



PROTOZOA AND MERIDIAN HILL PICTURES PRESENT

HOLDING LIAT

DIRECTED BY BRANDON KRAMER

PRODUCED BY LANCE KRAMER, DARREN ARONOFSKY & ARI HANDEL
YONI BROOK & JUSTIN A. GONÇALVES





WORLD PREMIERE, BERLINALE
2025, DOCUMENTARY
97 MINS
COUNTRY: USA
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH/HEBREW

Download Press Photos [HERE](#)

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LOGLINE

Liat Atzili was kidnapped from her kibbutz on October 7. What begins as a chronicle of her parents, sister, and children's efforts to secure her return, becomes a portrait of conflicting impulses towards anger, indifference, and compassion straining the bonds of one grieving family.

SYNOPSIS

On the morning of October 7, 2023, Israeli-American Liat Atzili and her husband Aviv were at home when Hamas attacked their kibbutz. By nightfall, Liat and Aviv are captives in Gaza along with 250 other people - 12 of whom, like Liat, are American citizens.

Caught between international diplomacy and a rapidly escalating war, their family must face their own uncertainty and conflicting perspectives in the pursuit of Liat and Aviv's release. This agonizing process, and the ultimate fate of their loved ones, challenges how the members of the family understand themselves and their place in the conflict.

Through the intimate lens of a family's experience, HOLDING LIAT poses complex questions of identity across generations, as the family is thrust into the epicenter of a global conflict rapidly unfolding in real-time.

An independent production of Protozoa (BLACK SWAN) and Meridian Hill Pictures (THE FIRST STEP).



PROTAGONISTS



YEHUDA BEININ

Liat's father, American-born in Philadelphia, emigrated to Israel in 1973 to live on Kibbutz Shomrat in Northern Israel.



CHAYA BEININ

Liat's mother, also American-born, who also immigrated to Israel with Yehuda in the 1970s.



TAL BEININ

Liat's younger sister, Israeli-born with dual American citizenship, now lives in Portland, Oregon and works as a personal trainer.



LIAT BEININ ATZILI

Born in the United States, Liat is a dual citizen of the US and Israel. She teaches history to high school students, and is the mother of three.



AVIV ATZILI

Born on Kibbutz Nir Oz, Aviv has been married to Liat for 30 years. He is an artist, tractor mechanic, and manager of the agricultural garage on Nir Oz.



NETTA ATZILI

Liat and Aviv's middle son



JOEL BEININ

Liat's uncle, a Middle Eastern History professor emeritus at Stanford University. Joel now lives in Portland, Oregon. .



OFRI ATZILI

Liat's oldest son



AYA ATZILI

Liat and Aviv's daughter and youngest child

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

After October 7, 2023, my brother Lance and I contacted our extended family in Israel to check on their well-being.

When we spoke with our relative Yehuda, we learned that his daughter Liat and son-in-law Aviv went missing from their kibbutz and were presumed to be hostages in Gaza. Since Liat was one of a dozen Americans missing, Yehuda told us that he planned to come with his family to our hometown, Washington, DC, to advocate for their release.

We did not know what was about to unfold, but we felt an imperative to start documenting the family's experience. We started by asking questions, observing, and being present in quiet moments where there often were no other cameras. Within the first days of filming, we were struck by the multiplicity of perspectives within the family on how to free hostages, end the escalating war, and find a path toward reconciliation. Liat and Aviv's captivity brought out questions about each family member's identity and their relationships with one another. Our camera became a place for each person in the family to authentically share without judgment.

We had a unique access point to create a historical record of this moment through the frame of one family. Because of our pre-existing relationships beginning decades prior to October 7th, we were able to bear witness with an intimacy and depth

that could go beyond the intense glare of the media spotlight. We filmed with the family in their homes, in the halls of Congress, and backstage at demonstrations, as they were thrust into the epicenter of this geopolitical crisis. Where the story led us was a profound place we never could have imagined from the onset.

More than a year after October 7, lives are still imperiled: with hostages still held, tens of thousands of Palestinians killed, and people across the region suffering. Our conversations about all these issues have only become more polarized, even within communities and families. By telling an intimate story of one directly impacted family, and the way they navigated differences amongst each other, we hope to open up new possibilities for understanding this conflict, and contribute to an end to the unrelenting violence in the region.

We are keenly aware that this film is just one family's story out of countless others, and that many important stories may tragically never be told. We hope through the family's resilience and openness, alongside other Israeli and Palestinian films that seek to broaden understanding, audiences will find room to ask deeper questions that help mark a path toward healing and reconciliation.

