

MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

STUDY GUIDE

THE LINE:

A Personal Exploration About Sexual
Assault & Consent

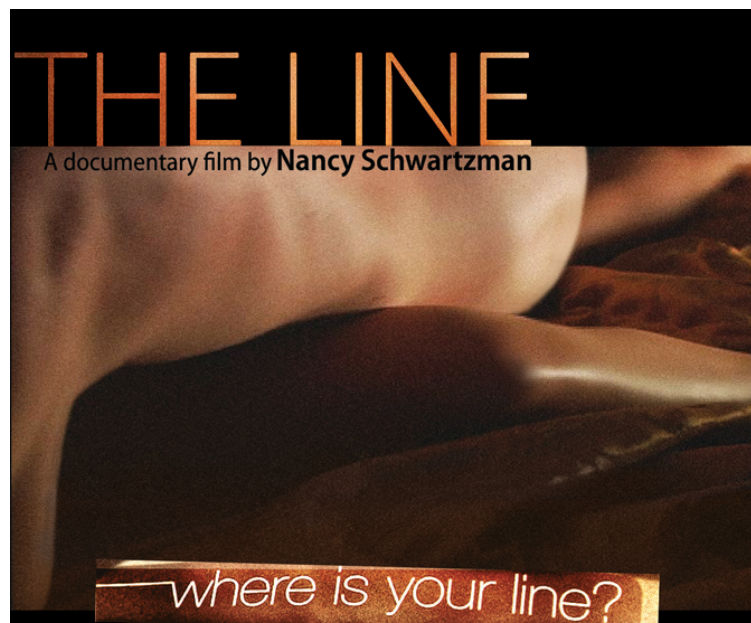


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CREDITS

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NOTE TO EDUCATORS

THE LINE is a powerful documentary dealing with sensitive issues. For this reason, we recommend that you preview the film and supporting materials before using them in the classroom. Unfortunately, there is a high probability that some students in your group are survivors of an attempted or completed sexual assault. We encourage you to connect with your campus or community rape crisis center before you screen this video. If possible, have a trained rape crisis worker available at the video presentation. Collect, and make available to your class, information about sexual assault and the services available to survivors.

In the course of watching this video, students might disclose their own personal experiences with sexual assault (either individually with you, as the facilitator, or within the group discussion). If this happens, listen. Talking can be an empowering, validating experience. It can also have a positive effect on a group's learning experience, and students may find that putting a face to the 'sexual assault victim' helps them better grasp and understand the issues. However, some disclosures may require further attention. To that end, we suggest that you connect with anti-sexual violence advocates and educators to discuss how you can best handle these disclosures and guide students toward confidential counseling services, or any other resources they may need.

Before using these materials, consider the following questions:

- How similar/different are your students and their experiences from the filmmaker who made this video?
- How does this video relate to the subject you are teaching?
- What results do you hope to see from using this video?
- What concerns do you have about your students' responses to the issues raised in this video?
- What background information will your students need before viewing this tape?

Assumed in this guide are the following beliefs about teaching and learning:

- All learning starts from the students' own experiences;
- Diversity of opinion is useful in a classroom and must be respected;
- Students can make a difference in the world;
- Students can learn from each other;
- Social issues and community problems are an integral part of the school curriculum; and
- An active viewing experience leads to a richer understanding of the documentary.

RESOURCES

- *A Fine Line: How to Talk to Kids About Sexual Assault* (Tameka Reece, August 2006)
<http://www.connectforkids.org/node/4600>
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.nsvrc.org
1-877-739-3892
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE
- RAINN National Sexual Assault Online Hotline: <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>

For additional resources and information, visit the website for *The Line Campaign*: www.whereisyourline.org or at www.facebook.com/thelinecampaign and www.twitter.com/thelinecampaign.

Nancy Schwartzman is available for speaking engagements, workshops, and campus events. Email thelinemovie@gmail.com to invite this dynamic program to your campus or community.

ABOUT THE STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

This study guide is designed to help you and your students engage and manage the information presented in this video. Given that it can be difficult to teach visual content – and difficult for students to recall detailed information from videos after viewing them – the intention here is to give you a tool to help your students slow down and deepen their thinking about the specific issues this video addresses. With this in mind, we’ve structured the guide so that you have the option of focusing in depth on one theme from the video at a time. We’ve included a series of key summary points, questions, and assignments specific to each section.

Key points provide a concise and comprehensive summary of the narrative of the video. They are designed to make it easier for you and your students to recall the details of the video during class discussions, and as a reference point for students as they work on assignments. A full transcript of THE LINE is also available at www.mediaed.org/wp/transcripts.

Discussion Questions provide a series of questions designed to help you review and clarify material for your students and to encourage students to reflect critically on the ideas presented in the film. These questions can be used in different ways: as guideposts for class discussion; as a framework for smaller group discussion and presentations; or as self-standing, in-class writing assignments (i.e. as prompts for “free-writing” or in-class

reaction papers in which students are asked to write spontaneously and informally while the video is fresh in their mind).

Activities offer students opportunities to explore the subject in more depth through group exercises and projects or through writing exercises. They are sometimes followed up with questions that can be used to guide discussion or serve as writing prompts.

FILM SYNOPSIS

A young woman is raped when a one-night stand far from home goes terribly wrong. In the aftermath, as she struggles to make sense of what happened, she decides to make a film about the relationship between her own experience and the tangle of political, legal, and cultural questions that surround issues of sex and consent. Using a hidden camera, filmmaker Nancy Schwartzman goes head-to-head with the man who assaulted her, recording their conversation in an attempt to move through the trauma of her experience and achieve a better understanding of the sometimes ambiguous line between consent and coercion. The result is a powerful documentary about the terrible personal reality of rape and sexual violence – and the more complicated and ambivalent ways sexual assault is often framed and understood in the wider culture. Schwartzman, as the prismatic main character, is likeable, while embodying the needs, desires, and inner conflicts common among young sexually active American women. Completed after being presented in classrooms on dozens of college campuses, *The Line* is structured to invite and reward students' trust, making them comfortable enough to discuss sex, consent, legal rights, and the politics surrounding gender violence while examining issues too often deemed embarrassing, shameful, or taboo.

