



For Immediate Release:

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<http://therearejewshere.com> (coming soon)

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PRESS RELEASE FOR DOCUMENTARY FEATURE *THERE ARE JEWS HERE*

***THERE ARE JEWS HERE*, a new feature documentary film by Brad Lichtenstein and Morgan Elise Johnson about small Jewish communities around the United States struggling to survive, debuted at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival on July 30th, 2016.**

Milwaukee, WI -- A new feature documentary, *THERE ARE JEWS HERE*, takes you inside the stories of four small American Jewish communities trying to survive amid shrinking populations. The film had its world premiere at the 36th annual San Francisco Jewish Film Festival.

Shot over the course of nearly three years, *There Are Jews Here* is an intimate look at four once thriving American Jewish communities now fighting for survival. In Latrobe, PA we witness the closing of the synagogue through the story of longtime member Mickey Radman who keeps the doors open long enough for the Bat Mitzvah of the shul's oldest member's granddaughter. In Butte, MT, we meet the indefatigable Nancy Oyer who tries to maintain her community while struggling with her personal health. In Laredo a young interfaith couple is torn between reviving their fading community or moving to a thriving one in San Antonio that can nurture the spiritual growth of their young family. And, in a twist, we meet a Los Angeles family who takes up Dothan, Alabama's bold offer to provide Jews up to \$50,000 to relocate to Dothan's Jewish community.

There Are Jews Here is a testament to Jewish continuity, illuminating the inner strength that drives people to maintain their identities even when they find themselves virtually alone. The movie is both a celebration of their tenacity and a cautionary tale that their histories, synagogues, cemeteries, and sacred possessions could disappear if they are not vigilant.

Producer and director Brad Lichtenstein said “ **I didn’t know 1 million Jews live in small American communities. I discovered a new world in making this film. A Jew myself, what I knew was my experience growing up in Atlanta and living in New York and Milwaukee — large cities where we are free to define ourselves Jewishly in any way we wish. But for Jews living in small communities, identity is a daily urgent challenge; if they don’t personally uphold their communities and live affirmative Jewish lives, they and their legacies could fade away forever.**”

Morgan Elise Johnson, a producer and co-director of the film who is not Jewish, said “**One thing that struck me was how no matter where I went, I heard the same prayers and songs. They may sing them in a different tune, but there is this strong tradition and that’s something that’s radically different from what I’m used to in Christianity where you can walk into a church and it can be completely different from what you’ll get at a different church.**” A daughter of a preacher and member of her church choir, she goes on to say “**I learned every song!**”

The producers feel that their film ultimately transcends religion. It is a deeply human exploration of age-old universal questions of faith and identity.

After its premiere in July at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, *There Are Jews Here* will travel the country at festivals and community screenings before an anticipated PBS broadcast. 7th Art Releasing will assist 371 Productions in setting screenings and outreach.

About the filmmakers

371 Productions

Brad Lichtenstein founded 371 in 2003 when he moved from New York City to Milwaukee. 371 produces stories on multiple platforms about significant cultural and social issues. Its work regularly appears on PBS, cable television, in film festivals, on the radio, as podcasts, streaming across the Internet, and even on a stage or two. Learn more at www.371productions.com.

Brad Lichtenstein (Producer/Director)

Brad Lichtenstein is an award-winning filmmaker & president of 371 Productions. He’s won two DuPonts: one for the recent Al Jazeera America series *Hard Earned* (produced by Kartemquin Films) and another for his 2001 film *Ghosts of Attica* (produced with Lumiere Productions). His first virtual reality film, *Across the Line* (produced with Custom Reality Services and Emblematic Group) about accessing abortion amid hostile protests, premiered at Sundance in 2016 and is playing all major festivals. His 2012 movie *As Goes Janesville* (PBS/Independent Lens) was nominated for a News & Doc Emmy and landed him on CNN, Fox and other networks. *Penelope*, his film about a nursing home that performs the Odyssey from Penelope's point of view, aired on PBS in 2015. 371’s *Wisconsin's Mining Standoff*, premiered in June 2014 on Al Jazeera America's *Fault Lines* and streams on Al Jazeera English. He’s the executive producer of *Precious Lives*, a Peabody-nominated radio/podcast and print series about young people &

