

THE NEW YORKER
DOCUMENTARY



ACADEMY AWARDS SHORTLISTED for BEST SHORT DOCUMENTARY 2023

HOLDING MOSES Press Kit

TRT 17 minutes - US 2022 - English

Available via [The New Yorker](#)

For inquiries, please contact:

Press

The 2050 Group
Adam Segal
adam@the2050group.com

Festival Distribution

The Film Collaborative
Jeffrey Winter
jeffrey@thefilmcollaborative.org

Film Team

Frankly Speaking Films
Jen Rainin
jen@franklyspeakingfilms.co

LOGLINE

A Broadway performer becomes a mother, braiding rhythm, grief and time with joy on her path to connect with her profoundly disabled son.

SYNOPSIS

Randi studied Butoh dance in Japan before performing in the show STOMP, forging a deep connection with movement and her body. She is visually striking, with close-cropped salt and pepper hair, and presents as very masculine of center, defying most people's image of a mother. Birthing her son felt triumphant, then confusing as he was whisked away to the NICU. When doctors shared that Moses was profoundly disabled and faced a tenuous future, Randi fell into a well of grief before unearthing a new language by which to learn and love her son – one born and honed in the body.

Randi's story laces together family, queerness and disability with vulnerability. Hers is a parenting journey we rarely speak openly about in our culture. We made this project over the last two years with generous feedback from parents of disabled children, the disabled adult community, queer families, and fellow filmmakers. The film has screened with disability, rare disease, and LGBTQ+ family groups including Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Foundation, Moebius Syndrome Foundation, AGENDA, Connected Brain, Lowe's Syndrome, Keshet Camp Tawonga and others. HOLDING MOSES illuminates the often invisible story of the caregiver and sparks conversations that help shift the narrative around the stunning challenges and surprising gifts that come with the birth of a disabled child.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

HOLDING MOSES is especially intimate for me. I'm in an open marriage with my incredible husband, Randi is my long-term girlfriend, and Moses is her son. In the throes of my own deep grief around becoming a caregiver, Randi and I recorded the story of how she reckoned with her feelings of grief around birthing Moses. I wanted to know everything about how she had moved through her grief around becoming both mother and caregiver; I thought it would hold a possible path to becoming the person I desperately wanted to be to meet my situation. We set up a mic just the two of us and Randi shared for three hours with a fierce honesty that became the audio track for *Holding Moses*. So the intimacy you're hearing in Randi's voice is that of a mother revealing her rawest self to me, the person she trusts most in the world.

My creative partner, Jen Rainin, and I brought the radio edit to our collaborators and started filming with our cinematographer Clare Major. We filmed across a year of changing seasons to evoke the passage of time essential to Randi's internal emotional experience. An unexpected hail storm swept through Marin in late January on my birthday, giving us the gift we needed to finish the film. Then my old friend Greg O'Toole edited during nights and weekends to put the film together.

Caregivers are a deeply invisible community and often feel that taking up space for themselves is selfish, inappropriate or unacceptable. I know this as a caregiver myself, from witnessing Randi over the past four years, and from joining this community of millions. I've also learned that by naming our own truths fully we can help dispel the saint-or-shame narrative, interrogate our own ableism, and ultimately deepen our capacity to learn and love authentically. Feedback screenings of the film with a range of audiences show us how healing it is to share Randi's parenting journey. I hold immense respect and gratitude to Randi for sharing this story and to our team for holding space for us to tell it together so we can join conversations that move each of us individually and as a group to greater clarity and positive action in our worlds.

KEY TEAM



Featured Cast: Randi Rader is a mother and a dancer who lives with her three children in Marin. She works as a trademark attorney for a leading international tech company. Randi cares deeply about people, relationships, and community. She seeks understanding and her training in Non-Violent Communication deepens her empathetic connections, helping her make observations instead of judgements.

Frankly Speaking Films was founded in 2020 by Oakland-based queer activist filmmakers Jen Rainin and Rivkah Beth Medow, whose first collaboration on the feature documentary *AHEAD OF THE CURVE* served as a model on which the company was built. Frankly Speaking Films exists to tell mesmerizing stories about strong queer women and non-binary people. The team created the award-winning short documentary *HOLDING MOSES*, and executive produced *JEANNETTE (In Festivals)*, a feature documentary about a survivor of the Pulse nightclub massacre.



Director: Rivkah Beth Medow is a Sundance x WIF and Film Independent fellow whose documentary feature credits include *AHEAD OF THE CURVE*.

(Co-Director/Producer: STARZ);
HUMMINGBIRDS (Co-Producer: in post);



and *SONS OF A GUN* (Director/Producer: PBS).

Co-Director/Producer: Jen Rainin is a Film Independent fellow whose credits include *HOMEROOM* (EP:

Hulu); *TWO SPIRITS* (EP: Independent Lens); and *SHIT & CHAMPAGNE* (EP: Hulu). *AHEAD OF THE CURVE* (Director: STARZ) was Jen's directorial debut.



Cinematographer: Clare Major is a cinematographer and documentary filmmaker who specializes in handheld observational camerawork, beautifully lit interviews, and rich scene coverage. She is passionate about stories that illuminate the intersection of cultures and the lives of women and girls. Credits include THE ANTS AND THE GRASSHOPPER (Sheffield 2022); BELLY OF THE BEAST (Human Rights Watch Film Festival 2020); AHEAD OF THE CURVE (Frameline 2020); and WE ARE THE RADICAL MONARCHS (SXSW 2019). In 2020, Clare was named as one of DOC NYC's "40 Under 40" filmmakers to watch.



