

ODYSSEYIMPACT!™

THE RAPE OF
REGY TAYLOR

A FILM BY NANCY BUIRSKI



SOCIAL IMPACT CAMPAIGN
FINAL REPORT

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OVERVIEW

The social impact campaign for **The Rape of Recy Taylor** was designed to engage, educate, and activate the public around issues related to sexual violence against women and underscore the historical trauma faced by Black women during the Jim Crow South and still today. Since the launch of the Impact campaign on December 7th, 2018 at Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, NY, the film and impact campaign have been inspiring individuals, organizations, houses of worship, and university campuses across the nation. It concluded with a special Odyssey Impact Live Town Hall during Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April 2020. During the campaign lifecycle, Odyssey Impact coordinated 100 impact screenings of the film.

The Rape of Recy Taylor impact campaign acknowledged the disproportionate discrimination faced by Black female survivors of sexual assault. It empowered audiences to become vocal allies that spoke out against the structural racism that affects survivors of color. Audiences were asked to engage by hosting a screening of the film, organizing a day of service in honor of Recy Taylor, donating to a sexual assault prevention organization in Recy Taylor's name, and/or spotlighting Recy Taylor in social media posts and publications. Ultimately, the campaign ensured that Recy Taylor's story became a focal point of national conversation by providing a dedicated vehicle that uplifted her contributions to the civil and women's rights movements.

MESSAGING AND OBJECTIVES

MESSAGE FRAMEWORK

This campaign centered the voices of Black women. It aimed to further educate the public about the disproportionate discrimination faced by Black female survivors compared to their white counterparts, and intended to equip supporters with tools so that they can be better, stronger allies. It aimed to break the culture of silence around sexual assault and violence.

- **The Rape of Recy Taylor** impact campaign was a part of the **national conversation on equality, racial justice, and feminism**, and acknowledged the disproportionate discrimination faced by Black, female survivors.
- **She spoke up.** The campaign ensured that Recy Taylor's brave story became a focal point of national discussion and highlighted how her legacy contributed to the civil and women's rights movements.
- **Structural racism is real.** Black female survivors face disproportionate discrimination compared to their white counterparts. The impact campaign equipped supporters with tools so that they can be better, stronger allies.
- **Hidden figures.** Prior to the film and impact campaign, Recy Taylor was a hidden figure to mainstream audiences and many only knew Rosa Parks for refusing to give up her seat after a long day at work. The stories of **these courageous women were only hidden because the United States does not embrace the broad history of the civil rights movement.** The Rape of Recy Taylor impact campaign shined a light on this.

OBJECTIVES

The campaign accomplished the following objectives:

- 1) **Elevated the voices of Black women and empowered all survivors to share their stories.** The campaign ensured that Black women and their stories were a focal point of the civil and women's rights movements by providing a dedicated vehicle to uplift their work.
- 2) **Engaged the Church** (Black and white churches) as a leader on this issue. Worked with clergy to enable conversation about sexual violence against women and the disproportionate discrimination experienced by Black women.
- 3) **Educated audiences and allies** on the structural racism that disproportionately affects Black female survivors of sexual assault. Empowered audience members to speak out about the structural racism that affects survivors of color..
- 4) **Connected survivors to resources** for legal and emotional support. Audiences were activated and engaged locally on issues related to sexual violence against women.

CALLS TO ACTION

1 

Host a screening of The Rape of Recy Taylor.

2 

Partner with a gender-based violence prevention organization for an event and/or make a donation in Recy Taylor's name.

3 

Connect survivors of sexual assault with local resources.

4 

Spotlight Recy Taylor in social media posts and publications.

5 

Organize a day of service in honor of Recy Taylor.

FAITH ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES

The campaign fulfilled the following objectives among its faith-based audiences:

- 1) **Educated black and white faith-based audiences about the legacy of sexual violence** against black women as well as its ongoing contemporary manifestation
- 2) **Opened dialogue in churches and among people of faith around sexual violence**, especially as it is experienced by women of color.
- 3) **Promoted healing, support and reconciliation** for victims in the church context.

CALL TO ACTION

The campaign set forth the following calls to action for its faith-based audiences:

- 1) **Train clergy** to respond to issues of sexual violence.
- 2) **Start a sexual violence ministry.**
- 3) **Partner with local sexual violence support providers.**
- 4) **Write and deliver a sermon on The Rape of Recy Taylor** and the legacy of sexual violence against black women.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership building for the social impact campaign began in July 2017 when the Raben Group held a secular brain trust for the film. In January of 2018 Odyssey Impact hosted the faith based brain trust for the campaign. Odyssey Impact convened a group of 15 faith-based scholars, experts, and influencers in the sexual violence prevention space. These individuals gave valuable feedback that was integral to devising the impact campaign strategy for the film. Additionally, many of them went on to become official campaign partners.

