



**“I DON’T THINK
ANY WOULD
CONTRADICT
THAT THE
ISSUE WAS
EFFECTIVELY
NOWHERE
BEFORE THE
FILM “HIT.”**

PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE

THE INVISIBLE WAR

The Invisible War is a groundbreaking investigative documentary about one of America’s most shameful and best kept secrets: the epidemic of rape within the U.S. military. The film paints a startling picture of the extent of the problem — 1 in 4 women will be sexually assaulted during military service. Focusing on the powerfully emotional stories of rape victims, *The Invisible War* is a moving indictment of the systemic cover-up of military sex crimes, chronicling the women’s struggles to rebuild their lives and fight for justice.

WHAT THE CRITICS SAID

“Many great documentaries have been nominated for Oscars, yet few if any have done so much to actually change culture and policy as quickly as *The Invisible War*” *The Huffington Post*

“An aptly infuriating expose of sexual abuse” *Variety*

“A movie that cannot be ignored” *New York Times*

THE IMPACT
FIELD GUIDE
& TOOLKIT

WHO SAW IT

“AS A WOMAN IN THE MILITARY I APPRECIATE ITS STRENGTH AND COURAGE. THANK U FOR SPEAKING OUT! THE WHOLE WYOMING NATIONAL GUARD WATCHED THIS MOVIE...UR MAKING A DIFFERENCE. KEEP IT UP!!!”
TV VIEWER NICOLE FARNHAM

TELEVISION SPECIALS

In an unusual departure for the show, Katie Couric devoted a whole hour-long episode to *The Invisible War*. She asked Kathryn Bigelow and actress Jessica Chastain to watch the film and speak about it – even though they were originally booked to discuss their own film – *Zero Dark Thirty's* --Oscar campaign. “Katie” is the No. 1 syndicated freshman talk show on each week since its debut, averaging 2.080 million viewers.

79 FESTIVALS
in 22 countries

1.4K COMMUNITY SCREENINGS
From April 2012 - present, a minimum of 1418 distinct campus, military, community or institutional screenings of *The Invisible War* have been hosted by more than 640 different organisations around the world

110 CINEMAS
June 2012 - release in US 100 cities / 50 screens and Canada 10 cities

2.1M TELEVISION
Cumulative reach: 2,100,000.
97% coverage across the PBS network via Independent Lens

17K DVD
17,410 DVD sales in the US and Canada

739K ONLINE TRAILER VIEWS

19 AWARDS AND PRIZES

470K WEBSITE VISITS
282,532 InvisibleWarMovie.com (since July 2012)
190,271 NotInvisible.com (since launch)

145K EMAIL LIST
39,000 #NotInvisible email list
115,164 MoveOn.org petition email list

47K SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES
36,716 Facebook members - posts frequently engage over 2,000 users
8067 Twitter followers
#NotInvisible has been mentioned in over 15,000 Tweets
Handle @invisible_war has been mentioned 20,000 times



THE CAMPAIGN

THE CAMPAIGNERS

The campaign has been spearheaded by the filmmaking team of Ziering and Dick whose personal commitment to fight for change on the issue began in production and has continued to drive the snowball effect of the campaign. The two have continued to make personal appearances at key political advocacy and public events. They have also been supported by a wider team including community screening organisation Film Sprout, digital media strategists Fitzgibbon Media and educational distributor ro*co Films, not to mention a whole host of other freelancers and media PRs.

CAMPAIGN AIMS

The Department of Defense estimates there were a staggering 26,300 violent sex crimes in the military during 2012. 20% of all active-duty female soldiers are sexually assaulted, and female soldiers aged 18 to 21 accounted for more than half of the victims.

The filmmakers and their team analysed the political landscape and concluded that the one politically achievable reform that could dramatically reduce sexual assault was to remove adjudication of these crimes from the chain of command.

In order to achieve this the team wanted to:

1. Dramatically raise public awareness about the epidemic of Military Sexual Assault (MSA)
2. Create a national dialogue about the issue
3. Motivate the press to substantially increase its coverage of this issue and its investigative reporting of these crimes
4. Spur the military one to initiate internal changes
5. Build a national community of active survivors
6. Effect policy change at the level of Congress and the Department of Defense



HOW THE CAMPAIGN WORKED

This campaign was a strategic combination of awareness building at the grassroots, so advocates could exert pressure on political decision makers via a series of petitions as well as working to sway grassroots decision makers.

The team decided to begin building alliances with key members of House, especially Republicans since they controlled the House. They did this by establishing close one on one relationships with key politicians and their staff, always representing the issue and the film as bipartisan.

