



# **PRIVATE VIOLENCE**

# SYNOPSIS

## PRIVATE VIOLENCE

*A Documentary Film Produced and Directed by Cynthia Hill*

### SHORT

One in four women experience violence in their homes. Have you ever asked, “why doesn’t she just leave”? *Private Violence* shatters the brutality of our logic and intimately reveals the stories of two women: Deanna Walters, who transforms from victim to survivor, and Kit Gruelle, who advocates for justice.

### LONG

*Private Violence* is a feature-length documentary film and audience engagement campaign that explores a simple, but deeply disturbing fact of American life: the most dangerous place for a woman in America is her own home. Every day in the US, at least four women are murdered by abusive (and often, ex) partners. The knee-jerk response is to ask: “why doesn’t she just leave?” *Private Violence* shatters the brutality of this logic. Through the eyes of two survivors – Deanna Walters, a mother who seeks justice for the crimes committed against her at the hands of her estranged husband, and Kit Gruelle, an advocate who seeks justice for all women – we bear witness to the complicated and complex realities of intimate partner violence. Their experiences challenge entrenched and misleading assumptions, providing a lens into a world that is largely invisible; a world we have locked behind closed doors with our silence, our laws, and our lack of understanding. Kit’s work immerses us in the lives of several other women as they attempt to leave their abusers, setting them on a collision course with institutions that continuously and systematically fail them, often blaming victims for the violence they hope to flee. The same society that encourages women to seek true love shows them no mercy when that love turns dangerous. As Deanna transforms from victim to survivor, *Private Violence* begins to shape powerful, new questions that hold the potential to change our society: “Why does he abuse?” “Why do we turn away?” “How do we begin to build a future without domestic violence?”



It's not always easy to just leave.

# PRIVATE VIOLENCE

**HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS** PRESENTS A MARKAY MEDIA PRODUCTION "PRIVATE VIOLENCE" WRITTEN BY CYNTHIA HILL DIRECTED BY REX MILLER PRODUCED BY TOM VICKERS EDITED BY CHUCK JOHNSON COSTUME DESIGNER KIT GRUELLE  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER MALINDA MAYNOR LOWERY EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS REX MILLER JENN CROMLING UN KYONG HO PRODUCED BY CINDY WAITT GLORIA STEINEM REGINA K. SCULLY JULIA PARKER BENELLO WENDY ETTINGER JUDITH HELFAND LILLY HARTLEY  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS TRAILBLAZER STUDIOS PRODUCED BY SOUTHERN DOCUMENTARY FUND EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS NANCY ABRAHAM EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SHEILA NEVINS

**PREMIERES MONDAY OCT. 20, 9PM HBO**

POSTER

# BIOS & CREDITS

## **CYNTHIA HILL** - DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

Cynthia Hill crafts documentaries that take a complex approach to critical contemporary issues, creating story-driven and visually-rich films. *Private Violence* is Hill's fourth feature documentary. The subjects of her work range from tobacco farming, to Latino migrant labor and Southern foodways, and challenge dominant narratives about the rural South. Hill allows unexpected stories to unfold, laying bare the assumptions behind the systems that drive people's everyday lives. Each of Hill's documentaries open up space for vigorous community engagement, with viewers from wide-ranging political and ideological beliefs. Producer/director credits include *Tobacco Money Feeds My Family*, *The Guestworker*, *February One*, and *A Chef's Life*. Hill's work has appeared nationally on PBS and the Sundance Channel and featured in festivals around the globe. She has lectured at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University and is the co-founder of the Southern Documentary Fund, a nonprofit organization established to support place-based storytelling. Hill is from Pink Hill, NC and currently resides in Durham, NC.

## **REX MILLER** - CINEMATOGRAPHER

Rex Miller is a visual storyteller with an extensive background as a photographer and filmmaker. He got his start as a photojournalist in NYC, shooting for *Newsweek*, *New York Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, *Spin* and *Time*. He completed *All the Blues Gone*, a 10-year documentary project on music and life in Mississippi that included a book, CD soundtrack, traveling exhibition, and educational foundation funded by the NEA. His feature doc, *SOMAY KU: A Uganda Tennis Story*, won Best Documentary at the Malibu Film Festival. Miller directed and shot the documentary *Behind These Walls*, which explores life at and around the tennis court at San Quentin Penitentiary. Recent DP work includes: *The Loving Story*, (HBO, 2012) for which director Nancy Buirski won both the Peabody and the Emmy for Best Historical Documentary, and *A Chef's Life*, directed by Cynthia Hill, a 13-part documentary food series currently airing nationally on PBS.

## **TOM VICKERS** - EDITOR

Tom Vickers has been working as an editor for over ten years. His work includes projects that have aired on the Discovery Channel and ESPN. His feature documentary work includes *Ain't In It For My Health: A Film About Levon Helm*, which screened at the SXSW and Los Angeles Film Festivals and had a national theatrical distribution by Kino Lorber. He also edited the award-winning documentary feature *February One*, which aired on PBS's Independent Lens and screened at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival. He is currently editing the first season of *A Chef's Life*, a 13-part documentary food series airing nationally on PBS.

## **KIT GRUELLE** - SPECIAL ADVISOR & FILM SUBJECT

Kit Gruelle is a survivor of domestic violence and has worked as a battered women's advocate and community educator for over 25 years. She educates advocates, criminal justice professionals, healthcare providers, faith leaders, educators and other allied professionals about domestic violence. She is dedicated to challenging the stereotypes and prevailing belief systems about violence against women and children and highlights the prevalence of out-of-date responses that do little to change the fundamental dynamics of domestic violence.

**COMPOSER:** Chuck Johnson

**CO-PRODUCERS:** Malinda Maynor Lowery, Rex Miller

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS:** Jenn Cromling, Un Kyong Ho

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:** Cindy Waitt, Gloria Steinem, Artemis Rising Foundation (Regina K. Scully), & Chicken & Egg Pictures (Julia Parker Benello, Wendy Ettinger, Judith Helfand), Lilly Hartley

**A Presentation of HBO Documentary Films**

# FILM STILLS



Photo Credit: Rex Miller

# TRAILERS



## HBO TRAILER

<http://vimeo.com/107612239>

## OFFICIAL HBO SITE:

[www.hbo.com/documentaries/private-violence#](http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/private-violence#)



## 3 MINUTE TRAILER

<http://vimeo.com/80041224>

**WEB:** [www.privateviolence.com](http://www.privateviolence.com)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/PrivateViolence](http://www.facebook.com/PrivateViolence)

**TWITTER:** [@PrivateViolence](https://twitter.com/PrivateViolence)

A PROJECT OF SOUTHERN DOCUMENTARY FUND

A PRESENTATION OF HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS

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