

Sexual violence against U.S. soldiers portrayed in documentary

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A mural of late Vanessa Guillen in Fort Worth, Texas, U.S., July 2020. | Photo: Twitter/ @NPR

Washington, July 15 (RHC)-- The TV network Univision has premiered the Spanish and English versions of a documentary about Vanessa Guillen, Karina Lopez, and other soldiers who suffered sexual assault and harassment within the United States Armed Forces.

In April 2020, Private Guillen was murdered at Fort Hood in Texas. The alleged killer, Private Aaron Robinson, killed himself shortly afterward as he was to be arrested. The victim had spoken with her family about sexual harassment on base and her case prompted protests and initiatives in Congress to

remedy problems in investigating sexual harassment within the U.S. Armed Forces.

Karina Lopez is another former U.S. soldier fighting to change the system that silenced her. In the documentary titled "I am Vanessa Guillen," she describes how what happened to her at Fort Hood changed her as a person forever.

After being sexually assaulted, Lopez reported what happened to her military commanders. She recalls that what affected her the most was the fact that her commanders and other people did not support her and even doubted the veracity of her story.

"Unfortunately this is very common," said Andrea Patiño Contreras, an Emmy-nominated video journalist from Colombia who is also the director of the documentary.

Later, Lopez filed a complaint with the Pentagon and requested an honorable discharge in 2019. Two years after the events, she created a Facebook page titled #IamVanessaGuillen, which brought to light complaints of dozens of female soldiers who had been victims of sex-related offenses.

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