Unveiling the Silence

NO!™ The Rape Documentary Study Guide

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Unveiling the Silence: *NO!* The Rape Documentary Study Guide is dedicated to:

Every woman and girl victim/survivor who privately or publicly said "No" to rape and/or any other form of sexual assault.

Every woman and girl victim/survivor who did not know that they had the right to privately or publicly say "No" to rape and/or any other form of sexual assault.

It is also dedicated to:

Leah Makeda
Iyana Marie Ali
Nathalia Smith
Pilar Jefferson
Yasmeen Brownlee
Jerlast Foster
Aaliyah Hunter
Niyala Brownlee
Mico Fazakas
Sajo Jefferson
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Rachel Olomofe
Amari Rose Mealy
Andie McClennon Dotson
Ife Bryant-Davis
Soleil Xavier
Sky Sierra Lyric Raye
Desta Davis-Cherry
Ella Carmen Cohen-Ritchie
Avye Dai Thwaites-Simmons
Sophia Bartoli-Wright
Jasmine Mané
Ryan Olivia Dotson

And all girls born and yet to be born may they never experience the horror of incest, rape, or ANY other form of sexual violence on their journeys called life.

Purpose of Guide

A tool for educators and workshop facilitators – This study guide may be used within a workshop, class session, or semester-long course. You may decide to screen the documentary film in its entirety or use segments integrated into a broader course addressing race, gender, and sexuality. Viewing the film in segments allows for discussion related to themed sections. You may choose to work through the study guide chapter by chapter, or use it as a jumping off point for student-led exercises or longer activities.

A tool for everyone – Our hope is that this study guide will be used as a companion to the film *NO!* by all individuals who are taking action in their communities to educate themselves and each other about rape and sexual assault. The film will get conversations going in your communities and on your campuses. You might host a screening of the film as a one-time event in your dorm, classroom, church, mosque, rape crisis center, shelter, correctional facility, living room, or in a community space, and facilitate a group discussion immediately following the screening or in the days following.

This guide includes:

- Summaries of the different chapters of the film
- Excerpts from the transcribed testimonies of rape survivors and quotes from the film to spark discussion
- Myths and facts about rape and sexual assault so participants in discussions have the relevant information regarding the truth about sexual violence and its impact
- A glossary of terms useful for talking about sexual assault in the African-American community
- Discussion questions about the subject of sexual assault to promote positive and informative conversations for participants
- Worksheets and handouts for participants to reflect on what they think they know about rape and sexual violence in their communities

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Producer/Director's Statement

Aishah Shahidah Simmons

"...and when we speak WE ARE AFRAID our words will not be heard nor welcomed but when we are silent, WE ARE STILL AFRAID So it is BETTER TO SPEAK remembering WE were never meant to survive."

–Audre Lorde[1]

Aishah Shahidah Simmons; photo by Barbara Kigozi

I am an African-American[2] feminist lesbian cultural worker who for fifteen years primarily used the camera lens, as a producer, writer, and director, to make central some of the many things that have been and are on the periphery–the lives of African-American lesbian and heterosexual women. I believe that using the camera lens to bring progressive ideas, images, perspectives, and voices from the margins to the center is a form of social change. In 1992, I chose film/video as my tool to make progressive social change irresistible because we live in an age where people are inundated with images–the majority of which are both directly and indirectly manufactured by a handful of global corporations. Very unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of these images either completely ignore the majority of the world's human inhabitants or they reinforce negative stereotypes of the majority of the world's human inhabitants.

Since the early nineties, and largely as a result of the late Black feminist author and screenwriter Toni Cade Bambara's[3] guidance and tutelage, I have had a deep and profound appreciation for and understanding of the critical need to shed light on controversial and ignored subjects within African-American communities, without reinforcing stereotypes. My goal with my work is to visually engage audiences while educating them and encouraging them to work toward eradicating all forms of oppression, which include but are not limited to: racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, colonialism, and imperialism, in all of their violent manifestations.

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1 Audre Lorde was an award-winning and prolific, self-defined Black lesbian feminist mother warrior poet. Among her numerous awards, she was named the New York State Poet from 1991-1993. She published ten volumes of poetry and five volumes of prose before her untimely death in 1992.

2 For the purpose of this study guide, the words Black and African-American are used interchangeably to describe the descendants of enslaved Africans who were brought over, against their will and in chains, to the Americas, and landed on the mass of land now known as the United States of America.

3 Toni Cade Bambara was an award-winning Black feminist writer, filmmaker and cultural worker. During her lifetime, she edited two anthologies, two short story collections, and a novel. As a screenwriter she worked on several award-winning documentaries. After her untimely death in 1995, Toni Morrison published two pieces of Bambara's writings, which were a collection of fiction, essays, and conversations; and a novel.

I am a Black woman who is a survivor of incest and rape.

> *I was the young Black woman who in 1989, at 19 years old, six weeks shy of my 20th birthday, broke the rules of the university where I attended by agreeing to sneak out after hours to meet the man who would become my rapist… I was the Black woman who after breaking the university enforced rules started to have second thoughts but was afraid to articulate them and was afraid to turn around because my friends were covering for me… I was the Black woman who paid for the hotel room where I was raped... I was the Black woman who said, "I don't want to do this. Please stop." I didn't "violently" fight back. I didn't scream or yell to the top of my lungs because I was afraid. I didn't want to make a "scene." I told myself it was my fault because I willingly left the dorm, ignored school policy, and even paid for the hotel room… I am one of countless, nameless, and voiceless women, who experientially learned that the (often unchallenged) punishment for women who use poor judgment with men is rape and other forms of sexual violence.*

Rape and other forms of sexual violence are some of the most underreported crimes in the United States because most victims believe that the atrocities committed against them are private or personal matters. I know too many Diasporic African women who are incest and rape survivors. And yet, in spite of this reality, there is an "uncanny silence surrounding the trauma of Black rape."[4] In 1994, this deafening silence led me on an eleven-year international grassroots journey to produce, write, and direct *NO!* The Rape Documentary, a feature length documentary which unveils the realities of rape, other forms of sexual violence, and healing in African-American communities.

It should be noted that while *NO!* is the first documentary if its kind, it is a part of a long tradition of protest by Black women educators, writers, activists, artists, poets, filmmakers, cultural workers, and organizations, including but not limited to: the narratives of enslaved African women, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Amy Jaques Garvey, Zora Neale Hurston, Rhoda Bell Temple-Robinson-Hudson-Douglas, Beah Richards, Louise Patterson, Rebecca White-Simmons-Chapman, Jesse Neal Hudson, Mattie Simmons Brown, Ella Baker, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Fannie Lou Hamer, Nina Simone, Toni Cade Bambara, Ruby Dee, Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, Elaine Brown, Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, Diane Nash, Shirley Chisolm, Florence Kennedy, Johnnetta Betsch Cole, the National Black Feminist Organization, the Combahee River Collective, Alice Walker, Sonia Sanchez, Audre Lorde, Loretta J. Ross, Nkenge Toure, Angela Y. Davis, ntozake shange, Elsa Barkley Brown, Michelle Wallace, Barbara Smith, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Sweet Honey In The Rock, Pearl Cleage, bell hooks, Julie Dash, Michelle Parkerson, Ayoka Chenzira, Zeinabu irene Davis, the National Black Women's Health Project, and African-American Women In Defense of Ourselves... Their scholarship, activism, films, and cultural work broke the ground and paved the way for *NO!* to exist today.

Barbara Smith and Aishah; photo by Joan Brannon

In *NO!* Black women's voices and experiences are integral–not on the sidelines, not on the periphery but in the center of the work–without any excuses or apologies. I believe this directorial decision is a revolutionary act because to paraphrase Toni Cade Bambara, none of us are aurally or visually-trained to prioritize, much less make central, Black women's lives. That

4 Charlotte Pierce-Baker, *Surviving the Silence: Black Women's Stories of Rape* (Norton, 2000).

was the challenge that Julie Dash[5] faced with her cinematic masterpiece *Daughters of the Dust* because that breathtaking film required viewers to visually experience Black women's lives at the turn of the twentieth century.

Charlotte Pierce-Baker, Joan Brannon, Gail Lloyd and Aishah; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

Within an intraracial Black context, *NO!* addresses the classist notion that rape, sexual assault, and other forms of gender-based violence are only perpetrated by the hands of working class Black men who live in the "hood" or in the "ghetto." The majority of the victim-survivor testimonies featured in *NO!* challenge the classist stereotype that Black men with academic degrees, high profiles, or who are on the frontlines fighting for racial liberation are incapable of being sexist, misogynistic, and/or predatory.

> *"He was the highest ranking Black professional at the University."*

> *"I never expected that I would have to fight off someone in the movement, a leader in the movement... He was one of our heroes."*

> *"It involved someone who was an avowed pro-feminist man who I did anti-racist work with."*

There are no White experts in *NO!* and that is very conscious decision. While I believe that White women and men have said and continue to articulate some important things about rape and sexual assault in the Black community, my vision and my goal for *NO!* is for Black women and men to address rape, other forms of sexual violence, and healing in our non-monolithic community. I want all viewers to see Black women as victim-survivors of rape and other forms of sexual violence while simultaneously seeing them as activists, scholars, theologians, cultural workers, and agents for social change.

Equally as important, I want viewers to see Black men as staunch advocates against rape and sexual violence. Many of the featured men in *NO!* have a demonstrated track record of being on the frontlines of the anti-violence against women movement.

> *"My personal mission statement is to prevent rape. Men can stop rape just like that if we all just started conforming to a certain type of behavior."*

> *"You cannot work toward eradicating oppression of people of color and continue to oppress your sisters. That's the point."*

> *"I realized that men needed to take some responsibility around ending this because after all we're the ones committing the acts."*

---

5 Julie Dash is an award-winning, critically acclaimed African-American woman filmmaker who has been producing, writing, and directing films and videos since 1973. She was the first African-American woman to have a full length general theatrical release with the debut of *Daughters of the Dust* in 1992. In December 2004, The Library of Congress placed *Daughters of the Dust* in the National Film Registry to join 400 American films preserved as National Treasures.

Frequently during question and answer sessions following screenings of *NO!* I am asked if I am concerned that the film will perpetuate the racist stereotype of the Black male rapist. My first response is that the racist stereotype is that of Black men raping White women, not Black women. We usually don't flip the metaphorical racial coin, as Salamishah Tillet does in her award-winning essay "Fragmented Silhouettes." The other side of that racist stereotype is the Black woman "whore" who is incapable of being raped because she's always wanting, willing, and able to have sex. More often than not when we are thinking about victims-survivors of sexual assault we don't think about, much less visualize women of color who have been sexually assaulted. As you will read in this study guide, the overwhelming majority of rapes are intraracial. However, when it comes to interracial rape, according to FBI Statistics, White men rape Black women at a higher rate than Black men rape White women. Whether it's intraracial or interracial rape or other forms of sexual assault, Black women, when compared to White women, get less justice.

Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Aishah; photo by Joan Brannon

After a screening of *NO!* at a predominantly White university, a young White woman viewer said to me, "Wow, thank you for your documentary. Prior to seeing *NO!* I didn't know that Black women could get raped."

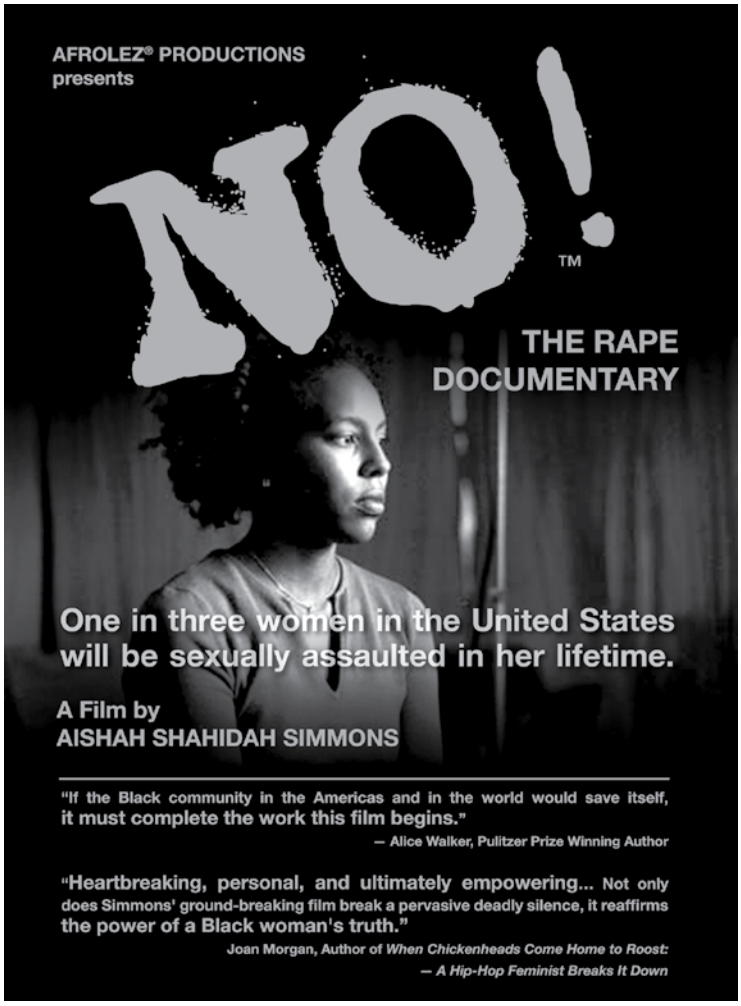
It's an experience such as this that constantly underscores the utmost importance that when White women and men (and/or predominantly White organizations and institutions) organize events and discussions about ending rape and sexual assault, the voices, experiences, perspectives, and cultural work of Diasporic African, Latina, Indigenous/Native American, Asian, Arab, and Pacific Islander women, who are victim-survivors and/or activists in the violence against women movement, are consulted and included.

From an 8 minute work-in-progress to a completed feature length documentary, *NO!* has been screened extensively to racially and ethnically diverse audiences internationally. These screenings and discussions have ranged from as small as two people to as large as 500 people. To date, there hasn't been one screening, on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, when at least one girl or woman, or sometimes a man, from across the racial, national origin, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, sexual orientation, and class spectrum, has not disclosed to me personally or the entire *NO!* viewing audience that *NO!* created the space for them to share that they have been raped or experienced some form of sexual violence. Based on these experiences, I believe *NO!* has the power to challenge, if not transform, people's thinking about heterosexual rape and sexual assault. It is my affirmation that *NO!* will continue to be used as one of the many resources in the global movement to end all forms of sexual violence.

Synopsis of *NO!*

NO! is the first documentary of its kind!

Produced and directed over a period of eleven years, seven of which were full-time by Aishah Shahidah Simmons, *NO!* unveils the realities of rape, other forms of sexual violence, and healing in African-American communities, through intimate testimonies from Black women victim-survivors, commentaries from acclaimed African-American scholars and community leaders, impactful archival footage, spirited music, transformational dance, and performance poetry. *NO!* also examines how rape is used as a weapon of homophobia.



For ninety-four minutes, *NO!* gives viewers the opportunity to experience the international reality of rape and other forms of sexual violence through the testimonies, scholarship, activism, spirituality, and cultural work of African-Americans.

What does it look like to visually make central that which has been placed on the margins and on the periphery? Moving from the enslavement of African people in the United States through the present day, *NO!* travels from rage, trauma, and emotional and physical pain to meditation, action, and healing. It is a journey through the experiences of the featured Black women survivors of rape and sexual assault, who range in age, geographic location, and sexual orientation, and transform themselves from victims to survivors to educators to activists to healers. *NO!* writes African-American women back into African-American history, recognizing and responding to the rape and sexual assault of Black women and girls.

Based on an understanding that heterosexual violence against women will end when all men make ending this international atrocity a priority in their lives, the commentary and performance of five Black male activists and cultural workers are placed alongside the African-American women's voices. While *NO!* explores how the collective silence about acts of sexual assault adversely affects African-Americans, it also encourages dialogue to bring about healing and reconciliation between all men and women.

Since its official release in 2006, *NO!* has been screened and used internationally as an educational organizing tool with racially and ethnically diverse audiences at community centers, colleges/universities, high schools, juvenile correctional facilities, rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, conferences, and film festivals throughout the United States, and in Italy, Spain, Rwanda, South Africa, Hungary, Jordan, Peru, Nepal, Congo, Uzbekistan, Burkina Faso, Kenya, France, and Mexico.

NO! received both a juried award and an audience choice award at the 2006 San Diego Women Film Festival. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center–the comprehensive center for information, research, and emerging policy on sexual violence intervention and prevention in the United States–designated screenings of *NO!* in community settings as the Featured Event of its 2007 National Sexual Assault Awareness Month campaign.

DVD Chapter Selections

1) Introduction & Devastation of Date Rape

• Introduction	00:00:00:00
• Desire of film: "A sense of community founded on justice, not silence."	00:01:51:01
• Men stopping violence against women	00:02:32:04
• Survivor's Story: Salamishah Tillet — Date rape, Silence is not consent	00:02:59:11
• Negotiating sexual consent	00:06:05:28

2) Weapon of History: Slavery, Freedom, Sexploitation

• Slavery as a sexual economy	00:07:20:20
• Lynching & Migration: race, sex and violence	00:11:26:20

3) Survivors Silenced

• Survivor's Story: Rev. Reanae McNeal —"Break-up" battery, Stand by your (Black) Man	00:15:38:18
• Silence will not save our communities	00:20:04:09

4) Civil Rights and Wrongs

• Sexual harassment & assault in Civil Rights & Black Power Movements	00:23:33:12
• Survivor's Story: Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons — Battle within SNCC	00:26:52:24
• Feminism and anti-racism	00:33:31:20
• Lesbian women in solidarity, "Gay-baiting" in the Movement	00:37:50:16
• Survivor's Story: Queen — Rape threats as gay bashing	00:38:24:11
• Black women writers: center stage on violence	00:40:33:03

5) Raping the Next Generation

• Lifelong impact	00:43:12:17
• Survivor's Story: Rosetta Williams — Uninformed consent	00:43:27:09
• Sex education helps prevent sexual violation	00:47:33:23
• Watchful eye on family ties	00:49:04:01

6) Holding Men Accountable — Campus, Clergy and Community

• Survivor's Story: Janelle White — Men challenging men	00:50:25:04
• Men Stopping Violence	00:56:17:11
• Survivor's Story: Aaronette M. White — Power without accountability	00:56:44:19
• Failures of leadership: Mike Tyson conviction	00:59:04:16
• Media, Music & Misogyny	01:06:23:16

7) Unequal Justice Under Law

• Unequal rates of conviction	01:08:57:17
• Survivor's Story: Audree Irons — Hands of a stranger	01:09:28:01
• Inadequate justice for women of color survivors	01:12:03:21

8) Healing, Faith, & Hope

• Reaching out for help, Sharing in confidence, Healing journeys	01:12:50:03
• Alternative justice and community accountability	01:20:31:00
• Outro, Dedication, Credits	01:25:25:00

Creating a Safe Space Discussion

The sobering occurrence of rape reminds us that in our society all of us are impacted by violence against women. It is unlikely that participants in a class, workshop, or viewing of the film *NO!* will not know someone who has been affected by sexual violence.

In preparation for a screening of *NO!* and before discussions on the topic of sexual assault in the Black community, please remind participants of the following:

- It is possible that the content of the film and comments by interviewees may trigger emotional feelings or memories of experiences of one's own sexual trauma or that of someone close to you.

- It is difficult to discuss the topic of rape and sexual assault because it is deemed personal as well as shameful to do so in our society. Laughter among discussion participants, which is interpreted as disrespectful when discussing such serious subjects, may reflect discomfort with the topic.

- It is important that participants are committed to creating a safe space for open and honest discussion with each other. To keep the conversation open, participants will need to commit to a level of confidentiality and should not repeat personal information outside of the discussion.

- In leading a group discussion, whether it is in a semester-long course, or an 8-hour workshop, you will likely find that discussions about rape and sexual assault will be more fruitful and open if you provide participants with the opportunity to get to know each other over time before launching into discussion. Allow students time to get to know each other beforehand, over a several week period if possible.

- For workshops or one-time meetings, conducting an ice breaker activity will help you build trust with the group and lead the participants to an honest and frank discussion.

Glossary

Accountability is a readiness to have one's actions judged by others. When appropriate, it also means being able to accept responsibility for unjust actions and misjudgments, and recognizing the need to change in the light of improved understanding gained from others.

Acquaintance Rape is a sex crime committed by someone who knows the victim. It could be a friend, lover, classmate, relative, or co-worker. As a sex crime, acquaintance rape includes forced, manipulated, or coerced sexual contact.

Art Therapy is the therapeutic use of art-making, within a professional relationship, by people who experience illness, trauma, or challenges in living, and by people who seek personal development.

Black Feminism is a movement that argues that sexism and racism are inextricable from one another. Black Feminism has its origins in the late nineteenth-century, and has three underlying tenets: that Black men have often asserted their "rights to be men" by restricting these same rights for Black women; that Black male leaders often consider it inappropriate for Black women to play a leading role in fighting for Black freedom and justice; and that the mainstream feminism in the United States, from the suffragists to pro-choice advocates, define feminism by excluding the needs and rights of women of color and poor women.

Consent means explicit words or actions that show a voluntary agreement to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity.

