

TMI PROJECT AND MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN ULSTER COUNTY PRESENT A NORTHGUILD PRODUCTION

VICARIOUS *Resilience*

TRUTH WILL SET US FREE



DOCUMENTARY SHORT | 34:55 | USA | ENGLISH

DIRECTED BY: Eva Tenuto

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With openness and understanding, **Vicarious Resilience** follows three Hudson Valley residents as they experience the transformative power of true storytelling and share personal stories about loss and triumph.



NORTHGUILD
PRODUCTION

PRESS BOOK **VICARIOUS RESILIENCE**

SYNOPSIS

The docu-short **Vicarious Resilience** follows three Hudson Valley residents over the course of a 10-week true storytelling and memoir writing workshop. Along the way, the participants experience the transformative power of true storytelling; they face mental illness, childhood neglect and addiction head-on; and, ultimately, share deeply personal stories about love, loss and triumph.

Since 2012, twice a year, the Hudson Valley-based nonprofit storytelling organization TMI Project has offered 10-week memoir writing and true storytelling workshops specially tailored to meet the needs of the Mental Health Association of Ulster County's (MHA) population of adults with mental illness. TMI Project's partnership with this peer-based organization—where a portion of the staff are people who have recovered from mental illness—is designed to help destigmatize mental illness, while also empowering participants to imagine and work toward the possibility of their own recovery.

In 2016, the documentary about this partnership, **Vicarious Resilience**, was shot by North Guild Films. The short film highlights the experience of three TMI Project workshop participants: Morris Bassik, Barbara Stemke and Hayley Downs. These three participants were followed as they went through the workshop, from the first session, where many expressed doubts and trepidation, to their final storytelling performance before an audience of over 100, and a final follow-up session where they voiced the ways in which they experienced positive transformation.

"I was so moved from beginning to end. Inspiring, and a lesson to us all that there is nothing more damaging than shame." —JAMES LECESNE, ACADEMY AWARD WINNER & CO-FOUNDER OF THE TREVOR PROJECT



FILMMAKER'S STATEMENT

Changing the world, one story at a time. That is our motto at TMI Project.

In all my years as a director of live theatre, never have I seen a reaction from an audience like the one we received after debuting our first performance in 2010. It was on a small stage at the Rosendale Theatre in Rosendale, NY that 12 women were willing to share their secrets; the parts of their stories that they usually leave out—the ones full of shame, fear, anger and guilt. After revealing their truths, and receiving a standing ovation by over 300 audience members, something shifted, and their shame was removed and replaced with pride and a recognition that their stories can inspire others. This is the essence of *Vicarious Resilience*: We all find healing when we tell our stories—not only the teller, but also the listener.

We knew we had to spread this healing phenomenon to a larger audience beyond the Hudson Valley and to amplify the voices of populations that often go unheard. We know this kind of connection is key to social justice movement building.

As we began our third year working with the Mental Health Association in Ulster County, we wanted to share a new story. We wanted to document the work with participants to show the *process* of transformation through our true storytelling workshops, to share the bravery it takes to find a buried story and be willing to share it with the world.

The result is this documentary—a powerful encapsulation of the deep healing that can happen when we are willing to reveal the things we are most ashamed of.

Over the course of the film, we successfully capture the process from the first session, where many of the participants express doubts and trepidation, to the storytelling performance before an audience of over 100, and a final follow-up session where they voice the ways in which the experience has positively transformed their lives. We learn that truth sets all of us free, and both storyteller and listener alike are endowed with vicarious resilience from sharing the truth and deeply listening.

—Eva Tenuto, July 2018



CAST



MORRIS BASSIK

Close with his grandmother as a young adult, Morris has always been saddened by her failure to understand his mental illness. Though she has passed away, Morris chooses to write a letter to her to attempt to explain what his life has been like living with schizophrenia.



HAYLEY DOWNS

Standing in the rubble of fractured relationships with two addict parents, Hayley attempts to understand her own relationship with drugs and alcohol, and most importantly, how to repair her relationship with herself.



BARBARA STEMKE

From yard sales to thrift stores, Barbara has accumulated clutter that has started to overtake her apartment. She examines why she keeps holding on to so much “stuff” and wonders if it might have to do with growing up void of not only material possessions, but also loving attention in a house that never felt like a “home.”

CAST



SARI BOTTON is a writer living in Kingston, NY. She is the editor of the award-winning anthology *Goodbye to All That: Writers on Loving and Leaving New York* and its follow-up *Never Can Say Goodbye: Writers on Their Unshakable Love for New York*. She has worked as a journalist, essayist, *New York Times* best-selling ghostwriter, and teacher of various kinds of writing at the college level, and for the Moth-style storytelling non-profit TMI Project. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *The Village Voice*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Marie Claire*, *More*, *The Rumpus*, plus other publications and anthologies.



ELLEN PENDEGAR has been the CEO of the Mental Health Association in Ulster County, New York for over 20 years. She is the Board Chairperson for the MHANYS. The MHA in Ulster County provides education, advocacy and direct services in many different forms/types. The MHA strives for optimal mental health for everyone and advocates for improvements in the mental health system. Ellen has been involved in Ulster County's SPEAK, Suicide Prevention Coalition, since its beginning. Ellen is a Certified ASIST, SafeTALK, SuicideTALK and Connect Trainer.