— Brandon Kramer



FILMMAKING TEAM

BRANDON KRAMER

DIRECTOR

Brandon Kramer is a Washington, DC-based filmmaker and co-founder of Meridian Hill Pictures with his brother Lance. Brandon directed THE FIRST STEP (Tribeca, AFI DOCS); CITY OF TREES (Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, PBS, Netflix); and the Webby Award-winning independent documentary series THE MESSY TRUTH (CNN). Brandon is a Film Independent Fellow, a DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities Fellow, a regular collaborator with Kartemquin Films in Chicago, and has served as a media teaching artist for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Brandon holds a bachelor's degree in film and cultural anthropology from Boston University.

LANCE KRAMER

PRODUCER

Lance Kramer is a Washington, DC-based filmmaker and co-founder of Meridian Hill Pictures. Lance produced THE FIRST STEP (Tribeca, AFI DOCS); CITY OF TREES (Full Frame, PBS, Netflix) and the Webby Award-winning series THE MESSY TRUTH. Lance is a Film Independent Fellow and has been selected to participate in the Film Independent Fast Track program, Sundance Creative Producers Summit, Impact Partners Documentary Producers Fellowship cohort, was named to the DOC NYC "40 Under 40" list, and received the DC Mayor's Arts Award, the highest honor given to working artists in the Nation's Capital. Lance is a former Board Member of Docs in Progress, a member of the Documentary Producers Alliance, and currently serves on the board of the Foundation for the Augmentation of African Americans in Film (FAAAF).

DARREN ARONOFSKY

PRODUCER

Darren Aronofsky is an Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Aronofsky heads Protozoa based in Chinatown NYC. His credits include n, REQUIEM FOR A DREAM, THE FOUNTAIN, THE WRESTLER, BLACK SWAN, NOAH, mother!, THE WHALE, the Sphere Experience POSTCARD FROM EARTH, and the upcoming CAUGHT STEALING for Sony Pictures. As a producer his credits include JACKIE, THE GOOD NURSE, SOME KIND OF HEAVEN, Peabody and Emmy-winning THE TERRITORY, National Geographic's LIMITLESS, starring Chris Hemsworth, WELCOME TO EARTH, ONE STRANGE ROCK, and the upcoming POLE TO POLE starring Will Smith.

ARI HANDEL

PRODUCER

Ari Handel holds a doctorate in Neuroscience and has published four papers on the neural control of saccadic eye movements. He left academia to become President of Protozoa where he has been a writer on the films THE FOUNTAIN and NOAH and the Sphere Experience POSTCARD FROM EARTH; a producer on mother!, JACKIE and THE WHALE; an executive producer on SOME KIND OF HEAVEN, WHITE BOY RICK, NOAH, BLACK SWAN, CATCH THE FAIR ONE, THE TERRITORY and THE GOOD NURSE; and a co-producer on THE WRESTLER. He is an executive producer on the National Geographic science series ONE STRANGE ROCK, WELCOME TO EARTH, and LIMITLESS, FX's KINDRED, and the VR series SPHERES: SONGS OF SPACETIME.

JUSTIN A. GONÇALVES

PRODUCER

Justin A. Gonçalves is an Emmy-nominated filmmaker based in New York City. Prior to joining Protozoa Pictures in 2021, he traveled the world crafting short-form documentaries for CNN, Great Big Story, Quartz, Mashable, and the NBA. His work has been featured at Hamptons International Film Festival, New Hampshire Film Festival, and the Valencia International Film Festival Cinema Jove. Justin holds a BA in American Studies and an MFA in Film from Columbia University.

YONI BROOK

PRODUCER, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Yoni Brook is a Peabody Award winning filmmaker whose films have screened at Sundance, Berlinale, and the New York and Toronto Film Festivals. Credits as a producer include the docuseries PHILLY D.A. (PBS/Topic, Peabody Winner, duPont-Columbia Award Winner, Gotham Award Winner), MENASHE (Sundance, A24, Film Independent Spirit Nominee), BRONX PRINCESS (True/False, PBS POV), THE CALLING (PBS Independent Lens), and A SON'S SACRIFICE (Tribeca Film Festival Best Documentary Short, IDA's Best Documentary Short, PBS Independent Lens) and as a cinematographer, 32 SOUNDS (Sundance, Oscar Shortlist), A STRAY (SXSW), and VALLEY OF SAINTS (Film Independent Spirit Nominee, Sundance World Dramatic Audience Award Winner).