They arranged for screenings to Congress, kickstarted by two early screenings on Capitol Hill. The team has distributed hundreds of screeners to congressional

ESTABLISHING CLOSE ONE ON ONE RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY REPUBLICANS AND THEIR STAFF, ALWAYS REPRESENTING THE ISSUE AND THE FILM AS BIPARTISAN

staffers and delivered the film to new members following the 2012 election cycle.

Simultaneously, they worked with Susan Burke, the leading attorney on this issue, who is also in the film, holding a series of meetings over a year long period with nearly two dozen senators and/or their staff. As a result, when these senators

began to take a leading role on this issue, the team was in a position to guide them toward championing removing adjudication from the chain of command.

The campaign was highly coordinated; during each hearing related, however tenuously, to the issue, the team showed up, tweeted and documented which members were in attendance and which were not, then called upon tens of thousands of supporters to tweet public messages of “thank you” to members who had stood up for survivors and “Why don’t you stand up for survivors of military rape?” to nonparticipants.

This, coupled with petitions, and delivered DVDs, and legislative aides and staffers talking to their members all had an impact.

They built up a cohort of influential supporters including Katie Couric. In Summer 2013, she organised and hosted a screening and panel discussion of the film at the Aspen Institute, a prominent Washington DC based policy studies organisation.

In addition the team coordinated with other groups already committed to the issue – advocacy organizations, executive producers, members of Congress – and engaged new ones to stand for the cause, including veterans groups, women’s advocacy organisations and think tanks, all mobilised via an extensive screening programme and online communications programme.

THE CAMPAIGN WAS HIGHLY CO-ORDINATED; DURING EACH HEARING SEMI-RELATED TO THE ISSUE, THE TEAM SHOWED UP

COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

Since April 2012, a minimum of 1418 distinct campus, military, community or institutional screenings of *The Invisible War* have been hosted by more than 640 different organisations around the world.

63 of these screenings were on military bases in countries including Afghanistan, Germany and Kuwait.

HOSTS

- Over 36% of the total screenings were hosted by active-duty military installations;
- Over 28% were hosted by college campuses;
- Over 15% were hosted by veterans' organisations;
- Beyond military, college and veteran screenings, the remaining screenings were sponsored by a gamut of community screening hosts, including survivor networks, assault crisis centers, faith groups, volunteer and civic organizations, public libraries, and local chapters of the American Association of University Women, among other organisations;
- A full 33% were "repeat screenings"—second or third or even tenth showings

hosted by an organization or institution after its initial screening. Such frequency of use demonstrates the film's value to screening hosts, particularly on military bases, for their ongoing training, education and awareness-building challenges.

AUDIENCE

Audience tallies (reported on 77% of screenings), suggest:

- At least 306,000 people saw *The Invisible War* in a nontheatrical screening facilitated by Film Sprout
- Informal estimates are that up to a million members of the armed forces have seen the film
- An estimated 266,000 were active-duty military or civilians working on active-duty military installations; an estimated 40,000 were non-military civilians

Additionally, media mentions of the issue, film and/or the work of partners have increased exponentially over Summer 2013. In a sample two week period there were more than 10 media hits each day surrounding the issue, primarily from notable mainstream media outlets. In total there have been more than 21,000 media mentions surrounding the film, campaign and issue.

