

In 1986 Yoko Ono decided it was time for those who loved John Lennon to receive a dose of reality. She says now "I

believe in the power of truth and hope that people will get some power from the truth that comes through the film". The film is called **Imagine: John Lennon**.

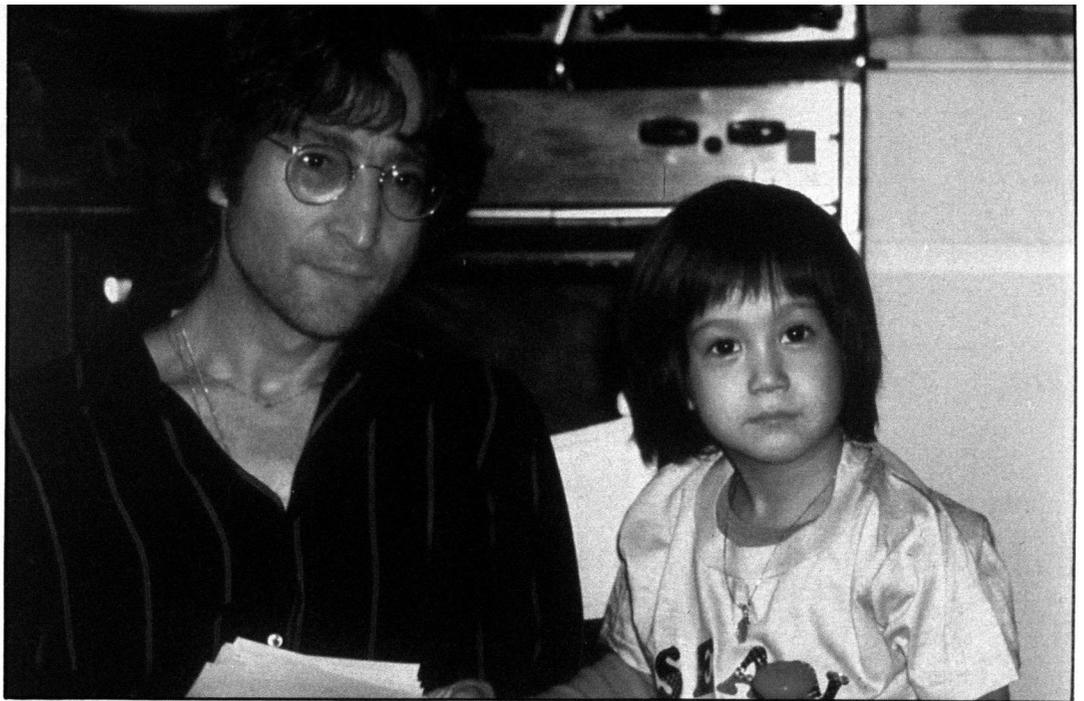
In 1986 when David Wolper was working on Liberty weekend in New York he was approached by Yoko who offered him everything she had on vinyl, paper and tape which pertained to the life of John. She apparently told Wolper she wanted the 'definitive theatrical documentary'.

Many in the industry expected Yoko to make this film herself, but she chose an expert and had no trouble accepting his demand of total creative control. "I accept whatever view the film takes of my involvement in John's life as being a world's view. In the end what we are is what we are to the world, nothing less, nothing more, and that's all right".

Wolper wasn't sure at the start of the project that there would be enough new material to interest moviegoers but because this is the first project to be fully supported by Yoko, the producers were able to collect a tremendous amount of material which has never been seen or heard before. In fact, the first draft of **Imagine: John Lennon** was 20 hours long. As Wolper says "In my involvement with producing more than 400 documentaries, never before have I encountered a project where the life of a public personality has been so thoroughly chronicled on tape and film."

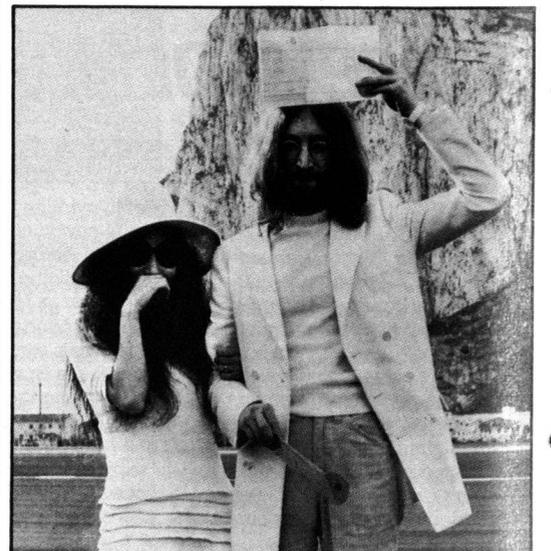
What sets this documentary apart from all of Wolper's other works is the fact that the film is narrated by John Lennon himself. There are some wonderful quotes which will warm the hearts of fans who have been hurt by the recent tales of excess spread by Albert Goldman author of *The Lives of John Lennon*. For example, John saying to a young man who showed up at his house "Don't confuse the songs with your own life. I mean they might have relevance to your own life but a lot of things do. I'm just a guy, man who writes songs. We can only say hello and what else is there?... Are you hungry?" Or a comment John made during his last walk through central park with Yoko "When I was singing and writing this (the *Double Fantasy* album) and working with her, I was visualizing all the people in my age group and singing to them. I'm saying 'here I am now. How are you? How's your relationship going? Wasn't the 70s a drag? Well lets try and make the 80s good!'"

TRIBUTE



IMAGINE

THE DEFINITIVE JOHN LENNON



A real coup for Wolper was enlisting the cooperation of Lennon's Aunt Mimi who raised John after his mother deserted him. Mimi spent over seven hours talking with co-producer Sam Egan about their life together. In the film she claims "There was never the possibility that John would just be an ordinary person. He'd have been successful in anything he did." She is also the woman who gave him his first guitar with a warning that he'd never make a

living from it.

One of Wolper's strengths as a filmmaker is that he doesn't do films about personalities he knows inside out. He explains "I'm really not an expert on any of the subjects I did. What I am is an expert on knowing how to make the film. Yoko asked me what I knew about John Lennon and I told her the truth. I knew nothing about him. She liked the fact that I admitted that."

Co-producer Sam Egan knew

Lennon a little better and was determined to show him as a real person. "He was one of the most extraordinary artists/philosophers, poets of his time, but he was not without his contradictions... admittedly he was a rebel, a delinquent and at times in his life prone to fits of violence. But he was someone who had a message of peace for the world and was undone by a world of violence."

— Jane Hawtin

