



Raquel: a marked woman

Defying her sexual exploiters then. Her story resonates today.

a documentary short by award-winning director Gabriela Böhm

Raquel's story is from another time, but resonates today. A mother, she was torn from her children and tricked into prostitution. In the early 20th century, thousands of Eastern European Jewish women were lured to Argentina and forced into prostitution. Others gave up. Not Raquel. Bravely, she exposed her oppressors.

Raquel: a marked woman is a window on to a shameful and largely unknown episode in the history of the Americas. More than 3,000 Jewish women were lured from Europe to the New World from the late 19th century through the 1930s, only to be devoured in Argentinean prostitution rings run by Jewish criminals.

The film details the quest of one of those women — Raquel Liberman — who was torn from her children and tricked into prostitution. Her journey — from wife and mother to exploited woman to defiantly free woman — would be exceptional under any circumstances, but is even more so given the times and place where she lived.

Sexual slavery is still a scourge in our society. This historical story is relevant today, showing how the actions of one person can make a difference.

Gabriela Böhm is a documentary filmmaker and founder of Böhm Productions. Her award-winning documentary short ***Raquel: a marked woman*** has been screened in North and South America, Europe and Israel. She has also produced/directed several award-winning documentary features. ***The Longing: The Forgotten Jews of South America*** was honored as Best Documentary (Long Island Latino International Film Festival) Best Latino Film (Santa Fe International Film Festival) and received a Telly Award. ***Passages*** won Best Documentary (Woodstock International Film Festival) and Jury Award (Tambay Film Festival). A native of Argentina, Böhm received a BFA at NYU Tisch School of the Arts and MFA at Maine Media College.

Film Notes:

- Documentary Short
- Color
- Spanish & English with English subtitles
- 33:25 minutes
- Shot on Location: Capital Federal, Buenos Aires & Rosario, Argentina



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The Film

Gabriela Bohm's film ...illuminates a sordid chapter in Jewish-Argentinian history, throws light on the possibilities of courage under repressive conditions, and prompts closer attention to the widespread enslavement of women by international criminals that has become epidemic in our time.

Donald N. Levine
Professor of Sociology, Emeritus
The University of Chicago

More than 3,000 Jewish women were lured from Europe to the New World, only to be devoured in Argentinean prostitution rings run by Jewish criminals, the Zwi Migdal. ***Raquel: a marked woman*** follows the quest of Raquel Liberman. Her story is one in a thousand untold narratives of sexual exploitation, buried and forgotten until now.

She came to Argentina with her two small children to join her husband who had gone there to seek employment. He unexpectedly died, leaving her vulnerable and without options. Unable to find work, Raquel became a victim of the South American Jewish sex trade, losing everything. Determined to win back her freedom and children, she saved every cent, but her efforts were met with betrayal and thievery.

Up against the evil forces — which have exploited women around the globe throughout time — she was also confronted with Argentina's corrupt legal system and decadent society. Left without options, Raquel decided to rise up out of anonymity and expose her oppressors, risking public humiliation and death.

Raquel: a marked woman celebrates Raquel's fight against her oppressors and the government system that supported them. Her journey — from wife and mother to exploited woman to defiantly free woman — would be exceptional under any circumstances, but is even more so given the times and place where she lived.



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The History

Between the 1890s and 1940s, more than 250,000 Jews immigrated to Argentina, the second largest Jewish immigration to the western hemisphere. This time frame was also the world's "golden age" of prostitution.

Argentina had a open prostitution policy that benefitted the sex trade via legal brothels/prostitution, laws that gave husbands the right to "own" their wives, and a Catholic state that believed prostitution kept society's "plumbing" clean and the family intact.

The country was vast and unpopulated, eager for immigrants. Prostitution provided a huge income source for the government, which helped to build Argentina's infrastructure.

Raquel Lieberman was one of thousands of women trapped in an international sexual trafficking ring run by the Jewish criminal syndicate Zwi Migdal, which, at one time, controlled 50 percent of Argentina's prostitutes.

Many young Jewish Polish women were lured into the sex trade, by "recruiters" coming to "shtetls", (Polish villages), offering the potential of either work or a husband awaiting them in a far-away land. False marriages were also a way to ensure a quick and easy transaction. Other Polish women, like Raquel Liberman, were forced into a life of prostitution, because they had no other option and were pressured by relatives who were involved in the trade.



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Directors Statement

I deeply believe that learning from our personal and communal legacy is the only way to grow and learn. In my eyes, holding on to secrets can traumatize and sicken communities and individuals. My way is to ask questions. To rethink a sad period in our history — specifically one of enslaved and traded Jewish girls and women by a Jewish criminal alliance — is necessary to generate change.

Although this film is not about me, it embodies many elements of who I am. I find Raquel's story powerful, her journey of survival, her ability to withstand adversity and to fight for what is hers, all resonate within me. As a survivor of aggression against my body (as a rape victim), against my family (as the daughter of a father who committed suicide) and against my community (as the child of Holocaust survivors), I, too, have had to find the courage to speak up.

While making ***Raquel: a marked woman***, I journeyed back in time and learned more about Raquel's almost-forgotten story. I shifted the project from an abstract historical concept to a personal expression of her journey. Her life gave me insight into my own conflicts — helping me to find and give her a voice, when, before, she had none. It also allowed me to express my own. Raquel's story is an inspiration to me. She was an ordinary person, one among many, who stood up and forced change.

