

## **A Screening Guide for the Video**

# **AN AGE FOR JUSTICE: CONFRONTING ELDER ABUSE IN AMERICA**

**“Imagine if someone you knew was a victim of elder abuse, and you were in a position to support something that could stop it.”**

– Bob Blancato, National Coordinator, Elder Justice Coalition

### **Produced by**

ELDER JUSTICE NOW  
[www.ElderJusticeNow.org](http://www.ElderJusticeNow.org)

A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT OLDER AMERICANS FROM ABUSE



[www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)



[www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 1. Introduction

- Elder Abuse in America . . . . . 3
- A Synopsis of the Video . . . . . 4
- The Producers, The Crew & Our Hope . . . . . 4

## 2. Organizing a Screening of the Video

- Step One** – Identifying Your Objectives and Target Audiences . . . . . 5
- Step Two** – Get the Word Out, Publicizing Your Screening Event (optional) . . . . . 6
- Step Three** – Screening the Video . . . . . 6
- Step Four** – Holding a Post-Screening Conversation with the Audience . . . . . 7
- Step Five** – Providing Information on How to Take Action . . . . . 7
- How the World Will Be Different Because of Your Involvement . . . . . 8
- Credits & Acknowledgements . . . . . 8
- Post-Screening Organizer Evaluation . . . . . 9
- Post-Screening Audience Evaluation . . . . . 12

## 3. Appendices and Additional Resources

- A. Event Planning Checklist . . . . . 15
- B. Promotional Flyer . . . . . 17
- C. Press Release . . . . . 18
- D. Radio/TV PSA . . . . . 19
- E. Film Introduction for Presenters . . . . . 20
- F. Elder Abuse Fact Sheet . . . . . 21
- G. Human Rights and Aged Persons . . . . . 23
- H. Elder Justice Act – Questions and Answers . . . . . 25
- I. Elder Justice Now Campaign, a one-page Introduction . . . . . 27
- J. Post-Screening Discussion Question Starters . . . . . 28

## Pertinent Websites

- National Council on Aging at: <http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy/elder-justice/elder-justice.html>
- WITNESS at: <http://www.witness.org>
- Administration on Aging at: [http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/Elder\\_Rights/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/index.aspx)
- Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse and Neglect at: <http://www.centeronelderabuse.org>
- Elder Financial Protection Network at: <http://www.bewiseonline.org>
- Elder Justice Coalition at: <http://www.elderjusticecoalition.com>
- National Adult Protective Service Association at: <http://www.apsnetwork.org>
- National Center on Elder Abuse, Administration on Aging at: [http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/ncearoot/Main\\_Site/index.aspx](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/ncearoot/Main_Site/index.aspx)
- Older Women's League – the Voice of Midlife and Older Women at: <http://owlnational.blogspot.com>

***There is elder abuse occurring in probably every zip code in the United States.***

– Dr. Carmel Dyer, Professor, University of Texas Medical School at Houston

## ELDER ABUSE IN AMERICA

Vicki Bastion, 92, became a prisoner in her own home. After her grandson moved in with her, he started allowing drug dealing and other gang activity to take place in her home. Fearing for her safety but questioning how to confront her grandson, Vicki resorted to installing an iron security gate on her bedroom door to protect herself and her few belongings. Unfortunately, Vicki's story is not unique.

This is a problem from which no older American is safe, as elder abuse cuts across racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, geographic, gender, and socio-economic lines. Worse yet, many elders don't even realize it is happening to them. This crisis leads millions of Americans to live in silent fear, battered and beaten, preyed upon, quieted by shame. With the rapid aging of America, the incidence of abuse will undoubtedly grow.

Elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver, trusted individual, or stranger that leads to harm of any elder. While most people probably think of someone physically beating an elder when they think of elder abuse, emotional, psychological, or sexual abuse, financial or material exploitation, and neglect are all part of the problem.

The effect of abuse on the individual is what really brings this issue home. Elders who have been abused have a higher risk of dying prematurely compared to those who have not been mistreated. Financial abuse costs older Americans more than \$2.6 billion each year. The problems are widespread and harmful enough that one expert in this video advocates for America to develop a systemic approach to addressing this issue so that when our children, or our children's children, become senior citizens they don't face the same abuse and neglect that our seniors are facing today.

National commitments to protect women and children from abuse are now joined by landmark legislation doing the same for elders. We must work together to fully invest in and leverage these new protections so we can fulfill our elders deserved and basic human right to live a life free from abuse and financial exploitation. This is where you and the Elder Justice Now campaign come into play.

***Elder abuse is a national problem that is only going to get worse with the aging of the population.***

– Dr. Carmel Dyer, Professor, University of Texas Medical School at Houston

***I don't think that anyone could walk into the homes of some of these abused and neglected elders and not take up this charge.***

– Dr. Carmel Dyer, Professor, University of Texas Medical School at Houston

## **A SYNOPSIS OF THE VIDEO**

***An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*** is a short documentary that brings you into the homes of courageous American elders to hear their poignant and real stories about the abuse, neglect, or exploitation they have experienced. This intimate story reveals a hidden crisis harming older Americans in every community across the country. By uniting voices of abused elders, family members, and experts from across our nation, ***An Age for Justice*** brings the issue of elder abuse out of the shadows and asks us to imagine what we would do if someone we loved was beaten, neglected, or exploited, and we were in a position to stop it.

