

Rochester native nominated for Academy Award for film on rape within U.S. military **WITH VIDEO**

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Of The Oakland Press

Rochester native Doug Blush has something to brag about — the documentary “The Invisible War,” which he helped produce, is nominated for a 2013 Academy Award.

Blush, who moved to Los Angeles to become a documentary filmmaker, was the associate producer and editor of the film. “The Invisible War” is an investigative documentary about the epidemic of rape within the U.S. military. The film, which is available on Netflix and iTunes, shows that a female soldier in combat zones is more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire.

“The topic of the film was first brought up by director Kirby Dick and producer Amy Ziering, who were amazed that it hadn’t been covered in any deeper way in the media before, despite all the previous sexual assault scandals over the years,” Blush said.

“The film was able to actually change a major law to help protect women and men in our armed services. That gave me and the entire crew a huge sense of pride that documentary films really can make a difference; that our long hours of work really can pay off.”

Blush said he worked closely with the crew to make the film and was really excited to find out it was nominated for an Oscar.



“It’s a nice validation, especially a film that’s about a cause,” he said. “The awards are great, but when you have someone who is actually changed by the film, that’s a huge deal.”

Blush is even more proud of the film “Of Two Minds,” which he directed with his wife, Southfield native Lisa Klein. Last year, “Of Two Minds” was the winner of the United Film Festival in Los Angeles and was an official selection at the Cleveland International Film Festival, the Newport Beach Film Festival and the United Film Festival of New York. The film follows three adults diagnosed with bipolar illness over a period of three years.

Blush and his wife Klein will come back to their home state on Feb. 10 for the Michigan premiere of their documentary. The showing of the movie will take place at 2 p.m. at the Maple Theatre, 4135 West Maple Road in Bloomfield Township.

This is part of a tour of film festivals throughout the United States. In May, the documentary will be released on iTunes.

“We let the characters talk about the issues they were facing. They have very different opinions — one who’s pro-medication, one who absolutely rejects (medication) and one who’s working on alternative therapy and medication together,” Blush said.

Klein said she wanted to make the film to show people with bipolar that they don’t have to be ashamed. She was inspired to make the film after reading an article in the New York Times about Liz Spikol, a columnist with Philadelphia Weekly who was open about her diagnosis, and Spikol agreed to be one of the three people featured in the documentary. “Of Two Minds” was made in memory of Klein’s sister, Tina Siegal of Ann Arbor, who had bipolar disorder and died from an alcohol overdose in 1994.

Klein said, through the making of the film, she learned what her sister was going through.

“After she died, I had so many questions. Talking to all these people in our film helped,” she said.

“People with bipolar are much more likely to be victims of a violent crime than to actually commit a violent crime. I think that’s a huge misconception.”

The people Klein interviewed in the film told her that the stigma is often worse than the illness.

Blush said, “Most people’s exposure to bipolar and mental illness in general is either celebrity headlines or breaking news about ax-wielding psychopaths. That’s such a wrong impression.”

One of the people featured in the film is

Sylvan Lake resident Monni Must. Must’s daughter Miya Jo,

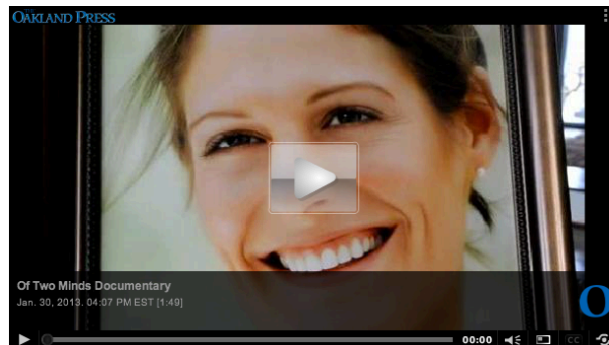


who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder when she was 13, lost her life to suicide in 2007 at 28 years old.

“People with bipolar can’t help it. This is something they are born with. But it is manageable. People (with bipolar) are some of the brightest, most compassionate, kind and creative people,” Must said. “Miya was the glue of my kids. ... She loved yoga, exercising, mountain biking and she loved her dogs Henry and Billy. She was a complete character, and she was herself. She didn’t worry what other people thought about her.”

Must called the documentary a real-life version of the Oscar nominated “Silver Linings Playbook.”

“(The film) puts a human face to bipolar. It can happen to anybody,” she said. Miya’s grandmother Mary Must bought a home through the local nonprofit organization Kadima, which provides group residential living as well as outpatient care for people with mental illnesses. All proceeds raised from the “Of



Two Minds” Michigan premiere will go toward maintenance of the Miya Jo Must Home.

Kadima homes are located in Southfield, Oak Park, Farmington Hills and West

Bloomfield. The nonprofit also hosts support groups and events such as Sunday brunch, bowling and dances for people diagnosed with a mental illness.

Kadima clinical director Nancy Stein said, “Funding is stable, but the need is

growing. We always have increased requests for services. As states, counties and cities struggle with their budgets, one of the first places that gets cut is community mental health. There's always a need for funding to ensure that we have no cuts in our programs."

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FYI

The Michigan premiere of the documentary "Of Two Minds" will take place at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 10 at the Maple Theatre, 4135 West Maple Road in Bloomfield Township. Tickets are \$20 and include bottomless popcorn and soft drinks. Proceeds will go toward the nonprofit organization Kadima, which provides group residential living and outpatient care for people with mental illnesses. Tickets are expected to sell out, so pre-purchasing tickets is recommended. The RSVP call 248-559-8235 ext. 118 or visit kadimacenter.org.