

CHANGEFOCUSMEDIA

PO Box 240 Balmain NSW 2041 Australia
info@changefocusmedia.com.au changefocusmedia.com.au
ABN 44 080 705 933

in association with Kalejdoskop Film, Warsaw

PRESS KIT



www.ancemymother.com.au

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73 min Feature Documentary
57 min TV Version

+ DVD with extras
+ Study Guide free download

'An epic story of survival told against a backdrop of war and its aftermath. With consummate skill, Sophia Turkiewicz weaves the personal with the historical, giving depth and meaning to both.'

Peter Weir

'It is inspiring to see something made with passion directly from the heart. Sophia's mother's story is amazing almost beyond belief & the interweaving of her saga with Sophia's own story very deft, revealing & fascinating. It's a rare human story told with compassion & insight. You will touch people all over the world with this film.'

Bruce Beresford

MEDIA AND SALES CONTACTS

Rod Freedman, Producer – info@changefocusmedia.com.au
Tel + 61 2 98103540 Mob +61 (0)418 219053

Sophia Scheduling, Director - sophiascheduling@icloud.com
Tel +61 2 9360 6444 Mob +61 (0)417 453772

Principal Investor



Produced in association with



Australian Distributor
www.roninfilms.com



Funding auspiced by
Kresy Siberia Foundation



INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

AUDIENCE AWARD, Krakow Film Festival, Poland

TIME OF HISTORY AWARD, Valladolid International Film Festival, Spain

PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING HUMAN VALUES, 26th Polish Film Festival in America, Chicago

BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM, Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival, USA

BEST DOCUMENTARY, Tiburon International Film Festival, USA

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE, St Louis International Film Festival, USA

SPECIAL AWARD, Prowincjonalia Film Festival, Poland

SPECIAL AWARD Niepokorni, Niezłomni, Wiekłeci Film Festival Gdynia, Poland

AWARD, International Historical & Military Film Festival, Warsaw

PRIZE, Cinema With A Soul, Warsaw

AUSTRALIAN AWARDS

BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY, Australian Directors Guild Awards

AUDIENCE AWARD BEST DOCUMENTARY, Adelaide Film Festival

AUDIENCE AWARD BEST FILM, Canberra International Film Festival

BEST MUSIC IN DOCUMENTARY, **CEZARY SKUBISZEWSKI**, Australian Screen Music Awards

BEST EDITING FEATURE DOCUMENTARY, **DENISE HASLEM**, Australian Screen Editors Awards

BEST DOCUMENTARY BIOGRAPHY, ATOM Awards

BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY Nomination, AACTA Awards

BEST SOUND Nomination, AACTA Awards

FINALIST Sydney Film Festival Documentary Competition

SHORTLISTED, SCRIPTWRITING & MULTICULTURAL AWARDS NSW Premier's Literary Awards

Australia: Adelaide, Canberra, Sydney, Launceston & Caloundra Film Festivals

International:

FIPA, Biarritz, France

Valladolid International Film Festival, Spain

Krakow Film Festival, Poland

'Niepokorni, Niezłomni, Wiekłeci' Film Festival, Gdynia, Poland

Prowincjonalia Film Festival, Poland

'Generations Remember' Kresy Siberia Conference, Warsaw

Cinema With A Soul Festival, Warsaw

Edmonton International Film Festival, Canada

Festival Internacional de Televisao de Sao Paulo, Brazil

16th Rencontres Internationales du Cinéma des Antipodes, St Tropez France

Festival Regards d'Ailleurs, Dreux, France

Rhode Island International Film Festival USA

Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival USA

Kansas International Film Festival USA

Polish Film Festival in America, Chicago USA

Seattle Polish Film Festival USA

Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival USA

Los Angeles Polish Film Festival USA

Womens History Month Film Festival USA

Tiburon International Film Festival USA

Vilnius International Film Festival, Lithuania

Moscow International Documentary Film Festival, Russia

Biografilm Festival, Bologna Italy

Down Under Berlin Film Festival, Germany

Batumi International Art House Film Festival, Georgia

International Historical & Military Film Festival, Warsaw

International Festival of World Cinema, Milan

St Louis International Film Festival, USA

PolArt 2015 Film Festival, Melbourne

Mumbai International Film Festival, India

DOCfeed, Netherlands

iDocs International Film Festival, Beijing

SELECTED MEDIA

The Huffington Post, Greg Archer

'...compelling ...soul-stirring documentary'