## **THE PRODUCERS, THE CREW & OUR HOPE**

The **National Council on Aging (NCOA)**, a nonprofit service and advocacy organization and **WITNESS**, an international human rights organization, established the **Elder Justice Now campaign** in early 2009. This short documentary is the collaborative work of 17 elder rights advocates (and now first-time filmmakers) along side **NCOA** and **WITNESS** to increase public awareness of elder abuse in America and to give older adults and advocates an opportunity to effect needed policy changes.

The **Elder Justice Now campaign** recognizes elders, elder champions, or family members might be interested in joining the effort to educate others about the issue of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We are pleased to provide the video, ***An Age for Justice***, to introduce these issues in a comprehensive, respectful, and sensitive manner.

Given your passion for older Americans, and your efforts to advocate for their well-being, we hope you will show and widely share the video with people in your workplace, community, or family to help raise awareness about the issue of elder abuse. In this guide, you will find all the information you need to organize a screening of ***An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America***. We thank you for taking advantage of this opportunity to make a difference for older Americans.

### **For more information about this campaign contact:**

**The National Council on Aging:** NCOA, [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org), is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization working to improve the lives of older Americans. NCOA is a national voice for older adults – especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged – and the community organizations that serve them.

**Contact:** Marci Phillips, [marci.phillips@ncoa.org](mailto:marci.phillips@ncoa.org).

**WITNESS:** WITNESS, [www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org), is an international human rights organization that uses video to open the eyes of the world to human rights violations. WITNESS empowers people to transform personal stories of abuse into powerful tools for justice, promoting public engagement and policy change.

**Contact:** Kelly Matheson, [kelly@witness.org](mailto:kelly@witness.org).

# ORGANIZING A SCREENING OF THE VIDEO

## AN AGE FOR JUSTICE: CONFRONTING ELDER ABUSE IN AMERICA

Showing the video ***An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*** is easy when you follow the steps provided in this Screening Guide. Here we provide a primer on the five steps to organizing a successful screening in your workplace, home or community.

1. Identifying your objective(s) for the screening – why are you showing the video?
2. Publicizing the video screening (optional, depending on your need)
3. Screening the video
4. Holding a post-screening conversation with the audience
5. Providing the audience with information on how to take action

There is additional information regarding each step provided in the Appendices.

### **STEP ONE – IDENTIFYING YOUR OBJECTIVES & TARGET AUDIENCES**

The **Elder Justice Now campaign** highlights five reasons to show the video but you may have others. We encourage you to think about what you'd like to get out of the event. The five we have identified are:

1. To build public **awareness** about the issue of elder abuse and answer general questions.
2. To help prompt a **discussion** about the issue within your community (whether that community is a senior center, counseling center, law enforcement agency, judiciary committee, neighborhood, or the larger community as a whole) and provide information about the **rights** of older Americans.
3. To **inspire** viewers to support a local issue or program related to elders to **make a difference** for this issue.
4. To prompt a **discussion** about how this issue affects the audience members in more personal ways.
5. To **engage** viewers in support of the **larger goals** of the Elder Justice Now campaign and protect older Americans from abuse.

From our perspective, we are pleased you want to screen the video no matter the reason, and we thank you for helping us raise the public profile of this important issue.

To make the most of this opportunity, we encourage you be clear about:

- What type of screening event you want to hold (public/private, larger/smaller, more intimate, etc.)?
- Who your audience will be (older adults, social workers, policymakers, law enforcement, general public, etc.)?
- What message you hope the audience will get from the presentation?
- Do you want them to engage in the issue afterwards?

For instance, if you want to discuss this sensitive topic with a group of elders, we encourage you to enlist the help of a local social worker and/or facilitator (if you are not one). If you want the audience to engage in the **Elder Justice Now campaign** or some local issue, we encourage you to have appropriate materials available to distribute (useful national materials are provided in this guide and much more can be found in the Appendices and at <http://elderjusticenow.org>).

## **STEP TWO – GET THE WORD OUT! PUBLICIZING YOUR SCREENING EVENT**

Whether you are showing ***An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*** in your senior center, to local law enforcement officials, or to a larger public audience, we have provided materials that will help you advertise the event – should you need or want to promote it. In the Appendices, you will find templates for a flyer and related materials for any promotional work you may want to conduct.

- The flyer is designed so that you can easily fill in the details about the time, place, purpose, and sponsor(s) of the screening.
- You can also use the flyer, or write up your own text with the information we provided, as an e-announcement to send to your email contacts and other list serves.
- If you are organizing a public screening of the video, we encourage you to contact your local newspaper, or television and radio stations, to ask how you can best utilize their service to publicize your event. We have included a template for a public service announcement in the Appendices.
- If publicizing an event is new to you, contact another organization in your community that you know has experience with event promotion and ask for their help.