Editor: Greg O'Toole is an Emmy-winning documentary film editor and writer whose feature documentaries have screened at festivals around the world, broadcasting on PBS, the BBC, ESPN, FOX, Netflix, and other outlets. Since 2011, he has been nominated for eight National Emmys, including for Best Editing and Best Documentary. His work includes the Emmy-winning AFTER TILLER, the three-time Emmy-nominated BETTER THIS WORLD (winner of the WGA award for Best Documentary Screenplay), the Emmy-nominated and Tribeca Audience Award-winning THE RETURN, the Emmy-nominated TWO ESCOBARS, the Emmy-nominated SHOT IN THE DARK, the Emmy-nominated VEGAS BABY, the Cinema Eye-nominated AN HONEST LIAR, the Sundance award-winning THE PRICE OF FREE, and the Sundance opening night film, MISS AMERICANA.

FESTIVALS

SFFILM Festival 2022 - **Winner** - Golden Gate Award (Academy Award qualified)
Riverrun Film Festival 2022 - **Winner** - Best Short Documentary - Honorable Mention
Provincetown Film Festival 2022 - **Winner** - Best Short Documentary (Academy Award qualified)
Frameline46 2022 - **Winner** - Best Short Documentary (BAFTA qualified)
Outfest 2022 - Official Selection
SF Jewish Film Festival 2022 - **Winner** - Best Short Documentary (Academy Award qualified)
Traverse City 2022 - Official Selection
Tallgrass Film Festival 2022 - Official Selection
Seattle Queer Film Festival 2022 - Official Selection
Hawai'i International Film Festival 2022 - Official Selection
Q-Doc Portland 2022 - Official Selection

High-resolution images for the film can be found [here](#).

Film trailer can be found [here](#).

Press and Praise for HOLDING MOSES

'Holding Moses' Trailer: The New Yorker's Oscar-Contending Short Doc Reveals Dancer's Journey Of Love With Her Disabled Son - Matthew Carey, ***Deadline***

"An intimate, remarkably candid journey that features stunning visuals"
- ***Deadline***

Sports, Politics and Equality Among Top Subjects of Documentary Short Contenders - Hilton Dresden, ***The Hollywood Reporter***

"Insightful and powerful"
- ***The Hollywood Reporter***

2023 Oscars Predictions: Collective – 'Avatar 2' and 'A Man Called Otto' Finally Drop; AFI and NBR Boost; Could 'Top Gun: Maverick' Conquer Best Picture? - Clayton Davis, ***Variety***

"Heartfelt"
- ***Variety***

Landmark queer film Holding Moses has been voted Oscar-worthy! - Merryn Johns, ***Queer Forty***

"Landmark queer film" "A journey we never get to see"
- ***Queer Forty***

"Holding Moses is a lyrical and artfully-made film that explores the complexities of being an artist, a parent and a human. Embracing the movement and physicality of its dancer protagonist, Randi, this powerful film allows viewers to share a brutally honest and emotionally profound journey of motherhood."

- San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, **Winner – Best Short Documentary**

"An incredible piece of filmmaking with beautifully intimate cinematography and striking sound design. Holding Moses is a love letter that exposes the vulnerability of the story and the truthfulness of the struggle."

- Frameline Film Festival, **Winner – Best Short Documentary**

"Honest and vulnerable. A fantastic way to explore parenting and the act of patience."

- SFFILM Festival, **Winner – Golden Gate Award**

“Courageous in its honesty and joy. Exquisitely filmed and deeply engaging.”

- Provincetown International Film Festival, **Winner – Best Short Documentary**

“This special story has the ability to change lives.”

- Jenny Whitman, Executive Director, **Moebius Syndrome Foundation**

“Incredibly raw and beautiful. This film is a gift. Thank you for giving people permission and validation to express and feel all the complexities of raising atypical children.”

- Ronni Blumenthal, Executive Director, **Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Foundation**

“This film made us talk, for the first time, about how my daughters felt when their little brother was diagnosed with Angelman syndrome - that even as children they felt incredible shame for thinking some of their thoughts. This film is a door.”

- Terry Jo Bichell, Founder/Director, **COMBINEDBrain**

“Thank you for telling this story – for all that it means for our disability community. And for all the other people who will learn and grow in compassion for having seen this film. This film is truly beautiful. I was moved by Randi’s articulation and images of her falling deeply in love with her son Moses, moving from devastating disappointment to a place of limitless love. Seeing and feeling their shared love up on the screen was such a gift. I hope the film is able to reach a broad audience as there are countless ways so many people will benefit.”

- Geri Justi, Infant Parent Psychotherapist, **Children’s Hospital Oakland**

“Thank you for so candidly and beautifully sharing your story. Your message and your work will help so many others in and outside of our PMS community. It will make all of our childrens' lives better not only by opening up the discussion with caregivers, but also sharing the true story with the world. I hope we continue the conversation. As I said last night, I am changed by meeting you.”

- Diane Linnehan, Director of Operations, **Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Foundation**

“This touching short film resonates with the range of feelings that parents of a child with a rare disease can have, including the love and honor and even challenges and fears. Watching the experience that Randi has will help even those without a disability in the family to better understand the unique journey they are on.”

- Alycia Halladay, Chief Science Officer, **Autism Science Foundation** and Program Manager for the **Alliance for Genetic Etiologies in Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Autism (AGENDA)**

[Video: Q&A with Award-winning filmmaker Pete Nicks](#)

