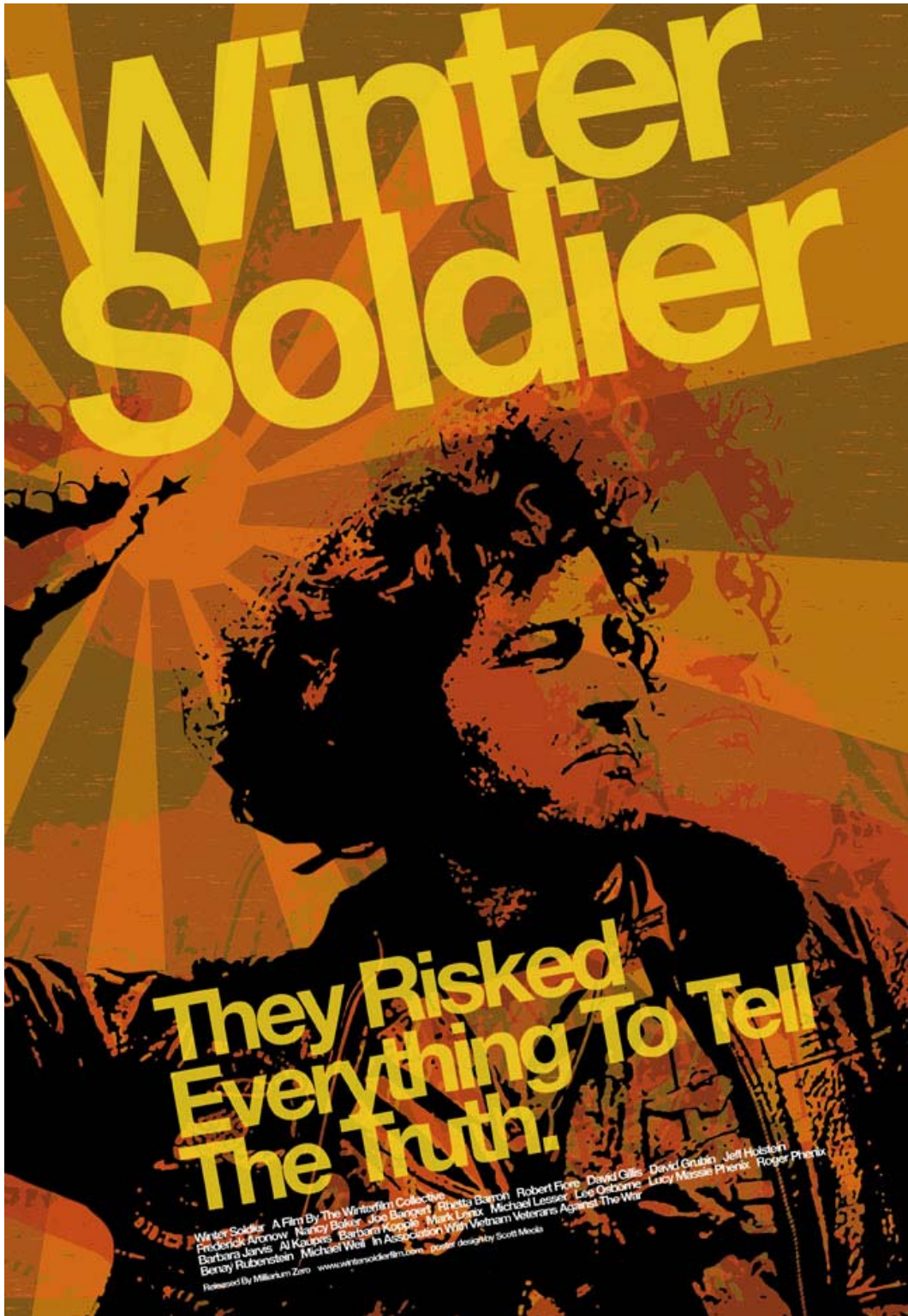


Milliarium Zero and the Winterfilm Collective present



Milliarium Zero • PO Box 128 • Harrington Park, NJ 07640 • 201-767-3110

Website: www.wintersoldierfilm.com • Email: winterfilm@aol.com

WINTER SOLDIER

1972. 95 minutes. Black & White and Color. Produced and directed by Winterfilm Collective in association with Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Filmed in 16mm. Re-released in Beta SP, DigiBeta and DVD-R.

Winter Soldier: The Conversation

2005. 18 minutes. Color. Produced by Winterfilm Collective. Director: Michael Lesser. Released in Beta SP, DigiBeta and DVD-R.

Winterfilm Collective

Frederick Aronow
Nancy Baker
Joe Bangert
Rhetta Barron
Robert Fiore
David Gillis
David Grubin
Lee Osborne
Lucy Massie Phenix
Roger Phenix

Jeff Holstein
Barbara Jarvis
Al Kaupas
Barbara Kopple
Mark Lenix
Michael Lesser
Nancy Miller Saunders
Benay Rubenstein
Michael Weil

Winter Soldiers in the Film

(in order of appearance)

Rusty Sachs, *1st Marine Air Wing*
Joseph Bangert, *1st Marine Air Wing*
Scott Shimabukuro, *3rd Marine Division*
Kenneth Campbell, *1st Marine Division*
Scott Camil, *1st Marine Division*
John Kerry, *Costal Divisions 11 & 13, USN*
Steve Pitkin, *9th Infantry Division*
Johnathan Birch, *3rd Marine Division*
Charles Stevens *101st Airborne Division*
Fred Nienke, *1st Marine Division*
David Bishop, *1st Marine Division*
Nathan Hale, *Americal Division*
Michael Hunter, *1st Infantry Division*
Murphy Lloyd, *173rd Airborne Brigade*
Carl Rippberger, *9th Infantry Division*

Evan Haney, *US Naval Support Activity*
Robert Clark, *3rd Marine Division*
Gordon Stewart, *3rd Marine Division*
Curtis Windgrotsky, *Americal Division*
Gary Keyes, *Americal Division*
Allan Akers, *3rd Marine Division*
William Hatton, *3rd Marine Division*
Joseph Galbally, *Americal Division*
Edmund Murphy, *Americal Division*
James Duffy, *1st Air Cavalry Division*
Scott Moore, *9th Infantry Division*
Mark Lenix, *9th Infantry Division*
Thomas Heidtman, *1st Marine Division*
Dennis Caldwell, *1st Aviation Brigade*
James Henry, *Marine Sergeant*

Background on the film *Winter Soldier*

Winter Soldier is a documentary chronicle of the extraordinary Winter Soldier Investigation conducted by Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) in Detroit during the winter of 1971. Veterans from all branches of the US military came from across the country to speak out about the atrocities they had committed and witnessed while stationed in Vietnam.

Recognizing the urgency and historical importance of the investigation, a remarkable group of independent filmmakers came together to document the veterans' testimonies. Calling themselves Winterfilm, their collective included Fred Aronow, Nancy Baker, Rhetta Barron, Robert Fiore, David Gillis, David Grubin, Barbara Jarvis, Barbara Kopple, Michael Lesser, Lee Osborne, Lucy Massie Phenix, Roger Phenix, Benay Rubenstein and Michael Weil. (Members of this group of filmmakers have gone on individually to make some of the most important documentaries of our time, winning several Academy Awards in the process.)

Over the course of four days and nights, using donated equipment and film stock, the Winterfilm members shot footage of more than 125 veterans (including a very young John Kerry). These men, who represented every major combat unit that saw action in Vietnam, gave eyewitness testimony to war crimes and atrocities they either participated in or witnessed. Members of the collective next spent eight months editing the raw footage from the hearings together with film clips and snapshots from Vietnam into the 95-minute feature documentary *Winter Soldier*. Because the proceedings went virtually unreported by the media, *Winter Soldier* is the only audiovisual record of this historic turning point in American history.

