



LAURA
BOLDRINI

GLEN
CANNING

DONNA
ZUCKERBERG

KIAH
MORRIS

MARION
SÉCLIN

BACKLASH

MISOGYNY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

A FILM BY LEA CLERMONT-DION & GUYLAINE MAROIST



WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY LÉA CLERMONT-DION & GUYLAINE MAROIST EDITED BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS LORD, ERIC RUEL AND BIRCK FULHAM SOUND DESIGN FRANÇOIS LACASSE
ORIGINAL SCORE ANTOINE FÉLIX ROCHETTE PRODUCERS GUYLAINE MAROIST & ERIC RUEL A LA RUELLÉ FILMS PRODUCTION
BacklashTheFilm.com



– *National Post*

"Real-life silencing horror stories"

– *Marsha Lederman, The Globe & Mail*

**"Fantastic directing. The script, photography
and music are truly striking."**

– *Rayed Hamoud, Radio-Canada*

**"An important, complex film that is like a kick to the gut.
A must-see doc that is breaking records at the box office."**

– *Sophie Durocher, QUB Radio*

"A disturbing and necessary film"

– *L'Oeil régional*

"You'll be glued to your seat in the movie theatre."

– *André Noël, Radio-Canada*

REVIEWS

"A disturbing yet vitally important film"

– *Chris Knight, Toronto Sun*

"A dystopian atmosphere that is all too real"

– *Odile Tremblay, Le Devoir*

**"A multi-voiced film, edited like a thriller,
with a strong political message"**

– *Silvia Galipeau, La Presse*

**"I was expecting a high-impact film,
not a total knockout like this!"**

– *Franco Nuovo, Radio-Canada*

**"This is more than a documentary. It is a scream,
a proof, a call for awareness and change.**

It is a film to see. Absolutely."

– *Jean-Michel Lhomme, Néo média*

**"It sends shivers down your spine.
It's very effective, very well shot."**

– *Sébastien Diaz, Radio-Canada*

SYNOPSIS SYNOPSIS *SYNOPSIS* SYN



Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age

A shocking story of four women leaders whose lives are overturned by cyberviolence.

They share a common cause: refusing to be silenced.



NOOPSIS SYNOPSIS *NOOPSIS* SYN

What is it like to live with this so-called virtual violence? That's what this opus aims to show by closely following the victims in their daily lives. As in a horror movie, we witness in real time the waves of hate that assail them, the fear that invades their private lives, and the loss of their sense of security in public spaces. Their lives are marred by a loss of confidence, and by shame.



Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age also shows how each of these women, and this man speaking in his late daughter's name, are waging the same battle. They share a common cause: refusing to be silenced. Their journeys intertwine. They demand widespread accountability from those who allow the propagation of such hatred, whether it be the tech giants, the state, or the perpetrators themselves.

Why this unrelenting and systematic discrimination against women? Can we leave the screen now and shift the age-old paradigm?



LAURA BOLDRINI GLEN CANNING DONNA ZUCKERBERG KIAH MORRIS MARION SÉCLIN



Ray Anjo
YOU DESERVE TO BE RAPED STUPID WHORE
REPLY 18

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Kevin TheMachine
SOMEONE SHOULD KILL THAT UGLY BITCH
REPLY 5

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Axl 666
SHUT YOUR STUPID MOUTH OLD CUNT
REPLY 32

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TRAILER

TRAILER



WATCH TRAILER: <https://vimeo.com/laruellefilms/backlashtrailer>

TECHNICAL SHEET + DISTRIBUTION



WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: Léa Clermont-Dion and Guylaine Maroist

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF: Sylvain Cormier

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Steeve Desrosiers,
Jean-François Perreault, Louis-Vincent Blaquière,
Fabien Côté, Richard Hamel

EDITED BY: Jean-François Lord and Eric Ruel

SOUND RECORDING, EDITING AND MIXING: François Lacasse

ORIGINAL SCORE: Antoine Félix Rochette

English and french spoken with english subtitles | 78 minutes

MEDIAS RELATION, BOOKING & DISTRIBUTION: Eric Ruel eric@laruellefilms.com

PRODUCTION: **LA RUELLE FILMS**

OFFICIAL WEBSITE: BacklashTheFilm.com





CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS

MARION SECLIN

French actress, author, and YouTuber, Marion Seclin has received over 40 000 hateful messages after posting a video condemning streetharassment. Since then, she has received insults, rape threats, and death threats on a daily basis.

