



# WRESTLING GHOSTS

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DIRECTED BY ANA JOANES

TRT: 92 MINS

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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PRESS CONTACT

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# WRESTLING GHOSTS

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## LOGLINE

WRESTLING GHOSTS follows the epic journey of Kim, a young mother who, with the help of her partner Matt and the support of therapists, works to confront her traumatic childhood to build a stronger bond with her sons Aiden and Gabriel.

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## SYNOPSIS

WRESTLING GHOSTS follows the epic inner journey of a young mother, who, over two heart-breaking and inspiring years, battles the traumas from her past in order to create a new present and future for her and her family.

Kim knows she is not a natural mother—she shrinks from the touch of her adorable little boys. Faced with a constant inner reproach—What is wrong with me?—she embarks on an extremely difficult journey to overcome her unhappiness and become able to give her kids the warmth and attention they deserve.

As Kim digs deeper and deeper, she makes important progress but deep down remains stuck. She only makes a breakthrough when she learns about the new science of childhood trauma, how it physically changes the human brain, creating a neurological straightjacket of sorts.

With relentless self-awareness, amazing openness, and devastating honesty, this extraordinary ordinary woman becomes a real soul warrior, doing battle with the traumas in her past in order to create a new present and future for her and her family.

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## QUOTES

“Wrestling Ghosts is very moving and very stirring—a real accomplishment. The portrayal both of mental suffering and of therapy is profound and beautifully done.”

*- Andrew Solomon, Author of The Noonday Demon & Far from the Tree*

“Wow, such a moving and powerful film! I will be thinking about it for a long time. This film is a gift to those who have suffered childhood trauma, and my hope is that people will indeed find a path to begin their healing journey through it.”

*- Alison Fornes, Family Constellations Facilitator*

“This documentary will so change lives. It is an intimate visit but not voyeuristic. It is tender but not sappy. They are human but humorless. Their smiles and love for each other? I am 62 and this gives me hope.”

*- Carey Smith Sipp, ACEs Connection Community Facilitator: Southeast U.S.*

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## TOPIC SUMMARY: CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

We know that many millions of adults are living with damage caused by violence and neglect in their childhood, and passing down their trauma to their own children in turn. This is what we call the “cycle of abuse,” a well-known and real phenomenon.

But the lasting effects of childhood trauma are not so widely understood. Most people probably know that an abused or neglected child will suffer a higher risk of emotional problems and mental illness as an adult. But now we know that these children will also have significantly higher risks of heart disease, lung cancer, and other chronic illnesses. And trauma need not be violent to have dire impact: the simple lack of a close parental bond has more impact on a child’s health than smoking, drinking, or exposure to toxic environmental substances.

Issues related to childhood trauma also have special importance in terms of social inequalities including race, class, and gender. Women’s rates of sexual abuse, and depression, are twice those of men. And while members of disadvantaged economic and social groups undergo more childhood trauma, and suffer more of its consequences, they are even more likely to be met only with blame and punishment.

The good news is that medical knowledge has been growing quickly, and we now have tools to help spare millions of adults and children unnecessary suffering. Trauma-informed talk therapy, mindfulness practice, neuro-feedback, among others have proved to help rewire the brain and heal the damage that trauma in childhood creates. But tragically, as few really understand the full consequences of childhood trauma, even fewer are aware of—and have access to—these exciting new treatments.

Considering the cost of ignoring childhood trauma, healing these awful invisible wounds must become a national priority. *WRESTLING GHOSTS* shows, through one woman’s journey, that healing and breaking the cycle are possible. It serves as an inspiring guide for those wishing to do the same, and spreads compassion for all our friends and neighbors who feel these impacts.

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## ARTISTIC APPROACH

Director Ana Joanes’ deepest artistic ambition is to create a film that encourages the viewer to experience a movement from judgment to compassion, not only for Kim, but towards themselves or their loved ones.

The key to our approach is the creation of real intimacy between filmmaker and subject. Ana’s camera achieves the time-honored magic of cinema verité, becoming an invisible intimate, allowing the viewer to forget the mechanics and fully enter Kim’s world.

Kim’s counseling sessions provide us with natural “experts,” respected authorities in their fields who impart information and open up new ways of thinking. Their teachings become the conceptual framework for the movie. *WRESTLING GHOSTS* is thus a hybrid genre of film: a pure verité character portrait on one hand, and a social issue immersion on the other.

The pace and structure of the movie also seek to foster the viewer’s movement from judgment to compassion. Unlike many plotlines that try to “hook” the viewer with heavy early foreshadowing of the drama to come, *WRESTLING GHOSTS* lets the story to deepen at its own pace. This allows the viewer to “make up their mind” about Kim and Matt, and, as their lives unfold and more information surfaces, to notice their perception changing. Viewers are similarly given room to reflect on their own lives, and to begin to shift from judgment to compassion for themselves and their loved ones as well.