Key points in the narrative:

- The narrator's mother says that women in the United States have come a long way, that "no means no and a woman out alone is not an invitation, a woman has control over her body and her choices." But she wonders if the rest of the world goes along with this thinking.
- Nancy grew up in a Philadelphia suburb in what she describes as "your garden variety American Jewish family."
- Nancy tells us that when her mother was young, "women were supposed to be virgins when they got married. Sex was for making babies with your husband. But," she says, "I got a different sort of sexual education. And I watched it religiously."
- Nancy tells us, "I moved to New York City. In college, I studied art history, played varsity tennis, and partied. We were into drugs, politics and booty calls. I marched against rape and called myself a slut. Lil Kim was my favorite rapper and I discovered feminist porn. My friends and I did a lot of white powdery drugs and danced with the

go-go boys in Times Square. I was the group photographer, trying hard to be Nan Goldin.”

- After college, Nancy took a job in Jerusalem, where woman “covered their bodies when they went outside” and “anything exposed was a potential invitation.”
- She started belly dancing, and her belly dancer taught her that in the Mizrahi (Jews descended from the Jewish communities of the Middle East, North Africa, and Caucasus), Sephardi (Jews who define themselves in terms of the Jewish traditions and customs that originated in the Iberian Peninsula), and Arabic world “a woman is supposed to go out in simple clothes and not put on a lot of make up and then when she comes home she’s supposed to put on her beautiful clothes, her sexy clothes and put on lipstick and make-up and be beautiful. . . For her husband to make romantic feeling.”
- Nancy met Etai, and fell in love. She “thought he was the one. But Etai fell in love with someone else.”
- A few weeks after things ended with Etai, Nancy went to a party, flirted with a man she knew from work, and went home with him. He sodomized her without her consent.
- The next morning, Nancy says that she felt “weak, vulnerable, dirty, like anyone could take advantage of [her].”
- At work, the man came up to her in front of a group of other people. She says that she “could tell he wanted [her] to say everything was ok and that what happened would stay between [them].” She told him never to speak to her again.
- Nancy quit her job, left Jerusalem, and moved back to New York.
- Nancy’s friends all had different reactions when she told them about the assault. Some of them implied, or told her outright, that what she experienced wasn’t rape.
- Nancy said, “At a certain point the confusion about what happened was as painful as the event itself.”
- Nancy’s friend Netanya was attacked and raped by a stranger in Brooklyn.
- After spending time with Netanya, Nancy wanted to know what her options were, and she went to see a lawyer.
- The first lawyer that Nancy went to see told her that if she went to the police, the burden of proof would be on her, and that if she were Nancy, she wouldn’t report it to authorities.
- Next Nancy went to see Brett Sokolow, an attorney who specializes in sexual assault.
- Attorney Sokolow told Nancy that “the jury system actually permits a rape prone society. . . asking 12 witnesses essentially who weren’t there, who didn’t take part, to unravel this is near impossible. If you have done anything that places you in a position of vulnerability, that makes you something less than a perfect victim, is what I like to call it, you’re doomed.”
- Nancy went to see Don McPherson, a former NFL Quarterback who now educates young men about masculinity and respecting women. He said to her, “we raise women to survive in a rape culture, yet we do nothing to talk to men about not raping.”
- Nancy tells us, “Here’s what happened. A co-worker and I flirted at a party and I decided to go home with him. We had a few drinks. He undressed me on the couch

and then we went to the bedroom. We started having sex. We were having sex, but then he turned me over, held me down and sodomized me. I didn't say 'no,' and I didn't say 'stop' – the words – but I screamed. And he went (thrust), came, and pulled out and then left me crying, I was crying.”

- Nancy went to a legal brothel in Nevada to meet with prostitutes who write up a contract before having sex with men. She says, “They’re professional negotiators who draw clear boundaries. Everything is agreed on before they get started.” Nancy ended up telling her story to Alexis, one of the sex workers.
- Of her conversation with Alexis, Nancy said, “It was a relief to share my story with someone who really understood that what happened to me was a violation. Even if I approached him that night, flirted, and went home with him, he still crossed a line.”
- The police found Netanya’s attacker, arrested him, and put him in jail. Netanya went to court and read a letter to him.
- Nancy decided to go to Jerusalem to confront the man who raped her. She brought a hidden camera to, in her words, “record the truth.”
- When confronted, the man said, “we did everything from our free will. . . it was really cooperative...” and “I’m not trying to put the blame on you, really I’m not.”
- While talking to the man who raped her, Nancy momentarily questioned herself and wondered if she remembered it wrong.
- Nancy said to him, “That night, that night you raped me.”
- Nancy tell us, her audience, “I needed to tell him he violated me, and I wanted to know why – why did that happen, why did he do it? I didn’t get answers from him, but all the same, I felt strong. I had faced the person who scared me the most.”
- Nancy says, “I’ve learned to be careful about who I’m intimate with, and I’m clear about what I do and don’t want sexually. The more comfortable I am in my own skin, the more present I can be to give consent, to seek pleasure and to choose a partner who respects my line – wherever it may be.”
- Nancy ends the film with these lines, “Most cases of sexual abuse fall somewhere between Netanya’s and mine. How can we make sure we respect the line?”

Historical context:

- The women’s movement made significant gains in rape crisis and sexual assault education in the 1960s and 1970s.¹
- In 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW) was established. Three of their causes were women’s liberation movement, anti-rape movement, and the battered women’s movement.²
- In 1971, the first rape crisis centers were established in the United States. By 1979, every state in the U.S. had at least one rape crisis center.³

¹ Gromisch, Elizabeth Stannard. " Highlights in the Anti-Rape Movement Advancements and Setbacks for Sexual Assault Awareness ". suite101.com. May 27, 2010 <http://sexual-abuse.suite101.com/article.cfm/highlights_in_the_antirape_movement>.

