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True Crime Thriller ‘Roll Red Roll’ Exposes Culture at the Heart of Sexual Assault in America, Opens POV’s 32nd Season on Monday, June 17

Critics’ Pick: “An essential watch.” - *The New York Times*
“Piercingly relevant.” - *Variety*
“It’ll stay with you forever.” - *Slate*

The film unflinchingly asks: “Why didn’t anyone stop it?”



At a pre-season party in small-town Steubenville, Ohio, a heinous crime took place: the assault of a teenage girl by members of the beloved high school football team. As it painstakingly reconstructs the night of the crime and its aftermath, **Roll Red Roll** uncovers the ingrained rape culture at the heart of the incident, acting as a cautionary tale about what can happen when teenage social media bullying runs rampant and adults look the other way.

Directed by Nancy Schwartzman, winner of seven documentary feature awards, and nominated for the Cinema Eye Honors Spotlight Award, **Roll Red Roll** has its national broadcast and streaming debut on the PBS documentary series POV and pov.org on Monday, June 17 at 10 p.m. ([check local listings](#)). POV is American television’s longest-running independent documentary series, debuting its 32nd season with Schwartzman’s investigative film.

What transpired in Steubenville went on to garner international media attention and resulted in the sentencing of two key offenders; but it was the disturbing social media evidence uncovered by crime blogger Alexandria Goddard, that provoked the most powerful questions about collusion. Not only did teen witnesses and bystanders discredit the victim, but teachers, parents and coaches seemed to

protect the assailants. With unprecedented access, the film shares text messages, social media posts, police interviews and the unmasked responses of town residents.

Like many communities across the country, Steubenville takes pride in its high school athletics. Talented and promising young male athletes are practically town ambassadors, held in high regard by their classmates and the entire community. So when two of these young men are charged with the rape of another student, the entire social structure of Steubenville is threatened, and a legacy of sexual assault and forced silence spanning years is revealed.

The film looks closely at social media, a tool that turns out to be remarkably malleable depending on which party is involved. For students, social media documents the acts that took place, becoming a platform to engage in callous and desensitized mockery of the crime of rape. Local authorities use evidence gathered online to assist with their investigation of the case, including incriminating tweets and 400,000 text messages. For local crime blogger Alexandria Goddard, social media presents an opportunity to spread awareness about the high school's toxic "rape culture" where a "boys-will-be-boys" attitude runs rampant. For the rest of the nation, disturbing images, video and dialogue revealed online create a shocking paper trail that anyone—from concerned citizens to hacktivist group Anonymous—can follow.

"Disturbing and illuminating, **Roll Red Roll** goes beyond the individuals directly responsible for the assault, widening its lens on the role of the community responsible for the victim's wellbeing," said Justine Nagan, executive producer/executive director of POV/American Documentary. "It presents a clear opportunity to shift our focus from the victim and the victim's behavior to where the scrutiny belongs. More than five years after Steubenville made headlines, **Roll Red Roll** brings an essential perspective, and conversation, in this #MeToo era."

Roll Red Roll has a robust impact campaign spearheaded by director Nancy Schwartzman, a globally-recognized human rights and anti-violence activist. The campaign is designed to engage men and boys in the conversation and the work to prevent sexual violence. A team of organizers is working with key partners in the athletic arena, and highlighting male advocates who actively challenge "boys will be boys" and other harmful norms around masculinity. Crafting teaching tools for coaches, parents and school administrators, the film illuminates the endemic issue from the perspective of those who enact the violence - the perpetrators and bystanders - and provides solutions to recognize patterns and eradicate the behavior.

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About the Filmmaker:

Nancy Schwartzman, Director/Producer

Nancy Schwartzman is a director, producer, and tech founder who uses storytelling and technology to create safer communities for women and girls. Her debut feature, *Roll Red Roll*, world premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2018, had its international premiere at Hot Docs, is the winner of seven feature documentary awards and played over 40 international festivals. For *Roll Red Roll*, Nancy received the Adrienne Shelly Foundation's Excellence in Filmmaking Award. The film was nominated for a Cinema Eye Spotlight Award, and is the winner of Best Documentary at the Florida Film Festival, Best in Show at Bend Film Festival, Best Documentary at Monmouth Film Festival, Best Social Impact Doc at Chagrin Falls Festival, and Visualizing History at Middlebury Film Festival. She is the creator of the Circle of 6 mobile app, winner of Vice President Biden's "App Against Abuse" challenge, an anti-violence tool used by over 350,000 in 36 countries to link users safely to a trusted circle of friends to promote bystander intervention and vetted safety resources. The app has been recognized by the United Nations, Good Morning America, *Wired*, *Cosmopolitan*, NPR and more.

Her first film, *The Line*, a short documentary examining consent was used by the White House for a campaign around sexuality, and her follow-up short, *xoxosms*, was on PBS/POV and BBC exploring love between two teenagers, bridged by technology.

Steven Lake, Producer

Steven Lake is a documentary producer creating social impact films with commercial reach. He is the producer of *Roll Red Roll* which premiered at Tribeca 2018, screened at over 40 international festivals and went on to have a theatrical run in the U.S. The film was called “essential viewing” by the Hollywood Reporter, “Raw and pressing” by Anthony Lane of *The New Yorker* and was a Critics’ Pick for *The New York Times*. His feature debut documentary, *Drying for Freedom* (Amazon Prime), and was the winner of Climate Week’s Best Artistic Response Award. Steven is specializing in security conscious film-making, using new technologies to create safe and secure workflows for films to protect them and their highly sensitive content. He has produced work in collaboration with *The Guardian* and Gucci, Doc Society, TFI, Ford Foundation, Fork Films and the BFI.

Eliza Licht, Impact Producer

Eliza Licht is an industry leader in developing and implementing engagement strategies to maximize the impact and visibility of documentary films. Before starting Licht Creative Consulting, she spent 17 years building and expanding the community engagement and education department at the PBS documentary series POV.

Credits:

Director:	Nancy Schwartzman
Producers:	Steven Lake, Jessica Devaney
Co-Producer	Bari Pearlman
Editor:	Christopher White
Original Music:	Nima Fakhrara
Executive Producers for POV:	Justine Nagan, Chris White

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Produced by American Documentary, POV is the longest-running independent documentary showcase on American television. Since 1988 on PBS, POV has presented films that capture the full spectrum of the human experience, with a long commitment to centering women and people of color in front of, and behind, the camera. It's on POV where American television audiences were introduced to groundbreaking works like *Tongues Untied*, *The Act of Killing* and *American Promise* and innovative filmmakers including Jonathan Demme, Nanfu Wang, and Laura Poitras. In 2018, POV Shorts launched as one of the first PBS series dedicated to bold and timely short-form documentaries.

Over a generation, POV has championed accessibility and innovation in nonfiction storytelling. **POV Engage** works with educators, community organizations and PBS stations to present more than 800 free screenings every year, inspiring dialogue around today's most pressing social issues. The series' interactive arm, POV Spark, creates and advances experiential forms of storytelling and programming, redefining U.S. public media to be more inclusive of emerging technologies and interactive makers.

POV films and projects have won 38 Emmy Awards, 23 George Foster Peabody Awards, 12 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards and the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award. Learn more at pbs.org/pov and follow @povdocs on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content

on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

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