

News Release
 For Immediate Release

NOW IN PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY, FEATURE DOCUMENTARY *A BETTER MAN* WILL RADICALLY REFRAME HOW WE DEAL WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Co-director Attiya Khan explores her past with the man who once abused her in a powerful new film from Intervention Productions and the NFB



Left to right: Lawrence Jackman (co-writer, co-director), Christine Kleckner (producer, Intervention Productions), Attiya Khan (writer, co-director) Justine Pimlott (producer, NFB)

February 26, 2016 – Montreal, Quebec – National Film Board of Canada

Principal photography on the Intervention Productions/[National Film Board of Canada](#) (NFB) co-production [A Better Man](#) is underway in Toronto. Making her directorial debut, Attiya Khan is working with veteran filmmaker Lawrence Jackman on a highly anticipated feature documentary that will radically reframe the conversation about domestic violence by including the abuser in the discussion. The film will be released in early 2017, distributed by the NFB.

A courageous demonstration of restorative justice for a survivor and the man who abused her, ***A Better Man*** is an intensely personal project for Attiya. Twenty years ago, Attiya was a teenager living in an abusive relationship. Now, as a counselor and advocate for survivors of domestic violence, she wants to know if her ex-boyfriend's accountability can lead them through a process of recovery and healing.

The anger she once felt toward her ex-boyfriend gave way to a desire to understand the reasons behind his behaviour. She needed to better grasp who he was then, who he is today, and whether he could be accountable for his actions. For his part, her ex-boyfriend was still struggling with what he'd done and with the person he used to be. So when Attiya asked him to sit down and talk on camera about their shared history of domestic violence, he agreed. Having once hurt her, he wanted to help her heal—and in the process come to terms with his own past.

A Better Man will also feature discussions with friends, colleagues and loved ones, who will share memories of Attiya's past relationship with her ex-boyfriend and speak to what their lives have become since that time—while others bring professional perspective to the extraordinary process that unfolds in the film.

A Better Man is produced by Christine Kleckner for Intervention Productions and Justine Pimlott for the NFB's Ontario Studio. The director of cinematography is Iris Ng. The executive producers for Intervention Productions are Sarah Polley, Kathy Avrich-Johnson and Janice Dawe. The NFB executive producer for **A Better Man** is Anita Lee.

A Better Man first got off the ground in 2014, via an [Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign](#) that exceeded its target by nearly 50 percent through financial support from over 1,000 donors from 30 countries, international media coverage, and expressions of support from leading women's organizations, artists like Feist and Margaret Atwood, labour unions, and some of the leading experts on men's use of violence.

Quick Facts

Attiya Khan (writer, co-director) is a Toronto-based feminist, intimate partner violence survivor, and long-time advocate and counselor for abused women and children. Attiya has worked in women's shelters in Canada and the United States, including running the Child and Youth Services Program at Transition House in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Most recently she worked at YWCA Toronto, where she served in a variety of frontline, program management and advocacy roles, including supporting the communications and advocacy team, running a training program on crisis intervention, and administering the December 6th Fund, which offers interest-free loans for women fleeing domestic violence. As a writer, activist and speaker, she has become a presenter and panelist for numerous events and conferences related to domestic violence.

Lawrence Jackman (co-writer, co-director) is a Toronto-based filmmaker. Over the past 15 years he has worked on many award-winning films, focusing primarily on independent documentaries and dramas. He often works as an editorial consultant and has a long working relationship with both the NFB and producer Christine Kleckner. Both as an editor and in his own filmmaking, he is interested in creative storytelling and pushing genre boundaries. In 2011, he directed the award-winning *How Does It Feel*, a documentary musical about the importance of creative fulfillment told through the musical pursuits of a singer with cerebral palsy.

Christine Kleckner (producer) is a producer whose short film *Barefoot* (2012) premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, received honourable mention at the Berlinale, and was selected for the Not Short on Talent Showcase at the Cannes Film Festival. Prior to that, she produced *Wapawekka* (2010), which screened at TIFF, Sundance and the Berlinale. During her time with the NFB, she collaborated on groundbreaking projects including [Stories We Tell](#) and the multi-platform [Filmmaker-in-Residence](#). Christine also worked on CTV's acclaimed *Corner Gas*. She is an alumnus of the National Screen Institute of Canada's Drama Prize Program.

Justine Pimlott (NFB producer) is a multi-award-winning producer who began her film career interning with the NFB's legendary women's studio, Studio D. She was a co-founder of Red Queen Productions before joining the NFB's Ontario Studio as a producer. Justine's productions include *Derby Crazy Love*, which had a European premiere at Sheffield Doc/Fest 2014; the NFB co-production [The Mystery of Mazo de la Roche](#) (recipient of the Yorkton Film Festival's Golden Sheaf Award for Best Social Issue Documentary); *Dish: Women, Waitressing & the Art of Service*; *Cat City*; the Gemini-nominated *Girl Inside*; *Fag Hags: Women Who Love Gay Men*; *Punch Like a Girl*; and *Laugh in the Dark*, winner of Best Social Issue Doc at Hot Docs.