Date Rape is a form of acquaintance rape, when someone is raped by someone they have dated or are dating. As a sex crime, date rape includes forced, manipulated, or coerced sexual contact.

Homophobia is the irrational fear of, aversion to, and discrimination against lesbians, gay men, and bisexual men and women.

Incest is the sexual abuse of a child by a relative or other person in a position of trust and authority over the child. A child molested by a stranger can run home for help and comfort; a victim of incest cannot. Incest has been cited as the most common form of child abuse. Studies conclude that 43% of the children who are abused are abused by family members, 33% are abused by someone they know,

and the remaining 24% are sexually abused by strangers. Other research indicates that over 10 million Americans have been victims of incest.

Interracial Rape is a sexual assault in which the victim and the offender are from *different* racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Intraracial Rape is a sexual assault in which the victim and the offender are of the *same* race.

Intersectionality is a theory that posits different layers of oppression within a society, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, as related phenomena. Because these forms of oppression invariably overlap and often intersect, the theory of intersectionality aims to reveal multiple identities, and to expose the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities.

Patriarchy is a family, community, society, and nation based on a system in which men govern and have authority over women and children. While patriarchy refers to gender and sexual inequality that privileges men over women, it maintains male authority through individual, collective, legal, and institutional behaviors.

Perpetrator is a person who has committed a crime against another person. We use the terms "perpetrator," "offender," and "assailant" interchangeably throughout this guide.

Rape is a crime in which forced, manipulated, or coerced sexual intercourse takes place.

Rape Culture describes a society in which sexual violence is common and in which prevailing attitudes, norms, practices, and media messages justify, excuse, or encourage sexually-based crimes. Many feminists argue that in a rape culture, acts of "harmless" sexism are oftentimes engaged to validate and perpetuate misogynistic practices; for example, sexist jokes and stereotypes may be used to promote disrespect for women and disregard for their safety, which ultimately makes their being sexual abused seem acceptable and normal.

Rape Survivor is a woman, man, or child who has experienced sexual assault. However, whether it takes months or years, many rape victims attempt to reorganize their life and create the world that they once knew. Even though rape produces a sense of distrust, insecurity, blame, isolation, and shame, many victims seek psychological help in order to deal with the short term and long term impact of their assault. As such, with professional help and an extensive network of supportive friends and family members, many victims of sexual violence begin to see themselves as "survivors" and learn to integrate the trauma into their concept of self.

Rape Trauma Syndrome/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of life-threatening events such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults like rape. People who suffer from Rape Trauma Syndrome, which is a form of PTSD, often relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping, and feel detached or estranged. These symptoms can be severe and last long enough to significantly impair the person's daily life.

Rape Victim is a woman, man, or child who has been raped and oftentimes experiences the immediate symptoms of heightened anxiety, self-blame, denial, frequent flashbacks, nightmares, fear for physical safety, emotional turmoil, and in severe cases psychological breakdowns and attempted suicide.

Sexual Economy as used by law professor Adrienne Davis, describes the relationship between sex, law, profit, and power during slavery. More specifically, sexual economy refers to the physical, legal, and economic control that slave masters had over enslaved Black women and the financial capital they derived from their reproductive and sexual relationships.

Sexual Violence refers to unwanted or coercive sexual behavior which ranges from sexually bullying to rape. The terms rape, sexual assault, and sexual abuse can be used interchangeably and refer to coercive, forced sexual contact.

Stranger Rape is non-consensual, or forced sex, by a person who is a complete stranger to the victim.

Victim-Blaming is holding the victims of sexually-based crimes responsible for their having been assaulted. In many instances of acquaintance rape, the victims are said to have "asked for it" and encouraged their rape because they were flirting, wearing sexually provocative clothing, or intoxicated.

Key Myths and Facts

MYTHS	FACTS
Black women can't be raped.	**Even though African-American women make up 7% of the population in the United States, they constitute 18.8% of reported intimate violence victims.[6]**
"Rape is a rare occurrence. It will never happen to me."	**There is a sexual assault once every 2.5 minutes in the United States.[7] Between 1-in-4 and 1-in-6 women will be the victim of a sexual assault or rape in their lifetime.[8]**
Women often lie about getting raped to get back at someone.	**According to FBI statistics, only 2% of reported rapes are false; the same rate as with other felonies.**
Many women say "no" when they mean "yes."	**If a woman says "no," that "no" must be respected.**
A woman could prevent herself from getting raped if she really wanted.	**In 85% of rapes, the perpetrator was the first to use physical force.[9]**
Rape is an act of sex and passion; for example, a sexually frustrated man sees an attractive woman and can't control himself.	**The vast majority of rapes are planned. The rapists are motivated by power, anger, and control, not sexual gratification.**

6 Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, "Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey," National Institute of Justice. www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf

7 The calculation that "every two and a half minutes, somewhere in America, someone is sexually assaulted" is based on 2004-2005 National Crime Victimization Survey from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. The calculation was done by the Rape And Incest National Network (RAINN). www.rainn.org/statistics/index.html

8 Bonnie Fisher, Francis Cullen, and Michael Turner, "The Sexual Victimization of College Women," National Institute of Justice. www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf

9 "Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2005," National Institute of Justice.

MYTHS	FACTS
A rapist is more likely to be a crazed masked stranger who jumps out of the bushes than a good looking college student.	**73% percent of rape victims know their assailants.[10]**
Rape is the victim's fault if she slept around, drank alcohol, or invited him to her room.	**No one asks to be raped. Believe the victim. She might be pregnant or have contracted a sexually transmitted disease. She is probably experiencing loss of trust, confusion, self-blame, and shame and needs support.**
Most rapes are interracial.	**Most rapes are intraracial. The vast majority of rape victims, almost 90%, report being raped by a member of their same racial or ethnic group.**
If a woman does not struggle or use physical force to resist, she has not been sexually assaulted.	**If a woman is forced to have sex without her consent, she has been assaulted whether or not a struggle was involved.**
Only young, pretty women are raped.	**Rapists do not discriminate. Women, children, and men of every age, physical type, and demeanor are raped.**
The majority of sexual offenders are caught, convicted, and in prison.	**Only a fraction of those who commit sexual assault are apprehended and convicted for their crimes.**

10 Shannan M. Catalano, "National Crime Victimization Survey: Criminal Victimization, 2005," National Institute of Justice. www.rainn.org/docs/statistics/ncvs_2005.pdf

Chapter 1

Salmishah Tillet; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

Introduction & Devastation of Date Rape

Acquaintance Rape and Consent

DVD Chapter Stop: 2:32

"I think there's a lot of belief that women don't have the right to say 'no' under certain sets of circumstances. They don't have a right to say 'no' if it's late at night in a man's room. They don't have the right to say 'no' if a man has become sexually aroused. They don't have a right to say 'no' if they have indicated earlier on that they might be interested. So there are all kinds of assumptions that we make about a woman's right to say 'no.'"

–Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Ph.D., Historian and Author, Spelman College

MYTH

Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers. It's not rape if the people involved knew each other.

FACT

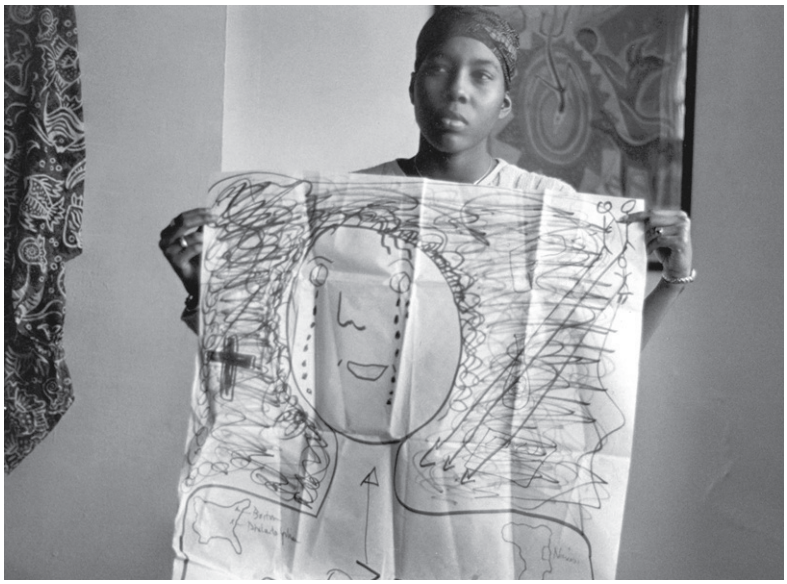
Almost 80% of sexual assaults are committed by someone the victim knows.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Salamishah Tillet describes a date rape experience in which she visits the room of a male college senior late at night. Although they had previous sexual encounters, they never had sexual intercourse. On this night, she went to his room expecting that they would "fool around" but not go any further than that. However, as her acquaintance began to pressure her into having "sex," she became afraid and repeated "no" several times. Without her consent, he violently penetrated her. The next morning, they both pretended nothing happened.

DEFINITION

Acquaintance Rape is a sex crime committed by someone who knows the victim. It could be a friend, lover, classmate, relative, or co-worker. As a sex crime, acquaintance rape includes forced, manipulated, or coerced sexual contact.



Salamishah Tillet; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Using the definition of rape, what makes Salamishah's experience sexual assault?

2. Many people have difficulty accepting Salamishah's testimony as sexual assault. What are some of the reasons that they might have this response? For example, to which stereotypes about female sexuality do people refer in order to explain away her having been raped?

3. Like 61% of all rape victims, Salamishah was under the age of 18 at the time of the assault and sexually inexperienced. How and why do you think her age increased her risk of being sexually assaulted?

4. Salamishah admits that she had some previous sexual contact with her perpetrator. Do you think she lost her right to say "no" because they had been sexually intimate before?

5. At what point can a person refuse sex once they have initiated physical contact?

6. Salamishah indicates that she did not report her rape. What unique personal, legal, and social challenges do you think acquaintance rape victims face because they know their perpetrators?

DVD Chapter Stop: 6:06

Acquaintance Rape and Consent

"Even if a woman admits to wanting some kind of sexual activity. If she says that she does not want you to penetrate her. That she does not want to engage in the complete act of sex. Then that means 'no.' And not only does 'no' mean 'no,' 'I'm not sure' should be interpreted as 'no.' 'Let's wait' should be interpreted as 'no.' 'I don't know' should be interpreted as 'no.'"

– Aaronette M. White, Ph.D., Social Psychologist and Activist

MYTH

Girls say "no," but really mean "yes."

FACT

Consent is a freely given, clearly stated "yes." Silence is not consent. Being drunk or drugged and unable to understand or speak is not consent. Being passed out or unconscious is not consent.

DEFINITION

Consent means explicit words or actions that show a voluntary agreement to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can consent be implied from previous sexual contact with someone? Why or why not?

2. Do women give up their right to say "no" when a man spends a lot of money on a woman? When she visits his bedroom? When she gets him sexually excited?

3. What did Salamishah do to let him know that she was not consenting to sexual intercourse?

4. What might he have done to ensure that he had her consent?

5. What actions or dialogue could ensure that both parties are consenting to sexual activity?

Salamishah Tillet; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

Chapter 2

Vignette depicting enslavement of Africans in the United States; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

Weapon of History

Slavery

DVD Chapter Stop: 7:20

"But what we haven't really ever examined to the extent that it must be is how many of our sisters also endured rape from those who were said to own not only their physical labor but their sexual possessions."

–Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Ph.D., President, Bennett College for Women

MYTH

During slavery, Black women were naturally sexually promiscuous, constantly seduced, and desired to have sexual relations with their White masters. As a result, White men did not have to rape Black women during slavery in order to have sex with them.

FACT

Unlike White women, Black women had no legal rights or protection from the sexual aggression of their slave masters. Black women were no more sexually promiscuous than their White female counterparts. Despite the fact that slaves could not legally marry, the majority of Black women engaged in long-term monogamous relationships. Furthermore, since the institution of slavery depended on Black women to supply future slaves, slave masters used every method imaginable, especially rape, to force slave women to reproduce. White slave masters repeatedly and systematically raped Black women and girls so much that rape became an essential weapon utilized by the White master to reinforce the authority of his ownership.

SYNOPSIS

NO! discusses rape and sexual violence against Black women in the institution of slavery. Not unlike a tool of war, the rape of Black women was used to maintain power and build wealth. At the same time, the culture maintained the idea that White women were civilized, modest, and sexually pure, whereas Black women were stereotyped as "jezebels" who were uncivilized, immodest, and sexually aberrant. As a result, American society actively protected the sexuality of White women for fear of Black male sexual aggression and routinely dismissed Black women's claims of sexual assault by White men.

DEFINITION

Sexual Economy, as used by law professor Adrienne Davis, describes the relationship between sex, law, profit, and power during slavery. More specifically, sexual economy refers to the physical, legal, and economic control that slave masters had over enslaved Black women and the financial capital they derived from their reproductive and sexual relationships.

Vignette depicting enslavement of Africans in the United States; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Since Black women were considered property, what rights or legal protections did they have to prevent rape?

2. How did slave masters and mistresses use the stereotype of the "jezebel" to justify the sexual coercion and exploitation of Black women?

3. Why and how did the rape of enslaved Black women financially benefit slave masters and by extension the larger American economic system?

4. During slavery, Black women and White women were defined by the competing stereotypes of the whore and the chaste woman. How do you think sexual exploitation of Black women differed from that of White women during slavery?

5. Have the stereotypes about Black female sexuality significantly changed since slavery? If so, in what ways? If not, please give an example.

6. How does the "jezebel" stereotype influence public response when Black women come forward and say that they have been sexually assaulted?

DVD Chapter Stop: 11:26

Lynching

"Lynching is really a phenomenon of a national obsession of Black male sexual aggression against White women. In this history of lynching, there were no Black men lynched for acts of sexual aggression against Black women."

–Adrienne Davis, J.D., Legal Scholar at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

MYTH

Black men are so sexually aggressive that they uncontrollably target and routinely rape helpless White women and girls.

FACT

The myth of the Black male rapist or brute came about in the post-slavery era to justify the lynching of Black men and to preserve the "racial purity" of White Americans by preventing interracial sexual unions between Black men and White women. Contrary to the widespread fear that Black men wanted to rape White women, the vast majority of White women were raped by White men and most of the Black men lynched had not been accused of rape or even attempted-rape.

MYTH

White women are more likely to be raped by Black men than by White men.

FACT

Only 13% of reported rapes are interracial and of those that are, the majority involve White men raping Black women.

SYNOPSIS

NO! discusses how at the beginning of the twentieth century, the stereotype of the Black rapist who attacked White women emerged as a public rationalization for the lynching of Blacks. Even though the rape of Black women at the hands of *both* White men and Black men continued to be a widespread phenomenon, no man was ever lynched for sexually assaulting a Black woman. As noted by Beverly Guy-Sheftall in the film, suffragist and journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett led the anti-lynching movement in order to prevent the further lynching of Black men and to increase public awareness about the ongoing rape of Black women.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The lynching of Black men was relatively common between 1876 and 1945. According to Tuskegee Institute data, between the years 1882 and 1951, 4,730 people were lynched in the United States and 3,437 of them were Black. According to Ida B. Wells-Barnett's anti-lynching study *The Red Record*, more often than not the African-American men accused of sexually assaulting White women were the most influential political and business leaders within their communities. Furthermore, Wells-Barnett found that the majority of accusations of Black men raping White women were fraudulent claims. She not only challenged the notion that the mob lynchings of Black men were the result of White womanhood needing protection from African-American men, but also revealed that behind the lynching was a concealed racist agenda that functioned to keep White men in socio-economic power over Blacks as well as White women.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did the stereotype of the Black male rapist come about after slavery ended?

2. After slavery, how was the rape of Black women perceived differently than the rape of White women?

3. Why was rape not a taboo subject amongst African-American leaders in the aftermath of slavery?

4. How did the punishment of White men for the sexual assault of Black women change after slavery?

5. How did the stereotype of the Black male rapist justify the racial violence committed against both Black men and Black women?

6. Why were African-American women so integral to the anti-lynching movement? How was their work considered both anti-lynching and anti-rape activism?

7. Even though White men regularly abused Black women, how did Black men also benefit from the racist stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes about Black women's sexuality?

Great Migration

DVD Chapter Stop: 11:26

"In fact many Black women migrated as result of violence and often it was an act of sexual violence."

–Farah Jasmine Griffin, Ph.D., Scholar and Author, Columbia University

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Great Migration was the movement of millions of African-Americans out of the rural Southern United States from 1914 to 1950. Many African-Americans tried to overcome the economic poverty of sharecropping and avoid the racial segregation and violence of the Jim Crow South, by seeking refuge in the North where there was thought to be less segregation and more economic and educational opportunities. The majority of African-Americans who left the South relocated to large industrial cities, such as New York City; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Baltimore, Maryland; Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; St. Louis, Missouri; and Los Angeles, California.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Farah Jasmine Griffin notes that many African-Americans migrated to the North in response to Jim Crow racial segregation and in resistance to the violent racial acts of lynching. However, simultaneous to the racial mob violence that Black men experienced in the Jim Crow South, Griffin also notes that African-American women were routinely subjected to sexual assault by their White male employers and by Black men within their communities and families. Despite the fact that in the Black popular imagination and art forms the lynching of Black men is commonly known to be the definitive racial violence that spawned the Great Migration, the sexual assault and rape of Black women was equally a catalyst for African-American women and families to leave the American South and migrate to the North.

Vignette depicting the Great Migration of African-Americans; photo by Wadia L. Gardener

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Black women continue to be highly vulnerable to sexual assault in the post-slavery era?

2. Why do you think that African-American artists and intellectuals did not consider the sexual assault of Black women as a "motivating factor" for the Great Migration?

3. As acts of violence against the Black community, how did the lynching of Black men differs from the raping of Black women? Who perpetrated these crimes? What stereotypes were used to justify both forms of racial violence?

4. How did African-American leaders and artists respond differently to lynching than rape? Do you think there are any connections between the community response to lynching and to that of police brutality today? If so, what? And why?

5. Whether it is lynching or police brutality, why do you think racial violence has come to be identified with the Black man's body as opposed to Black woman's body?

Vignette depicting the Great Migration of African-Americans; photo by Wadia L. Gardener

Chapter 3

Aaronette M. White's hands; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

Survivors Silenced

Campus Safety

DVD Chapter Stop: 15:30

"I didn't even think to call the police because it was a predominantly White college campus. We had some trouble with the police harassing Black men. And then I thought, 'Okay, I am Black Student Union President. How is this going to look?' because I had advocated for Black men, in terms of the police harassment. So I never said anything. I buried it in the deepest part of my Spirit."

–Rev. Reanae McNeal, Imani Revelations

MYTH

"He didn't penetrate me so it wasn't rape. Therefore I cannot report it to the police."

FACT

Whether a woman is penetrated by her assailant does not determine if she was the victim of a sexual assault. Sexual assault is an act of violence. By keeping silent about sexual assault, we contribute to the victim's sense of shame and allow our communities to overlook the frequency with which sexual violence occurs. The majority of rapes and sexual assaults go unreported, giving perpetrators the power to commit this type of violence within our communities again and again.

SYNOPSIS

In her testimony, Rev. Reanae McNeal speaks to two issues of sexual violence in the campus community: the expectation of racial solidarity among Black students and the blurred definition of a sexual assault. She describes calling off a relationship with an abusive boyfriend over the telephone. When he comes by to pick up his belongings, he becomes violent and holds her captive in her room and sexually abuses her. When she is finally able to escape, she finds herself with nowhere to go. Later, when returning to her apartment she does not consider calling the police to be an option since they were known for their frequent harassment of Black men on campus.

DEFINITION

Sexual Violence can include sexual assault or rape, sexual abuse, stalking, dating, domestic violence, and verbal and physical harassment.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do Black students display racial solidarity on college campuses? How might it empower them? How is this alliance of Black students different on predominately White college campuses?

2. In what ways do you think the concept of racial solidarity strengthens Black student communities? In what ways might individual Black students be silenced by the Black students' solidarity?

3. What kind of relationship do Black students on your campus have with the police?

4. What aspects of your campus culture do you think contribute to the disrespect of women and women's bodies, and may contribute to sexual violence?

5. What are some of the things that you have heard both women and men say about rape and sexual assault that you understand to be true or false? What is not said?

6. Is the trauma of sexual assault that Reanae experienced any different because her ex-boyfriend did not penetrate her during the time he was abusing her sexually?

7. If this type of assault had occurred on your campus today, what resources would be available to the victim of the assault? Are there resources available to perpetrators of sexual assault?

8. As a Black female college student, what social factors might have made Reanae especially vulnerable to the physically and sexually abusive relationship she describes?

9. In our society, who decides what is considered sexual assault? Who decides what is considered a sexual trauma?

DVD Chapter Stop: 23:33

Racial Solidarity

"Why do you think there are so few reports of rape in the Black community /
Because rape doesn't happen in the Black community."
– Honorée Fannone Jeffers, poet, "that's proof she wanted it"

Honorée Fannone Jeffers; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

MYTH
Black women can't be raped.