Gabriela Böhm



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Producer/Director

Gabriela Böhm is a documentary filmmaker and founder of Böhm Productions. Her award-winning documentary short ***Raquel: a marked woman*** has been screened in North and South America, Europe and Israel. She has also produced/directed several award-winning documentary features. ***The Longing: The Forgotten Jews of South America*** was honored as Best Documentary (Long Island Latino International Film Festival) Best Latino Film (Santa Fe Film Festival) Best Documentary (Orlando Hispanic Film Festival) and received a Telly Award. ***Passages*** won Best Documentary (Woodstock Film Festival) and Jury Award (Tambay Film Festival). She received a BFA from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and MFA from Maine Media College. Böhm is tri-cultural. A native of Argentina, she lived in Israel as teenager and young adult. Böhm is a US citizen.

Böhm Productions

Böhm Productions aims to inspire, teach, and challenge long-held perspectives by producing creative, thought-provoking, character-driven films exploring cultural identity through inspiring stories — past and present. Its founder is Gabriela Böhm, an award-winning documentarian. *Raquel: a marked woman* is its third production. Its previous documentaries, both award winning, were *Passages* and *The Longing: The Forgotten Jews of South America*.



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The Creative Team

Guillermo Zappino, Director of Photography

Guillermo Zappino has been a cinematographer for over 18 years. His film credits include the Böhms Productions documentary, *The Longing: The Forgotten Jews of South America*, *Cohen v. Rossi*, *Alma Mía*, *El Día Que Me Amen* and *Anita*. Zappino has been DP on numerous television projects and miniseries including the 13-episode HBO series, *Epitafios I & II*, and has worked in high definition on versions of the 23-episode mini-series *Amas de Casa Desesperadas (Desperate Housewives)* for Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil and Univision.

Jonathan Brock, Editor

Jonathan Brock has edited documentaries and nonfiction projects for film, television and DVD. His credits range from IMAX trailers to *E! The True Hollywood Story* to Discovery Channel programs to Robert Greenwald's *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*. His TV credits include *Dog Whisperer with Cesar Milan*.

Richard Martinez, Composer

Richard Martinez is a composer and music producer, supervisor and programmer. He is best known for his work on the films *Heat*, *Across the Universe*, *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles*, and *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*. He also worked on *Frida*, *Titus* and *A Time to Kill*. Martinez composed the theme for the documentary *A Miracle in Spanish Harlem* and additional music for *La Americana*.



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Credits

Producer/Director	Gabriela Böhm
Co-Producer	Martin Ganem
Editor	Jonathan Brock
Director of Photography	Guillermo Zappino
Music	Richard Martinez
Narrator	Esmeralda Santiago
Sound Recording	Fabian Munne
Production Company	Winner Producciones
Online Editor	Christopher Gray Post
Sound Mix	Kenny Klimak Barking Sound Studios

Based on the book:

The Jewish White Slave Trade and the Untold Story of Raquel Liberman by Nora Glickman.



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Special Appearances & Interviews

Max Berliner	Yiddish actor; former resident
Placido Rosario Donato	Police historian
Elsa Drucaroff	Author: <i>Jewish Prostitutes, Hell Promise</i>
Ricardo Feierstein	Author: <i>History of Jews in Argentina</i>
Lucia Galvez	Historian
Rafael Ielpi	Author: <i>Prostitution and Pimping</i>
Maria L. Múgica	Historian, Author: <i>Sex Under Control</i>
Myrtha Schalom	Author: <i>La Polaca: Inmigrantes, rufianes y proxenetas a comienzos del siglo XX</i>
Yvette Trochon	Author: <i>Eros Routes: White Slavery in South America (1880-1932)</i>
Ana E. Weinstein	Director, Jewish Communities of Argentina, AMIA



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Screenings

Krakow 25th Jewish Culture Festival, Poland
Moscow Jewish Film Festival
Screenings across Poland (2015)
JFilm: The Pittsburgh Jewish Film Forum
San Luis Obispo International Film Festival, San Luis Obispo, CA
Muestra de Cine y Cultura Judía de Lisboa, Portugal
San Diego Jewish Film Festival, San Diego, CA
Festival de Cine Judio de Punta del Este, Uruguay
Tucson Jewish Film Festival, Tucson, AZ
Jerusalem Jewish Film Festival, , Israel
World Forum on Human Rights, Morocco
Warsaw Jewish Film Festival, Poland
Bucharest Jewish Film Festival, Romania
Krakow JCC, Krakow, Poland
29th Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres, Salta Province, Argentina
University of Lujan, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Palm Springs International ShortFest & Market, Palm Springs, CA
Los Angeles Jewish Film Festival, Los Angeles, CA
Toronto Jewish Film Festival, Canada
Palm Beach International Film Festival, Palm Beach, FL
Transatlántico Film Series, Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA

Awards/Honorable Mention

Bronze Telly Award — Non-Broadcast Film/Video — History/Biography (2015)
Silver Prize, Robinson International Short Film Competition (2015)
Best Short Documentary/Punta del Este Jewish Film Festival (2015)
Award of Excellence/Best Short Competition (2015)
Founders Award: The Joyce Forum/San Diego Jewish Film Festival (2015)
Best in Fest Selection/ Palm Springs International ShortFest (2014)
Best Short Documentary/Warsaw Jewish Film Festival (2014)
Outstanding Achievement/Humanitarian Awards, Global Film Awards (2015)
Outstanding Achievement/Humanitarian Awards, Best Shorts Competition (2015)

Media

Los Angeles Times (February 1, 2014) ["Skirball's 'Transatlántico' film series spotlights a shared history"](#)

Maariv, Israel

Arizona Jewish Life (January 2015) ["Tucson Film Festival Is a Jewel"](#)

Arizona Jewish Post (January 5, 2015) ["Issues of Identity at Forefront in Tucson Jewish Film Festival"](#)