A recent trend in the field of transitional justice has been the inclusion of a gendered perspective to ensure that women’s experiences during war are addressed. For truth commissions in particular, this has meant implementing various gender-sensitive protocols such as women-only hearings for victims to testify about experiences of sexual violence, as well as chapters in final reports dedicated to the experiences of women during conflict. The Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is considered to be a successful example of how to address the needs and experiences of women. Yet despite a number of comprehensive recommendations and extensive research into the pre-existing social inequalities that contributed to the wartime experiences of Sierra Leonean women, progress towards gender equality has been slow. What accounts for the gap between the TRC’s work and the reality of women’s lives post conflict? My research explores how the almost singular portrayal of Sierra Leonean women as passive victims of sexual violence has reproduced previous notions of gender roles, and in turn hindered progress. By tracing legal trends and narratives of womanhood in popular Sierra Leonean culture, I assess the impact that the TRC has had on the lives of women, and identify missed opportunities, drawing larger connections through an analysis of five other truth commissions from around the world: East Timor, Liberia, Ghana, and Peru and Guatemala.