



# KNOTS

*a forced marriage story*

LIFT THE VEIL



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<http://knotsthefilm.com>

Knots TRT: 1 hour, 16 minutes, 41 seconds

# TAGLINES



## Primary:

Forced and child marriage is happening all across the United States, **legally**.

Three survivors - Nina, Sara, and Fraidy - take us on a journey into the depths of this human rights abuse hiding in plain sight.

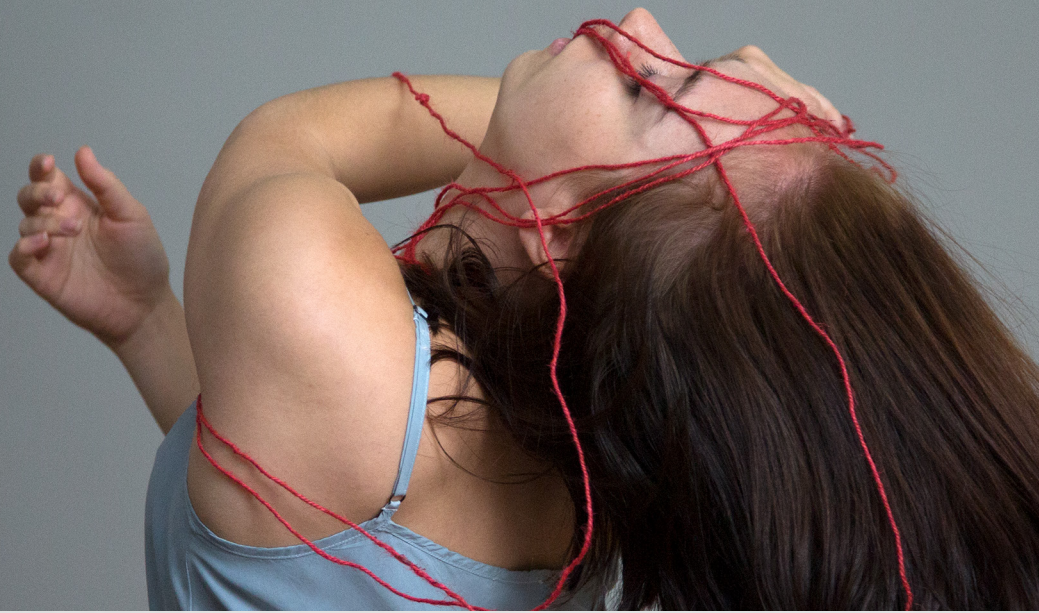
## Alt:

When we think of girls and women being forced into marriage, we often think of countries and cultures distant from our own. But the truth is it's happening all across the U.S. -

and it's **legal**. Discover the stories of three survivors and witness the fight to end this human rights abuse in America.



# SYNOPSIS



**Knots: A Forced Marriage Story** is a feature-length documentary that explores the truth about forced and child marriage in the U.S. through the complicated experiences of those who have survived it.

Often misunderstood, forced marriage is a human rights abuse that has lifelong traumatic consequences.

**It is widespread, and it is wrong.**

Three brave forced marriage survivors - Nina, Sara, and Fraidy - take us on a revealing journey through their lives and fight alongside advocates, experts, and lawmakers to end this gender-violence issue in the U.S. With the help of dynamic visuals - including original illustrations and a specially choreographed movement piece - this film brings to light both the horror and the hope that define this difficult issue.



# FORCED AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN THE U.S

**Forced Marriage in the United States** has gone under-reported and unnoticed for decades. When we think of girls and young women being forced into marriage, we rarely think about it in the context of our communities, our neighbors, our backyards. And yet, women and girls, including children as young as 11 and 12, are being forced into marriage here in America, in the 21st century. To top it off, in 48 states **it's completely legal**. For now.

