



Searching for Angela Shelton



VIEWING GUIDE & WORKBOOK: An Educational Viewer's Guide



“This is more than just a movie, this is a movement. Everyone should see this film.”

-Jamie Kennedy, comedian

Angela Shelton's search took her many places, but it led her to one conclusion: *We Can All Help End Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault*

Dating and sexual violence knows no boundaries. One in three women worldwide will be beaten, raped, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime.¹ An estimated 39 million survivors of childhood sexual abuse live in the United States today.²

The women behind these statistics are our mothers, daughters, sisters, friends and colleagues. They are rich and poor, young and old, more and less educated, from cities, towns and villages across the country and around the world. And the violence against them -- domestic and sexual violence, stalking and other forms of abuse -- seeps into schools and workplaces, resulting in absenteeism and physical and mental illnesses; seeps through communities impacting law enforcement, court systems and healthcare professionals; and ripples through families, causing the cycle of violence to continue from one generation to the next.



*There is no
Community
without Unity
and no Unity
without U!*

But that cycle can be broken. It can start with you, then your friends, then their friends. You are a part of the community. You can be part of the solution. **There is no Community without Unity and there is no Unity without U!** Learn to recognize violence and abuse. Learn how to stop it. Learn how to prevent it and educate others.

Searching for Angela Shelton

Searching for Angela Shelton has started a grassroots movement of survivors and humanitarian organizations that are breaking the silence of the epidemic of abuse.

Angela Shelton, an accomplished screenwriter ("Tumbleweeds") and actress, decided to set out across the United States to survey women in America by interviewing those who shared her name. She rented an RV, gathered a crew and set out to meet 40 other Angela Sheltons. She wasn't prepared for what she would soon discover -- that like herself, 28 of the 40 Angela Sheltons are survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence or child molestation.

Completely moved by this discovery and inspired by their lessons of forgiveness, faith, and the human spirit, Shelton finds the strength to confront her own past on-screen and to begin down her own path of healing. It took Shelton 57 days to shoot the documentary and another three years to edit it. The editing process was extremely painful, as she was forced to piece herself back together after dealing with so many stories of abuse, her own included. Ultimately, editing the film -- especially the parts dealing with her confrontation with her father -- led her to realize that she had a responsibility to herself to heal because no one was going to do it for her. The documentary has started a grassroots movement of survivors and humanitarian organizations that are breaking the silence of the epidemic of abuse.

Sources: 1 Heise, L., M. and Gottemoeller, M. Ending Violence Against Women. Population Reports, Series L, No 11, Dec. 1999.
2 Darkness to Light www.d2l.org/KnowAbout/statistics_2.asp



Accolades

Searching for Angela Shelton has won: Audience Award at the Durango Film Festival; Best Independent Documentary at the Austin Film Festival; Best Documentary at the Asheville Film Festival; the Audience Award at Sonoma Valley; and Best Documentary at Zoie Fest.


Angela Shelton was presented with the Voice of Courage award from Darkness to Light. The mayor of Asheville, NC signed a proclamation making April 29, 2008 ANGELA SHELTON DAY in honor of abuse survivors. Angela was also presented with the Humanitarian Award from the Cultural Enrichment Committee at Umpqua Community College in Oregon.

The United States Justice Department presented Angela with a certificate of appreciation from for her hard work and dedication on behalf of America's crime victims.

Because of the tremendous outpouring from survivors worldwide, Shelton has worked to empower all survivors to heal and to go on to lead joyful lives. To learn more, go to www.searchingforangelashelton.com.

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Laura Davis, author of The Courage to Heal says, "If you care about the lives of women in America, see Searching for Angela Shelton, a fascinating, one-of-a-kind documentary. Searching for Angela Shelton leaves us not in despair, but in awe of the resilience and strength of women who have had the cards stacked against them."

Who is Angela Shelton?

Angela Shelton has appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Larry King Live*, *48 Hours Investigates*, *NPR*, *Lifetime Television for Women* and the cover of *The New York Times*. Angela first brought her life to the screen with the award-winning movie, *Tumbleweeds*, that she co-wrote based on her first novel. The film won the filmmaker's trophy at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival and brought the lead actress, Janet McTeer, an Academy Award nomination and a Golden Globe win. Angela then received outstanding reviews for her adaptation of Kaye Gibbon's novel, *Charms for the Easy Life*, starring Gena Rowlands, and began a screenwriting career in Hollywood.

Angela Shelton is an acclaimed filmmaker, writer, actress and public speaker. Angela wrote her first manuscript at the age of nineteen while modeling in Paris. She bridged into acting from modeling, and booked the lead in Gavin O'Connor's first film, *Comfortably Numb*. Angela appeared in national commercials and TV shows while continuing to write. She teamed up with Gavin and the pair adapted Angela's first novel into the film *Tumbleweeds*. The film won the filmmaker's trophy at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival and brought the lead actress, Janet McTeer, an Academy Award nomination and a Golden Globe win.

