FAMM Advocate's Watch Party

Host a Viewing Party of HBO’s

the sentence

Watch Party Toolkit & Guide
Dear FAMM Advocate,

Thanks so much for helping us take advantage of a great opportunity to change hearts and minds about our criminal justice system. You’re joining a great team of people all over the country hosting watch parties of HBO’s award-winning documentary, “The Sentence.”

When FAMM first heard about this movie, we knew it was a perfect fit with our work. It’s a close-up look at one family struggling with the consequences of having a loved one in prison for far too long. After Cindy Shank began serving a 15-year mandatory minimum sentence for her part in a drug conspiracy headed by her then-boyfriend, her brother Rudy picked up his handheld camera and began recording his three nieces’ lives. The hundreds of hours of footage soon became a feature-length film, which went on to win enormous praise at the Sundance Film Festival.

You can view a trailer of the documentary HERE. This film is a great way to explain to the people in your lives—family members, neighbors, colleagues, friends—how our criminal justice system affects real people. It’s impossible to watch “The Sentence” and not feel a deep and emotional understanding of the issue, as well as gain greater knowledge about how our criminal justice system fails.

By hosting a watch party, you’ll be playing a big part in helping us communicate our message. And for that, we are so grateful. We want to make it as easy as possible for you to get the party started, and this guide covers many of the logistical details of how a watch party works. And if you’re confused about anything, just give us a call. We’re happy to help.

We’re excited to have you join us in spreading the word about this moving and inspirational documentary! Let’s fight, together.

Thanks,
FAMM
Before:

1. Determine the time and place.
2. Make a recruitment plan to invite people.
3. Plan an event agenda.
4. Arrange food, drinks, decorations, and other event supplies.
5. Determine and test your technology.
6. Remind your RSVPed guests.

During:

7. Make sure everyone signs in at the event!
8. Take pictures and videos!

After:

9. Ask questions after the documentary.
10. Send FAMM pics, videos, and sign-in sheets!

OVERALL: ENJOY THE WATCH PARTY!!!
Determine the time and place
Decide what day of the week and what time you would like to show “The Sentence.” Once you know when you’d like to host your party, secure an event space. An “event space” can be as simple as your living room, a local bar or restaurant, a place of worship, library, or town square. Be sure to check to see if you need permits/reservations!

Make a recruitment plan
A recruitment plan isn’t complicated! Simply:
- Set a goal for the size of your watch party
- Invite your family, friends, colleagues, and local community groups
- Track your RSVPs

When setting your goal, keep in mind the capacity of your event space. Be sure to determine a method for tracking your RSVPs, too. You can use an online tool or form (EventBrite or Google form), a spreadsheet you maintain, or even a good old-fashioned pen and paper list.

Sample Recruitment Plan
- Goal for watch party attendees: 10 people
- Calls, texts, and e-mail to friends & family: 5 people
- Facebook event recruitment: 5 people
- Calls and emails to local community groups: 5 people
- Fliers: 5 people
- RSVP tracking via Facebook event page
Sample Personal Email

Dear X,

I hope you’ve had a great week. I’m reaching out because I am an Advocate with FAMM, a national criminal justice reform organization working to empower affected family members and advocates with the tools needed to create change.

FAMM is encouraging advocates to organize locally, so on <your date>, I’m hosting a viewing party of a powerful documentary movie called “The Sentence.” You can find a trailer HERE. The movie shows how one family copes with the mother serving a 15-year mandatory minimum sentence for a nonviolent drug charge.

I’m hosting and inviting people – just like you – who are concerned with criminal justice issues.

It’s going to be a great program and I would love it if you could attend.

**Watch Party Details:**
- **When:**
- **Where:**
- **RSVP:**

Can I expect to see you there?? If so, please RSVP by (date). The more people are made aware of the negative consequences harsh sentencing laws have on families, the more advocates we create, and the more our lawmakers will have to listen. Thanks in advance for joining me to help create a better world.

Hope to see you there!