## **A Forced Marriage Doesn't Always Look Like a Gun To The Head.**

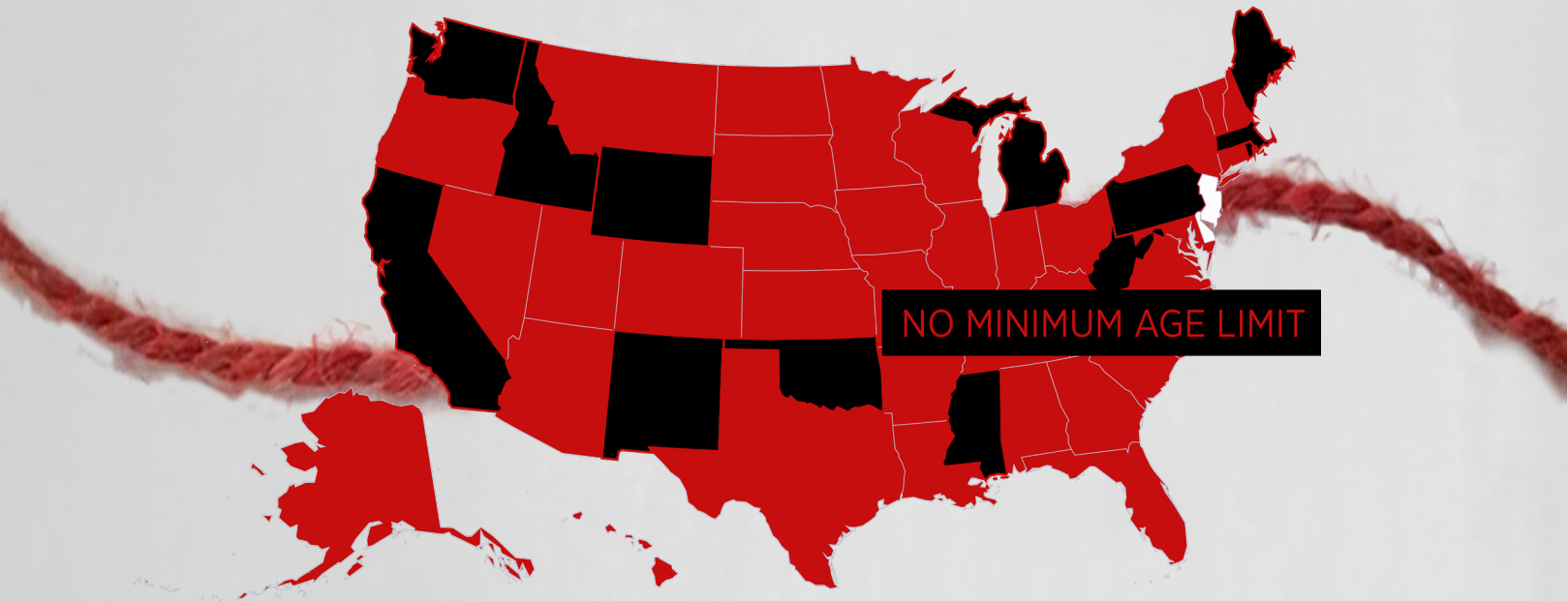
It comes in many shapes and sizes, all of which have traumatic life-long consequences.

This film brings the true human cost of this human rights abuse to light.



KNOTS: A FORCED MARRIAGE STORY

# STATES WITH CHILD MARRIAGE THROUGH LEGAL EXCEPTIONS



Nearly **250,000 children** in the U.S. were married between 2000 and 2010, some as young as 12-years-old.

**77% of children** were young girls married to significantly older men.

Forced marriage can happen at **any age**.

A limited survey in 2011 uncovered **3,000 cases of forced marriage** in the U.S. within the previous two years. Experts and advocates estimate that hundreds of thousands of women and girls in the U.S. are in or facing forced marriages.

While boys and men are sometimes affected by forced and child marriage, it **overwhelmingly affects women and girls** and is globally considered a gender-violence issue.

### The Consequences:

- End of education, leading to poverty.
- Significantly higher risk of domestic violence.
- Significantly higher risk of health issues including heart disease and cancer.
- Significantly higher risk of mental health issues.
- Ongoing sexual assault.



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

How do you tell a story that isn't yours to tell? Working with forced and child marriage survivors to share their harrowing stories - bare their souls - this is a question I asked myself many times throughout the filmmaking process.

Directing *Knots: A Forced Marriage Story* has been a deep and haunting excavation. We worked to expose the dark underbelly of the otherwise Pinterest-perfect concept of marriage in America. To give survivors a platform where their voices can be heard, their experiences felt. To let others know they are not alone.

*We see you. We hear you. We are you.*

Born in Seattle and raised in Southeast Asia, I'm an independent writer and filmmaker, avid traveler, and macaroni and cheese connoisseur. Since graduating from Florida State University film school in 2007 I've lived and worked around the world in Los Angeles, Marrakech, London, Sydney, Washington DC, and Omaha.

I've had the pleasure of working for a range of companies and clients writing feature scripts, short scripts, advertising copy, advocacy campaigns, blogs, and everything in-between. I've worked for companies like Disney and non-profits such as The Tahirih Justice Center. Hyperion published my first YA novel, "I Heart Vampires: Birth" under the pen name Siona McCabre in 2011.

