Beyond *Law and Order: SVU*, Representations of Sexual Assault in Film and Television

Violence has long been a staple of cinematic representation and was featured as a key element of the 1903 western, *The Great Train Robbery* and continued through the evolution of 20th Century cinema to television and new media. The “damsel in distress” has been a consistent trope with women represented as victims of mostly male-initiated violence.

Susan Brownmiller brought sexual assault to the forefront of public consciousness, declaring in *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape,* that “from prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.”

It is no wonder that forty-two years later, some critics suggest Hollywood supports a “Rape Culture.” Several episodes of the successful HBO series *Game of Thrones* (known for not shying away from violence) have come under fire for several rape scenes that are well-above the typically high levels of violence.

While the prevalence of sexual assault has dropped since Brownmiller’s work first appeared in 1975, a sexual assault still occurs once every two minutes according to RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network). In addition, since the publication of *Against Our Will,* sexual assault of men has become understood as a greater problem than previously believed (The organization 1in6 estimates that one out of every six men has been sexually assaulted).

This panel proposes to address representations of sexual assault and violence in film and television.

John Garofolo will analyze sexual assault in the military. While the recent Marines United social media scandal has rocked the military (and pointed out a number of inaccurate assumptions about the use of social media among members of the military and the degree of misogyny that military women still experience), military sexual assault has been represented in film for more than 50 years. Films including *In Harm’s Way*, *The General’s Daughter* and *From Here to Eternity* will be part of this discussion.

While sexual assault in the military and the Marines United scandal has gained much recent attention, the topic of military sexual assault is just part of a much broader problem and important topic of representation. Other topics that may be addressed include representations of date rape, spousal sexual assault, male sexual assault, lesbian, gay and transgender sexual assault, sexual assault of women by women. Mixed gender sexual assault (more common with male victims), etc.

**If you are interested in participating, please send a 300-500 word abstract, a list of 5 sources, and a brief bio to JOHN GAROFOLO** **jjgarofolo@aol.com** **by AUGUST 28, 2017**