The film was shown at the Cannes and Berlin Film Festivals and went on to be lauded throughout Europe. In the US, it opened briefly at the Cinema 2 in Manhattan. At the time of *Winter Soldier's* release, underground film critic Amos Vogel wrote:

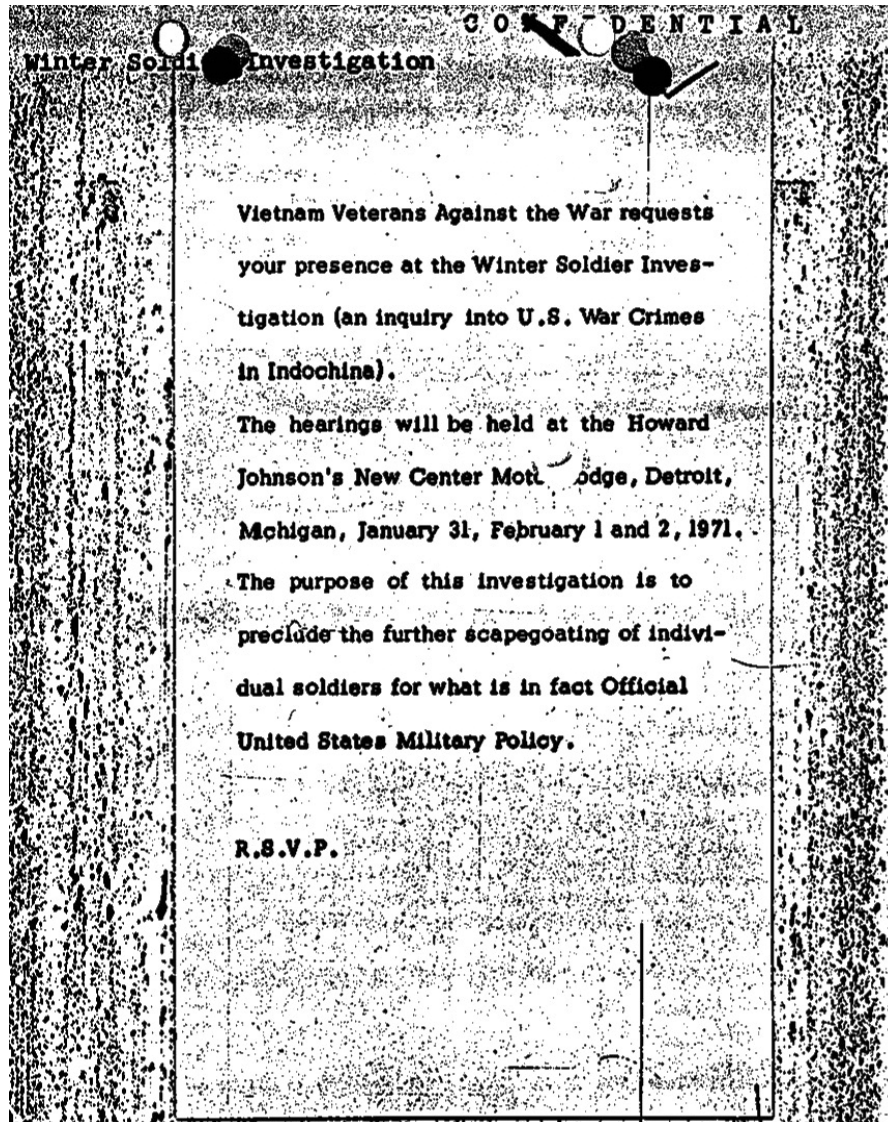
This is a film that must be shown in prime time evening on national television, and never will be.

After all three broadcast networks and PBS declined to show it, the documentary played only on New York's local public television station, WNET. Since then, only rare screenings by the filmmakers have kept the legacy alive.

Now, thirty-five years after the hearings in Detroit, the veterans' courage in testifying and their desire to prevent further atrocities and regain their own humanity, remain deeply moving and provide a dramatic intensity that makes *Winter Soldier* an unforgettable experience. Their words eerily remind us of recent tortures and murders of prisoners held in detention by the American military. The terrible abuses of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, in Afghanistan and at Guantanamo have sometimes been reported as unprecedented. The voices of the veterans in *Winter Soldier* attest that they were not.

The Winter Soldier Conference

“Everyone is talking about the war that you know from the inside. If you want to have anything to say about it, come to Detroit and tell it like you saw it.”



The Winter Soldier invitation found in the FBI file on the Winter Soldier Investigation, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act

In late January 1971, more than 125 Vietnam veterans, representing almost every major unit to see action in Vietnam, gathered in a second floor ballroom at a Howard Johnson's motor inn in Detroit. They met to discuss and testify to war atrocities they had committed and witnessed in Vietnam. The conference was named the "Winter Soldier Investigation" and was organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and Citizens Commission of Inquiry (CCI) in the hopes of revealing the true nature of American military policy in Vietnam and the extent to which war crimes were common procedure. The organizers hoped to "[tell] the American people of the war crimes that are being committed every day in their name and as the result of national policy." Celebrity anti-war

activists including Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland, Graham Nash, and Phil Ochs helped raise funds for the meeting.

The three-day Winter Soldier Investigation was the first time a group of Vietnam veterans publicly testified about their experiences. The conference revealed the violent and racist nature of American military policy in Vietnam. Veterans explained that incidents akin to the massacre at My Lai were not only commonplace, but were, as John Kerry described it, “committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command.”

The investigation took place over three consecutive days, January 31 – February 2, 1971, People from all over the area attended the hearings, as well as newspaper and magazine reporters and camera crews from many major television stations. Unfortunately, few journalists stayed to cover the event and those who did ultimately did not report on it. The veterans’ testimonies were candid, detailed and devastating. But the media deemed that their words were too controversial for the eyes and ears of the American public.

The conference organizers chose the name *Winter Soldier* from Thomas Paine’s first Crisis paper, in which he wrote:

These are the times that try men’s souls. The summertime soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

The Vietnam veterans saw themselves as soldiers battling the wrongs of the war and speaking out against the brutal training that made them capable of unthinkable violence.

Among those involved in the organization of the conference was future senator John Kerry, who later stated in his address to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: “We who have come here to Washington have come here because we feel we have to be winter soldiers now. We could come back to this country; we could be quiet; we could hold our silence; we could not tell what went on in Vietnam, but we feel because of what threatens this country, the fact that the crimes threaten it, not reds, and not redcoats but the crimes which we are committing that threaten it, that we have to speak out.”

While some young men choked back tears of humiliation and others spoke with numb indifference, all revealed their shocking participation in acts of violence. They testified to the destruction of entire villages, the torture, rape, electrocution and murder of civilians and prisoners as well as the tossing of blindfolded POWs from helicopters, among other violations of international law. The atrocities seemed to the veterans to be an epidemic problem — one that stemmed from the very essence of American military training and procedure. In his book *Home to War*, a chronicle of the history of the Vietnam veterans’ movement, author Gerald Nicosia wrote:

What the veterans insisted over and over was that America knew better than to do the things it was doing in Vietnam...the veterans were asking America to listen to its own much-touted morality, and to begin to practice what it had spent two centuries preaching. At the same time, though, the veterans were careful to point out that the war crimes the United States was committing in Vietnam did not stem from the misconduct of individual soldiers – which the government had tried to establish by scapegoating Calley and a handful of his fellow officers [on trial for the My Lai

massacre] – but resulted rather ‘from conscious military policies...designed by the military brass, National Security Council, and major universities and corporate institutions, and passed down through the chain of command for conversion into Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the field.’

