



**TOUGH
OLD
BROADS**

**DOCUMENTARY
DISCUSSION GUIDE**

USING THIS GUIDE

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you use *Tough Old Broads* to educate, engage, and activate people in the community after they have seen this film. It provides an overview of the documentary, discussion questions, and the many ways to take action.

Because *Tough Old Broads* is more than a documentary — it is a film that will spark a movement of women, both young and old, to embrace their power, speak out, and demand attention. The film and discussion guide offer changemakers and educators an accessible tool to encourage participation at all ages.

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SYNOPSIS

Kathrine Switzer, Siila Watt-Cloutier, and Sharon Farmer. They are the first woman to officially run the Boston Marathon, the first woman to connect climate change to human rights, and the first woman to serve as Chief White House Photographer. These trailblazing women broke barriers in their time and continue to pursue their passions to this day.

When Kathrine Switzer became the first woman to officially run the Boston Marathon in 1967, it sparked a lifelong quest to promote women's running, culminating in her securing women's marathon acceptance as an event at the 1984 Olympics. Now 79, Kathrine is the Co-Founder and Chair of 261 Fearless, a global not-for-profit to empower women through running internationally.

Siila Watt-Cloutier dedicated her life to fighting climate change. Her work at the U.N. led to the international ban on toxic chemicals under the Stockholm Convention. In 2005, she was the first person to launch an international legal action against the U.S. for its contribution to global warming, arguing that it violated the human rights of the Inuit. She was nominated for a Nobel Prize in 2007 for her work framing climate change as a human rights issue. Now 72, Siila continues speaking out to save her people and the planet.

Sharon Farmer started taking photos in the early 70s during the campus riots and civil rights protests at Ohio State University. She ended up as the first woman and first person of colour to serve as the Chief Official White House Photographer for Bill Clinton. Sharon continues to fight for social justice - photographing the realities she encounters as a Black woman in America.

FILM CREDITS

DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER: Stacey Tenenbaum

CINEMATOGRAPHER: VanRoyko, CSC

EDITOR: Jaclyn Lee

COMPOSER: Maxime Fortin

SOUND DESIGN & MIX: Michel Gauvin

RUN TIME: 89 minutes

LANGUAGES: English

COUNTRY & YEAR: Canada, 2025



WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH THE FILM

Tough Old Broads is a doc that wants to elevate trailblazing and impactful women worldwide.

Here's how you can help:

- Follow Tough Old Broads on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Threads, and BlueSky and tell your friends about the film!
- Adopt a Tough Old Broad mindset. No matter how old you are!
- Create a #ToughOldBroads video
- Follow and Support our Partners
- Join or start a running club
- Get active in your community. Change starts at home.
- Host a screening! Contact tougholdbroads.doc@gmail.com to find out how! Visit ToughOldBroads.com for more.



CONTEXT & INFORMATION

INCOME INEQUALITY

- Facts, stats & impact: Gender equality
 - Globally and on average, women earn 23% less than men. ^[1]
 - Women make 89¢ for every \$1 men make. ^[1]
 - Despite efforts to close the gender pay gap, income inequality persists in retirement. In 2022, senior women earned 26% less than senior men, down from 34% in 1976. ^[1]
 - Senior women are more likely than senior men to live in inadequate or unaffordable housing. 12% of senior women live in housing that is unaffordable and/or below acceptable standards, compared to 8% of senior men. ^[1]
 - Senior racialized and immigrant women experience the highest rates of low income. Senior racialized women had the highest low-income rate in 2020 at 19%, followed by senior immigrant women at 18%. ^[1]
- Intersectionality and Workplace Gender Equity:
 - Visible minority women, especially first-generation immigrants, earn on average \$5,000 less than non-visible minority women. ^[1]

HEALTH

- One in five women said that a health care provider ignored or dismissed their symptoms, compared with 14% of men.^[3]
- Medical schools and medical research consider a 154-pound, white male the average patient—this means that a white man’s biology has been guiding medicine and treatment options.^[4]

AGE DISCRIMINATION

- Ageism in the workplace:
 - 80.7% of people have witnessed women in the workplace being treated differently because of their age.^[5]
 - Professionally, 57.7% reported impaired career progression.^[5]
- Intersectional Feminism
 - Women are 60% less likely than men to move from middle management to executive ranks.^[6]

POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think it was about these 3 women that allowed them to succeed in a “man’s world”?
 - What can we do to ensure the next generation of young women do not see their gender as a barrier to realizing their dreams?
- What is one takeaway you gleaned from each Broad’s story in the film?
- What unique strengths or perspectives do older women bring to activism?
 - What can we learn from the stories of these three older activists about persistence in the face of institutional or other barriers?
- Where have you witnessed discrimination against older women in your life/community?
 - What can you do to combat this?
 - What can we do to challenge the paradigm/narrative that older women are disposable while older men are still valuable?
 - How can we ensure we include women with multiple intersecting marginalized identities remain at the center of this fight?