## **STEP THREE – SCREENING THE VIDEO**

This entails four easy but very important steps:

- “Test-drive” the video and video equipment before the actual screening.
  - Provide an introduction to the screening (and post-screening conversation, if you are having one).
  - Provide printed materials that the audience can take home afterwards.
  - Be sure to address the needs of people with hearing and visual limitations.
1. Test-drive the equipment: We will send you a DVD of the video for your screening. Although it will likely have no flaws, we encourage you to watch the video before you screen it – you will know the video is working properly and will be better prepared to introduce it. We also encourage you to have the video projector system set up at least a half hour before the audience arrives so you can test that too.
  2. Introduce the video: In planning your event, designate a facilitator who will introduce the video and lead any relevant discussion. You will find an introduction in the Appendices. Use it as is, or amend it to fit your needs. Also, we encourage you to explain what you hope the audience will get out of the film and the format of the post-screening conversation (if you are having one). Finally, it will enhance our collective efforts to address elder abuse if you introduce **NCOA, WITNESS** and the **Elder Justice Now campaign** – and let the audience know where they can get more information (including the materials you provide).
  3. Provide materials to take home: Whether or not you have a conversation with the audience, we strongly encourage you to provide printed materials the audience can take home. This can be as simple as a sheet providing pertinent internet resources and local expert/support contact information, and as comprehensive as a variety of print-outs we have provided in the Appendices. We recommend that you provide or distribute any materials before the post-screening discussion, as some people may not stay for the full discussion. Materials included in the Appendix are listed in the table of contents – both those mentioned in the guide and others we recommend.
  4. Address needs of the hearing and visually impaired: This will be especially important if your target audience is the elderly. Be sure that you are prepared to accommodate for these impairments. For example, have someone prepared to read the title cards aloud for the visually impaired. Ensure that the subtitles are working ahead of time in preparation for audience members with limited hearing.

## **STEP FOUR – HOLDING A POST-SCREENING CONVERSATION WITH THE AUDIENCE**

The most challenging part of showing this film may be discussing it with the audience afterwards. This is particularly true if you are hosting the screening in a senior center, a retirement facility, or elsewhere where elders and their loved ones will be present.

Once you have seen the video, we think you will agree that the personal stories and hard-to-swallow facts will likely stir up emotions and maybe even memories for elders and their loved ones. Given the widespread nature of elder abuse, it may be that an audience member has been abused, neglected, or exploited. Through watching the video, a person may realize for the first time that s/he is a survivor of abuse. The video and follow-up discussion may even result in someone talking about their past abuse – maybe for the first time.

This is a sensitive issue that requires a sensitive approach to discussing it which is why we encourage you to be prepared by having a social worker (which may be you), a discussion facilitator, and crisis contact information available. Should you need additional support, you can contact:

- For non-emergency – The National Elder Care Locator at 800-677-1116 or (<http://www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare.NET/Public/Home.aspx>) to find Adult Protective Services in your community; or
- For emergency – your local police station or 911

We also encourage you to be very clear about why you are holding a post-screening conversation with the audience. Generally speaking, we think there are four reasons to have a post-screening conversation:

1. To further build public awareness about elder abuse, and answer general questions from the audience. If this is the sole reason for the conversation, we encourage you to say so, and to let the audience know that if someone wants to discuss a personal situation, s/he should do so privately with an individual from the sponsoring organization or agency. In the Appendices, you will find an “Elder Abuse Fact Sheet” accompanied by other materials you can use to help direct your conversation and answer questions. Again, we encourage you to provide hard-copy materials the audience can take home, including links to informative websites.
2. To provide information about the rights of older Americans. The right to not be abused, neglected or exploited is a basic human right – including for elders. A post-video discussion is a great time to re-affirm these rights, and we encourage you to do so. We have provided information about the rights of elders to live a life free of abuse. (<http://www.pdhre.org/rights/aged.html>)
3. To discuss how the audience members can make a difference for this issue – at the local, state and/or national level. It is very likely that audience members will want to know what they can do to help confront elder abuse in America. We encourage you to provide them with the information in the Appendix about both the federal **Elder Abuse Act** and the **Elder Justice Now campaign**.
4. To discuss how this issue affects the audience members and their lives. This is a conversation that is probably only suitable for a senior center or similar facility. From our perspective, this conversation is not meant to elicit “true confessions,” as much as it is to allow people to discuss the topic in a supportive environment, with their peers. This is the conversation that will benefit most from having a social worker, facilitator, and crisis contact information on hand.

## **STEP FIVE – PROVIDING INFORMATION ON HOW TO TAKE ACTION**

We urge you to inform your audience about actions they can take to help the **Elder Justice Now** campaign which include:

1. Visit the “Take Action” page at Elder Justice Now: Help make change happen. Encourage others in your workplace, professional networks and community to do the same. (<http://elderjusticenow.org/takeaction>)
2. Tell others about this video and Screening Guide: Share this video and guide, or their existence, with others in your workplace, professional networks and community. Let us know about other people, professionals, organizations or agencies we should contact regarding the video.



3. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper: Most people read the editorial page of their newspaper so this is a great way to shine a light on what one senior citizen in the video referred to as “a dark mark on our humanity.”

## How you can help the campaign: We need your feedback!

### **PLEASE FILL OUT THE POST-SCREENING EVALUATION**

(found on the next page of this guide or online at: [http://www.witness.org/AnAgeForJustice\\_ScreeningEvaluation](http://www.witness.org/AnAgeForJustice_ScreeningEvaluation)):

This little bit of business will help **Elder Justice Now** make the video as effective a public education and engagement tool as possible and ensure the continued quality and success of our future work. Thank you for your time!