The hearings was monumental in its revelations, exposing for the first time that the US with Operation Dewey Canyon I had illegally and secretly invaded neutral Laos. It was at this conference also that the health dangers of Agent Orange were first discussed.

Although media coverage of the event was disappointingly limited and it did not have the immediate impact its coordinators had hoped for, the words of the soldiers who testified did not entirely go unheard. A group of independent documentary filmmakers in New York heard about the event and traveled to Detroit to spend three days documenting what would become for them a lifelong cause.

How the Film Came About Intro by the Winterfilm Collective.

In late 1970 the Vietnam Veterans Against the War sent out a call to vets all over the country to participate in the Winter Soldier Investigation. They hoped that they could attract media attention and could speak directly to the American public and, in this way, could help bring about an end to the war. But the national news media for the most part did not cover or mention the Winter Soldier Investigation, though it was an historic event.

When that call went out from the veterans, a few people in the documentary film community of New York City recognized the importance of what was about to happen. They contacted friends, then friends of friends, asking who was available to go to Detroit for a long weekend to record the testimony as an independent effort.

The search began for donations of equipment and film stock. Many of the people in the group didn't know each other when they started out, but life-long friendships were forged that week-end.

The shooting took place over the course of 4 days and involved about 17 people. The editing took about eight months with usually 5 or 6 people working at a time, although not always the same people because of demands of family and work. A few stuck it out for the entire effort. Periodic screening allowed members of the group to contribute on a regular basis. The process was stressful because of the intensity and complexity of the material and the importance of finishing the film and getting it right, and the demands of trying to work as a collective. The filmmakers came to understand that if there WERE to be in-depth coverage of this historic event that the veterans had created in order to be heard, it would come about in the many hours of film the group shot.

It was a constant struggle to find money to continue editing and respond to the pressure from VVAW for something they could use for their own organizing and fund raising. A 17-minute version that was quickly put together got a great deal of use across the country and helped to raise money for continuing the project. There were a lot of people, including many veterans, who gave the filmmakers input and helped in various ways during the year of editing, which took place in NYC and in rural New Jersey.

The film *Winter Soldier* was shown and praised in Europe, at festivals, in theaters and on television. But it was largely overlooked in the U.S. because it was a first-hand account of the war in Vietnam, which the U.S. was still waging when the film was made.

Jane Fonda on *Winter Soldier*
The Brian Lehrer Show, WNYC, Tuesday, April 12, 2005

In 1971 an earlier caller had mentioned that I had spoken some place where she was and that was a trip that I was taking to raise money for the Winter Soldier investigation. Over one hundred military personnel from every branch of the service, American soldiers, sailors, marines, officers, pilots, they came and testified in Detroit as to atrocities that they had committed or had seen committed in the presence of officers while in Vietnam. It took such unbelievable courage for them to do that. They were disparaged by the Nixon administration, but all of them were telling the truth and they shook while they spoke and I realized while I sat there that these men, by virtue of their collective truth telling, were being redeemed. They had seen the heart of darkness and because they were willing to own their experience and speak to the American people, they were healing. They were asking American people, 'Come with us, understand what this has been. Understand the nature of this war that your young men are being put into by its nature atrocity producing. This is how we will be redeemed as a nation' and we did not listen. A film was made of it called *Winter Soldier*. Barbara Kopple, the award winning documentarian was one of the young filmmakers that did it. Graham Nash was one of the people who helped me fund it and raise money for it and it's out there and it is grainy black and white reality and it is very important.

John Kerry on the Winter Soldier Investigation
Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee April 22, 1971

I am not here as John Kerry. I am here as one member of the group of 1,000 which is a small representation of a very much larger group of veterans in this country, and were it possible for all of them to sit at this table they would be here and have the same kind of testimony ...

I would like to talk, representing all those veterans, and say that several months ago in Detroit, we had an investigation at which over 150 honorably discharged and many very highly decorated veterans testified to war crimes committed in Southeast Asia, not isolated incidents but crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command ...

They told the stories at times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war, and the normal and very particular ravaging which is done by the applied bombing power of this country ...

We who have come here to Washington have come here because we feel we have to be winter soldiers now. We could come back to this country; we could be quiet; we could hold our silence; we could not tell what went on in Vietnam, but we feel because of what threatens this country, the fact that the crimes threaten it, not reds, and not redcoats but the crimes which we are committing that threaten it, that we have to speak out.

Oh! Camil (The Winter Soldier) Lyrics by Graham Nash

Singer/songwriter Graham Nash, was inspired to write these lyrics after seeing *Winter Soldier*. Lyrics used by permission of Graham Nash.

*Oh Camil, tell me how do you feel?
You fought for your country
For God and for war,
Now your heart tells you that can't be real.
So you tell me your story from beginning to end
All the blood and the guts and the gore
Will you tell all the people
'bout the people you killed,
Not for God, but for country and war?*

*Oh! Camil, tell me what did you mother say,
When you left those people out in the fields,
Rotting along with the hay?
Did you show her your medals?
Did you show her your guns?
Did you show her the ears that you wore?
Did you show her a picture of the people you killed
Not for God, but for country and war?*

*Oh! Camil, tell me why are you in this place?
When you stood up for justice your country replied
By throwing it back in your face.
When you tell me your story
Are you making amends for all of the hatred you saw?
Will you tell all the people about the people that cry out for God
Not for country or war?*

Winterfilm: The Filmmakers



The Winterfilm Collective 2004

Frederick Aronow

Fred Aronow worked in films out of New York and Los Angeles for 20 years on projects including features such as *Some Kind of Hero* starring Richard Pryor; several Golan-Globus epics; *Aggro*, *Seizeman*, shot in Guyana; *Traidores en el Lago*, shot in Mexico; and the ever-popular micro-budget classic, *Revenge of the Blood Farmers*. His short films include work on the Gene Searchinger film version of the award-winning short play *Motel* and the animated featurette *One Man's Laundry* made with animator George Griffin and Metropolis Photoplays. His work in documentaries includes participation in the Shoshoni Productions-(NET) PBS series *Vanishing Wilderness*; the PBS special, *Black Coal, Red Power*; and the shorter documentary *When the Rivers Run Dry*, also released as *Cuando Los Rios Se Sequen*; as well as several films about artists and their work including Bettye Saar and Harry Fonseca.

In the late 1980s, Aronow became involved with Casa Colina Centers for Rehabilitation (Pomona, CA), doing special writing and media projects relative to their programs for brain injury, spinal cord injury and stroke rehabilitation. He became the Director of Public Relations at Casa Colina and served in that capacity for many years. Among his other duties there, he produced videotape programming and staged fundraising events, the most recent of which featured author Stephen King. He is now Associate Director of Casa Colina Foundation.

He lives in Los Angeles where he is the President of the Board of Directors of Sunset Hall, a non-profit retirement home for “free thinking elders who maintain an active engagement in the community, politics, and our society.”

Nancy Baker

After working on *Winter Soldier*, Nancy Baker went on to edit documentary and feature films for the next 30 years, including *Harlan County, USA* directed by fellow collective member Barbara Kopple, another Academy Award winner, *Born into Brothels*, and Oscar-nominated, *Between the Lines*, *Streetwise* and *On the Ropes*. Among the dramatic films she edited was Louis Malle’s last film, *Vanya on 42nd Street*. She is especially grateful for the many long-lasting friendships made through working on *Winter Soldier*.

Rhetta Barron

Rhetta Barron was part of the *Winter Soldier* post-production editing team and her voice is heard reading the Tom Paine quote that opens the movie. She left a twenty-year freelance career in film and television in the late 1980s to teach and perform. She currently works in NYC with at-risk high school students and as singer/dancer/actress with three political satire groups.