Please see the appendix for a full list of individuals who attended the brain trust.

In total, Odyssey Impact amassed 24 campaign partners. These individuals and organizations demonstrated their commitment to the impact campaign by contributing content to our discussion guides, hosting screenings of the film, and providing critical resources to survivors in honor of Recy Taylor.

For example, the Center for Anti-Violence Education (CAE) screened the film and offered to provide a free “Upstander” workshop to any nonprofit or educational screening host who was interested in engaging with the campaign further by learning bystander training and de-escalation techniques. Furthermore, Jewel Cadet, CAE’s Director of Programs, served as a panelist in **The Rape of Recy Taylor Live Town Hall**.

A main focus of our outreach was also Black Greek letter organizations, and we had major success in building partnerships with sororities and fraternities. The Atlantic Region of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc raffled off two prepaid screenings to chapters in their region. Additionally, Z-Hope, the sorority’s national service program, offered chapters that sponsored a screening of **The Rape of Recy Taylor** 200 points towards their service requirement for the year. Furthermore, major impact screening events were sponsored by chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

We identified and reached out to targeted faith leaders representing denominations, houses of worship, faith-based nonprofits, seminaries and universities who are committed to the issue of sexual violence against women. Many were leading ministries, coalitions and movements in this area and asked to join the campaign as official campaign partners to enable conversation about sexual violence against women and the disproportionate discrimination experienced by Black women.

PARTNERSHIPS CONT.

CONNECT led by Sally MacNichol works with houses of worship to establish domestic violence ministries and as a campaign partner they committed to being a resource for faith leaders engaged in the Recy Taylor campaign who were interested in starting their own domestic violence ministries in their houses of worship. Dr. Ralph Watkins, professor at Columbia Seminary screened the film in his first year seminary class where he shared that *"I've never been in a class where a film had that kind of effect on the students. I've never experienced this in my life."* In addition to delivering a sermon on the issue and hosting a screening of the film the Park Avenue Christian Church devoted a day of advent to the Recy Taylor campaign and moving forward they will include screenings of the film in their yearly justice advent calendar.

Please see the appendix for a full list of campaign partners.

SCREENINGS SUMMARY

The social impact campaign for **The Rape of Recy Taylor** officially launched on December 7, 2018 with a screening and panel at The Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, NY. Throughout the course of the campaign, Odyssey Impact organized and completed 100 impact screenings. The film was seen by approximately 9,000 audience members, across 26 states, nationwide. The film screenings were hosted by both faith-based and secular communities at educational institutions, non-profit organizations, faith-based institutions, houses of worship, African American museums, campus based initiatives, Black Greek letter organizations, government, advocacy and community groups. Community groups made up 31% of completed screenings, while faith-based screenings made up 29%, followed by educational institutions with 26% of completed screenings. Museums, advocacy, and government screenings made up the rest.

Every screening host was encouraged to partner with local organizations that offer support to survivors of sexual assault or violence, and was given access to resources within our Screening Toolkit, created for the campaign. Hosts were coached through the process of hosting a public or private screening event, and provided materials to support and facilitate post-screening discussion in the form of a talkback, Q&A, or panel discussion.

Please see the appendix for a list of all completed impact screenings, as well as select impact screening stories.

SCREENINGS OUTREACH SUMMARY

After the launch and during the course of the Impact campaign, an outreach strategy was implemented that targeted specific groups and organizations, encouraging screenings, with particular focus on Black History Month in February, Women's History Month in March and Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. With these three months in mind, proactive outreach began on January 16th, 2019 to the following targeted audience groups: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Women's Colleges, and Universities within cities that align with the network of Odyssey Impact, allowing us to leverage our existing partnerships. Outreach was also conducted to those within our Faith-Based network, as well as organizations aligned with supporting survivors of rape and sexual assault.

During the course of the campaign, new audience targets were identified, and outreach conducted. Those audience groups include faith-based institutions, seminaries, Houses of worship, previous hosts of films by Odyssey Impact, Harlem churches, Black Greek letter organizations, and African American museums.