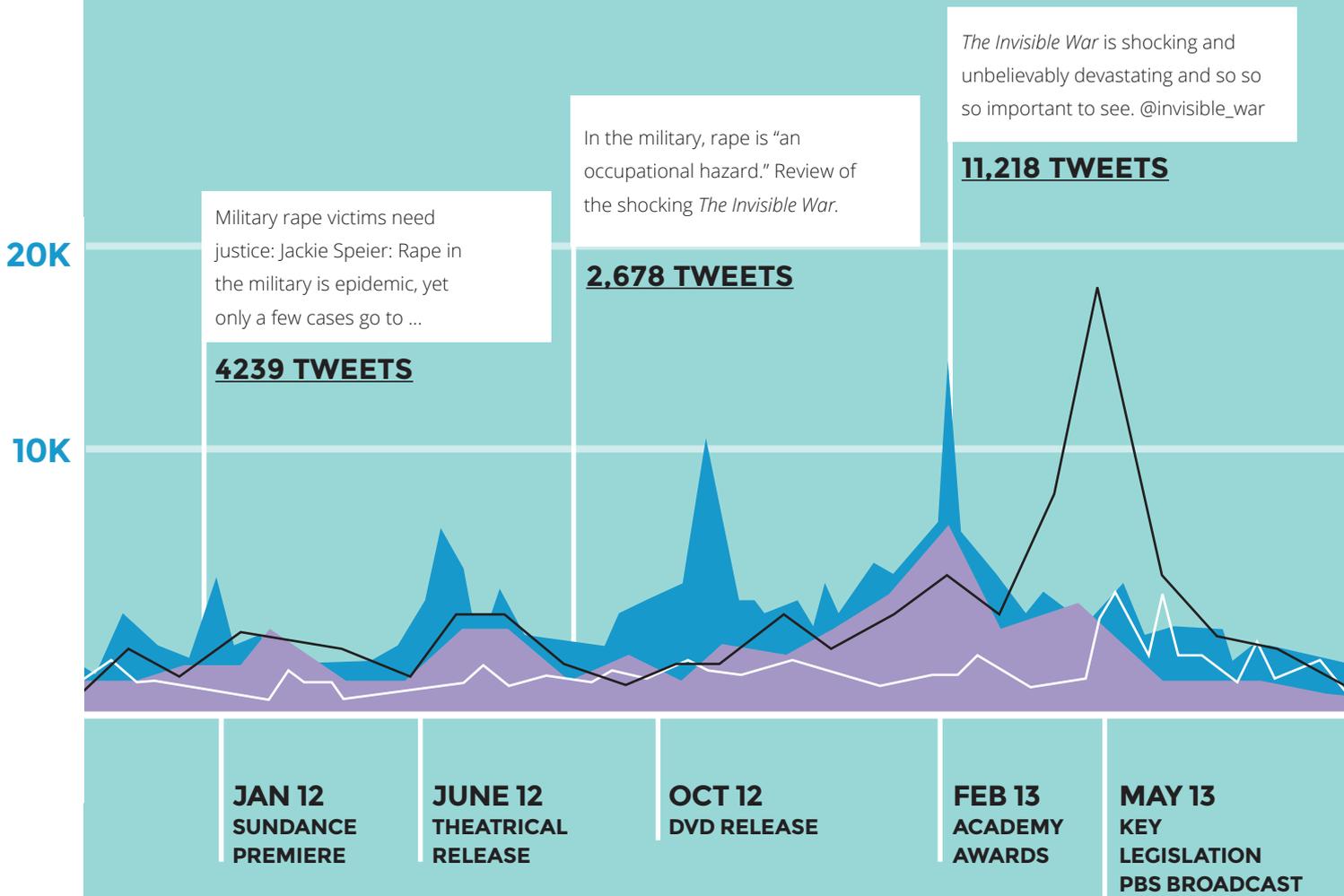


ONLINE TRENDS

Google Trends shows that search interest for “The Invisible War” significantly peaks for the first time in January 2012 (premiere of the film at Sundance), again in June 2012 (theatrical release), October 2012 (ancillary release – DVD and iTunes), in February 2013 (Academy Awards), and again

in May (surrounding key legislation, a coordinated political push around the issue and the broadcast premiere on PBS). Correlative to the incline of “The Invisible War” is search interest for “military sexual assault.” There is a steady climb and rise in the popularity of the issue that matches the increased public awareness of the film.

KEYWORD MENTIONS ONLINE (VIA GOOGLE & TWITTER)



KEY

- “INVISIBLE WAR” (GOOGLE)
- “MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT” (GOOGLE)
- “INVISIBLE WAR” (TWITTER)
- “MILITARY RAPE” (TWITTER)

CAMPAIGN IMPACT & ACHIEVEMENTS

The major impact of this campaign can be seen in the top level of political buy-in on the issue as well as the way that the military has begun to address Military Sexual Assault head on in a public sphere as well as behind the scenes, the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff having viewed the film.

WITHIN THE MILITARY

There are many indications that the military hierarchy is taking serious steps to address the issue of Military Sexual Assault (MSA). Senator Blumenthal, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee credits the film with “changing the conversation within the military.” The Pentagon has matched the rhetoric with funds, increasing the amount it spends on combatting sexual assault by \$30-\$50m annually.

In July 2012, only 6 months after the Sundance premiere, The Army, Air Force, and National Guards started using film as training tool to combat MSA. The film is now officially incorporated and implemented into the Army SHARP (Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response and Prevention) Program training for military and civilian personnel, in compliance with Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and Secretary of the Army directives.

In November 2012 the film caught the attention of General Welsh, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, who flew all AF Wing Commanders from bases around the world to the Pentagon. This in itself was unprecedented event and signalled his commitment to the issue.

Following a private screening of the film, one former Chief of Staff who had recently stepped down from running one of the most powerful branches of the military told the filmmakers, that he “learned more about this issue in the 90 minutes spent watching it than he had in forty



years of reading briefing papers on this issue.”