Robert Fiore

After New York University Film School and while working for Don Pennebaker and Rickie Leacock at Filmmakers, Robert Fiore started filming documentaries (including theatrical releases *Dionysus in '69* and *Festival Express*) and Brian de Palma’s early feature, *Greetings*, as well as doing camerawork on the Maysles’ *Gimme Shelter* and helping Robert Smithson put together his film, *Spiral Jetty*, prior to working on *Winter Soldier*.

Subsequently, he has continued to shoot documentaries, both on film and tape for television, as well as sometimes direct (*Pumping Iron*) or produce (*Matta: the eye of a surrealist*).

David Gillis

After *Winter Soldier*, David Gillis’s energies and focus centered on raising a family (three children), and striving to learn skills necessary to become self-sufficient and detach from “the system.” This effort was minimally successful and intermittently supported by varied film productions, most notably documentaries working with David Grubin and Bill Moyers. To relieve financial strains, Gillis turned to producing and directing film and video programs for the pharmaceutical industry. Now, with his children grown to fine adults and blessed with a grand grandson, he is returning to produce and direct documentaries that support the social movements in which he believes. These include establishment of universal health care in the United States, worker rights issues, and various environmental causes.

David Grubin

David Grubin has won every major award in his field, including two Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University awards, three George Foster Peabody awards, and nine Emmys. A director, writer, and cinematographer, his many films for television range across a wide variety of disciplines: science — *The Secret Life of the Brain*; poetry — *The Language of Life*; psychology — *Young Dr. Freud*, art — *Degenerate Art*; world history — *Napoleon*; public affairs — *Kofi Annan: Center of the Storm*. He is

widely known for his acclaimed series of presidential biographies for *American Experience* on PBS — *LBJ, FDR, Truman, TR: The Story of Theodore Roosevelt*, and *Abraham and Mary Lincoln: A House Divided*. *RFK* — his biography of Robert Kennedy — aired on PBS. His four-hour series on immigration — *Destination America* — will air on PBS in 2005. Currently, he is completing a biography of Marie Antoinette.

A member of the executive committee of the Society of American Historians, Grubin has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, has been a Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College, and is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Hamilton College. He is a member of the Directors Guild and the Writers Guild, and serves on the board of directors of the Film Forum. He is married with three children and lives in New York City.

Barbara Jarvis

From, 1966 to 1978, Barbara Jarvis worked in documentaries, starting with the Maysles Brothers and Charlotte Zwerin. Her work included *Winter Soldier* (producer and film editor, *Lambing* (a TV special made with Robert Fiore) and *Spiral Jetty* (editor) for Robert Smithson..

Creating and working on Winter Soldier had a very profound effect on my life. It shook up my core values and I began to question almost everything. I continued to work in film for a few years afterwards. I became restless and wanted to understand the deeper meaning of Life, and what was happening on the planet. Rather than become more involved - I left New York and began to travel, seeking experiences and teachers.

I ultimately found that I wanted to live in closer relationship to the land. I moved to Kauai, grew a garden, learned to meditate, practiced and taught Tai Chi, raised horses and eventually ended up teaching art and then becoming a Waldorf School teacher. The best part of my life has been spending the past twenty-four years as a single mother raising a wonderful daughter. I have continued to enjoy drawing and painting and living on this beautiful place.

It was an exceptional experience to gather together the Winterfilm group after 30 years. We got a short taste of each other and the spirit and connection is still there. Some of the group is still working hard to keep this project going and they deserve appreciation.

Barbara Kopple

Barbara Kopple is a two-time Academy Award winning filmmaker, in 1977 for *Harlan County USA* and in 1991 for *American Dream*. That same year, *Harlan County USA* was named to the National Film Registry by Congress and designated an “American Film Classic.” *Wild Man Blues*, Kopple’s film about the European tour of Woody Allen and his New Orleans-style jazz band, was selected by the National Board of Review and the Broadcast Critic’s Association as the Best Documentary of 1998. *My Generation*, a non-fiction feature film that examines the Woodstock legacy and Generation X, which screened at the 2000 Venice and Toronto Film Festivals. For her film *Fallen Champ: The Untold Story of Mike Tyson*, Kopple received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Individual Achievement for Directing. The first non-fiction film to be featured as a Movie of the Week on NBC, *Fallen Champ* was also awarded the Best Special Award by the Television Critics Association, the Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award, and the Director’s Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement.

Kopple has been honored with the 1999 New York Women in Film and Television Muse Award, the Irene Diamond Human Rights Achievement Award, the Cannes Film Festival Critics Choice Award, the National Society of Film Critics Award, the Crystal Award and the Christopher Award. She is also the recipient of artistic fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Barbara Kopple interview from *Documentary Filmmakers Speak* by Liz Stubbs

"[I]...worked on a film called Winter Soldier ... with a collective of people. It was Vietnam veterans giving testimony of what they had done in Vietnam. And it was incredible. We did it with Donald Sutherland and Jane Fonda, who were the people who put up the money for it. I think I was probably one of the youngest people who was working on it. I loved every minute of it. I was doing sound. We all lived together in the editing of it. And Vietnam veterans who were out of the war would come stay with us on this fantastic estate that was donated to us to edit the film. And they'd sort of shake us in the morning and wake us up and we'd all talk and look at material. And sometimes, if we woke them up in the morning, they'd think they were still in Vietnam and they'd take their hands as if they still had a gun in it. So it was pretty heavy. It was sort of an end of innocence."

Michael Lesser

Michael Lesser's resume spans over 35 years in the film business. In collaboration with his wife and partner, Carol McCann, he has owned the award-winning film and video production company Grandview Island since 1992. Grandview Island has focused Lesser's talents as director, producer and cameraman on projects as diverse as advertising, political campaigns, corporate image films, and documentaries. He combines an eye for lighting with a hands-on knowledge of every aspect of production, and has produced film and video for clients throughout the USA and in global locations as far flung as Hong Kong, mainland China, Morocco, and numerous locations throughout Europe and South America.

Lesser's talents as an intuitive documentary filmmaker, coupled with his award-winning track record in long form projects have earned him a reputation for getting highly engaging, compelling performances from some of the world's best-known and most influential citizens.

Highlights of his career include over a decade as lighting director for the renowned documentary team of David and Albert Maysles, working in close collaboration on both short form and long form films, with a focus on beautiful lighting for real people. In addition to the work he did on *Winter Soldier* near the beginning of his career, he was the director of lighting for the classic film, *Pumping Iron*, and has also lent his skills to scores of commercials as well as several feature films.

Lee Osborne

Lee Osborne worked for many years at the New York University sound department as well as on many independent films in the 1960s and 1970s. His work included such films as *Woodstock* (1970), *Italianamerican* (1974) and *The Warriors* (1979). He can be seen at the very beginning of Martin Scorsese's *Italianamerican* slating the camera with a beep light attached to his Nagra.

Lucy Massie Phenix

Lucy Massie Phenix has been making social documentary films for nearly thirty years. Her film credits include such groundbreaking films as *Regret to Inform*, (senior editor and writer), a winner of the Peabody and an Academy Award nominee telling of Vietnamese and American war widows in a strong indictment of war and its long-term effects; *You Got To Move* (producer, director and co-editor), a film about grass roots social change in the South; *Stranger with a Camera* (director in editing phase, co-writer, editor), a film of the fatal shooting of a cameraman in Eastern Kentucky exploring the documentary genre as a vehicle for social change, and the forces of class and culture that are involved in image-taking, stereotyping and community coherence. *Cancer in Two Voices*, producer/director/editor; Audience Award Winner, Festival of Films by Women, Creteil, France; the story of a relationship between two women during the time in which one partner is dying of cancer, *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (editor), the compilation film classic on government propaganda and women working in the skilled trades during World War II; *Word Is Out* (co-director and co-editor), the acclaimed documentary on the experiences of 26 gay men and lesbians; and collaborator on the Winterfilm Collective's film *Winter Soldier*. She has also served as consulting editor on many films including *Berkeley in the Sixties*, *Common Threads*, and *Absolutely Positive*. She currently lives in Northern California and is working on a film about the Vermont ceramic artist, Karen Karnes.

