

BEHIND THE #METOO STORY... IS A FILM!

By Nakeisha Geddes



(Ed. Note: We are doing something at SMJ Magazine that we have never done before, and that is, reprint a previously published article. Rather than do a bio of the Publisher/Creator and myself/Executive Producer of W'AT ABOWT US, we felt our readers/attendees of the premiere screenings would find out what they need to know about us from the story that appeared in the previous issue.)

Tarana Burke started the #MeToo movement in 2006 to encourage women to show solidarity with each other against sexual harassment. This movement went viral in 2017 with women around the world standing together to speak their truth and expose larger-than-life men in arts & entertainment, media, and politics.

In December 2017 (Editor-in-Chief) Andrew approached me about writing my article for SMJ Winter 2018 (Issue No. 20) and we agreed it seemed fitting for me to look at ' #MeToo Closer to Home.'

The magazine story was intended to give every day women a chance to share their experience and to lay claim to the diversity of the issue. Five amazing women from different cultural backgrounds shared their story with me, with the intention to heal themselves and encourage others to take a stand and speak their truth. Their stories were powerful and moving.

(Publisher) Shelley recognized that we should take the story to a bigger platform...the big screen. The upcoming documentary entitled W'AT ABOWT US (WHAT ABOUT US) is the first film for Andrew and Shelley, the power couple behind SMJ Magazine. By raising the bar they continue to push themselves, seeking new ways to give back within their community by living out their passion.

I had the pleasure of interviewing them just weeks before the filming of the documentary, to get an insight on them and on this project.

NG: Tell me about your feelings when you sat down and interviewed each lady about their #MeToo experience.

SJ: I was interested to hear each lady's story because I know they need to be told. I am coming from a social worker background and over the years I have supported many women who have experienced sexual abuse. The timing for this story in SMJ Magazine was perfect because Oprah Winfrey had just done her #MeToo speech at the 2018 Golden Globes Award.

Each story is different, each story is heart wrenching and I think this documentary will help women. We want to bring attention to everyone that this is happening to every day women and it is time to expand the conversation around sexual abuse to motivate others to speak up. We hope it will help to change the behavior of men from being potential perpetrators.

NG: How do you want this documentary to influence your audience?

SJ: My goal is to take this documentary into the community-at-large such as schools, colleges, universities and shelters to inspire women to start talking and seeking help because most suffer in