

# THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE

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## Bullfrog Community Screening & Discussion Guide

**Roll out the red carpet!** Use your film screening of THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE as a tool to build community. Spark discussion and action to address ...This guide offers some background information plus helpful tips and discussion questions for a stirring, informative, and rewarding screening. **Good Luck!**

For additional resources, visit [waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds\\_resources](http://waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds_resources)

## About THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE

Following his award-winning documentary The War on Democracy, John Pilger's new film is a powerful and timely investigation into the media's role in war. THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE traces the history of "embedded" and independent reporting from the carnage of World War I to the destruction of Hiroshima, and from the invasion of Vietnam to the current war in Afghanistan. As weapons and propaganda are ever more sophisticated, the very nature of war has developed into an 'electronic battlefield'. But who is the real enemy today?



## About the Director

For over 40 years, John Pilger has brought his unique blend of tenacity, courage and controlled anger to the investigation of the "official" version of events from around the world. His exposures, through words and images, of man's inhumanity to man have jolted the consciousness of the public. In a world increasingly dominated by spin, sound-bite and cover-up, he remains a figurehead for "old school" investigative journalism and political dissent - clear-headed, unshakeable in his moral convictions and impervious to manipulation or deception.

# ready to watch!

Here are some ideas and best practices to help make your community screening of **THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE** a success!

- 1. Publicize Your Event!** This is the most important step. Not only can you tell the world about your screening, but you can also let the Bullfrog Community team know about your plans so we can help you publicize your event. Visit [waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds\\_screenings](http://waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds_screenings) to register your screening of **THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE**.
- 2. Visualize Your Goal!** What do you hope to achieve with your screening of **THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE**? Your goal could be to generate a lively post-film discussion with your audience about the news media's role in reporting on war. Perhaps you want a chance to discuss and compare with others the reliability of your own daily news sources. Or, you can simply provide an opportunity for families to watch and learn together.
- 3. Where To Host?** Consider which locations in your area would be ideal for accommodating a community film screening of the size you anticipate: churches, town halls, private homes and even high schools have been venues for many successful community screenings.
- 4. Find A Partner!** Give some thought to who is already working on this issue in your community. Can they help sponsor the event? Spread the word? Speak on a panel discussion after the screening? Some potential partners include: Journalism and Media departments at colleges, universities, and high schools, faith-based organizations and institutions, and organizations concerned with war crimes and international human rights. Links to some of these organizations are available at [waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds\\_resources](http://waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds_resources).
- 5. Invite A Guest Speaker!** Guest speakers and panels are a great way to encourage discussion and debate after a community screening. When people are engaged and thinking about the issues they will stay engaged long after the screening has passed. Contact local television reporters, newspaper editors, journalism teachers, political science professors, and media instructors who have expertise or insight into the issues raised by the film, and invite them to attend and participate in a discussion or Q&A session. The filmmakers are available to appear in person for a Q&A. [Contact Bullfrog Communities](#) if you are interested.
- 6. Engage Your Audience!** Included in this handout is a section called Ready to Act! which is meant to be a hand-out at your screening. It will help your audience know what they can do to educate themselves about key issues brought up in the film.
- 7. Spread The Word!** Think about the best methods available to you for publicizing the film screening to people in your community. Sending emails, creating event notifications on Facebook or Meetup, using Twitter, and placing screening announcements in local newspapers and newsletters is a good start. Find the **THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE** screening poster, discussion guide (includes handout), and press photos on [waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds\\_resources](http://waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds_resources) to help publicize your event around town.
- 8. Tell Us How It Went!** Visit [waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds\\_discussion](http://waryoudontsee.bullfrogcommunities.com/wyds_discussion) to tell us about your event. Where it was held? Who attended? What went well, and what was challenging? Your feedback will help others in organizing their own successful events and will energize the Bullfrog Media Community as a whole.

# ready to talk!

## Here are some questions that will help get people talking about the issues after watching THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE!