Canberra Film Festival Director, Lex Lindsay

'...a remarkable story... This moving documentary bravely lays bare the complexity of generational displacement, not uncommon in an Australia built upon migration and resettled refugees, while celebrating the enduring bond of family love and its endless power of forgiveness.'

Jason Di Rosso, The Final Cut, ABC Radio National

'Few films or TV shows have captured the Australian migrant experience with as much depth as a new documentary by Sophia Turkiewicz.'

Adelaide Film Festival Director, Amanda Duthie

'...a compelling personal journey... a finely crafted story... a universal theme - Mother Love'... At once brave and gentle, this is a study of the way generations are inextricably connected by the thick and complex bonds of love.'

ABC Arts, Julie Rigg

'... a magnificent film about heroism, resentment, and forgiveness, a film of raw honesty.'

The Australian, Evan Williams

'...a bright jewel'

Sydney Morning Herald, Phillipa Hawker

'... moving, thoughtful and loving'

Australian Financial Review, John McDonald

'... exactly the kind of film we need most urgently right now...'

Canberra Times, Chris Wallace:

'a remarkable documentary... Don't miss it!'

Canberra Times

"...a brave, bittersweet reminiscence... an intensely personal story..."

The Age, Jake Wilson:

'...a settling of accounts...'

Adelaide Advertiser, Penelope Debelle:

'... betrayal and abandonment...'

Movie Critical, Nicki Newton-Plater

'Turkiewicz's ode to her mother is as heartbreaking and shocking as it is loving and inspiring. It is a rare experience that opens the doors of an incredible family history and invites all in to witness their pain and triumph.'

MEDIA LINKS

The Huffington Post Nov 2014

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/greg-archer/agents-of-change>

The New York Polish Daily News

<http://www.dziennik.com/publicystyka/artykul/opowiadalam-te-historie-przez-cale-zycie>

At The Movies Review 22 July 2014

<http://www.abc.net.au/atthemovies/txt/s4031353.htm>

ABC TV – Anne Maria Nicholson video and article

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-09-05/documentary-charts-life-from-gulag-to-adelaide/4932956>

Julie Rigg ABC Arts ‘Once My Mother Shows Audiences Crave Intelligent Films

<http://www.abc.net.au/arts/blog/Julie-Rigg/Film-Festival-success-Once-My-Mother-shows-audiences-crave-intelligent-films/default.htm>

Gary Maddox, The Good Weekend ‘Finding My Mother’

<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/movies/filmmaker-sophia-turkiewicz-lifetime-journey-making-once-my-mother-20140707-3bh7f.html>

Phillippa Hawker The Age and Sydney Morning Herald 24 July 2014

<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/movies/once-my-mother-review-sophia-turkiewicz-eplores-the-painful-truth-behind-her-own-fiction-20140723-zvz0b.html>

Sylvia Lawson review ‘Somewhere along the line, we’re implicated’

<http://inside.org.au/somewhere-along-the-line-were-implicated/#sthash>

John McDonald, Australian Financial Review 26 July 2014

<http://johnmcdonald.net.au/2014/once-my-mother/>

702ABC Richard Glover - Drive ‘A Mother’s Betrayal’

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2014/07/14/4045797.htm?site=sydney>

Radio National Late Night Live – Philip Adams

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/my-mother2c-my-heroine/5601876>

ABC Classic FM – Margaret Throsby - Midday – with Sophia Turkiewicz

<http://www.abc.net.au/classic/content/2014/07/28/4052934.htm>

Movie Critical Interview

<http://www.moviecritical.net/2014/07/interview-with-once-my-mother-director.html>

And the film review:

<http://www.moviecritical.net/2014/06/once-my-mother-2014.html>

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

A Polish mother's wartime escape from a Siberian gulag during World War Two has lasting repercussions for her daughter growing up in post war Australia.

