



My Dear
Hanna

The background of the image is a close-up of a handwritten letter on aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in a cursive script, and the paper shows signs of wear and discoloration. On the right side of the image, there is a yellowed, frayed fabric strip, possibly a piece of clothing or a shawl, which is also aged and textured. The overall lighting is soft and warm, highlighting the textures of the paper and fabric.

My Dear Hanna

My Dear Hanna is a Holocaust wartime love story between one of Hungary's most renowned Jewish heiresses and a prominent diplomat forced to work under Nazi command in order to survive. Told from the perspective of their daughter through a series of love letters unearthed 60 years after they were written, this story discovers how one family will do anything to stay together in the midst of history's darkest moment.

TBD | USA | 2023

Synopsis (Long)

From Director Matt Sullivan and Award-Winning Executive Producers Justin Jarrett and Travis Capacete comes *My Dear Hanna*.

In 2007 Marianne Szegedy-Maszak discovered a treasure trove of letters from her father, Aladar, a former wartime diplomat who worked directly under Adolf Hitler, to her mother, Hanna, an heiress of Hungary's most influential Jewish family at the time. These letters detail the courtship of the couple during the height of World War II as they navigate the dangers of The Holocaust.

Told from Marianne's perspective, this story is an intimate account of the circumstances that brought Aladar and Hanna together along with the forces that nearly separated them forever. This family memoir encompasses wide reaching themes such as Hungary's relationship with its Jewish population, the strength of love in the face of adversity, and humanity's ability to overcome.



Background

The Holocaust is a well studied and documented travesty that has set in motion years of generational trauma and division. The suffering, death, and fallout of European Jewish communities cannot be understated or overlooked. The stories from survivors, to this day, are the clearest example of humanity's potential not only for violence and hatred, but for determination and love as well.

With *My Dear Hanna* we examine one of these stories by sitting down with Marianne Szegedy-Maszak, a daughter of two survivors. Marianne's parents, Aladar and Hanna, experienced The Holocaust as nobody else did, Aladar as a Hungarian diplomat working under, and secretly against Adolph Hitler, and Hanna as an heiress to the wealthiest Jewish family in Hungary at the time. As their relationship had been declared illegal the couple continued their courtship in absolute secrecy to stay together. With this film we examine the hatred of the Nazis, the division of the Hungarian people in response, and the thread of light in the darkest period of human history that was Aladar and Hanna.

We don't consider *My Dear Hanna* to be a war story. Despite the setting of their budding relationship, the story of Aladar and Hanna is one of love.





WATCH CLIP

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Marianne Szegedy-Maszak

Marianne Szegedy-Maszak is the author of the critically acclaimed memoir *I Kiss Your Hand Many Times: Hearts, Souls and Wars in Hungary*, which was published by Random House in the US and was a bestseller in Hungary. Her book was chosen as one of the 100 great works of Hungarian literature. She is the Editorial Operations Director of the DC Bureau of *Mother Jones* and her journalism career has included covering the collapse of communism, 9/11, neuroscience, and social policy for such publications as the *New York Times Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *Esquire*, *Harpers Bazaar*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New Republic*, *Newsweek*, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, *Psychology Today*, and *Newsday* among others. She regularly reviews books for the *Washington Post*.

In addition to her own work, she has ghost-written seven memoirs—including *Costly Grace* by Rob Schenck and *Cubed* by Ernő Rubik. She also has been a book doctor and editor for a number of works including the *New York Times* bestselling biography of Lady Bird Johnson and a book about health workers in war zones. Winner of the prestigious Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellowship, she was a reporter at the *NY Post*, an editor at *Congressional Quarterly* and a professor of journalism at the American University School of Communication before joining *US News & World Report* as a Senior Writer in 2000. She's a graduate of the University of Michigan and Columbia University's School of Journalism—where she won the Pulitzer Traveling fellowship.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Justin Jarrett is an award-winning American Film Writer, Director, and Producer based in Philadelphia. He has written and directed over 200 television shows, commercials, shorts, and feature-length documentaries on five different continents while acting as Principal Director of East Coast Production company, JTWO Films. He directed his first feature-length project, *For Aaron The Documentary*, at the age of 21 and has since had his work featured on the Discovery Channel, ESPN, CBS, Science Channel and the American Heroes Channel.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Travis Capacete is an award-winning Producer and Editor with more than a decade of experience under his belt. Travis has worked with media powerhouses NFL Films, Bravo, NBC, and Warner Brothers while overseeing the business operations for his own production company, JTWO, where he produces projects ranging from feature-length documentaries to television shows.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