Still, she continues to be vocal in the public arena that is the internet. She uses the platforms that others have weaponized to share her message and raise awareness among users.

We follow her in her struggle to make the big players of Silicon Valley change their practices and protect their users. In front of the camera, she challenges YouTube, demanding that the site be held accountable.



LAURA BOLDRINI

President of the Chamber of Deputies between 2013 and 2018, Laura Boldrini is the most cyberharassed woman in Italy. Ever since she took office, the female politician has received rape threats and death threats by the thousands.

These insults often come from male politicians who sit with her in parliament, including Matteo Salvini, leader of the populist party Northern League. A fierce critic of Facebook's inaction when it comes to dealing with the spread of online hate, Laura Boldrini fights for the adoption of European laws to adequately oversee all social media platforms.

She is trying to implement a bill that would impose harsh fines on social media that allow hateful messages to be posted and shared on their platforms.

CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS



LAURENCE GRATTON

Laurence Gratton is a young teacher in an elementary school in Montreal. For the past five years, she has been harassed by a former colleague. When she was still in university, she began to receive hateful messages coming from accounts which she believed belonged to classmates.

As years went by, messages kept pouring in. The situation even got worse: she received rape threats and death threats, she was harassed, her identity was stolen to create an account on a porn site in the dark web. The young woman is not alone: over 40 women have been targeted by the same perpetrator.

Overcoming her fear, Laurence denounces these attacks and demands that the police protect her adequately and give her support as she seeks justice.



KIAH MORRIS

Vermont State Representative, Kiah Morris was first elected in 2014. As the only Black female member of the House, she served her community for two consecutive terms, but she had to resign in 2018 following months of online harassment.

She is the target of a group of alt-right men who have been sending her hateful messages and even death threats. She went to the police, but nothing could stop the outpour of digital misogyny. The violence against Kiah quickly escalated, moving from the digital world to the physical world: swastikas were carved on trees on her property, someone broke into her house, her young son witnessed his mother receiving a death threat.

Faced with an unbearable dilemma, she had to make a choice and leave her office. Still, she refuses to be silenced and demands that the justice system protect her and all women.

