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Out in the Silence. Review.

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Gay filmmaker Wilson expected the outrage his wedding announcement generated in his hometown newspaper in Oil City, PA. But when the mother of 16-year-old CJ Wills wrote to Wilson about her son having to leave high school because of constant harassment, he decided to return to his hometown with his partner, Hamer, and film a documentary. The initial focus here is on CJ's experiences at school: hit, slammed, threatened, shoved, yanked, and verbally abused, all for being candid about his sexual orientation. CJ is terrified, finds no help from teachers or administrators, until his mother has no choice but to remove him and have him attend cyberschool. He is the one who ends up deprived and punished for others' behavior. Though viewers understand and sympathize with Wilson's passion, his having grown up gay in the same town, it would have been better had he left his own narrative and plight out of the film. Instead, he confronts the school board, the local pastor, the antagonizing American Family Association ideology—all noble efforts but detracting from the drama surrounding CJ and his mother. Courageous actions don't always make for great filmmaking. Still, *Out in the Silence* addresses important issues and is recommended for those interested in GLBT concerns.

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