

# HAIL MARY:

## How Women Tackled Football's Concussion Crisis

Concussions in Football were a man-made problem. It took women to fix it.

One of the most pressing public-health crises of our time – brain injuries among athletes, and the National Football League's attempt to cover up the dangers – keeps making national headlines. But only true insiders know that the people who shook the testosterone-drunk N.F.L. to its core were mostly WOMEN. They drove the story, never backing down, and ultimately forced reform throughout youth sports – all the while schooling the men in power who kept underestimating them.

**Alan Schwarz**, the New York Times reporter who covered the concussion story for 10 years and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, takes audiences behind the scenes to watch how these women turned football upside down. Exclusive interviews, videos and more let viewers meet:



- **Sylvia Mackey**, who started the revolution by pleading for help from the N.F.L. for her husband John, a Hall of Fame player who developed dementia in his late 50s;
- **Judy Ryser**, who lost her 17-year-old son to a football brain injury and bravely told her story to educate lawmakers and other mothers;
- **Eleanor Perfetto**, another N.F.L. wife who confronted commissioner Roger Goodell in person and testified in Congress (where she described herself proudly as “one pushy broad”);
- **Dr. Ann McKee**, the neuropathologist who risked her scientific career by reporting cases of players' brain damage and staring down the men who dismissed her findings;
- **Linda Sanchez**, the Congresswoman who stole the show at Congressional hearings, challenging league officials and comparing the N.F.L. to Big Tobacco;
- **Gay Culverhouse**, the former president of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers who is still the only team or N.F.L. official to speak out against the league;
- Last but not least, the men who tried to stop them, from doctors and league lawyers to Congressmen and even players.

This unique hour-long presentation, customizable for any audience, not only traces how one of sports' most fascinating stories of all time played out, but gives take-home lessons of what any underdog – woman or not – can apply to their next challenge.

**Alan Schwarz** is a former investigative reporter for the New York Times who regularly speaks at colleges, professional organizations and governmental agencies nationwide, including Harvard University, the University of Notre Dame, the National Institutes of Health and the National Academy of Sciences. For bookings, contact Alan Schwarz at [alanschwarz@gmail.com](mailto:alanschwarz@gmail.com) or 917-405-7705.