In May 2013 The Ohio Army National Guard 1-174th Air Defense Artillery Battalion threw out their manual and replaced their annual sexual assault prevention and response training with a screening of the film followed by a conversation with film subject and survivor, Kori Cioca. “What played out that Sunday morning was the single most amazing experience I have had in my 10+ year military career....I have no doubt that

soldiers left that room changed...

In all my years attending sexual assault prevention training, I have never once heard anyone talking about it after it was over. But now we are. And now we understand that there is work to be done, and in order to make a difference we have to talk, we have to stand up and speak out against it and we have to do it together.” Army Captain

In the same month the largest ever overhaul of the military occurred when sixty serving personnel were dismissed due to revelations of sexual misconduct. The head of SAPRO (The Sexual Assault Prevention

and Response Office of the Department of Defence) and the Commandant at Marine Barracks Washington were both reassigned/ fired. They were featured prominently in the film and the timing of their dismissal correlated with the opening of the film theatrically.

In July 2013 the US Army Materiel Command

SEN. BLUMENTHAL, A MEMBER OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, CREDITS THE FILM WITH “CHANGING THE CONVERSATION WITHIN THE MILITARY.”

Headquarters purchased 152 Institutional & Public Viewing copies of *The Invisible War* to be used at 128 sites across the world, marking the film's official incorporation into the Army SHARP (Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention) Program training for military and civilian personnel. This was in compliance with numerous directives which had been issued by Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and Secretary of the Army.

DEFENSE SECRETARY PANETTA ANNOUNCED NEW INITIATIVES TO COMBAT MSA TWO DAYS AFTER WATCHING THE FILM

MSA epidemic in the short time since the film's release. As most of this legislation had never been presented or imagined prior, and as several senators have told the team that they penned the legislation or signed on as a sponsor as a result of watching the film, it is safe to say that *The Invisible War* was the direct progenitor of these legislative acts.

There was an early win in April 2012 when Defense Secretary Panetta announced new initiatives to combat MSA two days after watching the film as part of early influencer screenings and advocacy on Capitol Hill. One of Panetta's initiatives was removing the authority to handle MSA out of the hands of junior commanders.

There have also been unprecedented hearings on the issue by various committees including the full House Armed Services Committee in January 2013, the first on the issue in 20 years. This included many members the team had carefully selected and encouraged to take a lead on the issue.

Two months later, Senator Gillibrand, Chair of the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on personnel held the first Senate hearing on the issue in a decade, a decision made after

POLITICAL TRACTION

Two years ago, before the film came out, the US Senate was so fearful of taking on the military on military sexual assault that the filmmakers could not get one senator to be interviewed about the issues.

Today, so far, there have been a total of 20 pieces of new legislation introduced to address the United States'

seeing *The Invisible War*. At that hearing, which included testimony from assault victims, nearly all Senators spoke of the value and impact of the film and its message, and all six Pentagon generals testified that had seen the film.

In February 2013, during Sen Hagel's confirmation hearing as new Defense Secretary, Senate Armed Services Committee members questioned him on MSA and made references to the film. During his commencement ceremony at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Hagel told cadets that sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military are a "profound betrayal" and charged them with the responsibility to stamp out the sexual assault problem plaguing the military.

In May 2013 multiple senators, led by key advocate Senator Gillibrand, introduced new legislation, the Military Justice Improvement Act (MJIA) that would move the decision to investigate and prosecute MSA out of the chain of command, a key campaign goal. The draft of this bill had been informed by the campaign team's careful advocacy.

The team launched a campaign empowering grassroots supporters to call their senators to ask them to cosponsor the MJIA and have logged 2223 calls so far. Valerie Jarrett (Senior Advisor to President Obama) told Ziering and Dick that she and the President had seen the film, thought it was "brilliant" and that the President, post viewing, had convened a meeting with his senior officials to tell them they were now charged with "exponentially stepping up their game on this issue". In May 2013 President Obama vowed publicly to "end the scourge" of military sex abuse. The Vice-President has also seen the film as has the majority of the Senate.

At an early summit meeting the team concluded that it would be impossible to get the various campaign groups to agree on supporting a specific political

THERE HAVE BEEN A TOTAL OF 20 PIECES OF NEW LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO ADDRESS THE UNITED STATES' MSA EPIDEMIC IN THE SHORT TIME SINCE THE FILM'S RELEASE

ask. However several did coalesce around the MJIA including Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Service Women's Action Network and Protect Our Defenders which was a step forward in itself for the field.

"Only the U.S. Congress can amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The U.S. Senate must act swiftly to move the decision to prosecute sexual assault in the military out of the chain of command."