Sarah Polley (executive producer) is a writer-director whose dramatic features include *Away from Her* (nominated in 2007 for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay and winner of the 2008 Genie Award for Best Motion Picture and Achievement in Direction) and *Take This Waltz*, starring Seth Rogen, Michelle Williams and Sarah Silverman. Her most recent film, the NFB documentary **Stories We Tell**, was awarded Best Documentary by the Toronto Film Critics Association, the New York Film Critics Circle, the National Board of Review, and the Los Angeles Film Critics Association.

Janice Dawe (executive producer) has produced over 150 hours of award-winning documentary and factual programming and 50 hours of drama. Her documentary executive producer credits include *Sugar Coated*, which had its world premiere at Hot Docs 2015, *Fight Like Soldiers, Die Like Children*, and *The Experimental Eskimos*, a compelling look at a social experiment in Canada's history that received the DGC's Allan King Award for Excellence in Documentary. As head of production at White Pine Pictures, Janice oversaw such Oscar-shortlisted documentaries as *Genius Within: The Inner Life of Glenn Gould* and *The Promise to the Dead*.

Kathy Avrich-Johnson (executive producer) has facilitated the production finance and smooth business operation of dozens of feature films, both drama and documentary, and is a producer of more than 125 hours of television. Her many accomplishments include developing the financing structures, securing funding and interim financing, and ensuring timely cash flow for many feature films, television, and digital projects and timely and on-budget delivery. Kathy executive produced Allan King's last three feature documentaries: *Dying at Grace*, *Memory for Max*, *Claire, Ida and Company*, and *Empz 4 Life*.

Anita Lee (NFB executive producer) leads development and production at the NFB's Ontario Studio. Anita is a multi-award-winning producer with 20 years' experience in the industry and founder of the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival. As NFB producer since 2005, her credits include some of the most acclaimed and inventive works in recent NFB history, including Sarah Polley's *Stories We Tell*. Prior to joining the NFB, Lee produced a slate of award-winning independent films that premiered at international festivals including TIFF, Sundance and Berlin and were theatrically released.

Quotes

"I know that making *A Better Man* will be painful for me. It'll mean talking openly about the abuse, seeing the person who hurt me, remembering the violence. But I know that this pain will be outweighed by hope—hope that I will get answers to questions that have been keeping me awake for two decades; hope that the person who hurt me can be given a chance to redefine himself; hope that our conversation can be the beginning of a broader change that will prevent stories like ours.

"I believe that my ex is taking a pathway that demonstrates to all of us, including himself, that he truly values and is committed to ending men's violence against women. He doesn't have to be just part of the problem; he can become part of the solution."

– Attiya Khan, co-director

"I came into this project thinking I would not be able to identify with the issue of domestic abuse. I quickly came to realize that this issue actually affects us all. It is a privilege to bring this important and groundbreaking story to audiences."

– Lawrence Jackman, co-director

"The team on *A Better Man* and subjects alike have been deeply moved by the tremendous courage that it takes to unravel the complexities of this important story. It is clear to me that *A Better Man* will remind audiences of our instinct to be compassionate and empathetic towards each other."

– Christine Kleckner, producer

"The NFB has a long legacy of exploring vital stories and sharing them with Canadian and international audiences, as part of a broad public dialogue on the issues that matter. We are proud to be part of this incredible team of filmmakers and partners at Intervention Productions. This film can make a profound difference in the lives of both women and men and how we address domestic violence."

– Justine Pimlott, NFB producer

Associated Links

[A Better Man web page](#)
[Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign](#)
[Facebook – A Better Man](#)
[Twitter – A Better Man](#)
[Instagram – A Better Man](#)

Stay Connected

Online Screening Room: [NFB.ca](#)
Facebook: [facebook.com/nfb.ca](#)
Twitter: [twitter.com/thenfb](#)

Media Relations

Jennifer Mair
NFB Publicist
Tel.: 416-954-2045
Cell: 416-436-0105
E-mail: j.mair@nfb.ca
Twitter: [@NFB_Jennifer](#)

Lily Robert
Director, Communications, Marketing and Public Affairs
Tel.: 514-283-3838
Cell: 514-296-8261
E-mail: l.robert@nfb.ca

About the NFB

The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) creates groundbreaking [interactive works](#), social-issue documentaries and auteur animation. The NFB has produced over 13,000 productions and won over 5,000 awards, including 14 Canadian Screen Awards, 11 Webbys, 12 Oscars and more than 90 Genies. To access acclaimed NFB content, visit [NFB.ca](#) or download its [apps](#) for smartphones, tablets and connected TV.