

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.



PRESS BOOK **VICARIOUS RESILIENCE**

## SYNOPSIS

**Vicarious Resilience** follows three storytellers over the course of a 10-week TMI Project storytelling workshop presented at The Mental Health Association in Ulster County (MHA). 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.

The film and its accompanying materials seek to raise awareness and amplify the voices of those who have inspiring stories about living with mental illness. We aim to provide audiences the opportunity to listen, expand their awareness, and eradicate stigma so all those who are living with mental illness are free to share their truth. Our hope is the film will inspire mental health professionals to incorporate our true storytelling methodology into their group work and private practice.

From 2012-2020, TMI Project offered 16 true storytelling workshops specially tailored to meet the needs of adults with mental illness. We guided over 160 participants to create their stories and provide a platform to amplify them in an effort to destigmatize mental illness, while also empowering participants to imagine and work toward the possibility of their own recovery.

TMI Project continues to provide in-person and online workshops and training for mental health providers and/or clients in the mental health community. Check out our Storyline program for organizations and don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

The documentary was shot in partnership with North Guild Films.

**“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 the author of the memoir in essays *And You May Find Yourself...Confessions of a Late-Blooming Gen-X Weirdo*. She was TMI Project's editorial director for several years, and the essays editor at Longreads. She edited the bestselling anthologies *Goodbye to All That: Writers on Loving and Leaving New York* and *Never Can Say Goodbye: Writers on Their Unshakable Love for New York*. She publishes *Oldster Magazine* and *Memoir Land*. She was the Writer in Residence in the creative writing department at SUNY New Paltz for Spring, 2023.



**ELLEN PENDEGAR** served as the CEO of the Mental Health Association in Ulster County for over 20 years before her retirement. 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. Since 2010, Eva has brought the true storytelling organization from her living room to the United Nations, and many places in between. TMI Project stories are now being listened to worldwide on the award-winning podcast, *The TMI Project Story Hour*. Eva is the editor and director of multiple solo shows, one of which was awarded Best Comedic Script in the United Solo Festival. Her award-winning docu-short, *Vicarious Resilience*, celebrated its world premiere at The Woodstock Film Festival. Her second docu-short, *Locker Room Talk*, debuts in 2024. Her essays have appeared in assorted anthologies and at [Longreads.com](https://www.longreads.com).

## CREW



**CHRIS RAHM** is a born and bred Hudson Valley filmmaker. 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. Over the last decade, Chris has documented the Hudson Valley environmental movement through his close involvement with Jon Bowermaster's Oceans 8 Films, helping to conceive their award winning Hudson River Stories film project, lending his skills as a director, cinematographer and editor across the still ongoing 16 part series. Chris enjoys imparting his skills and experience to others by also serving as an educator for Stockadeworks. His work has been featured on networks like VICELAND, Nat Geo and NBC Universal and Netflix.

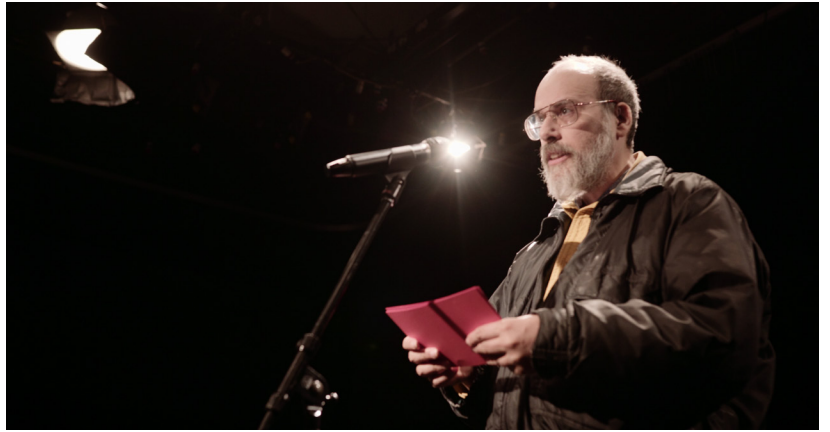


**DEVIN PICKERING** Whether it's been from behind the camera or in the editing suite, Devin Pickering has spent the past 20 years telling stories. While past work has been seen on PBS, CNN, ESPN, and FOX television networks, Devin has put an emphasis on films relating to the environment, collaborating 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 Hudson River Stories.



**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, and 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. This is Kashka's third documentary film with TMI Project, having served as a long-time media partner through Northguild Productions.

# 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](http://WWW.VICARIOUSRESILIENCE.COM)

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