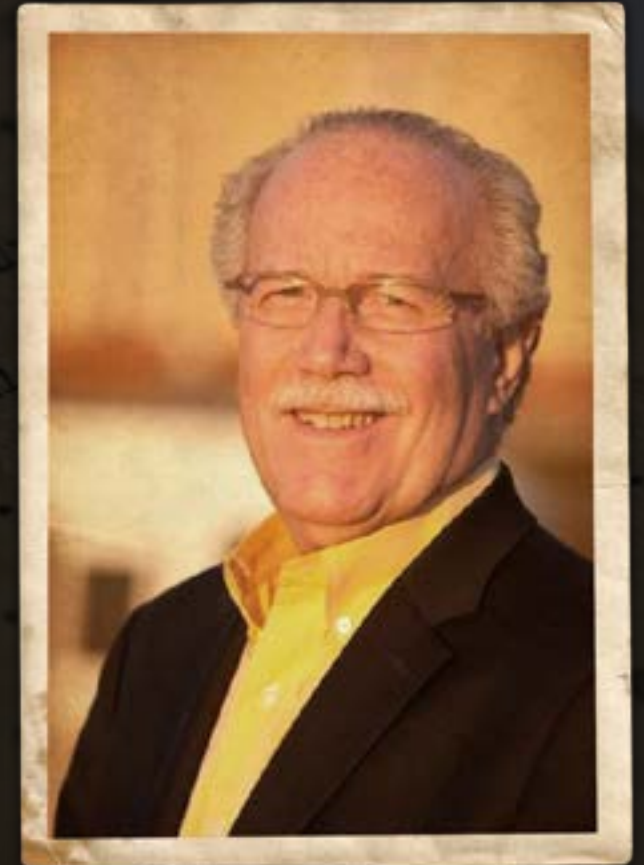
Ralph S. Blackman

Ralph S. Blackman retired as President and CEO of the Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility in 2018. Responsibility.org was founded in 1991 and has received more than \$300 million dollars from the nation's leading distillers to fight drunk driving and underage drinking and promote responsible decisions concerning beverage alcohol. Key to the success of these award winning programs were several video and animated features that delivered educational content to both parents and young people.

Mr. Blackman served two presidents before joining Responsibility.org. He was appointed Associate Director of the White House Conference on Small Business by President Ronald Reagan in 1986 and Assistant Administrator for Private Enterprise at the U.S. Agency for International Development by President George H.W. Bush in 1992. Mr. Blackman also served on the staffs of the Governor of Illinois, the Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives and the Republican National Committee.

Mr. Blackman also founded Public Access, Inc., which provided government relations and strategic marketing advice to corporate and non-profit clients in the U.S. and abroad. Public Access was a leader in US efforts to establish business ties with Eastern and Central Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Opening an office in Budapest, Hungary, Public Access forged joint ventures between Hungarian businesses and American companies seeking a foothold in new markets.

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Mr. Blackman graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Western Illinois University and completed his Master of Arts degree in public administration from the University of Illinois-Springfield which honored him with the 2014 Alumni Achievement Award. While residing in Chicago, Mr. Blackman was a member of the Chicago Media Angels which invests in independent and documentary films and features.



DIRECTOR

Matt Sullivan

Matt Sullivan is an American Film Director and Editor based out of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is a dynamic filmmaker with a passion for developing strong, impactful stories that stay with their viewers, and is always looking to find and dig into the personalities behind each one.

Matt has directed and edited various projects since the beginning of his career with JTWO Films, including commercial, documentary, and branded content.



Director's Notes

Being entrusted by Marianne Szegedy-Maszak with her family's story has not only been an incredible experience, but a highlight of my career as a filmmaker. Having family members who lived through The Holocaust and the ensuing Communist Revolution in Hungary, I feel a unique attachment to sharing such a raw, emotional chapter in Hungary's history.

As a filmmaker, I was excited to take a fresh look at a widely studied topic such as The Holocaust. We tend to think of The Holocaust in terms of victimization; of how many people died, how many families destroyed. Rarely is a story found from Europe in the 1940s of an interracial couple, especially of such social and political esteem, surviving the genocide. In this story we examine and focus on the strength of love rather than the depths of hatred. We explore how a connection between two people can impact history, increase understanding, and limit the power of intolerance.

Love is at the center of this film, and has been since the beginning.

As our society becomes more divided, with some groups going so far as to deny the sheer existence of The Holocaust, I, along with our team, take immense pride in telling a Hungarian Jewish story of hope, truth, and perseverance. We have a deep love and appreciation for this story, and we are excited to bring it to light.

Featuring

- *Marianne Szegedy-Maszak, Editorial Operations Director of the DC Bureau of Mother Jones, Author of “I Kiss Your Hands Many Times.”*
- *Gabor Kadar Ph.D, Professor of Jewish Studies at Central European University, Author of “Self-Financing Genocide: The Gold Train, the Becher Case and the Wealth of Hungarian Jews.”*
- *Eszter Kutas, Executive Director at Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation.*



FAQS

Q: How long did it take to complete the documentary?

A: Roughly two years.

Q: Who is the production company?

A: JTWO Films is an integrated video production company with offices in both Philadelphia and Chicago.

Q: Was anything improvised that was not pre-determined in the film?

A: Everything in this film was pre-determined as it relates to Marianne Szegedy-Maszak's book, "I Kiss Your Hands Many Times: Hearts, Souls, and Wars in Hungary."

Q: When creating/shaping the overall flow/structure of the documentary, how did you approach such a big undertaking?

A: We took a linear approach to this documentary, allowing the story to unfold before the audience as it did the protagonists years ago. We want the viewer to walk through the fear of exposure and capture, the determination to survive, and the power it took to move forward alongside Aladar and Hanna.

