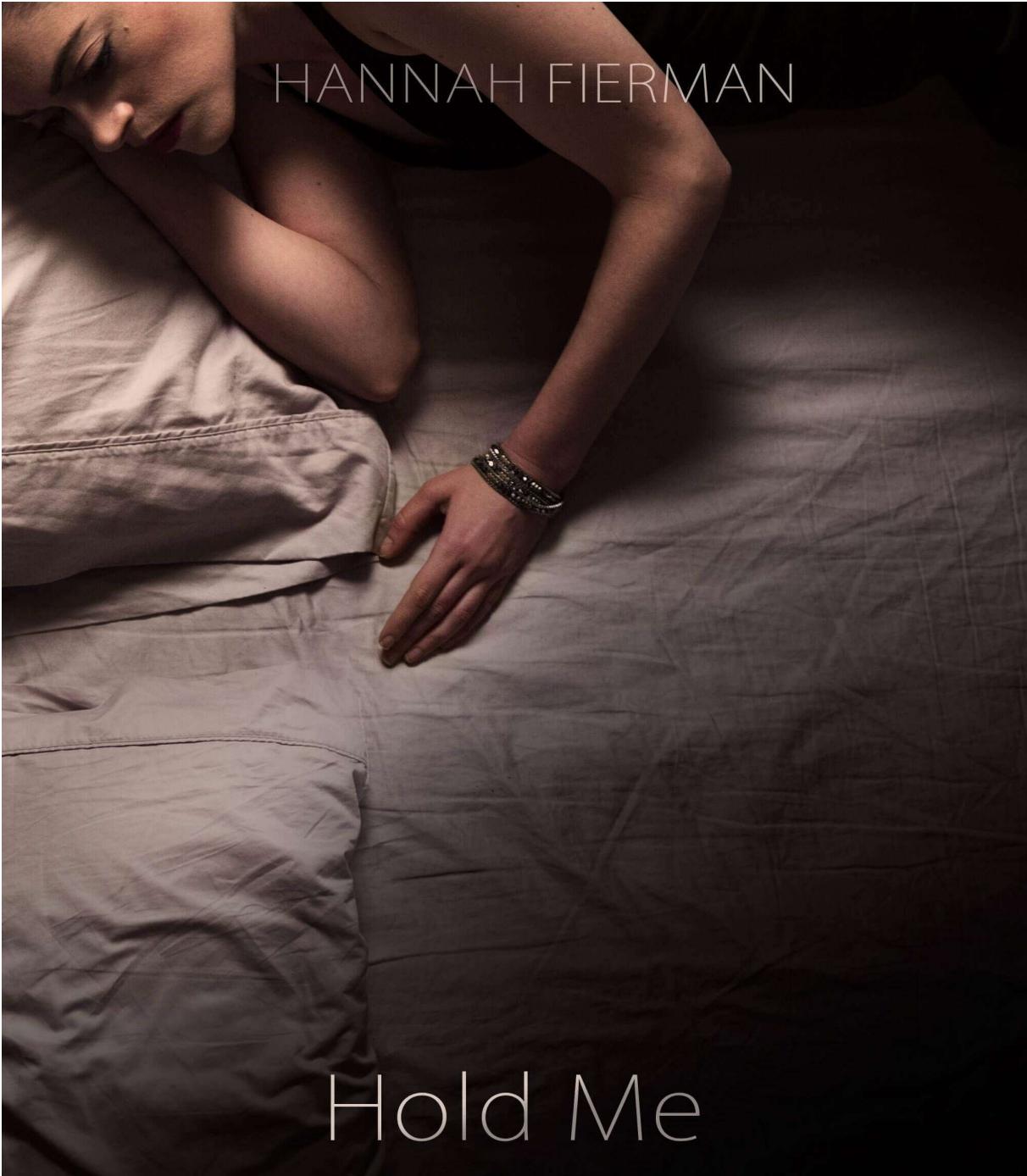


Hold Me (2016)