I was a teacher when I went, as a film assistant, to the Winter Soldier Investigation. Right away I saw what a huge a story it was that these young American soldiers were telling their truth about being in the war, speaking with the authority of first-hand experience. All of us in the audience listened raptly to what they were saying. We had heard nothing like this in our lives. We in that room were the first American audience to hear this testimony. Yet none of the mainstream media stayed to cover this breaking story. I remember seeing network reporters there interviewing vets for part of one morning and then they left, not to return during the next two days of testimony, even as the stories the vets were telling were corroborated and verified. We scoured the newspapers, the TV news, and there was nothing. A blackout. I learned then about suppression of the truth in media which continues today. Some "news" is too true to report, too dangerous for the people to know. It was this experience that turned me into a documentary filmmaker, determined to give voice to those whose stories were stifled, denied.

I remember that I learned what war meant by listening to these young men, my age, speak from deep within them, about how it felt to kill little kids, and look into the eyes of the men and women, old people and young, that they were killing, in order to save their own lives. I listened to these boys tell how they cut off their feelings and turn away from everything they had learned in their short lives about valuing human life. And for the first time, I realized that I, too, in the situation they found themselves, could have taken human lives in order to save my friends. I had never imagined that I could have been a killer until I heard these tender defeated young men talk about what they had to do, as soldiers...what they had been hardened and trained to do. To overcome this training and to speak truthfully about what they had seen and done took great courage. This was a kind of truth and reconciliation, not organized by the government as in South Africa, but organized by veterans, themselves.

It was in the Winter Soldier Investigation when I realized that war is murder, that a government that sends its young people into war, is carrying out premeditated murder on

a huge scale and leaving the young soldiers who survive to deal with being killers, without help or support.

The Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh who has taught American veterans how to live with the war that stays inside them, has said "If we want to protect life, we have to look deeply as individuals and as a nation into the true nature of war. And when we see it, we have to project it onto a huge screen...to prevent it from happening again. We who have touched war have a duty to bring the truth about war to those who have not had a direct experience of it." This is what the veterans in Winter Soldier have bravely done. And hopefully what soldiers returning from Iraq will do together, in large numbers. All of us who hear them, must pass the word on. It is a courageous duty to say we will not do your killing for you. We will study war no more.

The men who decide to start a war, like in Iraq, especially by using false data to convince the American people it is necessary, are deciding to take away precious human life in the thousands in Iraq, (in the millions in Vietnam). That is murder. It seems to me important to use this language, to say to these men, 'You are responsible for cutting short countless precious lives, and for using other young men and women to die and be maimed for the ideas of power and greed in your heads. These are criminal decisions, and it is time that we the people hold you responsible for them.'

Winter Soldier changed my life, and the lives of all of us who were there. It was meant to be seen by American people in 1971 to stop a war. Now, in another time of war, 33 years later, it is ironic that it might be more widely seen by another generation, another American public, still for the same purpose.

Roger Phenix

Since 1968, Roger Phenix has worked as a free lance filmmaker and journalist. He has participated in long-form television documentaries working with David Mc Cullough, Bill Moyers, Tom Jennings, Tom Brokaw, and other reporters. He has recorded documentary sound for cinema verite projects with producer/directors David Grubin, Tom Spain, Charlotte Zwerin, Susan Froemke, Merle Worth, Robert Elfstrom, and many others. He recorded sound for two Academy Award-winning features, *Best Boy*, and *The Long Way Home*, and received an Emmy Award as director of the NBC White Paper, *To Be A Doctor*. He lives with his wife Jo Ann Phenix in a cooperative community north of New York City, and continues to stay in touch with and work with many of the others in this original group.

For me, there has not since been an experience to compare with the making of Winter Soldier. As filmmakers, we focussed our complete attention on the subjects of the film, the Veterans. Some of the vets participated with us in the long editing process. As we struggled to know their experience, the war came home to us with a new ferocity. The film was more than a story — it was something they hoped to be able to use, and the longer the process took — while the Vietnam War continued as well — the more urgency the project seemed to gain. What had been a four-day volunteer shoot became an eighteen-month radically altered way of life, with echoes reverberating today.

By the time we got back to New York, we knew — the press event which was the Winter Soldier Investigation had not been broadcast to the American public. For the American

citizen with an interest in current events, Winter Soldier might as well have never happened. Despite this reality, we prepared to finish the film which had been shot.

Months after the Detroit event, as we were completing the film, the veterans went to Washington, organizing a protest event which finally did succeed in reaching the American consciousness. Ironically, it was a few congressmen who opened the doors of their committee room for the Veterans to explain their presence. It fell to John Kerry as VVAW spokesperson to encapsulate everything that had been expressed months earlier at Detroit in a speech which brought the veterans' message to the American public through the print and broadcast media.

The influence of the Winter Soldier film has been felt far beyond the small number of people who have actually seen it so far. It remains as a true and rigorous document at the center of a controversy which still rages in America. One can only wonder whether some might now deny that the Winter Soldier Investigation had ever happened if it were not for this film.

Benay Rubenstein

Benay Rubenstein has been a leading prison educator for over twenty years. From the early 1980s until 1995 she designed and coordinated college degree programs in both New York State and Federal Correctional Institutions. In 1995, when (PELL) and New York State (TAP) financial aid were eliminated for inmate use, Rubenstein produced an award-winning film, *The Last Graduation*, documenting the history of higher education in New York State prisons. From 1997-2001, she directed the College Bound program at Bedford Hills Correctional facility (New York's only maximum security prison for women), one of the few post-secondary programs resurrected after the loss of public funding. Since 2001, Rubenstein has developed and directed The College Initiative, a model re-entry programs for men and women who want to begin or continue higher education upon release from prison.

In her free time Rubenstein enjoys spending time with her three grown children and young grandson. Other longtime interests includes yoga, gardening, photography and travelling to the far reaches of the world.

Michael Weil

After completing *Winter Soldier*, Michael Weil moved, with Laurie Vermont and his sons, Josh and Colin, to the San Francisco Bay Area. Robert Dalva, another New Yorker, introduced him to Francis Coppola, with whom Michael set up a post-production facility. He made commercials for the Golden State Warriors, documentaries for the Shaklee Corporation, and, with Devendra Rathod, produced music videos for Huey Lewis and the News. Weil directed a political campaign spot for Robert Matsui, running for US Congress from Sacramento. Matsui, a liberal Democrat, came from fourth place to win the election and still serves, 25 years later, in Washington.

Weil produced several "behind-the-scenes" documentaries on the making of feature films, including *Semi-Tough*, *Bad News Bears Go to Japan*, and *More American Graffiti*. His courageous testimony before the National Labor Relations Board helped to clarify the limits to which Hollywood unions could control the labor market. His continuing opposition to the US war efforts in Southeast Asia

brought him to Cambodia to explore the plight of Cambodian refugees living in squalid and dangerous camps on the Thai border.

Another overseas venture was the production of a documentary on the visit to Moscow and Leningrad (1988) by a group of 20 young ballet students. He also accompanied a group of students to Fiji.