² ibid

³ ibid

- In 1978, the government formed the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape, thus providing resources to survivors, as well as collecting data about the prevalence of sexual assault in the United States.⁴
- In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), often described as an international bill of rights for women.⁵ The United States, as of 2010, is the only country in the Western Hemisphere and the only industrialized democracy that has not yet ratified this treaty.⁶
- In 1982, the term “date rape” was used for the first time in *Ms. Magazine*.⁷
- By 1987, rape laws were established in every state.⁸
- In 1990, the United States government passed the Omnibus Crime Control Act, which requires college campuses to disclose crime statistics every year.⁹
- In December 1993, The United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which recognized “the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings.”¹⁰
- In 1998, VAWA (the Violence Against Women Act) was passed.¹¹
- In 1999, a study performed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention showed that 15 percent of college women experience rape.¹²
- In March 2010, Amnesty International released two reports (one focused on Nordic countries, one focused on Cambodia), which concluded that victims of rape worldwide are denied access to justice due to gender discrimination and assumptions about the sexual behavior of victims of rape.¹³

Rape & Sexual Assault: U.S. Statistics:

- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime.¹⁴
- College age women are 4 times more likely to be sexually assaulted.¹⁵
- Every 2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is assaulted.¹⁶
- Sexual assault is still one of the most under reported crimes, with 60% still being left unreported.¹⁷

⁴ ibid

⁵ “Convention on the Discrimination to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women”. Division for the Advancement of Women: Department of Economic and Social Affairs. June 21, 2010. <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>>.

⁶ “Convention on the Discrimination to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women”. Amnesty International. June 21, 2010. <<http://www.amnestyusa.org/violence-against-women/ratify-the-treaty-for-the-rights-of-women-cedaw/page.do?id=1108216>>.

⁷ ibid

⁸ ibid

⁹ ibid

¹⁰ “Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women”. United Nations: General Assembly Resolution 48/104. May 27, 2010 <<http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/%28symbol%29/a.res.48.104.en>>.

¹¹ ibid

¹² ibid

¹³ “Rape Victims Worldwide Denied Justice and Dignity”. Amnesty International. May 27, 2010 <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/rape-victims-worldwide-denied-justice-and-dignity-2010-03-08>>.

¹⁴ National Institute of Justice & Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. *Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey*. 1998.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Justice. *2003 National Crime Victimization Survey*. 2003.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Justice. *2007 National Crime Victimization Survey*. 2007.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Justice. *2005 National Crime Victimization Study*. 2005.

- Reporting of sexual assaults has increased by one third since 1993.¹⁸
- Factoring in unreported rapes, only about 6% of rapists will ever spend a day in jail.¹⁹
- 73% of sexual assaults are perpetrated by non-strangers.²⁰
- 90% of rape survivors on college campuses know their attackers.²¹
- 4 in 10 rapes take place at the victim's home.²²
- 2 in 10 rapes take place at the home of a friend, neighbor, or relative.²³

¹⁸ ibid

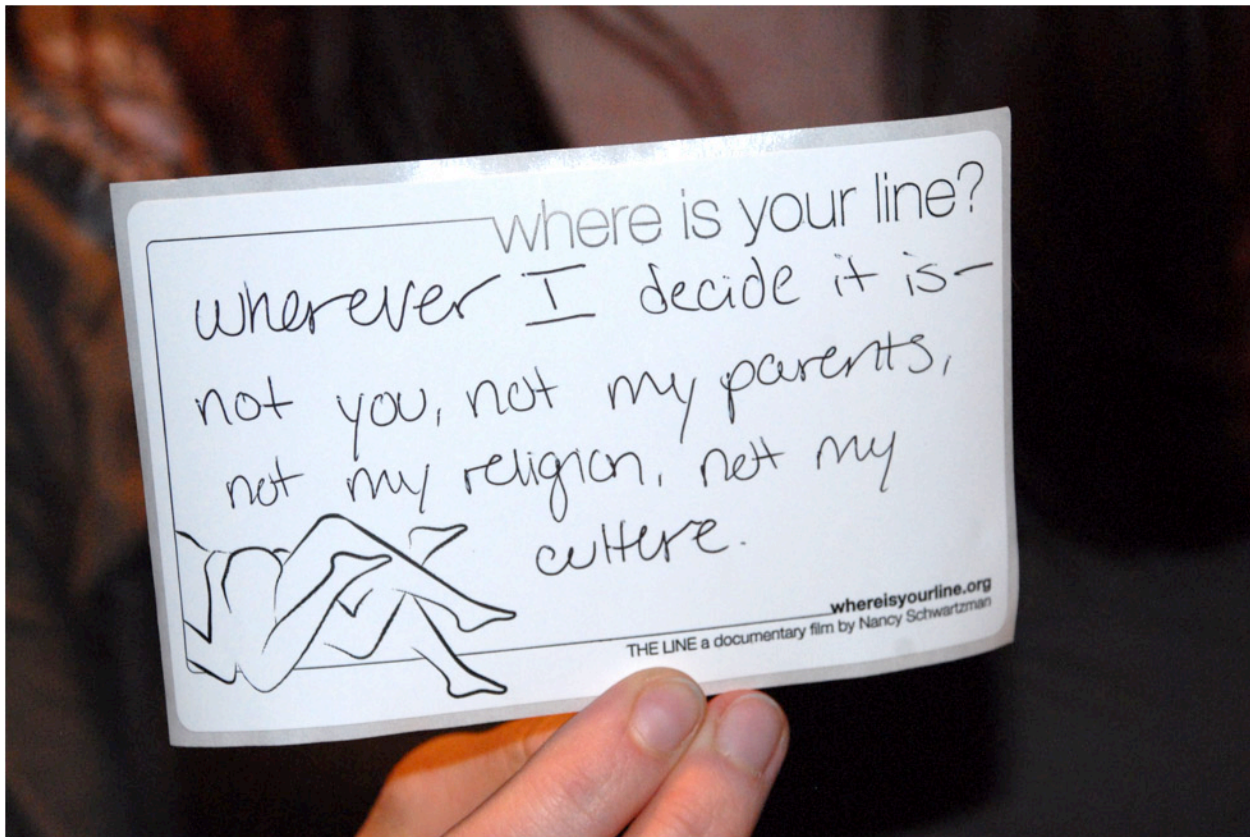
¹⁹ National Center for Policy Analysis. *Crime and Punishment in America*. 1999.

