



THE HUNTING GROUND AUSTRALIA PROJECT

POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION GUIDE (UNIVERSITIES)

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PANEL DISCUSSION GUIDE

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

INFORMATION FOR PANELLISTS

The Film: *The Hunting Ground*

The Hunting Ground (educational version, 58 minutes, 2015) is a critically acclaimed US documentary chronicling the personal stories of students who have reported sexual assault on campuses, and the failure of a number of American universities to respond effectively and appropriately to these reports.

It is the latest film by Oscar-nominated filmmakers Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering who made *The Invisible War*—a film directly responsible for influencing government policy and laws on how the US armed forces responded to and prevented sexual assault.

Approach to the Campaign: *The Hunting Ground Australia Project*

The Hunting Ground Australia Project is engaging with the entire Australian university sector to create a collaborative, comprehensive and unified campaign around the incidence of, and responses to, sexual violence in Australian universities.

The campaign involves a number of streams including:

- a campus screening program of *The Hunting Ground* documentary
- an independent national survey
- the development of model protocol and policy frameworks in response to reports of sexual harassment or violence
- ethics and consent training, including bystander strategies.

The Hunting Ground Australia Project is using the documentary as a tool to engage Australian universities, and the broader community, in a conversation around issues concerning sexual assault and harassment, consent, disclosure and reporting in Australian universities.

The Hunting Ground Australia Project acknowledges that there are significant cultural, financial and structural differences between American and Australian universities and student life.

However, the issues raised by the film present an opportunity for Australian universities to review the effectiveness of existing procedures, protocols and institutional responses; the issue of victim blaming; the impact of alcohol; interpretations of consent; bystander engagement; the prevalence of sexual crime and reporting of those crimes and the need for comprehensive data to inform the conversation.

For more information about *The Hunting Ground Australia Project* outreach campaign, please refer to www.TheHuntingGroundAustralia.com.au



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

UPDATE ON THE PEOPLE IN THE FILM:

Where are they now?

ANNIE E. CLARK, ANDREA PINO and SOFIE KARASEK founded 'End Rape on Campus' (EROC). The organisation works to end campus sexual violence through direct support for survivors and their communities; prevention through education; and policy reform at the campus, local, state, and federal levels.

endrapeoncampus.org

ERICA KINSMAN moved away from Florida State University to complete her education. There was a settlement of her case with FSU in January 2016.

KAMILAH WILLINGHAM graduated from Harvard Law School and currently holds the position of Program and Outreach Director at the California Women's Law Centre. She is an outspoken advocate and activist dedicated to gender equality, social justice and human rights.

There have been some strong responses to the film from some of the universities portrayed in the film – what are the facts?

The filmmakers reached out to the presidents of every college and university mentioned in the film. Two university presidents were interviewed for the film, and thirty-five college or university presidents did not respond or declined to speak to the filmmakers.

You can read about the film and the responses to it on the American website page: www.TheHuntingGroundFilm.com/story/



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AUDIENCE REACTIONS TO THE FILM

Audience members will experience a range of emotions while viewing the film and could have a strong emotional response to certain content within the documentary.

The educational version of the film for Australian campus screenings commences with a trigger warning including contact information for where viewers can seek assistance.

Institutions should prepare for the possibility that a number of students will request information or require access to resources following the film screening.

Be aware that:

- Audience members may take a few minutes to process their reactions to the film following the screening.
- When speaking about the film in discussions consider that not everyone affected by this type of violence is ready or willing to speak up in private or in public.
- The labels “victim,” “survivor” or any other label are identities that only the person affected by violence can claim. Everyone involved in a screening should be careful not to impose language to describe the trauma or the person affected by it.
- Some people who have experienced gendered or sexual violence are often hesitant to disclose their trauma because they fear that they won’t be believed and that they will be subjected to judgment, blame or shame. Empathy and compassion may gradually offset the effects of isolation and fear and allow people to open up and seek care and support.
- The film’s primary focus is the experience of sexual assault survivors, which may lead to questions regarding accused students as well.



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RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES

- If an audience member discloses their experience, it is important to let the person who experienced gendered violence know that you believe him or her.
- Reporting of assaults may occur at varying levels. Assaults may be reported to peers, to counsellors, at hospitals or to the police. Care should be taken in outlining reporting and support options to people disclosing assaults so their wishes are respected.
- Disclosures and reports can be made over time; even if the assault occurred in the past a report can still be made.

PANEL DISCUSSION

A moderated panel discussion after the screening can contextualise the film and encourage a safe and respectful dialogue. This is particularly important for groups in which survivors and their friends or family may be present.

Once the panel have talked to the points the moderator has introduced (see potential discussion points below), audience members can be invited to ask questions or contribute an opinion.

Reaffirm that you are having a dialogue (discussion) not a debate (one party right or wrong).

When your event concludes, remind the audience where they can seek further information and support, and let them know how they can remain engaged.

DISCUSSION POINTS

These points are suggestions for framing a discussion around the film; you may also like to identify your own points, based on the objectives of your screening.

Consider questions that might elicit some answers you (as host) may be looking for; these could include a 'show of hands' type question, for example student awareness of where to seek assistance on your campus.



Producer Amy Ziering and Director Kirby Dick

PANEL DISCUSSION GUIDE

General Questions:

- As one of the survivors in the film says, “Rape is a scary word.” Many survivors tend not to talk about, let alone report, the violent acts they’ve experienced. What can be done to break the silence about rape and to encourage survivors who are ready to come forward?
- Rape and sexual assault have been stereotypically portrayed as crimes that involve heterosexuals. In reality, sexual assault happens to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. What are some of the additional concerns faced by these survivors?
- Several survivors interviewed in the film offer examples of “victim blaming”: suggestions from administrators, campus police, or law enforcement that they were responsible for their assaults. Why is victim blaming a problem? How does it contribute to a feeling of betrayal among survivors of sexual violence? Does it deter survivors from reporting their assaults?
- According to the film, what role does alcohol play in relation to rape and sexual assault? How can telling women (and other targets of sexual violence) to avoid drinking serve as an example of victim blaming? Can you identify other elements of student party culture that women (and other targets of sexual violence) are often told to avoid?

Local campus context:

- Where do you think we are at, here in Australia, in comparison to the US campuses depicted in the film?
- What do you think about the relationship between alcohol and sexual violence? At your university? More broadly?
- Would you know what to do if a friend disclosed to you that they had been sexually assaulted?
- What support mechanisms are in place for student disclosures at this university?
- Would you know what to do if a fellow student was being sexually harassed?
- Would you be interested in attending a bystander strategy workshop?
- International students can be particularly vulnerable to sexual violence on campus. What prevention and intervention mechanisms are in place to support international students?
- How visible and vocal are survivors on your campus?