Health problems, including diabetes and a severe stroke, left Weil physically impaired, but actively engaged in progressive politics. He helped Joe Nation win a seat to the California Assembly, from which he will probably advance to the US Congress. Weil's spirits never flagged during his lengthy illness and hospitalization. He maintained a wide circle of friends, inspiring many with his cheerful response to his health challenges. He passed away on February 27, 1999.

Weil was intensely proud of his sons and grandchildren. Joshua B. Weil is Chief of ER Medicine at Kaiser Hospital in Santa Rosa, where he and his wife Claire, a veterinarian specializing in Chinese Animal Medicine, are raising their three children, Sydney, Caleb and Sophie. Colin A. Weil is following in his fathers footsteps as a filmmaker and political activist, focusing on gay and lesbian civil rights and public health issues. Colin lives in Greenwich Village across the street from Weil's last NYC address.

Winterfilm: The Soldiers

Rusty Sachs

Rusty Sachs served in Vietnam as a USMC Aviator from August of 1966 to September of 1967. By the time he had finished, receiving an Honorable Discharge as Captain, he had participated in over 725 combat missions and 221 carrier landings. Following his period of service in Vietnam, Sachs studied at Harvard College and Vermont Law School, receiving a Bachelor of Arts (in 1972) and a Juris Doctor (in '78), respectively. He also went on to study at the Universite de Grenoble, where he received a Diplome de Hautes Etudes.

Upon completing his studies, Sachs moved to Vermont, where he worked as an attorney in private practice for over twenty years and performed *pro bono* work on behalf of Vietnam veterans and battered women. During this time, he also taught various ground school aviation courses and acted as a freelance instructor, lecturing frequently on aviation topics at FAA safety seminars, EAA chapter meetings, and flight schools throughout the northeast US. He also, periodically, served as a guest instructor of combat leadership at US Marine Corps installations.

Aviation again took the forefront for Sachs when, starting in 1997, he became the Director of Training and Chief Pilot at Signal Aviation Services, Inc., in New Hampshire. In 1999 he was named a FAA Designated Pilot Examiner. He was also appointed in the first group of Master Instructors under the National Association of Flight Instructors, and is one of three individuals to have received this designation five times. Sachs is currently the Executive Director of the National Association of Flight Instructors.

Scott Camil

Scott Camil enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1965 and served twenty months of voluntary service in Vietnam. He was discharged in June of 1969, having received thirteen medals and attained the rank of Sargent. After testifying at the Winter Soldier Investigation, he became a founding member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War and helped organize the Dewey Canyon III March on Washington, which culminated in the soldiers' throwing away of their medals. Between 1972 and 1975, Camil faced numerous federal and state charges, including the Gainesville 8 case and one where federal agents shot him in the back during a drug bust. He was not only acquitted of all charges, but the jury recommended that the agents be charged with attempted murder.

In 1987 Scott Camil went on a fact-finding trip to Central America and founded the Gainesville chapter of Veterans for Peace. In 1989 and 1990, he served as an official observer to elections in Nicaragua, and, following, went on another fact-finding trip to the Middle East, visiting Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Occupied territories and Jordan. In 1994 Camil returned to Vietnam as a US representative for the Vietnam Friendship Village Project. He also visited his old battlefields while there.

Camil founded All Veterans for Kerry in 2004, and currently resides in Florida with his wife.

The Winter Soldier Investigation was more pivotal to me than any experience in my life except for Vietnam. I went to the Investigation still supporting the war and only seeking to let the public know what was going on in their name with their money. I thought of Vietnam only in terms of how much my fellow Marines and I had sacrificed and suffered.

It was the way the filmmakers of Winter Film conducted their interviews that made me think, look at the big picture, and understand that the Vietnamese were humans. They

asked the right questions and I owe them a debt of gratitude so huge that I cannot even find the words to articulate how strong my feelings are for these filmmakers who woke me up and brought out my Humanity. It is their questions that make the Winter Soldier film so powerful. We veterans got all of the credit. It's way past time to give the credit for this great film to the people responsible for asking the right questions and then editing all of that into a film with so much feeling and heart.

Kenneth J. Campbell, Ph.D.

Kenneth J. Campbell was born and raised in a working-class neighborhood in Philadelphia. He enlisted in the Marines Corps in 1967 at the age of eighteen and served thirteen months as an artillery forward observer with a rifle company in Vietnam. He earned a Purple Heart, a Navy Achievement Medal with (combat "V") and eight other decorations and awards for his service in Vietnam. He was discharged as a corporal in 1970 and soon after became active in the Philly chapter of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. He testified at the Winter Soldier Investigation in Detroit, joined the VVAW encampment on the Capitol Mall in Washington, testified before the Dellums Committee hearings on Vietnam in Washington, and testified at the International Commission of Enquiry into US War Crimes in Oslo, Norway in 1971. He also began his undergraduate studies at Temple University, earning a B.A. in history in 1975. For the next eight years he worked as a factory worker, a shipyard worker, a taxi driver, a bus driver, and a respiratory therapy technician. During these years he was an active organizer in the labor, unemployed, community, veterans, and anti-US intervention in Central America movements. In 1983 he returned to Temple University to pursue his primary interest in American foreign policy, earning an M.A. and a Ph.D. in political science. His dissertation explored the US military's lessons of Vietnam.

Ken Campbell has received distinguished teaching awards from the Temple University, the University of Delaware, the Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society, the American Political Science Association, and *Pi Sigma Alpha* National Political Science Honor Society. Professor Campbell has presented conference papers in the US, Canada, and Europe. His publications include book chapters on war crimes and genocide in the *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2004), *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographical Review*, 6th ed. (Transaction, forthcoming), and *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (Syracuse University Press, 1992). He has published journal articles on humanitarian intervention, national security strategy, and the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine in *Civil Wars, Armed Forces & Society*, the *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, and *Human Rights Digest*. Palgrave/Macmillan published his book, *Genocide and the Global Village*, in September 2001. The importance of Professor Campbell's research on the Powell Doctrine, humanitarian intervention, and genocide has been personally recognized by General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Henry "Hugh" Shelton, and Canadian Major Brent Beardsley, personal staff assistant to General Romeo Dallaire, UN commander during the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

In October of last year, during the presidential campaign, Professor Campbell filed a defamation lawsuit against Carleton Sherwood and the makers of the anti-Kerry film "Stolen Honor" for inappropriately using a scene from *Winter Soldier* to give the impression that Campbell was a fake veteran, fabricating atrocity stories. The suit is scheduled for trial sometime in late 2006.

Ken Campbell is an associate professor of political science and international relations at the University of Delaware and the director of the University's international relations program. He lives in Philadelphia with his wife and daughter and is currently writing a book on comparative quagmires: Vietnam and Iraq.

Websites/Links

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<http://www.vvaw.org/about/> (Vietnam Veterans Against the War)
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Original Reviews from 1972

Village Voice, February 3, 1972 ATROCITIES AND ARTLESS INNOCENCE By Amos Vogel

One of the strongest film indictments yet produced of our civilizing role in Vietnam was at the Whitney last week; it is a film that must be shown in prime evening time on national television, and never will be.

Winter Soldier is a feature-length documentary of the historic, terrifying testimony given by more than 200 ex-GIs at the 1971 Detroit Winter Soldier investigation concerning American atrocities in Vietnam and renders academic any disputes as to the relative effectiveness of word as against image. There is simply no substitute for seeing the faces of the men as they testify, their strain, tears, hesitations, and artless innocence – all inexorable guarantors of veracity, none available from a reading of the testimony.

The enormity of our genocidal passion is recounted here in factual, chilling detail, resembling a criminal, cosmic jigsaw puzzles, any tiny part of which simultaneously contains within itself the totality of the over-all horror.