Angela left Hollywood to make her directing debut by traveling the US interviewing other Angela Sheltons in an effort to survey American women. Her multi-award winning film *Searching for Angela Shelton* surprised her and the world when it put a spotlight on sexual abuse and domestic violence and began a grassroots movement of healing for abuse survivors worldwide. Angela has spoken in Congress, universities, military bases, high schools, elementary schools, community centers, conferences and seminars worldwide. The United States Justice Department presented Angela with a certificate of appreciation for her hard work on behalf of crime victims. The mayor of Asheville, NC made April 29th Angela Shelton Day in honor of all abuse survivors. Angela's memoir, *Finding Angela Shelton*, is mandatory reading in many Women's Studies programs. Angela became a superhero for children and won an Emmy for her performance in *The Safe Side* video series created by Baby Einstein's Julie Clark. Angela's mission is to inspire and empower people to heal and lead joyful lives.

E. Sue Blume, the author of Secret Survivors says: "Like its subjects, Searching is inspiring, funny, moving. The Angelas teach us about abuse, love, and hope, survival, and the human spirit. Whether you are a survivor, a professional, a woman, or someone who cares about women, see Searching for Angela Shelton, and make sure everyone you know does too."

A letter from Angela Shelton – Dear Viewer,

Whether you are an educator, therapist or student, I have the same thing to say to you: Everything you do affects everything else, so what are you doing? If you have been through any type of trauma or abuse, I urge you to heal and move forward in your life no matter what you have been through. If you are in a position to help or educate others, think outside the box and provide a safe place to accelerate learning, healing and awareness. Thank you.

I began *Searching for Angela Shelton* with the intention of surveying women in America. My broad stroke questions were: Who are you? Where have you been? Where are you going? I wasn't expecting to focus on the topic of abuse until I noticed that it was a common theme among the women I was speaking to. When I started calling Angela Sheltons around the country, many of them thought I was a telemarketer and wanted to know who I was before they told me who they were. When I shared that I came from a broken home, had been sexually abused and was placed into foster care as a child, many of the Angelas came forward with their own stories of abuse and neglect. By the time I finished the movie, I had spoken to 40 Angela Sheltons and 24 had been victims of rape, domestic violence and/or childhood sexual abuse. When I sent copies of the movie to the Angelas, four more came forward with stories of abuse, making the statistics 28 out of 40 Angela Sheltons that had been abused. That is 70%.

The fact that 70% of the Angela Sheltons I interviewed had been victims of sexual abuse or domestic violence does not mean that you shouldn't name your child Angela Shelton or that every Angela Shelton you encounter was (or is) a victim of abuse. The "Angela Shelton" factor simply shows that abuse and violence is an epidemic; I could have picked any name. I could have picked a man's name too and still seen a huge number of abuse cases since this is not a women's issue, this is a people problem.

Since finishing the film, I have become an expert in trauma and recovery. I have spoken to thousands of trauma survivors and learned that trauma has no boundaries of race, religion, gender or social status. Not only did *Searching for Angela Shelton* open my eyes to a worldwide epidemic of violence, I discovered organizations around the world that are working towards ending the violence. I have befriended many of the heads of these organizations; some of whom have agreed to contribute answers to questions in this viewing guide.

I thank them for their contributions and their commitment to ending violence. I also thank every survivor who makes a commitment to heal. We can and we are changing the world one survivor at a time. I created www.survivormanual.com to continue this conversation and be a platform for more healing and awareness information so that you have the answers you need to move forward. Thank you for being a part of this movement. Hopefully the answers to the following questions help you and your friends on your journey. You are not alone.

Love, Angela Shelton – filmmaker

Test Yourself—How much do you know about sexual violence?

The following pages show the answers to the questions from Angela Shelton's fellow advocates and friends.

Compare your answers with theirs and discuss the differences or similarities between your answers and theirs with your group or class.

Anne Lee, CEO & President, Darkness to Light (D2L - darknesstolight.org)

Delilah Rumburg, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR – pcar.org)

Scott Berkowitz, President & Founder, Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN - rainn.org)

Rita Smith from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV – ncadv.org)

Pat McGann, Communications Director from Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR – mencanstoprape.org)

Fact or Fiction?

Sexual violence often has been considered a taboo subject, but it is a crime, and greater awareness of it will lead to a greater ability to provide survivors with the support services they need and to prevent abuse and assault from happening in the first place. Think of the stories these courageous women -- all who just happen to share the same name -- shared with you. Answer the questions below and see how your answers compare with the facts.

1. Fact or Fiction: Sexual violence can sometimes be the survivor's fault.

FICTION: The fact is, sexual violence is NEVER the survivor's fault. It doesn't matter what the survivor was wearing, whether she/he was drinking or using drugs, out at night alone, homosexual or even on a date with the perpetrator -- no one asks to be raped. The responsibility and blame lie with the perpetrator, never with the survivor.

2. Fact or Fiction: If the abuser and the abused are dating or are even married, it's not rape.

FICTION: The fact is, rape is rape -- no matter what the relationship is between the victim and perpetrator. It doesn't matter if the two have had sex before: The perpetrator does not have the right to force sex on the survivor. It is estimated that almost 70% of all sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the survivor, including intimate partners, friends, relatives and acquaintances.