gun violence. He is the director of the forthcoming PBS film, *When Claude Got Shot*, a feature doc about race and gun violence in America. Brad has also produced for Lumiere Productions, Frontline and Bill Moyers. His work is supported by Bader Philanthropies, Blue Mountain Center, Creative Capital, the Fetzer Institute, The Forward Fund, ITVS, the Ford, HKH, MacArthur, Nathan Cummings, Retirement Research and Tides Foundations, as well as the IDA and Mary L. Nohl Fellowship. Brad is the founder of docUWM, a documentary program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Morgan Elise Johnson (Producer/Co-director)

Morgan Elise Johnson is an independent filmmaker and writer. *There Are Jews Here* is her first documentary feature film and directorial debut. With 371 Productions she associate produced the VR film and Sundance New Frontiers selection, *Across the Line* (produced with Custom Reality Services and Emblematic Group); and the award winning 6-part documentary series, *Hard Earned* (produced by Kartemquin Films). Morgan is passionate about creating complex portraits of the Black experience in America. Currently, she is developing *Out West*, a multi-platform exploration of Black identity in the oft-forgotten, oft-neglected West Side of Chicago; and *Shambles*, a fictional web series and dramedy about two broke journalists trying to make it. She has a BS in Radio/Television/Film from Northwestern University.

Matt Lauterbach (Editor)

Matt Lauterbach is a documentary filmmaker and editor, an educational media developer, and an advocate for accessible media. *There Are Jews Here* is his second collaboration with 371 Productions. He also edited the PBS film *Penelope*. Matt served as Post Production Manager (2012-2014) at Kartemquin Films, escorting nine films safely to release during that period. Matt served as Post Supervisor of *The Trials of Muhammad Ali*; as an editor of *American Arab*; and as Co-Editor of *Saving Mes Aynak*. He continues to freelance edit for Kartemquin, and recently finished editing *Unbroken Glass*, the directorial debut of producer-cinematographer Dinesh Sabu. Matt is currently producing and directing an interactive multimedia website called *Beyond Blind: A Guide for the Sighted*, which will address common misconceptions and stereotypes about blindness.

Jason Longo (Director of Photography)

Jason's filmmaking career began in 1994 when he documented the resettling of collective farms by Chechen war refugees in the Chernobyl radiation zone. In the years since, he has photographed over 100 documentary films and television programs in over 60 countries on six continents. He is a frequent contributor to the PBS series Frontline, NOVA, and the American Experience, as well as to The Discovery Channel, National Geographic, and The History Channel. Jason's quiet, elegant aesthetic draws influence from his background as a photographer, sound recordist & editor. Editing credits include *School Prayer: A Community at War*, which aired on the PBS series POV and won a national Emmy Award, and *Never Forget to Lie*, an intimate portrait about a child survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto. From the remote deserts of Namibia to the Himalayan Mountains, Jason has worked in some of the most challenging environments in the world. Recent locations include the deepest inhabitable spot on the planet,

14,000 feet below the Earth's surface in a South African gold mine. He is currently shooting a four hour series about behavioral economics for PBS.

Vernon Reid (Composer)

Vernon Reid is a guitar player, perhaps best known as the founder and primary songwriter of group Living Colour. He was named #66 on Rolling Stone's 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time. Vernon has collaborated with Brad before, on the soundtracks for *Ghosts of Attica* (Court TV and BBC, 2001), *Almost Home* (2008, PBS) and *As Goes Janesville* (2012, PBS).