LOGLINE

Australian filmmaker Sophia Turkiewicz investigates the reasons why her Polish mother abandoned her in an orphanage as a child and uncovers the truth behind her mother's wartime escape from a Siberian gulag, leaving Sophia to confront her own capacity for forgiveness.

ONE PARA SYNOPSIS

When Australian filmmaker Sophia Turkiewicz was seven years old, her Polish mother, Helen, abandoned her in an Adelaide orphanage. Sophia never forgot this maternal act of betrayal. Now in middle age, as Sophia examines her troubled relationship with Helen, she discovers the story behind Helen's miraculous wartime escape from a Siberian gulag, her subsequent survival against the odds and the truth about an historic betrayal involving Stalin and the Allies. With Helen sliding into dementia, Sophia must confront her own demons. Did she ever truly know this woman who became her mother? Does she have it in her heart to forgive her? And is it too late?

ONE PAGE SYNOPSIS

Abandoned in an Adelaide orphanage at the age of seven, Sophia feels betrayed by her mother, Helen. In early adulthood, Sophia still feels angry and resentful. Her mother is now married with two more children. Sophia rejects her new family and refuses contact with her mother.

In her twenties, Sophia is now a filmmaker living in far away Sydney, embracing her independence but deep down, blaming her mother when things go wrong in her life. Yet Sophia finds herself drawn back to her mother's life, using Helen's stories as inspiration for her films but disguising them as fiction.

Thirty years on, Helen has dementia. Sophia starts to question their deeply troubled relationship. She digs out an unfinished documentary film about Helen that she'd started as a film student years before and finds herself compelled to finish it.

Returning to her mother's former homeland of Eastern Poland in what is now Ukraine, Sophia begins to trace her mother's traumatic childhood. Orphaned as a young girl, Helen grows up in a rural Polish village. As an adolescent, she's illiterate and homeless, somehow surviving on the streets.

As Sophia re-examines her mother's life, she discovers the historical truth behind Helen's deportation to a Siberian gulag. Helen was one of almost two million Poles who were incarcerated in Russian gulags during World War Two. The truth behind this little known episode of history reveals a dark story of betrayal involving Stalin and the Allies.

Miraculously given their freedom, Helen is part of a vast exodus of Poles who travel from Russia with no food or organised transport. Over months, they trek thousands of miles to Uzbekistan and eventually, freedom in Persia. Most of the Poles perish on this treacherous journey. Helen is one of the few survivors and she's sent to a Polish refugee camp in Lusaka, Africa. Here she meets Valdiero, the love of her life, an Italian prisoner-of-war who becomes Sophia's father.

Finally, a decade after leaving Poland, Helen and her baby daughter arrive in Australia as refugees. Not long afterwards, she abandons Sophia in an orphanage.

With growing insight, Sophia starts to re-assess the troubled relationship with her mother. But as Helen slips out of reach, Sophia must confront her own demons. Did she ever truly know this woman who became her mother? Does she have it in her heart to forgive her? And is it too late?

KEY CREATIVE PERSONNEL

Director, Writer Sophia Turkiewicz

Producer Rod Freedman

Associate Producer, Australia Bob Connolly

Associate Producers, Poland Janusz Skalkowski

Kalejdoskop Film Kamil Skalkowski

Editor Denise Haslem ASE

Composer Cezary Skubiszewski

Cinematography Rod Freedman, Joanne Parker,

Stephen Scheduling & others

PERSPECTIVE BY BOB CONNOLLY

OSCAR NOMINEE and ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

ONCE MY MOTHER is one of the most powerful and moving films I've ever seen - an exquisitely poignant journey of reconciliation.

