



**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 & INFORMATION

DIRECTOR, WRITER, PRODUCER: Stacey Tenenbaum

CINEMATOGRAPHER: Van Royko, 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.



GENERAL 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. ^[2]

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]

GENERAL 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?

BROAD-SPECIFIC POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION BACKGROUND & QUESTIONS

KATHRINE SWITZER



BACKGROUND:

- 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]

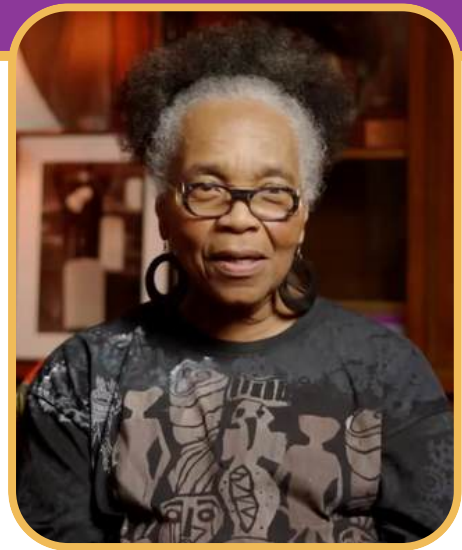
QUESTIONS:

- 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.)

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