JEFF GILBERT

EDITOR

Jeff Gilbert is a Los Angeles based documentary film editor with Academy Award and Emmy nominated films to his credit. His work has shown at festivals worldwide and been broadcast by Netflix, Apple, Hulu, Amazon and PBS. Jeff's sensibilities are recently reflected in his Sundance premiered War Game, the award-winning Boys State (Academy Award Short List, Sundance Grand Jury Award), Extremis (Academy Award Nominee), Gay Chorus Deep South (Audience Award, Tribeca Film Festival) and The Overnighters (Sundance Special Jury Award). Jeff won editing awards from Doc NYC and filmmaking fellowships from the Sundance Institute, New York Foundation of the Arts and Film Independent. He has served on the IDA's granting committee and is a Karen Schmeer Foundation editing mentor. He's a member of ACE and an honorary member of the British Film Editors guild.

HILLA MEDALIA

CO-PRODUCER

Hilla is a Peabody Award-winning director and producer, and has received six Emmy award nominations. Her projects have garnered critical acclaim and screened internationally in theaters and on platforms including HBO, MTV, PBS, BBC and ARTE. Her range of titles includes: MOURNING IN LOD (2023, MTV Documentaries, Paramount+), INNOCENCE (2022, Venice International Film Festival), H2: THE OCCUPATION LAB (2022, Hotdocs), LEFTOVER WOMEN (2019, Tribeca), THE OSLO DIARIES (2018, Sundance, HBO, ARTE), CENSORED VOICES (2015, Sundance, Berlinale), THE GO GO BOYS (2014, Cannes), WEB JUNKIE (2014, Sundance), DANCING IN JAFFA (2013, Tribeca).

Hilla is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the PGA and she holds an M.A. from Southern Illinois University.

JORDAN DYKSTRA

COMPOSER

Jordan Dykstra is a Brooklyn-based performer and BMI Award-winning composer. His film scores have been heard at numerous film festivals such as Cannes, Sundance, Rotterdam, Tribeca, TIFF, DOC NYC, and CPH:DOX, amongst others. Dykstra scored the Oscar and BAFTA-winning film 20 DAYS IN MARIUPOL, which the Wall Street Journal said was "aided greatly by an eerie, tonal score by Dykstra."

MARILYN NESS

CONSULTING PRODUCER

Marilyn Ness is a two-time Emmy, Peabody, and DuPont Award-winning filmmaker. Producing credits include ANONYMOUS SISTER, the Netflix Original documentaries BECOMING, and DICK JOHNSON IS DEAD, CAMERAPERSON, and TRAPPED. Marilyn also directed the Emmy®-nominated documentary CHARM CITY. Marilyn is a member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, the Television Academy, the Producers Guild of America, and the IDA.

GORDON QUINN

STORY CONSULTANT

Gordon Quinn is Artistic Director and co-founder of Kartemquin Films, where over the past 50+ years he has helped hundreds of documentary filmmakers advance their projects forward and been a champion of documentary filmmakers' rights. He is the 2015 recipient of the International Documentary

Association Career Achievement Award and was a key leader in creating the Documentary Filmmakers Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use. His credits as director and producer include films: Inquiring Nuns (1966), Golub (1988), A Good Man (2011), '63 Boycott (2017), and For the Left Hand (2021). As executive producer his credits include four Academy-Award nominees: Hoop Dreams (1994), Abacus: Small Enough to Jail (2016), Edith & Eddie (2017), and Minding the Gap (2018), and six Emmy Award-winners: The Interrupters (2011), The Trials of Muhammad Ali (2013), The Homestretch (2014), and Life Itself (2014). He has also executive produced the acclaimed limited series The New Americans (2003), Hard Earned (2015), America to Me (2018), and City So Real (2020), and recent films including Unapologetic (2020), Finding Yingying (2020), and The Dilemma of Desire (2020).

CAROL DYSINGER

STORY CONSULTANT

Carol Dysinger directed the short documentary LEARNING TO SKATEBOARD IN A WARZONE (IF YOU'RE A GIRL) which won the OSCAR® for best short documentary and the BAFTA for best short. Dysinger is known for her feature length documentary CAMP VICTORY, AFGHANISTAN (SXSW 2010, Human Rights Watch Film Festival). Dysinger has edited DEADLINE for Big Mouth Productions (Sundance, and NBC), RAIN for Lola Films, Martin Scorsese Executive Producer (Sundance, Venice International) SANTITOS for Springall Pix, John Sayles Exec (Sundance, Guadalajara, San Sebastian) and PUNK (Warners) which was a finalist for a national Emmy. She is the recipient of the David Payne Carter award for excellence in teaching and was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship.