It's a beautifully realized elucidation of Sophia's growing understanding, compassion and forgiveness for her mother as she delves into her extraordinary life. From that delving comes gradual comprehension of the heights and depths of her mother's heroic struggle to survive, gradual realization of the depth of her mother's protective love for her only child.

But as Sophia's knowledge and understanding expands, her mother's mind contracts. By the time Sophia is fully ready to forgive, indeed to ask forgiveness for her own cruel rejection, her mother's mind has almost faded and fading with it is her ability to grant her daughter absolution.

That is an exquisitely painful narrative denouement, unbearably tragic, almost Sophoclean in its psychological reach.

The fact that **ONCE MY MOTHER** also manages along the way to tell a powerful story about refugees, about mothers and daughters, about survival, about war and cruelty - just adds lustre to this extraordinary work.

I don't usually get involved in other people's films but this time, I was really happy to make an exception.

Bob Connolly
October 2013
Sydney

PRODUCTION STORY BY SOPHIA TURKIEWICZ, DIRECTOR

ONCE MY MOTHER is the story of two films – the one I started in 1976 and never finished and the one I've made now. The story begins in 1976 when I was a film school student and shot 16mm black and white footage of my mother and family, intending to make a documentary. But the footage was never edited. Looking back, I lacked the skill, the maturity and the perspective to do her story justice. The rushes lay in film cans in my hot attic cupboard for over thirty years. Occasionally, I'd come across them and I'd think that I should check out those rushes. But it all seemed too hard.

Then in 2008, I finally had a reason to dig out the footage. I'd been watching my mother declining into dementia over several years and I realized that she was forgetting not only the stories of her life, but also who her family was, including me. Suddenly, it became important to see what was in those cans. It seems now like they'd been lying there for years in that dark cupboard, waiting until I was ready.

What a surprise it was to see my mother's younger self, aged in her early fifties in 1976, come to life before my eyes. After years of seeing her lost and confused, I'd myself forgotten what she had once been like. The footage revealed the person she'd once been. Despite all the tragic events of her life, I primarily remember that she had a playful way of looking at the world. This positive quality may well have been important in keeping her alive during those early years of surviving on the streets and in a Soviet labour camp.

I realized then that I had to finish this story of my mother's life. I started filming again, with whatever resources I could find. Her memory was entirely unreliable. At times she was remarkably lucid. At others, she had no memory of what had happened in her life.

I knew I was in a race against time. So I started shooting whatever I could with whatever resources I could find. These usually involved non-professional equipment and people so that at least I had a record of her declining years and her remaining memories.

Then in 2007, I was invited to Poland to screen my feature film, *Silver City*, at the Wroclaw Film Festival as part of a retrospective of the work of Polish/Australian actor Gosia Dobrowolska. I took the opportunity to search for my mother's village in what had once been eastern Poland and was now part of Ukraine. Eventually, I located Oleszow (now Oleshiv), just east of what had been the regional town of Stanislawow (now Ivano Frankivsk). With my husband Stephen in tow as cameraman, we filmed my arrival in the village, meeting various locals and discovering my mother's old family home.

This first trip to Oleshiv affected me profoundly. Before then, my sense of who I was occurred somehow in a vacuum. I had no family connection to any past generation beyond that of my mother. I had a stepfather and two brothers in Australia but there were no links back beyond this one generation. There were no surviving aunts or uncles, no nieces or nephews, no grandparents in our family. When my mother spoke of her own mother, it never occurred to me she was speaking about a woman who was my grandmother. I'd never even called her my 'grandmother' – it was always 'your mother' when we discussed her. Now here I was in the village, tramping through the fields and along dirt tracks that my relations had also walked along. They suddenly became real. I could imagine them. They were no longer abstract ideas. For the first time I understood what it feels like to have a generational past.

