



CHILDREN OF THE INQUISITION A FILM WHOSE TIME HAS COME

BY CORINNE J. BROWN

What began as a dream, the telling of the story of the Iberian Jewish Diaspora in the 15th and 16th centuries as a result of the Spanish Inquisition, and the reawakening of its descendants around the world, has become a reality. Director Joe Lovett and his crew at Lovett Stories and Strategies can truly celebrate an astonishing film, a riveting story of persecution and survival under extreme odds.

"Children of the Inquisition" is not only a two-hour documentary, it is also an immersive website and educational outreach project that unearths 500 years of hidden history. The project looks in depth at what happened to specific families forced to convert to Catholicism or flee during the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions through the eyes of their contemporary descendants, many of whom are just discovering their often nuanced Jewish roots. Diverse personal narratives about subjects, that many members of SCJS have come to know and respect, reveal the connections between the subject's individual family's journeys and this buried history. The discoveries of these flights to safety enable each subject to access a fuller understanding of how their lives were shaped by a perilous history.

More than just a film, "Children of the Inquisition" is an opportunity to better understand our complex world and identities, a revelation for many. Constructed of interviews about descendants: José Barreiro; artist Carlos de Madeiros; journalist and author Doreen Carvajal; Kingston, Jamaica resident Dr. Winston George Mendes Davidson; Professor Devin Naar of the University of Washington in Seattle, and young Ise Sharp,



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Unveiling a shared history

granddaughter of Ainsley Henriques of Jamaica, the powerful imagery is tied together with a superb soundtrack. Historical insights by author David Gitlitz enrich the tour of Spain and an interview with Rabbi Stephen Leon of El Paso, Texas focuses on the hidden Jews of the Southwest. Contributions by historian Jane Gerber lend clarification and credibility.

After six years of shooting in 12 cities spanning four continents, the new release recently premiered at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival to rave reviews. Said Lovett about his accomplishment, "Making 'Children of the Inquisition' has been an extraordinary learning experience. I've learned there is much more to history than what we've been taught and much more to identity (Jewish, Christian, Muslim) than what we've assumed. And there is a much wider Jewish history and experience than that which is often recounted in today's narratives. Our subjects and our expert consultants have helped me to understand the people of the Middle Ages and their tribulations of persecution, forced migrations and hiding. I've gotten an important perspective on the plights of today's refugees and the politics and prejudice that creates their situation."

See "Children of the Inquisition" in Denver
Wednesday, June 5 • BMH Synagogue
For details, email info@bmh-bj.org

