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FILM REVIEW: Audrie and Daisy

Description

Audrie & Daisy, a new documentary co-directed by Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk, takes an in-depth look at the effects of cyber bullying following the aftermath when two teenage girls are sexually assaulted. The girls went to parties, drank alcohol to excess and were then sexually assaulted by boys and young men they believed were their friends. The shame and scorn the girls were subjected to resulted in a suicide of a Saratoga, Georgia high school student, Audrie, who believed her reputation was beyond repair. The culprits in the assault eventually reached a plea agreement so the young men could graduate from high school. The agreement included an admission of guilt and a public apology as well as a 45 minute videotaped interview. In the case of Audrie, a Missouri resident in the small town of Maryville in Nodaway County, all charges were dropped in a highly publicized news reported court judgement.

Cohen and Shenk open the film with a slow pan of empty desks in a classroom as a voice over about the Audrey case begins. A cut is made to a high school football practice with the diagetic sounds of grunting, helmets and pads colliding and thudding with the sounds of whistles chirping. An audio deposition of Jon B., not the perpetratorâ??s real name, is heard as an image shows the critical information of what is occurring in a black and white frame as the filmâ??s narrative is slowly opening. In a taped 2015 interview, Audreyâ??s mother and father, Larry and Sheila Pott talk candidly about Audrey while pictures of Audrey range from the time she was a baby up into her high school years. Sheila reminisced how she and Audrey cooked together while they watched the food network together. Audreyâ??s best friend from the time of middle school, Amanda Le, opened up about their experiences together through adolescence. Le remembers Audrey developed early physically and by high school was well developed. A group of boys from junior high began a Yahoo! group where they shared nude pictures of their classmates. Le stated Audrey received a lot of requests for pictures, however, as Audrey was quite self-conscious she didnâ??t provide any pictures. Audrey was popular and had many friends. One night at a party Audrey drank too much. In a deposition, her â??friendâ?• stated her carried Audrey upstairs and laid her on a bed. Two other young men entered the room and closed the door. With Audrey, unmoving on the bed, the three boys stripped her naked. They took turns sexually assaulting her with their fingers. They painted half her face black and placed indelible lewd comments on her body. Photographs were taken and videos were recorded while Audrey laid defenseless.

Through the use of textual overlays from conversations Audrey initiated with her â??friend,â?• Cohen and Shenk create a sense of real-time. Audrey does not recollect what happened and pleads with her friend and others to tell her what happened. Her â??friendâ?• tells her it will blow over in a week. Yet, when Audrey gets to school, she comes to a realization that everyone in school is aware of what happened and the images of her assaulted naked body have made their way online. Shamed and humiliated, Audrey feels her reputation is beyond repair and commits suicide.

Daisy Coleman, a perky blonde-haired, blue-eyed freshman, and new to the small town of Maryville, Missouri also is subjected to shame, humiliation and ridicule following her sexual assault. Daisy and her 8th grade friend who according to an official police investigator looked about eight are invited to a â??party.â?• While at the party held in the basement of one of the three older high school males present, both girls are raped while incapacitated. The following morning Daisy is found on her homeâ??s lawn with her hair frozen to the grass. What unfolds in Daisyâ??s story is the difficulty is prosecuting an assault without hard evidence. None of the males were over 17. A video was recorded and shared and subsequently deleted without means of retrieval. Consequently, all charges were dropped.

Nevertheless, the maelstrom created by Daisy coming forth had severe repercussions for Daisy on social media. Slowly diminishing in spirit, Daisy began sinking further and further into the rabbit hole when a young woman who had endured and survived a similar sexual assault reached out to Daisy via social media. Delaney Henderson heard about Daisy and used the Facebook chat feature to tell Daisy she understood the feelings and what Daisy was going through. The two young women have started and joined a survivorsâ?? group facilitated by a professional counselor. In a Q & A following the screening, it was revealed Daisy Coleman received an athletic scholarship to Mountain Valley College. Daisy stated with strength and conviction, â??Iâ??m done with being mad. I finally wanted to move on. Iâ??m not forgetting the past. Iâ??m forgiving the past.â?•

Hear Daisy and what the filmmakers have to say the making of *Audrie & Daisy*:



https://hollywoodglee.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/audrie-daisy.wav

High in production values complete with traditional interviews, archival news footage, original evidence-gathering investigation-room interviews, panning location shots, photographs as well as masked caricatures of the depositions, Audrie & Daisy, is a must-see documentary.



Pictured from left to right are Delaney Henderson and Daisy Coleman. (Photo from American Film Institute Magazine/Blog)

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2. Uncategorized

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