

A CRAVE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY

"STUNNING"
MOVIEMAKER MAGAZINE

RESIDENT ORCA

"RIVETING"
OVERLY HONEST REVIEWS



PRESS

"The stunning, hypnotic Resident Orca film is a Santa Fe Film Fest standout..."

- *MovieMaker Magazine*

"Unwavering... a reminder for the strength and necessity of change and growth as a society..."

- *POV Magazine*

"A riveting piece of cinematic activism..."

- *Overly Honest Reviews*

"A sublime message of life and connection."

- *Film Threat*

Resident Orca

A film by Sarah Sharkey Pearce and Simon Schneider

with Executive Producers Squil-le-he-le Raynell Morris and Tah-Mahs Ellie Kinley

Our fates are the same.

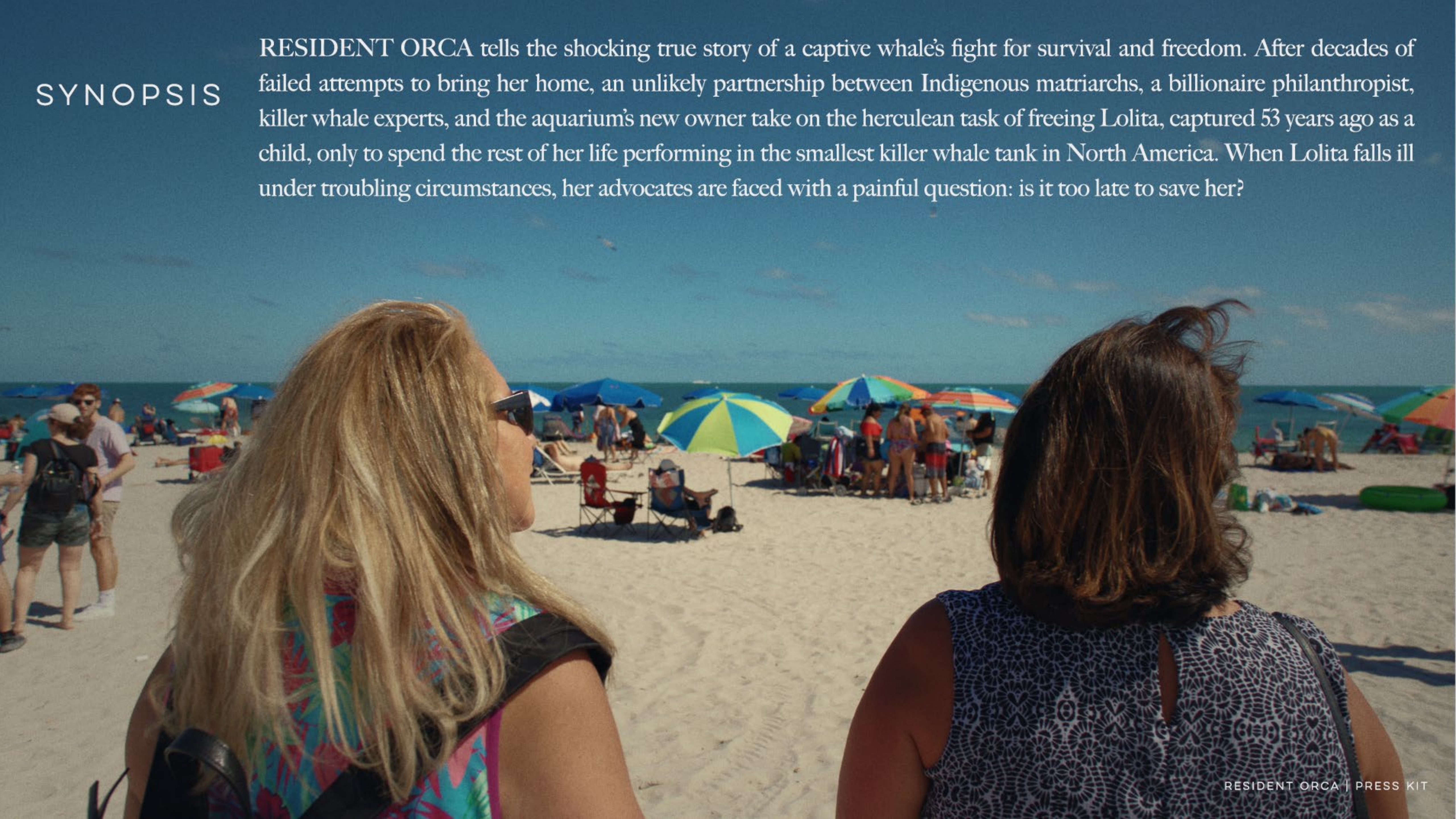


LOGLINE

Raynell and Ellie will stop at nothing to bring home their relative, a 57 year old killer whale named Lolita by her aquarium owners.

SYNOPSIS

RESIDENT ORCA tells the shocking true story of a captive whale's fight for survival and freedom. After decades of failed attempts to bring her home, an unlikely partnership between Indigenous matriarchs, a billionaire philanthropist, killer whale experts, and the aquarium's new owner take on the herculean task of freeing Lolita, captured 53 years ago as a child, only to spend the rest of her life performing in the smallest killer whale tank in North America. When Lolita falls ill under troubling circumstances, her advocates are faced with a painful question: is it too late to save her?