CHARACTERS

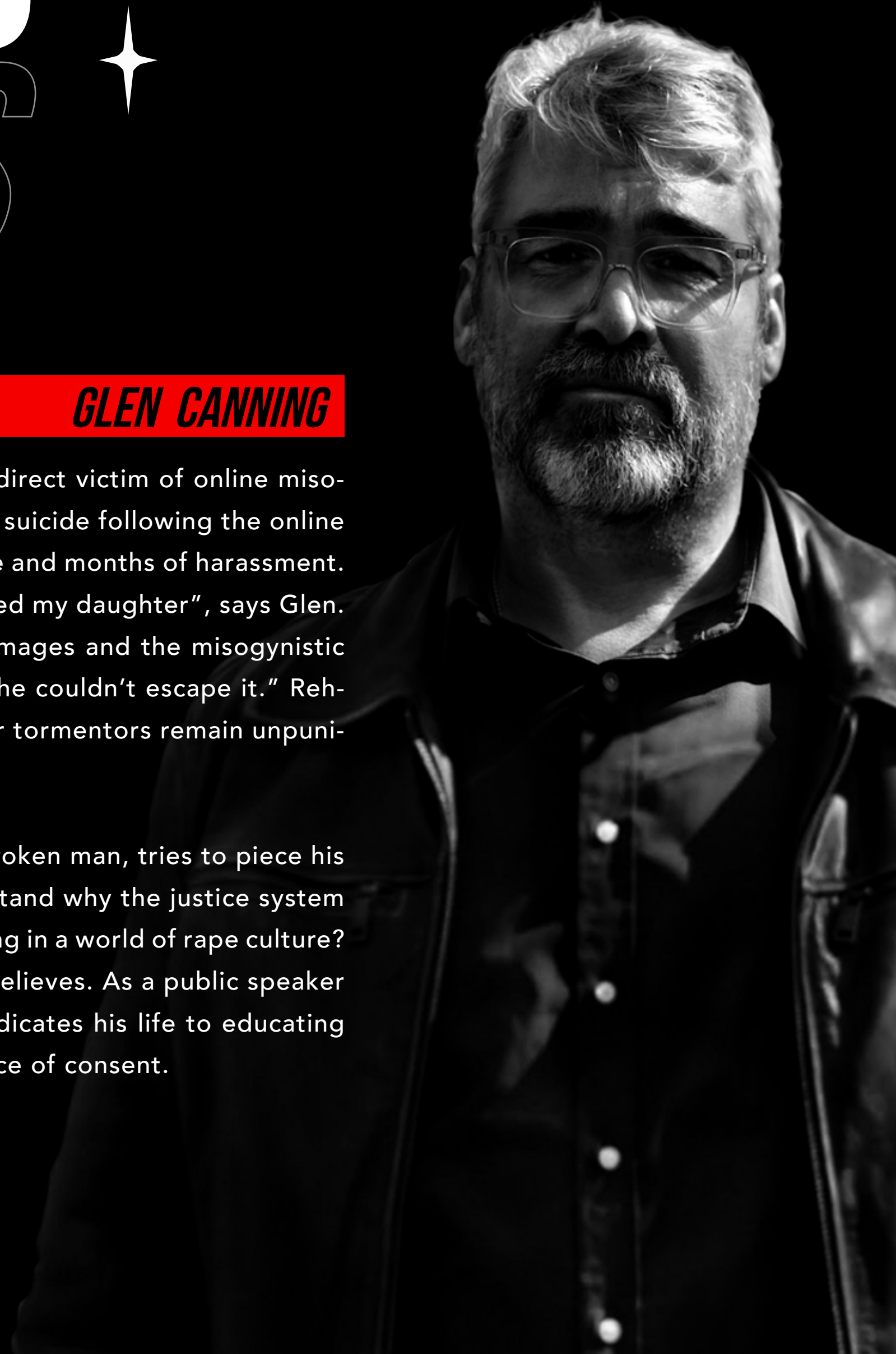
CHARACTERS

"IT WAS HATRED
ON SOCIAL MEDIA
THAT KILLED
MY DAUGHTER"

GLEN CANNING

Father of Rehtaeh Parsons, he is an indirect victim of online misogyny. In 2013, his daughter committed suicide following the online distribution of photographs of her rape and months of harassment. "It was hatred on social media that killed my daughter", says Glen. "Even after she changed school, the images and the misogynistic comments followed her everywhere. She couldn't escape it." Rehtaeh's story shocked the world, but her tormentors remain unpunished.

Five years after the tragedy, Glen, a broken man, tries to piece his life back together. He wants to understand why the justice system failed him and his daughter. Are we living in a world of rape culture? That's exactly what the army veteran believes. As a public speaker in high schools, Glen Canning now dedicates his life to educating young men about the crucial importance of consent.



EXPERTS EXPERTS EXPERTS EXPERTS



DONNA ZUCKERBERG, a classicist from Princeton University, is unequivocal: “social media have elevated misogyny to an unprecedented level of violence.” In her recent book *Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age*, she exposes the connections between the misogynist movements and the Right.



LAURENCE ROSIER is a professor of linguistics at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Her research is focused on tracing the etymology of insults against women over the centuries.



SARAH T. ROBERTS, from the University of California, Los Angeles, shares her knowledge of the inner workings of social media, these gigantic companies that profit from the hatred shared on their platforms.

INTENTION BEHIND THE FILM

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LÉA CLERMONT-DION

Filmmaker

In 2012, when I started speaking out more and more in public, I got my first taste of harassment 2.0 in the form of death and rape threats. Attacks were made on my appearance, my sexuality and my intelligence—the classic, insidious attacks so often made against women. So I took cover and kept quiet. I was 22 years old and, for a while, I was ashamed of being a woman.

When I realized how widespread the phenomenon is, and just how many women are affected, I decided to make this film. I wanted it to be a bold film that pulled no punches, a film that would bring about change. I especially wanted to avoid self-censorship in this effort to raise awareness. Online hate against women doesn't lend itself to cinematography, so we had to find creative ways to make audiences feel the collateral damage of this modern plague.

INTENTION BEHIND THE FILM



GUYLAINE MAROIST
Filmmaker

At first, we wanted to show how cyberviolence predominantly affects women. Over the course of our research, we discovered the resurgence of a retrograde misogynist, anti-feminist ideology that was spreading on social media. At all points in history when women have stood up for their rights, they've moved two steps forward and three back. What we're witnessing today is an immense backlash against women, a wave of hate facilitated by the anonymity of online platforms. This wave is reaching uncontrollable proportions.

In the face of this surge, we have no choice but to keep fighting back. We have to hold fast to our ideals, especially our belief that social justice will prevail.

