

UNFOLDING



A DOCUMENTARY SHORT

LOGLINE

After the criminal case against USC gynecologist George Tyndall is dismissed following his death, Japanese American survivor Mai Mizuno embarks on a journey to nurture healing through reclaiming her voice, cultural reckoning, and ancestral power – in search of a justice the courtroom could never offer.

Los Angeles Times

MAY 2018

Must Reads: A USC doctor was accused of bad behavior with young women for years. The university let him continue treating students

USC was told gynecologist could be preying on Asian women, secret records show

U.S.C. Agrees to Pay \$1.1 Billion to Patients of Gynecologist Accused of Abuse

The New York Times

MAR. 2021

The Washington Post

OCT. 2023

Ex-USC doctor accused of sex abuse by hundreds has died, attorney says

Criminal case dismissed against former USC gynecologist who died last year



FEB. 2024

THE STORY



For years, Mai Mizuno had been preparing for the criminal trial of ex-USC gynecologist George Tyndall that was set to happen before the end of 2024. Since Tyndall's death in 2023 and subsequent criminal case dismissal, Mai has had to come to terms with the fact that she will no longer get her day in court. But although the case has come to an end, her healing journey continues.



This fall, Mai is instead preparing for a big move – from the Brooklyn apartment where she went through the lawsuit and pre-trial hearings to a garden home in upstate New York. It's a move that represents a new chapter — Mai finally voicing her needs and defining life on her own terms.



In **UNFOLDING**, we capture Mai as she leaves one world behind to enter another, while reflecting on her upbringing as the daughter of immigrants, her world being upended as a college freshman, and the trauma that she continues to carry with her. We follow Mai as she takes us to where she went after first hearing of Tyndall's death — a riverside walk with golden asters. We then see the rituals that she's built into her daily life to bring stillness and healing — from tending her plants, to the tradition of folding origami cranes that has been passed down in her family.

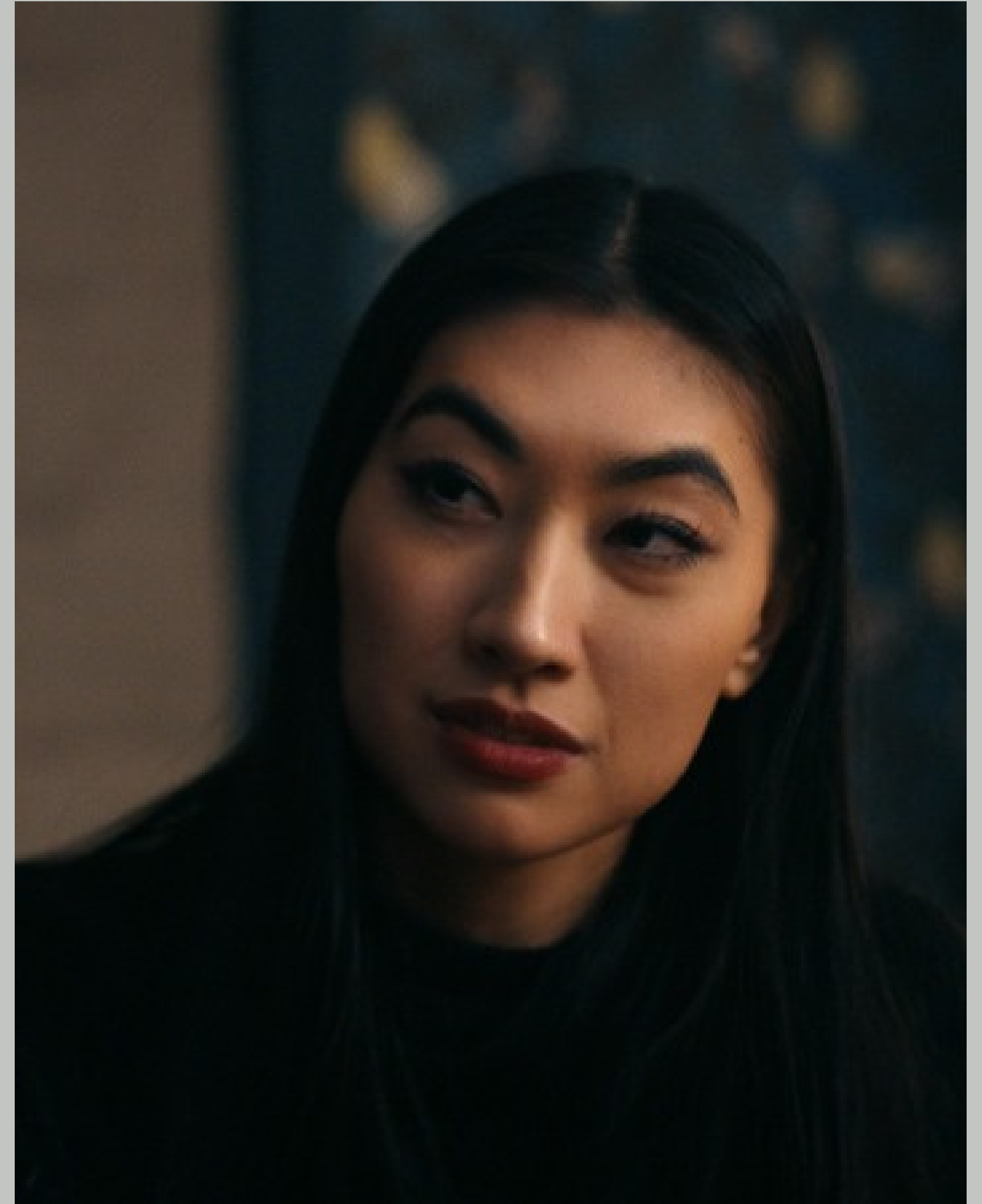
Finally, we film Mai as she moves into her new home, where she's nurturing a springtime garden that represents a new season of growth. Here, she has a conversation with her mother where she expresses her feelings of connection to her lineage and liberation from the injustice of the courtroom.

