

## CULTURE

## 'Rebel Hearts' Nun Documentary on Discovery+ Could Continue in a 'Mini-Series'

BY JAMIE BURTON ON 6/27/21 AT 6:00 AM EDT

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**R**ebel Hearts and the story of nuns who transformed the education system is available to watch Friday in a new documentary on discovery+—but the movie only tells half the story according to the creators.

*Rebel Hearts* focuses on a group of progressive nuns who tried to shake off the shackles of patriarchal oppression within the Roman Catholic church.

The nuns at the center of *Rebel Hearts* are teachers at the Immaculate Heart College in 1960s Los Angeles. They grew tired of the rules in place for them like imposed bedtimes, forced prayer schedules and vows of silence.

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'Rebel Hearts' Highlights  
Trailblazing Nuns in New  
Discovery+ Documentary

As they stepped away from this stifling regime, they transformed the education system and made sure women received degrees too.

***Rebel Hearts* has been decades in the making**

The documentary contains interviews conducted over the past 20 years by co-writer and producer Shawnee Isaac-Smith. She speaks to the women who were first involved in the nuns' fight for

feminism and equality back in the 1960s.

With over 50 years of story to tell, Shawnee Isaac-Smith says naturally footage, outtakes and entire stories had to be left on the cutting room floor.

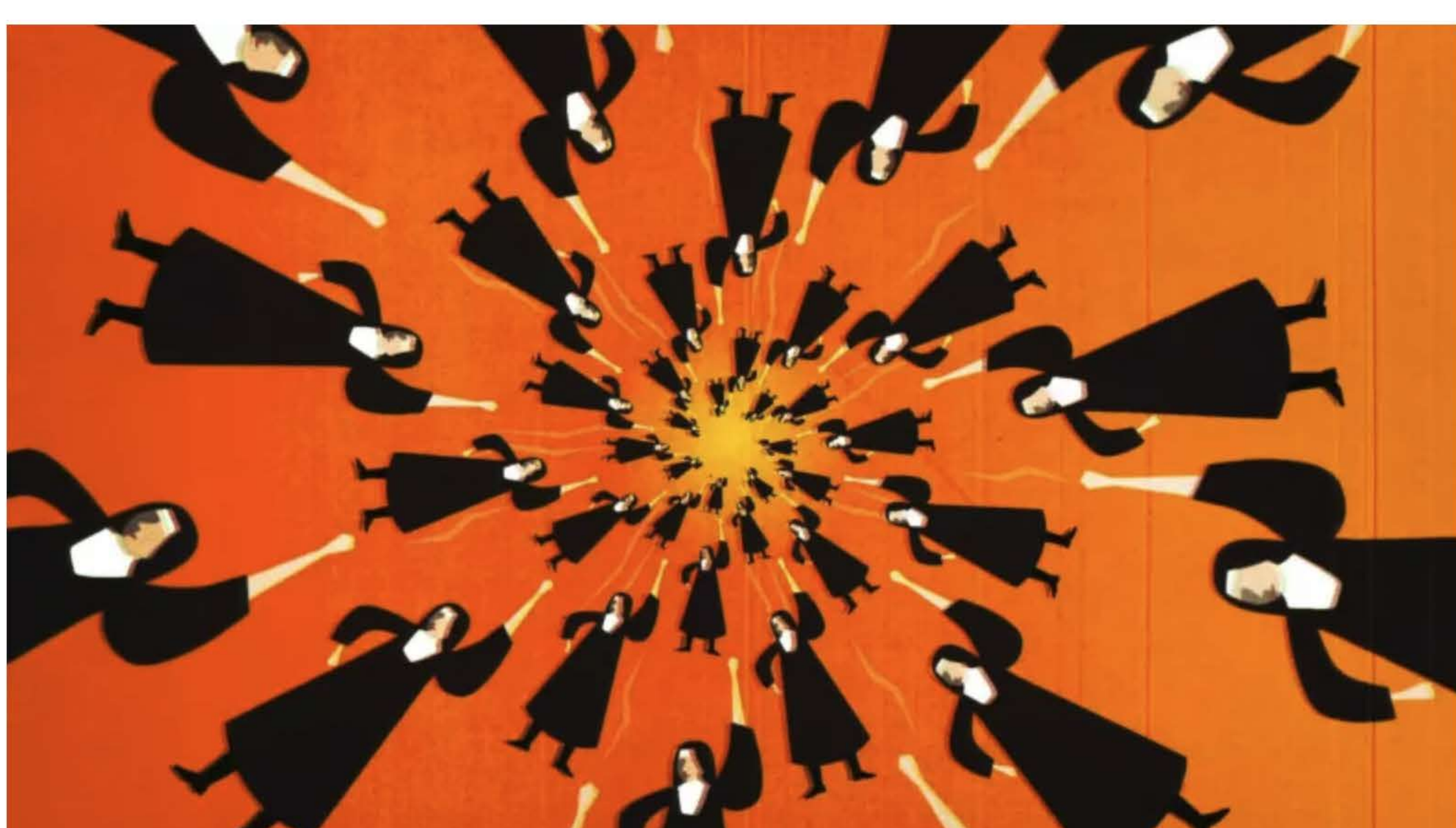
Speaking to *Newsweek*, she said: "We have so much material, it was so hard to pair it down to make it into the documentary you see today. We could do a mini-series."



Now available to watch on discovery+, Isaac-Smith hopes it's not the last we've seen of *Rebel Hearts* and the women of the Immaculate Heart College. Even if the story doesn't get extended and picked up, she believes the documentary is important enough to be used in schools. She said: "I also see a narrative project coming out of it, which would be very inspiring. There's so many different ways it could go."

She continued: "We also have plans to bring it back into education. We are currently working on ways to bring this whole social movement, Corita's [Kent] art, and all that into an educational format to bring it to younger audiences."

She is referring to Corita Kent, also known as Sister Mary Corita, an artist of international acclaim. She's featured heavily within *Rebel Hearts* and was one of the prominent figures within the documentary thanks to her artwork.



Director Pedro Kos says the animations used within the film are inspired by Corita. He told *Newsweek*: "On the decision to use animation, we said in the edit room, what would Corita do? Which is code for, think outside the box."

"There were parts of the story where we didn't have much [footage] and we wanted to make this as much of an emotional and immersive experience as possible," he said," so to do that we followed their lead and we thought outside the box and so hence came the animation, the interweaving of the disparate elements to create a unique and new and emotional experience that hopefully can move audiences."

**What the critics are saying about *Rebel Hearts***

The movie had its world premiere earlier this year when it was an official selection at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival. It's since gone on to receive extremely positive reviews from critics, something which the director Kos finds incredibly flattering.

"I'm very encouraged and I feel really lucky and overjoyed that people are moved by this story. People are responding. It's not a film about religion but it's about an incredible community of extraordinary women who stood up for what they believed in and people seem to be getting that. This story was an important piece of history that was really needed to be told and uncovered so I'm grateful to Shawnee and everyone who helped us get here."



Echoing Isaac-Smith's wish to extend the *Rebel Hearts* story, Kos also believes there's more to tell that couldn't squeeze into the 99 minute runtime of the discovery+ documentary.

He said "Absolutely. Especially the story post-1970s there's so much there and so many twists and turns we weren't able to get to. Even though the film is coming out this week, there's still a lot of work for us to do to get the film out there and engage with audiences."

"My hope is for the next few months we can really do that. Bring the story out to different audiences and create a wonderful dialogue. That's a hope and a dream and a goal."

*Rebel Hearts* is available to watch on the streaming service discovery+ now. It's also available to view in select theaters in New York and Los Angeles.

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