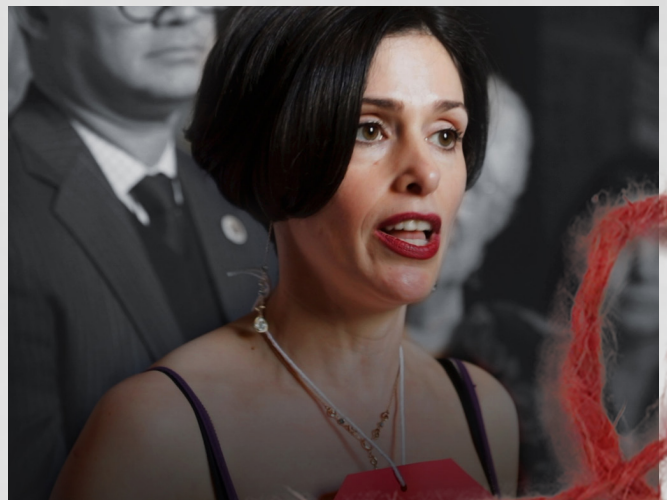
My first feature film as director and producer is a documentary on forced and child marriage in the United States, and I've also written and directed a short horror film that I'm developing as a feature. In November 2019 I was invited to present a TEDx Omaha talk on the subject of the documentary.

# SURVIVORS

## Fraidy Reiss

New Jersey

Fraidy grew up in Brooklyn, New York, in the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish community. Her schooling consisted of learning to cook and sew, religious training, and understanding that her only roles in life would be that of wife and mother. When she was matched at 19 years old with a man whose violent outbursts she was told to ignore, she knew she had no choice.



## Nina Van Harn

Michigan

Homeschooled in an insular Christian community in Michigan and raised to be subservient to men, Nina was taught from a young age that women are nothing more than wives and mothers. At age 19, upon threat of being excommunicated from her family, her community, and religion - the only life she knew - she was forced her to marry a stranger.

## Sara Tasneem

California

When Sara was just fifteen, she was essentially kidnapped by her father in California and given to an older man who was part of her father's religious group. The day she was legally forced to marry in Reno, Nevada, she was sixteen, visibly pregnant, and hoping desperately that an adult, anyone, would help her. Instead, they pronounced her married.





# END CREDITS

## Cast

BELLA WARU  
Dancer/Performer

NINA VAN HARN  
Herself

SARA TASNEEM  
Herself

FRAIDY REISS  
Herself

CASEY SWEGMAN  
Herself

JEANNE SMOOT  
Herself

AMY PAULIN  
Herself

SAFIA MAHJEBIN  
Herself

SARAH BOSAKOWSKI  
Herself

ADDITIONAL NY CHAIN-IN PARTICIPANTS  
Themselves

RICHARD MORRIS  
Himself

DEB HUBER  
Herself

JENNIFER MCCLELLAN  
Herself

CHRISTINE BROWN  
Herself

THERESA BIVALETZ  
Herself

LEANNA DANA STANICK  
Herself

ADDITIONAL NJ CHAIN-IN PARTICIPANTS  
Themselves

NICHOLAS L SYRETT  
Himself

JONATHAN STRIKER  
Himself

CHELSEA CLINTON  
Herself

CALIFORNIA CONSTITUENT  
Herself

WENDY ROBINSON  
Herself

MICHAEL HENNINGS  
Man in Diner

## Crew

**Director**  
KATE RYAN BREWER

**Executive Producer**  
TIMOTHY RYAN

**Producers**  
KATE RYAN BREWER  
PAIGE LIVINGSTON  
JASMINE LORD

**Associate Producer**  
LORA SMITH-RYAN

**Original Score by**  
MIRIAM MAYER

**Vocals**  
JAYLA DAMARIS

**Director of Photography**  
JASMINE LORD

**Additional Photography by**  
MICHAEL HENNINGS  
JJ SEREDAY

**Film Editing**  
DARMYN CALDERON

**Art Direction**  
CHRIS COOK

**Production Design**  
CHRIS COOK

**Graphics**  
CHRIS COOK

**Choreography & Performance**  
BELLA WARU

**Post-Production Supervisors**  
JASMINE LORD  
DARMYN CALDERON

**Story Development Assistant**  
CHRIS COOK

**Field Sound**  
JASMINE LORD

**Sound Mix**  
KEVIN KEPLAR

**Sound Design**  
KEVIN KEPLAR

**Dialogue Editing**  
KEVIN KEPLAR

**Colourist**  
ENRICO TARGETTI

**Colour Studio**  
INCENDIO

## Stills Photographer

JOEY VALENTI

**Production Assistants**  
CATHERINE COOK  
CHRIS COOK  
MARYBETH GUINEY  
WILLIAM RYAN  
LORA SMITH-RYAN

**Stunt Drivers**  
MORGAN ADAMS  
KOSTYA MAROWITZ

**Website Designer**  
CHRIS COOK

**Teaser Trailer Editor**  
RICHARD PAYNE

**Teaser Trailer Composer**  
SEAN PETER

**Producers Assistant**  
TINA LOU

**Partner Organizations**  
THE CHILD LABOR COALITION  
THE FILM COLLABORATIVE  
THE KAILASH SATYARTHI CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION  
UNCHAINED AT LAST