One after another, these veterans of crime recount their experiences in acts of accusation and expiation; the testimony of these long-haired, intense young men implicates them as well; and judicious intercutting of old photographs showing them in crewcut and uniform further solidifies this theme and broadens it to one potentially encompassing all of us, given only our presence at the right time and place.

Authenticity and horror are built with small, precise details. An American officer advises his men not to count prisoners at the beginning of their removal in American planes, only upon arrival. A woman is slit open from vagina to neck. A small child is stoned to death for taunting the Americans.

The effect of the testimonials is enhanced by intercutting of color slides and live footage of tortures, killings, burnings, bombings – images otherwise hidden away by the hundreds and thousands of feet in film libraries of television networks and never seen. They show pitiful, enormously frightened, totally disoriented human beings, delicate and small in build, violated and murdered by massive, huge Westerners who seem to look like men from outer space, dropped by evil machines to rain destruction on their ancestral lands. All the “cliches” are there – the crying mother displaying a maimed child, the aged grandparents herded off, the civilians crouching in unbelievable fear in bushes, ineffectively hiding from helicopters in which one of the monsters actually films their plight. One feels frightened at the thought of untold thousand others patiently waiting in television vaults to be stirred into pitiful life by future researchers, an accusing army of corpses that we will never surmount.

Far from being a horror show or propagandistic exercise, however, the film, by the very enormity of what it portrays, becomes a philosophical setpiece, raising all basic moral issues: the mechanisms by which “ordinary” people become torturers and killers, the inability to feel the suffering of others, the possible inevitability of violence and murder in human affairs, the capability of all-encompassing evil as the part of everybody. It postulates self-protection, the need to maintain personal sanity, the urge

for revenge, as premise for total indifference toward the “enemy”; and asks unvoiced, insistent questions as to the irreversible damage this war has already done to American civilization.

Filmically, the work is a symptomatic example of content triumphing over form. While sound is on a professional level, the camera skips too rapidly from face to face (sometimes not even showing the particular narrator) and editing never surmounts simple juxtapositions or chronological transitions. The profound effect on the spectator by one particular GI shown repeatedly, whose background and formation are more thoroughly gone into, indicates what could have been done. The reviewer of such a film is always faced with the dilemma of attempting to delineate the artistic component of what is primarily a social artifact, whose informational content outweighs its artistic merits. And yet the sheer power of subject matter, the profound weight of revelation is such that it sweeps aside all limitations and transforms the work into a deeply moving, absolutely necessary experience.

The great and ultimate stars of the film are the tears shed by men who have learned that to destroy the false machismo instilled by school, state, and army, it is necessary to learn how to cry. Through the depth of their tearful misery, openly expressed, they reveal the true essence of a masculinity which, for the first time, is human.

At the end, an American Indian slowly, painfully establishes a congruity between our Vietnamese crimes and those perpetrated against his race and then refers to a frequent phrase in the broken treaties between white and yellow men: “When we made treaties long ago, they were for as long as the grass shall grow and as long as the rivers shall flow...” He stops and continues haltingly, “...The way we are going now, some day the grass ain’t going to grow and the rivers aren’t going to flow...” Then he breaks down, on camera, a grown man, and cries. It is an unbearable moment.

***The Village Voice*, January 27, 1972** **SCENES by Sally Helgesen**

It seems unlikely that a film consisting of naught but tightshots of ex-soldiers detailing their wartime experiences would have the power to rivet your gaze to the screen and glue you to your seat for a full 90 minutes. But *Winter Soldier* does, right from that opening moment when the camera locks in on a former marine pilot Rusty Sachs describing the competition between soldiers in his helicopter to see who could toss live Vietnamese hostages the furthest distance through the air. When the film was screened last week at the Whitney, the audience seemed alternately tense and numb, but never restless or bored.

Winter Soldier is, of course, the documentary account of the Winter Soldier Investigations, that three-day coming together in Detroit last February during which 200 Vietnam veterans unsparingly detailed the war crimes and atrocities they had witnessed or participated in. It was made by Winterfilm, a 16-member collective of New York movie professionals and technicians and will run at the Whitney January 27 through February 2 as part of the Young American Filmmakers series. After that it’s on its own — Winterfilm hopes the museum showings will attract enough attention to ensure its move national distribution.

“The whole thing began last December when a group of filmmakers in contact with Vietnam Veterans Against the War heard about the investigation and decided it should be filmed.” Winterfilmer Michael Weil told me. “We figured the media would ignore it, and they did. Swarms of reporters showed up but there was little real coverage. I personally saw story after story killed. Feeds went out over the wire, but nothing was ever printed. The vets demonstration in Washington

that spring got lots of attention, but I guess the official press figured the hearings were just too heavy for the public to take.”

Money problems plagued the venture throughout. Winterfilm had to constantly stop in the middle of editing to hold fundraising screenings of rough cuts so they could get up the cash to go on. But the visual quality has nothing in common with the typical low-budget cheapie anti-war flick; the editing is flawless and smooth and the camera work always steady throughout the black and white 16mm film.

What exactly makes the picture so engrossing, especially now, a year later, when the grisly testimony has long since filtered down and been absorbed, its horror dulled by familiarity? It has something to do with the fact that each individual soldier comes across on celluloid as a fascinating, articulate, really vital personality. Perhaps the strongest of many strong segments comes during what could have been a clichéd confrontation between a staid-looking white testifier and a tough-ass black rapper explaining why so few blacks showed up, and how racism was really the problem, not the war. He delivers his long monologue in the baddest of Detroit street jive, complete with long runs of rhyming couplets. It's more real than theater, but at the same time more theatrical, and no one in the audience wanted him to stop.

Variety, Wednesday May 10, 1972
Critics Week at Cannes, Mosk.
Winter Soldier (U.S.) Documentary. 16mm)

Docu on Vietnam vets talking of atrocities witnessed or taken part in, made by a team of 18 filmmakers who have decided to remain anonymous. No credits except a filming of the Detroit Winter Soldier Investigation in 1971. Reviewed in Cannes, Critics Week 5/5/72. Running time 96 minutes.

A documentary based on the 1971 Detroit Winter Soldier Investigation during which over 200 ex-GIs who had been in Vietnam testified on American atrocities there, with most having participated, affected by them or trying to understand what had happened to them and their fellow soldiers. Its sheer cumulative power transcends any propagandistic level and makes a shattering statement on the degradation of war, the myths of glory and the insidious undermining of the morale of these men returning to civilian life.

The mixture of articulateness and non-articulateness, the halting and more forthright talk, the building of an overwhelming authentic feel make this a film that overrides any consideration of art, technique or the usual critical preoccupations. It will shock, move, appall or anger.

Winter Soldier was offered to television in the U.S. but rejected by all three commercial networks and public TV. This was in spite of the Pentagon's inability to criticize or refute any of the testimony. After many months, the film was aired on WNET-TV, the New York non-commercial station, and just previous to that was seen in part, along with a panel discussion, on WNYC-TV's "All About Television" series. WNYC-TV is New York's city owned UHF station. [Also the hearings were aired via eight hours of tape on Pacifica Foundation's listener-sponsored stations — ED.]

Film builds up a mosaic of talk that grows in power from their almost naïve innocence counterpointed by the horrors they depict. Intercutting youthful snaps of these men and scenes from Vietnam, interweave for a revelation on how ordinary people can become killers on the assumptions that one has to survive, revenge buddies or that all is fair in war.

Perhaps more of this might have helped, but it is a powerful indictment on film that should raise pros and cons, get attention, if well-placed, handled, and labeled in special situations, with school cinematheque or perhaps only educational TV usage also there.