In June 2013 Trina McDonald, one of the survivors in the film, personally delivered a petition with these words, with 115,086 signatures to the US Senate, along with the petition of congressional partner and champion, Rep. Jackie Speier and the Courage Campaign which had gathered 85,000.

Unfortunately, in June 2013 the Senate Armed Services Committee voted 17-9 to keep the current system of prosecuting assault cases in place. This was undoubtedly a disappointment given that in March this committee had held its first hearing on the issue in a decade.

However, illustrating the nature of top level support, the Pentagon rolled out seven new rules in August 2013, improving how the military will prosecute and investigate sexual assault.

In September 2013 the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) voted overwhelmingly in support of removing the decision whether to prosecute sexual assaults and other serious crimes from the chain of command. Historically, DACOWITS' recommendations have been very instrumental in effecting changes to laws and policies pertaining to military women.

CAPACITY BUILDING

While MJIA has yet to pass, Sen Gillibrand has 39 official cosponsors and the support she needs from close to 60 Senators and is planning to reintroduce the bill at the end of 2013. In addition other organisations have used the film to fundraise for themselves:

"Our event was intended to raise money for AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund, which is supporting three of the cases that were filed... We raised a little over \$2,000 in support of the law suits... the movie was reinforcement for those who have been following the cases

AAUW is supporting." (American Association of University Women, Metro St Louis)

The screenings have led to increased funding of interview subject Susan Burke's lawsuit and increased awareness of the work of two of the national outreach partners Service Woman's Action Network (SWAN) and Protect Our Defenders (POD).

The filmmakers worked with one of their executive producers, Regina Kulik Scully, to launch a groundbreaking trauma recovery program for survivors of military sexual assault: the Artemis Rising Invisible War Recovery Program (http://www.notinvisible.org/recovery_program). The program had its first 14 day program in February 2013 attended by contributors to the film, a recognition of the courage it took for them to come forward and speak. The second took place in June 2013 and there will be one more for men in October. Monitored by a Stanford researcher, it is a first of its kind residential program to develop a specialised and effective non pharmaceutically based treatment to reduce/eliminate MST related Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). \$1M has already been raised to continue to pilot the programme over the coming year.

CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

Official "Impact Partners" of social action campaign, #NotInvisible:

Protect Our Defenders
Give an Hour
Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)
David Lynch Foundation
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
UltraViolet
Fledgling Fund
Women Donors Network
Peace Over Violence
Futures Without Violence
RAINN
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center
Women's Media Center: Women Under Siege
Equality Now
The Soldiers Project
NYCLU
Plus many more further partners.

CONCLUSION



The campaign team has ensured that the issue of Military Sexual Assault has remained constantly in the public eye, coordinating a sustained grassroots campaign around strategic tentpoles such as the Academy Awards, and generating sustained press coverage. High level military and crossparty political support has signalled a shift in public discourse, acknowledging the gravity of the issue and pledging to “end

the scourge.” There has been a raft of unprecedented legislation which has tackled MSA from multiple angles, a signal that the campaign has managed to create a change in culture within that most conservative of institutions, the US military. This will need further sustained advocacy over a considerable period of time, a commitment the campaign has already made.

“THE HIGH QUALITY OF THE FILM AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF SURVIVORS BOTH IN THE FILM AND THE FOLLOW UP WERE CENTRAL TO THE FILMS ABILITY TO CREATE ACTUAL CHANGE”

PEER REVIEW COMMITTEE

TEAM BIOGRAPHY



DIRECTOR

KIRBY DICK is an Academy and Emmy Award nominated documentary director. His prior film, *Outrage*, was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Investigative Journalism.

In 2006 he directed *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*, a breakthrough investigation of the highly secretive film ratings system that compelled the MPAA to make long overdue changes. In 2004 he directed *Twist Of Faith*, the story of a man confronting past sexual abuse by a Catholic priest, which received an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Feature.

Dick's other films include *Derrida* and the internationally acclaimed *Sick: The Life & Death Of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist*, which won the Special Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and the Grand Prize at the Los Angeles Film Festival. He is the 2012 recipient of the Nestor Almendros Prize for Courage and Filmmaking and the 2013 Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize.



PRODUCER

AMY ZIERING produced Kirby Dick's previous film, *Outrage*, an indictment of the hypocrisy of powerful, closeted politicians and the political and media institutions that protect them.

Ziering also codirected and produced *Derrida*, a complex portrait of the world-renowned French philosopher Jacques Derrida which won the Golden Gate Award at the San Francisco Film Festival.