PRODUCTION COMPANIES

PROTOZOA

Protozoa, based in Chinatown NYC, is headed by Darren Aronofsky and his partner, Ari Handel. Their film credits include Aronofsky's *n*, *REQUIEM FOR A DREAM*, *THE FOUNTAIN*, *THE WRESTLER*, *BLACK SWAN*, *NOAH*, *mother!*, *THE WHALE*, *POSTCARD FROM EARTH* for MSG Sphere, and the upcoming *CAUGHT STEALING* for Sony Pictures; as well as Pablo Larrain's *JACKIE*, Yann Demange's *WHITE BOY RICK*, Lance Oppenheim's documentary *SOME KIND OF HEAVEN*, Josef Kubota Wladyka's *CATCH THE FAIR ONE*, Alex Pritz's documentary *THE TERRITORY*, Tobias Lindholm's *THE GOOD NURSE*, and Jack Begert's *LITTLE DEATH*, Olivier Sarbil's documentary *VIKTOR*. Their recent TV credits include *ONE STRANGE ROCK*, *WELCOME TO EARTH*, and *LIMITLESS* for Nat Geo, *KINDRED* for FX, and *BLACK GOLD* for Paramount+. Upcoming will be Season 2 of *LIMITLESS* and *SENTIENT* for Nat Geo.

MERIDIAN HILL PICTURES

Meridian Hill Pictures is an independent production company based in Washington, DC started by brothers Brandon and Lance Kramer in 2010. MHP's first film *CITY OF TREES* was broadcast nationally on PBS; played at more than 20 festivals including Full Frame Documentary Film Festival prior to its release on Netflix and iTunes. MHP produced the Webby Award-winning series *THE MESSY TRUTH*. MHP's recent film *THE FIRST STEP* premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, was an official selection in more than 35 film festivals, and received coverage in the *NYTimes*, *Politico*, *The Guardian*, and *LA Times*. In 2014, MHP received the DC Mayor's Arts Award, the highest honor given to working artists in the District of Columbia.

KARTEMQUIN

Kartemquin is a collaborative center for documentary media makers who seek to foster a more engaged and empowered society. In 2016 Kartemquin celebrated 50 years of sparking democracy through documentary. A revered resource within the film community on issues of fair use, ethics, story and civic discourse, Kartemquin is internationally recognized for crafting quality documentaries backed by audience and community engagement strategies, and for its innovative media arts community programs. The organization has won every major critical and journalistic prize, including multiple Emmy, Peabody, duPont-Columbia and Robert F. Kennedy journalism awards, Independent Spirit, IDA, PGA and DGA awards, and an Oscar nomination. Kartemquin is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization based in Chicago.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
ELLIOTT JOSEPH
JANINE FRIER
ALEXANDRA SHIVA
TED HADDOCK
ALBERT WENGER
GIGI DANZINGER

POST PRODUCTION SOUND BY
GIGANTIC STUDIOS

SUPERVISING SOUND EDITORS
TRISTAN BAYLIS MPSE
and **PETER RUSSELL**

POST-PRODUCTION PICTURE
FINISHING SERVICES BY
POST WORKS NYC

COLORIST
NAT JENCKS

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CREDITS

A film by **PROTOZOA** and **MERIDIAN HILL PICTURES**

editor **JEFF GILBERT** director of photography **YONI BROOK** co-producer **HILLA MEDALIA**

original music by **JORDAN DYKSTRA** Cinematographer - Israel **OMER MANOR** archival producer **SYDNEY TRATTNER** associate editor **ALEX OSTROFF**

story consultants **RA'ANAN ALEXANDROWICZ** **CAROL DYSINGER** **GORDON QUINN** consulting producers **MARILYN NESS** **LIBBY LENKINSKI**

produced by **LANCE KRAMER** **DARREN ARONOFSKY** **YONI BROOK** **JUSTIN A. GONÇALVES** **ARI HANDEL**

directed by **BRANDON KRAMER**

CONTACT INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOLDING LIAT,
PLEASE VISIT **[HTTPS://HOLDINGLIAT.COM/](https://holdingliat.com/)**

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