The strategy involved personally emailing or calling all researched contacts. Potential screening hosts were given information and engaged in a dialogue about the film, the screening process, our social impact campaign, and the type of powerful event that could have an impact within their community.

Outreach strategy varied depending on the target audience. For example, HBCUs were contacted through Student Affairs and Student Engagement and Leadership groups--campus wide organizations that could partner with a specific department, such as Criminal Justice, African American Studies and or Title IX Offices. The strategy for Women's Colleges includes cold outreach to Student Affairs as well as specific departments such as Women's Studies, Gender and Sexuality departments. The strategy for national universities focused on specific departments as well, including Criminal Justice, Women's Studies, Gender Studies, etc., as well as more general campus groups and student affairs. All targeted groups were informed that the screening and resources could be a way to facilitate needed conversation and awareness regarding sexual assault and violence against women, and acknowledge the disproportionate discrimination faced by Black female survivors of sexual assault.

PIVOT TO VIRTUAL SCREENINGS

Due to restrictions caused by COVID-19, in March of 2020, Odyssey Impact made the pivot to a virtual only screening model. The film was made available to confirmed screening hosts using indee.tv as the delivery platform. Indee.tv is a platform that allows for secure digital delivery of film, and enables hosts to easily share private viewing access with their intended audience, upon RSVP. Since the pivot to virtual only screenings, Odyssey Impact coordinated and completed 4 virtual screening events, with 4 additional virtual screening events confirmed to take place by the end of June, 2020.

Shortly before the restrictions caused by COVID-19, The Carver Museum in Dothan, Alabama hosted a screening of The Rape of Recy Taylor, followed by post screening discussion. Recy Taylor's brother, Robert Corbitt, was a special guest at the event and spoke on the post screening panel. The museum was so pleased with the event that they decided to host a second screening. Due to COVID-19, that screening was transitioned to a virtual experience, and thus became Odyssey Impact's first virtual only screening event.

SCREENING TOOLKIT AND RESOURCES

We worked internally and with our campaign partners to develop the screening toolkit as well as accompanying resources for screening hosts. The screening toolkit was accessible online to all screening hosts, using this private [link](#) and the following password: **Recy2018**.

Please see below for a list of materials that was included in the screening toolkit:

- [Facilitator's Guide](#)
- [University Discussion Guide](#)
- [Faith Based Discussion Guide](#)
- [General Discussion Guide](#)
- [Sermon Guide](#) (in partnership with The Rev. Amy Gopp)
- [Impact Materials](#) (including a poster and outreach templates)
- [Social Media Press Kit](#)
- [Pre and Post Screening Surveys](#)

All screening hosts were asked to distribute pre and post-screening surveys, which Odyssey Impact used to measure how the impact campaign is changing audience awareness, attitudes and actions. Please see below for a summary of the findings:

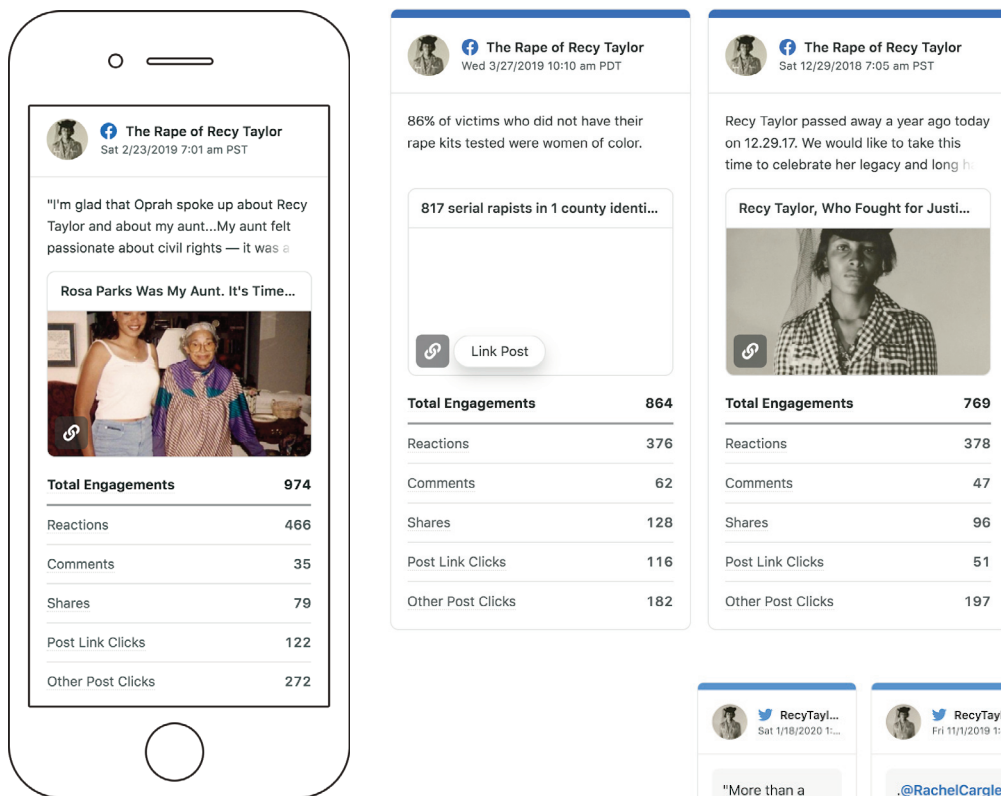
- **Change in awareness:** 76% of respondents indicated that they learned "A great deal" of "A lot" about the impact of supporting sexual assault survivors from **The Rape of Recy Taylor**.
- **Change in attitude:** 76% of respondents indicated that they "Strongly agree" or "Agree" that **The Rape of Recy Taylor** affected them emotionally.
- **Change in action:** 55% of respondents indicated that they "Strongly agree" or "Agree" that they could see **The Rape of Recy Taylor** changing their lives.