FACT
Even though African-American women make up 7% of the population in the United States, they constitute 18.8% of reported intimate violence victims.[11]

SYNOPSIS
In *NO!* Johnnetta Betsch Cole discusses the devastating impact that intraracial rape has on the African-American community. With the daily experience of American racism, African-Americans feel the crippling effects of having unequal access to education and quality healthcare, while facing high unemployment rates. Charlotte Pierce-Baker notes that the emphasis on ending racism without paying attention to high incidence of sexual violence in the African-American community reveals the "double bind" that plague African-American women in which they unfairly feel they have to choose between fighting against either racism or sexism.

DEFINITION
Intersectionality is a theory that posits different layers of oppression within a society, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, as related phenomena. Because these forms of oppression invariably overlap and often intersect, the theory of intersectionality aims to reveal multiple identities, and to expose the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities.

11 Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, "Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey," National Institute of Justice. www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Johnnetta mean when she says, "Every rape is an assault against every one of us as a people?"

2. According to Charlotte, why do Black women feel like they must choose between advocating on behalf of the rights of African-Americans or women? How does choosing only one platform adversely affect Black women? What about the larger African-American community?

3. Sulaiman Nuriddin states that many Black men feel uncomfortable publicly challenging the sexism of their male peers because they are afraid of what "the White power structure" will do with that. Can you give an example of one of the fears that African-Americans may face when publicly dealing with the issue of rape? What is the negative impact of this fear on the lives of Black women? How does overcoming those fears positively help Black women who have experienced sexual violence?

4. In addition to racism, what are the other threats that Black women confront? How does using a theory of intersectionality provide a more comprehensive view of African-American identity? How can we use the theory of intersectionality politically to organize around and end sexual violence within the African-American community?

Chapter 4

Beverly Guy-Sheftall; photo by Joan Brannon

Civil Rights and Wrongs

Sexual Harassment & Assault in Civil Rights & Black Power Movements

DVD Chapter Stop: 23:33

"As an African-American woman in the Civil Rights Movement, I certainly experienced sexism, while fighting (with the men practicing sexism) against racism and racial violence and assault."

–Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, Ph.D., Islamic Scholar and Former SNCC Organizer

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964 brought hundreds of Black and White young people, as members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), to the racially segregated South. They would register Black citizens whose voting rights were being systematically and often violently denied.

SYNOPSIS

Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons tells of her experiences as a SNCC organizer during the Mississippi Freedom Summer and the overwhelming expectation that women in the movement were sexually available to the Black male leadership. When one of the field secretaries whom she respected came to her room, Gwendolyn Zoharah let him in because she felt no reason to be fearful or distrustful of him. After he attempted to rape her, she reported the incident but no one in the organization took the assault seriously. Later when she was assigned to and became the project director of the Laurel, Mississippi project, she ensured that field workers were educated about the impact of sexual violence. She implemented a zero tolerance sexual abuse policy and because of this stance, her field site was mockingly referred to as the "Amazon Project."

Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons; photo by Joan Brannon

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think some male SNCC organizers assumed that they could force sex on any women in the program? Does the expectation that women be sexually available to men continue today? If so, in what contexts?

2. Students participating in the Freedom Summer were there to fight violence and the oppression of Black people in the South. What assumptions about the importance of race as opposed to gender might have led male participants to ignore the fact that their unwanted sexual advances toward women in the movement were violent and experienced as oppressive?

3. How did the social context and working relationship between Gwendolyn Zoharah and her attacker influence their expectations of one another?

4. What popular conceptions about sex in our society seem to imply that it is okay to force women to have sex? Do these ideas differ regarding Black women?

5. Why was Gwendolyn Zoharah's field site referred to as the "Amazon Project" by male field secretaries?

6. When Gwendolyn Zoharah reported her sexual assault, none of the predominantly male SNCC organizers responded. Why not? How do you think a group or student organization that you are a part of today would respond to a sexual assault?

7. Gwendolyn Zoharah responded to her assault by actively changing the culture on the project, which she directed. Was this an effective response? What actions might you take to change an organization or group's culture in order to prevent sexual assaults from taking place?

DVD Chapter Stop: 23:33

Black Power and Sexual Assault

"The notion of Black Power was that it would go beyond, that our struggle was beyond civil rights but more towards the arrival of total liberation and freedom and the exercise of our human rights. So Black Power embraced that. Somewhere in the mix there was a notion that this was a manly effort."

–Elaine Brown, Former Chairperson of Black Panther Party

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Black Panther Party for Self Defense was founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966 in Oakland, California. The group advocated armed resistance to fight racial oppression and integrated Marxist, socialist, and Black nationalist ideologies. They sought racial justice for African-Americans nationwide and advanced a 10-point program that in part demanded freedom from capitalist oppression, access to education, and basic human rights for the Black community.

SYNOPSIS

A former chairperson of the Black Panther Party, Elaine Brown addresses how integral a role women had in the Black Power movement. Nevertheless, Black men–while fighting for revolutionary change–maintained gendered expectations of the women with whom they worked. Black women were expected to be silently supportive in the name of the cause.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Elaine, how did Black men working toward the "total liberation and freedom" ideology of the Black Power Movement respond to the issue of gender equality?

2. Elaine implicates Black women and men who were silent about abuse that took place within the Black Power movement. Why were they silent?

3. In Samiya A. Bashir's poem "Treason," she positions herself between experiences of oppression at the hands of Black men and White men. In what ways might these oppressive experiences be different? In what ways might they be similar?

4. What is the significance of the title of Samiya's poem "Treason?"

5. What have Black women been expected to sacrifice in the ongoing struggle for civil rights? What have Black men been expected to give up?

Samiya Bashir; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

Black Lesbians and Activism Against Sexual Assault

DVD Chapter Stop: 35:22

"Black lesbians have definitely been at the forefront of raising issues of sexual politics in the Black community generally and also working on issues of violence against women. Since we are outcasts anyway, of course we're going to speak out in principle and for justice and against oppression whatever the results are because it's not like we're ever going to be that acceptable."

–Barbara Smith, Scholar and Activist

MYTH

Because only "straight women" are sexually assaulted, lesbians do not have to worry about it.

FACT

Rape and sexual assault are crimes of violence and control that stem from one person's determination to exercise power over another. As a result, anyone—no matter one's sex, gender or age—is vulnerable to sexual assault.

SYNOPSIS

Queen talks about coming out as a lesbian to her audience and her peers through her poetry. Her Afrocentric and womanist work had always brought her respect in the Black community, especially amongst Black male poets. Yet when she shared with these same colleagues that she had sex with and was in love with a woman, the response was hostile and even threatening. Black men that she considered to be brothers wanted to justify the rape of Black women as a permissible response to Black lesbians who they felt needed to be forced into sexual intercourse with a man. Although they imagined themselves protectors of Black womanhood, Black men that she was close with felt that it was appropriate to use sexual violence toward Black women to "put them in their place." They felt that in order to be in solidarity against a White oppressor, Black women must be sexually available to and only interested in Black men.

Barbara Smith; photo by Joan Brannon

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do you think a concept of racial solidarity strengthens communities? In what ways does it silence particular groups or identities?

2. Loretta Ross says in her interview that, "Those of us who weren't lesbians, were called lesbians anyway." Why would a woman's sexual orientation be challenged for speaking out against misogyny and sexual violence against women?

3. Do Black women need the *protection* of Black men? How might the respect of Black men serve to protect or empower Black women in our society?

4. According to Barbara Smith, she has had the experience of being an outcast in the Black community because of her identity as a lesbian. Why do you think she has been made to feel like an outcast?

5. Is there any reason that Black lesbians should or would have a greater investment in social justice for Black women? Is there any one group that should take on the greatest responsibility for sexual assault activism?

6. What might be some of the challenges in building a coalition of men and women against sexual assault on your campus?

7. How do expressions of homophobia within the Black community uniquely challenge Black gays and lesbians?

DVD Chapter Stop: 35:22

Black Women Writers and Sexual Assault

"So there began to be in the early 70s an enormous bout of hostility toward what we now can call the emergence of Black feminism and the emergence of Black women writers who believed it was also important to address intraracial issues."

–Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Ph.D., Historian and Author, Spelman College

MYTH

Black feminists hate men.

FACT

Contrary to prevailing racial and gender stereotypes, Black women who are feminists do not hate men. Instead, Black feminists argue that the liberation of Black women entails freedom for all people, since it would require the end of racism, sexism, and class oppression.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Farah Jasmine Griffin notes that Black feminist writers such as Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and ntozake shange are not the first Black writers to depict the theme of the intraracial rape in African-American literature. Writers such as Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison also confronted the theme in their respective works *Native Son* (1940) and *Invisible Man* (1952); however, unlike the Black feminist writers of the 1970s, Wright and Ellison did not "center" their texts on the experiences of their Black female characters. As such, it was only until the 1970s when what Beverly Guy-Sheftall describes as "the emergence of Black feminism" that Black women and girls who were raped became the focal points of many African-American novels.

DEFINITION

Black Feminism is a movement that argues that sexism and racism are inextricable from one another. Black Feminism has its origins in the late nineteenth-century, and has three underlying tenets: that Black men have often asserted their "rights to be men" by restricting these same rights for Black women; that Black male leaders often consider it inappropriate for Black women to playing a leading role in fighting for Black freedom and justice; and that the mainstream feminism in the United States, from the suffragists to pro-choice advocates, define feminism by excluding the needs and rights of women of color and poor women.

Farah Jasmine Griffin; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Barbara Smith, why did many African-Americans initially have a very strong negative response to ntozake shange's *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*?

2. While many people have argued that these texts reinforced negative stereotypes about Black men, the authors were attempting to break the silence regarding the intraracial violence against Black women. What are some of the difficulties that Black feminists face when they try to expose sexist attitudes and practices in the African-American community?

3. According to Farah Jasmine Griffin, Black male writers such as Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison did not "center" their novels on the experiences of their Black female characters who were raped. How did the emergence of Black feminist writers change the way in which intraracial rape was portrayed in African-American literature?

4. How does "centering" a text around such Black women characters break racially-coded silences around rape and sexual violence?

5. In what ways does the film *NO!* continue the tradition of these Black feminist writers?

Chapter 5

Photo by Gail Lloyd

Raping the Next Generation

Date Rape and Prevention

DVD Chapter Stop: 49:04

"Bad girls only know about sex in the Black community and we still believe that. And we think that the best way to protect good girls is to keep them ignorant. We work hard to overcome that. So, at the D.C. Rape Crisis center we had to do a lot of sex education in order to do rape prevention."

–Loretta Ross, former director, D. C. Rape Crisis Center

MYTH

If she had sex with him before, she consented to have sex with him again.

FACT

Previous sexual conduct, including previous consent to sex, is not consent for sex right now. If she kissed him yesterday, that doesn't mean she wants to kiss him today.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Rosetta Williams describes the sexual assault she experienced when she twelve years old. At the time of her assault, she was dating a much older boy from her neighborhood that repeatedly pressured her into having sex. Being so young, completely unaware of intercourse or penetration, and a virgin, Rosetta thought she should have sexual intercourse with him because she was "in love." However, after they had sex about four times, her much older boyfriend pressured her to have sex with him outdoors. When she refused to have sex with him and said "no," he repeatedly punched her in her face, pulled down her pants, and raped her.

DEFINITION

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric disorder that can occur following the experience or witnessing of life-threatening events such as military combat, natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents, or violent personal assaults like rape. People who suffer from Rape Trauma Syndrome, which is a form of PTSD, often relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping, and feel detached or estranged. These symptoms can be severe and last long enough to significantly impair the person's daily life.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Rosetta's boyfriend pressure her into having sex before the rape? What about during and after the sexual assault?

2. Do you think Rosetta's age and sexual inexperience made her more vulnerable to sexual assault? If so, how did her boyfriend prey on these vulnerabilities before the assault?

3. In *NO!* Rosetta says that she was sexually aroused by her boyfriend during the assault even though she repeatedly asked him to stop. Does her arousal change her consent or our opinion about whether or not she is a victim of sexual assault?

4. Even though an orgasm does not indicate whether a sexual experience is consensual, why do you think a survivor of sexual assault is often confused by her body's response if an orgasm occurs during the attack?

5. Why do you think that, unlike most other crimes, many people tend to blame sexual assault victims for their attacks?

6. Why do you think sexual assault victims often blame themselves for their attacks?

7. How can we help other members of society and sexual assault victims better understand that their attacks were not self-induced but rather illegal crimes committed against them?

8. Rosetta states after her assault she went home and forced herself to vomit. She has been a bulimic ever since. Why do you think sexual assault can impair one's short-term and long-term physical well-being? Their short-term and long-term psychological well-being? Their body image? Their self-esteem?

9. How do you think sexual assault affects the social relationships that victims have after their attacks?

DVD Chapter Stop: 43:27

Adolescent Sexual Abuse and Prevention

"If we don't break the silence around that, around little Black girls being sexually abused and assaulted, then what we say, in essence in our silence is, Here have my little Black girl child and murder her emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually and I'll sit and say nothing. That the biggest betrayal that any child in the world can have."

– Rev. Renae McNeal, Imani Revelations

Photo by Gail Lloyd

MYTH

If adolescent girls are not sexually active, then they will not be raped.

FACT

Only the perpetrator is responsible for his/her criminal actions. No one wants or asks to be sexually assaulted. However, adolescent girls are at a higher risk for sexual violence than girls in any other age group. Part of the reason for this is the large number of date/acquaintance rapes which occur at this age. This is coupled with the fact that many adolescents are victims of sexual abuse and incest as well.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Rosetta Williams describes the sexual assault she experienced when she twelve years old. At the time of her assault, she was dating a much older boy from her neighborhood that repeatedly pressured her into having sex with him. After she was raped, she returned home and told her mother what happened. Neither Rosetta nor her mother reported the crime.

DEFINITION

Date Rape is a form of acquaintance rape, when someone is raped by someone they have dated or are dating. As a sex crime, date rape includes forced, manipulated, or coerced sexual contact.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. About 54% of rapes that women experience occur before they turn 18. Why do you think that adolescents are so vulnerable to sexual assault?

2. What different social and peer pressures do you think adolescents feel that render them more vulnerable to sexual abuse?

3. Why do you think Rosetta's mother did not report the crime to the police?

4. In what ways can parents, family members, friends, or lovers immediately help sexual assault victims after they have been attacked? What constitutes a negative response? A positive response?

5. What do you think Rosetta meant when she said that because her mother was not protected while growing up, and thus her mother did not know how to protect Rosetta "for real?"

6. How and why are young boys raised to defend themselves from physical attacks differently from how young girls are raised to defend themselves?

7. Given the frequency of sexual assault perpetrated against adolescent girls, why do you think there are so few resources to help this population?

8. How do you think the race, gender, sexuality, and class of the victim impacts the number of violence prevention programs and treatment resources that are available to them?

Incest

DVD Chapter Stop: 43:27

"I look at pre-sexual, knee-socked girls on buses and wonder how many of them live with secrets of rape and incest. When I pass through Black communities and see daycare centers and school yards filled with Black and Brown and a few White children running and pushing in play, a sadness sweeps over me as I realize that many of them don't have a vocabulary for the atrocities already performed on their unknowing, unwilling bodies."

–Charlotte Pierce-Baker, Ph.D., author of *Surviving the Silence: Black Women's Stories Of Rape*

MYTH

Most sexual assaults experienced during childhood are committed by strangers in isolated locations.

FACT

The overwhelming majority of children are assaulted by a person whom they know and trust, often in their own homes or the offender's home. Victims of incest are boys and girls, infants and adolescents. Incest occurs between fathers and daughters, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, and mothers and sons. Perpetrators of incest can be aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, siblings, stepsiblings, and grandparents.

SYNOPSIS

Although the documentary *NO!* does not deal with this topic in great depth, Charlotte Pierce-Baker and Renae McNeal discuss the prevalence of incest in the African-American community. Reading from her book, *Surviving the Silence: Black Women's Stories of Rape*, Charlotte describes the feelings of sadness she experiences when she sees young children playing because she knows so many of them have been sexually assaulted but are unable to tell anyone. Renae talks about how communities put young girls at risk for sexual assault and incest because people are more willing to protect assailants than hold them accountable and report them.

DEFINITION

Incest is the sexual abuse of a child by a relative or other person in a position of trust and authority over the child. A child molested by a stranger can run home for help and comfort; a victim of incest cannot. Incest has been cited as the most common form of child abuse. Studies conclude that 43% of the children who are abused are abused by family members, 33% are abused by someone they know, and the remaining 24% are sexually abused by strangers. Other research indicates that over 10 million Americans have been victims of incest.

Charlotte Pierce-Baker; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why would a child feel uncomfortable telling an adult about his/her sexual assault?

2. Why do you think victims of incest are less likely to come forward than victims of other sexual crimes?

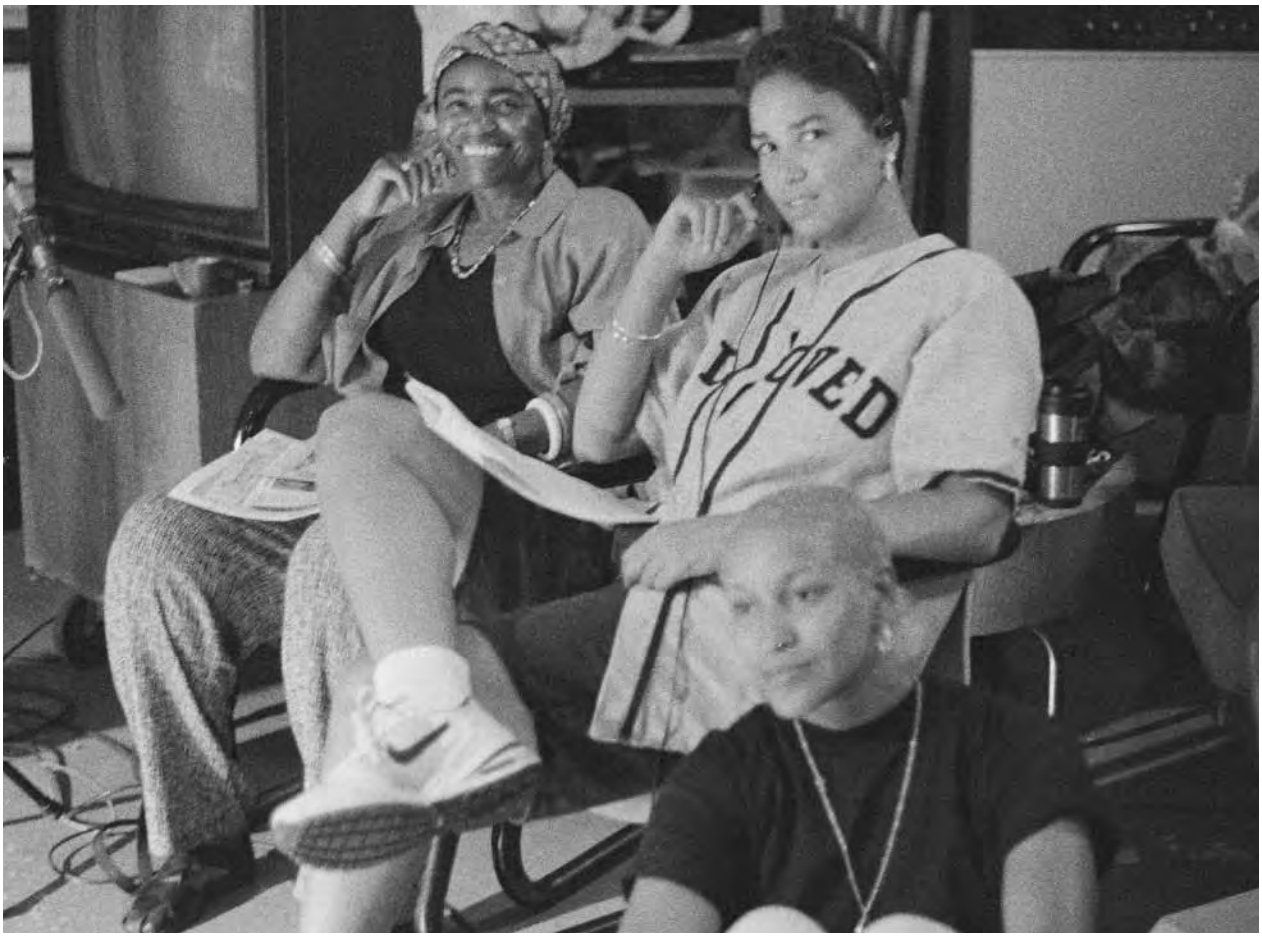
3. What responsibility do parents have in talking to their children about incest and child sexual abuse?

4. What do you think are some of the indicators of incest? If you suspect a child is being sexually assaulted in his/her home, what are some steps you should do to minimize the devastating effects of incest?

5. In *NO!* Renae says that families would rather remain silent about the sexual assault of young girls rather than confront their perpetrators. What do you think the long-term impact of this "silence" will have on the child victim? What message does this "silence" send to young girls about their sexuality and their self-worth?