²⁰ U.S. Department of Justice. *2005 National Crime Victimization Study*. 2005.

²¹ National Institute of Justice, 2002.

²² U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Statistics. *1997 Sex Offenses and Offenders Study*. 1997.

²³ Ibid



SECTION 1: WHERE & WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT SEX?

Discussion Questions:

- In the film, Nancy says, “I got a different sort of sexual education. And I watched it religiously.” Where do young people in the United States learn about sex? What do they learn? How is this education different from the education of women who grew up in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s?
- What messages do U.S. media send about women? About sexuality? About sexual consent? What do young people learn from mainstream, commercial media about sex and its relationship to identity? What influence do these messages have on attitudes toward rape?
- What did your religious institution, if you grew up affiliated with one, tell and/or teach you about sex?
- What messages do media send about men and boys? About the way that men and boys should and do behave sexually? What influence do these messages have on attitudes toward rape?
- Where and how did you learn about sex?
- What did you learn from you parents about it? What did they expect from you?

- What messages (both direct and indirect) are sent by abstinence-only sex education programs? Discuss the conflicts inherent in teaching abstinence-only sex education in a hyper-sexualized media culture.

Activity:

Cut out 3 or 4 magazine ads or layouts that feature pictures of men and women in sexually suggestive poses. In groups of 3 or 4, observe the images and then discuss the following questions:

- What messages do these images send about what it means to be a woman? What messages do these images send about women's sexuality?
- What messages do these images send about what it means to be a man? What messages do these images send about men's sexuality?
- The images that you brought in are all constructed for commercial purposes. If sexuality in commercial images is a set of constructed stories and messages, what is sexuality in the real world? How do the images we see in commercial media influence how we think of ourselves and our own sexual identities?

SECTION 2: FEMINISM, WOMEN'S RIGHTS & SEXUAL FREEDOM

Discussion Questions:

- What is feminism? Meriam-Webster defines feminism as "1: the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes; and 2: organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests." How is your understanding of feminism different or similar to this definition? Where has your understanding of feminism come from? Do you define yourself as a feminist? Why or why not? Do you believe in equal rights and treatment of women? What stereotypes – both positive and negative – of feminists exist in U.S. culture? How might the negative stereotypes function to limit women's rights?
- Does Nancy ever refer to herself as a feminist? Is she one? Why or why not?
- How have the terms 'slut,' 'bitch,' and 'whore' been (and continue to be) used against women? What does 'slut' mean?
- Throughout history, derogatory labels have been used to describe people of color, homosexuals, ethnic groups, and others. How does name-calling and the use of pejorative language function to maintain societal power structures?
- There are frequent instances throughout history where derogatory labels are reclaimed and used by the group they have been used to describe and oppress. Why

might Nancy have chosen to call herself a ‘slut’? In what ways might this choice be empowering? Are there ways in which this choice might be disempowering? If so, how?

- How do you define sexual liberation? Is it exploring your desire, or something political? Where did the term originate? Is it still relevant?
- What does “sex-positive” mean? What is a “sex-positive” approach to educating about sexual assault?
- How is women’s sexual freedom an important component of gender equality?
- How does a culture of victim blaming limit women’s sexual freedom? Discuss.

Activity:

Make copies of the “Feminism Survey” at the end of this guide and hand out to your students. This survey, and the discussion questions that follow, are designed to help students think about the initial resistance and defensiveness that can sometimes greet discussions of women’s rights and freedom. They are designed to encourage students to think beyond easy stereotypes that can block deeper analysis, and to take responsibility for their own ideas and views.

Note: It might be most effective for students to complete the survey anonymously at the end of a class period. This will allow you to collect the surveys, synthesize the data and share the results with them in the next class. You can then use the survey to guide a discussion not only about definitions of feminism and femininity, but about the way that public discourse, especially media discourse, can shape the way we think about reality.

Post-Survey Discussion Questions:

- What is feminism?
- Where do stereotypes about feminism come from?
- How do stereotypes about feminism discredit the ideas behind feminism?
- In the MEF film *Tough Guise*, Jackson Katz says that people use derisive and personally insulting terms to describe strong women because “it has the effect of shutting off thinking about the ideas that feminists represent. If you kill the messenger, you don’t need to face squarely the implications of the message.” Explore Katz’s statement. What do you think he means? In what other social movements are people labeled in ways so as to avoid facing the ideas they represent?
- What does it mean to be a strong woman? Are strong women always feminists? Explain your reasoning.
- What terms are often used for women who voice strong opinions? How might these terms serve to keep girls and women from voicing their opinions?

- Nicholas Groth, a psychologist and author of *Men Who Rape: The Psychology of the Offender*, says, as paraphrased on the National Center for Victims of Crime website, “all sexual assault is an act of aggression, regardless of the gender or age of the victim or the assailant. Neither sexual desire nor sexual deprivation is the primary motivating force behind sexual assault. It is not about sexual gratification, but rather a sexual aggressor using somebody else as a means of expressing their own power and control.” Considering this, how does heterosexual rape serve to express male power and dominance and exert control over women?