## How the World Will Be Different Because of Your Involvement

Being treated justly and fairly is a basic human right. But when human rights are violated without most people knowing about it, as is the case with elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, then there exists what some have called “a silent crisis.” We at **Elder Justice Now** already know you have added your voice to the growing call to confront elder abuse. We can now also be grateful for your efforts to inspire others to take up that call, simply because you took the time to show them this video.

**Elder Justice Now** produced ***An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*** to help effect change. However, we cannot bring about the type of change we want, on behalf of our elders, without the help of others. That is why we are so excited about your willingness to show the film, which we believe will inspire others to help make the world a safer place for our elders. Thank you so much for your efforts.

## Credits and Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the producers of ***Made in L.A.*** for the inspiration for this kit and guidance in its development. Portions of this guide were adapted from the ***Made in L.A. Event Planning Toolkit***, created by the filmmakers of ***Made in L.A.*** ([www.MadeinLA.com](http://www.MadeinLA.com)) and based on materials developed by **Active Voice** ([www.activevoice.net](http://www.activevoice.net)) with funding from **P.O.V.** ([www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)).

Generous support for this project provided to WITNESS by **The Fledgling Fund** ([www.thefledglingfund.org](http://www.thefledglingfund.org)).



# POST-SCREENING ORGANIZER EVALUATION

## AN AGE FOR JUSTICE: CONFRONTING ELDER ABUSE IN AMERICA

**The importance of your feedback cannot be emphasized enough.** Not only does it allow us to improve our work to protect older Americans but it also allows us to continue the distribution of this documentary. Please take few minutes to complete this survey below and send it back to us via:

**Email at:** [kelly@witness.org](mailto:kelly@witness.org)

**Fax:** 718.783.1593

**Or By mail at:** Attn: Kelly Matheson, WITNESS, 80 Hanson Place, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11217

**You can also fill out the survey online at:** [http://www.witness.org/AnAgeForJustice\\_ScreeningEvaluation](http://www.witness.org/AnAgeForJustice_ScreeningEvaluation)

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Organization:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Date of Screening:</b>

### How many people attended?

- 1-10                       30-40  
 10-20                      40-50  
 20-30                      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Who was your target audience?

- Elders                                       Social Workers  
 Law Enforcement                         Elder's Family Member  
 Judiciary                                      General Public  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

## What was the goal of the screening event?

- To build public awareness about the issue of elder abuse and answer general questions.
- To prompt a discussion about the issue within your community and provide information about the rights of older Americans.
- To inspire viewers to support a local issue or program related to elders to make a difference for this issue.
- To prompt a discussion about how this issue affects the audience members and their lives.
- To engage viewers to support the larger goals of the Elder Justice Now campaign and protect older Americans from abuse.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## With acknowledgement that you are not inside your audiences' heads, on a scale of one to five (five being highest), please provide a sense for how your audience felt about the film.

- |                            |                            |                            |                            |                            |  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | Educational value  |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | Efficacy to empower elders to speak out about the issue of abuse |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | Awareness building value   |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> | Other_____   |

Did you hold a post-screening discussion?  yes  no

Please share any key audience reactions and insights from the audience.

**Please feel free to share any additional information from your screening. Please include any personal thoughts on the value of the film, screening kit, and materials found on the DVD. Your expertise is invaluable.**

**Is there anyone you would like us to email with information about this film and the Elder Justice Now project? If so, please include their name, organization and email address.**

# POST SCREENING AUDIENCE EVALUATION

## AN AGE FOR JUSTICE: CONFRONTING ELDER ABUSE IN AMERICA

**The importance of your feedback cannot be emphasized enough.** Not only does it allow us to improve our work to protect older Americans but it also allows us to continue the distribution of this documentary. Please take few minutes to complete this survey below and then give it back to the screening organizer:

---

[ADD NAME OF ORGANIZER HERE]

**Location:**

**Date:**

**Name (Optional):**

**If you would like to receive information on elder rights from NCOA and/or international human rights from WITNESS, please check NCOA and/or WITNESS below and include your email address.**

National Council on Aging Mail List\*

WITNESS Mail List\* (you will receive one email newsletter per month only)

\* You may leave the list/s at any time by following the instructions that will be sent when we sign you up.

**Email:**

**On a scale of one to five (five being *highest*), please let us know how you felt about the film.**

5  4  3  2  1  Educational value

5  4  3  2  1  Efficacy to empower elders to speak out about the issue of abuse

5  4  3  2  1  Awareness building value

5  4  3  2  1  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Please share your key reaction/s to the film.**

**Please briefly describe what you learned from the film.**

**Do you have suggestions on additional venues at which we should show this film? *If so, please include the name of the person we should contact if you have it and any other relevant contact information (emails, phone numbers, etc.)***

**Please feel free to share any additional information below.**

## APPENDICES

### AN AGE FOR JUSTICE: CONFRONTING ELDER ABUSE IN AMERICA

A. Event Planning Checklist . . . . .	15
B. Promotional Flyer . . . . .	17
C. Press Release . . . . .	18
D. Radio/TV PSA . . . . .	19
E. Film Introduction for Presenters . . . . .	20
F. Elder Abuse Fact Sheet . . . . .	21
G. Human Rights and Aged Persons . . . . .	23
H. Elder Justice Act – Questions and Answers . . . . .	25
I. Elder Justice Now Campaign, a one-page Introduction . . . . .	27
J. Post-Screening Discussion Question Starters . . . . .	28

# EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

## AN AGE FOR JUSTICE: CONFRONTING ELDER ABUSE IN AMERICA

Once you have defined your target audience, objectives, and framing, it is time to plan the event. If you are planning a private event for your center or organization, consult the following steps:

### Preliminary Planning – approximately 6 weeks prior

- Set a date for your screening.
- Determine speakers, panelists, and moderator (if applicable).