She is the 2012 recipient of the Nestor Almendros Prize for Courage and Filmmaking, the 2013 Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize, and the 2013 Gracie Award for Outstanding Producer - News/Non-Fiction.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Winner, Audience Award US Documentary, **SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**

Winner, Nestor Almendros Award, **HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL**

Winner, Silver Heart Award, **DALLAS FILM FESTIVAL**

Winner, Best Documentary, **SEATTLE FILM FESTIVAL**

Winner, Best Documentary, **PROVINCETOWN FILM FESTIVAL**

Winner, Best of Fest, **DOCUWEST DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL**

Winner, Best Human Rights Film, **DOCUMENTARY EDGE FESTIVAL**

Winner, Best Documentary, **FIND SPIRIT AWARDS**

Winner, Documentary Film Prize, **RIDENHOUR PRIZES**

Winner, "Golden Tomato" Best Reviewed Film of 2012, **ROTTEN TOMATOES**

Winner, Outstanding Achievement in Filmmaking, **FSU TORCHLIGHT AWARD**

Winner, Humanitarian Award: Media Advocacy, **PEACE OVER VIOLENCE**

Winner, Outstanding Producer, News/Non-Fiction, **GRACIE AWARD**

Winner, Distinguished Service Awards for Excellence in the Medium of Film,
17TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND TRAUMA

Winner, Media Excellence Award,
2013 END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Winner, GirlPower Award, **2013 APCH GIRLPOWER AWARDS**

Winner, The Abby J Leibman Pursuit of Justice Award 2013, **CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S LAW CENTER**

NOMINATIONS:

ACADEMY AWARD: Best Documentary Feature

DIRECTORS GUILD AWARDS: Outstanding Directorial Achievement

WRITERS GUILD AWARDS: Best Documentary Screenplay

GOTHAM INDEPENDENT FILM AWARDS: Audience Award

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION: Best Feature

CREDITS

The media/publicity team was the combined efforts of: Nancy Willen, Susan Norget, Sunshine Sachs (Ken Sunshine), and PR Collaborative (Jamie Schor, Renee Tsao).

Kristin Cooney, Vice President of ro*co films oversees educational sales and outreach.

Freelancers Kathie Berlin, Ellen Pasternak, Paula Silver and Dorothea Sargeant were part of the outreach team during the Oscar campaign.



WEDNESDAY, JUN 27, 2012 11:45 PM NZST

Ending military rape: The crusade of “The Invisible War”

“The Invisible War,” inspired by a groundbreaking Salon report, wants to change the military culture of sex abuse

BY MARY ELIZABETH WILLIAMS



TOPICS: THE INVISIBLE WAR, DOCUMENTARIES, SEXUAL ABUSE, KIRBY DICK, MOVIES, ENTERTAINMENT NEWS



Kirby Dick’s “The Invisible War” is already the darling of the festival circuit, a documentary that won the audience award at Sundance and critical praise for its sharp, skillful storytelling. But as compelling as his film is, the director of “This Film Is Not Yet Rated” and the Catholic Church sex abuse documentary “Twist of Faith” doesn’t merely want to impress you. This is a movie that intends to reform the entire United States military. And it stands a very good chance of succeeding.

Inspired by Helen Benedict’s 2007 Salon story “The Private War of Women Soldiers,” “The Invisible War” is a gut-wrenching condemnation of the way the military has, across the board and in every branch, failed to protect its members from sexual assault – and then failed them again and again afterward. In a series of harrowing personal accounts, victims – mostly women but a sampling of men as well – recount the trauma of their rapes while in uniform and the sickening personal consequences they experienced for reporting them. It’s estimated that over 20 percent of female veterans have been sexually assaulted during their service – and some believe the real figure is even higher. It’s an epidemic.

As the film demonstrates, because the military handles sexual assault internally, a stunning number of victims are simply brushed off by their superiors. But even more outrageously, many of them have faced retribution. The subjects speak of having their careers ruined, of being punished for committing “adultery” with their married rapists, or being denied veterans’ benefits for the long-term consequences of the emotional and physical batterings they received.

Dick’s film is a devastating, intimate portrait of the aftereffects of sexual abuse. It’s impossible to see the photographs of the astonishing number of women and men who talked to the filmmakers – each looking so fresh and sharp and proud in their uniforms – and not be heartbroken and enraged at the perpetrators and the institutions that protected them. Days after seeing the film, I can’t get the sound of their sobs out of my head. I can’t forget the words of Marine Lt. Ariana Klay, talking about how her experience “destroyed” her. Or her husband, Capt. Ben Klay, choking as he talks about how “when your wife doesn’t come home ... [you’re] rummaging through the house to find the suicide note.” Another veteran explains the options simply: “Suicide, AWOL or deal with it.”