I was hoping to find a direct link to blood relatives but that didn't happen. I found a number of indirect links that let me put parts of my family jigsaw together. And I came back to Australia knowing that I *had* to make the film - somehow.

My producer, Rod Freedman, came on board in 2010. Rod was interested in my story because there were strong resonances in his own family history. Rod's Jewish

grandparents had migrated in the early 1900's from Lithuania to South Africa and in 1997, he made *UNCLE CHATZKEL*, a personal documentary about his 93 year old Lithuanian great uncle.

The story of **ONCE MY MOTHER** has relevance for the Jewish community because twenty per cent of the Poles deported to the USSR were Jewish. Stalin was not anti-Semitic in the way Hitler was, Stalin was anti-Polish. The deportations were organized to get rid of troublesome groups such as political elites, the intelligentsia and community leaders. If you happened to fall into one of these categories, and were also Jewish, you were deported.

Stalin's strategy was to deport entire families – if you were a troublemaker that meant that your whole family couldn't be trusted. But as well as deportations of organized groups, huge numbers of people were randomly deported. If the Soviet police came to collect a family who had fled, they were just as likely to pick whoever happened to be next door or walking along the street. Like my mother, tens of thousands of people ended up in Siberia without any idea why they were there.

Rod and I began working together by filming my mother in her old aged home in Adelaide. With no funding, but now with a mass of unedited footage, we held a fundraiser at Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation and raised enough money to edit a rough cut of the story.

We were lucky to discover the Kresy Siberia Foundation who agreed to auspice tax-deductible donations for the project. KSF was created in 2001 to 'research, record and remember' the experiences of Polish families swept up in the deportations to Siberia. Rod and I filmed survivor interviews of Poles living in Australia for the Kresy Siberia Virtual Museum. (<http://kresy-siberia.org/muzeum>). It was so moving to hear the personal stories of what had happened to so many other Poles – each story echoing my mother's story and each just as tragic in its own way.

I was fortunate to find an oral history recording that my mother had done for the National Library of Australia and have used that in the film to voice part of her story.

In 2012, Rod and I were invited to be on the jury at the Gdynia Film Festival in Poland. This was a great opportunity to return to shoot further material. In Warsaw, we enlisted a young crew to shoot various recreations, wanting to lift the film out of a straight, documentary format. Then we travelled to Ukraine to shoot in and around my mother's village, Oleshiv. With the help of our translator, Mariyka, a local from the next village of Ostrynia, we spent ten days shooting more recreations and other material. We found a young village girl to play 'Young Helen' and received warm hospitality from local families.

In late 2012, we finally received funding from Screen Australia's prestigious Signature Docs program and raised the rest of the budget. Thinking back, it was fortunate that the film took so long to make. If I'd told this story when I was younger, I wouldn't have been able to do it justice. And before the early 90's there were serious obstacles in finding any historical information in communist countries. It was only with the fall of communism that the archives finally opened. So by the time I got serious, information was becoming available - if you knew where to look.

I wanted the focus of my story to be on the ordinary people who experienced the events of the war. I recount the broad military story, but it's the civilian experience that most interests me. A shocking fact is that while the total military losses of World War II are estimated at 14 million, total civilian losses are estimated at around 27 million. My mother was just one of millions of people whose lives were torn apart.

The film is also a story about refugees and their resilience, fortitude and survival. My mother Helen and I, were part of the huge wave of refugees who arrived in Australia after World War Two. Despite some fear and resistance, we were welcomed. From refugees we quickly turned into productive citizens and helped transform Australia into a dynamic, multicultural society. How different it is for today's refugees, with Government

policies that fuel people's fears and generate mean-spiritedness, not open hearts. By making the contrast between 'then' and 'now', my film is a reminder that there is a different way to deal with the 'refugee' issue. I will be happy if my film contributes to the public conversation regarding refugees that continues to rage in Australia.