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## FILMAKERS BIOS



### **ANA JOANES** - DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

Ana Joanes is a documentary maker dedicated to inspiring conscious action and systemic change through film. Her previous works include *GENERATION MEDS*, an exploration of our fears and misgivings about mental illness and medication, and *FRESH*, which celebrates the farmers, thinkers and entrepreneurs who are reinventing our food system. Before dedicating herself to filmmaking, Ana was a lawyer. She founded Reel Youth, Inc., a video production program for youth coming out of detention and other underserved youth. Ana is the mother of three children, and with *WRESTLING GHOSTS*, she hopes to contribute to a shift toward a more compassionate world.



### **TONI NAGY** - PRODUCER

Toni Nagy is a writer for Huffington Post, Salon, Alternet, Elephant Journal, Hairpin, Thought Catalogue, and more. Toni also has a popular blog, "Toni Bologna," and is a comedian and film maker. Toni graduated from Sarah Lawrence College and was double major in philosophy and dance.



### **MONA DAVIS** - EDITOR

Mona Davis has edited numerous award-winning feature documentaries. Her credits include the critically acclaimed *Love and Diane* (premiered at the New York Film Festival), *The Farm, Angola USA*, (Grand Jury Prize winner at the Sundance Film Festival, Academy Award nominee), for which she won an Emmy, *A Perfect Candidate* and *Dream Deceivers* (both nominated for Emmys), and the American versions of *7 Up* and *14 Up*. She was the consulting editor on the award winning *51 Birch Street* and *Girls Like Us*. Her work has appeared in theaters, and on HBO, CBS, PBS, BBC, Arte, and Showtime.



### **KATHRYN BOSTIC** - COMPOSER

Composer and singer/songwriter Kathryn Bostic is known for her work on film, TV and theater. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Television Academy. Kathryn is a recipient of numerous fellowships and awards including the prestigious Time Warner-Sundance Fellowship, Sundance Fellowship for Feature Film Scoring, BMI Conducting Fellowship, Sundance Fellowship for Documentary Film Scoring.

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### **REGINA SCULLY - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Regina K. Scully is the Founder and CEO of Artemis Rising Foundation, a philanthropic organization dedicated to developing and promoting Media, Education and the Arts that transform our culture. Ms. Scully is also the Founder and CEO of RPR Marketing Communications, a premier Public Relations Agency, NYC, specializing in exclusive consumer products and brands. A social entrepreneur, media activist, and documentary filmmaker, Ms. Scully is a leading communications and media consultant, speaking at schools, conferences, and companies around the world.



### **GERALYN WHITE DREYFOUS - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Geralyn Dreyfous has a wide, distinguished background in the arts and participates on numerous boards and initiatives. She is the founder of the Utah Film Center and co-founder of Impact Partners Film Fund with Dan Cogan. In 2013, Geralyn co-founded Gamechanger Films, a film fund dedicated to women directors. Her independent producing credits include many award winning and nominated films.



### **DAN COGAN - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Dan Cogan is an Academy Award® -winning producer and the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Impact Partners, a fund and advisory service for investors and philanthropists who seek to promote social change through film. Since its inception in 2007, Impact Partners has been involved in the financing of over 90 films, including: Icarus, which won the 2018 Academy Award® for Documentary Feature; Dina, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival and was named Best Feature by the International Documentary Association; Otto Bell's The Eagle Huntress, which was nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Documentary; The Cove, which won the Academy Award® for Documentary Feature; How to Survive A Plague, which was nominated for the Academy Award® for Documentary Feature; The Queen of Versailles, which won the U.S. Directing Award at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival; and Hell and Back Again, which won the Documentary Grand Jury Prize and Cinematography Awards at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for the Academy Award® for Documentary Feature. In 2013, Cogan co-founded Gamechanger Films, which is the first for-profit film fund dedicated exclusively to financing narrative features directed by women.



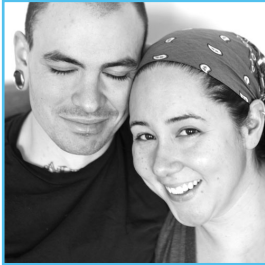
### **JENNY RASKIN - EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Jenny Raskin is VP for Development and Filmmaker Relations at Impact Partners. She has worked as a documentary producer, director, series producer and executive producer. Her credits include STEP (executive Producer), TROPHY (executive producer), DINA (executive producer), OUR NIXON (executive producer), HERE COME THE VIDEOFREEEX (director/producer), MOTHERLAND AFGHANISTAN (producer), ON HOSTILE GROUND (director/producer) and many others. She received her B.A. from Barnard College and a masters's degree from the Culture and Media Program at New York University.