### Logistical Planning – approximately 2 weeks prior

- Confirm that you have the right equipment to screen the DVD.
- Secure food for reception (if applicable).
- If applicable, ensure the presence of a local social worker and/or facilitator for the screening and discussion.

### Final Planning – several days prior

- Important:** Test the DVD in advance to make sure everything runs smoothly. Be sure of screen placement, DVD player functionality, etc.
- Make copies of handouts, fact sheets, and other flyers.
- Create an agenda

### At the Event Itself

- Before the discussion, pass out any printed materials.
- Make sure to have a social worker or facilitator present and/or crisis contact information on hand.
- Encourage participants to spread the word and let them know that they can learn more about the film.

### After the Event

- Fill out the post-screening evaluation form and return to WITNESS via mail/email/online survey option.



**If you are holding a screening that is open to the public, here are some extra steps you can take:**

**Preliminary Planning – approximately 6 weeks prior**

- Book the venue.
- Recruit local organizational partners to broaden your reach within the community.

**Logistical Planning – approximately 3–4 weeks prior**

- Create a flyer or use the flyer template to publicize your screening.
- Draft and discuss agenda with any partners.

**Logistical Planning – 2 weeks prior**

- Create an email blast to publicize your event electronically. We recommend sending one announcement two weeks prior and another several days prior.
- Contact community calendars about your event.

**Media Outreach – 10 days prior**

- Send out press releases to media outlets.
- Make calls to local television and radio programs.

**Final Planning – several days prior**

- Send second round of email blasts.
- Follow up with press who expressed an interest in covering the story.

**At the Event Itself**

- As people arrive, ask them to sign up to receive updates from your organization.



*Join us for a screening of*

***AN AGE FOR JUSTICE:  
CONFRONTING ELDER  
ABUSE IN AMERICA***

***An Age for Justice*** is a short documentary that brings you into the homes of courageous American elders, to hear their poignant and real stories about the abuse, neglect, and exploitation they have experienced. This intimate story reveals a hidden crisis harming older Americans in every community across the country. By uniting the voices of abused elders, family members and experts from across the nation, *An Age for Justice* brings the issue of elder abuse out of the shadows and asks us to imagine what we would do if someone we knew was a victim of elder abuse, and we were in a position to stop it.

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

**Sponsored by:**

The **National Council on Aging (NCOA)** and **WITNESS** established the Elder Justice Now Campaign in early 2009 with the support of the **Elder Justice Coalition**.

[LETTERHEAD, IF AVAILABLE]

---

## MEDIA ADVISORY

---

For Immediate Release: [DATE]

Media Contact: [NAME]

[OFFICE AND CELL NUMBERS]

[E-MAIL ADDRESS]

**DOCUMENTARY FILM, *An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America***

**TO SCREEN AT [YOUR SCREENING LOCATION]**

**WITH SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY [SPECIAL GUESTS]**

**A powerful documentary brings you into the homes of courageous American elders, to hear their poignant and real stories about the abuse, neglect or abandonment they have experienced.**

**WHAT:** Film screening and discussion of *An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*

**WHERE:** [EVENT NAME, LOCATION]

[ADDRESS]

**WHEN:** [DATE & TIME]

**SPEAKERS:** [NAMES & TITLES OF SPECIAL GUESTS, IF APPLICABLE]

**DETAILS:** Free and open to the public; for more information, call or e-mail [NAME] at

[(XXX) XXX-XXXX] or [E-MAIL ADDRESS] or visit [WEBSITE ADDRESS].

[YOUR CITY HERE] – The moving new documentary *An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America* will screen at [VENUE HERE] on [DATE AND TIME]. The film will be screened in English with English subtitles for the hearing impaired. This event is the film’s CITY premiere (IF APPLICABLE).

Acknowledged by one interviewee as a “dark mark on our humanity,” elder abuse leads millions of Americans to live in silent fear. This documentary unites the voices of abused elders, family members and experts from across our nation to help bring the issue of elder abuse out of the shadows. Shocking, compelling, and inspiring, this film empowers elders to speak out against abuse and calls for change to protect the generation who came before us. In 2009, as part of the *Elder Justice Now* campaign, the National Council on Aging (NCOA), WITNESS, an international human rights organization, and a team of 17 elder rights advocates from across the country (that are now also first-time filmmakers) produced this video to educate and encourage others to take action against elder abuse.