When I started on this film, I had planned to focus entirely on my mother's life, with no intention of putting myself in the picture. It was only gradually that I realized that I had to be part of this story. As I say in the film, I had 'plundered' my mother's life to make various fictional films in my career as a drama director. Now that I was making my first documentary about the 'truth' of my mother's life, I realized I had to be as honest with myself. In that sense, **ONCE MY MOTHER** is a story about mothers and daughters, about parents and children. I hope it will prompt people to ask questions of their own parents and record their stories before it's too late. I feel fortunate that I can pass something on to my son so that he and his future children will have a record of the lives of their antecedents.

At its deepest level, I was interested in investigating that most primal of bonds, the parent-child relationship. Through tracking my own journey towards 'forgiveness', I hope that the story raises questions about what it is to be a parent, what it is to be a daughter or a son. How do we learn our roles? What happens when a parent has no template for how to be a parent? How do our formative years affect our roles as parents? What happens when roles are reversed and the child becomes the carer?

What inspired me to tell this story was that I wanted my mother's life to *matter*. I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to record her life and discover her true story. She was an ordinary person who was swept up in extraordinary events, a pawn in a political game.

I hope **ONCE MY MOTHER** helps to place a forgotten chapter of World War Two history on record and to honour the lives of the Poles who went through the same horrific experiences as my mother once did.

PRODUCER'S STATEMENT BY ROD FREEDMAN

I was instantly attracted to work with Sophia on **ONCE MY MOTHER**, having made a personal documentary. **UNCLE CHATZKEL** (2000, 2 AFI nominations, 55 festivals), about my 93 year old Lithuanian great uncle. Like Sophia's story, my film is also a portrait of an extraordinary individual which reveals a sweep of tumultuous Eastern European history.

I was drawn by the scope of this film, which presents an unusually broad and intimate perspective of both mother and daughter over the course of their lifetimes. Sophia explores both their lives from childhood to maturity and on to her mother's old age, when the daughter has now become the carer.

The distinctiveness and boldness of the film's form and content lies both in this scope but also in the depth of Sophia's personal archival material, starting with black and white 16mm material from 1976 up to the present in digital formats. It's uncommon to see a film with this extent of personal recordings.

The deeply personal, honest, first and second person narration is another distinctive feature, with Sophia poignantly reminding her mother of her own story as Helen descends into dementia.

At the heart of the film is this loving, yet troubled mother and daughter relationship. Exploring it, we also come to understand the devastating historical events that shattered Helen's life and helped shape the world we've lived in for the past seventy years. It's a window into an epic wartime story not widely known in the West, involving Stalin and the Allies and a betrayal never forgotten by the Poles. This story will be of interest to international audiences.

Another layer of the storytelling is in the extensive archival footage and photographs, some not seen before, that we sourced from Poland, Russia, Germany, the USA, UK and Australia. While filming in Poland, Sophia and I sourced wonderful 35mm footage from the Polish National Film Archives and other historical photographs. Extraordinarily, we found an old British newsreel of the exact refugee camp for Poles in Africa in which Sophia was born. All of this adds authenticity to the story.

There's also a depth of cultural, national and international significance in Helen and Sophia's story. In Australia, over 1 in 4 citizens (27%) have parents born overseas. The issues and tensions explored in this film are relevant to many of them.

At a time when the issue of refugees is seldom out of the headlines, the film portrays the experiences of Polish refugee Helen and her daughter, who arrived by boat in a period when Australia was welcoming refugees, seeing them as an asset to our future. Sophia's struggle to understand the actions of a traumatized parent and her journey from resentment and embarrassment of her mother to pride and admiration, are themes to which many descendants of refugees and migrants will relate.

The universal themes in the film will draw international audiences to engage with the inspiring story of survival and love in **ONCE MY MOTHER**.

BIOGRAPHIES OF KEY CREW



Rod Freedman and Sophia Turkiewicz

SOPHIA TURKIEWICZ – WRITER, DIRECTOR

Sophia was born in a refugee camp in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia. She arrived in Australia as a young child. Sophia grew up in Adelaide, South Australia, where she completed an arts degree at Adelaide University. She became a teacher before being selected for the prestigious first intake of full-time students at the newly created Australian Film, Television & Radio School.