- What can we learn from these 3 women's different approaches to advocating for what they believe in—legal action, art, and mobilizing through sport?
 - How do these forms of activism compare to traditional forms of protest in our day and age?
 - What are the most effective ways of creating change today?



KATHRINE SWITZER

- The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Movement in the United States: ^{[7][8]}
 - The ERA was a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution intended to guarantee equal legal rights for all citizens regardless of sex.
 - It was first introduced in Congress in 1923 by Alice Paul and members of the National Woman's Party.
 - The amendment sought to eliminate legal distinctions between men and women in areas such as employment, property rights, and divorce.
 - The ERA gained momentum during the 1960s and '70s alongside second-wave feminism and broader civil rights movements.
 - In 1972, Congress passed the ERA and sent it to the states for ratification, requiring approval by three-quarters of all states within a set deadline.
 - Although the ERA initially gained strong support, a conservative backlash, led by Phyllis Schlafly, argued that it would undermine traditional gender roles and legal protections for women.
 - By the deadline, the amendment fell short of ratification, and has still not been added to the U.S. Constitution today.
 - Debates over the ERA have continued into the present, reflecting the ongoing struggle over gender equality.
- Women in Sports:
 - The history of women in sport has been similarly challenging. Women were excluded from organized sport in North America, including the early modern Olympics, in the late 19th and early 20th century on the grounds that vigorous physical activity was medically dangerous and incompatible with motherhood and femininity. ^{[9][10]}

- When women were first allowed to participate in the Olympics in 1900, their inclusion was limited to sports considered “socially acceptable,” meaning endurance events like running were prohibited. Distance running, and the marathon in particular, became a crucial site of gender conflict. ^[11]
- The 1960s and ‘70s were a turning point as feminist activism, scientific research, and high-profile acts of resistance (like Kathrine’s running the Boston marathon!) challenged long-standing medical and institutional barriers. ^[12] Policy changes such as Title IX in the United States, which was a federal civil rights law that banned sex-based discrimination in federally-funded programs, dramatically expanded access to training and competition. ^[12]
- Finally, the inclusion of the women’s marathon in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, which Kathrine helped champion, symbolized a broader recognition of women’s athletic legitimacy. ^{[11][13]}

QUESTIONS:

- How does sport contribute to women’s mental health, confidence, and sense of agency at different life stages?
 - How can sport challenge traditional ideas of femininity or female “fragility”?
- How does intersectionality (race, age, sexuality) compound existing gender-based inequities/discrimination in sport?
- Following Kathrine’s lead, how else might sport serve as a tool for advocacy and social change for women’s rights globally?



SIILA WATT-CLOUTIER

BACKGROUND

- The History of Framing Climate Change as a Human Rights Issue:
 - In the late twentieth century, climate change was primarily discussed as a scientific, environmental, and economic problem, with policy debates focusing on emissions targets and international agreements such as the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. ^[14]
 - During the 1990s and early 2000s, human rights advocates increasingly argued that environmental degradation directly threatened fundamental rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water, housing, and culture. ^[15]

- This perspective gained momentum as vulnerable populations—particularly Indigenous people and communities in the Global South—experienced disproportionate effects of climate change despite contributing least to greenhouse gas emissions.^[15]
- A major turning point occurred in 2005, when our Broad, Inuit leader, Siila Watt-Cloutier, petitioned the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, asserting that climate change violated the human rights of Arctic Indigenous peoples. Although the petition did not result in a formal ruling, it helped legitimize the human rights framework within climate discourse.^[16]
- In subsequent years, international bodies such as the United Nations Human Rights Council formally recognized that climate change poses serious threats to the enjoyment of human rights.^[17]
- By the 2010s, this framing influenced climate litigation worldwide, with courts increasingly considering government responsibility to protect citizens from climate-related harm.^[17]
- Today, the human rights approach to climate change is widely used by activists and legal scholars to argue that climate action is not only a policy choice but a moral and legal obligation.^[18]
 - One impressive example of this that we see in the film was by Verein Klima Seniorinnen Schweiz (Senior Women for Climate Protection), an association of over 2,000 women aged 64+. ^[18]
 - They argued that the Swiss government violated human rights by failing to act strongly enough on climate change, which was causing heatwaves and other climate impacts that disproportionately impacted vulnerable people like the elderly.^[18]
 - In 2024, the European Court of Human Rights voted that the Swiss Government was, in fact, in violation of these human rights, marking a landmark victory for these tough old broads!^[18]

QUESTIONS:

- How does environmental racism disproportionately impact women, older women, women of colour, and indigenous people?
 - How is climate change connected to systemic racism, and what are the gendered dimensions of this?
 - What role can grassroots activism play in combating environmental racism when legal and policy tools often fail marginalized communities?
- How might media coverage of environmental crises differ based on the racial makeup of the affected community? And what are the greater implications of this?
 - What are some examples you have seen of this discrimination and its consequences?

