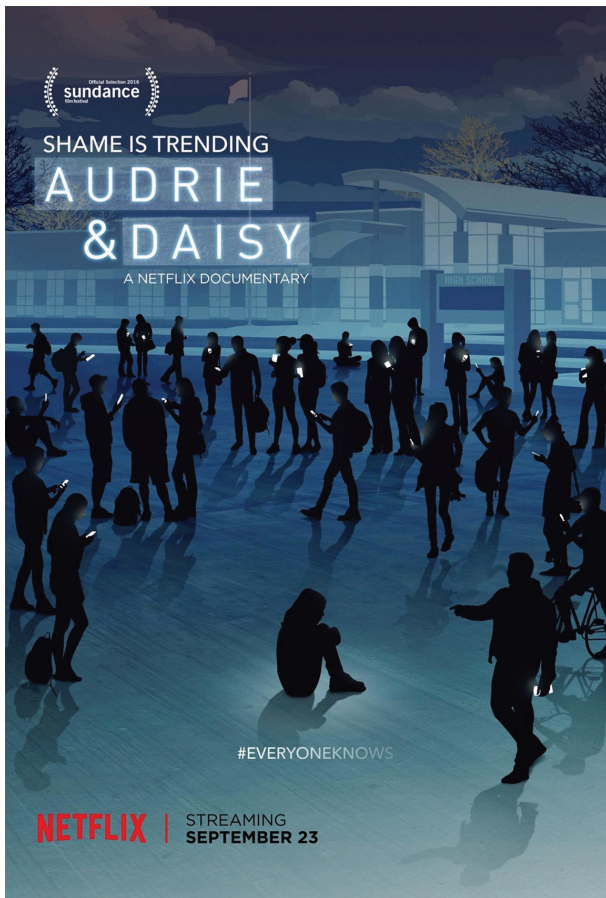


INFLUENCE | FILM CLUB

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Audrie & Daisy Discussion Guide

Directors: Bonni Cohen & Jon Shenk

Year: 2016

Time: 95 min

You might know these directors from:

Lost Boys of Sudan (2003)

The Rape of Europa (2006)

The Island President (2011)

An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power (2017)

FILM SUMMARY

On September 12, 2012, 15-year-old Audrie Pott committed suicide by hanging after being sexually assaulted at a party a week prior by boys who she thought were her friends. When she discovered that pictures of the assault had been shared among her classmates and posted online, she felt as though her reputation had been ruined. She could not see past the tragedy of the situation, and thus, ended her life. As we learn from other victims of similar crimes—Daisy Coleman, Paige Parkhurst, and Delaney Henderson—this sort of disturbing situation is far from unusual, especially now in an age in which internet anonymity and social media bullying add fuel to an already raging fire.

Allowing the victims and their families to tell their own tragic stories of sexual abuse and the personal fallout that has followed in its wake, AUDRIE & DAISY explores how cyberbullying has led to modern day instances of “The Scarlet Letter” where young women have been unjustly ostracised for having been taken advantage of by so-called friends while under the influence of alcohol. In nearly all of the instances found within, the families of these young women have had to uproot their lives and move to completely new towns in hopes of starting anew without the crushing sense of judgement, speculation, and torment that has haunted them since their assault and subsequent trial of public opinion.

While Audrie didn't see her way through the fire, Daisy and the others have weathered the storm, battled through court hearings, endured a hail of threats and public ridicule, and now hope to help see the stigma of sexually abused persons dissolved. These young women did not want this to happen to them, and they certainly do not want it to define them as adults, so by reaching out to others with similar stories, acknowledging what has occurred, and finally, making an effort to move forward, past the trauma and bullying, onto something better.

FILM THEMES

Taking a hard look at teenagers coming of age in this newly connected world of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and beyond which has the power to both bring people together and exacerbate conflicts, *AUDRIE & DAISY* examines the emotional and social repercussions of sexual abuse in small-town America.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Though *AUDRIE & DAISY* looks at the lives of four young women who were raped while under the influence of alcohol as teens, only two of these girls knew each other before they were assaulted. Seeking support, they were brought together by their shared stories. Dealing with the aftermath of sexual abuse is most often an immensely lonely endeavor that triggers unfounded feelings of embarrassment. Tragically, Audrie didn't live to realize that she was not alone.

SOCIAL MEDIA SHAMING

Like never before, the effects of personal tragedy can become amplified in the echo chamber of social media with every post, share, and hashtag. In the case of Daisy, when she decided to speak out against her assailants, her classmates and community lashed out under the cover of anonymity on social media (depicted beautifully within the film via animation and drone footage) with hashtags like #daisyisaliar, #ihatedaisy, #jordanandmattarefree, and #matt1daisy0, causing further ostracisation and emotional trauma.

CONSENT IS NOT IMPLICIT

Consent around sex is often not taken as seriously as it should be, and as *AUDRIE & DAISY* makes dreadfully clear, it may be due to a lack of knowledge about how consent can be given or expressed. In the case of Daisy, who was completely intoxicated and incoherent at the time she was assaulted by her assailant Matt Barnett, she could not have knowingly given consent. Meanwhile, Barnett should have known that consent is never implicit, even if both parties are intoxicated. Without consent, unwanted sexual contact is sexual assault.