THE FILMMAKERS



LÉA CLERMONT-DION

Léa Clermont-Dion is a writer, filmmaker and post-doctoral student in Art Education at Concordia University. Her Ph.D. thesis was about online anti-feminist discourses in Quebec. In recent years, she has published several books, including the bestselling *La revanche des moches*, *Les superbes*, *Lettres à un souverainiste* and *Crève avec moi*, her first foray into fiction writing. She was also the co-scriptwriter for *Beauté fatale*, which aired on Télé-Québec (2014). She co-directed and co-wrote with Gianluca Della Montagna the documentary *T'as juste à porter plainte*, which aired on Noovo. For close to 15 years, LéaClermont-Dion has been involved in social movements to emancipate women. She has given more than 200 talks on topics related to feminist issues, notably at the Council of Europe. She was also awarded a Vanier Canada Graduate scholarship, the most prestigious of its kind in Canada, underscoring her academic excellence and positive impact on the community.

GUYLAINE MAROIST

After completing her studies in Cinema and Musicology at the Université de Montréal, Guylaine Maroist worked as a freelance journalist for Le Devoir in the early 1990s. In 2002, she founded La Ruelle Films to produce POV documentaries with producer and director Eric Ruel. She has garnered several awards in Canada and abroad, including a Governor General's History Award, a Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the New York International Independent Film Festival, a Gold Ribbon Award, and three Géméaux awards. Her recent films include *God Save Justin Trudeau*, *Expo 67 Mission Impossible*, *Jukebox: Sing, Twist and Shout!*, and *Gentilly or Not to Be*, which helped bring about the permanent shutdown of the Gentilly II nuclear plant. In 2015, she was appointed a member of the NGO Pugwash, becoming the first filmmaker in history to join the ranks of an organization that, since 1957, has influenced the United Nations and state leaders in matters related to global peace and nuclear disarmament. In 2021–2022, Guylaine Maroist was a guest professor at UQAM university's media school.



THE FILMMAKERS

73%

73% of women have experienced some form of online violence.¹

27X

Women around the world are 27 times more likely to be harassed online than men.²

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

53M

An estimated 53.35 million US citizens have been affected by cyber crime in the first half of 2022.³

41%

41% of Americans have personally experienced some form of online harassment.⁴

53%

53% of young women ages 18 to 29 say that someone has sent them explicit images they did not ask for.⁵

¹⁻²UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development

³"Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls: A World- Wide Wake-Up Call", 2015

³The Latest 2023 Cyber Crime Statistics (AAG, Cyber Crime in the United States)

⁴Pew Research Center, January 2021, "The State of Online Harassment"

⁵Pew Research Center : Online Harassment 2017

*Underreporting likely hides
the real numbers:*

1/4

Only 1 in 4 women reported the behavior to the online platform(s) on which it occurred.⁵

14%

Only 14% reported it to an offline protective agency.⁶

74%

74% of women surveyed expressed their concern about online abuse escalating to offline threats.⁷

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

*Known attackers blur the line between
online and offline violence:*

54%

54% of the women who reported personally experiencing online violence knew the perpetrator.⁸

50%

50% of women said the internet is not a safe place to share thoughts.

Forced self-censorship means women's voices are under-represented, reducing diversity in societal, political, and economic discussions and decisions.⁹

⁵The Economist Intelligence Unit : Statistiques sur les crimes déclarés par la police au Canada, 2020

⁶⁻⁷⁻⁸⁻⁹Ibid

✦ *LA RUELLE FILMS* ✦

LA RUELLE

In 2002, in Montreal, Eric Ruel and Guylaine Maroist founded **LA RUELLE FILMS** (formerly Les Productions de la Ruelle).

They are both passionately devoted to vital causes such as the nuclear threat (***Time Bombs*** and ***Gentilly or Not to Be***) and the resurgence of sexism on social media (***Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age***). They also offer a fresh take on political issues (***Disunited States of Canada*** and ***God Save Justin Trudeau***).

Backed by a top-notch team, Eric Ruel and Guylaine Maroist have forged a unique brand of filmmaking that is reinventing the art of storytelling. They are at the avant-garde of documentary making, creating deep and engaging experiences across multiple platforms.

FILMOGRAPHY

Jukebox (2020)

Expo 67 Mission impossible (2017)

God Save Justin Trudeau (2015)

Disunited States of Canada (2012)

Gentilly or Not to Be (2012)

Time Bombs (2007)

Singing to Drown Out the Sea (2003)