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## SUBJECT BIOS



### **KIM & MATT MONTLEON**

Kim and Matt met in highschool and have been together since. They operate a Tattoo shop, Honorable Ink, on Main Street, Beacon in NY. and have two boys, Aiden and Gabriel. They hope Wrestling Ghosts can help others feel less alone in their struggles and see themselves and others with more compassion.



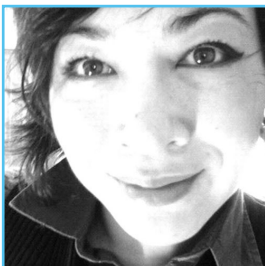
### **DONNA JACKSON NAKAZAWA**

Donna Jackson Nakazawa is an award-winning science journalist interested in exploring the intersection between neuroscience, immunology, and the deepest inner workings of the human heart. Her most recent book, *Childhood Disrupted: How Your Biography Becomes Your Biology, and How You Can Heal*, examines the lifelong consequences—both emotional and physical—of adverse childhood experiences and offers readers suffering from chronic conditions a window to healing. Donna's other works include *The Autoimmune Epidemic* (Touchstone, Simon & Schuster, 2008, 2009), which investigates the causes of a growing environmental health crisis, and *The Last Best Cure* (Hudson Street Press / Penguin, 2013), which chronicles a year-long journey to test a variety of mind-body therapies in order to unlock the restorative powers of the brain. She is also the author of *Does Anybody Else Look Like Me?: A Parent's Guide to Raising Multicultural Children* (Perseus, 2003).



### **NADINE BURKE-HARRIS**

A pioneer in the field of medicine, pediatrician Dr. Nadine Burke Harris is a leader in the movement to transform how we respond to early childhood adversity and the resulting toxic stress that dramatically impacts our health and longevity. By exploring the science behind childhood adversity, she offers a new way to understand the adverse events that affect all of us throughout our lifetimes. As the founder/CEO of the Center for Youth Wellness, she has brought these scientific discoveries and her new approach to audiences at the Mayo Clinic, American Academy of Pediatrics, Google Zeitgeist and Dreamforce.



### **MITSIKO MILLER**

Mitsiko Miller is a certified coach from Montreal, Canada. With over a decade of experience, Mitsiko offers tools to embody harmony for the well-being of families and all collectives. She has been practicing the nonviolent communication for more than a decade and offers support using Hakomi, mindfulness and Focusing IRF. Mitsiko graduated from the Peer Parenting Leadership Program to share nonviolent communication with families. She is also trained by Isabelle Filliozat, of which she is the Canadian collaborator.

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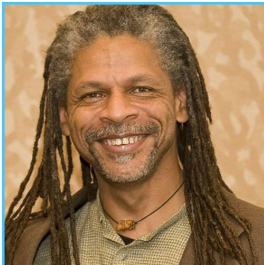
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### **JOSHUA HATHAWAY**

Joshua Hathaway, M.A. Holistic Clinical Psychology, is the founder of No Bullshit Communication. Joshua is a dynamic coach and public speaker, able to gently and humorously dismantle people's Bullsh!t, deliver practical skill building tools, and facilitate experiences that bring home the power and value of connection. A 2005 graduate of the BayNVC North American Leadership Program, and a 2008 Master's graduate from JFK University, he brings almost two decades of research and practice in communication, psychology, and integral systems to the process of leveling up your emotional intelligence and communication skills.



### **VICTOR LEE LEWIS**

Victor Lee Lewis, MA, is the Founder and Director of the Radical Resilience Institute, and Radical Resilience Coaching and Consulting. He is a Progressive Life Coach, trainer, speaker, and social justice educator. Lewis received his Master of Arts in Culture and Spirituality in 1987 from the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality (ICCS) at Holy Names College in Oakland, California. He has also done extensive post-graduate study. He is a Neuro-Linguistic Programing Master (NLP) Practitioner, an NLP Health Practitioner, an EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) Advanced Practitioner, an AAMET-certified EFT Trainer, a certified NLP hypnotherapist and a resilient and thriving trauma survivor.



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## DIRECTOR

Ana Joanes

## PRODUCERS

Ana Joanes & Toni Nagy

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Regina K. Scully, GERALYN White Dreyfus,  
Dan Cogan & Jenny Raskin.

## EDITOR

Mona Davis

## COMPOSER:

Kathryn Bostic



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