DENISE RANAGHAN, LMHC, CPRP is director of Peer Services at the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Service, Incorporated (NYAPRS) and served as Director of Wellness Services at MHA during filming. She has worked in the field of mental health for over 17 years, and is a certified WRAP facilitator who has both helped to start and support self-help groups and has made numerous presentations on trauma informed care, voice hearing and cultural diversity. Denise is also the author of "Institutional-Eyes," which profiled her experience in the military.



EVA TENUTO is the co-founder and executive director of TMI Project. She studied acting at American Academy of Dramatic Arts and went on to found The Women's Experimental Theater Group. In the last seven years Eva has brought TMI Project from her living room to a host of performance spaces, high schools, colleges, detention centers, mental health facilities and the United Nations. Eva is the editor and director of multiple solo shows, one of which was awarded Best Comedic Script of 2014 in the Untied Solo Festival. Eva's own true stories have been published in numerous anthologies.

CREW



CHRIS RAHM is an independent creative director specializing in film production and graphic design. He brings 20 years of experience with him and complements his design skill set with an ability to produce sharp, effective film projects for commercial, creative and advocacy applications. Chris has shot, edited and produced documentary films that have been featured on networks like VICELAND, Nat Geo and NBC Universal. Between films, Chris also works as a freelance editor and cinematographer, producing corporate video and commercial work for brands like United Healthcare, Oxfam and Invensys Controls.

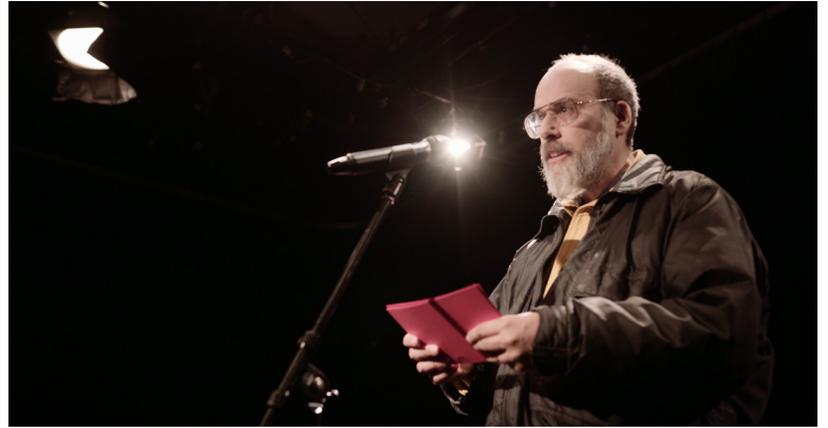


DEVIN PICKERING
Whether it's been from behind the camera or in the editing suite, Devin has spent the past 20 years telling stories. While past work has been seen on PBS, CNN, ESPN, and FOX television networks, Devin has put an emphasis on films relating to the environment, collaborating with Oscar nominee Robert Stone on "Pandora's Promise", earning the Green Award at the Sheffield Intl. Documentary Film Festival in 2013. Most recently, Devin has contributed cinematography and editing for Oceans 8 Films "Dear President Obama" (Viceland), and the ongoing documentary web series "The Hudson: A River At Risk."



KASHKA GLOWACKA is a producer with eleven years of professional experience in film and video production, graphic design and original marketing content. Her clients and collaborations include Ulster County Economic Development, Zen Mountain Monastery, Lockheed Martin, Columbia University, AHRC NYC, Community Healthcare Network NYC. She is a co-founder and a producer at an award winning film and video production company, Espresso Pictures where she is responsible for the development of scripts and production of original documentary and fiction work, TV ads, web videos, training videos and product presentations.

PHOTOS



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PRODUCTION CREDITS

**TMI PROJECT AND MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION IN ULSTER COUNTY
PRESENT A NORTHGUILD PRODUCTION**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Eva Tenuto, Ellen Pendegar

PRODUCERS

Kashka Glowacka, Chris Rahm, Devin Pickering

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Devin Pickering, Chris Rahm

DIRECTOR

Eva Tenuto

STARRING

Morris Bassik, Hayley Downs, Barbara Stemke
Eva Tenuto, Sari Botton, Ellen Pendegar,
Denise Ranaghan

FEATURING

Amber Hadigan, Beth Broun, Kate McCoy
Susan Grove, Kathryn Lucia, Marlan Barry

EDITORS

Kashka Glowacka, Chris Rahm

MUSIC COMPOSER

Benjamin Horn

AUDIO POST PRODUCTION

House of Love Sound Studio

CAMERA OPERATORS

Chris Rahm, Devin Pickering,
Francesco Cordaro, Chris Nostrand

LIVE SOUND ENGINEER

Chris Heitzman

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Marykate Marley, Benjamin Horn

SPECIAL THANKS

Maureen Bowers, Vincenza Dante, Amy Day
Sara DeRose, Kyra Greweling, Kathryn Lucia
Julie Novak, Blake Pfeil, Tameka Ramsey



WWW.VICARIOUSRESILIENCE.COM

PRESS CONTACT: EVA TENUTO | eva@tmiproject.org | 845.335.7910