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***THE INVISIBLE WAR PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS
ON MONDAY, MAY 13, 2013***

**A Searing Exposé of the Culture of Sexual Violence Within the U.S. Military,
Film Helps Change Policy For Sexual Assault Investigations**

(San Francisco, CA) — Nominated for an Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature, *The Invisible War* is a groundbreaking investigative documentary about one of America's most shameful and best kept secrets: the epidemic of rape within the U.S. military. The film paints a startling picture of the extent of the problem; today, a female soldier in combat zones is more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire. The Department of Defense estimates there were a staggering 19,000 sexual assaults in the military in 2011. Veterans Affairs (VA) studies have shown that one third of women seeking assistance from the VA have been sexually assaulted, and that more men than women are assaulted while in service. From the Oscar®- and Emmy®-nominated filmmaking team of director Kirby Dick and producer Amy Ziering, *The Invisible War* premieres on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Stanley Tucci, on Monday, May 13, 2013 at 10 PM ET on PBS ([check local listings](#)).

Focusing on the powerfully emotional stories of rape victims, *The Invisible War* is a moving indictment of the systemic cover up of military sex crimes, chronicling the veteran's struggles to rebuild their lives and fight for justice. It also features hard-hitting interviews with high-ranking military officials and members of Congress, which reveal the perfect storm of conditions existing for rape in the military, its long-hidden history, and what can be done to bring about much needed change.

At the core of the film are often heart-rending interviews with the rape survivors themselves, people like Kori Cioca, who was beaten and raped by her supervisor in the U.S. Coast Guard; Ariana Klay, a Marine who served in Iraq before being raped and threatened with death by a senior officer and his friend; and Trina McDonald, who was drugged and raped repeatedly by military policemen on her remote Naval station in Adak, Alaska. And it isn't just women: according to one study's estimate, one percent of men in the military — nearly 20,000 men — were reportedly sexually assaulted in 2009.

And while rape victims in the civilian world can turn to an impartial police force and judicial system for help and justice, rape victims in the military must turn to their commanders — a move that is all too often met with foot dragging at best, and reprisals at worst. Many rape victims find

Be more



themselves forced to choose between speaking up and keeping their careers. Little wonder that only eight percent of military sexual assault cases are prosecuted.

The Invisible War exposes the epidemic of sexual assault in the military, one of the most under-reported stories of our generation. Since it premiered at Sundance, the film has been circulating through the highest levels of the Pentagon and Congress. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta watched *The Invisible War* on April 14, 2012. Two days later, he directed unit commanders to hand over all sexual assault investigations to a higher-ranking colonel (or Navy captain). At the same time, Panetta announced that each branch of the armed forces would establish a Special Victims Unit. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force ordered all wing commanders around the world to fly back to Washington, DC to view the film, which is now being used by the military as part of its sexual-assault training programs. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel stated in his confirmation hearings that he watched *The Invisible War*, and the film was mentioned repeatedly by senators and generals during the Senate Armed Services hearings in March.

“We hope the film will affect lasting changes in the way the military investigates and prosecutes sexual assault crimes and supports and cares for assault survivors,” said Kirby Dick. To that end, *The Invisible War* is a call for our civilian and military leadership to listen — and to act.

To learn more about the film, visit *The Invisible War* interactive companion website (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/invisible-war>), which features detailed information on the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film’s subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

About the Filmmakers

Kirby Dick (Director) is an Academy®- and Emmy® Award-nominated documentary director. His previous film, *Outrage*, nominated for an Emmy® and released by Magnolia Pictures, is an indictment of the hypocrisy of powerful closeted politicians and the political and media institutions that protect them. In 2006, he directed *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*, released by IFC Films. A breakthrough investigation of the highly secretive MPAA film ratings system, the film compelled the MPAA to make long overdue changes in the way it rates films.

Dick's prior film, *Twist of Faith*, is the powerful story of a man confronting the trauma of his past sexual abuse by a Catholic priest. Produced for HBO, *Twist of Faith* received a 2004 Academy Award® nomination for Best Documentary Feature. Dick's other films include *Derrida*, a complex portrait of the world-renowned French philosopher Jacques Derrida, which won the Golden Gate Award at the San Francisco Film Festival, and the internationally acclaimed *Sick: The Life & Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist*, which won the Special Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and the Grand Prize at the Los Angeles Film Festival.

Amy Ziering (Producer) is an Academy Award®- and Emmy®-nominated documentary producer and director. Her previous film, *Outrage*, for which she received an Emmy® nomination for Outstanding Investigative Journalism, is a searing indictment of the hypocrisy of powerful, closeted politicians and the institutions that protect them. It was distributed by

Magnolia Pictures and had its television premiere on HBO. Ziering also produced *The Memory Thief*, which stars Mark Webber, Rachel Miner, and Jerry Adler and is a thought-provoking examination of the relationship between empathy, narcissism, and trauma. It was a *New York Times* critics' pick and won several festival awards. Prior to this, Ziering co-directed and produced *Derrida*, a documentary about the world-renowned French philosopher and the philosophical movement known as deconstruction. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, won the Golden Gate award at the San Francisco Film Festival, was released theatrically by Zeitgeist Films, and features an original score by Oscar®-winning composer Ryuichi Sakamoto. Ziering's first film, Richard Cohen's critically acclaimed *Taylor's Campaign*, was a documentary about Ron Taylor, a homeless person who ran for a seat on the Santa Monica City Council. Ziering is the 2012 recipient of the Nestor Almendros Prize for Courage and Filmmaking, the 2013 Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize, and the 2013 Gracie Award for Outstanding Producer - News/Non-Fiction. She is currently in production on a new project for HBO.

Tanner Barklow (Producer) is an Emmy®-nominated producer. Barklow was also co-producer on *Outrage*, a searing indictment of the hypocrisy of powerful, closeted politicians and the political and media institutions that protect them. The film was nominated for an Emmy®, released by Magnolia Pictures, and had its television premiere on HBO.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the MacArthur Foundation. The senior series producer is Lois Vossen. More information at www.pbs.org/independentlens. Join *Independent Lens* on Facebook at www.facebook.com/independentlens.

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