3. Fact or Fiction: Men can be and are sexually assaulted.

FACT: It is estimated that over the past five years (2000-2004) an average of 19,000 men have been sexually assaulted, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey. Many people mistakenly believe that a man should be able to prevent the assault by putting up a fight. No rape victim -- male or female, gay or straight -- should be judged for being sexually assaulted.

4. Fact or Fiction: Talking about it [sexual abuse] only makes it worse.

FICTION: The fact is, allowing survivors to discuss sexual abuse/assault helps them heal. Speaking out about sexual assault is for many, an essential part of the recovery process. It empowers the survivor to erase the shame and stop the silence of sexual violence. However, no survivor should be forced to speak --publicly or privately -- before he or she is ready. Every survivor is the expert on her/his own recovery. For many, recovery becomes an ongoing process of change that may continue for one, five or 20 years.

Before watching the movie, answer the list of questions and write your answers in your notebook or on the board.

1. Can sexual assault happen to me?
2. How can adults protect children from sexual abuse and where do I go for help if a child I know is being abused?
3. What should I do if I have been sexually assaulted or someone I know has?
4. What should I do if I, or someone I know is involved in an abusive relationship?
5. What can I do as a man to teach other males not to rape?
6. Are men abused too?
7. Should I prosecute?
8. Where should I go to get help and heal if I am a survivor of trauma?
9. What is the best way for a child or an adult victim to go through the court system with the most ease?
10. How can I make a difference in my community?
11. What can I do to help change laws to protect women and children?
12. How does abuse affect our society?

Watch - Searching for Angela Shelton

Now please watch the documentary, *Searching for Angela Shelton*. Included in this educational package is the 43 min version that appeared on Lifetime Television for Women.

After watching the documentary, think of the stories the Angela Sheltons shared with you.

Go around the room and share your personal experiences with trauma.

How are you as a group going to change the world?

What are some ideas you have about breaking the silence and the cycle of abuse?

How does your life and the lives of your loved ones compared to the Angelas' lives?

How have your thoughts about violence been confirmed or changed?

“If there were that many Angela Sheltons that were treated like that, just think how many more women that are not Angela Sheltons who have been treated the same way.” - filmmaker Angela Shelton’s Grandmother

Now is the time to begin a dialog and writing exercises based on what you wrote down before watching the movie and after watching. Compare your answers to the experts in the trauma and recovery field on the following pages. This is a good time to expound on your original answers and begin to see how your opinions and thoughts are now different or confirmed.

This is not a time to get in trouble or be reprimanded for any answer that was different. This is an opportunity to learn, help each other move forward and create a safer happier world for all of us to live joyfully in.

If anyone in your group or classroom comes forward with their own trauma, please seek the help of the guidance counselor or therapist. Based on the statistics, the chances of there being a survivor in the room are high. This could be an opportunity to save someone's life.

Can sexual assault happen to me?

Scott: One in six women and one in 33 men are victims of sexual assault. Every two and a half minutes, someone in America is sexually assaulted. These numbers are disturbing, and prove that we are all at risk, no matter what we are wearing or what we look like. There's no simple way to identify potential attackers. However, there are several things you can do to lower your risk. Always travel in groups. Use the buddy system. Never remain alone with someone you don't know well or trust. Don't accept beverages from people you don't know. When at a party, guard your drink. And be aware of your surroundings at all times. These safety precautions will not always work. Unfortunately, when an attacker is motivated, sexual assault can happen. But please remember, if you're a victim, it is never your fault and you are not alone.

Delilah: Sexual assault can be perpetrated against anyone. Sexual victimization broadly impacts society, regardless of age, gender, race or socioeconomic class. Certain age groups, however, are particularly at risk. For instance, young women roughly between the ages of 18 and 25 are at the greatest risk. It is also important for people not to assume that they are safe from sexual assault; at the same time, they must continue to go about their lives and not allow fear to immobilize them. Some people attempt to reduce risky situations, but regardless of what we do, or do *not* do, in the end, sexual assault is never the victim's fault.

Rita: Yes. Stay vigilant, and pay attention to your environment and your sense of safety. Most women I have worked with who were sexually assaulted could identify some behavior or person that felt out of place or dangerous and they convinced themselves it was nothing to worry about. Be cautious around people you don't know well if there is drinking or drugs involved in the activities you are engaging in. Don't assume that because you know someone well, or that they are your partner, that they won't hurt you just because they haven't in the past.

Who do you know who has a story? Write or draw it.

“Everybody has a story. Sometimes you have to live a little and hurt a little before you realize what your purpose is.” -Angela Shelton Virginia (survivor of domestic violence)

How can adults protect children from sexual abuse?
Where do I go for help if a child I know is being abused?

Anne: First, learn the facts and understand the risks. Experts estimate that one in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday. One in five children will be sexually solicited over the internet. You can do the following to protect a child from sexual abuse: 1. Minimize opportunity - more than 80% of child sexual abuse cases occur in one adult/one child situations; 2. Talk about it - children often keep their abuse a secret, but you can break down these barriers by talking openly about the issue; 3. Stay alert - there are signs, but you've got to spot them; 4. Make a plan - learn where to go, whom to call, and how to react; 5. Act on your suspicions - the future well-being of a child is at stake and by acting on your suspicions of child sexual abuse, you will save not only one child, but perhaps countless others; 6. Get involved by volunteering and financially supporting organizations that fight child sexual abuse.