SECTION 3: GENDER ROLES, CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS & SEXUALITY

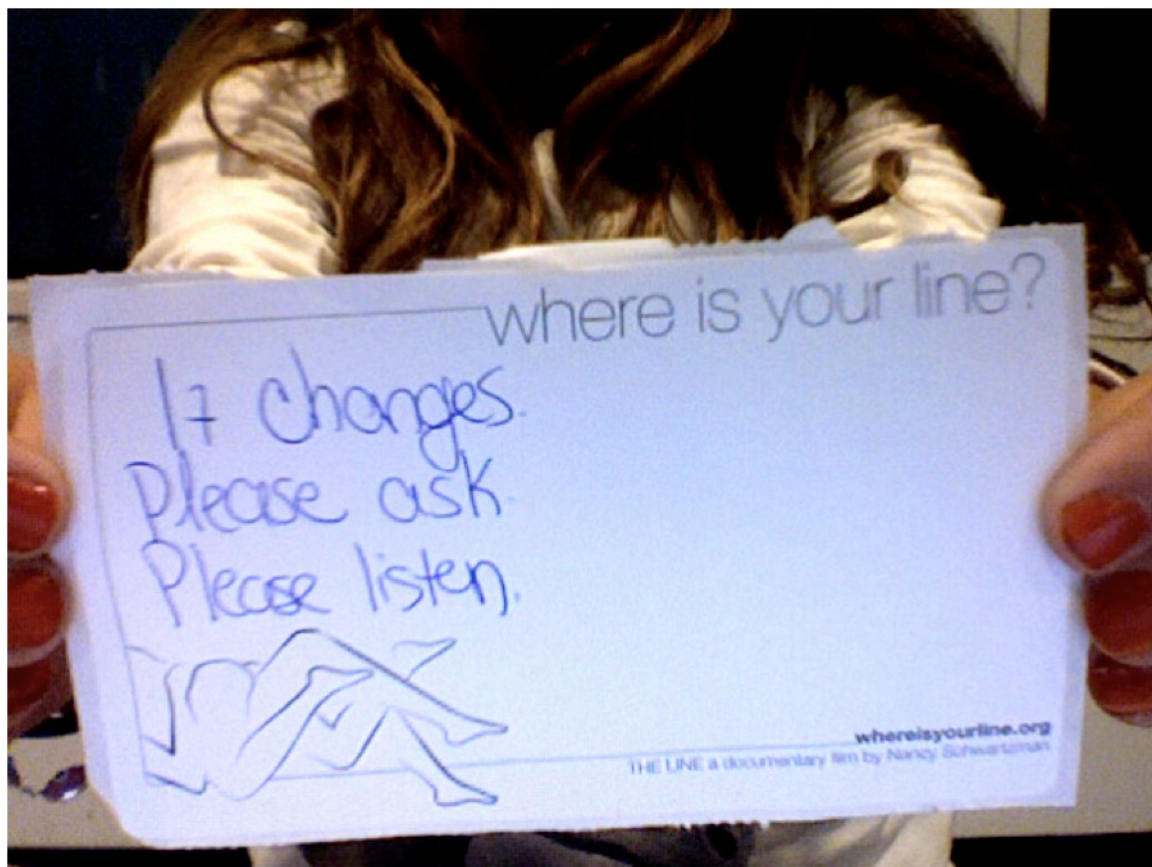
Discussion Questions:

- In the first key point of the narrative, Nancy’s mother makes a statement about our country and “the rest of the world.” Do you agree or disagree?
- Although Nancy was assaulted in Israel, sexual assault is an endemic problem in the United States. What are ways we overlook sexism and violence in our culture?
- Based on what Nancy shared in the film, how does it appear that women dress differently in Jerusalem than how they dress in New York, or in pop culture/music videos?
- How do cultural expectations regarding gender roles, sex, and women’s bodies affect attitudes toward consent and rape? Is a woman “safer” if she is covered? How might this effect the idea that a short skirt means a woman is “asking for it?”
- The expectation that a woman’s body should be covered – to greater and lesser degrees – is a norm in many cultures around the world, not just in Orthodox Judaism. In what ways is the covering of a woman’s body a religious issue? In what ways is it a political issue? A civil rights issue?
- How can covering one’s body be liberating or empowering? Reflect on the difference between covering one’s body because you have the choice to do so versus covering one’s body because culture or laws expect, or demand, that you do so.
- What is the relationship between gender equality (and inequality) and rape? How might culturally defined gender roles affect views of rape in countries outside of the United States?
- What is cultural sensitivity? Why is cultural sensitivity important when traveling and living in foreign countries? It is very important that the cultural sensitivity training provided never requires that you submit to behaviors that invade your personal boundaries and that feel unsafe or even uncomfortable to you. How does one practice

cultural sensitivity and still ensure that you are respecting your own personal (especially sexual) boundaries?

- In the film, there is some footage of young people partying on spring break. What gender roles and sexual expectations are the men on spring break performing through their behavior and language? What about the women?

SECTION 4: IS CONSENT “COMPLICATED?” RAPE MYTHS & VICTIM BLAMING



Discussion Questions:

- Consent means to permit or agree. In the sexual context it is both complicated and simple. Slogans like “no means no” and “yes means yes” are meant to use clear

language to talk about wanting or not wanting a sexual act or acts. For example, viewers of THE LINE have defined “their lines” or consent in the following ways:

- *It Changes. Please Ask. Please Listen.*;
- *Undefined, but not unclear*;
- *Well above “consent”*;
- *Ask me everytime. It changes...*;
- *I’m not sure, but I’ll know when you cross it*; and
- *When I say stop. That’s not maybe, that’s stop.*

From these examples, you can see that people experience consent as clear, but not fixed in time and space. Depending on mood, context, partner, or any set of internal or external factors. What other factors might affect how people define and experience consent?