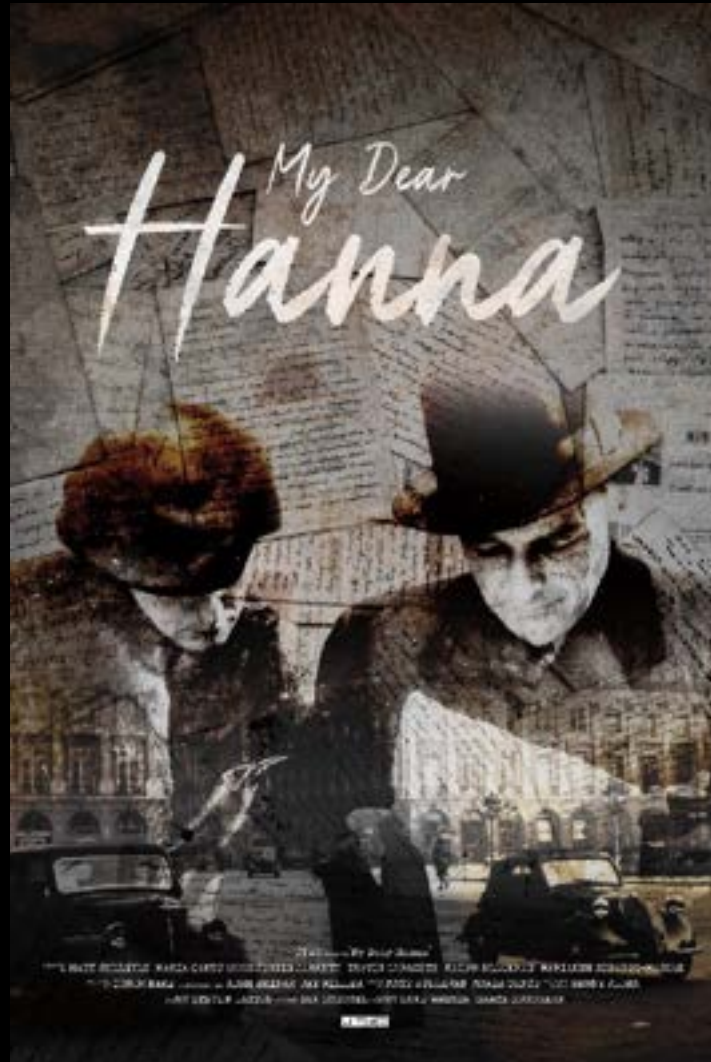
Q: Did any directors/filmmakers' styles influence you before, during, and after the documentary? If so, how did those influences change throughout?

A: As a team, we generally focus on documentaries, but we are always inspired by narrative filmmakers such as Spike Lee, Christopher Nolan and the team that created HBO's *24/7*. Director Matt Sullivan was personally influenced by social and history documentaries such as *13th* and *Five Came Back*.

Q: Are there any underlining messages or stories within the film?

A: We wanted to focus on the strength of the love between our protagonists in contrast to the hatred of the Nazi Party. We are a team that truly believes pieces such as *My Dear Hanna* can be a tool of change, one that can not only evaluate the history of The Holocaust, but can help prevent such hatred from taking root again.

Poster



Full res poster files available upon request

Gear & Equipment

CAMERAS:

- RED Weapon Helium 8k
- Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera 6k Pro
- Blackmagic Ursa Mini 12k
- Sony FS7

LENSES:

- Angenieux EZ-1 (S35/30-90) (FF/45-135) Zoom
- Angenieux Cine Zoom - EZ-1 45-153mm/T3
- ZEISS CP.3 T2.1 Compact Prime Lenses
- Rokinon XEEN CF T1.5 Pro Cine Lenses
- Venus Optics Laowa 24mm f/14 Probe Lens

POST-PRODUCTION:

- Adobe Creative Cloud (Premiere Pro, After Effects, Audition, Photoshop, Illustrator)
- DaVinci Resolve 16
- Promax Online 2000 10GB Fiber Server (10G Base-T)
- Apple iMac 27"
- PC - Ryzen Threadripper 1950X 3.4 GHz 16 Core TR4 Boxed Processor, ROG X399 ZENITH EXTREME TR4 eATX AMD Motherboard (RAM CORSAIR Vengeance LPX 64GB (4 x 16GB) 288-Pin DDR4 SDRAM DDR4 3200 (PC4 25600) Desktop Memory Model CMK32GX4M2D3200C16

Credits

PRODUCED BY:

JTWO FILMS

DIRECTED BY:

Matt Sullivan

EXECUTIVE
PRODUCERS:

Justin Jarrett

Travis Capacete

Ralph Blackman

Marianne Szegedy-Maszak

PRODUCED BY:

Conor Hare

CINEMATOGRAPHERS:

Adam Hribar

Jay Miller

EDITED BY:

Matt Sullivan

Maria Cantu

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Benny Flora

SOUND ENGINEER:

Steven Layton

COLORIST:

Ian Schobel

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:

Luke Wagner

Grace Southern

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PROVIDED BY:

United States of America

National Archives



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