This screening is sponsored by SPONSORING ORGANIZATION(S) NAME(S), which are working to achieve ORGANIZATION(S) MISSION(S). The ORGANIZATION is screening the film as an example of INSERT SENTENCE CONNECTING EVENT TO ORGANIZATION’S GOALS AND/OR CURRENT CAMPAIGNS. IF APPLICABLE, INSERT SENTENCE DESCRIBING SPECIAL GUESTS’ ROLE AT THE EVENT.

For more information about *An Age for Justice* and the Elder Justice Now campaign, visit: [elderjusticenow.org](http://elderjusticenow.org). For more information about SPONSORING ORGANIZATION visit WEBSITE.

---

## RADIO/TV PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

---

### 00:15 (Proposed 15-second spot)

Every year elder abuse leads millions to live in fear. On [INSERT DATE], join [INSERT ORGANIZATION] at [INSERT LOCATION] for a screening of *An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*. To learn more about how you can stop abuse of older Americans go to [WEBSITE/NAME].

### 00:30 (Proposed 30-second spot)

Did you know there is a silent crisis that affects every zip code in America? Elder abuse leads millions to live in fear. On [INSERT DATE], join [INSERT ORGANIZATION] at [INSERT LOCATION] for a screening of *An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America* and learn more about how you can protect America's elders. For more information contact [NAME] at [NUMBER/EMAIL/WEBSITE].

### 00:60 (Proposed 60-second spot)

Did you know there is a silent crisis that affects every zip code in America? Elder abuse leads millions to live in silent fear. The abuse is not only physical, but can be emotional, sexual and financial, and includes exploitation and neglect.

Being treated justly and fairly is a basic human right. Help put an end to elder abuse. On [INSERT DATE], join [INSERT ORGANIZATION] at [INSERT LOCATION] for a screening of *An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*, a documentary that unites voices of abused elders, family members, and experts from across the nation. To learn more about how you can protect older Americans contact [NAME] at [NUMBER/EMAIL/WEBSITE].

# INTRODUCING THE FILM AND PROJECT TO THE AUDIENCE

## ELDER ABUSE IN AMERICA

This intimate 16-minute documentary reveals a hidden crisis harming older Americans in every community across the country. The film brings you into the homes of four courageous American elders, to hear their poignant and real stories about the abuse, neglect or abandonment they have experienced. Elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver, trusted individual or stranger that harm an elder. This includes physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse, financial and material exploitation, and neglect and self-neglect.

This is a problem from which no older American is safe, as elder abuse cuts across racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, geographic and gender lines. Worse yet, many elders don't even realize it is happening to them. With the rapid aging of America, the incidence of abuse will undoubtedly grow.

To begin to bring awareness to this epidemic the National Council on Aging (NCOA), a nonprofit service and advocacy organization and WITNESS, an international human rights organization, teamed up with elder rights advocates from across the country to produce ***An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America***.

The film empowers elders to speak out against abuse and unites the voices of abused elders, family members and experts from across our nation to help bring the issue of elder abuse out of the shadows. Ultimately, this story asks us to imagine what we would do if someone we loved was beaten, neglected or financially exploited and we were in a position to do something about it.

### Explain Also:

- **What you hope the audience will get out of the film**
- **Post-screening support for any audience members who have an emotional reaction and will need to talk with someone**
- **Format of the post-screening discussion (if applicable)**
- **Introduce campaign:**

The **National Council on Aging (NCOA)** and **WITNESS** established the **Elder Justice Now campaign** in early 2009 with the support of the **Elder Justice Coalition**. As part of the campaign, **NCOA, WITNESS** and a team of elder rights advocates from across the country (that are now also first-time filmmakers) produced this video.

**The film, *An Age for Justice*, seeks to increase public awareness of elder abuse in America and to empower elders to speak out about this hidden crisis so we – as a country – can further protect our seniors from abuse.**

# ELDER ABUSE FACT SHEET



www.ncoa.org



www.witness.org

## What is it?

Elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or “trusted” individual that lead to, or may lead to, harm of a vulnerable elder.

## Key Facts:

- **How Many Elders Are Abused?** According to the Department of Justice, a minimum of 1 in 9 or 11% percent of Americans over age 60 have experienced some form of elder abuse in the past year.
- **Many Cases Go Unreported.** For every one case of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, or self-neglect reported to authorities, at least five more go unreported.
- **Who Commits Elder Abuse?** In almost 90% of the elder abuse and neglect incidents with a known perpetrator, the perpetrator is a family member, and two-thirds of the perpetrators are adult children or spouses.
- **Financial Abuse is Common.** Elder financial abuse is regarded as the third most commonly substantiated type of elder abuse, following neglect and emotional/psychological abuse. While underreported, the annual financial loss by victims of elder financial abuse is estimated to be at least \$2.6 billion dollars.
- **Reports Increasing.** As the number of elders increases, so does the problem. Adult Protective Services (APS) found that elder abuse reports have increased by 16% comparing data from 2000 with that of 2004.
- **Death Rates Higher.** For those elders who have been mistreated, the risk of death is 300 times greater than those who have not been.

## Who is at risk?

- **Women and Very Elderly Most at Risk.** Elder abuse affects seniors across all socio-economic groups, cultures, and races. However, women and “older” elders are more likely to be victimized. In 2003, two out of every three (65.7%) elder abuse victims were women and in 20 of the states, more than two in five victims (42.8%) were age 80 or older.

