



Secret signal: ‘The Whistle’ tells the story of ABQ Latina lesbian youths in the ’70s and ’80s

By Adrian Gomez / Journal Arts and Entertainment Editor Friday, September 20th, 2019 at 12:02am

A scene from the documentary “The Whistle,” which premieres at the KiMo Theatre on Friday, Sept. 20. (Courtesy of StormFlorez.com)

It took StormMiguel Florez a few decades to tell this story.

He’s captured it on film in the documentary, “The Whistle,” which is having its world premiere on Friday, Sept. 20, at the KiMo Theatre.

“It’s amazing to have the film completed,” he says. “It’s been a journey within myself to get the story captured on film.”

“The Whistle” tells the story of a group of predominantly Latina lesbians who came out as youths in the ’70s and ’80s in Albuquerque, and the secret code they used to find one another and build community.

The film collects and preserves a little-known piece of LGBTQ and Latinx history and explores the resiliency of queer communities during that time.

Florez, a trans man, is an Albuquerque native who came out as a teenage lesbian in the ’80s and returned to Albuquerque from San Francisco to make the film.

In search of the origin of a secret lesbian code he had learned as a teenager – the “dyke whistle” – he uncovered the humorous, heartbreaking and often forgotten stories of the local LGBTQ community.



A scene from the documentary “The Whistle,” which premieres at the KiMo Theatre on Friday, Sept. 20. (Courtesy of StormFlorez.com)

“One of the biggest gifts and surprises in making this film was the opportunity to meet some of the people who came out a decade before I did,” Florez says. “These women paved the way so that my peers and I had a celebratory culture to come out into. I think our support network and particular culture were pretty unique for LGBTQ youths in the ’70s and ’80s, especially outside of urban areas like New York and San Francisco. I’m thrilled to premiere in Albuquerque.”

Florez says that while making the film, he was worried about coming back to Albuquerque.

“I came back to my lesbian community as a trans guy,” he says. “There are a lot of people that didn’t know me. The last time most people saw me was years before I transitioned.”

Florez began interviews for the film in 2016 while living in San Francisco. He did most of the interviews by phone.

“I didn’t know what the narrative was going to be for the film,” he says. “There were all these different pockets of stories. Surprisingly, I learned a lot of things. People have these rich stories to share, and Albuquerque had a vibrant and lesbian and gay community then. That’s really unique, and the story ended up going in that direction.”



StormMiguel Florez directed “The Whistle.”

‘The Whistle’ world premiere

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 20

WHERE: KiMo Theatre, 423 Central NW **HOW MUCH:** \$4-\$30, plus fees at holdmyticket.com

Article link: <https://www.abqjournal.com/1368027/film-screening-albuquerque.html>