6. How does a family's silence around incest condone the behavior of the perpetrators of incest and sexual assault?

7. What do you think are the unique challenges incest survivors face during their recovery and healing processes?



Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, Nikki Harmon and Kia Steave Dickerson; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

Chapter 6

Essex Hemphill; photo by Charlene Gilbert

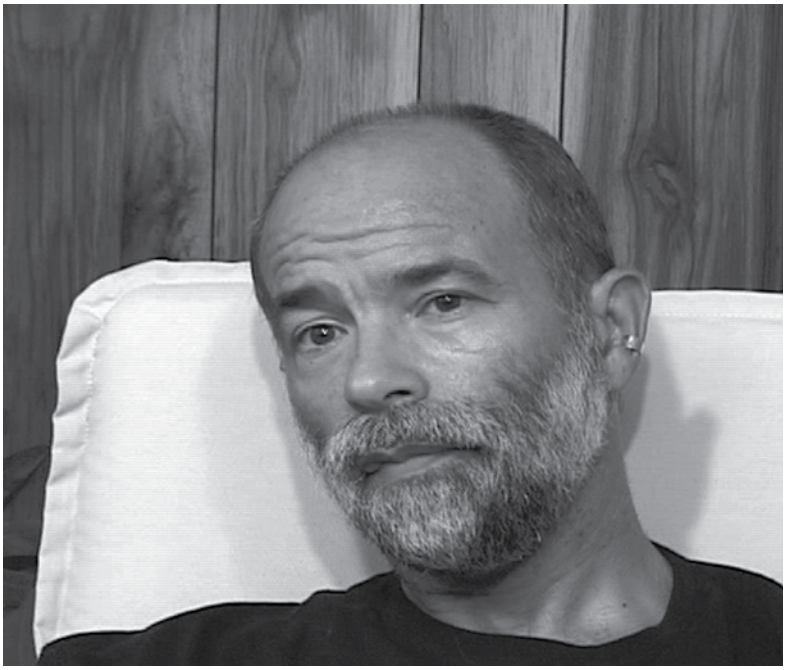
Holding Men Accountable

Intraracial Betrayal and Sexual Assault

DVD Chapter Stop: 50:25

"How do we develop in a way that she does not have to be responsible for his receiving consequences for what he's done. Because what we know after all that if they're no consequences for me I will continue to do what I am doing."

–Sulaiman Nuriddin, Men Stopping Violence, Inc.



Sulaiman Nuriddin; photo by Joan Brannon

MYTH

Rape is mostly an interracial crime

FACT

In about 88% of forcible rapes, the victim and the offenders were of the same race.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Janelle White describes being sexually assaulted by her male roommate during the period that she was "coming out" as a lesbian. Before the assault, she and her perpetrator were good friends who worked together on a series of anti-racism projects on their predominantly White campus. Although it took her almost an entire year to disclose, Janelle eventually told her first female partner about her rape. The emotional and psychological toll of the assault was so strong that Janelle eventually had to check herself into the hospital to assist her in her recovery process. During that time, her female partner confronted her assailant.

DEFINITION

Intraracial Rape is a sexual assault in which the victim and the offender are of the same race.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Given that Janelle's assailant was her roommate, we can assume that he was a person that she had trusted and befriended. How does his raping of her contradict the myth that rape could be prevented if women dressed less provocatively and avoided dark alleys and other "dangerous" places?

2. How did the racial identity of her assailant affect Janelle's decision not to report her assault?

3. Did the racial climate of the university influence Janelle's decision to not report her assault? In what ways?

4. How do you think being sexual assaulted adversely affected her "coming out" process?

5. What difficulties do you think Janelle faced in disclosing her story to others? What affect do you think not disclosing for almost a year had on her healing process?

6. Honorée Jeffers's poem "that's proof that she wanted it" refers to multiple instances in which a rapist justifies his violent assault of a woman. What are ways that men might justify violent behavior and sexual assault? What are ways that as a society we justify the violent behavior of men?

DVD Chapter Stop: 56:17

Black Feminist Men and the Anti-Rape Movement

"It's not enough to be a principled person with women.
You have an obligation to challenge the behavior of your peers."
–Michael Simmons, International Human Rights Activist

MYTH

Men cannot hold other men accountable for rape.

FACT

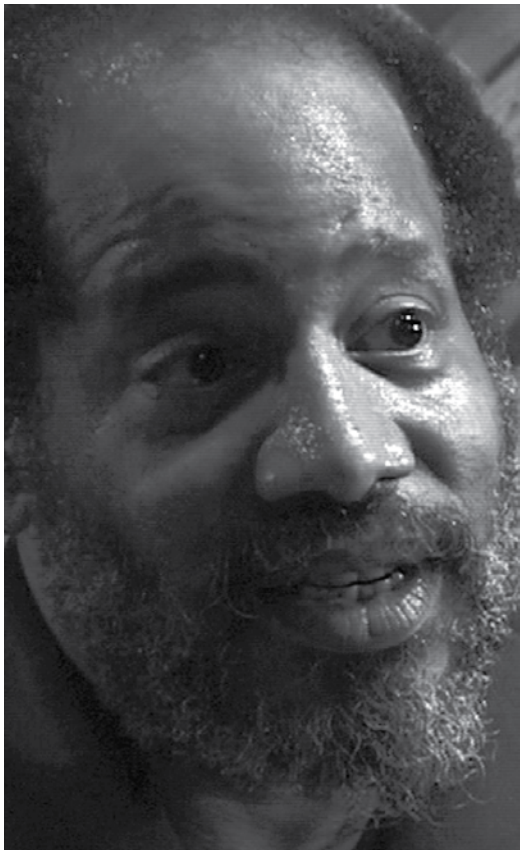
Given that men commit the majority of sexual assaults, *all* men have a disproportionate amount of power in our society. They carry a responsibility to change sexist behavior, challenge their peers, and prevent and end rape.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Janelle White says that after her sexual assault, she told one of her close Black male friends. Instead of disbelieving her, this friend responded in a way that supported her healing process: He confronted her perpetrator with whom he was friends. Yet, rather than reprimand him, Janelle's friend held her perpetrator accountable by challenging him to change his sexually violent behavior, make amends, and seek counseling. Unlike too many responses to sexual assault that blame the victim, Janelle's friend did not blame her for the rape, but held her perpetrator responsible for his actions instead.

DEFINITION

Accountability is a readiness to have one's actions judged by others. When appropriate, it also means being able to accept responsibility for unjust actions and misjudgments, and recognizing the need to change in the light of improved understanding gained from others.



Michael Simmons; photo by Joan Brannon

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can men become more active in the anti-rape movement? What are some of the internal and external pressures that inhibit many men from become stronger allies in the fight to end sexual violence?

2. Why do you think African-American heterosexual men are underrepresented in the anti-rape movement? How can their visibility and participation be increased?

3. What stereotypes about Black masculinity and Black female sexuality need to be challenged in order to create more intraracial solidarity around ending sexual violence?

4. What are some of the challenges that men face when confronting other men about sexism and sexual violence?

5. Why do you think Janelle's male friend confronted her perpetrator? Was this an effective strategy?

Black Leaders and Sexual Violence

DVD Chapter Stop: 56:44

"Imagine if all of us thought it was unthinkable to assault women what might happen, if the judge thought that, if the pastor thought that. These are individuals, for example, we often refer to as reality definers. They have the power to shape norms."

–Ulester Douglas, Men Stopping Violence, Inc.

MYTH

All rape victims report the crime immediately to the police. If they do not report it or delay in reporting it, then they must not have been raped. Either they made up the stories because they're mad at their boyfriends, they're trying to stay out of trouble with their parents, or they want to extort money from the guys.

FACT

There are many reasons why a rape victim may not report the assault to the police. Only 3-in-10 rapes are reported to law enforcement. The experience of retelling what happened may force the person to relive the trauma. Other reasons for not immediately reporting the assault–or not reporting it at all–-include fear of retaliation by the offender, fear of not being believed, fear of being blamed for the assault, and fear of being "re-victimized."

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Aaronette M. White describes an acquaintance rape experience that took place when she was twenty years old in which she visits the apartment of a senior-level college administrator for whom she was an undergraduate research assistant. At his apartment, when he began to kiss her, Aaronette refused his sexual advances and expressed discomfort with the situation by saying, "I don't think we should be doing this." Instead of listening to her repeated pleas of "no," he proceeded to undress her, ridicule her by remarking that "you act like those silly little White girls who complain of rape," and sexually assault her. When she returned to her dorm room and sought help from another African-American administrator on campus, he told her, "Don't tell anyone. He is the highest ranking Black professional on campus."

DEFINITION

Patriarchy is a family, community, society, and nation based on a system in which men govern and have authority over women and children. While patriarchy refers to gender and sexual inequality that privileges men over women, it maintains male authority through individual, collective, legal, and institutional behaviors.

Aaronette M. White; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Using the definition of rape, what makes Aaronette's experience sexual assault?

2. Given that she was an undergraduate and her perpetrator was a college administrator, in what ways did he have authority over her before and after the assault?

3. Describe the varied ways that he first exercised and then misused his authority over her. How did his verbally taunting of her make Aaronette feel like she had no grounds to file a complaint?

4. When Aaronette sought help from another African-American administrator, he told her not to tell anyone else. Why do you think he said this? How did it further silence and traumatize her?

5. What obstacles would Aaronette have had to face in order to report the assault and press charges? What impact do you think her lack of campus support had on her short-term and long-term recovery process?

DVD Chapter Stop: 59:04

The Mike Tyson Trial

"Imagine the strength of that man. You know, the heavyweight champion. Nobody wanted to talk about that. It was, "What was she doing in his room?"

–Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Ph.D., President, Bennett College for Women

MYTH

If a woman goes to someone's room or house, or accompanies him to a bar, she takes on the risk of being sexually assaulted. If something happens later, she can't claim that she was raped or sexually assaulted because she should have known not to go to those places.

FACT

Women have the legal right to enter a man's hotel room, car, and home and not be raped. Rape is never the victim's fault for it is a crime of violence and control that stems from the perpetrator's determination to exercise power over another. Furthermore, neither a person's clothing nor behavior is an invitation for unwanted sexual activity. Forcing someone to engage in non-consensual sexual activity is rape, regardless of the way that person dresses or acts.

SYNOPSIS

NO! examines the response amongst prominent African-American leaders about the conviction of boxer Mike Tyson in February 1992 for the rape of Miss Black Rhode Island Desiree Washington in an Indianapolis hotel room in 1991. Even though the court sentenced him to serve six years, he was released in May 1995 after only serving three years. Despite the fact that both the accuser, Desiree Washington, and the defendant, Mike Tyson, were African-Americans, many African-American leaders such as Minister Louis Farrakhan and Rev. T.J. Jemison, and other community members (mostly men) automatically believed that Mike Tyson was either: completely innocent; being set up because he was a Black celebrity athlete; or could not control his sexual urges and thereby not be responsible for the rape. Furthermore, many of these same people publicly ridiculed and blamed Desiree Washington for her sexual assaulted because she went to "Mike Tyson's hotel room at 2:00 a.m."

Johnnetta Betsch Cole; photo by Joan Brannon

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did so many African-American men and women automatically think Mike Tyson was innocent and that Desiree Washington was lying?

2. Why and how did many African-American leaders hold Desiree Washington responsible for Mike Tyson's actions?

3. How do you think the ridicule levied by African-Americans at Desiree Washington and stereotypes of Black women as liars and sexually promiscuous prevent Black women from reporting when they have been sexually assaulted?

4. Unlike other victims of violent crimes, rape victims are often held responsible for preventing their assaults. What double standard is created when we hold women as opposed to their assailants responsible for their sexual assault experiences?

5. Using a model of intraracial solidarity that is not dependent on patriarchy, what type of support should Black women who have been raped by African-American men expect? How does that differ from what happens today?

Sexual Assault and Religion

DVD Chapter Stop: 59:04

"Unfortunately, many leaders of Black communities, who are often clergy, stand with Black males even Black males who have committed, even in some cases as in the case of Mike Tyson, have been convicted of raping Black women. It's a tremendous betrayal of Black Women."

–Rev. Traci West, Ph.D., author of *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence and Resistance Ethics*

MYTH

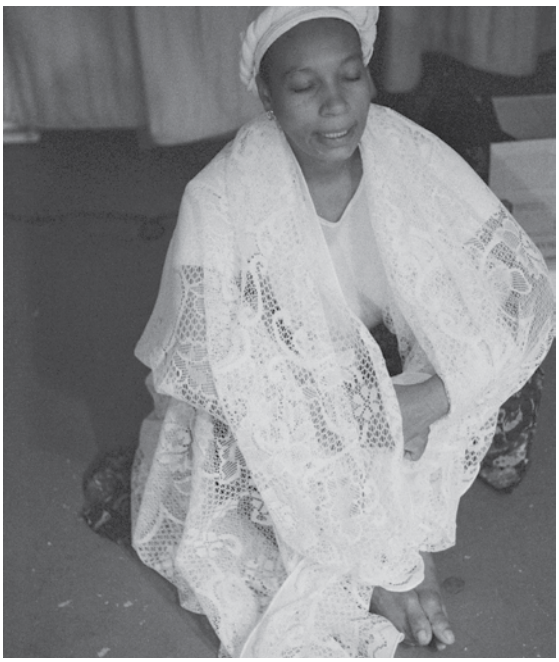
If a person consents to have sex at the start of making out with their partner, then changes their mind but their partner keeps going, it is not an assault.

FACT

Legally a person has the right to change her mind about having sex at any point of sexual contact. If a sexual partner does not stop at the time a person says "no," this is sexual assault. If a person is in a relationship with someone or has had sex with a person before, this does not mean that they cannot be assaulted by that person. Consent must be given every time two people engage in sexual contact.

DEFINITION

Victim-Blaming is holding the victims of sexually-based crimes responsible for their having been assaulted. In many instances of acquaintance rape, the victims are said to have "asked for it" and encouraged their rape because they were flirting, wearing sexually provocative clothing, or intoxicated.



'Mother Spirit'; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When Minister Louis Farrakhan claims that women say no but mean yes, does his statement contradict the definition of rape?

2. When Farrakhan states to his female audience that, "You're not dealing with a man that don't know you and the damn deceitful games that you play," what stereotypes about Black female sexuality does he invoke in order to condone Mike Tyson's behavior?

3. In the prayer service that Rev. T.J. Jemison's leads for Mike Tyson, he says that, "We cannot destroy anybody to build up another body." Who do you think he believes is being destroyed by the sexual assault charges? In what ways does Jemison either ignore or minimize the negative impact that both the rape and the subsequent legal proceedings had on Desiree Washington?

4. How do both Farrakhan and Jemison use "victim-blaming" statements to further penalize Desiree Washington for being raped?

5. Why do many members of the Black community consider Black women who come forward with charges of intraracial rape to be bigger a threat to the African-American community than their rapists?

6. Given the high incidence of sexual assault in the United States, many religious leaders, such as ministers and imams, have a significant number of female rape victims already in their congregations. What responsibilities do these leaders, who more often than not are male, have to these women? In what ways can religious leaders help rape victims overcome their assaults?

7. Given the high incidence of sexual assault in the United States, many religious leaders, like ministers and imams, have a significant number of perpetrators already in their congregations. In what ways can religious leaders hold these men responsible for their crimes?

DVD Chapter Stop: 66:23

Media, Stereotypes, and a Rape Culture

"Things like gangsta rap, stereotypes about Black women, create this hostile environment where women's lives, Black women's lives are not respected. If you're going around for instance, calling Black women names, or putting Black women down, it's easy to make the next leap to disrespect this Black woman."

–Aaronette M. White, Ph.D., Social Psychologist and Activist

MYTH

Women lie about being sexually assaulted to become famous and rich, to seek revenge, or because they feel guilty afterward about having had sex.

FACT

Women rarely make false reports about sexual assault. Acquaintance rape is the most underreported crime in the United States. As well, false accusations of sexual assault are made no more often than false reports of other types of crime are made: about 2% to 4%, which means 96% to 98% of the reports are true.

DEFINITION

Rape Culture describes a society in which sexual violence is common and in which prevailing attitudes, norms, practices, and media messages justify, excuse, or encourage sexually-based crimes. Many feminists argue that in a rape culture, acts of "harmless" sexism are oftentimes engaged to validate and perpetuate misogynistic practices; for example, sexist jokes and stereotypes may used to promote disrespect for women and disregard for their safety, which ultimately makes their being sexual abused seem acceptable and normal.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Essex Hemphill's poem, "To Some Supposed Brothers," he says that men "judge" women by the "length of her skirt / by the way she walks, / talks, looks, and act." What stereotypes about a woman do people often assume by what she is wearing and how she behaves? How are some of these stereotypes used to denigrate Black women who come forward and state they are victims of sexual assault?

2. Think of the number of jokes and songs that are used as slurs to describe women. How are the terms such as "bitches," "hoes," and "sluts" used to deride women? Why are there no male-directed counterparts to these terms?

3. What does Hemphill mean when he says, "We so-called men, / we so-called brothers / wonder why its so hard to love 'our' women / when we're about loving them / the way America / loves us?"

4. Write a list of terms used to describe women who are sexually assertive, socially aggressive, and professionally ambitious. Then write a list of terms used to characterize men who are sexually assertive, socially aggressive, and professionally ambitious. Why do you think there are substantially fewer derogatory words that come to mind to describe men who assert themselves sexually and professionally? How do these terms and the images of women with which we associate them reveal and perpetuate sexist attitudes?

5. In what ways do men, including Black men, have substantially more sexual freedom than Black women? How do industries that propagate pornography, prostitution, and sexually violent music and movies perpetuate sexism? How do they encourage men to be more sexually aggressive against women?

6. Can you name five films or television shows that deal explicitly with the theme of rape? How are the victims portrayed before their rape? How are they portrayed after their assaults? How are the perpetrators portrayed? Which films or television shows do better jobs at minimizing victim-blaming statements? Which do not invoke stereotypes that explain rape as a direct result of women's immoral behavior?

7. Why are women held more responsible for being raped than their male perpetrators? Does holding women responsible for crimes committed against them deter men from raping? How does it encourage men to continue to sexual assault women in order to exert power and control?

8. How do men use rape to control and to police women's sexual, economic, and political independence?

9. How can the entertainment industry help create and promote an anti-rape culture?

Chapter 7

Farah Jasmine Griffin; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

Unequal Justice Under Law

Sexual Assault and the Criminal System

DVD Chapter Stop: 69:28

"Black women are the ones who get the least justice when it comes to these rape convictions."

–Aaronette M. White, Ph.D., Social Psychologist and Activist

Audree Irons; photo by Joan Brannon

MYTH

Rape can be avoided if women avoid dark alleys or other "dangerous" places where strangers might be hiding or lurking.

FACT

Rape and sexual assault can occur at any time, in many places, and to anyone. According to a report based on FBI data, almost 70% of sexual assault reported to law enforcement occurred in a residence belonging to the victim, the offender, or another individual.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Audree Irons describes a stranger rape experience in which a man breaks into her apartment, coerces her by holding a knife to her throat, and sexually assaults her. He not only threatens her safety but also states that he will harm her children unless she cooperates. After he assaults her, he then warns her that he will return and rape her again. Although she reported the crime, the police never made any formal arrests. Audree then proceeded to investigate the crime on her own and eventually located the name and the whereabouts of a potential suspect. Even though she forwarded the information to the police officers assigned to her case, they never arrested, charged, or prosecuted anyone.

DEFINITION

Stranger Rape is non-consensual or forced sex, committed by a person who is a complete stranger to the victim

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Using the definition of rape, what makes Audree's experience sexual assault?

2. In addition to exerting physical force, what did Audree's assailant do to threaten her well being?

3. In her testimony Audree says that she tried protecting her children by not giving "the guy any trouble." What did she mean by that? How is sexual assault as much as physical violation as it is a psychological one?

4. Unlike many of the other women in the film, Audree immediately reported her crime to the police. Why do you think victims of stranger rapes are more likely to report their assaults to the police and seek medical attention for their injuries than victims of acquaintance and date rape?

5. How does Audree's experience challenge the stereotype that rape victims can prevent their assaults if they wear less provocative clothing, are less sexually promiscuous, and avoid dangerous areas?

6. Audree was able to learn more information about her assailant because she described him to her neighbor; however, she believes that the police did not follow up on her lead. What would make Audree believe that the police would not follow up on such a lead? If this is true, why would they not follow up?

7. If the police are not going to respond in an effective and efficient manner to claims of sexual assault, what are other ways a victim can respond? How can the community respond? What other forms of accountability can a community pursue outside of or working alongside the American judicial system?

DVD Chapter Stop: 72:03

Disparities in the American Judicial System

"You know W.E.B. Du Bois said 'To be poor is a hardship, but to be poor in the land of dollars is the bottom of hardships,' and to be poor and Black and female in America is about the bottom of all that because we are so irrelevant, that's why we can be raped. What difference does it make? It's only some Black woman."

–Elaine Brown, Former Chairperson Black Panther Party

MYTH

The majority of sexual offenders are caught, convicted, and in prison.

FACT

Only a fraction of those who commit sexual assault are apprehended and convicted for their crimes. Most convicted sex offenders eventually are released to the community under probation or parole supervision.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Aaronette M. White notes that despite the fact that Black men are not raping more than White men, they receive more severe and longer sentences. The racial disparities in arrest, prosecution, and sentencing are not only limited to race of the assailants, but also determined by the race of the victims. While most rapes are intraracial, the highest number of convictions are for Black men who are accused of raping White women. The lowest convictions are for White men who are accused of raping Black women. These racial disparities indicate that White women get more justice than their Black female counterparts.

Adrienne Davis; photo by Scheherazade Tillet

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does racial stereotyping and the myth of the Black male rapist influence how the criminal justice system treats African-American men accused of raping White women?

