

# TTIP and Feminist Film

Posted by leosheek August 23, 2015



Saturday: the mistake was perhaps going to two screenings in one day, or handing out leaflets in the sun for an hour, or not having lunch. The result was that when I got home at seven, I felt really awful, with a painful head and sad thoughts.

The day began in quite a jolly way, my sister came round to pick up my mum who was staying over, we had tea and a chat. A friend had stayed over after a mini-party that had accidentally happened the night before, and my mum had explained to me that my house is a disaster, and how can I live like this, and I can't be like an adolescent forever.

## TTIP

But, the sun was out and I felt jolly, so I put my things together and set out to meet the Southwark Greens who were helping 38 Degrees on the [TTIP Day of Action](https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/index.php/pages/553/) (<https://secure.38degrees.org.uk/index.php/pages/553/>). The mission was tricky: to chat to people about international trade deals. At first I'd hand the flyer to people with the phrase "do you know about TTIP" but then I wasn't sure "no" meant "no I don't want to know more" or "no I don't know about TTIP."

Initially, I was flyering outside of Morrisons with a Green Party friend, but the security guy asked us to leave, so we went to the bus stop. I'd say to passers-by, "do you want to know more about international trade deals" or some variation of that, and then hand them a flyer. If they wanted to stop and chat, I'd explain what I knew about TTIP and say, they could find out more and sign the petition online. I wasn't too keen to ask them to sign the petition there and then because of my lack of confidence in my knowledge in the issue.

Reading about [NHS privatisation](https://radioactivisms.wordpress.com/2015/08/18/the-nhs-pfi-and-privatisation/) (<https://radioactivisms.wordpress.com/2015/08/18/the-nhs-pfi-and-privatisation/>), and watching this [John Oliver segment](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UsHHOCH4q8) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UsHHOCH4q8>) on the suing of the Australian government were enough to convince me that TTIP is a bad idea. But I was fully aware that I was no expert and this worried me while I was flyering. I started chatting to one guy said who listens regularly to BBC documentaries and knows all about TTIP. Then he started telling me about how if you're a business and you've worked in the US, you can then work anywhere because the legal restrictions are so tight. Now that I think about it, that's definitely not true – pharmaceutical products being one example. But I felt stumped and unqualified to be a campaigner.

You, however, should sign the petition, [here](http://speakout.38degrees.org.uk/campaigns/218) (<http://speakout.38degrees.org.uk/campaigns/218>).

What also worried me about my campaigning was that I might have too much on my little tiny plate – I can't care enough about both fossil fuels, and the NHS, and TTIP, and everything else, just because there are not enough hours in the day and I don't want to be like the Britta character in *Community*. They're all linked, and all important, but I need to pipe down and focus. Yes, mum, see, I'm not an adolescent.

## The London Feminist Film Festival

### *It Happened Here*

trigger warning: sexual assault, sexual violence, rape.

Initially, I only planned to go along to the Shorts screening. But my friend Emma who does the Resonance radio show with me said we should go along to a documentary about rape on US campuses. I said yes, and met her at the Rio Cinema in Dalston.

The film is called *It Happened Here*. Here's the [trailer](https://vimeo.com/117528078) (<https://vimeo.com/117528078>). It is a 76 minute documentary – I mention the amount of minutes because those were more or less the amount of minutes I was crying for. It was so upsetting. I mentioned this to Emma later that day and she said, yeah, but they group together and become friends and sue. But somehow that fact didn't make me feel any less depressed.

Later that day, I wished I could have unseen what I'd seen – especially the parts where women were on camera speaking in a way that seemed like they were pleased to be victim blaming – the sort of, if you don't want to get raped, don't drink alcohol, don't have male friends, if sexual assault really was happening that much, there wouldn't be co-education. That footage was the most harrowing for me.

But the film followed activists, and their journey to try and take the universities to account for ignoring or not dealing with the rape allegations. And Emma was right, ultimately, as she usually is – there were inspiring parts to the films. The activists were taking concrete legal steps to change the system, to get their universities to change. They settled a court case against one university for \$1.3million.

The discussion after the screening highlighted the differences between the US and the UK. A psychologist on the panel, Dr Nina Burrowes, explained about how in the US the deans and academics are the ones dealing with sexual assault on campuses in their spare time, whereas in the UK, trained psychologists in the police have this job as their main job. She said she was horrified at the idea of non-professionals speaking to survivors.

After the screening, I walked to the supermarket to get some food, and saw an old friend sitting at a café. Within about ten minutes of speaking to him, he made a joke about someone being “raped by wolves” as punishment, and I was at that moment, not at all equipped to deal with that sort of joke.

### *Feminist Shorts*

I was particularly eager to see [these Feminist Shorts \(http://londonfeministfilmfestival.com/lfff-2015-programme/sat-22-aug-4-00pm-feminist-shorts/\)](http://londonfeministfilmfestival.com/lfff-2015-programme/sat-22-aug-4-00pm-feminist-shorts/) as a friend had linked me up with one of the directors who said she was up for coming on Very Loose Women, our ResonanceFM radio show.

Her name is Jasmine Pitt and she made a 9 minute film called “Kids on Gender,” filmed over the course of a workshop with children discussing “what is gender.” It was cute and funny but also brought up serious debates like nature/nurture in terms of gender. She said in the Q&A that the first two days of the 5 day workshop were not useful in terms of footage. It was only by the third day that kids felt comfortable enough to start speaking. She said the kids had an ability to contradict and analyse what they were saying to arrive at a conclusion.

The other films included

- a short about a female jogger, and the harassment she gets
- moving testimony of the survivor of rape
- an animated documentary about suffragette Margaret Mackworth
- a beautiful short about a young girl in Venice who wants to be a gondolier, which is typically male profession.

I went home with a bad headache, and I was still confused, upset and angry having seen the first film, and also firm in my conviction that I haven’t done enough with my life after having met the film makers of the second film. There’s still time though, right? I just need to stop spending my Saturdays handing leaflets at Peckham Rye station.

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