Delilah: Education is the best defense against child sexual abuse. An educated child has the ability to recognize dangerous/uncomfortable situations and will be more likely to tell you if an abuse has occurred. In addition to education, be cognizant of anyone who spends time alone with your child. How well do you know your child's coach, teacher, youth pastor or friends' parents? Ninety percent of the time, a child victim knows her/his abuser – it is often someone they trust. Most importantly, if you suspect a child is being abused, take action. Report your suspicions to the local ChildLine or contact your local rape crisis center for guidance. It is a difficult conversation to have, but one that could help save a child from further devastation.

Rita: If you are a professional that is mandated to report child abuse, call social services to report a child in danger. If you are a friend, family member, or neighbor, try to ask the child general questions about how safe they feel at home, if they are afraid of what might happen to them when no one is around, and if you get any answer that makes you think they are being hurt, report it. If you think that someone else in the household is also in danger, and that person is an adult, try talking with them about your fears and asking how you can help when you think the abusive person is not around.

What should I do if I have been sexually assaulted or someone I know has been?

Scott: If you have been sexually assaulted: find a safe environment; preserve evidence of the attack (don't bathe or brush your teeth); write down all the details you can recall about the attack and the attacker; call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE, operated by RAINN; get medical attention; report the rape to law enforcement authorities (a counselor can provide you the information you'll need to understand the process); remember it wasn't your fault; recognize that healing from rape takes time and give yourself the time you need; and know that it's never too late to call. Even if the attack happened years ago, the National Sexual Assault Hotline can still help.

Delilah: The single most important thing to do when someone you know has been sexually assaulted is to believe her/him and not get caught up in the often emotionally confusing and sometimes self-blaming anxiety that your friend may be feeling. In general, you want to have a supportive tone and empower your friend to make her/his own decisions - offer ideas about reporting to the hospital or talking with a counselor at a local rape crisis center. Be sure to remind your friend that the rape crisis center will respect her/his wishes for confidentiality. If your friend wants to report to law enforcement, assure her/him that someone from the rape crisis center will accompany her/him to the police.

Rita: If it was very recent, and you haven't bathed or washed your clothes, consider going to an emergency room to have a rape kit done to gather evidence. If you have any thoughts that you might want to have the criminal justice system pursue your perpetrator, you have to gather the evidence immediately after the assault. If you don't get the kit done, the evidence won't be there to support your testimony at trial.

“All of us females should stick together; unity.” -Angela Shelton NY (survivor of domestic violence and attempted rape)

What are some other ways to unite? Write or draw them.

“There’s always hope for the next day and as you see the new sun rise, put a smile on your face for the new day.” -Angela, New Mexico

What should I do if I, or someone I know is involved in an abusive relationship?

Rita: If you are being abused verbally, emotionally or physically in a relationship, you may need to develop a safety plan on how you can escape the violence. You can get information from the internet on a public computer like at a hotel or library, or at a friend's house. Don't use a computer your abuser has access to because the sites you visit on the web may be tracked. Ask friends, co-workers or family for assistance. Call a local domestic violence hotline to find out what resources are available in your community.

Supporting someone you love who is being abused can be hard. They will leave when they feel ready, and have the supports in place to succeed. Your role in repeating to them that they don't deserve to be treated like that, that there are resources if they want to leave, that you will love them no matter what decision they make is critical to building up their reserves so they can take the important first step away. It is often very dangerous to leave an abuser, and the person you care about knows that leaving could make the abuse escalate. Provide non-judgmental continuous support as best as you can. It may make all the difference.

"Watch out for uncle Joe, usually they're the abusers." -Angela Shelton, Georgia

What can I do as a good man to teach other males not to rape?

Pat: First, you can encourage other men to talk with women about how the risk of being raped affects their daily lives; about how they want to be supported if it has happened to them; about what they think men can do to prevent sexual violence. And you can encourage men to talk with other men about how it feels to be seen as a potential rapist; about the fact that 10-20% of all males will be sexually abused in their lifetimes; about whether they know someone who's been raped. Also, help men see the value of using language that respects women. We live in a society in which words are often used to put women down, sending a message that females are less than fully human. When we see women as inferior, it becomes easier to treat them with less respect, disregard their rights, and ignore their well-being. Also, while you will probably never see a rape in progress, you will have many opportunities to speak out against attitudes and behaviors that degrade women and promote rape. When your best friend tells a joke about rape, say you don't find it funny. When you read an article that blames a rape survivor for being assaulted, write a letter to the editor. When laws are proposed that limit women's rights, let politicians know that you won't support them. Show your strength: set an example for other men by using your strength for respect and not for hurting. Open communication with others is also a critical component of being a responsible individual. By learning effective sexual communication -- stating your desires clearly, listening to your partner, and asking when the situation is unclear -- men make sex safer for themselves and others. Men can also organize anti-sexual assault groups, which promotes discussion by other men and women who are also focused on stopping sexual violence. Other ways men can teach others not to rape include contributing one's time and money, and supporting survivors of rape.

