

1. Find the Location.

a. Independent Cinema

- i. These places attract people who are interested in independent films, documentaries, etc. They have name recognition.
- ii. The website for the cinema should have an email address or way to contact the cinema about a private screening. You can ask:

- 1. What days/times of the week is the cinema available for rental?
- 2. How much does it cost to rent the cinema for 3 hours?
- 3. Is there any discount for non-profits or events that require fundraising to put on?
- 4. What format do you need the film in to be able to play it?

a. Can you stream from a website? If not,

b. Film Rise can send the cinema the film as

- i. DCP via Aspera or
- ii. An H264 file

b. Church

- i. Churches have a potential audience already – the congregation. Also, many churches are sympathetic to the cause.
- ii. Call or email the church and ask if you could host a screening of the documentary.
- iii. Ask about what technology is needed to show the film.

1. Can you play film from Hulu using a laptop and HDMI cable?

c. Home setting

- i. This is the easiest to arrange but likely limits the number of attendees considerably.

2. Date

- a. You may be restricted by the available dates offered by the venue (cinema or church) but if possible, pick a date that gives you enough time to promote the screening if you don't already have an audience.

3. Promote the Event

a. Prepare a flier with the basic information about the event.

- i. Print on 8.5 x 11 for posting and 4x6 (four fliers printed on one page, then cut up) as little fliers that people can take with them.

b. Post the flier on social media.

c. Create an event on social media.

d. If it is at a cinema, create an Eventbrite pages where tickets can be reserved for free.

- e. Go to coffee shops, libraries, restaurants, bars, laundry mats, churches, and any other place in the community you can think of and ask if you can:

- i. Put a flier in their window?
- ii. Leave a few of the smaller fliers by the cash register or bathroom where people can take one with them.
- iii. Leave some fliers to be taken to the employee lunch room.

f. Hand out the small fliers in public to anyone you see. You can start by saying, "Do you like documentaries? I'm hosting a free screening of a really good documentary..."

- i. I find it helps to explain that the Free Melissa Lucio campaign simply wants to spread the word by having people watch the film, and afterwards, if they are so inclined, they can learn about what they can do, such as sign a petition. But there's no pressure or expectation to do anything. Just watch the film. (If you're wearing your Free Melissa Lucio t-shirt you can show them the back of the shirt to prove that's all this is about.)

- g. Go back to the same places where you have been allowed to leave fliers and replenish them. Many times the flier will have been taken down, but they will let you put up another one. Plus it helps build rapport with people who are open to sharing the event.

4. At the Screening

a. Opening.

- i. Consider showing the 4 minute clip of John Oliver talking about Melissa's case before you show the documentary. It is a good way to get the audience up to speed instead of leaving them wondering what the current situation is as they watch the film.
- ii. Tell the audience that if there are questions, they can be addressed at the end of the film.

b. Q&A or Discussion.

- i. Consider having something following the film, such as a brief Q&A or moderated discussion, that will attract people to come to the screening. Otherwise, they may think they'll watch it at home and never get around to it.
- ii. Ideas for people who can be panelists:

1. Lawyers who represent death penalty cases can answer questions generally about the death penalty, the appeals process, why it's so hard to overturn a death sentence when it seems unfair or wrong.

2. A member of Melissa's family.

3. Sabrina Van Tassel, if she is available.

4. Someone from Death Penalty Action.

5. Other people?

- iii. If there is a large group (more than 20 people), you can put them in groups and have them come up with two or three questions to ask.

c. Call to Action.

- i. Prepare a handout that tells the attendees what they can do, particularly the part about contacting Texas officials to request that the execution be stopped.
- ii. You can find this information on the Free Melissa Lucio website.