SHARON FARMER

BACKGROUND

- The Kent State Shootings: ^{[19][20][21][22]}
 - The shootings occurred on May 4, 1970, when Ohio National Guard troops fired on student protesters at Kent State University, killing four students and wounding nine others.
 - The protest was primarily a response to the U.S. government's expansion of the Vietnam War, reflecting massive student opposition to the war and growing distrust of political authority.
 - This horrific event occurred within a broader era of social upheaval that included civil rights activism, student protests, and challenges to state power.
 - The Kent State shootings showed the grave extent to which the government was willing to use force against domestic protest.
 - It marked a turning point in public opinion about the Vietnam war, with the war ultimately ending largely because of such domestic protest.
 - The power of protest was also evident from civil rights demonstrations and women's marches of the era that had similarly monumental effects in enacting the change they sought.



QUESTIONS:

- Where have you witnessed the power of photography or images in promoting social change?
- How is the changing media landscape and the flood of visual media we're met with at all times affecting this power?
- How are platforms like Instagram and TikTok useful for amplifying voices of activists from marginalized communities?
- Why does the identity of the photographer behind a camera matter in our digital, highly visual age? (in the context of photojournalism but also at large/on social media/etc.)

GLOSSARY

Advocacy

Advocacy refers to the active support, promotion, or defense of a cause, policy, or group of people. It often involves raising awareness, influencing public opinion, and working to bring about social, political, or institutional change, particularly on behalf of marginalized or underrepresented communities.

Age Discrimination

Age discrimination is the unfair or unequal treatment of individuals specifically because of their age. It often occurs in employment contexts, such as hiring, promotions, or layoffs, but can also appear in access to services, housing, or healthcare.

Ageism

Ageism is a form of prejudice or discrimination based on a person's age. It can affect individuals of any age but is most commonly directed toward older adults, resulting in stereotypes, exclusion, or unequal treatment in areas such as employment, healthcare, and social participation.

Climate Change

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns, largely driven by human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes. These changes contribute to global warming, rising sea levels, and increased frequency of extreme weather events.

Climate Litigation

Climate litigation refers to legal actions taken to address climate change issues, often by holding governments or corporations accountable for contributing to environmental harm or failing to act on climate commitments. These cases can seek enforcement of environmental laws, compensation for damages, or stronger climate policies.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. It can be direct (explicit actions) or indirect (policies or practices that disproportionately disadvantage certain groups).

Environmental Racism

Environmental racism refers to the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards, pollution, and lack of access to environmental resources on racialized or marginalized communities. It often results from systemic inequalities that place these communities closer to sources of environmental risk and limit their access to clean air, water, and green spaces.

Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap is the difference in average earnings between men and women (and often other gender identities) in the workforce. It reflects systemic inequalities such as occupational segregation, differences in work experience, and discrimination, resulting in women typically earning less than men for similar or equivalent work.

Human Rights

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, or other status. These rights include civil, political, economic, social, and cultural protections such as the right to life, freedom of expression, education, and equality before the law.

GLOSSARY

Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous peoples are distinct cultural groups with historical ties to specific lands and territories prior to colonization or the formation of modern states. They maintain unique social, cultural, economic, and political systems and often face ongoing challenges related to rights, recognition, and self-determination.

Intersectional Feminism

Intersectional feminism is an approach to feminism that recognizes how different forms of inequality—such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability—intersect and shape individuals' experiences. It seeks to address the diverse and overlapping forms of discrimination that affect women and other marginalized groups.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a framework for understanding how multiple social identities (such as race, gender, class, and sexuality) overlap and interact to create unique experiences of privilege and oppression. It highlights that forms of discrimination are interconnected and cannot be examined in isolation.

Marginalized Identities

Marginalized identities refer to social identities that experience exclusion, disadvantage, or discrimination within a society due to systemic inequalities. This can include groups defined by race, gender, sexuality, disability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics.

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism refers to patterns of discrimination embedded within institutions, policies, and societal structures that result in unequal outcomes for racialized groups. Unlike individual acts of prejudice, it operates at a structural level and can affect areas such as education, healthcare, housing, and employment.