"I never told anybody because I thought it was my fault." -Angela Shelton Michigan (survivor of date rape)

Discuss some more ways to set a good example:

Are men abused too?

Delilah: Sexual violence can and does happen to males. Men and boys are sexually assaulted every day in the United States. Twenty-five to 35 percent of child sexual abuse victims and 1 in 6 adult men will be sexually assaulted in his lifetime. False assumptions, popular stereotypes and the belief that men are immune from sexual

assault help us to ignore the fact of male rape. Most sexual assaults of males are perpetrated by other males. However, male rape has nothing to do with the sexual orientation of either the victim or the offender. Rape is not an expression of sexuality; it is a crime that is motivated by a need to control, humiliate and harm.

Rita: Men and boys are also raped and abused. While the numbers of males who are victimized in rape and domestic violence assaults is much smaller than the number of females who are assaulted, it can happen to men and boys. The resources that have been developed to deal with violence against women can also be accessed by males. Those agencies will assist any victim who needs support, and will find the most appropriate resources to meet their needs when they call a hotline and identify as a survivor.

Pat: Although it is less recognized, men can also be victims of sexual assault. Research suggests that 10-20 percent of all males will be sexually violated at some point in their lifetimes. Victims often do not report being sexually assaulted for fear of being ignored, laughed at, disbelieved, shamed, accused of weakness, or questioned about being gay. While it is not nearly as common as male-on-male assault, females are also capable of assaulting males. It is also a common misconception that men are only sexually assaulted in prison. The reality is many male survivors are assaulted in everyday environments (at parties, at home, at church, at school, on the playground), often by people they know -- friends, teammates, relatives, teachers, clergy, bosses, partners.

While there are some differences in the impact sexual assault has on male and female survivors, they can share a number of common reactions: anxiety, anger, sadness, confusion, fear, numbness, self-blame, helplessness, hopelessness, suicidal feelings and shame. Also, the basics of supporting survivors are the same for men as for women. Believe him. Know what your community's resources are and help him explore his options.

Discuss some ways to remove the stigma of abuse:

Should I prosecute?

Delilah: Deciding whether or not to prosecute is a very personal decision for a victim of sexual assault. Some victims choose to prosecute in hopes of having closure, helping empower other victims and possibly stopping the perpetrator from assaulting someone else. Other victims who choose not to prosecute may feel that a trial is a painful ordeal they would rather not endure. Whether or not you decide to prosecute, consider notifying the police of the assault. Remember, a local rape crisis advocate is available to accompany you to the police station.

Not one of the abusers of any Angela Shelton ever went to jail. What does that say about how abuse is kept silent and why it continues?

“If a woman is in a low time in her life, let her know that there is light at the end of the tunnel.”-Angela Shelton Illinois

Where should I go to get help and heal if I am a survivor of trauma?

Delilah: Enduring sexual violence is a very traumatic experience. In fact, many sexual assault survivors experience post-traumatic stress disorder. Counseling can help you work through the crisis and deal with your feelings. Contact your local rape crisis center for free and confidential counseling.

Whether or not therapy is covered by insurance is dependent upon an individual's insurance plan. However, victims of crime may be eligible for crime victims' compensation to assist with the cost of therapy. Contact your state crime victims' compensation program to obtain eligibility requirements in your state.

Rita: Survivors of incest or molestation may have repressed much of the abuse in order to survive the trauma, especially if it began at an early age. If you have questions about things that may have happened to you in the past, find a therapist that specializes in working with trauma victims and explore your questions. Your strength and inner courage have gotten you through to the present, so trust that the two of you can open the door, look at what's behind your questions, and safely deal with whatever is revealed.

What is the best way for a child or an adult victim to go through the court system with the most ease?

Delilah: Navigating the complex procedures of the court system can be daunting. However, local rape crisis center advocates are available to help ease the burden and trauma of testifying by providing accompaniment to proceedings.

"Nothing's more important to me than my children." -Angela Shelton, Tennessee

How do I make a difference in my community?

Delilah: Funding is critical. With an increased demand for rape crisis center services and a reduction in government funding, additional monetary support is needed to assure rape crisis centers have the necessary funds to provide vital services to all victims of sexual violence. If you'd like to help, there are several different ways that you can get involved, including: learn more about the issue of sexual violence by contacting your local rape crisis center; help ensure rape crisis center services and funding by writing to your legislator and encouraging their support; contact your local rape crisis center for a listing of volunteer opportunities; voice your opinion by writing a letter to the editor; educate others by distributing information about sexual violence through your workplace, church or civic/social organization; and donate to your local rape crisis center.

Scott: RAINN works closely with more than 1,100 rape crisis centers across the country that offer opportunities to volunteer in your own community. RAINN is also gearing up to launch the National Sexual Assault Online Hotline – the first live and secure support hotline on the Internet. Help spread the word and join the Online Hotline Awareness Advisory Board by visiting rainn.org. If you are a sexual assault survivor, consider joining RAINN's speakers bureau. And for more information and updates about fundraising and awareness-raising events across the country, visit rainn.org.

