

Shiori Ito's statement English translation

Shiori Ito Press Conference Statement

To the reporters who have gathered here today,

Thank you for being here. Unfortunately, due to health issues, I have been advised by my doctor to refrain from attending today, and I sincerely apologize for this.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain the background of how I came to make this film, *Black Box Diaries*, which I had planned to speak about in person today. Additionally, I apologize to those who were affected by the production process and provide an explanation of how I have handled things since then.

Why I Made *Black Box Diaries*

The documentary *Black Box Diaries*, which I have worked on for nine years, has been nominated for the Academy Awards in the United States. This film is not about my experience of being raped. What I wanted to convey in this film was the story of what happened afterward in society.

After the assault, I faced a police force that was reluctant to accept my victim report. Despite being told repeatedly by investigators, "Such things happen often, just forget about it," I desperately asked to check the security camera footage before it could be deleted. I went to check the security camera footage, to the hotel where the assault occurred, My legs trembling. There was a moment when I saw the security footage, a version of me that I had no memory of, I couldn't believe it was me, it was like a doll being pulled into the hotel.

After seeing the footage and deeming it to have criminal implications, the investigation began moving forward. Still, once it was discovered that the perpetrator was the head of the TBS Washington Bureau, I was told by the police, "Your life will be ruined, it's better to stop the investigation."

I still went ahead, the investigation itself was brutal. I was forced to reenact the rape with a life-sized doll on the floor, and several male investigators took photographs of me.

I had to take a leave of absence from my work.

Although the investigation finally made some progress, it was halted just before the perpetrator was about to be arrested at Narita airport, it was the Chief of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police's Criminal Division himself, who intervened.

With the hope of 110 years rape law to be changed and also, to open my case again, I went to public with my case.

Because my family strongly opposed my decision to go public, I initially held the press conference just with my first name.

However, my family name and identity were soon revealed on the internet, and I received online troll and threats. I became unable to stay in Japan and moved to London.

In London, I met fellow filmmakers, returned to Japan, and continued making this film.

Almost ten years have passed since the day that changed my life, and criminal law has now changed.

The #MeToo movement arose globally, and the way sexual crimes are reported in Japan has also changed.

If the police had accepted my report from the beginning and conducted a fair investigation, if the Chief of the Criminal Division had not intervened to stop the arrest, and if I had not known the struggle of raising my voice as a victim, I would not have made this film.

I have learned that how much society and law support survivors of sexual violence can significantly influence the speed of their recovery.

Sexual violence is not just an issue for the individual victim, but a societal issue.

Over the past ten years, I have lived with my trauma. What I have learned is that trauma and online troll are the worst combination.

No matter how many stones of hateful words were thrown at me, I kept telling myself that if I showed my pain or cried publicly, it would be a bad example and have a negative impact on other survivors.

Yet, I was the one who tried to take my own life away in the end.

Everything is depicted in this film.

When I woke up in the hospital, I immediately began filming the hospital ceiling with my phone. I was so dazed that I didn't even remember filming it. The footage was found a year later by the editor, deep in my phone.

These images were one of the things I honestly didn't want to include in the film. I didn't want my mother or father, who supported me despite their opposition, to see it. As a survivor, I didn't like it included.

Above all, as a journalist, I hesitated many times to make a film based solely on my subjective perspective.

However, when I saw the footage from the hospital, I promised myself, as a director of the film, that I would survive until this movie was completed. I was sure that, no matter how much pain I felt, I truly wanted to live and share my story.

Apologies and Future Actions

I sincerely thank the taxi drivers and doormen who risked so much to testify during the evidence-gathering process. They are my heroes.

Initially, the film included a phone recording of a conversation with my lawyer, Nishihiro, right after I heard the doorman's testimony, where the lawyer advised that the hotel might intervene. I used the shot without confirming it with the lawyer first, and I sincerely apologize for causing harm.

I also apologize to those whose consent was not obtained for the use of the footage. In the latest version, all efforts have been made to ensure that individuals cannot be identified. I will do everything I can to make the necessary changes for future screenings abroad.

I am deeply grateful to the supporters who provided valuable advice. The voices that encouraged me to "release the film after proper consideration" became an important source of strength.

Use of Security Camera Footage

The security footage from the hotel is the only visual proof of the sexual assault I endured. Without this footage, the police would not have acted.

Unfortunately, I did not receive permission from the hotel to use the footage. Therefore, in the film, I altered the exterior and interior of the footage.

However, the movements of the perpetrator, Mr. Yamaguchi, and myself could not be changed. That would be an act of distorting the facts. I understand there has been criticism, and it is justified. Nevertheless, I prioritized the public interest and made the decision to use the footage in the film.

This footage undeniably documents the events of the sexual assault. There are people in society who continue to deny sexual violence, and I wrestled with what to do with the footage for years. But ultimately, to convey the reality of sexual violence that has been locked away in a "black box," this footage was essential.

Lastly

Through this film, I have met many viewers. I have realized that, even in countries where criminal law is more advanced than in Japan, most people suffer from the same issues within their society, communities, and families.

The theme that this film sheds light on is sexual violence and power. This is a theme that no one wants to face.

Finally, what I ask of you is to watch this film and engage in the discussion. This film is, to me, a love letter to Japan.

Thank you very much.

Shiori Ito