PRESS KIT

BARBORA DOSLIKOVÁ



HANNAH FIERMAN

Hold Me

ORIGINAL CLICHE ENTERTAINMENT INC. IN ASSOCIATION WITH STASNY FILM PRODUKTION PRESENTS HANNAH FIERMAN LAURA KENNY
ROB KRAKOVSKI AND DANIEL HARRY ORIGINAL MUSIC BY ALEXANDRA STRELISKI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AKSEL STASNY EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BRUCE SINCLAIR
CHRIS SEMENUK PRODUCED BY TEACE SNYDER AND AKSEL STASNY WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY TEACE SNYDER

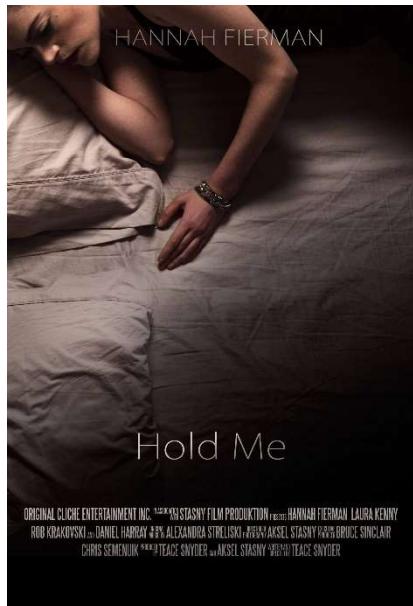
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Details

Title: Hold Me (2016)

Poster:



Film type: feature film

Genre: drama

Runtime: 89 min

Written and directed by: Teace Snyder

Produced by: Teace Snyder and Aksel Stasny

Starring: Hannah Rose Fierman, Laura Kenny, Daniel Harray, Rob Krakovski, Shannon Baker, Audrey Heningham, Heather Benton, Curtis Rind, Teace Snyder, Liana Shannon

Music: Alexandra Strélsiki

Distributed by: Original Cliché Entertainment, Inc.; distributed online via: VHX, iTunes, Amazon and Google Play

Released on: November 20th 2016

Shot in: Edmonton (Alberta, Canada) and New York City (NY, USA)

Language: English; subtitles in five languages: Spanish, German, French, Dutch, Japanese

Festival participation: 40th Montreal World Film Festival, 13th Rome International Film Festival

Logline

Hold Me is the story of a caregiver whose job it is to accompany people through doctor assisted dying.

Synopsis

After accompanying a friend's father through his final hours, Hannah finds herself conflicted and uncertain. She can barely bring herself to do her job any longer and soon, her own mother is hospitalized. Desperate for money to pay for the medical bills, Hannah agrees to the unthinkable—to meet someone before she holds them—to get to know someone before she has to watch them die.

As her life spirals out of control, Hannah tries to keep herself together for the sake of those around her. But her judgment falters and her mother's health suddenly worsens. She can't escape the path she's chosen or the memories of all those she's ushered to death's door. With no other direction to turn, Hannah faces her pain and allows herself to grieve.

Cast & Cast Bios

Hannah Fierman



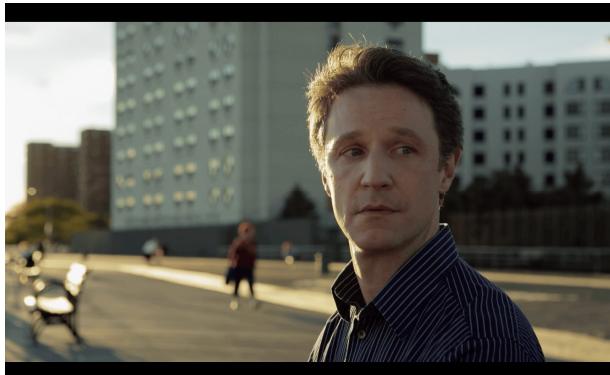
Hannah Fierman was born in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, England as Hannah Rose Fierman. She is an actress and producer, also known for [V/H/S](#) (2012), [SiREN](#) (2016) and [American Hell](#) (2014).