## Types of Abuse:

Physical

Financial or material exploitation

Neglect

Sexual

Abandonment

Emotional/psychological

## Federal Protections for Older Americans:

Older Americans have a basic right to live out their lives with dignity and respect, free from the fear of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Our country made a national commitment to protect children and women from abuse by enacting the Child Abuse Prevention Act in 1974 and the Violence Against Women Act in 1994. On March 23rd, 2010, decades after the first Congressional hearing on elder abuse, older Americans won a huge victory when the Elder Justice Act (EJA) was finally signed into law, the most comprehensive federal legislation to combat elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Once funded, the enactment of this landmark legislation will foster:

- **A National Commitment.** For the first time ever, efforts to prevent elder abuse will be coordinated at the federal level.
- **Understanding of Elder Abuse.** The EJA authorizes funding to jump-start research and raise public awareness of this crisis in our country.
- **Detection and Prevention of Abuse.** Pilot projects will be evaluated to identify successful approaches to elder abuse detection, prevention, and victim services and then the sharing of best practices will be coordinated.
- **Protections for Older Americans.** The EJA provides for desperately needed resources for state and community efforts and those who work on the front lines to prevent and prosecute elder abuse.
- **Prosecution of Elder Abuse Perpetrators.** The Act supports the investigation of abuse and development of a forensic program (similar to programs that already exist for child abuse).

Enactment of the EJA is an important step forward for seniors. However, we, as individuals, communities, and a country, have to work together to fully invest in and leverage these new protections so older Americans never have to confront abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation.

**Sources: Administration on Aging, National Center on Elder Abuse; MetLife Mature Market Institute, *Broken Trust, Elders, Families and Finances*, March 2009. OWL, *Elder Abuse: A Woman's Issue*, March 2009.**

revised 03/30/10



# HUMAN RIGHTS AND AGED PERSONS

## **WHAT ARE THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF AGED PERSONS?**

Human rights are universal, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights belonging to all human beings, including older people. The Human Rights of the Aged can be derived from:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 2, 22, & 25
- International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Articles 2, 7, 9, 11, & 12
- International Covenant of Civil and Political and Rights, Articles 2, 7, 10, & 17
- Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Articles 11, 12, & 14
- And other widely adhered to international human rights treaties and declarations.

However, despite the rising population and the fundamental rights at stake, no binding legal international document exists on old age. Furthermore, key U.N. documents, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the Millennium Development Goals, generally omit express references to the aged.

## **THE HUMAN RIGHTS AT ISSUE**

The Human Rights of the Aged include the following rights to:

- An adequate standard of living, including adequate food, shelter, and clothing.
- Adequate social security, assistance, and protection.
- Freedom from discrimination based on age or any other status, in all aspects of life including employment and access to housing, health care, and social services.
- The highest possible standard of health.
- Be treated with dignity.
- Full and active participation in all aspects of political, economic, social, and cultural life of society.
- Full and effective participation in decision-making concerning their well-being.

## **GOVERNMENTS' COMMITMENTS TO ENSURING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF AGED PERSONS**

What commitments have governments made to ensure the realization of the Human Rights of Aged Persons?

- Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing
- UN General Assembly Proclamation on Ageing, paragraph 2
- Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
- Cairo Programme of Action, paragraphs 6.17, 6.19, & 6.20
- Copenhagen Declaration, paragraph 26 & Commitment 2
- Copenhagen Programme of Action, paragraphs 24, 25, & 40

- Beijing Platform for Action, paragraphs 101, 106, & 165
- Habitat Agenda, paragraphs 17 & 40

### **For More Information:**

1. People's Movement for Human Rights Education – [www.pdhre.org](http://www.pdhre.org)
2. HelpAge International – [www.helpage.org](http://www.helpage.org)
3. Global Action on Aging – [www.globalaging.org](http://www.globalaging.org)

Source: People's Decade of Human Rights Education PDHRE International

# ELDER JUSTICE ACT SUMMARY

## COURTESY OF THE ELDER JUSTICE COALITION

Authorizes \$757 million over 4 years for the Elder Justice Act.

Establishes an Elder Justice Coordinating Council to make recommendations to the Secretary of HHS on the coordination of activities of Federal, State, local and private agencies and entities relating to elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. Recommendations contained in report due in 2 years.

Establishes a 27 member Advisory Board on Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation. They are to submit a report within 18 months to create a short and long-term multidisciplinary strategic plan for the developing field of elder justice.

Adult Protective Services (APS) funding. Provides \$400 million in first-time dedicated funding for adult protective services. Provides \$100 million for state demonstration grants to test a variety of methods to detect and prevent elder abuse.

Provides \$26 million for establishment and support of Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Forensic Centers to develop forensic expertise regarding and provide services relating to, elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Provides \$32.5 million in grants to support the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and an additional \$40 million in training programs for national organizations and State long-term care ombudsman programs.

Authorizes \$67.5 million in grants to enhance long-term care staffing through training and recruitment and incentives for individuals seeking or maintaining employment in long-term care, either in a facility or a community based long-term care entity.

Authorizes \$48 million for a National Training Institute for Surveyors.