2. Why do you think that White men receive shorter sentences for sexually assaulting Black women than they do for sexually assaulting White women?

3. How does racial stereotyping and the myth of Black female sexuality influence how the criminal justice system responds to White men accused of raping a Black woman?

4. Do you think that members of the African-American community are more likely to believe a Black woman when she says that she has been raped by White man than when she says a Black man has raped her? What explains the difference between these responses?

5. Why do you think Black women often feel guilty about pressing charges against Black men for sexual assault? What type of treatment should Black women expect from their community if they have been sexually assaulted? What about from the criminal justice system?

6. Given the fact that racism is deeply entrenched within the criminal justice system, how does this affect how many African-Americans feel about Black women who accuse Black men of rape? How does this influence the decision of Black women to come forward and report that they are victims of rape, if their perpetrators are Black?

Chapter 8

The cast of "A Stage of Rage;" photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

Healing, Faith, and Hope

Activism and Recovery

DVD Chapter Stop: 72:50

"The one thing I would really encourage people to do is to at least talk to someone. Find someone who you feel you can tell what happened. Because it does change your life when you're able to voice it, to just speak it. If it's even just that."

–Janelle White, Ph.D., Sociologist and Activist

MYTH

A person who really has been sexually assaulted will afterward be hysterical.

FACT

It is a common misperception that victims will show a certain type of response. Survivors exhibit a range of emotional responses to assault such as calm, hysteria, laughter, anger, apathy, and shock. There is no "right way" to react to being sexually assaulted. Assumptions about the way a victim should act may be detrimental to the victim because each victim copes with the trauma of the assault in different ways, which also can vary over time.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* Audree Irons, Janelle White, Loretta Ross, and Salamishah Tillet discuss their processes of coming forward about being raped and the advent of their political activist work. Audree notes that she went to counseling two years after her assault, but feels that if she went immediately after her assault she might have healed earlier. Loretta reveals that she was raped when she eleven years old and became pregnant as a result of incest when she was fifteen years old. However, as part of her healing, she became a leading anti-rape activist, and in the 1970s, she helped found the D.C. Rape Crisis Center. In addition to seeking psychological help; Janelle began educating others about sexual violence by teaching the class "Our Silence Will Not Protect Us, Black Women Confronting Sexual and Domestic Violence." Lastly, Salamishah discusses volunteering for the Men's Task Force at Women's Organized Against Rape in Philadelphia and becoming actively involved in her campus's Take Back the Night activities. All of these women emphasize the importance of activism as a tool in healing.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think Audree means when she says that if she went to counseling right after her assault she probably would have healed faster? Given that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms can appear immediately after an assault, how would therapy have helped alleviate those initial symptoms? What are some the cultural, social, and economic difficulties that women of color may face when trying to find a therapist?

2. What does Audree mean when she says, "I may have been victimized but I'm a survivor?" What do you think it means to be a rape survivor and no longer a rape victim?

3. Of her son, Loretta says she knows "exactly how hard it is to both love your child and to hate the circumstances from which he was born." What are the *unique* challenges that women experience after a perpetrator sexually assaults and then impregnates them?

4. Why do you think Loretta was drawn to political work around issues of sexual violence? What are some of the personal hardships that rape victims experience because of their anti-rape activism? How does the work help them heal?

5. Janelle emphasizes the need to "break silence" and "speak out" as essential components to healing. Why do you think disclosure is such a necessary part of the healing process? What constitutes a "safe space" to disclose?

6. Salamishah joined the Men's Task Force in order to help educate young boys and men about safe sex practices and to identify unhealthy sexual attitudes about girls and women. Whose responsibility should rape prevention and gender education be? Do you think rape victims should be responsible for sexual assault education and prevention? Or do you think all members of society should have that responsibility?

7. What are some of the challenges that women of color face in their attempts to locate resources, tools, marches, and rallies that speak to their unique experiences as rape survivors and women? How have many of the survivors in *NO!* used their activism to further embrace all aspects of their identity? What are some resources now available to women of color who are survivors of violence? What types of resources do you think should be available that are not presently provided?

DVD Chapter Stop: 72:50

Arts as Recovery

"I wanted to give back to women who have been through this ordeal as myself because I felt I was getting better and could help someone else through this process."

– Audree Irons, Administrative Associate, Spelman College

Tamara L. Xavier/ Moon Wisdom; photo by Tina Morton

MYTH

"No one will ever believe that I have been raped."

FACT

There are number of local resources to which victims of sexual violence can turn if they have been sexually assaulted. These often include: rape crisis centers, hospitals, women's centers, therapists, teachers, close friends, and mentors. However, because rape victims often feel "re-victimized" by people who do not believe them, it is important to listen to and support women and girls who assert that they have been raped.

SYNOPSIS

In *NO!* sisters Salamishah and Scheherazade Tillet discuss their creation of the multimedia performance *A Story of A Rape (SOARS)* and their founding of their arts-based non-profit A Long Walk Home, Inc. Scheherazade photographed Salamishah's recovery, and in *SOARS,* through a showing of black and white photography, alongside music, dance, and poetry, they offer the public a rare access into the very private world of rape, its aftermath for victims, and the post-trauma healing process. Through its powerful imagery, *SOARS* breaks the overwhelming silence that accompanies sexual violence. This multimedia performance has empowered women of color and underserved populations on a national front.

DEFINITION

Art Therapy is the therapeutic use of art-making, within a professional relationship, by people who experience illness, trauma, or challenges in living, and by people who seek personal development.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think sharing one's story with other victims of sexual assault is helpful? What are some of the internal and external challenges that rape victims have to overcome in order to share their testimonies with others?

2. How do you think sexual assault affects the family members of rape victims? Their significant others? What positive impact can family members and significant others play in the healing process?

3. What are the unique benefits of incorporating the arts into the healing and recovery process?

4. How do you think documenting, whether through photography, video, or journaling helps victims of sexual violence heal?

5. What are the differences, if any between, the terms "rape victim" and "rape survivor?"

Accountability and Recovery

DVD Chapter Stop: 80:31

"I think that the most important thing that a person can do in the healing process is to be patient with themselves and to love themselves in the process."

–Rev. Reanae McNeal, Imani Revelations

MYTH

When sexually aroused to a certain degree, men lose control, and have to have it.

FACT

Studies of convicted offenders indicate the majority of sexual assaults are premeditated. The brain controls all of our behavior, including sexual urges.

SYNOPSIS

In its closing sequence, *NO!* underscores the positive relationship that religious institutions can have in the lives of rape victims. Specifically, Rev. Traci West and Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons discuss how they both respectively interpret passages from the Bible and the Qur'an to support women's rights and to end rape, rather than use these religious books to justify the oppression of women. Following their lead, Sulaiman Nuriddin challenges religious and community leaders to become more actively involved in the anti-rape movement by holding their male congregants/fellow citizens publicly responsible for violent behavior toward women. Through questioning and challenging the criminal (in)justice system, the African-American community itself as Janelle White, Johnnetta Betsch Cole, and John Dickerson note, can and should create their own codes of accountability by which all members must abide.

Rev. Reanae McNeal; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What tenets of Christianity are applicable when condemning acts of violence against women?

2. What tenets of Islam are applicable when condemning acts of violence against women?

3. How can religious beliefs and spiritual practices help survivor's overcome the trauma of sexual violence?

4. When Sulaiman describes "the community effect" as a deterrent of sexual violence, what does he mean? What roles should religious and community leaders play in ending sexual violence?

5. Given the low rates of incarceration for sexual crimes, what other forms of accountability can community members impose on men who have sexually assaulted women and girls?

6. How does the statistic that says 1-in-3 women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime reveal that rape is not only a woman's issue, but also a larger cultural and political issue within the African-American community? How does rape within the African-American community further devastate racial progress?

7. When Michael Simmons says that the trauma he experienced after being robbed is nothing compared to that of being raped, what does he reveal about the long-term emotional trauma of rape on the individual victim?

Tamara L. Xavier and Aishah; photo by Tina Morton

Epilogue

Faith Sangoma; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

The Role of Religion In Violence Against Women

by Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, Ph.D.

Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

Religious feminists/womanists often say: "Women have been loyal to religion but religion has not been loyal to them." A slightly altered version of this same idea is their statement: "Women love religion, but religion does not love them." Why is this said? Because much of the violence against and the oppression and repression of women, historically and contemporarily, have been either implicitly or explicitly condoned or justified in religious texts like the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, the Qur'an, and the Hadith (Sayings and Actions of the Prophet Muhammad). Such condoning and justifying have been amplified in the male interpretations of these texts that have come down to us over the millennia. This is true in the texts of the three monotheistic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) as well as in some of the earlier religious traditions that preceded them.

Religion's overt and covert approval of the oppression of women and its concomitant sanctioning of violence against women is a very serious matter because religion affects us deeply, both individually and collectively. Age-old beliefs about sex or gender roles, the "natural superiority" of the male, and the requisite subordination of the female are deeply engrained in each of these traditions and transferred to all of our subconscious minds. Because of these embedded ideas about the naturalness of female subordination to males, many women as well as most men believe that this is the divine gender pattern ordained by God. This is still true even in so-called modern, secular Western societies like the one here in the U.S. and those in Europe. Religion still gives meaning to our existence even for those who claim to be atheist or secular because it has become an indelible and often indistinguishable part of our culture, where it influences our conscious and unconscious thoughts about so many things, particularly about sex roles and responsibilities.

Religion in the African-American community has been a conscious and everlasting part of the armor Black people reinforced themselves with in order to survive the hardships and horrors of slavery, the Jim Crow era, and the Civil Rights/Black Power era. They were a deeply spiritual people in Africa, be they African traditional religionists or Muslims, as many of them were. Religion remains perhaps the most important institution in our communities today. As Juan Williams has noted in his companion book to the PBS Series *This Far by Faith* of the same title, "Religion in the African-American tradition is still both a tool of survival and an inspiring 'terrible swift sword' of Justice. All life is spiritual and every breath is full of faith in God as an all-powerful ever-present force. Truly amazing is the reach of [religion] across class lines in Black America to this day."[12]

While few would question the immensely liberating and sustaining role that religion has played in the collective life of African-Americans, it has been doubled edged in the African-American woman's life. On the positive side, it has been that "Balm in Gilead that set the captive free," for Black women as it has been for Black men. Black woman's lives from the harrowing Middle Passage until now have always been beset with racism as well as sexism, and some times the weight of these twin oppressions has been greater than at others. Black women have relied on their spirituality and their membership in the church and now the mosque to sustain them through good times and bad. Delores Williams in her powerful volume, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, writes Black woman have "accounted their perseverance on the basis of their faith in God who helped them 'make a way out of no way.'"[13] Yet as Williams notes, Black women's faith has been used against them by the men in their

12 Juan Williams & Quinton Dixie, *This Far by Faith*, (Harper Collins, 2003).
13 Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*, (Orbis Books)

churches and in their mosques. She calls it "a colonization of the female's mind and culture."[14] In our churches and in our mosques, a patriarchal and andocentric theology and practice has been enshrined as the orthodox (or correct) version of our religions and any attempts made by women to change this thought and these practices have been seen as a rebellion against God's divine plan for hierarchal gender relations. Such engrained notions have covertly justified male violence against women as men's right as heads of their households, to rule with an iron fist (literally and figuratively) and to chastise "head strong and disobedient wives and girlfriends," often depicted as loud mouth "Sapphires" and "ball-busters."

Ministers and imams whom beat their wives have been ignored and these men have been accepted as leaders within our religious institutions, without calling these men to account for their behavior. Male lay and clergy in the congregations who are known to be abusive to their wives, girlfriends, and children are permitted to function as "upstanding" members of the community and as "role models" within our houses of worship without being publicly denounced and forced to get counseling or other forms of help for their unacceptable behavior. Even incest, sexual assault, and charges of rape are hushed up and swept under the rug while the victims are silenced and made to feel guilty for "provoking such attacks" by their "improper dress and behavior." ("What was she doing out at night?" "Why did she go to his room?" "Her skirt was too short.")

Why are the practices of spousal abuse, sexual assault, incest, and rape of Black women by Black men permitted within our communities and religious institutions without eliciting rage and condemnation? Why do these practices continue? Unfortunately in the three Abrahamic faiths, (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) woman has been projected as a "sexual being" that represents a threat or a danger to man. The Story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden found in the Book of Genesis and the Hadith texts of the Muslims are a beginning point theologically for the oppression of women. First Eve is depicted as being created from a rib of Adam. She is a derived being created as an afterthought, for Adam to use as a "helpmate."[15] Secondly and perhaps more importantly, Eve is portrayed as being the source of evil and suffering in the world. It is Eve whom Satan seduced (often hinted at as being a sexual seduction) and who convinced her to entice Adam to eat of the forbidden apple after she first ate the fruit. It is this act that these scriptures say caused human beings to be ejected from Paradise and sets sin lose in the world. Eve's punishment was to bear children in pain and to be *subject* to her husband in all things, according to these texts.[16]

This of course sets up the patriarchal and hierarchical gender relations' paradigm, which many, if not most, of us believe in today. Even when we do not consciously believe the Adam and Eve story to be a factual one, it is still deeply embedded in our subconscious, and influences our thoughts and our behavior as a part of our religion-cultural heritage. Anthropological studies show that people in every culture maintain and transmit ideas about the rules that women and men perform, the rights they have in relation to each other, and the values associated with their activities. Gender is a social category with a social interpretation. Religion plays a significant role in determining these gender roles. One's gender role is learned as it is transmitted to a child almost from birth. The child observes early the allotment of privileges such as the right to speak and be heard, to make decisions, and who wields the power in the home, in the political realm and in the religious institutions.

Photo of candles by Scheherazade Tillet, courtesy of A Long Walk Home, Inc.

14 Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*, (Orbis Books)
15 It is important to note that the Qur'an, Islam's holiest text does not say that Allah (God) created the first family in this way. But it is in the books of the Hadith that one finds these hierarchical creation of man and woman accounts taken directly from the Biblical story of the first couple.
16 Here again this account is not found in the Qur'an but is found in the Hadith, which are widely read by Muslims and considered authoritative by most.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Photo of alter by Scheherazade Tillet, courtesy of A Long Walk Home, Inc.

Until the twentieth century, men have been the sole interpreters of our sacred scriptures. It is the men in our traditions who have defined our religions for us. Women have been silenced, marginalized, and made invisible, theologically. This means that only one-half of humanity's voice has been heard in the creation of our religious dogma, institutions, and practices. This must change and is slowly changing. Religious feminist/womanist scholars are centering women's experiences as the basis for a new theology and religious understanding of our scriptures. They are affirming women's experiences, insights, and knowledge as the basis for new interpretations of our religions. In the Christian tradition, African-American women have fought their way into the leadership structures of the various denominations and are fighting to stay there. Muslim women are beginning to do the same. But Christian and Muslim women must do more. Muslim women must demand entry into their mosques, not just for salat (prayer), but also as leaders of their mosques and communities, as speakers, imams, teachers and heads of school committees and the like. Muslim women must demand equality of space within these mosques and refuse to be marginalized and relegated to balconies and side rooms where they cannot be seen or heard.

Religious women must be seen in authoritative roles in their religious institutions. Women must struggle against and change these awful stereotypes that posit women as secondary or derived creatures who are essentially sexual beings, and that this defines our totality. This nonsense must be debunked as it encourages men to be abusers and to see women solely as sexual objects, baby making factories, and domestic slaves that they possess. Concurrent with this thinking is the idea that if and when a woman displeases them, they have a right to beat her[17] and to force her to fulfill their misogynistic desire.

The veils of ignorance as they exist in and about our religions must be challenged. Women must take the lead. Progressive men must follow and support our leadership. It is the oppressed that must define the contours and substance of their liberation in any struggle against domination and oppression. This is as true for women in our efforts to achieve full human rights (including our religious rights) as it has been for all other groups who have fought for their God given inalienable rights. Women must use the women-friendly scriptures and our heroic religious foremothers' stories to educate the men and women in our traditions of the need for gender justice and the outlawing of all forms of violence, including rape, incest and sexual assault by Black men against Black women and girls. This is the only route to establish true peace and harmony in our families, our homes and our communities.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION:

1. What has been the result of andocentric interpretations of religious scriptures on women's lives?

2. How can women and men develop women friendly and supportive interpretations of texts that may be misogynistic in their literal meanings?

3. What kinds of classes and workshops should women and men organize in their churches and mosques that will change the patriarchal and hierarchical mindset in our religious institutions?

4. How can men be enlisted to change their beliefs and help to create women-affirming ideas in our churches and mosques?

5. What kinds of educational materials should each house of worship own that teach men how to stop abusing women and girls?

17 Unfortunately, more and more men are killing women who displease them or try to get out of abusive relationships in shocking numbers here in the United States.

Rev. Reanae McNeal, Tamara L. Xavier and Faith Sangoma; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

Dancing Mind and Body Back from Conflict

by Tamara L. Xavier, M.Ed.

NO! is, among other things, a social history of African-American women at the end of the 20th century. People of every race, religious background, sexual orientation and walk of life participated in the making of this work. Influenced by the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, and in keeping with the likes of Mary J. Blige, Prince, The Roots, Tori Amos and a multitude of artists who successfully crafted anthems of resistance, Aishah Shahidah Simmons presents a diverse community that together and individually, epitomizes the axiom that if one looks within, one will find strength to see one's self as whole.

Tamara L. Xavier, M.Ed.; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

The dance medium represents introverted survivors as well as the silent aspects of wellness. Three performance artists make statements–some searing and some tender–that evoke physical vulnerability, mental resilience and affective containment. Traditional African dance forms, yogic motifs, and avant-garde movements create a triptych of movement vignettes that reflect heterogeneous approaches to health. Heterogeneous in the sense that although one's body is the site of trauma, movement symbolizes traveling across emotionally debilitating states (e.g., heartbreak, depression, blind rage, etc.) in order to return to a magnificent and fresh sense of self that existed before any violation. Dance theorist Yvonne Daniel in *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomblé*, deciphers over twenty years of experience in three dance traditions while passing on warnings of the "doomed affair" some spiritual leaders say it is to write down dance practices. Thoughts expressed in words can be misunderstood – consider the difficulty in expressing thoughts without them; hence, the tumultuous endeavor to communicate some of the meanings within the documentary's dance sequences.

On the other hand, the late New York-based choreographer, dance company and studio director, Rod Rodgers used to say, "What dance looks like is usually what it means." The descriptions below are not meant to steer the viewer's own perception or be taken as the definitive interpretation of the vignettes. They simply describe major themes related to race, gender, and sexual identities that emerged over the eleven years of making *NO!* To some observers, the dances are abstract stews that bespeak the unspeakable. Many thanks to the singer/songwriters and musicians whose heartfelt and empathetic words provide a supplement to the motions adopted by the dancers and that, together, give a full picture of the survivors' struggle to achieve wholeness.

Vignette #1
INNER MIGRATION FROM WAR TO PEACE

Artist: Aminata

Myth: "I am alone."

Fact: As mentioned throughout this guide, there are numerous resources available for survivors today. Unfortunately, racist stereotypes about Black Americans can preclude survivors from disclosing their experiences in a public forum.

Synopsis: This movement vignette demonstrates one woman's externalization of deep psychic pain and ends with her being on her own two feet, reaching for the sun, and ready to face her future full-on.

Creative Context: According to Congolese choreographer, Zab Maboungou, in describing her dance "Incantation," "People say I'm a solo dancer, but in the African worldview, I'm not solo." In this same way, this dancer is releasing psychic pain through her body and communicating with the spirits around her. Her arms clear the energy around her and the earth holds her as she contracts and gives birth to her new self.

Vignette #2
IT TAKES TWO

Artists: Faith Sangoma and Tamara L. Xavier

Myth: "I am not a professional therapist. I can't help another."

Fact: Many hotlines and support centers are staffed by survivors and they have a particularly empathetic perspective. A sincere listener and kind word can do wonders.

Synopsis: The two seated figures are reminiscent of the blissfully meditative practices that have swept health and fitness programs. The devotion and self-awareness needed to hold one's being intact while embracing another dancer is exemplified in this short vignette.

Creative Context: Poet Sonia Sanchez once wrote, "Remember when the womb was cerebral." Law professor Patricia J. Williams in her landmark text, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* masterfully weaves intellect and artistry. This movement vignette is an understated celebration in honor of our elders and ancestors who made all things work together and helped us banish fear, doubt, and loneliness forever.

Vignette #3
FOR WOMEN OF RAGE AND REASON

Artist: Tamara L. Xavier

Myth: "There are no progressive, non-violent means to end violence."

Fact: The current AIDS pandemic–a holocaust–demands frank and honest discussions about sex. One does not have to be a victim of sexual assault to be proactive and vigilant about determining what sexual health means to them.

Synopsis: This individual represents an archetypal figure in Haitian Vodou art. The Siren is sometimes pictured as a whale and usually appears to young children who are separated from their parents for a given length of time. She tells them a secret so that they can become who they were born to be.