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The Makers of Military-Rape Documentary *The Invisible War* on How Winning an Oscar Could Help Change Military Policies

by **Alyssa Berezna** 6:10 PM, FEBRUARY 15 2013

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DOCUMENTARY

When director Kirby Dick and producer Amy Ziering started filming *The Invisible War*, a documentary about sexual assault in the military, they quickly realized that they wanted their work to influence change. They knew it was a lofty goal, considering both that the subject matter of rape was not necessarily a topic for *Good Morning America* and that the Department of Defense wasn't necessarily the most progressive institution in Washington. But since their film premiered at Sundance, it has facilitated astounding strides in policy, reaching as high as Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, who—two days after watching the film—created a special-victims unit for each branch of the military and directed military commanders to transfer all sexual-assault investigations to a higher-ranking colonel. All this *and* a nomination from the Academy for best documentary feature.



BY KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES.

Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering.

The Hollywood Blog spoke with Dick and Ziering about their post-premiere outreach, how they found their film subjects on Facebook, and why an Oscar would change everything. Highlights from our chat:

The Hollywood Blog: At what point during the making of the film did you decide you could use it for real change?

Kirby Dick: We were talking to all these women and men, hearing these incredible stories of their patriotism and commitment to serve, and then the betrayal they experienced. We realized that even though we were speaking to hundreds, there were *hundreds of thousands* of men and women that this had happened to.

I personally didn't think these kind of changes would happen this quickly. I remember Amy and I having this discussion with people in the Pentagon, and they were just adamant that it could not even be raised, that the unit commander had to make those decisions [about reporting rape]. . . . Likewise, we did not expect that the military would be using this film as part of its sexual-assault training programs. Today, the estimate is that over 250,000 men and women in the military have seen this film.

Amy Ziering: That's incredible. That's 10 percent.

Dick: Even slightly over 10 percent now. Maybe 12 percent. We're moving up. It's also happened from the top down, too. For example, the chief of staff of the Air Force, General Wells, flew in all 135 wing commanders from around the globe to the Pentagon to watch the film, and then had a discussion about the issue. We later learned, in more than three decades, there had been no instance where all the wing commanders were called back . . . it may never have happened before.

Ziering: Also, just as a reference point, Senator Richard Blumenthal during Hagel's confirmation hearing, one of his questions was, "Senator Hagel, have you seen *The Invisible War*?" Which I think is pretty amazing that he used that as a question to the nominee. Hagel responded, "Yes."

Rape isn't necessarily a topic that's easy to advertise to the public. Why were you able to make it happen and get important people to pay attention?

Ziering: The question is more cinematic. Artistically, it was our aim and ambition to expect

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Editorial: The Military's Sexual Assault Crisis (May 8, 2013)

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trials.

He said training and awareness programs masking indifference will no longer stand: "If we find out somebody's engaging in this stuff, they've got to be held accountable, prosecuted, stripped of their positions, court-martialed, fired, dishonorably discharged — period."

It has been a bad week for the hidebound defenders of a hopelessly antiquated military justice system that views prosecution decisions in all cases, including rape and sexual assault, as the private preserve of commanders rather than lawyers.

"They are dying a thousand deaths," said Eugene Fidell, who teaches military justice at Yale Law School. CAAFlog, the leading military justice blog, called it "the death knell" for the current system, at least for sexual assault cases.

During the Thomas-Hill hearings, many powerful men here — even ones defending Hill publicly — privately assumed that she was somehow complicit in encouraging Thomas's vulgar behavior. Feminists ranted "they just don't get it" so often that it became a grating cliché.

Yet, 22 years later, during another Senate hearing on Tuesday where the topic of sexual transgression flared, it became clear that, as the California Congresswoman Jackie Speier told me afterward, "people in authority just don't get it."

Gen. Mark Welsh, the chief of staff for the Air Force, shocked the women on the Senate Armed Services Committee when he testified that part of the problem in combatting "The Invisible War" as the Oscar-nominated documentary feature on the epidemic of rape in

Along with a boosted Buick LeSabre, another incident listed on a crime report Sunday in Arlington County, Va., was a creepy attack by a man on a woman.

"On May 5 at 12:35 a.m., a drunken male subject approached a female victim in a parking lot and grabbed her breasts and buttocks," the report read. "The victim fought the suspect off as he attempted to touch her again and alerted police. Jeffrey Krusinski, 41, of Arlington, Va., was arrested and charged with sexual battery."

Krusinski's mug shot, [showing scarlet scratches on his face](#), is a portrait in misery.

He knew his arrest on charges of groping a stranger would send the capital reeling and his career at the nearby Pentagon spiraling. The Air Force lieutenant colonel charged with sexual battery was the officer in charge of sexual assault prevention programs for the Air Force. (He had just finished his sexual assault victim training.)