Since graduating from AFTRS in 1978, Sophia has worked in the film and television industry as a drama director. Her credits include the feature film *SILVER CITY*, which was released internationally in 1984 and won 3 AFI Awards, as well as Best Film at the 1984 Sydney Film Critics Awards. Her television work includes both adult and children's drama (*SOMETHING IN THE AIR*, *ESCAPE OF THE ARTFUL DODGER*, *MIRROR MIRROR*, *A COUNTRY PRACTICE*) and telemovies (*TIME'S RAGING*, *I'VE COME ABOUT THE SUICIDE*). She spent six years lecturing in the Directing Department at the Australian, Film, Television and Radio School before leaving to prepare for the making of *ONCE MY MOTHER*, her first documentary.

ROD FREEDMAN – PRODUCER

Rod was born in Botswana and emigrated to Sydney from South Africa with his family in 1965. An independent director, producer and executive producer, his films have screened in dozens of international festivals, winning international and Australian awards. He started Change Focus Media in 1998 with partner Lesley Seebold, to produce documentaries for television as well as corporate and educational videos. His special interest is in people and their life's journeys.

Rod has made *WRAP ME UP IN PAPERBARK* (1999 Producer), *UNCLE CHATZKEL* (1999, Producer/Director, **55 International festivals and multi awards**), *ONE LAST CHANCE – WAR CRIMINAL* (2000 Producer/Director, **winner of 3 USA awards**), the *EVERYDAY BRAVE SERIES* (2001, Series Producer, **Best TV Series Tudawali Awards**) made with Indigenous directors, *WELCOME TO THE WAKS FAMILY* (2001 Co-Producer, 2nd Unit Director), *CROSSING THE LINE* (2004 Producer, **Best Documentary, Social & Political, Atom Awards**), three series of *AUSTRALIAN BIOGRAPHY* (2002, 2005, 2007 Series Producer/Director), *CHANGE THE WORLD IN 5 MINUTES* (2007 Executive Producer), *IT TAKES A VILLAGE* (2008 Producer/Director), *STAY STRONG* (2008 Producer/Director), *STRONG AND DEADLY* (2008 Producer/Director), *LOOKING FOR A MONSTER* (2008 Producer), *WRONG SIDE OF THE BUS* (2009, Producer, Director, **Best African Film, South African Film Festival**).

BOB CONNOLLY – ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Bob is an Oscar nominee and internationally acclaimed producer/director of *FIRST CONTACT*, *JOE LEAHY'S NEIGHBOURS*, *BLACK HARVEST*, *RATS IN THE RANKS*, *FACING THE MUSIC* and *MRS CAREY'S CONCERT*.

DENISE HASLEM, ASE – EDITOR

Recipient of an inaugural Australian Screen Editors (ASE) accreditation and former President of the guild, Denise has won awards as both producer and editor. Her career began studying Architecture at Sydney University before moving into alternative theatre as an actor, designer and producer. She was both producer and editor of the award winning programs such as *MABO - LIFE OF AN ISLAND MAN*, *FILM AUSTRALIA'S OUTBACK DVD*, *THE SAFE HOUSE* and *VOTE YES FOR ABORIGINES*.

A career highlight was in 2002 when she spent 8 months in Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, producing and editing the *LAW & ORDER PROJECT* out of which came *LONELY BOY RICHARD*, *THE PILOT'S FUNERAL* and in 2005 *CEREMONY - THE DJUNGGUWAN OF NORTHEAST ARNHEM LAND DVD* which contains a feature length documentary *DJUNGGUWAN: SPEAKING TO THE FUTURE* and six mini documentaries about Yolngu ceremony.

Her more recent editing credits include: *WHO KILLED DR BOGLE AND MRS CHANDLER?*, *THE PAGEANT*, *RIVER OF NO RETURN*, the *ON TRIAL SERIES*, three episodes of *THE MAKING OF MODERN AUSTRALIA* and *RECIPE FOR MURDER* for ABC Television.