Creative Context: Spiritual traditions that range from ecstatic to ascetic are referenced on the frame of this performer. Pre-Judeo-Christian and Islamic rhythmic and symbolic icons recall the masses of people whose words and actions embolden survivors to take the necessary steps toward self-determination. If dance, as an artistic medium, were to be distilled as a new metaphor for the "race" and/or "woman" questions of the past, then one might pay heed to African dance aesthetician Seónagh Odhiambo when she states:

I believe it is important to complicate the questions of body politics beyond discourses that isolate us into interest groups. The questions I ask through dance and writing are addressed to canonical discourses that separate and compartmentalize human beings, forcing us to form fractured communities of affirmations in response to overwhelming power.

QUESTIONS

1. How do you think a survivor would paint or otherwise communicate how they feel about being abused?

2. How would one choreograph a dance about betrayal?

3. How do the politics of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation affect one's decision to "go public" about one's experience of being raped?

4. How might society change to respect the privacy of the survivor who wishes to heal from her abuse without incriminating her perpetrator.

Vignette #1: Aminata C. Baruti; photo by Joan Brannon. Vignette #2: Tamara L. Xavier and Faith Sangoma; photo by Wadia Gardener. Vignette #3: Tamara L. Xavier/Moon Wisdom; photo by Aishah Shahidah Simmons

Appendix

Gail Lloyd, Rehema Imani Trimiew and Joan Brannon; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

Because we....: A Statement on NO! by the UBUNTU Education Working Group

The UBUNTU Education Working Group has chosen to use *NO!*, Aishah Shahidah Simmons' groundbreaking film about sexual violence in African-American communities because it exemplifies, informs and pushes our struggle to create a world that is free of sexual violence and full of community accountability and a sustaining, transformative love.

This is our collective reasoning for using this film and our vision for its impact on our communities.

NO! Because we love this film.
Because this film is made up of warriors showing up for their own liberation, starting with Aishah Shahidah Simmons, a survivor who created this film through 11 years of sustained community work to raise awareness about rape.
Because the stories of survivors of sexual assault are powerful and sacred.
Because there are survivors here.
Because this story speaks to and for all of us.
Because this story pushes us beyond words.
Because this story has the power to heal.
Because men need to be aware of the effects of sexual assault.
Because this lets you know what you need to know fast.
Because you have shown up and you will recognize your own fears and experiences here with a new clarity.
Because you have shown up and you have survived and you are not alone.
Because this film will make you think about sexual assault in your own community and in your own life.
Because the history of sexual assault matters.
Because you have shown up and this film might provoke you to demand and create your own freedom.
Because this film can make you recognize your own situations and your own actions. Because this film will remind you that you can act.
Because this film is brave and honest about fear and asks us to be brave and honest with each other.
Because this film is real and encourages us to be real in this space.
Because this film can push us all to acknowledge and share our emotions.
Because this brings this issue home to all of us.
Because this film insists that all oppression is connected.
Because this film holds us all accountable for the world that we comply with and perpetuate.
Because this film encourages us to change the way we respond to sexual assault on an institutional level.
Because this film shows us how to hold our communities accountable without always buying into the flawed legal system.
Because this film is about responsibility and not blame.
Because this film teaches us something new every time.
Because this film shapes and propels our analysis and our action.
Because this film demands that we re-imagine the whole world.
Because we believe that the best place to make a new world is right here, together, with you.

So we challenge you as you watch this film to see yourself, your own fears and your own responsibility. This film is not about other people. This film is not about some pathology that is unique to the Black community. This film is a specific and necessary examination of the manifestations of sexual assault in Black women's lives, but it calls all of us to recognize our own survival, our own silence, our own complicity, our own violence and our shared responsibility to create a world that honors us.
love,
UBUNTU

UBUNTU *is Women of Color and Survivor-led. This means that we emphasize people most affected by sexual violence as public representatives of the group (i.e., media, mobilizations, public meetings, events, etc.), and in the group's internal structure and processes (membership/composition, roles, and decision-making). This is our way of reclaiming power. The name UBUNTU reflects a commitment to a traditional sub-Saharan African concept of the same name, which roughly translated means "I am because we are."* http://iambecauseweare.wordpress.com/

IDEAS FOR PERSONAL ACTION

Create a safe space for Black women at home, at work, and at school to help build a society that does not allow for misogynistic, sexually inappropriate, or violent comments to be made about women and does not objectify women's bodies. We can be aware of our own language in talking about other people's bodies and identities.

Believe survivors and offer a non-judgmental listening ear to those who want to come forward with their stories of sexual assault.

Talk about sexual violence directed toward women and name it for what it is in order to help young people and adults have the vocabulary with which to talk about any sexual abuse they may have experienced. It is important, too, to help ourselves to recognize what a healthy physical relationship looks like.

Have a one-on-one conversation with a man that you know about sexual assault and sexual violence toward women. Whether you are on a working coalition with men on your campus or in your community activism, and whether or not you have romantic and physical relationships with men, start a dialogue. Men obviously play a role in the issue of sexual violence against women and necessarily play a role in transforming our society into one that is not violent toward Black women. These kinds of conversations across gender lines are essential in educating ourselves and our communities about the impact that violence against women has on our society.

Volunteer at a rape crisis center to support those who are healing from sexual assault and sexual violence. Volunteer your time with organizations that are committed to ending sexual violence in our society.

Know your community resources so that you can guide others to those resources if necessary.

Take a class in self defense so that you can feel empowered and confident about protecting your own body from physical violence and sexual assault.

IDEAS FOR POLITICAL ACTION

Organize with other people who are committed to work that will change our society into one that is a positive for women and girls.

Hold religious, political, and community leaders accountable to provide clear and consistent messages that sexual violence is not acceptable; and to model healthy, equitable relationships and sexuality.

Publicly recognize and reward organizations and community leadership groups that work to prevent sexual violence.

Support and encourage opportunities for artistic expression that promote community understanding about and solutions to the problem of sexual assault.

Implement and enforce sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention practices in schools, workplaces, places of worship, and other institutions.

Make sure resources and materials that exhibit examples of a healthy sexuality are available to young people in middle schools and high schools, and that such resources address issues of sexual violence prevention.

Hold regular educational forums and discussions about the impact of sexual violence on your community. Create a safe space for ongoing dialogue that can lead to change.

Be vocal about the frequency of rape and sexual violence to draw attention to a problem that requires everyone in our society to be part of the solution. Campaign to bring attention to this issue in the communities in which you are a member.

Donate money and time to organizations that are doing work to prevent sexual assault or support sexual assault survivors. Remember that money matters to the success of non-profit organizations that serve our communities. Consider hosting a small fundraiser since every dollar matters.

Media and Sexual Violence

"It's also important to emphasize how every subtle thing, or seemingly subtle things, contribute to a climate that creates an environment where women are much more easily raped."

– Aaronette M. White, Ph.D., Social Psychologist and Activist

Being aware of the images we consume and how they influence our actions, our assumptions about sexual interactions and our sexual desires, is essential to challenging a society that perpetuates violence against women of color. Teach yourself to recognize what images you consume in your daily life. Notice billboards, magazine ads, television commercials, films, and music videos. Actively identifying these images and critically engaging them is a way to resist the messages that they are sending out into the world. Talk to others, especially young people, about these negative messages. Contact companies, organizations and individuals that are producing violent and misogynistic media content and let them know that you and other men and women find it offensive and want it changed.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What images have you grown so accustomed to seeing that you have forgotten to be critical of them on a daily basis?
2. How are Black women portrayed in the media?
3. In what ways is Black women's sexuality represented and misrepresented in the media?
4. Where can you find positive images of Black women in the media?
5. How is sex portrayed in the media? Can you recall a recent media image of sexual assault? Of positive sexual interaction?
6. What recent cases of sexual violence that were covered in the news media can you recall? How was the victim portrayed?

Nikki Harmon and Gail Lloyd; photo by Wadia L. Gardiner

THE AGREE/DISAGREE LINE

1. Draw a line on the floor (outside with chalk, inside with tape or a string) or designate two people, two walls, two objects at opposite ends of the room: one direction will be where people head if they strongly agree with a statement, the other end will be where they will move to if they strongly disagree.

2. Read each of the statements on the right out loud, slowly and clearly, then ask participants to move to a point on the line that expresses whatever degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement that they feel. You may choose to add your own statements or decide to select only a few from the list. Any points along the middle of the line may reflect their agreement or disagreement with the statement.

3. After each statement is read, allow participants time to relocate then ask a few participants to explain why they are standing where they are. (Did they know where to move immediately? What did they notice about other people's choice of location? What did they think of the statement that was made?)

4. After the exercise is complete sit down with the group and discuss the statements that they found most difficult to hear, or those that there was a surprising response to, as well as those to which there was a varied response (Did women and men respond similarly to statements made?). Allow individuals time to respond to each other's comments.

"If a guy spends a lot of money on a date, he's entitled to sex."

"A woman who has more than one or two drinks is asking for sex."

"Women who dress provocatively invite being raped."

"If a woman goes to a man's dorm room at night she is probably interested in having sex with him."

"Black women are more interested in sex than White women."

"A woman who is drunk can still say 'no' to sex if she really isn't interested."

"It is possible to give nonverbal consent for sex."

"A man or woman can interrupt a sexual intimacy at any point if they decide they do not want to have intercourse."

"It is unfair for a woman to say 'no' to her boyfriend when he wants to have sex. If she really loves him, she'll have sex with him, to make him happy."

"Women are taught to say 'no' to sex, even if they want it. They need help saying yes."

"If I don't have sex on the first or second date I will look bad."

"If I do have sex on the first or second date I will look bad."

"Attractive women have to worry more about being sexually assaulted."

"Black men are more sexually aggressive than White men."

ANONYMOUS STATEMENTS

Have students anonymously complete the following sentences (to the right) on individual pieces of paper. Collect the papers and read some of them aloud to the group. Ask for responses and reactions to statements made. What do our assumptions and expectations tell us about our society or about limited communication about sex?

"I am owed sex when . . . "

"Someone is giving me a sexual come-on when…"

"I know my sexual advances are being rejected when…"

"When I am not interested in having sex with someone I let them know this by…"

"When I want to have sex with someone I let them know this by…"

VIEWING PRINT ADVERTISING CRITICALLY

1. Have participants bring in images of women from fashion magazines or other mainstream publications. Alternately, the facilitator might bring in a collection of fashion magazines to share with the group. Have each person select one image of a woman that they can present to the group.

2. In presenting the image, have participants consider some of the following questions to get them starting in talking about the image and looking critically at how women are represented.

- Does the image present a woman who is weak?
- How does the image present the woman's body?
- Is the image violent?
- Is the woman in the image being preyed upon or dominated? If so, by whom?
- What does the angle of the photograph convey?
- Who is the audience for the image or advertisement?
- Is the woman's body being used to sell something?
- Is the woman presented as a victim or as empowered? What empowers her? What victimizes her?
- What beauty standards are being upheld by the image?
- How are Black women depicted differently than White women?
- What stereotypes does the image use that we might be expected to recognize?

WOMEN IN MUSIC VIDEOS

1. There exists a proliferation of music videos that dehumanize and objectify women and women's bodies. Have group participants identify music videos across all genres that they recognize as harmful to women or as negatively influencing how we think about women in our society.

2. Most music videos can now be viewed on the internet. Set up a screening of several of these different music videos for the group to discuss and deconstruct. Either watch particular videos that have been suggested by members of the group or have the facilitator select a few provocative videos for viewing at the beginning of the discussion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How are women depicted as victims or sexual objects in music videos?
- Do these videos portray violent or misogynistic relationships?
- Who benefits from the perpetuation of these images? Who suffers?
- What messages do the videos send to young people about sex and sexuality?
- What does it convey about men's expectations of women in our society?
- What does it say about male and female gender identities?
- What does it convey about Black men and Black women?

3. For documentary films that deconstruct media representations of women take a look at the following documentaries:

- *Killing Us Softly III: Advertising's Image of Women* (2000) Producer/Director – Available from California Newsreel. www.newsreel.org
- *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (2006) Producer/Director Byron Hurt – Available from the Media Education Foundation. www.mediaed.org
- *Silence: In Search of Black Female Sexuality in America* (2005)Producer/Director Mya B. – Available from The National Film Network. www.nationalfilmnetwork.com

National Rape and Sexual Assault Resources

RESOURCES[18]

The *NO!* Supplemental Educational Video, which will feature highlighted in-depth excerpts from the thirty plus hours of footage that didn't make it into the final version of *NO!* will be available for purchase through AfroLez® Productions.

This educational audio/visual training tool will include:

- Additional testimonies from women who are multiple survivors
- Deconstructing Racist/Sexist Rape Myths
- The role of religion, from Christian and Islamic feminist/womanist perspectives, in stopping rape
- Examining the ways men can stop rape from the perspectives of male anti-rape activists
- The relationship between violence against women and the prison industrial complex

For more information about the *NO!* Supplemental Educational Video, please visit www.NOtheRapeDocumentary.org

NATIONAL RAPE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

A Long Walk Home, Inc.
www.alongwalkhome.org

Adults In Action, Inc.
www.voices-action.org

Adult Survivors of Child Abuse
www.ascasupport.org

After Silence
www.aftersilence.org

AVP: New York City Anti Gay & Lesbian Violence Project
www.avp.org

The Audre Lorde Project, Inc.
www.alp.org

Child Abuse Hotline
(800) 4-A-CHILD (422-4453)
www.childhelpusa.org

The Black Church and Domestic Violence Institute
www.bcdvi.org

The Black Woman's Rape Project
www.womenagainstrape.net

Communities Against Rape and Abuse
www.cara-seattle.org

The Dinah Project
www.monicaacoleman.com

God Bless the Child Productions, Inc.
www.bhurt.com

I Will Survive
www.lorirobinson.com

ILERA
www.ilera.com

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence
www.incite-national.org

Imani Revelations
www.rmcneal.com

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community
www.dvinstitute.org

Men Against Sexual Violence
www.menagainstsexualviolence.org

Men Can Stop Rape
www.mencanstoprape.org

Men Stopping Violence, Inc.
www.menstoppingviolence.org

My Sistahs
www.mysistahs.org

The National Domestic Violence Hotline
(800) 799-SAFE (7233),
Confidential 24/7
TTY: 800-787-3224
www.ndvh.org

National Hopeline Network
(800) SUICIDE (784-2433)
www.hopeline.com

National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
(860) 693-2031
www.sisterslead.org

National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women
www.vawnet.org/index.php

National Sexual Violence Resource Center
(877) 739-3895
www.nsvrc.org

National STD/HIV Hotline
(800) 227-8922

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline
(866) 331-9474

National Women's Alliance, Inc.
www.nwaforchange.org

No Secrets No Lies
www.robinstone.com

NYC-Safe Streets
www.nyc-safestreets.org

Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network
(800) 656-HOPE (4673),
Confidential 24/7
www.rainn.org

RightRides
www.rightrides.org

SARA The Sexual Assault Resource Agency
(434) 295-7273
Hotline: (434) 977-7273
www.sexualassaultresources.org

Sista II Sista
www.sistaiisista.org

SHaKTI PRODUCTIONS, LLC
www.shaktiproductions.net

Stop the Silence: Stop Child Sexual Abuse
www.stopcsa.org

The Street Harassment Project
www.streetharassmentproject.org

Ubuntu (A Women of Color and Survivor-led Collective)
http://iambecauseweare.wordpress.com/about/

V Day: Until the Violence Stops
www.vday.org

Violence in the Lives of Black Women
www.drcarolynwest.com

Women of Color Network
(800) 537-2238, ext. 137
http://womenofcolornetwork.org

Youth Out Loud Writing, Arts and Action
647-23-YOUTH (96884)
www.youth-out-loud.org

18 This is not an all inclusive list. There are more resources and organizations than those that are listed.

Rape and Sexual Assault Organizations by State

Alabama Coalition Against Rape
207 Montgomery Street
Montgomery, AL 36116
(334) 264-0123

Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
130 Seward, Rm 209
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 586-3650
www.andvsa.org

Arizona Sexual Assault Network (AzSAN)
12 West Madison
Phoenix, Arizona 85013
(602) 258-1195
www.azsan.org

Arkansas State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
215 North East Avenue
Fayatteville, AR 72701
(866) 63-ACASA (22272)
www.acasa.ws

California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
1215 K Street, Suite 1100
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 446-2520
www.calcasa.org

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA)
P.O. Box 300398
Denver, CO 80203
(877) 37-CCASA (22272)
www.ccasa.org

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc.
(888) 999-5545 (English, 24/7)
(888) 568-8332 (Español, 24/7)
www.connsacs.org

D.C. Rape Crisis Center
P.O. Box 34125
Washington, D.C. 20043
(202) 333-RAPE (7273) (24/7)
(202) 232-0789
www.dcrcc.org

Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
1311 A Paul Russell Road
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(800) 956-RAPE(7273)
www.fcasv.org

Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault
619 Edgewood Avenue SE, Suite 102
Atlanta, GA 30312
(678) 701-2700
www.gnesa.com

Hawaii Coalition for the Prevention of Sexual Assault
741-A Sunset Avenue, Room 105
Honolulu, HI 96816
(808) 733-9038

Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence
815 Park Boulevard, Suite 140
Boise, ID 83712-7738
(208) 384-0419
www.idvsa.org

Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA)
100 North 16th St,
Springfield, IL 62703
(217) 753-4117
www.icasa.org

Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc. (INCASA)
55 Monument Circle, Ste. 1224
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 423-0233
www.incasa.org

Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (Iowa CASA)
2603 Bell Street, Suite 102
Des Moines, IA 50321-1120
(515) 244-7424
www.iowacasa.org

Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence
220 SW 33rd Street, Suite 100
Topeka, KS 66611
(785) 232-9784
www.kcsdv.org

Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs, Inc.
P.O. Box 602
Frankfort, KY 40602-0602
(502) 226-2704
www.kasap.org

Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault (LaFASA)
P.O. Box 40
Independence LA 70443-0040
(985) 345-5995
www.lafasa.org

Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault
83 Western Ave, Suite 2
Augusta, ME 04330
(207) 626-0034
www.mecasa.org

Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
1517 Gov. Ritchie Highway
Suite 207
Arnold, MD 21012
(800) 983.RAPE (7273); (410) 974.4507
www.mcasa.org

Jane Doe Inc., The Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
14 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108-3704
(617) 248-0922
www.janedoe.org

Michigan Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
3893 Okemos Road, Suite B-2
Okemos, MI 48864
(517) 347-7000
www.mcadsv.org

Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault
420 N. 5th Street Suite 690
Minneapolis, MN 55409
(800) 964-8847; (612) 313-2797
www.mncasa.org

Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault
P.O. Box 4172
Jackson, MS 39296
(888) 987-9011
www.mscasa.org

Missouri Coalition Against Sexual Assault
107 West Main Street, Suite 100
Jefferson City, MO 65110
(573) 636-8776
www.mssu.edu/missouri/mocasa/mocasa.htm

Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
PO Box 633
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 443-7794
www.mcadsv.com

Nebraska Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Coalition (NDVSAC)
825 M Street, Suite 404
Lincoln, NE 68508
(800) 876-6238 (in NE); (402) 476-6256
www.ndvsac.org

Nevada Coalition Against Sexual Violence
PO Box 530103
Henderson, NV 89053
(800) 656-HOPE (4673); (702) 914-6878
www.ncasv.org

New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
P.O. Box 353
Concord, NH 03302-0353
(800) 852-3388

New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault -NJCASA
2333 Whitehorse Mercerville Road, Suite B
Trenton, NJ 08619
(800) 601-7200; (609) 631-4450
www.njcasa.org

New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Inc.
4004 Carlisle, NE, Suite D
Albuquerque, NM 87107
(505) 883-8020
www.swcp.com/nmcsaas/about.html

New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
63 Colvin Avenue
Albany, NY 12206
(518) 482-4222
www.nyscasa.org

NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault
27 Christopher Street, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10014
(212) 229-0345 (English)
(212) 229-0345 x306 (Espanol)
www.nycagainstrape.org

North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA)
4426 Louisburg Rd, Suite 100
Raleigh, NC 27616
(919) 431-0995; (888) 737-CASA (2272)
www.nccasa.org

North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services
418 East Rousser #320
Bismarck, ND 58501-4046
(800) 472-2911 (in ND); (701) 255-6240
www.ndcaws.org

SARNCO – The Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio
4041 N. High Street, Suite 410
Columbus, OH 43214
(614) 268-3322; (614) 267-7020 (24/7)
www.ohiohealth.com/body.cfm?id=980

Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
2525 NW Expressway, Suite 101
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
(405) 848-1815; (800) 522-7233
www.ocadvsa.org

Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (OCADSV)
659 Cottage Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 365-9644; (800) 622-3782
www.ocadsv.com

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR)
125 Enola Drive
Enola, PA 17025
(800) 692-7445 (in PA); (717)-728-9740
www.pcar.org

Day One - Sexual Assault and Trauma Resource Center
300 Richmond Street, Suite 205
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 421-4100; (800) 494-8100 (24 hrs.)
www.satrc.org

PeeDee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault
P.O. 1351
Florence, SC 29503
(800) 273-1820 (24 hrs.)
www.peedeecoalition.org

South Dakota Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse
P.O. Box 2000
Eagle Butte, SD 57625
(605) 964-7233
www.southdakotacoalition.org

Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
P.O. Box 120972
Nashville, TN 37212
(615) 386-9406; (800) 289-9018 (8am-5pm M-F)
www.tcadsv.org

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA)
6200 La Calma Drive, Suite 110
Austin, TX 78752
(512) 474-7190
www.taasa.org

Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA)
284 W. 400 N.
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
(801) 746-0404; (800) 421-1100 (in UT)
www.ucasa.org

Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
P.O. Box 405
Montpelier, VT 05601
(802) 223-1302; (800) 489-7273 (in VT)
www.vtnetwork.org

Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance
1010 N. Thompson St. Ste 202
Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 377-0335
www.vsdvalliance.org

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
2415 Pacific Ave. SE #10-C
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 754-7583
www.wcsap.org

West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information & Services
112 Braddock Street
Fairmont, WV 26554
(304) 366-9500
www.fris.org

Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA)
600 Williamson Street, Suite N-2
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 257-1516
www.wcasa.org

Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
441 South Center
Casper, WY 82602
(307) 235-2814
www.wyomingdvsa.org

Recommended Reading[19]

• Sexual Harrassment, Sexual and/or Domestic Violence, and Gender Issues •

Joe-Ellen Asbury, "African-American Women in Violent Relationships: An Exploration of Cultural Differences" in Robert L. Hampton (Ed.) *Violence in the Black Family: Correlates and Consequences* (Lexington Books, 1987)

Ronet Bachman, "Violence against Women: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report," NCJ-145325. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1994.