There was a fox-in-the-henhouse echo of Clarence Thomas, who Anita Hill said sexually harassed her when he was the nation's top enforcer of laws against workplace sexual harassment.

Senator Jay Rockefeller issued a white-hot statement, calling Krusinski's arrest "further evidence that the military isn't taking the issue of sexual assault seriously," and "a stain on the military" that "should shake us to our core."

President Obama was also lacerating on the subject of the Krusinski arrest and the cases of two Air Force lieutenant generals who set aside sexual assault convictions after jury

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Can The Invisible War Help Put an End to Military Rape?

The Obama administration is expected to make the war, especially, much more transparent.

By [Michael S. Schmidt](#) and [Seth D. Mitchell](#)

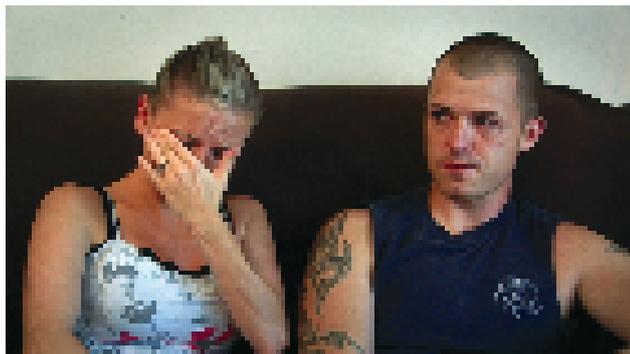


Photo by AP/Wide World

It was a grim, unrelenting scene. In a room in the U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Afghanistan, a young woman in a white tank top was crying, her hands covering her face. She was surrounded by a group of men in military uniforms, some of whom were looking at her with concern. The woman's face was a picture of despair, and the men's expressions were a mix of sympathy and duty. The scene was a stark reminder of the human cost of war.

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The Obama administration is expected to make the war, especially, much more transparent. This means that the public will have access to information that was previously withheld. This includes details about military operations, troop movements, and the experiences of soldiers and civilians. The administration's goal is to increase transparency and accountability in the way the war is conducted.

It's not an easy job, but it's one that the Obama administration has taken on. The administration is committed to transparency and accountability in the way the war is conducted.

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The film by director Kirby Dick premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival. | AP Photo

By PATRICK GAVIN | 1/10/13 10:10 PM EST

Of the five documentaries nominated for the Academy Awards on Thursday, no film hits Washington more directly than "The Invisible War," which looks at sexual assault in the U.S. military.

"Absolutely, it's a political film," director Kirby Dick told POLITICO in the wake of the Academy's announcement. "It was made to have an impact on policy. ... We — and actually every one of them who we interviewed — were making this film so we'd help protect the current service members, men and women in the military."

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The film, which premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, interviews victims of sexual assaults in the military and talks with politicians such as Reps. Chellie Pingree (D-Maine), Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.) and Loretta Sanchez (D-Calif.). The film is reportedly credited with having inspired Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to take action to eradicate sexual assault.

Dick jokingly said he learned of his film's nomination Thursday the "old-fashioned way" — by going online, like everybody else. "We feel great," he said.

And he said the nomination was especially gratifying "given the fact that it was such a strong set of films on the shortlist."

"Any one of those films could have been in the Top Five." The other films nominated are "Searching for Sugarman," "The Gatekeepers," "How to Survive a Plague" and "5 Broken Cameras."

It's not the first Oscar nod for Dick; his 2004 documentary about sexual abuse at the hands of a Catholic priest, "Twist of Faith," earned a nomination. Dick is also well-known for his 2006 documentary, "This Film Is Not Yet Rated," which examined the Motion Picture Association of America's ratings system. "Outrage," Dick's 2009 film about political opposition to gay rights, earned him an Emmy for Outstanding Investigative Journalism.

Although "The Invisible War" has already earned accolades, such as Sundance's Audience Award for U.S. Documentary, Dick says an Oscar nod goes a long way in bringing attention to this issue.

"It's a huge step towards shining a light on this," Dick said. "The film has really done so much to bring attention to this issue. A year ago, when the film premiered, very few people in this country were aware of what an issue this was, and this has been changing over the year and I think a fair amount has been due to the film."

Dick says there are "quite a few things on the wishlist that still need to get done" in order to prevent sexual assaults in the military.

"This decision to investigate and prosecute sexual assault has to be taken out of the chain of command," Dick said. "In every civilian system of justice, there is not this conflict of interest that exists in the military. It's been done in other militaries around the world and it would improve the system of justice in the military, certainly, and make for a stronger military."

Dick says he continues to receive messages of support and thanks from people within the

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