CEZARY SKUBISZEWSKI - COMPOSER

Cezary has scored feature films for many of Australia's top directors. Amongst them are *TWO HANDS*, *SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING*, *AFTER THE DELUGE*, *DEATH DEFYING ACTS* *BRAN NUE DAE*, *BENEATH HILL 60*. He has received many awards including two from the Australian Film Institute for *BOOTMEN* and *LA SPAGNOLA*. Recent works include *RED DOG* and *THE SAPPHIRES*.

STUDY GUIDE

Free download from www.oncemymother.com
and
Ronin Films www.roninfilms.com.au

DVD & EXTRAS

Interviews with the director and producer enhance the main content and expand on the production story and the political and historical background.

SALES AND INFORMATION CONTACTS:**Rod Freedman Producer**

Change Focus Media

PO Box 240, Balmain NSW 2041 Australia

Tel +61 (0)2 9810 3540

Mob +61 (0)418 219 053

Email: info@changefocusmedia.com.au

Website: <http://www.oncemymother.com>

Educational & DVD Distribution

Andrew Pike, Ronin Films www.roninfilms.com.au

info@roninfilms.com.au

+ 61 2 6248 0851

FULL CREDITS LIST

Writer and Director

Sophia Turkiewicz

Producer

Rod Freedman

Editor

Denise Haslem ASE

Composer

Cezary Skubiszewski

Associate Producer, Australia

Bob Connolly

Associate Producers, Poland

Janusz Skałkowski & Kamil Skałkowski

Narrator

Jen Vuletic

CAMERA

Rod Freedman

Joanne Parker

Stephen Scheduling

Rob George

Tim Walsh

Tony Wilson

SOUND

Rod Freedman

Leo Sullivan

1976 SHOOT

Camera

Gillian Leahy

Interviewer & Sound

Gillian Coote

POLISH CAST & CREW

Zofia Wichłacz

Wenanty Nosul

Karolina Porcari

Artur Urbanski

Camera

Michał Modlinger

Wardrobe

Olga Turczak

Design

Dina Bienfait, Michalina Łukasik

UKRAINIAN CAST & CREW

Young Helen

Natalya Doronyuk

Translators

Mariyka Prystaiko

Maria Vasylchyshyn

Transport

Roman Gnatyuk

Villagers of Oleshiv and Ostrynia

AUSTRALIAN CAST

Silver City

Gosia Dobrowolska

Ivar Kants

Letters From Poland

Basia Bonkowski

ADDITIONAL EDITING

Bill Russo ASE
Jeff Bruer
Gwen Sputtore
Joanne Levitan
Paul Hamilton

ARCHIVAL RESEARCHERS

Karinn Cheung
Robyn Bersten
Naomi Hall
Melanie Coombe
Roman Włodek

GRAPHICS AND TITLES

FrenchBaker
Betsy Baker & Michelle French

ADDITIONAL GRAPHICS

Sophie Nowicka

Online Facilities	FSM
Producer	Martin Thorne
Colourist	Billy Wychgel
Online Editor	David Tindale
Conform	Rodney Meier

SOUND POST PRODUCTION

Digital City Studios
Michael Gissing
Mark Keating

MUSICIANS

Jessica Bell, Leah Zweck, Nicholas Buc
Paul Ghica, Paul Zabrowarny, John Barrett
Sound Engineer Robin Gray

LEGALS

Lloyd Hart Lawyers

ACCOUNTS

Astims SWM	Bill Murphy
	Luke Tressider

ARCHIVE SOURCES

Australian Film Television and Radio School
Australian Film Institute (AFI)
Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA)
Belorussian Archives Minsk provided by Abamedia
Michał Bukojemski
Tim Cope
CriticalPast
Michael Dillon
Sandy Edwards
Footage Farm

FRAMEPOOL

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