

I CANNOT BE A BYSTANDER



A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY JENNIFER A. REINISH

Produced by Jennifer A. Reinish and Abbie Nissenson



I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” - Mother Teresa





I CANNOT BE A BYSTANDER

LOGLINE

Drawing parallels between the experiences of Holocaust survivors nearly a century ago, Jim Crow survivors who lived through America's own era of racial terror, and immigrants facing hostility today, *I Cannot Be a Bystander* is both an inspiring story and a homework assignment – activating the power within each of us to uplift our communities and safeguard our democracy.

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WHY NOW

This moment demands action. Hate crimes are rising across the U.S. Holocaust survivors are now in their 90s and 100s, and Jim Crow survivors are aging — their stories must be preserved now. Antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, and political division are escalating. Millions see the problem but feel powerless. This film shows them they're not.



WHAT IF **YOU** HOLD THE KEY TO TURNING THE TIDE ON HATE AND DIVISION?

I Cannot Be a Bystander is more than a documentary — it's a call to action. It shows how each of us can confront rising prejudice, protect democracy, and help build a more inclusive future with simple, concrete steps toward becoming an upstander.

Through powerful stories from leaders, scholars, and young people, this 90-minute film reveals a diverse chorus of courageous voices proving that anyone — even the most hesitant — can make a real difference, from everyday kindness to boldly standing against injustice.



WHOSE VOICES



A Diverse Chorus of Courage

Featuring powerful testimonies from leaders, experts, scholars, and young people, *I Cannot Be a Bystander* amplifies courageous voices who empower us to create change.

A 90 minute film told in three acts.

ACT 1



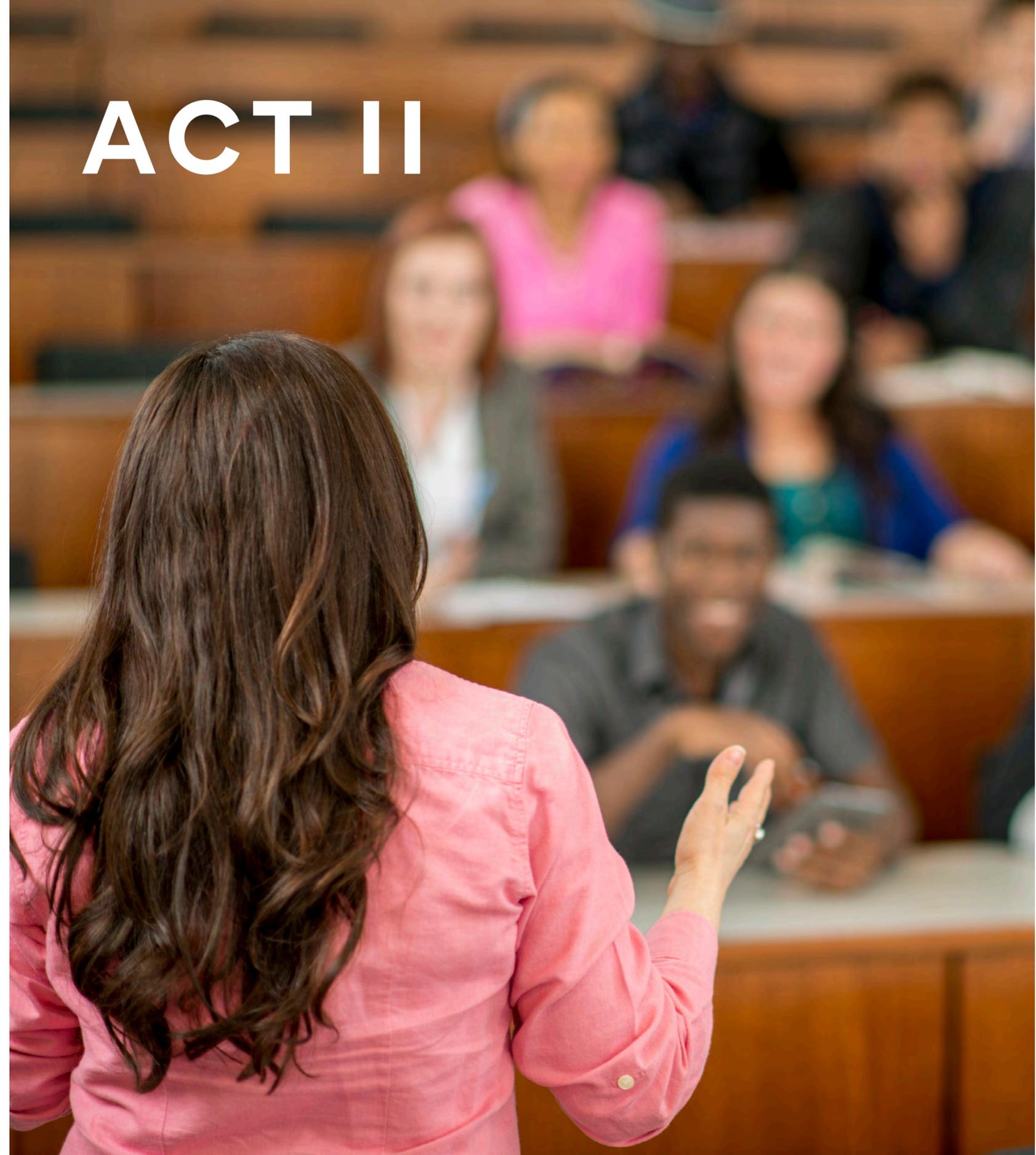
From our neighborhoods to the highest seats of government, hate is on the rise —and history warns where this will lead.