Ronet Bachman and Linda Saltzman, "Violence against women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey," NCJ-154348. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 1995.

Toni Cade Bambara (Ed.), *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (Washington Square Press, Reprint, 2005)

DeShannon Bowens, *Hush Hush: An African American Family Breaks Their Silence About Sexuality and Abuse*, 2007 www.ilera.com/hushhush

Thema Bryant-Davis, *Thriving in the Wake of Trauma: A Multicultural Guide* (Praeger/Greenwood, 2005)

Maryviolet C.Burns (Ed.), *The Speaking Profits Us: Violence in the Lives of Women of Color*, (Seattle, WA: Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1996)

Rudolph P. Byrd and Beverly Guy-Sheftall (Eds.), *Traps: African-American Men on Gender and Sexuality* (Indiana University Press, 2001)

Pearl Cleage, *Mad At Miles: A Black Woman's Guide to Truth* (Cleage Group, 1990)

Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African-American Communities* (One World, 2003)

Patricia Hill Collins, *From Black Power to Hip Hop: Racism, Nationalism, and Feminism* (Temple University Press, 2006)

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African-Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (Routlegde Press, 2005)

Patricia Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and Politics of Empowerment* (Routledge; Revised, 10th Anniv., 2nd edition, 2000)

Patricia Hill Collins, "The Sexual Politics of Black Women," in P. Bart & E. G. Moran (Eds.) *Violence Against Women: The Bloody Footprints. A Gender & Society Reader* (Sage Publications, 1993)

Kimberle Crenshaw, "The Marginalization of Sexual Violence Against Black Women," *National Coalition Against Sexual Assault Journal* (No. 2)

R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash, *Women, Violence and Social Change* (Routledge, 1992)

Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (Amistad, 1996)

Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the inner lives of Black women in the Midwest: Preliminary thoughts on the culture of dissemblance," *Signs* 14. 4 (1989): 912-920.

bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (South End Press, 2000)

bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (South End Press, 1999)

bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (South End Press, 1990)

bell hooks, "When brothers are batterers (African-Americans and domestic violence)," *Essence*, 25 (September 1994): 148.

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Eds.), T*he Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology* (South End Press, 2006)

Gail Garfield, *Knowing What We Know, African-American Women's Experiences of Violence and Violation* (Rutgers University Press, 2005)

Diane K. Lewis, "A response to inequality: Black women, racism, and sexism," in Micheline R, Mason et. al (Ed.) *Black Women in America: Social Science Perspective* (University of Chicago Press, 1990)

Audre Lorde, *A Burst of Light* (Firebrand, 1988)

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (The Crossing Press, 1984)

Mary P. Koss, "Hidden rape: Sexual aggression and victimization in the national sample of students in higher education," in Maureen Pirog-Good and Jan E. Stets (Eds.) *Violence in Dating Relationships: Emerging Social Issues*, (Praeger Paperback,1989)

Deborah Mahlstedt and Linda Keeny "Female Survivors of Dating Violence and their Social networks," *Feminism and Psychology* 3.3 (1993): 319-333

Clifton Marsh, "Sexual assault and domestic violence in the African-American community," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 17.3 (1993): 149-155.

Joan Morgan, *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip-Hop Feminist Breaks It Down*

19 This list does not represent an all inclusive list. There are many more resources than those that are listed.

(Simon & Schuster 1st Touchstone Edition 2000)

Toni Morrison (Ed.), *Race-ing Justice, En-Gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality* (Pantheon, 1992)

Athena Mutua (Ed.), *Rethinking Black Masculinities* (Routledge, 2006)

Mark Anthony Neal, *New Black Man: Rethinking Black Masculinity* (Routledge Press, 2006)

Jill Nelson, *Straight, No Chaser: How I Became a Grown-Up Black Woman* (Penguin Non Classics, 1999)

Helen A. Neville and Jennifer F. Hamer (Eds.), "Black Women's Activism" *The Black Scholar: Journal of Black Studies and Research* (Vol. 36, No. 1)

Maria Ochoa and Barbara K. Ige (Eds.), *Shout Out: Women of Color Respond to Violence* (Seal Press 2007)

Ewuare X. Osayande, *MISOGYNY and THE EMCEE: Sex, Race & Hip Hop*, 2007 www.osayande.org/books.html

Charlotte Pierce-Baker, *Surviving the Silence: Black Women's Stories of Rape* (WW Norton & Co, 1998)

Kevin Powell, *Who's Gonna Take the Weight: Manhood, Race, and Power in America* (Three Rivers Press, 2003)

Gwendolyn D. Pough, *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere* (Northeastern University Press 2004)

Beth E. Richie, *Compelled To Crime: The Gender Entrapment of Battered Black Women* (Routledge Press, 1996)

Beth E. Richie, "Gender entrapment: The link between gender identity, race/ethnicity, violence, and crime," in Alice Dan, Ed. *Reframing Women's Health* (Sage, 1994)

Lori Robinson, *I Will Survive: The African-American Guide to Healing from Sexual Assault and Abuse* (Seal Press, 2003)

Tricia Rose, *Longing to Tell: Black Women Talk About Sexuality and Intimacy* (Picador Reprint, 2004)

Ayanna Serwaa (Author), Leah Makeda (Illustrator), *Healing the Scars of Violence With Herbs and Essential Oils: A 'We Moon' Self Help Guide*
(Self Published; ayannaaromas@hotmail.com, 2007)
www.unltd.org.uk/directory_detail.php?ID=1003

T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Pimps up, Ho's Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women* (New York University Press, 2007)

Natalie J. Sokoloff and Christina Pratt (Eds.) *Domestic Violence At The Margins: Readings On Race, Class, Gender, And Culture* (Rutgers University Press, 2005)

Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968-1980* (Duke University Press, 2005)

Robert Staples, "Sexual harassment: Its history, definition, and prevalence in the Black community," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 17.3 (1993): 143-148.

Robin D. Stone, *No Secrets No Lies: How Black Families Can Heal from Sexual Abuse* (Broadway Books, 2004)

Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence And American Indian Genocide* (South End Press, 2005)

Barbara Smith, *The Truth That Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender, and Freedom* (Rutgers University Press, 2000)

Geneva Smitherman (Ed.), *African-American Women Speak Out on Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas*
(Wayne State University Press, July 1995)

Carolyn West (Ed.), *Violence in the Lives of Black Women: Battered, Black, and Blue* (Haworth Press, 2003)

Aaronette M. White, "Racial and Gender Attitudes as Predictors of Feminist Activism Among Self-Identified African American Feminists" *Journal of Black Psychology* Volume 32 (2006): pp. 455-478.

Aaronette M. White, "Talking Feminist, Talking Black: Micromobilization Processes in a Collective Protest against Rape" *Gender and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 1, *Special Issue: Gender and Social Movements,* Part 2 (Feb., 1999): pp. 77-100

Aaronette M. White, Michael J. Strube, and Sherri Fisher. "A Black Feminist Model of Rape Myth Acceptance." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* Vol. 22, no. 2 (1998): pp. 157-175.

Evelyn C. White (Ed.), *The Black Women's Health Book: Speaking for Ourselves* (Seal Press, 1993)

Evelyn C. White, *Chain, Chain, Change: For Black Women in Abusive Relationships* (South End Press, 1995)

Gail Elizabeth Wyatt, *Stolen Women: Reclaiming Our Sexuality, Taking Back Our Lives* (Wiley, 1998)

Gail Elizabeth Wyatt, "The Sociocultural Context of African-American and White American Women's Rape,"
Journal of Social Issues 48.1 (1992): 77-91.

• Fiction on Intraracial Rape in Black Communities •

Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
(New York: Random House, 1969)

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1952)
Thomas Glave, *Who's Song? And Other Stories*
(San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2000)

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970)

Gloria Naylor, *The Women of Brewster Place* (Penguin, 1985)

Ann Petry, *The Street* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.,1946)

Sapphire, *Push* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996)

ntozake shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*
(San Lorenzo, CA: Shameless Hussy Press, 1975)

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*
(New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982)

Richard Wright, *Native Son*
(New York and London : Harper & Brothers, 1940)

• Black Feminist/Womanist Perspectives on Christianity and Islam •

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Learn More About Individuals Involved in the Film

Aminata C. Baruti, Ph.D., is choreographer and dancer of "Blues Migration Dance". She has danced with the Urban Bush Women. She is active in presenting African and African-American dance forms and culture in universities, public schools, and local communities, and carries with her the message of healing through dance.

Samiya A. Bashir wrote and performed the poem "Treason" included in the film. She is author of *Where the Apple Falls: poems,* and co-editor, with Tony Medina and Quraysh Ali Lansana, of *Role Call: A Generational Anthology of Social & Political Black Literature & Art*. She has also authored two poetry collections and is a founding organizer of Fire & Ink, a writer's festival for LGBT writers of African descent. www.samiyabashir.com

Elaine Brown, former chairperson of Black Panther Party, continues the struggle for Black liberation. She is author of *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* and *The Condemnation of Little B*. She is co-founder of Mothers Advocating Juvenile Justice in Atlanta and the National Alliance for Radical Prison Reform, where she currently serves on their Board of Directors. She is also founder of Brunswick Women's Association for Community Improvement. A classically trained musician, one of her two albums—*Seize the Time*, which includes The Black Panther Party National Anthem (The Meeting)—was re-released in January 2007 by Warner Bros. She is presently writing *Reasons of Race and Belief*, the biography of Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown) with Karima Al-Amin (for 2007 publication by Carroll & Graf). www.elainebrown.org

Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Ph.D., was the first Black female president of Spelman College and has recently completed her tenure as the president of Bennett College for Women, respectively, the only two colleges serving Black women in the U.S. With her Ph.D. in Anthropology, she is a celebrated public speaker who addresses issues pertaining to justice, diversity, the health and safety of women, children, and underserved populations worldwide. Her most recent publication is *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African-American Communities*, co-authored with Beverly Guy-Sheftall.

Adrienne Dale Davis, J.D., is currently the Reef C. Ivey II Research Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of North Carolina School of Law. Her work focuses on gendered and private law dimensions of American slavery and women, slavery, sexuality, and religion.

John T. Dickerson, Jr., of the Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center in Frankfort, Kentucky has been honored by the office of the governor of his state for his work educating of boys and young men in Central Kentucky about rape prevention.
www.bluegrassrapecrisis.org

Ulester Douglas, M.S.W., is Director of Training for Men Stopping Violence. Certified as a relationship therapist he has worked with individuals, families and communities affected by violence. He has authored and co-authored articles and curricula on family violence and other human rights issues, and currently serves on the board of directors of the Washington, D.C.-based National Network to End Domestic Violence. www.menstoppingviolence.org

Farah Jasmine Griffin, Ph.D., is Professor of English and Comparative Literature and African-American Studies at Columbia University. Her major fields of interest are African-American literature, music, history and politics. She is the author of *"Who Set You Flowin'?:" The African-American Migration Narrative* and *If You Can't Be Free, Be a Mystery: In Search of Billie Holiday* and has also co-edited several publications.

Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Ph.D., is an author, historian, and Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies and English at Spelman College; and an adjunct professor at Emory University's Institute for Women's Studies where she teaches graduate courses. She is the founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center at Spelman, the first women's studies program at a Historically Black College or University. She has published a number of texts within African American and Women's Studies which have been noted as seminal works by other scholars.Her most recent publication is *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African-American Communities*, co-authored with Johnnetta Betsch Cole.
www.spelman.edu/about_us/distinction/womenscenter/sheftall

Essex Hemphill (1957 – 1995) wrote and performed "To Some Supposed Brothers" in the film. His groundbreaking work focused much on the experience of being Black, gay, and male, while addressing issues of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ho-

mophobia, and classism. His poetry appears in anthologies including *The Poet Upstairs: Natives, Tourists and Other Mysteries; Art Against Apartheid*. He is the author of *Ceremonies: Prose and Poetry* and the editor of *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men*. He also contributed to the award-winning documentaries *Tongues Untied* (Marlon Riggs); *Looking for Langston* (Isaac Julien), and *Black Nations/Queer Nations?* (Shari Frilot). His untimely death on November 4, 1995 was due to complications from AIDS.

Audree Irons received her BA in Film and Video with a minor in African-American Studies. An active member of Atlanta's community for twenty years, she is involved in her community, often volunteering her time and talent in assisting those less fortunate than herself. She has worked in various aspects of the film and video industry for over 10 years. Audree is a staunch supporter of a number of grassroots youth, women, and arts based organizations, which have included Hosea Williams' Feed The Hungry, Inner Strength, the National Black Arts Festival, Image Film and Video, Tupac Shakur's Arts Center and the Grady's Rape Crisis Center. Presently Audree is the Administrative Coordinator of the Office of Student Life and Leadership at Georgia State University.

Honorée Fanonne Jeffers wrote and performed "that's proof she wanted it" in the film. She is an award-winning poet who is an Associate Professor in the English Department at the University of Oklahoma. She has published three critically acclaimed collections of poetry, *The Gospel of Barbecue, Outlandish Blues,* and the *Red Clay Suite*. She is presently at work on her first collection of fiction.

Rev. Reanae McNeal is the founder and president of Imani Revelations and Beauty For Ashes Ministries. She is an international performing artist, vocalist, motivational speaker, storyteller, and trainer whose work includes a Womanist theater that begins to address issues of rape, racism, domestic violence, sexism, AIDS, classism, breast cancer, and homelessness. She has toured extensively across the United States, Hungary, Italy and Russia, where she was a cultural ambassador in the performing arts under the special invitation of The Russian Ministry of Culture. www.rmcneal.com

Sulaiman Nuriddin, M.Ed., has been with Men Stopping Violence for two decades. He works intensively with the DeKalb County, Georgia court system, co-teaching ongoing classes for convicted and self-referred men involved in cases of domestic violence. He has worked to develop effective interventions with men of color who batter, leading trainings for the National Council of Churches, the Atlanta Police Department, and the U.S. Department of Justice, for which he has also served as a consultant. www.menstoppingviolence.org

Charlotte Pierce-Baker, Ph.D., is the editor o*f Surviving the Silence: Black Women's Stories of Rape*. She is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Vanderbilt University as well as Professor of English. She is a participating member of Chicago's "Voices and Faces Project" on rape and sexual assault. Previously, as faculty in Women's Studies and English at Duke University, she was an active member of the school's Women's Center.

Loretta J. Ross is former Director, of the DC Rape Crisis Center. She is a co-founder and the National Coordinator of the SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective, and was the Co-Director of the 2004 National March for Women's Lives in Washington D.C., the largest protest in U.S. history. She is also the co-author of *Undivided Right: Women of Color Organizing for Reproductive Justice*. www.sistersong.net

Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, Ph.D., is a feminist scholar of Islam and former SNCC Organizer. She is Assistant Professor of Religion at the University of Florida, where her primary academic focus is on Islamic law and its impact on contemporary Muslim women. She conducted research in Jordan, Egypt, Palestine and Syria on the Shari'ah's impact on women, contemporarily and the women's movements in those countries to change these laws. An author of several essays, which are featured in anthologies and journals, she is currently completing a manuscript for New York University Press whose working title is: *Muslim Feminism – A Call for Reform*.

Michael Simmons has been an international human rights and peace activist over 40 years. Beginning as an organizer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the sixties, Michael's work has taken him to Africa, Asia, Europe and Middle East. The issues he has worked on include organizing conferences and seminars in Europe and Africa on the impact of East-West Tension on the Third World; seminars on peace and reconciliation in Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo during and after the Balkan War; a regional conference on sex trafficking in the Balkans; and work with Roma in Central Europe on Roma

human rights issues. He has lectured on and written about US foreign and military policy, nuclear weapons, human rights, conflict resolution and all forms of violence against women, with an emphasis on trafficking of women and girls in the US, Africa and Europe. Michael also worked as the Creative Advisor to *NO!* Living in Budapest, Hungary, Michael is the Co-Director, with Linda Carranza, of the Raday Salon, http://raday.blogs.com/.

Barbara Smith is an African-American, lesbian feminist, independent scholar, and activist who has played a significant role in building and sustaining Black feminism in the United States. She, along with Audre Lorde, co-founded and published Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, the first U.S. publisher for women of color. Author of a wide range celebrated publications, she edited three major collections about Black women: *Conditions: Five, The Black Women's Issue* (with Lorraine Bethel); *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (with Gloria T. Hull and Patricia Bell Scott); and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. Her recent publication is *The Truth That Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender and Freedom*. She is presently an elected member of the Albany Common Council in Albany, NY.

Salamishah Tillet, Ph.D., is the co-founder of A Long Walk Home Inc. and the writer and the program director of *A Story of a Rape Survivor (SOARS*). She is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization Program at Harvard University in March 2007. She is a graduate of Brown University where she received a Masters of Art of Teaching in English (M.A.T.) in May of 1997. She is also a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania where she received a B.A. in English and Afro-American Studies in May of 1996. Dr. Tillet also worked as an associate producer and the director of archival research on *NO!* www.alongwalkhome.org

Scheherazade Tillet is the co-founder of A Long Walk Home, Inc. and the photographer and artistic director of *A Story of a Rape Survivor (SOARS)*. In May 2000, she received her B.A. from Tufts University. She studied photography at the Boston Museum School of Fine Arts and the Rutgers University Mason Gross School of Art. Scheherazade earned her Masters in Art Therapy (M.A.A.T.) from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2004. Scheherazade was the production stills photographer for *NO!* She works as an art therapist and rape crisis counselor at the Chicago YWCA Rape Crisis Center.
www.alongwalkhome.org

Rev. Traci C. West, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Ethics and African-American Studies at Drew University Theological School. She is author of *Wounds of The Spirit: Black women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics* and *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter.* She is an ordained elder in the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist church and is a member of United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church.

Aaronette M. White, Ph.D., is a Social Psychologist and Activist. She is assistant professor of Women's Studies and African and African-American Studies at Pennsylvania State University. Her research focus includes socio-political identity changes in adulthood, the psychology of collective action, and behavioral and attitudinal correlates of race, gender, and class consciousness cross-culturally. Dr. White was one of the five scholar-activist advisors to *NO!*

Janelle White, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of San Francisco Women Against Rape. She has been active in the movement to end violence against women for over ten years working with the University of Michigan Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center, the YWCA Rape Crisis Program of Greater New Orleans, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, the Hate Crimes Project of the Lesbian and Gay Community Center of New Orleans, and as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of New Orleans (UNO) and Director of the UNO Women's Center. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan. Her doctoral work examines U.S. based Black women's mobilization to confront sexual and domestic violence. Dr. White was one of the five scholar-activist advisors to *NO!*. She is excited to once again be connected to community-based organizing efforts to challenge violence against women.

Rosetta Williams is a visual artist, poet and mother who resides in Philadelphia, PA.

Tamara L. Xavier, M.Ed., is a choreographer and dancer who performs in both the Black Feminist Dance Statement and "For Women of Rage and Reason" in the film. She is an avant-garde dance artist who applies deep listening and positive consciousness to the fore. Currently based in Philadelphia, PA, where she is completing a Ph.D. degree in Dance at Temple University (she already holds a Masters in dance), Tamara choreographs innovative dance dramas that raise awareness of current human rights issues and harkens back to Afro-Caribbean mythopoetic imagery.

