

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

That Linor Abargil was able to press charges against and convict her rapist already makes her story extraordinary. I wanted to find out how she did it, and what enabled her to get on with her life. How did she even dare to report her rape? When she called home moments later, Linor's mother told her not to take a shower until she could be examined by doctors and police. She credits that advice, as well as her mother's strong support in fighting back and not feeling ashamed, as the reasons she was able to convict her attacker and survive emotionally. However, her healing process is still ongoing.

Linor could be any of us. Every day in every city in the world, it happens to someone. One in four women world-wide will suffer rape or sexual assault in her lifetime. In the U.S., 60% of rapes go unreported, and 9 out of 10 rapists will never spend a day in jail. It's as though this crime is sanctioned, even in our own country. Most victims of rape are silenced by shame, humiliation, and a lack of support by their families or law enforcement. In stark contrast to this silence, Linor speaks out as loudly as she can. Her courage and willingness to open up about a painful subject are very compelling to me as a filmmaker. Linor is determined to take rape out of the shadows and bring it into the light. I'm inspired by her determination to transform herself from being the victim of a brutal crime, into someone who can make a huge difference in our world.

I see the film as an anatomy of rape. Linor has given us her rape, as a case study: What are the lasting effects on a victim? What does it do to a family? Can justice be served? Can one ever truly recover? Can speaking out help? She has taken the risk of opening up her wounds, in the hopes of changing the way we look at rape.

Once I delved into researching rape, and got to know Linor, I knew that the film had to be made. Where most young victims would retreat in shame, she fought at age eighteen to put a serial rapist behind bars. I believe that a film which can advocate for women to speak out about rape, and show how taking on this cause is helping one survivor to heal in turn, can truly have the power to change the world. This documentary, along with Linor's interactive website, will gather an international community with the strength to rise up and say NO to rape.

The Steubenville case, the outcry in Mumbai, Penn State, the scandals in the Catholic church, and other recent high profile cases which reflect the institutional sanctioning of rape, underscore the need for more attention to this issue in films, news media, and by law enforcement and justice systems worldwide. Girls on college campuses in our own country are not safe. The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights recently opened an investigation at Yale University after receiving complaints about male fraternity members chanting "No means Yes, Yes means Anal." Our awareness of the pandemic of rape is growing, and it is time to shed light on rape crimes. Linor Abargil's decision to speak out coincides with a global urgency for more attention to be given to the lack of law enforcement available to rape victims, and to the issues of healing and caring for rape victims.



I'm drawn to stories of people who stand up for what they believe in, like Natalie Maines of the Dixie Chicks, like Linor Abargil, and like my father, whose life and work I chronicled in "A Conversation With Gregory Peck." My 12 year experience working in verité documentary, combined with my desire to tell the stories of courageous women, have compelled me to make the film.

Cecilia Peck
Director