Tobey Libber (Director of Engagement)

A lifelong Milwaukeean, Tobey has spent 35 years in the nonprofit field as Executive Director of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization for the state of Wisconsin, Community Planning Director for the Milwaukee Jewish Federation, Program Officer at the Helen Bader Foundation, and Executive Director of Jewish Family Services Housing. He has an extensive knowledge of the Jewish Community both locally and nationally which enables him to build robust partnerships with Jewish organizations across the United States. Tobey Libber holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Social Work each from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

About the film's Supporters

Mike Leven (Lead Funder)

Mike Leven approached Brad with the idea for *There are Jews Here* in 2013. The Mike and Andrea Leven Family Foundation is the principal funder of the movie. Mike is the chairman and chief executive officer of Georgia Aquarium. He previously served as the CEO of the Aquarium from 2008 to 2009 before leaving for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lead Las Vegas Sands Corporation as President and Chief Operating Officer. He was previously the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of US Franchise Systems, Inc. (USFS), which franchises the Microtel Inn & Suites and Hawthorn Suites hotel brands. Prior to forming USFS in 1995, he was president and chief operating officer of Holiday Inn Worldwide. From 1985 to 1990, Mr. Leven was president of Days Inn of America. He has been an active philanthropist for much of his career, and served as the Vice Chairman of The Marcus Foundation, a philanthropic organization founded by Bernie Marcus, co-founder of The Home Depot, Inc. He first met the filmmaker, Brad Lichtenstein, when Brad was applying to attend his alma mater, Tufts University. He was among the first donors to Brad's first film, *Andre's Lives* (1998), about the "Jewish Schindler" who bribed Slovak nazis to help save Jewish lives during the Holocaust. Mr. Leven holds a Bachelor of Arts from Tufts University and a Master of Science from Boston University. He also holds an Honorary Doctorate from The Johnson & Wales University and College of Hospitality and Tourism Management of Niagara University.

Michael Kay (Funder)

Michael Kay is the former president and CEO of LSG Sky Chefs. He is active in philanthropy and has served as Board Chair for The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta

The Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta serves as fiscal sponsor of *There Are Jews Here*.

Crew and Cast List

Producer, Director

Brad Lichtenstein

Producer, Co-Director

Morgan Elise Johnson

Editor

Matt Lauterbach

Director of Photography

Jason Longo

Original Music

Vernon Reid

Assistant Editor

Ian McManama

[Ingrid Roe](#)

Additional Cinematography by

Keith Walker

Colin Systma

Mark Trottenberg

Field Sound

Colin Systma

Jacob Fatke

Ken King

Post Production Assistant

David Dejong

Graphics and Animation

Dan Sharkey

Color Correction

Joe Winston

Interns

Gregory Bishop

Colleen Black

Elle Gehringer

Emily Kuester

Daniel Larson

Brooke Moret

Moira Tracey

Project Management

Paul Kjelland

Outreach Coordinator

Tobias Libber

Cast (l-r in order as they appear in the film)

Milton Radman

Rhonda Buckman

David Balk

Rosalyn Balk

Brian Balk

Ellie Balk

Dalya Balk

Jeanette Wolff

Nancy Oyer

Glen Rafish

Janet Cornish

Uriel Druker

Joshua Druker

Gary Jacobs

Lynne Goldsmith

Larry Blumberg

Rob Goldsmith

Kenny Priddle

Lisa Priddle

Karen Arenson

Emily Arenson

Terence Arenson

Todd Silverman

Lewie Rudolph

Beverly Rudolph

Vicki Davis

Diana Farias

Mark Kessler

Irving Greenblum

Missy Wright

Debbie Firestone

Les Norton

Pam Rudolph

Jeffrey Abraham

Janet Radman

Don Pripstein

Vanita Sansom

Susie Druker

Ryan Druker

Tony Curry

Evelyn Selig

Susan Melnick

Gabriel Frydman

Nancy Crunk-Elsberry

Howie Nestel

Ariel Greenberg

Michael Jay