Film Credits

NO!™/USA/2006

Color/Digital Video/ 94 minutes

AfroLez® Productions, LLC – Production Company and Print Source

AfroLez® Productions & California Newsreel – Distributors

Women Make Movies, Inc. – Fiscal Sponsor

KEY PRODUCTION AND POST PRODUCTION PERSONNEL

Aishah Shahidah Simmons – Producer/Writer/Director

Tamara L. Xavier – Co-Producer/Director of Choreography

Gail M. Lloyd – Co-Producer/Contributing Editor

Joan W. Brannon – Associate Producer/Co-Writer/Director of Photography

Sharon M. Mullally – Editor

Wadia L. Gardiner – Associate Producer/Production Manager

Salamishah M. Tillet – Associate Producer/Director of Archival Research

Amadee L. Braxton – Associate Producer/Archival Researcher

Giscard (JEE EYE ZEE) Xavier – Original Score

Monica Dillon – *NO!* Song

Nikki Harmon – Assistant Director

Mishann Lau – Sound Editor and Re-recording Mixer

Kia Steave-Dickerson – Set Decorator

Scheherazade Tillet – Production Stills Photographer

Traci McKindra – *NO!* Logo Design/Webmaster

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POST PRODUCTION CONSULTANT

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Biographies of Contributors

Producer/Writer/Director of *NO!*

Aishah Shahidah Simmons is an award-winning African-American feminist lesbian independent documentary filmmaker, television and radio producer, published writer, international lecturer, and activist based in Philadelphia, PA. In 1992, Aishah founded AfroLez® Productions, an AfroLez®femcentric multimedia arts company committed to using the moving image, the written and spoken word to address those issues which have a negative impact on marginalized and disenfranchised people. Coined in 1990 by Aishah, AfroLez®femcentric defines the culturally conscious role of Black women who identify as Afrocentric, lesbian, and feminist. For three years she co-produced two monthly public television programs for a PBS affiliate in Philadelphia. Her internationally acclaimed short videos Silence…Broken and In My Father's House, explore the issues of race, gender, homophobia, rape, and misogyny. An incest and rape survivor, she spent eleven years, seven of which were full time, to produce/write/direct *NO!* The Rape Documentary.

Aishah is the recipient of numerous grants and awards including the 2007 International Federation of Black Prides Award; the 2007 Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community Media Award; the 2006 D.C. Rape Crisis Center's Visionary Award; a 2006 grant from the Ford Foundation to support the international educational marketing and distribution of *NO!*; 2006 National Award for Outstanding Response to and Prevention of Sexual Violence from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center; Leeway Foundation's 2005 Transformation Award; an Artist-in-Residency at Spelman College's Digital Moving Image Salon; and several production/post production grants from the Valentine Foundation, the Bread and Roses Community Fund, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation, and the Gloria Steinem Fund of the Ms. Foundation for Women.

Aishah's essays have been published in several anthologies and journals in the United States, France, and Italy. She has screened her work, lectured on the impact of the intersections of oppressions on women of African descent, and facilitated workshops on how to use cultural work to educate about and heal from sexual violence; and the process of making grassroots social change documentaries to racially and ethnically diverse audiences at community centers, colleges and universities, high schools, juvenile correctional facilities, rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, and conferences, across the United States, in Hungary, Croatia, France, Italy, The Netherlands, England, South Africa, Kenya, Mexico, and Spain.

AUTHORS OF THE STUDY GUIDE

Primary Author

Salamishah Tillet, Ph.D., is the co-founder of A Long Walk Home Inc. and the writer and the program director of *A Story of a Rape Survivor (SOARS)*. She is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization Program at Harvard University in March 2007. She is a graduate of Brown University where she received a Masters of Art of Teaching in English (M.A.T.) in May of 1997. She is also a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania where she received a B.A. in English and Afro-American Studies in May of 1996. In addition to her work on the Study Guide, Dr. Tillet is also an associate producer and the director of research of *NO!*
www.alongwalkhome.org

Secondary Author

Rachel Afi Quinn has taught students of all ages over the last thirteen years, with a particular commitment to underserved youth. Most recently, she has led college students in service learning programs abroad in Ghana, Ukraine and El Salvador. Since graduating from Wesleyan University in 1999, Rachel spent a year living in West Africa, then several years in San Francisco where her passion for diversity in education led her to documentary film distribution with California Newsreel. Rachel assisted in film promotion and development for the African American Perspectives Collection and the Library of African Cinema and she did outreach to high schools, college campuses, academic organizations and community groups Currently, Rachel is getting her Ph.D. in the Program in American Culture at the University of Michigan. Her work is on social constructions of race in the African Diaspora, specifically the US and Latin America. She is focused on and committed to diversity in education.

Contributing Essayists

Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, Ph.D., is a feminist scholar of Islam and former SNCC Organizer. She is Assistant Professor of Religion at the University of Florida, where her primary academic focus is on Islamic law and its impact on contemporary Muslim women. She conducted research in Jordan, Egypt, Palestine and Syria on the Shari'ah's impact on women, contemporarily and the women's movements in those countries to change these laws. Dr. Simmons also teaches on the topics of African-American religious traditions and race, religion, and rebellion. She is currently completing a manuscript for New York University Press whose working title is: *Muslim Feminism – A Call for Reform*. Dr. Simmons has a thorough grounding in Sufism (the mystical stream in Islam) having studied for seventeen years with the contemporary Sufi Mystic, Shaykh M.R. Bawa Muhaiyadeen. In addition to her academic and spiritual studies she has a long history in the area of civil rights, human rights and peace work, which includes being a member of the staff of the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker-based, international peace and justice non-governmental organization for twenty three years.

Tamara L. Xavier, M.Ed., is an avant-garde dance artist who applies deep listening and positive consciousness to the fore. Currently based in Philadelphia, PA, where she is completing a Ph.D. degree in Dance at Temple University. Tamara choreographs innovative dance dramas that raise awareness of current human rights issues and harkens back to Afro-Caribbean mythopoetic imagery. She was initiated into the world of experimental dance films via her collaboration with award-winning filmmaker Tina Morton in Morton's *If You Call Them*. As Director of Choreography for the documentary film *NO!* and Choreographer/Performer in the documentary film *Enemy on the Inside: Who holds you accountable?*, Tamara has had the opportunity to create narrative movement vignettes for Aishah Shahidah Simmons and Grace Poore, respectively, two award-winning women of color film directors and activists committed to breaking the silence around sexual violence endured by women and children. She has performed with maverick artists such as The Hydrogen Jukebox, Leah Stein, Ju-Yeon Ryu, Victoria Rothstein, Monica McIntyre and is showcased in Academy Award®-winning filmmaker Wendy Weinberg's documentary *The Art of Activism*. Her dream choreographic assignment would be to make a dance work with the phenomenal dancers of Urban Bush Women set to lyrics written by Mary J. Blige.

Graphic Designer

Kavita Rajanna is a freelance graphic designer, with a focus on using design as a tool of resistance and storytelling in support of social change. A South Indian with roots across the US South (from Selma to Atlanta) and the Global South (Bangalore), she has extensive experience with community-based and cultural work, having lived and worked in Atlanta, GA and New York City. She currently lives in Philadelphia where she is involved in community-based/solidarity work that supports grassroots movement building.

NO! Logo Design/Website Designer

Traci McKindra graduated from Drake University in 2002 with a B.A. in Graphic Design and a specialized minor in Arts Management (with advertising, marketing and management coursework). She is senior art director in the Midwest offices of Integer Group in Des Moines, IA. Traci also freelances as a logo and web designer for Lori Robinson (LoriRobinson.com), Aishah Shahidah Simmons (NOtheRapeDocumentary.org) and National Organization of Sisters of Colors Ending Sexual Assault (SistersLead.org). As a member of St. Paul A.M.E. Church, she serves as a Sunday School teacher, Unity Choir and Praise Team member, and attends the Women's Ministry. Traci (with partner Alesha Hartin) has also done some freelance print design work for the St. Paul A.M.E. Church Transformation Center, a half-way house and social service agency being sponsored by her church. Traci also works in the community as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and a spiritual advisor to the Drake Gospel Choir.

Copy Editor

Paul Farber is a cultural critic whose writing has appeared in Vibe, Blender, Complex, Philadelphia Weekly, Strut, and Mass Appeal, and on the internet on America Online and Outsports. He is currently a doctoral student in the Program for American Culture at the University of Michigan.

Legal Services

Tonya M. Evans-Walls, Esquire, is the managing attorney and principal of TME LAW. She practices in the areas of public finance, intellectual property, literary law, and estate planning. The firm is listed in the Red Book. She is also adjunct professor at York College of Pennsylvania, teaching Music Licensing, Publishing, and Copyright. Ms. Evans-Walls is a poet and the author of Literary Law Guide for Authors: Copyright, Trademark, and Contracts in Plain Language, Seasons of Her and SHINE! Her short story, Not Tonight appears in an anthology titled Proverbs for the People, published by Kensington.
www.tmelaw.net

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Aishah is also very appreciative of the hard work and support of the people behind the making of *Unveiling the Silence: NO! The Rape Documentary Study Guide*.

As the primary author, Salamishah Tillet worked tirelessly on the content of this guide, while addressing all of Aishah's requests and editorial comments, under some fairly stringent deadlines. As the secondary author, Rachel Afi Quinn, also worked diligently on the content of the guide, while also participating with the design of the guide. With Aishah's direction and editorial supervision, Salamishah and Rachel created an invaluable resource that enhances *NO!* The Rape Documentary because this study guide serves as a tangible "hands on" educational-activist discussion tool that really encourages viewers to challenge their thinking about heterosexual rape and other forms of sexual violence, while giving a road map on how one can become an active participant in the movements to end all forms sexual violence.

The scholar-activist contributions of Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons and Tamara L. Xavier added two important components on the critical roles of religion and dance/movement in ending sexual violence. Their contributions are also of special significance to Aishah because, in addition to being Aishah's mother, and comrade in the global movement to end violence against women, Zoharah was the first woman who agreed to be interviewed in *NO!*; and Tamara has been involved with *NO!*, as a co-producer, since its conception in October 1994. Additionally, as the director of choreography of *NO!*, Tamara is responsible for the inclusion of dance in *NO!*

Kavita Rajanna's political artistic eye brought another important dimension to the beautiful look and feel of the design of this study guide.

Paul Farber's editorial pen provided critical assistance to both Salamishah and Aishah as they prepared the guide for final delivery to Kavita.

Tonya Evans-Walls', Esquire, legal expertise and advice made sure that every single legal "T" was crossed and "I" was dotted before this Study Guide went into production.

Traci McKindra's *NO!* logo design; and *NO!* website design and ongoing maintenance gives *NO!* a distinct artistic look and powerful presence in the cyber universe and the real world.

Among many things, were it not for Cornelius Moore, Co-Director of California Newsreel, and Rahdi Taylor formerly Director of Marketing and Communications at California Newsreel at California Newsreel, and presently the Associate Director of Sundance Documentary Film Program; Aishah would not know much less have the pleasure of working with Rachel Afi Quinn.

Wadia L. Gardiner's administrative, logistical, organizational, and managerial support, were invaluable resources and priceless gifts to Aishah.

Monica Dillon's marketing strategies, and more importantly her consistent shoulder to lean on and ear to listen to, were precious gifts to Aishah.

The financial support of Tyree Cinque Simmons aka "DJ Drama", Aishah's brother and ninth birthday present, helped Aishah to give *NO!* the final push across the finish line.

Since *NO!* conception in 1994, Michael Simmons has played a pivotal role in the development, evolution, completion, and international promotion of *NO!*, as the creative advisor, a featured interviewee, and equally as important as Aishah's father and comrade in the global movement to end violence against women.

Since 1992, Dr. Clara Whaley-Perkins has been a critical guide on Aishah's journey called life. Dr. Whaley-Perkins' support created a road map for Aishah to develop compassion and empathy for herself as a survivor and by extension for all women who are survivors.

Infinite Thank you's to Robert J. Brand, founder and executive director of Solutions of Progress, Inc., who, since 1996 has provided in-kind institutional support to AfroLez® Productions and *NO!* The Rape Documentary.

In December 1994, during a scriptwriting workshop at Scribe Video Center, Toni Cade Bambara encouraged Aishah to channel her rage and pain about the rape and sexual assault of women of African descent in the United States of America to images on paper. This channeling enabled Aishah to dig deep into her psychic ancestral memory to create "A State of Rage," a choreopoem, which served as the critical roadmap from which NO! *was created. Toni's physical transition happened ten years before Aishah was able to get* NO! *across the finish line. However, through her invaluable lessons and priceless gift, Toni's Black*feminist*revolutionary*cultural worker*Spirit was with Aishah every step of the way.*

The making of *NO!* has been a hardcore collaborative effort under Aishah's leadership and vision. It literally took an international village to make *NO!* an award-winning, internationally celebrated reality. There are so many women and men who have given their creative, technical, scholarly, activist, and legal expertise behind the *NO!* camera lens. *NO!* would not exist without the support of numerous individuals and institutions. While it is literally impossible to list every single institution and individual who played a role, in one way or another in the making of *NO!* it is very important to Aishah that she list many of the funders and supporters, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean that played a role in helping her to get *NO!* across the finish line.

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National Host Committee for *NO!* Benefit
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Tyrone Smith
Denise C. Jones
Evelyne Laurent-Perrault
Oyatunde Amakisi
Mojisola Sonoiki/àFRIsistahs
Skye Ward
Heba A. Nimr
Wanda R. Moore
Funky LB
Cara Page
Torkwase Madison Dyson
Rachel Harding, Ph.D./ Veterans of Hope Project
Michelle Parkerson
Storme Webber
Amadee L. Braxton
Linda Holmes
Thomas Glave
Rahdi Taylor
Cornelius Moore
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Elisa Natali
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Members of Black Men in Support of the film *NO!* March 7, 2003

Hiphop Speaks and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Harlem, NY

Ras Baraka
St. Clair Bourne
Tyree Cinque Simmons/ DJ Drama
Ulester Douglas
Michael Eric Dyson
Alfred A. Edmonds, Jr.
Dr. Ibrahim Abdurrahman Farajaje'
Thomas Glave
Byron Hurt
Christopher C. Logan
Erik McDuffie
Mark Anthony Neal
Sulaiman Nuriddin
Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar
Eternal Polk
Kevin Powell (Founder)
Marcus Reeves
Michael Simmons
Tyrone Smith
Alvin Starks
Brook Stephenson
Kalamu Ya Salaam
Yemi Toure
Cheo Tyehimba

NEW YORK CITY *NO!*™ BENEFIT RECEPTION AND SCREENING

Brookdale Auditorium, Hunter College October 24, 2003

Members of the National Host Committee:

Ta'Juanna D. Anderson
Joy Bostic
Amadee L. Braxton (Chair)
Farai Chideya
Judy Claude
Johnnetta Betsch Cole
Dana Ain Davis
Ulester Douglas
Michael Eric Dyson
Torkwase Madison Dyson
Thomas Glave
Farah Jasmine Griffin
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Kim F. Hall
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Del R. Hornbuckle
Gerald Horne
Robin D. G. Kelley
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Manning Marable
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Leith Mullings
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Kathy Perkins
Dianne Pinderhughes
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Beth E. Richie
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Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons
Michael Simmons
Barbara Smith
Alvin Starks
Sister Scholars, NYC
Salamishah M. Tillet
Aaronette M. White
Janelle White
Traci C. West

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•••
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Black Men In Support of the Film *NO!*
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Clara Whaley-Perkins
Cornelius Moore
Debra Zimmerman
Dwight Williams
Gail Lloyd & Angela Gillem
INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence
Inelle Cox Bagwell & Pat Clark
Janelle White
Joan Brannon
Jocelyn Jones-Arnold
Joo-Hyun Kang
Kevin Powell
Linda Perkins
Lisa Gilden
Louis Massiah
National Host Committee for *NO!* Benefit
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Deborah Coy
Deborah Poland
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Delilah Rumburg
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Denise C. Jones
Dianne Forte
Dina H. Portnoy
Donald White
Elaine Brown
Elisa Natali
Elsa Barkley Brown
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Farah Jasmine Griffin
Felicia Webster
Frederica Massiah-Jackson
Friedarike Santaner
Gayle Olson
George Tomaccio
Gerald Horne
Giscard (JEE EYE ZEE) Xavier
Glenda Gracia
Gloria Steinem
H. Tia Juana Malone
Harvey Finkle
Heather Griffin
Heba A. Nimr
Honorée Fanonne Jeffers
Jacqui Patterson
Jaimie Pyle
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John Ali
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Kim Mayhorn
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Linda J. Holmes

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Loretta Ross
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Lula Christopher
Lynn Roberts
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Monica Pietrangeli
Monty Yellock
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Nadine Patterson
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Nia Wilson
Nicole A. Childers
Nikki Harmon
Oliver J. Williams
Oyatunde Amakisi
P. Sagwa Chabeda
Paule Marshall
Philadelphia Independent Film/Video Association
Rachel Afi Quinn
Rachel Harding
Reanae McNeal
Rebecca Alpert
Reynelda Ware-Muse
Roberta Padovano
Robin Stone
Rosetta Williams
Roxanna Walker-Canton
Ruby Sales &
Cheryl Blakenship
Samiya A. Bashir
Sande Smith
Sandra Lubjinkovich
Sarah Poindexter
Serena Reed
Shannone Holt
Shari Frilot
Sharon Mullally
Shay Mané & Tania Petit
Skye Ward
Sonia Sanchez
Stacey Tolbert
Suheir Blackeagle
Sulaiman Nuriddin
Sylvia Wright
Tamara K. Nopper
Tatiana Houtpankin
Thema Bryant-Davis
Theresa Jaynes
Theresa M. Lewis-King
Third World Coalition, American Friends Service Committee
Thomas Glave
Tiona McClodden
Toni Brown
Tonya Evans-Walls
Torkwase Madison Dyson
Traci McKindra
Tracy Sharpley-Whiting
Trina Jackson
Tyrone Smith
Ulester Douglas
Vanessa Agard-Jones
Veruska Bellistri
Veterans of Hope Project
Victoria Robertson
W. Jelani Cobb
Wanda R. Moore
Willie L. Chapman
Women In The Life
Yes to NO! Committee (Fort Wayne, IN)
Yvonne Bynoe
Zakiya T. Luna
Zami (Atlanta, GA)
Zeinabu irene Davis

IN MEMORY OF:

Lucy Goldsby
Hattie Goldsby Temple
John Temple
"Mother" Robinson
Zebede Robinson
Whitney Simmons
Rhoda Bell Temple Robinson
Hudson Douglas
Jackson Waldo White, Sr.
Henderson Cranford
Mattie Garrett Cranford
Rebecca Garrett Wilson
John W. Simmons
Alice Bostic Simmons
Maggie Pagan White
Major Robinson
Reginald Gennett Simmons
Willie Simmons
Wesley Cranford
Jessie Neal Hudson
Lula Simmons Thompson
Corinne Simmons Trumpler
Ollie B. Smith
Clarence Thompson
Charlie Brown
Mattie Simmons Brown
Lillie Bell Hall
Elizabeth White Paterson
Rebecca White Simmons Chapman
Helen White
Emma Reid
Cristina Simmons
•••
Clara Carter Allison
Wanda Alston
Ella Baker
Toni Cade Bambara
Shani Baraka
Ida Wells Barnett
Rosemary Cubas
Ossie Davis
Maria Carla Gerbasi
Sakia Gunn
Fannie Lou Hamer
Saralee Hamilton
Lorraine Hansberry
Rosemarie Freeney Harding
Essex Hemphill
Billie Holiday
Jacquetta Holley
Rayshon Holmes
Joan Howard
Zora Neale Hurston
Dorothy "Dottie" Jones
Maggie Jones
June Jordan
Coretta Scott King
Roz Leonard
Audre Lorde
William "Bill" Meek, Sr.,
Barbara Moffett
Vernon James Morris
Jane Motz
Pat Parker
Ma Rainey
Beah Richards
Marlon T. Riggs
Beverly Robinson
Ruby Doris Smith Robinson
Tyree Scott
Nina Simone
Bessie Smith
Harriet Tubman
Sojourner Truth
Shelley Zinzi Taylor

Notes

Notes

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT *NO!*:

If the Black community in the Americas and in the world would save itself, it must complete the work this film begins.

– Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize Winning Author, *The Color Purple*

I have seen a lot of documentaries about sexual violence in my 15 years as a film programmer, and '*NO!*' is by far the most well made, riveting, and poignant… The strength of '*NO!*' in reaching its viewers is significant, it's scope and ability to compel are astounding – all women can relate to this film.

– KJ Mohr, Film & Media Arts Programmer, National Museum of Women in the Arts

This DVD helps raise awareness about sexual assault and violence. Especially useful for counselors working with high-school and college students facing similar pressures and situations.

– Booklist

The notion "speaking truth to power" has been a hallmark of Black political struggle in the United States, but it has been increasingly clear that "speaking truth" was often solely reserved for Black men, especially when Black men themselves were the subject of scrutiny. In the spirit of women like Anna Julia Cooper, Mary Church Terrell, Zora Neale Hurston, Audre Lorde, Toni Cade Bambara, Pat Parker, June Jordan and Michele Wallace, filmmaker Aishah Shahidah Simmons dares to "speak truth to power" with the emphatic power that the very exclamation *NO!* is intended to convey.

– Mark Anthony Neal, Scholar and Author, *New Black Man*

The Power of NO! lies not just in regaining lost voices, but in re-visioning and repositioning Black women's history and current reality… One of the strengths of the film is that it does not show the women broken. They come across as whole human beings with agency and insight.

– Walidah Imarisha, *Left Turn Magazine*

Given the level of violence against women in this country, we owe it to ourselves and to future generations not to turn our backs on this film. For in ignoring this film we would once again be ignoring the voices of women.

– Kevin Powell, Activist and Author, *Who's Gonna Take the Weight: Manhood, Race and Power in America*

With the eye of a poet and the rigor of a sociologist, Aishah Shahidah Simmons exposes an ugly reality of sexual violence. This is cinematic activism at its finest, as it is both a call to action and an expertly constructed documentary.

– Gerald Horne, Scholar and Author, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham DuBois*

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