Rita: Everyone has a role in making the world a safer place. Your role may be small, like making an annual donation to a local domestic violence shelter or rape crisis center. It could be a larger role, like volunteering your time to assist programs that support survivors of violence. You could decide you want to work full-time in such an agency, or serve on the Board of Directors. You could gather up some friends and host a Mother's day lunch, or Holiday toy drive, or help plan a community awareness event like Take Back the Night rally. Find out what

your local community agencies are doing, and offer whatever level of support you can to assist them in their efforts. Invite your friends and family to begin to learn about this issue with you, and challenge them if they continue to express beliefs that you know are myths about violence against women. Any action you take in your community will be meaningful. Programs working to end violence are always in need of financial support and people power. Your willingness to step in, at whatever level you can provide, will join with the energy and gifts of others in your community who care and will make a difference.

Pat: Men have an important role in ending violence against women. You can begin to reduce the level of tolerance in your social circle for jokes that degrade women, the use of pornography by your friends or family, or the use of violence or abuse to control another person simply by identifying it every time you encounter it in that circle. Challenge the need for those kinds of tactics, express your disagreement with that kind of behavior, and tell your friends and family that you can't be around people who engage in those behaviors. Persistent calls to treat women and themselves with more respect may be all that is needed for the other men in your life. We need role models who have the courage to address the violence, every time they see it. Be aware of language. Words are very powerful, especially when spoken by people with power over others. We live in a society in which words are often used to put women down, where calling a girl or woman a "bitch," "freak," "whore," "baby," or "dog" is common. Such language sends a message that females are less than fully human.

When we see women as inferior, it becomes easier to treat them with less respect, disregard their rights, and ignore their well-being. Sexual violence often goes hand in hand with poor communication. Our discomfort with talking honestly and openly about sex dramatically raises the risk of rape. By learning effective sexual communication -- stating your desires clearly, listening to your partner, and asking when the situation is unclear -- men make sex safer for themselves and others.

Discuss ways to change your language and behavior toward one another:

"You are strong enough to break the cycle." -Angela Shelton, South Carolina

What can I do to help change laws to protect women and children?

Delilah: Legislation is crucial to assuring victims' rights. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) are critical pieces of legislation that provide funding to programs that offer vital services to women and children who have suffered abuse. Contact your federal legislators by phone or mail and encourage them to support this important legislation.

Discuss laws you would like to change:

According to the Center for Disease Control's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, the annual cost of lost productivity due to domestic violence is estimated at \$727.8 million with more than 7.9 million paid

workdays lost per year. To learn more about how your company can get involved, contact the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (caepv.org).

How does abuse affect our society?

Delilah: Sexual violence permeates our society – its devastation knows no boundaries. Victims of sexual violence are much more likely to develop mental health problems, eating disorders, drug and alcohol problems and post-traumatic stress disorder. Sexual violence violates a person's right to normal, healthy and trusting relationships; it affects a person's feeling of safety. Without help, the impact can last a lifetime. Over the past 30 years, the anti-sexual violence movement has made great strides in the prevention of sexual violence; however, there is still much to be done. Working together, we can bring an end to the violence and assure that everyone human being has a life free from the devastation of sexual abuse.

*“Bad things may have happened to you but it's your decision how the rest of the story goes.”
-Angela Shelton's brother, Steve (incest survivor)*

Areas where you can make a difference:

PARENTS – Stopping violence starts with preventing violence. Commit to talking to kids about dating and sexual violence. For more information, contact the Family Violence Prevention Fund at endabuse.org. Get copies of the Safe Side Videos at thesafeside.com. Angela Shelton is Safe Side Superchick. She is so funny that it is a great way to begin the conversation with your children about boundaries, strangers, kinda-knows and safety. Take the "Stewards of Children" training at www.d2l.org to learn more on how to keep kids safe.

SIBLINGS and PEERS - Older teens are role models for their younger siblings and peers. Let them know that it's never okay to hurt anyone with words or force. To learn more, go to teenpcar.com.

FAMILY MEMBERS - Stopping violence against women can be as simple as affirming the importance of healthy family relationships by volunteering at a local domestic violence shelter or sexual assault center. Contact the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ncadv.org) or the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (nsvrc.org) for more information. Child Welfare Information Gateway provides access to information and resources to help protect children and strengthen families. <http://www.childwelfare.gov/>

FRIENDS – If you think your friend is in an abusive relationship or has been sexually assaulted, express your concern. To learn more, go to teenpcar.com. For help or more information, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE or 800-787-3224 (TTY) or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE or rainn.org.

EDUCATORS - The National Center for Victims of Crime's Teen Victim Project (ncvc.org) and RAINN, the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (rainn.org), can help your school become a leader in ending teen dating violence and sexual assaults. Request that you and your fellow educators get the Angela Shelton educational package and be trained in the "Stewards of Children" training at www.d2l.org to learn more on how to keep kids safe.