- In the film, lawyer and victims’ advocate Brett Sokolow says, “consent to one form of sexual activity isn’t consent to every other form.” Reflect in more depth on the meaning of this statement. What are the implications if one assumes that consent to one form of sexual activity is consent to every other form?
- Until 2008 there was a law in Maryland that stated a woman could not revoke consent if she had already been penetrated. This law was overturned, but how might it reflect society’s larger beliefs around autonomy and consent?
- According to a recent study conducted in London, 75% of women said that if a rape victim got into bed with the assailant before the attack, s/he should accept some responsibility. The belief underlying this attitude is that if a woman goes home with a man, then she implicitly gives up her right to say “no.” What does this belief say about cultural attitudes toward women, women’s bodies, women’s rights, and their freedom to make choices about their own sexuality?
- Another rape myth is that a victim of rape is at least partly responsible if she was dressed provocatively. Feministing.com founder, Jessica Valenti, said: “A woman is raped because she is unlucky enough to be in the presence of a rapist.” No matter what she is wearing or if she was drinking. A Scottish PSA further illustrates this point: <http://notever.co.uk/>. Watch the PSA and discuss it and Valenti’s statement.
- How do gender equality and cultural attitudes toward women’s bodies and contribute to attitudes about rape that blame the victim?
- In the film, the following comments were made to Nancy – discuss the assumptions (esp. about gender and sexuality) behind each one:
 - *I don’t know what to think, I’m your friend, but I feel like I’ve had a lot of those experiences too but they weren’t rape.*
 - *Just because it hurts doesn’t mean it was forced.*
 - *You have two people saying two different things, and you were both drinking...*What are some of the rape myths described here? Who benefits from rape myths & why?
- What are ways that women internalize victim blaming? What does the statement “she put herself in that situation” mean? How does this statement relate to a culture of victim blaming?

- A common myth about rape is that it is about “miscommunication.” What are some ways that you can communicate clearly with a sexual partner and minimize the possibility of harm? What are some reasons why some people might hesitate to communicate clearly before engaging in sexual acts?
- How does “no means no” unfairly put the burden on women to resist sexual advances appropriately? How might emphasizing enthusiastic consent, or the “yes” of sex be more empowering and useful?
- What are the effects – both personal and societal – of women internalizing the culture of victim blaming?
- Why might it be easier for all us – whether we have been victims of an assault or not – to blame the victim? (Note to facilitator: Two distinct points here are: 1. If we acknowledge these experiences as rape, we realize how endemic and widespread rape is and that can affect our sense of security; and 2. If we acknowledge these experiences as rape, many women will have to acknowledge that they, too, have been raped or violated.)

SECTION 5: LEGAL ISSUES & OPTIONS FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS

Discussion Questions:

- In the film, the defense attorney says about seeking justice in the courts for a sexual assault case, “You have to prove it. You are the one who is under the spot light.” What is she saying about what a victim/survivor might experience in the court justice system? How might this discourage a victim from coming forward?
- In a court of law, who makes up a jury? How might common rape myths and assumptions about gender affect how members of a jury views a sexual assault case?
- In the film, Attorney Brett Sokolow uses the term ‘a perfect victim.’ What is a ‘perfect victim’? How and why does the concept of a ‘perfect victim’ make it difficult for the majority of victims of rape and sexual assault to seek justice in the court system? How might the idea of a ‘perfect victim’ discourage many people from reporting rapes and incidents of sexual assault?
- What are Rape Shield Laws? How can they be helpful? What are some of the flaws with these laws? (See the readings below for more information.)
- Can you think of what some alternative systems to deal with prosecuting rape? Does your campus have a panel system of holding students accountable for committing acts of sexual assault towards other students? What are the strengths and weaknesses of a panel system? (Read *Alternative Justice Responses to Sexual Assault* for more information below.)

Additional Resources:

Understanding Rape Laws: The Highly Publicized Case of Kobe Bryant:
http://new.vawnet.org/Assoc_Files_VAWnet/RapeShield.pdf

FAQ: Rape Shield Laws (The National Center for Victims of Crime):
http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbID=DB_FAQ:RapeShieldLaws927

Alternative Justice Responses to Sexual Assault
http://new.vawnet.org/category/Main_Doc.php?docid=1231

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence Papers by Michelle Anderson:
<http://www.incite-national.org/>

SECTION 6: ALCOHOL & SEX

Discussion Questions:

- In the Spring Break footage included in the film, a young man says, “Seventy-five percent of the bitches down here are using alcohol as an excuse to f&#k, twenty-five percent are just whores.” What is your reaction to his statement?
- What does “using alcohol as an excuse to f&#k” imply about social norms and women’s sexual freedom? What types of behavior might young women feel compelled to excuse by using alcohol? What is going on in our culture that makes women feel they need to rely on alcohol in order to do these things? Do young men need to excuse their behavior if they act in similar ways? What does this tell you about gender norms and expectations, specifically in relation to sexual behavior?
- What does the term “whore” mean? What assumptions about women and sexuality are embedded in the use of the term in the statement above? In what other contexts and ways is this term used to describe girls and young women? What are the assumptions and implications?
- Nancy did not film the Spring Break footage; a male camera operator did. How does gender change the dynamics of the conversation? How might this conversation been different if the camera operator were a woman? Explore.
- In the MEF film *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol*, media educator Jean Kilbourne says, “In a culture that primarily values women for their bodies and their appearance, there’s enormous pressure on young women to demonstrate their freedom and their independence by acting out sexually, and particularly by acting out sexually in a very male-oriented kind of way.” What does it mean for women to “act out sexually in a

male-oriented way”? What role might alcohol play in this situation? What is the alcohol industry’s vision of women’s sexuality and sexual freedom? How else might we envision sex, sexuality, and sexual freedom?

Activity:

In the MEF film *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol*, media and violence prevention educator Jackson Katz notes that “one of the stereotypical scenarios in beer ads is a highly sexualized woman, who is the object of male heterosexual desire, who is in a sense a reward for the purchase or the use of that product; so in other words, you’re not just buying the beer or consuming the alcohol, you’re actually getting the woman.” In a group of 3-4, list and briefly describe as many alcohol ads as you can that follow this scenario (alternatively, look through magazines and collect the ads or find them on television, record them, and bring them in – there are alcohol commercials available in the extras on *Spin the Bottle*). In these ads, the woman comes with the alcohol – in this situation, what power does she have? Is the woman acting as a subject or object? What is the difference? What is objectification? What are some possible consequences of objectification?

SECTION 7: RAPE CULTURE

Discussion Questions:

In the film, former NFL Quarterback Don McPherson says, “Understanding that we raise women to survive in a rape culture, because we raise women to know these things, yet we do nothing to talk to men about not raping. . .” What is a “rape culture”? (For the Facilitator: Rape Culture as defined by Wikipedia: “Rape culture is a term used within women’s studies and feminism, describing a culture in which rape and other sexual violence (usually against women) are common and in which prevalent attitudes, norms, practices, and media condone, normalize, excuse, or encourage sexualized violence.”)