Laura Kenny



Laura Kenny is an actress, also known for [10 Things I Hate About You](#) (1999), [Harry and the Hendersons](#) (1987) and [Judas Kiss](#) (2011).

Daniel Harray



Daniel Harray is an actor and writer, also known for [Fulfilled: A Halloween Story](#) (1999), [Interrogation](#) (2016) and [Una: A Dark Faerie Tale](#) (2016).

Liana Shannon

Liana Shannon is an actress, also known for [Fitz](#) (2007) and [The Plateau](#) (2010).

Shannon Baker

Shannon Baker is an actor, also known for [Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take 2 1/2](#) (2005).

Heather Benton

Heather Benton is an actress, also known for [Bust a Move 2](#) (1999) and [Quietus](#) (2012).

Audrey Heningham

Audrey Heningham is an actress and writer, also known for [Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take 2 1/2](#) (2005), [Due uomini per Pauline](#) (1993) and [We Rob The Bank](#) (2012).

Robert Krakovski

Robert Krakovski is an actor and editor, also known for [Struggle](#) (2002) and [Heads Up](#) (2013).

Curtis Rind

Curtis Rind is an actor, also known for [Echo Park](#) (2006), [Rock Paper Dice Enter](#) (2014) and [Money](#) (2010).

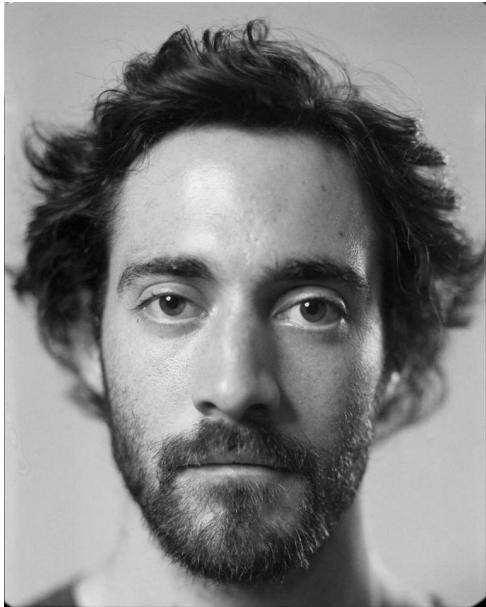
Selected Crew Bios

Teace Snyder, Writer/Director/Producer



Teace Snyder is a Canadian writer and filmmaker based out of Edmonton Alberta. His work centers on controversy and is designed to help broach controversial subjects to the public. A lifelong background as a novelist and formally educated as a filmmaker at the New York Film Academy in the style of “guerilla filmmaking” (small indie filmmaking crews that manage to accomplish a big-budget-feel for very little money).

His thesis film [Blindfold](#) (2011) received multiple awards, was featured on a number of socially conscious sites and fan-created foreign-subtitled versions of the film were subsequently created that helped facilitate a greater global reach. Following the completion of [Blindfold](#), Teace moved onto his first feature film [Hold Me](#): the story of a woman who accompanies people in the final moments of life as they go through the process of doctor assisted dying.

Aksel Stasny, Producer

Aksel Stasny was born in Vienna, Austria surrounded by the art of the country and his father, acclaimed photographer Horst Stasny. After finishing his degree in computer science and business at the HTBLA Leonding, Aksel continued his studies at the University of Vienna focusing on Theory of Theatre, Film and Media. After working at well-known Viennese production companies See'Ya Produktion and Close up – Filmgesellschaft mbH, he attended the New York Film Academy in New York City. In 2010, Aksel's American directorial debut, [Coming Home](#) (2010) was officially selected by the renown

Montreal World Film Festival. The following year, his second film [3 Needs](#) (2011) celebrated its world premiere at the Montreal World Film Festival.