1. Professor Stuart Ewen, media historian from Hunter College-SUNY, said that for The Iraq War to begin, we needed a link between Saddam Hussein and 9/11. That link was portrayed in the media as a symbol: the collapsing twin towers of New York. What other symbols can you describe that are associated with The Iraq War? Do you hear any examples of propaganda coming from the White House currently?
2. Dan Rather of MSNBC said, "If we journalists had asked the sort of tough, digging, aggressive questions we should have been asking...rather than just being stenographers...I do think the strong argument can be made that perhaps we would not have gone to war." Would we have gone to war if the media had challenged the information coming from the White House? Why or why not?
3. Who is selecting the images that we see in mainstream media? If the statement that "Ownership determines content" is true, how will it affect the images of war that we see in mainstream media?
4. Independent journalist Dahr Jamail says, "When a journalist chooses to embed, you're giving the military the power to control where you go, how you get there what you see, when you see it, and in many instances, how you are going to report it." Why utilize embeds if what they're going to produce isn't the total picture of war, only "nationally inspired" pieces of it? Is the practice worthwhile?
5. The bombing of Al Jazeera is described by former BBC world affairs reporter Rageh Omaar as "A direct targeting of those journalists to shut them up." By what means have corporate-owned media and the U.S. military silenced reports of wartime events? Is there an instance in your local community in which you have experienced or witnessed voices being silenced?
6. Is it ever appropriate to show graphic images of war casualties? If so, when? If not, why not?
7. John Pilger reports that with each war, we have more and more civilian casualties. He says that during the Vietnam War, 70% of all casualties were civilians. In the War in Iraq, 90% of all deaths are civilians. How often have you seen a report on an Iraqi civilian being killed? How has 'the human costs of war' affected you, personally?
8. Under what conditions, if any, would you feel it was appropriate for a journalist to publish or broadcast government secrets?
9. Do you consider Julian Assange a whistleblower or a journalist? Are whistleblowers heroes or knaves?
10. In what ways have public perception of The Iraq War changed since it began in March of 2003? How much influence has the media had on any change in support for or against the war?
11. Compare and contrast public attitude toward The Iraq War with that toward The Persian Gulf War of the early 1990s. What did The Persian Gulf War teach us? What do you believe we will learn from our current Iraq War?
12. Are the media beating the drums of war now? If so, describe what they are saying.

# ready to act!

handout

Share this handout with your  
**THE WAR YOU DON'T SEE** screening audience!

## **1. Ensure fair legal treatment for Julian Assange**

Protect free speech and the Wikileaks project by signing the “Wikileaks: Stop the Crackdown” online petition from Avaaz, global web movement, at [https://secure.avaaz.org/en/wikileaks\\_petition/?fpbr](https://secure.avaaz.org/en/wikileaks_petition/?fpbr)

## **2. Find out who owns your media sources**

Who owns your media? Is it someone from your community delivering your news? The Center for Public Integrity has a terrific search engine that lets you see exactly who owns what newspapers, radio stations and TV outlets in your community, by zipcode. Try it at [www.publicintegrity.org/telecom](http://www.publicintegrity.org/telecom)

## **3. You can Save the News!**

SaveTheNews.org is a campaign from Free Press whose vision is for every community to have access to in-depth investigative reporting, quality local news, and critical watchdog journalism that empower citizens, hold our leaders accountable, and represents the diversity of our nation. Become involved in their petitions and campaigns and follow them on their blog, facebook and twitter at <http://www.savethenews.org/>

## **4. Fight Media Consolidation**

Media conglomerates have abandoned their commitment to quality journalism, particularly at the local level. Across the country, hundreds of TV stations are circumventing consolidation rules at the expense of independent local journalism. Check out SaveTheNews.org’s map to find out if newsrooms are merging in your area at <http://www.savethenews.org/changethechannels>.

## **5. Join FAIR’s Action Alert Network**

Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting’s (FAIR) Action Alert network distributes timely, focused reports via email, critiquing a particular instance of media inaccuracy or bias, and encourages members to communicate directly to journalists to demand more responsible reporting. Find them at <http://www.fair.org/index.php>

## **6. Scrutinize Corporate Spin & Government Propaganda**

The Center for Media and Democracy (CMD) is a non-profit investigative reporting group whose reporting and analysis focus on exposing corporate spin and government propaganda. They publish PRWatch, SourceWatch, and BanksterUSA. They have been reporting on spin and misinformation since 1993, and can be found at <http://www.prwatch.org/>

## **7. Get it Straight: Read, Watch, and Listen to Independent Media**

Project Censor strives to tell the news that didn’t make the news and why. They have put together an extensive list of independent news sources at <http://www.projectcensored.org/news-sources/>