Activities:

- What things are women taught to do before they go outside to protect themselves from being raped? Create a list. What does this list tell us about the expectations of men’s behavior? In what ways is this limiting?

- What are men taught to do before they go outside to protect themselves from being raped? Create a list. Compare this list with the one you created for women. What does this tell us about cultural gender expectations and rape?
- Create a list to give to men of how to not rape or to not perpetuate a rape culture. What is your response to preparing such a list? Explore.

SECTION 8: RAPE AS A MEN'S ISSUE

Discussion Questions:

- Discuss the following statement: *Rape and sexual assault are women's issues.* Why might some people maintain this belief? Although the majority of rape victims are women, 1 in every 10 rape victims is male.²⁴ Additionally, 99 percent of female and 85 percent of male survivors were raped by a male.²⁵ How might the belief that rape is a women's issue limit discussions about rape and sexual assault? How might this belief inhibit rape prevention education?
- In the film, NFL Quarterback Don McPherson critiques the fact that women are positioned to be responsible for preventing rape. Most men don't rape, in fact, 90-94% of men don't rape and never will. But rape affects all of us. How does living in a rape culture negatively affect men?
- How can we move past the idea some men have that "I don't rape, so this isn't my issue?"
- There is a growing movement of men working to end men's violence against women. One strategy they have is to engage bystanders. The majority of men don't rape, but many men stand by and let it happen. This bystander intervention movement aims to hold men accountable – not intervening in a direct sexual assault, but intervening in problematic situations. This can be shutting down sexist jokes, or intervening if you see someone being taken advantage of when under the influence.
- What are some ways you can put the bystander approach into practice in your life? How can you challenge language and images that you see that perpetuate rape culture?
- What might some of the barriers men face when trying to challenge sexist behavior? How can coaches, teachers, athletes, and entertainers use their influence to challenge men's violence against women?

²⁴ U.S. Department of Justice. *2003 National Crime Victimization Survey*. 2003.

²⁵ NIJ, Special Report, *Findings from the Violence Against Women Survey*, 2006

Additional Resources:

THE LINE is a proud partner with Men Can Stop Rape to bring the film & conversation to college men.

Men Can Stop Rape Strength Campaign

<http://www.mencanstoprape.org/info-url2696/info-url.htm>

Engaging Men: Strategies and Dilemmas in Violence Prevention Education Among Men:

<http://endsexualviolence.oregonsatf.org/resources/docs/EngagingMen.pdf>

Coach for America with Joe Ehrmann

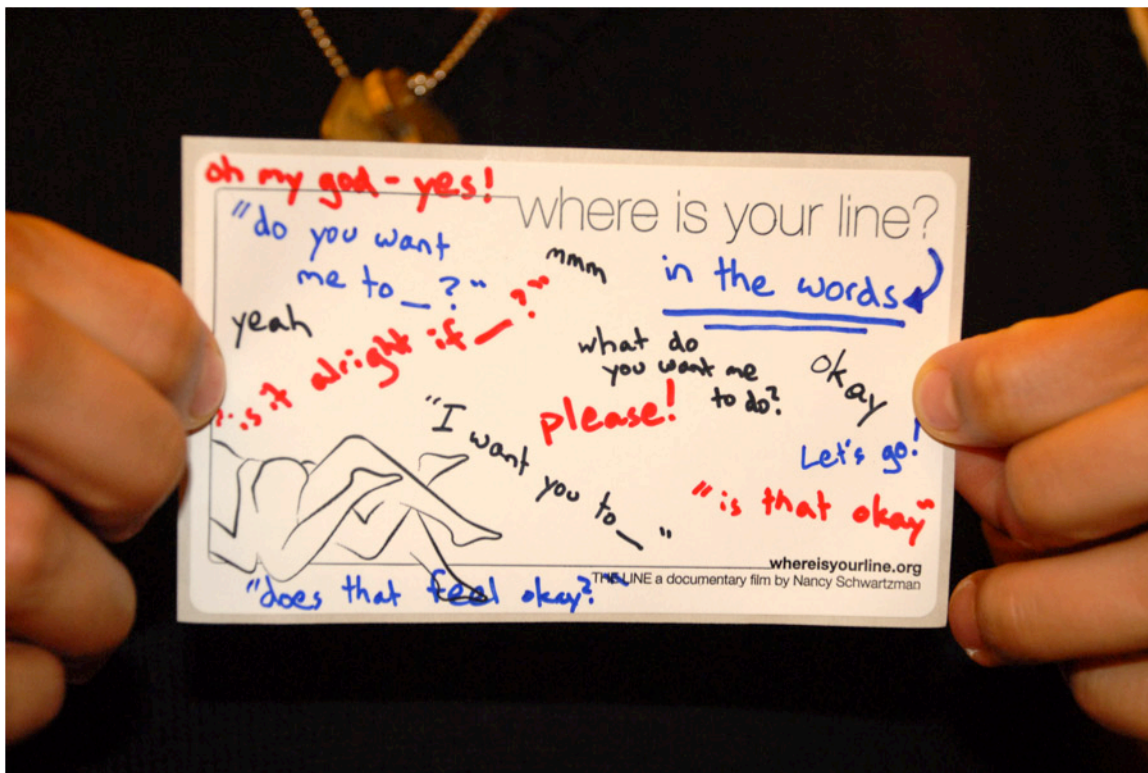
www.buildingmenandwomen.org

Family Violence Prevention Fund's Toolkit for Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-based Violence:

<http://toolkit.endabuse.org/Home/>

The White Ribbon Campaign

<http://www.whiteribbon.ca/>



SECTION 9: CONSENT AND SEXUAL BOUNDARIES

Discussion Questions:

- What is consent? What is *enthusiastic* consent?
- What messages do media send about sexual consent and sexual violence? How do these messages normalize violence and sexual assault?
- In the film, Nancy says, “The more comfortable I am in my own skin, the more present I can be to give consent, to seek pleasure and to choose a partner who respects my line – wherever it may be.” What does it mean to be ‘comfortable in your own skin’? How and why does this better enable one to give consent, seek pleasure, and choose respectful partners? What are some things that you can help yourself to feel this way?
- Look at the “Where is Your Line?” campaign. What does it encourage?
- How and why are programs that develop self-esteem for young girls and boys important early interventions in rape prevention?
- What are sexual boundaries? How do we learn where our own boundaries are? How do we ensure that we respect our own boundaries? How do we learn where other people’s boundaries are? How do we ensure that we respect other people’s boundaries?
- How is self-worth important to setting and maintaining boundaries with sexual partners?
- How can being clear about our own sexual boundaries (with ourselves and with our partners) make issues of consent more transparent?

Activity:

1. In groups of 3-4, write a definition for consent. Then create a list of guidelines for consent – i.e. what guidelines need to be followed in order to be sure that the sexual activity is consensual?
2. Read *Guidelines for Consent in Intimate Relationships* (Alan Berkowitz, 2002): http://www.kirklin.com/wfdata/files/Berkowitz-consent_guidelines_full.pdf
3. As a large group, use both the guidelines created in small groups and the guidelines proposed by Berkowitz to create a group list of *Guidelines for Consent*.
4. Discuss.
5. Download “where is your line?” campaign stickers. Fill them out after seeing THE LINE. Photograph them, and upload them to whereisyourline.org. Write and share a blog post about your statement.
6. Create a tabling campaign on campus using “where is your line?” stickers. Spend a week gathering stickers and create a wall, document the conversations you have.

SECTION 10: SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE LGBT/QUEER COMMUNITIES

The Line is a personal narrative about a heterosexual assault. However, sexual violence is a serious concern for members of the LGBT/Queer (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered) communities.

Statistics:

- Because of limited studies as well as barriers with reporting, it is difficult to determine accurate estimates of the prevalence of sexual violence in the LGBT/Queer communities. However, estimates indicate that bisexual, transgendered, lesbian, and gay people experience violence within their intimate relationships at about the same rates as heterosexuals.²⁶
 - 30% of lesbians report having experienced sexual assault or rape by another woman (not necessarily an intimate partner).²⁷
 - 15% of men living with a male intimate partner report being raped, assaulted or stalked by a male cohabitant.²⁸
- Queer persons may be sexually assaulted as part of a hate crime:
 - A study of gay, lesbian, and bisexual adults showed that 41% reported being a victim of a hate crime after the age of 16. Sexual violence is more common among LGBT hate crimes – assailants may use rape to “punish” victims for what they view as their sexual transgressions.

Discussion Questions:

- What aspects of American culture foster homophobia?
- What role does homophobia play in hate crimes that use sexual violence? How is sexual violence used to assert power in these situations?
- What kinds of barriers might exist if you were a member of the LGBT community and you were sexually assaulted? (Note to facilitator – Answers to this question might include: “Same barriers that exists for all people”; and “Additional barriers include being ‘outed,’ homophobia, and heterosexism inherent in our society, especially in law enforcement/health care”.)
- How might homophobia affect a member of the LGBT community’s choice whether or not to report a sexual assault? Discuss.

²⁶ Renzetti, C. (1992). *Violent betrayal: Partner abuse in lesbian relationships*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Patricia Tjaden & Nancy Thoennes, U.S. Dep't of Just., NCJ 181867, *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, at 30 (2000), available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/181867.htm

- What are the similarities between sexual assault between a man and a woman and between two individuals of the same gender? (Note to facilitator – Answers to this question might include: “Sexual assault is a crime of power and violence, NOT sex”; and “Survivors have traumatic experience regardless of the gender of the perpetrator”.)
- What does transgender mean? What other barriers might transgender individuals face in trying to get help for/cope with sexual violence?

WHAT CAN YOU DO ON YOUR CAMPUS & BEYOND:

“Where is Your Line” Campaign: <http://whereisyourline.org/>

Book Nancy Schwartzman to come to your campus:

<http://whereisyourline.org/about/bookings/>

Download stickers here: <http://whereisyourline.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/sticker.pdf>

Submit here: <http://whereisyourline.org/submit/>

STAY CONNECTED:

Follow *The Line* on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/thelinecampaign>

Follow the Media Education Foundation on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/mediaed>

Become a Fan of *The Line* on Facebook: <http://facebook.com/thelinecampaign>

Become a Fan of The Media Education Foundation on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/MediaEducationFoundation>

Read on Tumblr: <http://whereisyourline.tumblr.com/>

Join the Flickr group: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/1187243@N22/>

Subscribe to *The Line*'s RSS feed: <http://whereisyourline.org/feed/>

Feminism Survey

1. If a woman voices a strong opinion about a woman's rights issue, I tend to (check all that apply):
 - Listen
 - Get annoyed
 - Feel intimidated
 - Get angry
 - Feel inspired
 - Ignore her
 - Other _____

2. I would use the following terms to describe a woman with a strong opinion about a women's rights issue (check all that apply):
 - Strong*
 - Empowered*
 - Bitch*
 - Lesbian*
 - Feminist*
 - Respectable*
 - Inspiring*
 - Human*
 - Irritating*
 - Man-hater*

3. A feminist is (check all that apply):
 - A woman who doesn't like most men
 - A woman who believes that women are better than men
 - A person who believes in equal rights and opportunities for both men and women
 - A woman who doesn't shave her legs
 - A lesbian
 - A woman who works for equal rights and opportunities for both men and women
 - A person who supports abortion
 - A person who works for affordable daycare
 - A person who works against sexual harassment
 - A woman who doesn't respect married stay-at-home moms

4. What is your impression of feminists?
 - Favorable
 - Unfavorable

5. Is feminism today relevant to most women?
 - Yes
 - No

6. Is feminism relevant to you personally?
 - Yes
 - No