Aksel Stasny's body of work was celebrated at film festivals all over the world, such as the Busan Film Festival in South Korea, PUFF Film Festival in Hong Kong, LA Pacific Filmfest, San Diego Asian Film Festival, New York Independent Film and has won awards at the Oscar qualifying Rhode Island International Film Festival and Canada International Film Festival.

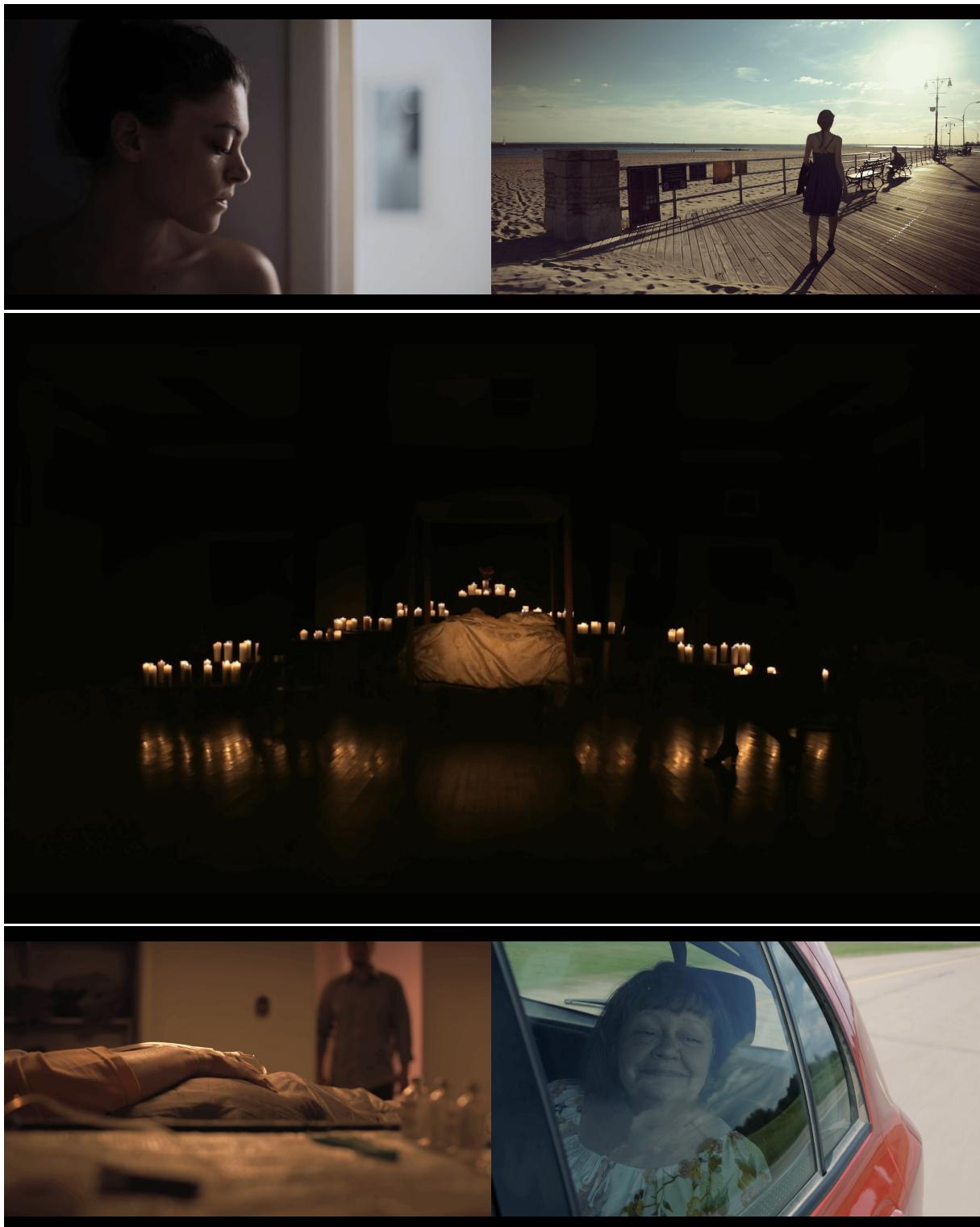
Currently living in New York City, Aksel Stasny is working as an independent director and director of photography for clients just as Ferrari, Goldman Sachs, Juicy Couture, Louis Vuitton, Miller Lite, BF Goodrich, Salvatore Ferragamo and W Magazine.