MAI MIZUNO

Mai Mizuno is a Japanese American writer who graduated from USC in 2019. She was an active student on-campus, running for student body president and a senator in the Undergraduate Student Government.

Mizuno made an appointment as a freshman to see a gynecologist for the very first time to change her birth control. She was sexually assaulted and racially targeted by George Tyndall during her first gynecologist exam. After graduating, she dropped out of her Teach for America and Columbia Graduate School programs as she coped with the lasting trauma and the subsequent betrayal by the school.

In 2019, Mizuno was named as one of 16 plaintiffs in the criminal case against Tyndall. She began pre-trial hearings in 2023. Mai wrote publicly about the absence of justice that slipped away with his death. She has since embarked on a personal journey of resilience, acceptance and healing.



FILMMAKERS' STATEMENT



Iris is an on-campus sexual assault survivor herself, which is how she found Mai's story.

After graduating from USC in 2019, Iris came forward to report her abuser, ultimately settling with USC in 2023. The settlement happened around the same time as Tyndall's death and the dismissal of the criminal trial. She wondered what would happen to the survivors who would no longer get their day in court – particularly the Asian women Tyndall targeted whose accounts were never told by the media.

After Iris read Mai Mizuno's Instagram post about the absence of justice following Tyndall's death, she reached out to her. When they met for the first time in January 2024, they experienced a profound sense of connection and mutual recognition. Until then, both had felt completely isolated and alone in their betrayal by USC as Asian students.

Mai opened up about her nonlinear healing path and having to reject everything she knew about success, productivity, and the American Dream after college. She described taking time off to rest, write, and garden in the years following graduation and after Tyndall's death.

Iris and Meghna are close friends who met through USC, and witnessed the Tyndall case as it was happening in real time. Hundreds of conversations during college and beyond led to the idea of **UNFOLDING**. With this film, we want to capture this journey of healing, showcasing an honest, raw, and difficult portrayal of what the life of an Asian American survivor looks like after the headlines fade and the cameras turn away.

So often, crime documentaries only focus on the sensationality of the moment and deliver trauma porn over centering survivors' narratives. We hope this documentary can be an antithesis to the true crime genre that trivializes and flattens sexual violence. We hope to center the untold story of an Asian American survivor and together envision a subversive path towards justice, healing and freedom.

FILMMAKING APPROACH

We incorporate a trauma-informed approach to our filmmaking where Mai as the subject tells her story on her own terms while moving through her day, partaking in somatic activities that ground her nervous system. We conducted pre-shoot interviews and observational sessions with Mai as we delve into her healing practices, working with mental health experts at Yellow Chair Collective to craft questions and create safe settings.

CINEMATOGRAPHY We used the Sony Fx9, a combination of lenses, and minimal lighting to create an immersive viewing experience that connects us to the subject as well as to her environment. The camera was mostly handheld to feel intimate with Mai, her movement, and her point of view throughout the film.

COLOR Our color palette is soft and dreamlike, with blues, greens and oranges to evoke a more joyful, natural and freeing emotional journey. The colors become warmer and brighter as the film progresses to further highlight the transformative journey that Mai is on - ending on a note that inspires change and hope.

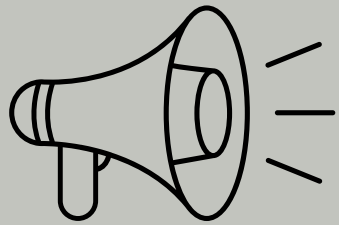
ANIMATION The film will end with footage incorporating animated sequences, to bring to life the emotional and transformative processes moving through Mai.