Requires the immediate reporting to law enforcement of crimes in a long-term care facility and establishes civil monetary penalties for failure to report.

Provides for penalties for long-term care facilities that retaliate against an employee for filing a complaint against or reporting a long-term care facility that violates reporting requirements.

Authorizes a \$500,000 study on establishing a national nurse aide registry.

Authorizes \$15 million for the Department of Health and Human Services to improve data collection and dissemination, develop and disseminate information related to best practices related to adult protective services and to conduct research related to APS.

Establishes a nationwide program for national and state background checks on direct patient access employees of long-term care facilities, and provides \$160 million in funding.

### **Related Provisions in the Finance Committee Bill**

Provisions in S.795 related to additional reporting of data on CMS's Nursing Home Compare (e.g. crimes in facilities) were moved to the section of the bill dealing with nursing home transparency requirements (S.647).

Provisions in S.631 to create a national program of criminal background checks for nursing home employees (a part of the original Elder Justice Act) were included in the Finance Committee bill.

### **For More Information Contact:**

#### **THE ELDER JUSTICE COALITION**

#### **A National Advocacy Voice Supporting Elder Justice in America**

1612 K Street, NW, Suite 400 Washington, DC 20006 Phone: 202.682.4140 Fax: 202.223.2099

## ELDER JUSTICE NOW

A VIDEO ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE  
PASSAGE OF THE ELDER JUSTICE ACT



[www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)



[www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org)

To heighten the visibility of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, and to assist the over 600-member Elder Justice Coalition with its efforts to persuade Congress to pass the Elder Justice Act this year, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) partnered with WITNESS, an international human rights organization that uses video to affect change.

NCOA and WITNESS produced *An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*, a documentary featuring stories told by four elder abuse victims or survivors. The documentary and 100 other stories by victims, caregivers, advocates and law enforcement officials were shared with Congress through the use of online, social and traditional media and through other grassroots advocacy tactics.

Over the course of the last decade, the Elder Justice Coalition, including NCOA, has been working to secure passage of the Elder Justice Act. This goal was realized in March 2010, when the legislation was signed into law as part of health reform. The Act provides increased federal resources and leadership to support state and community efforts to prevent, detect, treat, understand, intervene in and, where appropriate, prosecute elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. It also authorizes funding for broad-based education and awareness efforts.

**To learn more about Elder Justice Now, the funding and implementation of the Elder Justice Act, and to get involved in protecting elder rights, please visit the following web sites:**

- **Elder Justice Now** ([www.elderjusticenow.org](http://www.elderjusticenow.org))
- **National Council on Aging** ([www.ncoa.org/publi-policy/elder-justice/elder-justice.html](http://www.ncoa.org/publi-policy/elder-justice/elder-justice.html))
- **Elder Justice Coalition** ([www.elderjusticecoalition.com](http://www.elderjusticecoalition.com))

For more information about video advocacy, please contact:

**Marci Phillips**

Director of Public Policy & Advocacy

[marci.phillips@ncoa.org](mailto:marci.phillips@ncoa.org)

202.479.6658

**Kelly Matheson**

North America Program

[kelly@witness.org](mailto:kelly@witness.org)

718.783.2000 ext. 302

## POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION STARTER QUESTIONS

### **OBJECTIVE: TO BUILD PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE ISSUE OF ELDER ABUSE AND ANSWER GENERAL QUESTIONS**

1. What surprised you in the film *An Age for Justice: Confronting Elder Abuse in America*?
2. Whose story affected you the most? Why?
3. Elders who have been mistreated are more likely to die prematurely than those who have not experienced abuse. Abuse can have devastating effects on an elderly individual as we see through the story of Bob Lee. How else do you think elder abuse affects elders, family members, and society as a whole?

### **OBJECTIVE: TO PROMPT A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ISSUE AND PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT RIGHTS OF OLDER AMERICANS**

1. Many people think only of physical abuse when they think of elder abuse. Were you surprised to learn about the instances of other violations such as emotional abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation? Why or why not?
2. The film takes you into the lives of elders whose rights have been violated. What basic human rights (civil, political, social, cultural, and economic) do you think elders are entitled to?
3. How do you think we, as a country, can work to make sure that elders and their families are informed of their rights?

### **OBJECTIVE: TO DISCUSS HOW THE AUDIENCE MEMBERS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THIS ISSUE**

1. Think of the support provided to the victims by their families and/or social workers. How could we help more people care about and take action on this issue?
2. For many elders, they may not be aware that they are being abused or they may be too ashamed to speak up about their abuse. How can we work to bring this issue into the spotlight?
3. What changes could be made in America to better protect our elders? How can we begin to implement these changes on a local level?

### **OBJECTIVE: TO DISCUSS HOW THIS ISSUE AFFECTS THE AUDIENCE MEMBERS AND THEIR LIVES**

1. How, if at all, did this film change the way you view elders, aging in America, and your personal aging process?
2. This film highlights an issue that seems like it could never happen to 'you.' However, as the film shows, it happens to all types of people regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, socio-economic status, or geographic region. Did you find any similarities between the lives of these elders and their families and your own?
3. How do you feel about the idea that this is a 'growing crisis' – that as the number of elderly increase, so will the instances of abuse?