

Jane Bussmann joins a Mouseketeer lobbying Congressmen (it's a Hollywar)

Joseph Kony sports Milli Vanilli dreadlocks and Aviator sunglasses. He's teetotal, belongs to a religious cult and even has a personal tailor. But Joseph Kony is not an actor or singer, he is the world's most wanted man. The Ugandan guerrilla has abducted between 20,000 and 65,000 children and forced them to live as sex slaves or soldiers. Last month he kidnapped another 135.

And now he's become a Tinseltown talking point by playing up the image of the crazy African warlord, claiming he can read your mind, cure AIDS and talk to God. But Kony wasn't prepared for the three young Americans who stumbled across him in 2003. Bobby Bailey, Laren Poole and Jason Russell were travelling in Africa when they found thousands of children hiding from Kony by night, under armed guard. They made a viral MTV-style pop doc called *Invisible Children*, ended up on *Oprah* and became stars themselves. Their stunts have brought young Hollywood on board.

'I don't often feel like I have a purpose,' Kristen Bell of *Gossip Girl* and *Heroes* told the papers at the How It Ends anti-Kony lobby day in Washington last month.

Nip/Tuck and 90210 bad girl AnnaLynne McCord chimed in with: 'I'm saying, "It's cool to be a good person!"' Kirsten Dunst makes YouTube videos about Kony. Oscar nominee and former Mouseketeer Ryan Gosling has written a film about him and singer Ashlee Simpson turned out as a cheerleader when the Invisible Children charity organised a mass America-wide sleepout.

By this April, young pin-ups from *Melrose Place*, *Fame*, *Knocked Up*, *Tropic Thunder* and *The OC* took part in The Rescue, where children all over America 'kidnapped' themselves in solidarity with the abducted children and refused to go home until a celebrity 'rescued' them - in other words, arrived to give a public statement about what life is like for the very-much-not-rescued child soldiers. The final celebrity targeted? The toughest of all. The filmmakers sat outside her studio for six days begging to go on her show. 'We hadn't slept in days. Gayle brought us out cupcakes.'

Gayle who? Best friend to the lady they were picketing, Oprah Winfrey. After six days, 'Oprah came out to see us in an orange jumpsuit like she was fresh out the gym and said, "Are you really ready do this? Because with the public you have to be very clear - and I'm only going to give you a minute."' Oprah gave them eight minutes of air-time. By now one in five Americans was aware of Invisible Children. But could they stop Kony?

Last month, 2,000 children gathered near the White House. How It Ends was an event designed to train kids to talk politicians into supporting a Kony bill - in just 48 hours. Called Lord's Resistance Army

Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Bill, if it becomes law, it will give President Obama 180 days to come up with a plan to catch Kony and free the children.

I decided to join them. I had also been to Uganda, where I, too, blundered into kids hiding from Kony. I'd like to pretend I had noble reasons, but as a celebrity journalist, I was on the run not so much from an African warlord as from Britney Spears' entourage. I had turned the Britney and co encounters into a book about war crime and celebrities and was keen to see Hollywood activism in action.

I logged on to howitends.tv for my instructions. 'We will train you on how to clearly communicate this issue... it is important to dress formally,'

says the website. At the DC Convention Center many are so young they have braces. They dress like punks but talk world peace. John, 22, Nicholas, 16, and Bailey, 17, are from Arkansas. 'We do protest by the book - it works quicker,' says John.

We assemble on Capitol Hill. Then we see the enemy: another group of young people seeking funding to cure some horrible disease. They're playing hardball, wearing T-shirts with photos of a sickly girl. Luckily we have a secret weapon: Kristen and AnnaLynne.

Doors swing open and dozens of children in white shirts with Converse trainers and glitter flip-flops flood into the Senate. They make speeches. The benches fill up; soon it's standing room only.

They need 25 signatures to get the bill to the next stage. A visit to the office of conservative Congressman Royce - Liberian warlord Charles Taylor is one of his enemies - takes a surprising turn. 'Royce took us down this opulent hallway to introduce us to his fellow congressmen so we could tell them about Kony,' says Bobby.

Invisible Children has 73 signatures. The bill is now on its way to the White House, where if Obama makes it law, America will lead the hunt for the elusive monster. Kony's days could be numbered at last.

The Worst Date Ever by Jane Bussmann is out now (Macmillan, £11.99)



Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony

Three phone calls and three emails with Richard Mason

Author



Watching *Double Indemnity* on DVD -

a noir classic starring the sexy-voiced Barbara Stanwyck - and *In the Loop* (twice). Hilarious dialogue and a genius performance from Peter Capaldi as the foul-mouthed Scottish spin doctor.

Reading Mary Renault's *The Alexander Trilogy*. Queen of the gripping narrative, her straightforward acceptance of the richness and diversity of human sexuality is inspiring.

Meeting Mikhail Gorbachev, who sang a Russian ballad in memory of his wife Raisa. He has a great voice, surprisingly.

Eating I'm a creature of habit. There's no sorrow that The Groucho Club's shepherds' pie can't soothe.

Loving John Eliot Gardiner's erotic new production of *Carmen*, which I just saw at the Opéra Comique in Paris.

Hating Politicians dragging their feet over climate change. Does no one realise we're facing an ecological crisis?

Wanting A piece of land in South Africa's Eastern Cape. I've found the spot already and hope to build an eco retreat for the Kay Mason Foundation, the charity I set up to help disadvantaged South African kids (kaymasonfoundation.org). *The Lighted Rooms* is out now (Phoenix, £7.99)

President Obama will have **180 days** to develop a plan to catch **Kony** and **free the children**