Alexandra Stréliski, Music

Music Alexandra Stréliski is a pianist and composer from Montreal. Her childhood years were spent between Montreal and Paris, following her piano from one continent to the next, while absorbing their musical traditions. She then studied at the University of McGill Conservatory and the University of Montreal. Relying on her academic background, Alexandra developed a minimalist and instinctive artistic approach. She composed solo piano pieces that would appear on her debut album *Pianoscope* in 2010. Her compositions are a haunting blend of melancholy and light, taking listeners into a cinematic dreamworld, not unlike those of Satie, Glass and Nyman.

Alexandra presently composes for film and television. She composed music for films [Hold Me](#) (2016), [PerfectMatch](#) (2015) and [Demolition: Amare e vivere](#) (2015) as well as for numerous short films and documentaries. Alexandra's piano song *Prelude* was featured in Jean-Marc Vallée's Oscar-winning movie [Dallas Buyers Club](#) (2013) as well as at the 2013 Oscar ceremony.

Film Stills





Outtakes

A 12-minute video of outtakes can be accessed at: [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/X1ZSxJRKn8Q](https://youtu.be/X1ZSxJRKn8Q)



Director Statement

Hold Me is not a film about doctor assisted dying, it's a film about having a conversation about end of life care. A conversation about dying, about hospice, palliative care and about how hard all of these conversations can be to have at all. I created the film in this way because, before people are willing to discuss something as difficult as the final moments of life, they have to be compelled to talk about it. That's what this film aims to do. That's what this film is all about.

Hold Me is told in a fictional context, from the vantage point of a caregiver who works in close conjunction with medical professionals in a way that is not legally sanctioned by the state. The themes of the film are presented in this unorthodox way because, in the for-profit medical bureaucracies of most states within the United States, it is reasonable to suppose that to provide the proper care and services for the sick and dying, that some people will lend their hearts to fill in for the many holes ingrained in such a problematic system. The character of Hannah is one of such people. And because of the way in which she is forced to do her job in secret, she is constrained by the burden of never being able to talk about it to anyone.

The unfortunate reality of being bottled up and confined with the grief of those she has secretly assisted in death haunts Hannah relentlessly. She has sacrificed herself to alleviate their burden and in doing so has burdened herself. Such is often a natural aside to those who work with the dying, losing loved ones, friends and confidants over and over again. And with that process of loss comes the inevitable demands of grief. It is a part of the healing process after all to accept the pain that such experiences can bring. And this part of the healing process is exactly that which the character of Hannah has never truly allowed herself to indulge—Growing more and more strained by the sacrifices she has made until she can no longer bear to carry them.

The intention of the film is to act as a non-confrontational means of broaching numerous relevant, controversial subjects to the public in a way that does not add to the burden of the viewer's personal grief or losses but rather contextualizes grief in a way that alleviates its weight. Everyone can identify with the pain that accompanies death and a great many can relate with the lingering heartbreak that underlies such losses when a loved one has been made to suffer unnecessarily at the end of their life. Conversations about advanced directives are often left until the very end and due in large part to semantics looming over every detail

of the final moments of someone's life, the very end can often be laden with struggle and strife. *Hold Me* is a story about how it's ok to be overwhelmed sometimes, about how those who work with the dying know these realities all too well, and, most of all, it's a story about healing.

