

Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story

A Film by Todd Haynes

INTERTITLES

Transcribed by Robert C. Thomas

A Dramatization

A Simulation

1. As we investigate the story of Karen carpenter's life and death we are presented with an extremely graphic picture of the internal experience of contemporary femininity. We will see how Karen's visibility as a popular singer only intensified certain difficulties many women experience in relation to their bodies.
2. In 1973 President Nixon invited the Carpenters to sing at the White House, describing them as young America at its very best.
3. The same year would witness the discovery of the Watergate scandal. It was also the period of the Carpenter's greatest popularity.
4. Despite her busy schedule, Karen made many friends in the industry, such as Dionne Warwick, Olivia Newton-John, and Marlo Thomas. By 1975, however, it became clear that it was the inner relationship with herself that dominated Karen's life: her obsession with food and her refusal to eat.
5. The self-imposed regime of the anorexic reveals a complex internal apparatus of resistance and control. Her intensive need for self-discipline consumes and replaces all her other needs and desires.
6. Anorexia can thus be seen as an addiction and abuse of self-control, a fascism over the body in which the sufferer plays the parts of both dictator and the emaciated victim who she so often resembles.
7. In a culture that continues to control women through the commoditization of their bodies, the anorexic body excludes itself, rejecting the doctrines of femininity, driven by a vision of complete mastery and control.
8. Despite the warnings of friends, Karen married Tom Burris, a Los Angeles real estate developer. The marriage was very short lived. It is unclear whether it was Karen's struggle with anorexia or other factors that caused the marriage to sour.