



Veranda, 35 years old. Survived two attacks; raped by both Interhamwe soldiers and thieves dressed in Congolese Army uniforms.



Muhindo Feza, 52 years old. Forced into the forest by the Interahamwe and held captive for two weeks as a 'bush wife' (sex slave).



Marcelline M'Seba, 43 years old, mother of nine. Forced to become a 'bush wife,' was repeatedly raped by Rwandan soldiers.



Alexandrine M'Kajibwami, mother of nine. Raped by Rwandan soldiers, her husband was murdered trying to protect her.



Niota, Bunyakiri, 45 years old. Raped and beaten by two Rwandan soldiers three years ago, suffers from incontinence.



Imakile Furha, 18 years old. Raped at 15 by two Rwandan soldiers, has a daughter, Lumiere, from those rapes.

Show uncovers Congo's pernicious misogyny

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

While many people may be aware of the decade-long civil war raging in the Democratic Republic of Congo, most have no idea that one of the by-products of that brutal conflict has been the wholesale kidnapping, rape, torture and mutilation of hundreds of thousands of the nation's women.

Sadly, superstitious soldiers on both sides see females as a sort of spoil of war, and have come to rationalize mistreating them out of a sick belief that they must commit rape to defeat the enemy.

The upshot is that the land is now littered with innumerable mentally and physically traumatized women, walking wounded whose blank faces have the same 1,000-yard stare found on army veterans who've spent too many hours exposed to battle. Bewildered and still vulnerable, they roam the countryside in search of an elusive oasis of safety in a place which only



"The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo" uncovers repressive practices against women.

offers more violence.

Wading into the midst of this scary scenario, we find Lisa Jackson, an intrepid American filmmaker willing to risk her own life to shed light on the ongoing tragedy. Jackson can empathize because she herself had been gang-raped in Washington, D.C., at the age of 25. So, she understands the lingering effects of what they've experienced.

In this powerful documentary, "The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo," she not only interviews many victims, but ventures into the jungle to confront their perpetrators as well, to see whether any feel remorse about perpetrating crimes against humanity. They don't. One sicko thinks the practice is okay because, "God says man is superior to woman." Another arrogantly

brags that he never uses condoms when taking a woman against her will and that he thinks an herbal antidote can cure him of being

HIV positive.

We see that as a result of these sexual assaults, Congolese females are suffering from everything from AIDS to chronic pain to incontinence; disfigurement to sleeplessness and fear. A doctor attending to the endless stream of patients says, "every day there is a new horror."

Typical is the despondent soul who sorrowfully recounts for the camera how her husband's head was lopped off right in front of her, and the rest of his body chopped in half. Then, the murderer knocked out most of her teeth with the butt of his rifle before raping her right on the spot. Jackson shows how the problem appears to be intractable, be-

cause even when apprehended, attackers rarely spend any time behind bars, since rape has become a culturally-accepted, even encouraged lifestyle.

The exposé closes by them assessing the Congo's prospects pessimistically, given that one of the best ways of judging a society is by how highly, or in this case lowly, it regards its women. For, when its women are being systematically raped without recourse, the whole country is being affected.

A chilling reminder of why John Lennon once wrote a song entitled, "Woman is the [n-word] of the World."

Excellent (4 stars). Rated TV-MA for profanity, violence, nudity and adult content.

Remy Ma guilty of gunplay

Special to Sentinel-Voice

LOS ANGELES — In the end, Remy Ma couldn't beat the rap.

The Grammy-nominated rapper, whose real name is Remy Smith, was convicted Thursday of shooting a woman outside a Manhattan nightclub in July 2007.

She faces up to 25 years in prison when she is sentenced April 23.

Ma wiped tears from her eyes as the verdict was read and wept openly as she was led from the courtroom in handcuffs. The judge denied a request from her attorney, Ivan Fisher, to have her released on bail until her sentencing.

Her defense team had conceded that Ma, 26, fired a shot at a friend whom she suspected of stealing \$3,000 from her but claimed that it was an accident.

In their version of events, Ma and her victim, Makeda Barnes Joseph, were struggling over Joseph's purse after Ma demanded to look inside for the missing money and Joseph refused. Amid the tussle, Ma's gun supposedly went off accidentally, launching a bullet into Joseph's gut.

However, Assistant District Attorney Michael McIntosh said that Ma "took every step you had to take to shoot somebody," including loading her illegal .45-caliber auto-



REMY MA

matic with hollow point bullets and using both hands to cock the weapon.

Joseph survived the shooting but required three operations on her abdomen and was hospitalized for several weeks, according to her testimony.

Ma was found guilty of assault, weapon possession and attempted coercion. She was acquitted of additional charges of witness tampering and gang assault, stemming from the beating of the boyfriend of a witness who ultimately testified against her.

Her attorney said he plans to appeal the ruling.

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