Ten Most Frequently Asked Questions of Teace Snyder During the Making of Hold Me

1. What compelled you to make Hold Me and to tell this story?

I first had the idea for *Hold Me* when I was spooning with my girlfriend and I got a flashback of a photo from an old anthropology textbook. It was of two people who had been buried by volcanic ash, holding one another. And I thought about how beautiful and profound that idea was. And then I thought about 'what if it were somebody's job to hold people?' 'How would it affect them?' 'How would they cope with the emotional toll?' And 'How would they eventually work through that emotional toll to be ok again?' I started writing the script the next day.

2. The film touches on doctor assisted dying. What's your opinion on the matter?

My opinion is that it's a discussion that needs to be had and heard all over the world. In many places doctor assisted dying is not being sufficiently addressed and because of that to many people it's altogether out of reach. We need to talk about that. Everyone. Everywhere. We need to talk about it.

3. What's the underlying message of the film?

Hold Me challenges us to view end of life care in the context of a kind farewell. The film encourages a deeper discussion about grief and, moreover, encourages viewers to accept how difficult such discussions can be to have at all. It's ok to be overwhelmed. It helps to talk about it. That's the message of the film.

4. What made you think of Hannah Fierman for the lead?

She was perfect for the part. She's mostly known for horror films but her depth as an actress can be fully realized better in drama. I actually wrote the film with Hannah in mind. I felt she conveyed a haunted presence that fit the part beautifully. I already knew her through numerous mutual friends, many of whom ended up working on the film as well. So it was definitely a plus to be able to have a lighthearted repertoire between us all on set.

5. What made you decide to film in between Edmonton, Canada and New York?

Those are my two homes. Grew up in Edmonton, went to school in New York. The film is set in an ambiguous location in the US and, as long as you don't film mainstream locations or identifiable landmarks, New York just as easily doubles for other parts of the coast.

6. You wrote, directed, produced, edited and acted in the film. Do you always take on so many roles in your work?

Actually, yes. I went to a film school that taught us to do things that way. We were responsible for everything about every film we made. So, I sort of just got used to doing it that way.

7. Your background is mostly writing novels. What drew you to screenwriting and filmmaking?

Believe it or not, I only wrote novels because I didn't have the ability to make films. When I was 9 years old, I had my heart set on making the sequel to the first Jurassic Park by myself in my basement using dinosaurs I had crafted out of plasticine. Buuuuuut... I soon realized that was REALLY hard, REALLY expensive and nobody was gonna give a 9-year-old millions of dollars to make a movie. So... I wrote novels until I was experienced enough as a storyteller to make the transition into film.

8. Your work centers on controversy. Why do you feel drawn to telling stories that provoke people?

I tell stories that might provoke people if those stories weren't told in an ambiguous, accepting and kind way. Controversy is only controversial if approached in a way that feels threatening. It's important to grasp that controversy is a byproduct of insufficient understanding. If you completely understand context and circumstance, you diffuse controversy. It only has power if people are uninformed or unwilling to engage in a subject. So, I feel it's my responsibility as an artist to bring awareness. Not to propagandize a particular vantage point of my own. But simply to take a magnifying glass and focus on a subject delicately enough that it doesn't burst into flames. All of my work centers on controversy for this reason—to make it feel less threatening so that people are willing to talk about it.

9. Your plans for Hold Me don't stop with this film. How is it you're planning on continuing the project?

A big part of what *Hold Me* is all about is presenting difficult conversations about grief to the public in a way that makes them feel less cumbersome. The Caregiver Outreach campaign that will be released on the film's website over the course of the next few years takes the narrative pretense of the film and transitions it to be applicable within the real world. In a nutshell, we're gathering professional testimonials from caregivers who work closely with patients at the end of life and then recording what they think and feel about grief. It's our hope that by doing this, over time we can create a community of catharsis and reflection available online for everyone. Because of this continuation of the theme of the film, *Hold Me* isn't just a singular narrative feature. Instead, it's a hybrid narrative/documentary project intended to have a very real therapeutic affect within the real world. It's a movie that bridges the gap to reality.