COACHES - Men and boys look up to the athletic heroes and coaches that inspire them. Violence against women is a men's issue too. Contact Men Can Stop Rape (mencanstoprape.org) and the Family Violence Prevention Fund (endabuse.org) to find out more.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS – Religious teachings can serve as either a resource or a roadblock in ending domestic and sexual violence. Religious leaders such as rabbis, pastors, priests and imams are potential resources if they

are trained to understand sexual and domestic violence. For more information on working in and with religious communities, contact FaithTrust Institute at faithtrustinstitute.org.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS – Health professionals and practitioners are uniquely positioned to help victims of abuse, but studies show that interventions by the medical community are rare. Go to the National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence at endabuse.org to find out more. National Sexual Violence Resource Center (nsvrc.org) is a comprehensive collection and distribution center for information, research and emerging policy on sexual violence intervention and prevention. The NSVRC provides an extensive on-line library and customized technical assistance, as well as, coordinates National Sexual Assault Awareness Month initiatives.

LAW ENFORCEMENT & LEGAL OFFICIALS – Evidence shows that most female homicide deaths are the result of an assault by their intimate partner. To be safe in their communities, women first need to be safe in their homes. The National Network to End Domestic Violence can provide you with more information at nnev.org.

EMPLOYERS – The annual cost of lost productivity due to domestic violence is estimated at \$727.8 million with more than 7.9 million paid workdays lost per year, according to the Center for Disease Control’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. To learn more about how your company can get involved, contact the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (caepv.org).

GLOBAL CITIZENS – According to the U.S. government, nearly one million people are trafficked across international borders each year -- bought, sold and forced into slave labor and sexual exploitation. Eighty percent of trafficking victims are women and girls. To learn more about how you can help address international women's issues, contact Equality Now at equalitynow.org or the United Nations Development Fund for Women at unifem.org.

ACTIVISTS and ARTISTS - Join the millions of women and men who work at all levels to influence policy and raise awareness to stop violence against women through their activism and art.

FOR HELP OR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1.800.656.HOPE

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

Don't forget 911, in case of emergency.

Make a commitment to make a difference because you can

Thank you for using this powerful movie in your community

I believe artists have a major responsibility. It is through the artist that social change happens, eyes are opened, awareness is awakened and thoughts are provoked. Whether writing, directing or acting, I work on projects that contribute something positive to the world instead of adding to the chaotic numbness.

-Angela Shelton, a Filmmaker Statement

Ten Questions for *Angela Shelton*

1) How did you get the idea to look up other Angela Sheltons across the US as a way to survey women in America?

I changed my name to Angela Shelton when I was 18 and have always loved my name. I was working on doing a theater piece and then a TV sitcom about my name after I discovered there were other Angela Sheltons. I picked up a prescription and there was a long list of Angela Sheltons and the pharmacist wanted to know which one I was. Then there was another Angela Shelton who stood up at an audition when I was called. As a writer and an artist I was pondering various ways in which to use my name in a project. The documentary idea came when the Writer's Strike was pending. I figured if I couldn't write a TV script, I could make a documentary around my name. Little did I know at the time that my documentary would transform my life. I thought it was going to be funny.

2) Having met 40 Angela Sheltons, what can you conclude about "where women in America are today?"

My peek into a microcosm of women with the same name did give me a view into women in general because as Anais Nin says, "The story of one woman is the story of one million women." My survey said that women have been screwed over, raped, beaten, stolen from, starved, frozen in fear, kept silent and weak but we are stronger than any force imaginable and we have not only survived, we are prevailing and you haven't seen anything yet.

As I have traveled for years speaking everywhere from college campuses to high schools, I see women prevailing, no matter what their name is. A time for women is emerging. We are no longer buying into the lies that were forced upon us in order to push patriarchy forward. I see women having a new respect for themselves, their environment and the men in their lives. This is not about women against men and I don't think men need to fear an age of women either. I think men should rejoice in the fact that we are entering an age of women; they will be loved and fed better.

3) In what way did the stories and lives of other Angela Sheltons encourage and empower you personally in your search?

The Angelas encouraged me throughout every step of my search from the first one I called who loved this idea and told me to keep going to the last Angela I met who told me that I was the most important Angela in the film. The fact that 70% of the Angelas I spoke to had been abused is horrifying and certainly inspired me to break the silence and get this film finished. The fact that most of the Angelas left the abusive husbands, put themselves through school, got help, healed, got sober and I finished my film is what is most empowering. For me it's not only a survey of women, it's a love story for yourself and others. I thought at first that hearing about so much abuse would leave me with disdain for my fellow humans but it did the opposite. Making this film made me love people because everyone has a story. I don't take credit for the magic of this movie. I think I was simply the vehicle through which it came. My job was getting out of its way and letting it come to life. I find it incredibly inspiring to watch how it affects people in such positive ways, especially survivors.

4) It's a deeply personal film. At what point did you feel ready to put your story into a film and share it with the world? Were you uncomfortable with the idea of sharing your life with strangers?

I had no idea I was going to reveal as much as I did, let alone show up on my father's doorstep on Father's Day. When I first spoke to the Angela Shelton who lived in my dad's town I felt like vomiting. It wasn't until I was on the road for 30 days that I realized that confronting my own past had to be a part of the film. My crew knew it, but I didn't. I rushed into the RV when we were in New York City and announced that we had to go see my father. It had to be the climax of the movie so to speak. Puke. My crew stared at me and then pretty much in unison said,

“Duh, of course you’re going to you dad’s. You have to go.” That was when I sat in silence for a long time and had to take in the fact that I was about to reveal myself. My survey of women became a personal journey of self-discovery but through them I learned to purge the pain and live a joyful life.