(Your Name)
Sample Phone Call Script

Hey X,

It’s (your name). How are you? Good. I don’t know if you know this, but I’m an Advocate with a criminal justice reform organization called FAMM. It works to empower affected family members with the tools needed to create change.

I’m calling because I’m hosting a watch party on <Date>, as a part of FAMM’s mission to empower, organize, and educate. The documentary movie I’m showing is called “The Sentence.” It’s about a family’s journey with a 15-year mandatory minimum sentence for a nonviolent drug charge and captures this family’s hardship through the lens of a mother and her three young daughters. I’m inviting people who – just like you – are concerned with criminal justice issues. We’ll watch the documentary, have a discussion, and have some food as well [if food will be there]. Can I expect you to be there??

If yes, share event details:
When:
Where:
Thank you! I can’t wait to see you at my watch party.

If no:
No problem. Would you mind telling your friends?

Thanks! Goodbye
Make an event agenda

Follow or customize the sample below!

Introduction – 5-10 minutes: Allow participants to introduce themselves. Introduce yourself as a FAMM Advocate, explain the documentary and the discussion that will take place afterward.

Ex: Ask your group. “What do you know about mandatory minimum sentences?” or “What is the impact of mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines?” Give everyone a chance to write or at least consider his/her responses before the film.

View – 1 hour 20 minutes: Watch “The Sentence” (Make sure there’s Kleenex.)

Discussion – 15 minutes: Lead a discussion with the group about sentencing and advocacy.

Sample questions:

• What, if anything, surprised you about what you just watched?
• What impact did mandatory minimum sentencing have on this family?
• How did the children’s demeanor change from the beginning to the end?
• Cindy says that she violated the law as written but didn’t deserve 15 years in prison. Do you agree? If so, what do you think would have been an appropriate sentence?
• At one point, Cindy is moved to a prison in Florida. Were you surprised to learn that people who are incarcerated can be sent so far from home?
• Cindy’s mom says that when a loved one is locked up, the whole family does the time. Do you think courts should consider how incarceration might affect a person’s children and other family when sentencing him or her?

Call to Action – 5 minutes: Ask each guest to sign up with FAMM to Become an Advocate at www.famm.org and host their own Watch Party!
Plan food, drinks, decorations, and other event supplies

Once you have an idea of how many people are going to come to your party, decide what supplies you need for the event, including food and drink if you’d like to provide it. Also, consider making your event a potluck or contacting local restaurants or stores for donations.

Determine and test your technology

Log on to HBO to make sure you’re ready to go. Ensure screens and speakers work as well.

Remind your RSVPed guests

Everyone has busy schedules and it’s easy to forget things when caught up in the intricacies of everyday life. Remind guests a few days before the Watch Party, and especially again the day before. This can take the form of an email, text, phone call, or even a Facebook post.

Make sure everyone signs in at the event

Pre-print the included sign-up sheets (in this toolkit) and don’t forget the pens! As guests enter your event space, have them sign up before your event begins. After the event is over, fax, email, or take a picture of the sign-up sheet and send it to FAMM!

Take pictures and videos

Before, during, and after the Watch Party, make sure to take pictures and videos. Let your guests know that you will be taking pictures and posting to social media and that they should, too! Use the hashtag #TheSentenceWithFAMM
#TheSentenceWithFAMM

Be sure to post during the Watch Party and after the Watch Party!

Ask questions and discuss

Above are discussion questions that you can ask to generate conversation. One of our main goals is to make people aware of these issues and to facilitate conversation! If there’s a question you’re stumped on, we’ll be on social media that day so send us the question using the hashtags above.

Send FAMM pics, videos, and sign-in sheets

Once your event is over – first, give yourself a HUGE pat on the back! You hosted a FAMM Watch Party and we’re thankful! We also want to see how the event went, so make sure to send us pictures, videos, and the sign-in sheets!
Watch Party: *the sentence*

Hosted by:

Date: ________________________________

Time: ______________________________

Location: ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
<th>ZIP CODE</th>
<th>HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS EVENT (email, phone, social media, word of mouth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Send sign-in to FAMM at FAMM.org