10. What is your greatest creative influence?

The next generation of filmmakers is partially informed by a related but also distinctive genre of entertainment: videogames. So, the case, not only for myself, but for others as well, is that media attentiveness, focus and emotional culmination are more pronounced and analyzed by viewers than they've ever been before. People who grow up playing videogames are accustomed to looking at an environment as if it contains 'clues' for them to discover. Because of this, they're naturally inclined to delve deeper into narrative constructions and alternative realities. This is important for filmmakers because it means more of the nuanced language filmmakers use is going to be heard and listened for consciously by the audience. So, my greatest creative influences have been both videogames AND listening to the insights of gamers. I actually co-authored a book on this subject but... yeah... put simply, videogames are changing everything and most people are completely unaware of how profound and far reaching that transition is. The next creative generation is going to be hugely influenced by gaming.

Interviews with Actors

A 3-minute video of *Hold Me*'s main actress, Hannah Fierman, answering questions from the audience at the US première of the film at the 13th International Rome Festival on September 16th 2016, in Rome, GA, USA can be accessed at: <HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/HWJD-7BZ22M>



Caregiver Outreach Campaign

The central focus of the film *Hold Me* is Hannah's struggle with speaking openly about her experiences with loss and grief. Her character in the film is representative of the viewers own reservations towards speaking about death.

The Caregiver Outreach campaign is an ongoing collection of testimonials from professional caregivers working closely with people at the end of life. This will form a growing assortment of audio recordings speaking about end of life care, doctor assisted dying, philosophy on life, caregiving, overcoming grief and more.

Caregiver Panel Discussion

A 49-minute video of a caregiver panel discussion titled "Discussion on caregiving at the end of life" can be accessed at: <HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/I3GTWUFNXVO>

The panel discussion was organized alongside the Edmonton, Alberta, Canada première of the feature film *Hold Me* on November 20th 2016. Our aim was to let the audience have their questions about the end of life answered by experienced caregivers and to use the discussion alongside the film to inspire the discussion about various aspects pertaining to the end of life.



The panelists were:

Dr. Nekolaichuk, Counselling Psychologist

Dr. Armstrong, Family Physician

Reverend Susan Oliver, Anglican Parish of Christ Church

Dr. Leier, Clinical Ethicist

The panelists answered the following five questions:

1. What's a valuable story or account you can share about someone you've accompanied?
2. In the film *Hold Me*, Hannah struggles with talking about her grief. What advice would you offer people struggling with expressing or coping with their feelings?

3. How do you manage the emotional toll that working with the dying can bring?
4. What do you feel people want from a caregiver at the end of life?
5. What has working with the dying taught you about life?

Quotes from the panel discussion:

"Feelings are not bad or good, feelings just are. They're a part of who we are. And it's ok to express them in different ways. For some, it will be through conversation and it will be through connecting with other people. For others, it might be through the creative arts."

Dr. Nekolaichuk, Counselling Psychologist

Links: Official Website, IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes

Official website: <HTTP://HOLDMETHEMOVIE.COM/>

IMDb: <HTTP://WWW.IMDB.COM/TITLE/TT4960212/>

Rotten Tomatoes: HTTPS://WWW.ROTTENTOMATOES.COM/M/HOLD_ME_2016

Links: Trailer, Screener

Trailer: <HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/FTKHTCG1S6U>

Screener (password-protected): <HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/207525037> (Password: HoldSpace)

Links: Online Press Kit, Press Mentions, Wikipedia Article

Online press kit: <HTTP://HOLDMETHEMOVIE.COM/PRESS-RELEASE.HTML>

Press mentions: HTTP://WWW.DYINGWITHDIGNITY.CA/HOLD_ME_FILM

Wikipedia article: [HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/DRAFT:HOLD_ME_\(2016\)](HTTPS://EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/DRAFT:HOLD_ME_(2016))

Contacts

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