We meet the principal characters whose individual stories are woven throughout the film. Collectively, their visceral stories relay the immediate threat leading to a singularly powerful question: **What can be done?**

PAST IS PROLOGUE



ACT II



THE FIRE WITHIN

This act showcases the transformative power of activism and civic engagement. Through compelling examples of participation and allyship, we see how individual efforts inoculate communities against hate and fortify democracy.

***Hate is overcome by speaking out and standing up.
But how, precisely?***



ACT III

WE ARE THE CHANGE

The final act transforms intention into tangible impact and provides a roadmap for action. Whether introvert or extrovert, novice or seasoned activist, with ample or limited time—everyone can become an upstander.





DIRECTORS NOTE

For years, I documented the stories of Holocaust survivors in my community. As antisemitism rose publicly, I received a message that froze me in place: “You belong in an oven.” Once I processed that hatred, I knew I had to do something. I decided to make a film.

Survivors urged me to widen the lens—to confront not only antisemitism, but hate targeting the LGBTQ+, AAPI, Black, Muslim, immigrant communities and others.

Their message was clear: hate against one is hate against all, and **we must stand together.**



WHO IS THIS FILM FOR?

The goal of *I Cannot Be a Bystander* is to reach people who see hate as an issue but do not feel it is their place to get involved. This film encourages those who keep their heads down to add their voices to those already taking action.

The survivors remind us that atrocities can happen anywhere when people stay silent.

RESISTANCE
POWER IS THE
MOST FEROCIOUS
ENEMY
JUSTICE
CAN HAVE

BE ACTIVELY

INTENDED IMPACT

- Empower viewers to become active participants
- Show why and how to be upstanders
- Spark dialogue in schools and communities
- Strengthen civic engagement and democratic participation

If viewers leave their indifference behind, we have succeeded.

DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY



- Film festival launch and national festival circuit
- Limited theatrical release in key markets
- Broadcast and digital distribution
- Educational distribution for schools and universities

Our goal is to ensure the film reaches the people who most need to see it.

FUNDING NEED

We are raising \$500,000 to complete additional production and post-production to ensure accessibility and impact distribution.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION FUNDING WILL SUPPORT:

- COMPLETION OF REMAINING INTERVIEWS AND ON-LOCATION FILMING
- TRAVEL AND FIELD PRODUCTION COSTS
- EDITORIAL FINISHING AND STORY REFINEMENT
- ORIGINAL ANIMATION AND VISUAL ELEMENTS
- SOUND DESIGN, COLOR CORRECTION, AND FINAL MASTERING
- ACCESSIBILITY (CAPTIONS, AUDIO DESCRIPTION)
- DISTRIBUTION AND EDUCATIONAL DELIVERABLES



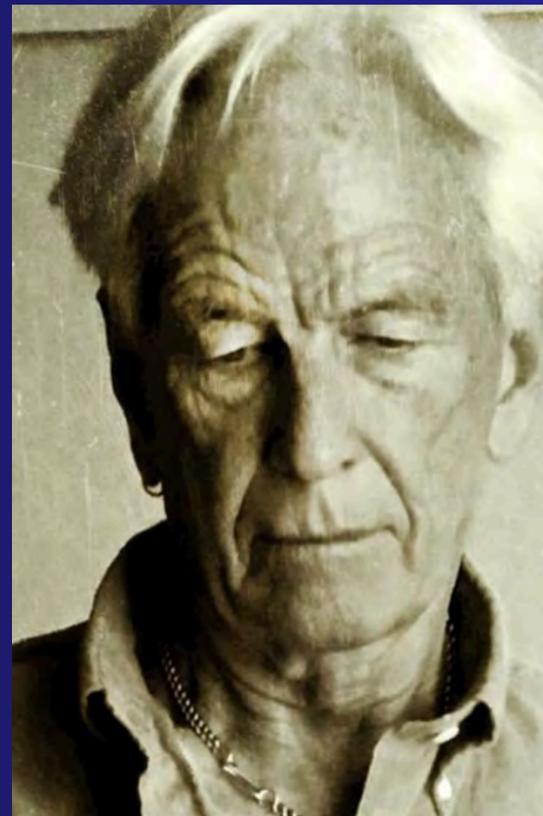
THE TEAM



Jennifer A. Reinish
Director / Producer



Abbie Nissenson
Producer



Keith English
Animation Director / Producer



Malynda Hale
Producer

NONE OF US CAN BE BYSTANDERS



**This film is a call to action. None of us can afford to look away.
We are all responsible for speaking out for one another.**