Please see the appendix for a breakdown of these survey questions.

COMMUNICATIONS

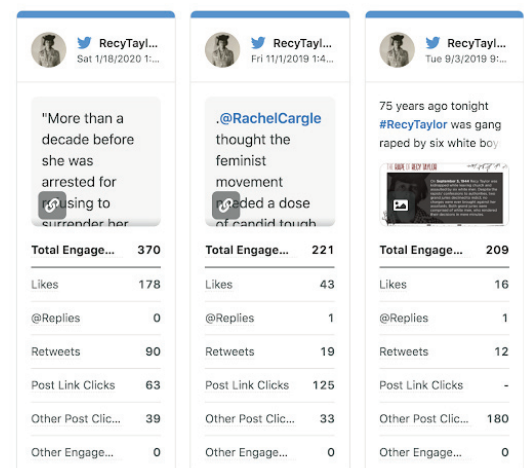
The social media strategy for **The Rape of Recy Taylor** campaign was focused on promoting screenings and content relevant to the film's key themes. We monitored the success from this strategy based on the amount of organic impressions, engagements, and page likes received. We also made several edits to the website. Most of the edits were made on the Social Impact page, to reflect every potential way a viewer could make an impact.

From December 7th 2018 to May 29th, 2020, **The Rape of Recy Taylor** Facebook page received 252,026 impressions, 20,179 engagements, and 286 total published posts. The page also has gained 1,297 page likes. A few of our top Facebook posts in that time were:



TWITTER:

In the duration of the campaign, **The Rape of Recy Taylor** Twitter account received 250,496 impressions, 4,233 engagements, and 86 new subscribers, garnering a total of 1,240 followers.



TOWN HALL OVERVIEW

The Rape of Recy Taylor Live Town Hall was co-presented by Odyssey Impact and NAACP Youth & College Division. The convening was a lively and interactive experience that uplifted the legacy of Recy Taylor and the importance of assisting survivors of sexual assault. It was watched by 116 audience members during the live Zoom session, and it was viewed 57 times after a follow up email with a recording of the event was sent to our network.

The Live Town Hall had the following participants:

- 1) Nancy Buirski, Director, **The Rape of Recy Taylor**
- 2) Jewel Cadet, Director of Programs, The Center for Antiviolence Education
- 3) Precious Freeman, Executive Director, GW Carver Interpretive Museum
- 4) Reverend Jacqui Lewis, Senior Minister for Public Theology and Transformation, Middle Collegiate Church
- 5) Jane Manning, Director, The Women's Equal Justice Project
- 6) Frank Walker, Florida SouthWestern State College, Youth Council Advisor for the NAACP Collier County in Naples, FL
- 7) Kyra Mitchell, Eastern Michigan University, Chair of the NAACP National Youth Work Committee
- 8) Carey Walls, Purdue University, President of Purdue NAACP & President of Indiana NAACP Youth and College Division

Please see the appendix for quotes from the Live Town Hall.

Please see the appendix for a map of nationwide locations, representing Town Hall attendees, as well as a pie chart of how they heard of the event.

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 TheRapeofRecyTaylor

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