2013 Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize Winner Announced

New York, NY (February 22, 2013): The Fertel Foundation and The Nation Institute today announced the recipient of the 2013 Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize, which is presented to a documentary for illuminating an underreported subject, or raising awareness around an issue of social importance. The film prize is one of four Ridenhour prizes, which recognize acts of truth-telling that protect the public interest, promote social justice, or illuminate a more just vision of society.

The Ridenhour Prizes are the only DC-based awards that celebrate courage in American life and commemorate the spirit of fearless truth-telling that whistleblower and investigative journalist Ron Ridenhour reflected throughout his life and career. Each winner receives $10,000, and is honored at a luncheon ceremony at the National Press Club. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the prizes. "For almost a decade, these awards have made Ron Ridenhour's legacy of courage and fidelity to the truth a living one,” said Randy Fertel, Founder of the Fertel Foundation, which co-sponsors the prizes.

The 2013 Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize honoree:

The Invisible War: In this groundbreaking investigative documentary, award-winning filmmakers Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering shine a light on the troubling epidemic of rape in the military while speaking with survivors who have refused to be intimidated into silence. The numbers are staggering: In 2009 alone, 16,150 service members were sexually assaulted. Female soldiers in the US military are more likely to be raped by a male soldier than shot by an enemy combatant. Through the poignant stories of the rape victims, The Invisible War reveals the systemic cover up of the crimes against them and follows their struggles to rebuild their lives and fight for justice. The film also explores what is now being done to ensure that no crime goes unpunished.

“This is a movie that cannot be ignored... The documentary filmmaker Kirby Dick has become one of the indispensable muckrakers of American cinema.”


“We are very honored and grateful to receive this prize that commemorates the legacy of Ron Ridenhour, who championed the importance of fearless and rigorous investigative journalism,” said the filmmakers Ziering and Dick. “This award will bring
much needed attention to the issue of sexual assault within our armed forces, and encourage our military to institute the structural changes it has yet to make to protect the men and women who are protecting us.”

The Ridenhour judges said, “The Invisible War is an exposé of the shocking prevalence of rape within the US military, and the systemic failure of the armed forces to protect its service members from violent sex crimes. Informative, provocative, and heartrending, The Invisible War is investigative documentary film making at its best. Rarely has a documentary film more completely embodied the spirit of the award which is designed to recognize acts of truth-telling that protects the public interest and promote social justice.”

Interviews are available with the winner, and the co-sponsors of the awards. Past winners and more information is at www.ridenhour.org, and at www.twitter.com/nationinstitute, using #ridenhour.

About The Ridenhour Prizes

The Ridenhour Prizes recognize and encourage those who persevere in acts of truth-telling that protect the public interest, promote social justice or illuminate a more just vision of society. The prizes are named after investigative journalist Ron Ridenhour, to commemorate his lifetime of fearless truth-telling and to inspire others to do the same.

In 1969, Vietnam veteran Ron Ridenhour wrote a letter to Congress and the Pentagon describing the horrific events at My Lai — the infamous massacre of the Vietnam War. Although the upper echelons of the military establishment resisted his revelations, his dogged persistence eventually brought the scandal to the attention of the American public and the world at large.

Ridenhour later became a respected investigative journalist, winning the George Polk Award for Investigative Journalism in 1987 for a yearlong investigation of a New Orleans tax scandal. He died suddenly in 1998 at the age of 52. At the time of his death, he was working on an article for the London Review of Books, had co-produced a story on state militias for NBC’s Dateline, and had just delivered a series of lectures commemorating the 30th anniversary of My Lai. The Ridenhour Prizes were established by The Nation Institute and The Fertel Foundation in partnership with The Fund for Constitutional Government, Government Accountability Project, and The Project on Government Oversight. For more information visit www.ridenhour.org.

About The Nation Institute

A nonprofit media center, The Nation Institute was established to extend the reach of progressive ideas and strengthen the independent press. Our dynamic range of programs include a bestselling book publishing imprint, Nation Books; our award-
winning Investigative Fund, which supports groundbreaking investigative journalism; the widely read and syndicated website TomDispatch; our internship program at the Nation magazine; and Journalism Fellowships that fund up to 20 high profile reporters every year. Work produced by The Nation Institute has sparked Congressional hearings, new legislation, FBI investigations and the resignation of government officials, has changed the debate and has a regular impact on the most urgent social and political issues of our day. For more information visit www.nationinstitute.org.

About the Fertel Foundation

Energized by a passion for weaving ideas and people together, the Fertel Foundation, based in New York and New Orleans, has a special interest in initiatives from which new communities and new insights may emerge and those that challenge entrenched communities of power. For more information, visit www.fertel.com.

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