5) Were you surprised by the number of abuse stories you heard from the Angela Sheltons you met on your travels?

To be honest, I was not surprised because most of the women I know in my life from my mother to my best friend have stories of abuse. The fact that the majority of the Angela Sheltons were abused doesn’t mean don’t name your child Angela Shelton either. I could have picked any name. I could have also picked a man’s name. I’ve spoken to thousands of men who have been through the same horrors. Sexual abuse is not just a women’s issue just like men are not the only perpetrators. This is a people problem.

6) Did you remain in contact with the other Angelas? Have any of them formed friendships with one other since this project?

I still communicate with Anonymous and she’s still sober. We’re Facebook friends too; I get to see what she’s up to since joining the Facebook craze. I talk to the Angela in Virginia periodically too. I love that woman. I stay in contact with the others too when there’s something that can bring them together. *48 Hours Investigates* did an hour special about me making the film and CBS flew nine of the Angelas out to LA to meet each other. It was amazing to meet all the Angelas but I wanted them to meet each other and I’m so glad CBS facilitated that. After that meeting, many of the Angelas kept in touch with one another. *48 Hours* did an awesome job on that special; it came out before I was even done with the movie though so about 12 million people thought that it was the film. I did hear from a few Angelas who were mad that they weren’t in the movie because they weren’t listed. One of them said she was upset that every time she used her credit card and the cashier read her name she was asked about the movie and she had never even heard of it. I have since found out through a private detective fan of the film that there are hundreds of Angela Sheltons. I toyed with the idea of continuing the search but I think the film did its job of breaking the silence. I don’t think the movement around this movie is about the Angela Sheltons, including me, I think it has a bigger meaning and a bigger message beyond the name.

7) Have you gone back and spoken again with your father since meeting him during your filming?

I haven’t seen my father since that Father’s Day on his porch. I sent him a letter after I was on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and *48 Hours* telling him that I forgave him. I said I’d like to talk to him further if he was willing to have an honest discussion with me. He sent me a cease and desist letter instead. It was a letter from his wife’s lawyer saying that my father had always denied that he has abused us and I needed to stop showing the film. I laughed at that because indeed he has always denied it! I simply replied with a copy of the film and the release he signed before we filmed him and that was that. I called him up to see if he was going to pursue it at all. He told me that still denied everything and was going to write his own book called *Who Calls The Kettle Black*. That was actually oddly funny to me. I haven’t spoken to him since. Last I heard the candy stores he owned with his wife closed down.

8) Is there any other follow up information that was found after the filming that was not included in the film but that you wish viewers would know?

The lists of followers and fans of this movie keep growing worldwide to this day. The film is used in universities, conferences, sex offender training programs, crisis center volunteer trainings, schools, mental health facilities, and in support groups. The power of this film has astounded, inspired and amazed me. The United States Department of Justice presented me with a certificate of appreciation for my work with crime victims. The mayor of my hometown of Asheville, NC declared April 29th Angela Shelton Day in honor of all survivors of abuse. I get more comments about how the film changed people’s lives than I do about the movie itself but every once in a

while, someone will raise their hand or send me an email and point out that the movie is the perfect hero's journey and a fantastic film. That's always nice to hear since it was my directorial debut and I originally set out to make a great film that inspired women. I think I made a really good movie but the last thing I expected was to become a hero. Now, the people I meet who have dedicated their lives to saving children from abuse are my heroes.

I have spoken to over 30,000 survivors at this point after traveling with the movie and my book and inadvertently become an expert in trauma and recovery. It is an honor for me to be a part of this movie and movement. It helped me in my life just as much as it helps others and I am eternally grateful. I'm very proud to be an Angela Shelton.

9) Were you ever worried that your interviews with some of the women prompted them to share information they were not yet ready to disclose to the public, or for that matter, themselves? Were you ever worried, particularly with the "anonymous Angela", that your questions would be too much for them to handle emotionally?

I had conversations with the Angelas that were not planned or scripted, so when something heavy came up, it arrived out of the natural flow of a heart-to-heart conversation. I was as open with them as they were with me. Actually, I think by me being so available, it gave them a safe place to talk. We were not hiding from each other. We were women meeting and talking about our lives. There was one Angela who told me some pretty deep things about her life and the following day asked me not to share it in the film and I respected that. I didn't make this film to create enemies; I made it to give women a platform to speak and I respected what they wanted to speak about.

I had a much different relationship with Anonymous than I did with the other Angelas. I was as worried about her as I was about myself to be honest. I go into much more detail about Anonymous and me in my book *Finding Angela Shelton*.

10) What projects are you working on currently?

I still travel and speak at various times throughout the year. Speaking in public is at the top of my list of favorite things to do. I bring a lot of humor to the horrible subject of sexual abuse so that it is palatable to wider audiences. Information about my work and me has always spread via word-of-mouth in a grassroots style. I don't fit into any particular mold of what I "should have done" or "should be doing" so I am very grateful to the people who help me continue by spreading the word. Thank you! Please be my friend; I run my own website and Facebook page.

www.angelashelton.com
www.facebook.com/AngelaSheltonfanpage