LIFE EXTENDS BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

In the insular world of high school teenagers, it's immensely difficult to see what life might look like after graduation. As it happens, the images and reputations built up over the course of one's preparatory education will most likely come to mean very little in the bright light of adulthood, but without the knowledge and perspective of this age-based vantagepoint, it is virtually impossible to fully impress this upon teens amidst the intense sway of hormones and the social anxieties inherent to coming-of-age.

“Do you know how people view me now?...u have no idea what its like to be a girl... my life is over”

Audrie Pott

“I found my voice when I decided to show my face in my first interview.”

Jada Smith

FURTHER DISCUSSIONS:

1. There are many narratives within AUDRIE & DAISY. What most struck you about the film? Which part of the film did you feel had the most impact on you?
2. Have you heard of any cases of online bullying or underaged sexual abuse prior to seeing this film? What was your initial reaction to hearing about the experiences of the characters in the film?
3. Victims of sexual abuse are often stigmatized. Why do you think this happens?
4. Have you or a friend ever experienced abuse or bullying? If so, how did this color your experience of watching AUDRIE & DAISY?
5. Why do you think that a culture of online bullying has become so common in today's world?
6. The film depicts an atmosphere of small-town scepticism from county sheriffs and also common townspeople around the idea of young women being sexually abused. How do you think this sense of scepticism develops and persists?
7. Do you think the film is effective in helping to increase compassion for those who experience sexual abuse, or a sense of empowerment for others who have had similar experiences? If not, what could the filmmakers have done differently?
8. Despite the film's focus on the experience of teenagers, much of the time we hear the perspective of parents and how they've handled the situation of their children being sexually abused. How do you think you would react as a parent if this happened to your child?
9. Throughout the film, we witness boys who assume that sex is their due and their right. Where do they get this idea, while on the other hand, girls feel ashamed or unable to say "no"? How can we change this gendered dynamic?
10. What do you think we can do as viewers to help victims of sexual abuse and social media shaming?

NOTES:

FILM FACTS:

- AUDRIE & DAISY had its debut at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival as part of the U.S. Documentary Competition, and went on to screen at international festivals like the Hot Docs International Documentary Film Festival and the Melbourne International Film Festival.
- Audrie Pott and Daisy Coleman were named among Cinema Eye Honors' 2016 Unforgettables, a short list of the year's most notable and significant nonfiction film subjects.
- Tori Amos, the longtime spokesperson of the [Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network](#), wrote and performed the song "Flicker" for AUDRIE & DAISY's final credit sequence. Throughout the 2016 awards season, the song was named as an Oscar contender in the running for Best Song, but ultimately was not nominated.
- Following the success of AUDRIE & DAISY, directors Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk returned to Sundance in 2017 after working with Al Gore to film AN INCONVENIENT SEQUEL: TRUTH TO POWER, a sequel to Davis Guggenheim's massively influential 2006 hit AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH.
- Daisy Coleman continues to pursue a career as a tattoo artist and is an avid tweeter—follow her at [@divadaisy2015](#).
- In a 2016 study released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, an average of approximately 21 percent of undergraduate women across the nine schools participating in the study reported experiencing sexual assault since entering college. The majority of rape and sexual assault victims reported being victimized by someone they knew.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance report, of LGB students in grades 9-12, 43 percent seriously considered suicide, 38 percent made a suicide plan, and roughly 30 percent actually attempted suicide.
- While 1 in 4 teens is harassed or abused through technology, only 9 percent of abused teens seek help, and rarely from a parent or teacher, reports the Urban Institute.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently found that suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 10 to 24.
- While 87 percent of today's youth have witnessed cyberbullying, according to a 2014 study by McAfee, 24 percent of youth would not know what to do if they were harassed or bullied online.

WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. **Raise** awareness of digital dating abuse—an issue that affects your friends, family, and the community at large—by becoming a [That's Not Cool](#) ambassador.
2. **Donate** to [Futures Without Violence](#), an organization that has been providing groundbreaking programs, policies, and campaigns that empower individuals and organizations working to end violence against women and children around the world for 30 years.
3. **Learn** how to support school efforts to prevent and eliminate peer-to-peer sexual harassment and sexual violence from the [Safe Place To Learn](#) resource package.
4. **Become** an advocate or coach for [Coaching Boys Into Men](#), a prevention program that trains and motivates high school coaches to teach their young male athletes healthy relationship skills and that violence never equals strength.

We believe a good documentary is just the beginning...

In a world of sound-bites, documentaries provide an opportunity to think, understand, share, and connect with the world.

They are controversial, divisive, fascinating, unexpected, and surprising. They can be thrillers, dramas, comedies, romance, tear-jerkers, and horror films.

Documentaries provide the perfect topic for meaningful conversations. If you want to talk about the things that matter with people that matter then pick a film, invite your friends, and watch & discuss together. It's as easy as that.

Influence Film Club – We are the conversation after the film.