

Center for Disability Rights, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Center for Disability Rights Creates PSA on Assisted Suicide in Response to *Me Before You*

June 7, 2016 – The Center for Disability Rights has created a PSA to address disability and assisted suicide, one of the primary topics highlighted in the new romantic comedy, *Me Before You*. The film is based on the novel of the same name by Jojo Moyes, who also penned the screenplay. *Me Before You* tells the story of a cheerful underachiever, Louisa, who is hired as the Personal Care Attendant for a wealthy quadriplegic named Will Traynor. Louisa soon realizes her job is to convince Will to live, as he has an appointment at an assisted suicide facility in Switzerland in six months. Despite the two falling in love Will tells Louisa that love is not enough, and goes through with killing himself because of his disability.

The murder and killing of disabled people in Hollywood films is a common theme. Assisted suicide, in particular, can be seen in a number of films beyond *Me Before You* including *Million Dollar Baby*, *The Sea Inside*, and *Whose Life is it Anyway?* Assisted suicide is often presented as a logical ending to disabled lives. In these films, disabled people are seen as a burden, and are presented as suffering, so assisted suicide is seen as a reasonable and rational outcome.

In response to the controversy, disabled people around the world have been protesting the movie, both at the London and New York premieres, and during the June 3 opening weekend. As the film heads into its second week in over 2000 theaters across the U.S., activists have continued to try to counter the film through a series of informational events that are being held offline, as well as through social media.

The PSA, which has already garnered over 150,000 views on Facebook, was developed by the Center for Disability Rights with filmmaker Clark Matthews. It features real individuals with disabilities, as they counter the message presented in these harmful films. The PSA highlights that disabled lives are worth living, and that assisted suicide is harmful to the disability community. The idea behind the PSA is to flip the script, and change the story when it comes to disability. Since there are not many films that counter the message that disabled lives are not worth living, the PSA and worldwide protests of the film are attempting to educate the public about the truth about disability. Everyone, whether they have a disability or not, is encouraged to stop accepting such harmful portrayals of disability, by avoiding these movies. Instead, the message is to promote content by disabled creators, and encourage Hollywood to make films that show disabled people living life, something the over 1 billion people with disabilities around the world do, every single day.

You can check out the PSA here: <https://youtu.be/PLPAzs0A5-Q>

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