MENTAL HEALTH THEMES

THE ‘SILENT MINORITY’ BREAKING THE SILENCE



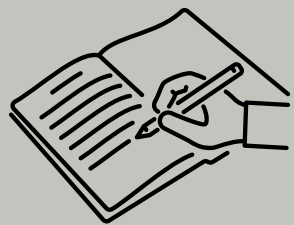
Though one in three Asian American women experience sexual assault, they are the least likely to seek mental health support. In this film, we challenge the ‘model minority’ myth, which keeps us the ‘silent minority’ – our voices rarely heard, our experiences barely visible. What does it look like when an Asian American survivor finally breaks that silence?

DEBUNKING THE AMERICAN DREAM



As children of immigrants, our parents have often held prestigious schools like USC as synonymous with the American Dream of freedom, equality and a better life. But is there a darker truth to that promise? What happens when the institutions that represent success fail us? How do we grapple with this disillusionment and define our own path to freedom?

RELEASING GUILT AND SHAME



Asian American survivors often face unique cultural complexities like shame, guilt, and stigma that can lead to familial rifts and suffering in isolation. In this doc, we’ll spotlight the relief and hope that comes with a survivor voicing her narrative on her own terms.

REIMAGINING HEALING AND JUSTICE



We know that healing from sexual trauma is nonlinear, and that there is no such thing as full closure or complete justice. We’ll explore spaces outside of the courtroom where a survivor can find alternate paths to safety, comfort, and joy.

MAI’S STORY ECHOES ACROSS GENERATIONS OF SURVIVORS. THESE THEMES SPEAK TO SO MANY OF US.

YELLOW CHAIR COLLECTIVE

Linda Yoon and Soo Jin Lee, Korean American eldest daughters, founded YCC in 2018 to address mental health crises in the AAPI community.

YCC focuses on the fact that Asian Americans and the multicultural population struggle with unique pain points and struggles. Much of what Asian American and multicultural therapy identifies as intergenerational trauma or racial discrimination has been neglected and dismissed throughout American history. As a Collective, Yoon and Lee are dedicated to bridging cultural identity as a huge part of everyone's mental struggles.



TEAM



MEGHNA CHAKRABORTY
(DIRECTOR/PRODUCER)
RESUME

Meghna Chakraborty is an LA-based director, producer and dancer/choreographer whose work is rooted in innovative, impact-driven storytelling and cultural empowerment. Her projects span documentaries, music videos and narrative film. She currently works at MGX Creative, focusing on TV, film, and branded content, and has previously held roles at Participant, Gold House, and in multicultural marketing strategy. Meghna received her MFA from the USC School of Cinematic Arts' Peter Stark Producing Program, and her B.S. in Business Administration at USC's Marshall School of Business.

Work sample: Director/Producer of
ASCENDING - South Asian Artists at Coachella 2023
YOUTUBE - WATCH



PRISCILLA JAYNE
(PRODUCER)
RESUME

Priscilla Jayne is an LA-based producer dedicated to compelling filmmaking. Her core mission is to empower women and transform entertainment culture. Priscilla currently works in creative development with an Emmy-nominated writer. She also serves as a juror for the Voices With Impact grant and festival. In every project, Priscilla bridges the gap between creative vision and strategic execution, leveraging her narrative eye and her background as a CFO and Head of HR. She holds both an MFA in Producing and a BS in Business from USC, as well as a certificate in screenwriting from NYU Tisch.



IRIS KIM
(DIRECTOR/PRODUCER)
WEBSITE AND RESUME

Iris (Yi Youn) Kim is a Korean American reporter at NBC News covering Asian American culture, identity, and politics. She is a 2022 PEN Emerging Voices Fellow, a 2022 USC Center for Public Diplomacy U.S.-South Korea Fellow, and a 2023 Gold House Journalism Futures Accelerator Participant. She's covered subjects like the Korean plastic surgery industry, Hollywood's dismissal of survivors, and finding sobriety in her survivor's journey for outlets like NBC, Harper's Bazaar, and TIME. Iris graduated from USC's Marshall School of Business in 2019.

Work sample: On-air Talent/Producer of
NBCU Academy Storytellers 'On the Road with
Arkansas' First Mobile Opioid Treatment Clinic'
NBC NEWS - WATCH



VIVIAN LAU
(CINEMATOGRAPHER)
RESUME

Vivian Lau is an award-winning Director of Photography and photographer based in Los Angeles CA. Vivian's narrative films have won awards internationally throughout North America and across Europe and Asia. Her documentary DP credits include the Diljit Dosanjh Dil-Luminati North American 2024 tour documentary, Goldenvoice's ASCENDING Coachella short documentary, as well as camera operator (hi-8 and digital) and stills (35mm and Polaroid) photographer on HBO Max's LIL NAS X: LONG LIVE MONTERO documentary (TIFF 2023). Clients include Sony, Nike, Conde Naste (Vogue, Vanity Fair), Kodak, Indeed, & LG.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual assault,
you are not alone, it is not your fault, and support is available.

Confidential help is available 24/7.

Call the **National Sexual Assault Hotline** at **1-800-656-HOPE**
or visit **RAINN.org**

to connect with a trained staff member in your area.

You deserve healing, support, and peace.