Title IX

Title IX is a United States federal law, enacted in 1972, that prohibits discrimination based on sex in any education program or activity receiving federal funding. It is commonly associated with ensuring gender equity in school athletics, but it also addresses issues such as sexual harassment and assault in educational settings.

Vulnerable Populations

Vulnerable populations are groups of people who are at increased risk of harm, discrimination, or adverse outcomes due to social, economic, environmental, or health-related factors. This may include children, the elderly, low-income communities, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups.

Workplace Discrimination

Workplace discrimination refers to unfair or unequal treatment of employees or job applicants based on protected characteristics such as race, gender, age, disability, religion, or sexual orientation. It can occur in hiring, compensation, promotions, job assignments, or workplace culture, and may be expressed through policies, practices, or interpersonal behavior.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (ERA)

National Archives – Equal Rights Amendment

<https://www.archives.gov/women/era>

Overview of the ERA, its history, and key documents.

Alice Paul Institute

<https://www.alicepaul.org/era/>

Historical context and educational resources on the ERA movement.

KENT STATE SHOOTINGS (1970)

Kent State University – May 4 Collection

<https://www.kent.edu/may4>

Primary sources, timelines, and educational materials about the Kent State shootings.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DISCRIMINATION

United Nations

<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/human-rights>

<https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism>

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/about-us.html>

Canadian Human Rights Commission

<https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/about-human-rights>

World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ageing-ageism>

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

<https://www.eeoc.gov/age-discrimination>

CLIMATE CHANGE & CLIMATE JUSTICE

NASA – Climate Change

<https://climate.nasa.gov/>

Clear, student-friendly explanations of climate science.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

<https://www.ipcc.ch/>

Scientific reports and summaries on climate change.

United Nations – Climate Action

<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange>

Global perspective on climate issues and solutions.

Queen’s University Library – Environmental Education Resources

<https://guides.library.queensu.ca/c.php?g=501784&p=5347485>

Teaching tools, timelines, and classroom-ready materials on environmental justice.

CLIMATE LITIGATION

Environmental Law Institute – Climate Litigation Overview

<https://cjp.eli.org/curriculum/overview-climate-litigation>

Introductory explanation of how climate cases work and why they matter.

Sabin Center for Climate Change Law

<https://climate.law.columbia.edu/climate-litigation>

Database and explanations of climate-related court cases.

United Nations Environment Programme

<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/global-climate-litigation-report-2023-status-review>

Global overview of climate litigation trends.

ADDITIONAL READING

EQUAL RIGHTS / FEMINISM

“We Should All Be Feminists” – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

<https://ameforeignpolicy.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/we-should-all-be-feminists.pdf>

“Reimagining Gender, Race, and Finding Home” – Anita Hill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pSSP3CxABM>

“Amazons, Abolitionists, and Activists” – Mikki Kendall

<https://mikkikendall.com/amazons-abolitionists-and-activists/>

“Vote! Women’s Fight for Access to the Ballot Box” – Coral Celeste Frazer

<https://school.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=74597&a=1>

“Because I Was a Girl” – edited by Melissa de la Cruz

<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250154460/becauseiwasagirl/>

“Moxie” – Jennifer Mathieu (A high school girl starts a feminist movement at her school after noticing sexist double standards.)

<https://www.indigo.ca/en-ca/moxie-a-novel/9781250104267.html>

“This Is Your Time” – Ruby Bridges

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/671312/this-is-your-time-by-ruby-bridges/9780593378526>

HISTORY / KENT STATE / SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

“Kent State” – Deborah Wiles

<https://deborahwiles.com/kent-state-by-deborah-wiles/>

“1968: Today’s Authors Explore a Year of Rebellion” – Marc Aronson & Susan Campbell Bartoletti

<https://www.candlewick.com/9781536203295/1968-todays-authors-explore-a-year-of-rebellion-revolution-and-change/>

CLIMATE CHANGE / ENVIRONMENT

“The Climate Book (Young Readers Edition)” – Greta Thunberg

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/709837/the-climate-book-by-greta-thunberg/9780593492307>

“All We Can Save (Young Readers’ Edition)” – Ayana Elizabeth Johnson & Katharine Wilkinson

<https://www.allwecansave.earth/>

INDIGENOUS VOICES/ INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM

“#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women” – edited by Lisa Charleyboy & Mary Beth Leatherdale

<https://birchbarkbooks.com/products/not-your-princess>

“Fighter in Velvet Gloves” – Annie Booshever

<https://www.ubcpres.ca/fighter-in-velvet-gloves>

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