New York Post, May 19, 1972
Pop Scene by Alfred G. Aronowitz

Go see *Winter Soldier* the film about GI war crimes hearings. It may make you angry about any of a number of things, but at the end, there's a blues sung and played by a young veteran named William Homans that'll just make you want to cry.

St Louis Post-Dispatch, Monday October 23, 1972
Jake McCarthy "A Personal Opinion"
A Film You Shouldn't See

I don't get to the movies very often, but I've hardly ever walked out on one. I did the other night, though, because I couldn't handle it.

The magnitude of what has gone wrong in Vietnam has caused us to tuck the war's atrocities and terrors into our national subconscious. The film *Winter Soldier* trots them back out again, and the role of American GIs in the war seems to become too ugly to accept.

Winter Soldier won't get mass distribution in our land of idealism for a long time, I suspect, although it won first prize for documentaries at this year's Cannes Film Festival. The three national television networks and public television have declined to run it, and it isn't in the regular movie houses, as Cannes prize winners often are.

It has run only on two New York noncommercial television stations. It is being shown on some college campuses, under sponsorship of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. I saw an hour of it at St. Louis University the other night — it runs 95 minutes...

I'm not sure what it means when our college generation can handle such a film and its elders may not, unless it says that the younger folks never have known much violence in their lives.

Winter Soldier was filmed during informal hearings last year in Detroit, where 200 young veterans of the Vietnam War - officers and foot soldiers- tried to inform the American people about some of the atrocities we have committed in Southeast Asia. The trade magazine Variety says that "its sheer cumulative power transcends any propagandistic level and makes a shattering statement on the degradation of war." It says the Pentagon was unable "to criticize or refute any of the testimony."

The full testimony was published in the Congressional Record of April 6 and 7, 1971 and was published in book form by Beacon Press, "The Winter Soldier Investigation: An Inquiry into American War Crimes." But Americans haven't rushed to read about it.

The film is interspersed with actual scenes of the grim destruction of a people. The matter-of-fact detailing of grotesque behavior by witnesses themselves contrasts with how some break down and cry at their remembrances. They speak of shooting farmers for sport and-in those days of body counts-reporting them as Viet Cong dead. One scene shows a GI, one of the witnesses, holding a dead civilian as a trophy.

In the Winter Soldier Investigation, these 200 young Americans made their confessions to the nation. One of them, Scott Camil, goes on trial soon with other veterans, not for his role in Vietnam, but for “conspiring” to disrupt the Republican national convention.

President Richard M. Nixon said the other day he opposed amnesty for young men who refused to serve in Vietnam, contending they must pay the same price as those who served and died. Or killed. But in *Winter Soldier* you see that’s hardly the question. It’s how do we achieve amnesty for the American soul, which knows it has been guilty of sin in Vietnam, and doesn’t have the guts to face the issue.

Playboy, May 1972, Bruce Williams

Few moviegoers, unfortunately, will have an opportunity to see *Winter Soldier*, a stirring documentary that was shown early this year in a special film makers’ series at Manhattan’s Whitney Museum of American Art. Put together under the aegis of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, *Winter Soldier* is a passionate cry of protest, taken from the actual testimony of former American soldiers at the Winter Soldier Investigation in Detroit in January and February 1971. After the Cally trial, a group of penitent GI’s voluntarily appeared to confess the atrocities they had committed during service in Vietnam; maiming, burning, rape, throwing suspected Viet Cong out of helicopters, beheading others, shooting innocent civilians in the back. “You’d bring back ears ... whoever got the most ears got the most beers,” testifies one returned veteran in a voice choked with shame. What makes *Winter Soldier* uncommonly powerful is that the bearded contrite awakened young Americans; who testify have so little in common with their counterparts from earlier wars — former Nazi henchmen, for example, who almost invariably pointed an accusing finger at some higher authority or at society as a whole. These soldiers never try to cop out, and their painful honesty may be the only hopeful sign in the horror stories told here.

WPIX, Channel 11 New York, by Jeffrey Lyons, January 27, 1972

Quickly I’ll dismiss “Murders in the Rue Morgue,” a cheesy remake of the Poe classic starring Jason Robards and Lili Palmer. It belongs in the trashcan. More important is *Winter Soldier*, showing this week at the Whitney Museum. It’s a documentary of the meeting of the Vietnamese Veterans Against the War, held last year in Detroit. No matter what your beliefs on the war, the following dialogue from the film, all quotes, will surely make you sick at heart.

“It was like a hunting trip, and the gooks were animals...we’d cut off their ears and trade them for beers ... the man on the street here at home is too busy making a buck or getting antifreeze for his car...we’d have to sing the marine corps hymn and pray for war every night at boot camp ... sure, we pushed gooks out of copters ... everyone did ... we weren’t supposed to see them as human...I carried a pistol for six months after I came home...some of us stoned this child to death just for a laugh because we were bored that day.”

It’s not a pretty picture, and all the stories can’t be documented, but the My Lai experience puts the tales of horror, from boot camp to return home, make it all possible. One American Indian soldier put it all into context, and made the film’s message unforgettable. “No one told us it was wrong, the Indians signed treaties with the White Man, for as long as the grass shall grow as long as the river flows. Well someday soon, the grass won’t grow and the river won’t flow.” Go see *Winter Soldier*. You will remember it for the rest of your life.

Cue magazine, May 13, 1972
Winter Soldier by Winterfilm reviewed by William Wolf

The memory of this documentary could well haunt you for life. A group of New York filmmakers, none of whom claim credits, went to Detroit last year to film Veterans Against the War hearings about Vietnam atrocities. Excerpts of candid testimony plus side interviews are crisply blended here, and punctuated with graphic newsreel footage and souvenir pictures from the GIs. The picture emerges of a steady, standard operating procedure of atrocities into which My Lai would fit like just another rampage. Those who shot the film kept the style simple. The repentant soldiers detail deeds that shake you up and are numbing in cumulative horror. Summed up one vet: "I didn't like being an animal and seeing everyone else turned into animals."

WCBS-TV Channel 2, New York City Broadcast May 10, 1972
Leonard Harris

It's what we in television news call talking heads ... just people being interviewed and yet you are compelled to listen.

Because the talking heads are talking of atrocities ... women and children being gunned down. Girls being raped; men being dropped from helicopters, prisoners being tortured; villages being burned. No, it's not Lidice and these are not veterans of the Wehrmacht. It is Vietnam and this is the Winter Soldier Investigation conducted by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, in the winter of 1971, in Detroit. These are GI's, 125 of them, Army, Marines, foot soldiers, pilots, officers, enlisted men, who got together to try and document what they had seen and performed in Vietnam. Sometimes the small incidents are the most gripping.

Lots of long hair, beards, and they're against the war, you'd like to think the whole thing was rigged that these stories can't be true ... but somehow you believe them.

Winter Soldier is an American version of the documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity* and for impact it rates five camera eyes. Don Rugoff, whose theaters both these films are at, has forgotten he's supposed to be our entertainer. I guess he's trying to be our conscience instead.

Milliarium Zero

Milliarium Zero is a brand-new company specifically created to acquire and distribute films of strong political and social content. The co-founders are Dennis Doros and Amy Heller, who started Milestone Film & Video in 1990 and still run it today along with Nadja Tennstedt, Director of International Sales and Acquisitions.

Milliarium Zero translates from Latin to “milestone zero.” In the US, this official landmark from where all roads in North America are measured, is located opposite the White House.

Milliarium would like to thank:

All the Winter Soldiers and the VVAW
Jan Barry, VVAW President, June 1967 – June 1971
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Press Kit by Elly Lachman

Milliarium Zero
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