## Producers Wish To Thank

OHN KING ADAMS  
PETER BOROSH  
MICHAEL BRAVIN  
BEN BREWER  
GRAHAM FUTERFAS  
MARYBETH GUINEY  
MARLENA HARTZ  
ALEX JAUREGUI  
AMAIA JAUREGUI  
ESTI JAUREGUI  
SARA TASNEEM AND LOVED ONES  
MICHAEL P TEDFORD  
UNCHAINED AT LAST  
OFFICE OF SENATOR JENNIFER MCCLELLAN (VA)  
ANNA MCDEVITT  
CHUCK MCILVAIN  
FRAIDY REISS AND LOVED ONES  
THE RYAN FAMILY  
DAVID SHEETZ  
THE SINGH FAMILY  
TIM SMITH  
PETER SUMMERVILLE  
NICHOLAS L. SYRETT  
THE TAHIRIH JUSTICE CENTRE  
NINA VAN HARN AND LOVED ONES  
BARBARA MARSHALL  
VELINDA WARDELL

## Additional Thanks

ADAMA FILMS  
BEE AL-DARRAJ  
MAIANA BIDEGAIN  
CANDACE CASON  
STEVE AND GLENDA CLABORNE  
MELISSA CRAWFORD  
SUSAN CULLINAN  
MARISSA DUGGAN  
MARCELLA GARCIA  
DEBORAH GILG  
MARK HANKIN  
KIM LANGLAND  
TURNER AND ABBY MORGAN  
MY BLUE SKY  
RUDY PORTER  
OFFICE OF SENATOR NELLIE POU (NJ)  
CELLA QUINN  
RED CROSS AUSTRALIA  
MICHAEL REHER  
GREG SCHULZE  
HELEN SEIGNIOR  
JILL SLUPE  
THE SOLIDARITY CENTER STAFF  
PETER SOMERVILLE  
LEISHA STROUD  
VICTORIA TARR  
OFFICE OF SENATOR JILL VOGEL (VA)  
OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE PERRY WARREN (PA)  
MICHELLE ZYCH, OMAHA WOMEN'S FUND

## Additional Footage & Resources

"AMERICAN CHILD BRIDE" BY NICHOLAS L SYRETT  
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
ARCHIVE.ORG  
CNN  
DAILY MAIL  
THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS  
EQUALITY NOW  
FREESOUND.ORG - DAVEINCAMAS "BIG METAL CHAIN"  
THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE  
THE NEW YORK TIMES  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER  
PBS FRONTLINE  
POLITICO  
SHUTTERSTOCK  
THE TAHIRIH JUSTICE CENTER  
TASNEEMSFADVOCACY.HOME.BLOG  
TEDX FOGGY BOTTOM  
UNCHAINED AT LAST  
THE WASHINGTON POST

## Equipment Rental

LENSRENTALS  
SUNSTUDIOS

## Filmed In

ALEXANDRIA, VA  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI  
LOS ANGELES, CA  
GREATER NEWARK AREA, NJ  
NEWTOWN, PA  
NEW YORK CITY, NY  
GREATER OAKLAND AREA, CA  
GREATER OMAHA & COUNCIL BLUFFS AREA, NE & IA  
RICHMOND, VA  
WASHINGTON D.C.

## Archival Footage

"A Date with your Family"  
Presented by simmel-meservey  
Directed by edward c. simmel  
Written by arthur v. jones  
1950

"In The Suburbs"  
Presented by on film, inc.  
Created by redbook magazine  
1957

"International Moves the Browns to Sterling Street"  
Presented by jam handy organization  
Created by international silver company  
1941

"Let's Go Bowling (Part II)"  
Created by bowling proprietors association of america  
1955

"Toward Emotional Maturity"  
Presented by knickerbocker productions  
1954

"Who are the People of America?"  
Presented by phoenix learning group, inc.  
Created by coronet instructional media, inc.  
1953