

FILMMAKER SLAYS HIS OLD DRAGONS

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EVERETT---Shaking and sweating from heroin withdrawal, Larry DuBois jumped over a pharmacy counter, grabbed bottle of painkillers and started gulping them down. He knew he was going to jail. All he wanted was to make the pain stop for a little while first. He swallowed 50 pills before Everett police arrested him. When the pills wore off, he was on the floor of his jail cell for five days; his body aching for the drug he'd injected daily. "It was torment," said DuBois, 45, of Everett. "(But) that was the best thing that could have happened to me." DuBois, who has stayed clean since his arrest two years ago, tells his story in a documentary he made to warn others about the danger of heroin use. His 80-minute film, "Don't Marry the Dragon," premieres tonight at an Everett Church. It was inspired by a poem DuBois wrote while he was behind bars about heroin's allure. "Chasing the dragon" is slang for inhaling heroin, he said. DuBois shot the movie on a hand-held digital camera, working on it for two years in his spare time. The film is partly a health lesson, with graphic footage of the damage heroin causes to users' bodies, plus firsthand accounts from people addicted to the illegal drug. Other scenes draw heavily on DuBois' Christian faith, emphasizing his view that heroin is a tool of the devil. The film gives a brief history of heroin before showing viewers an unflinching look at the effects of the drug. In several scenes, the camera zooms in on bleeding

abscesses on users' arms and legs. DuBois also rode along with Seattle medics who worked to revive a man, dying from a heroin overdose, filmed an addict shooting up in Seattle and included photos of the bodies of several men dead from heroin overdoses. Yet the film's most compelling moments are DuBois' interviews with current and former heroin users, including a suburban housewife who used to have a \$130-a-day habit. DuBois didn't start using the drug until 1998 when he swapped his prescription drug habit for heroin in an effort to save money. It didn't work. He quickly became addicted, committing up to six crimes a week to get money for the heroin. Then he began dealing it. "I knew I needed to stop, but I couldn't," DuBois said. "Instead, I got worse." He tried several treatment programs, but couldn't stay clean until he went through withdrawal in jail. The documentary is part of his recovery, he said, and has also helped him mend his relationship with his two sons. His oldest son, age 20, saw scenes from the movie during a recent visit. "By showing parts of the video to him, it let me tell him some things that would have been hard to say." DuBois said. DuBois plans to show his film in Seattle in February, then send copies to anyone who asks. He hopes that it will be used in schools and recovery centers. "You've got to stop heroin one person at a time and prevent it one person at a time," he said.