FESTIVALS AND AWARDS



DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

In 2019 we set out to make a film about the last living Southern Resident Killer Whale in captivity, an orca named Lolita. Her story resonated deeply with us – her history, a mirror of our settler-colonial legacy and treatment of the world around us. In development, we met with people whose lives intersected with the whale – captors, ex-trainers, scientists, journalists, advocates, and philanthropists. Many of these people participated in our film, but no one we met had a stronger connection to the whale than Indigenous Lummi Elders Squil-le-he-le (Raynell Morris) and Tah-Mahs (Ellie Kinley) from Washington State.

Raynell and Ellie invited us to document their ongoing journey to return their whale relative to her home waters. As participants and Executive Producers, the duo play a pivotal role in shaping the film's narrative – their claim to Lolita progressing the public conversation around the whale and her family from one of animal rights to one of inherent rights.

Through the effort to free her the film reveals Lolita through the complex web of humans around her. Her story becomes a parable for our hopes and our failures, past and present.

Sarah Sharkey Pearce & Simon Schneider


EXECUTIVE PRODUCER STATEMENT

My relative, Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut (Lolita/Tokitae) was captured in the 1970 orca roundup in Penn Cove, Washington from the L-pod, Southern Resident Killer Whales. She was sold to the Miami Seaquarium, Miami Florida where she lived for over 50 years. I campaigned for many years to have her returned to her natal waters, the Salish Sea.

In 2020, on the 50th anniversary of her capture, we realized we needed to tell the world about her life's journey, and we developed a partnership with filmmakers Sarah Sharkey Pearce and Simon Schneider who were filming in the Pacific Northwest with a trusted friend of Lummi Nation, Seattle Times Journalist, Lynda Mapes. Our collaboration took time to develop as I needed to have a voice in how Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's story was told and could ensure the project reflected Lhaq'temish values and my journey in an authentic way. Nothing could have prepared me for how the story would unfold over these past 4 years.

The public presentation of this film is very important for Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's legacy and Lummi Nation. In presenting this film we have a great opportunity to learn from Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's journey and to do better for her family, the Southern Resident Killer Whales. To protect and restore our waters, and our entire ecosystem before it's too late.

Squille-he-le (Raynell Morris)

An underwater photograph of an orca. The orca's eye is visible in the center-left, looking towards the camera. The dorsal fin is prominent on the right side, showing its characteristic shape and texture. The water is dark blue with some light reflections on the surface.

THE **LAND**, THE **WATER**, THE **AIR** IS ALL CONNECTED WITH A WEB.
SO YOU HAVE TO HONOUR AND RESPECT WHAT YOU DO HAS AN
IMPACT. GOOD OR BAD. IT HAS AN **IMPACT.**”

SQUIL-LE-HE-LE RAYNELL MORRIS

DIRECTORS

SARAH SHARKEY PEARCE is an award-winning documentary TV director, writer and executive producer. Her work appears on platforms such as Starz, Vice, BBC Arts, CBC, and Crave among others. As a queer filmmaker, Sarah also has a long history of working to decolonize her practice and disrupt power dynamics between producer and subject. *Resident Orca*, directed and produced for Crave Originals, is her feature documentary debut.

SIMON SCHNEIDER is an award-winning documentary cinematographer and director. His work appears on platforms such as Netflix, HBO, Sundance TV, Arte, Film4, and National Geographic among others. With a degree in marine biology and a MFA in science and natural history filmmaking, Simon has a passion for stories at the intersection of people and nature. *Resident Orca*, directed and produced for Crave Originals, is his feature documentary debut.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

JAMES COSTA is an award-winning film producer and the Vice President of the Board of Directors for Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. His films include Peabody award-winning *Welcome to Chechnya* (dir. David France), *Hidden Letters* (dir. Violet Du Feng/Qing Zhao), *A Decent Home* (dir. Sara Terry), *Desperate Souls: Dark City* and the *Legend of Midnight Cowboy* (dir. Nancy Buirski), and *El Equipo* (dir. Bernardo Ruiz)

LYNNE KIRBY is an Emmy, NAACP Grierson and BAFTA-nominated, Peabody and DuPont-winning producer of feature documentaries and unscripted television. Credits include *Thick Skin* (dir. Don Argott/Sheena Joyce, AMC+), *Unmasking Jihadi John* (dir. Anthony Wonke/HBO+C4) and *Water&Power: A California Heist* (dir. Marina Zenovich/Nat Geo, with Alex Gibney). Previously she was a senior programmer at Sundance Channel, Discovery and Court TV.

DIRECTORS Sarah Sharkey Pearce and Simon Schneider

WRITERS Sarah Sharkey Pearce and Simon Schneider

CINEMATOGRAPHER Simon Schneider

EDITOR Tony Kent

COMPOSERS Josh and Jesse Zubot

SOUND DESIGNER Eugenio Battaglia MPSE

SOUND FX EDITOR Humberto Corte MPSE

ADDITIONAL MUSICIANS Pura Fé - Vocals, Meredith Bates - Violin, Marina Hasselberg - Cello

ADDITIONAL MUSIC PROVIDED BY Solomon family, Lummi, Washington

FEATURING Squil-le-he-le Raynell Morris, Tah-Mahs Ellie Kinley, Marcia Henton, Charles Vinick, Pritam Singh,
Louis Aguirre, Howard Garrett, Terry Newby, Hy'oltse Shirley Bob, Tse Sum Ten Tony Hillaire, Lynda Mapes, Jeff Foster

PRODUCER Everyday Films

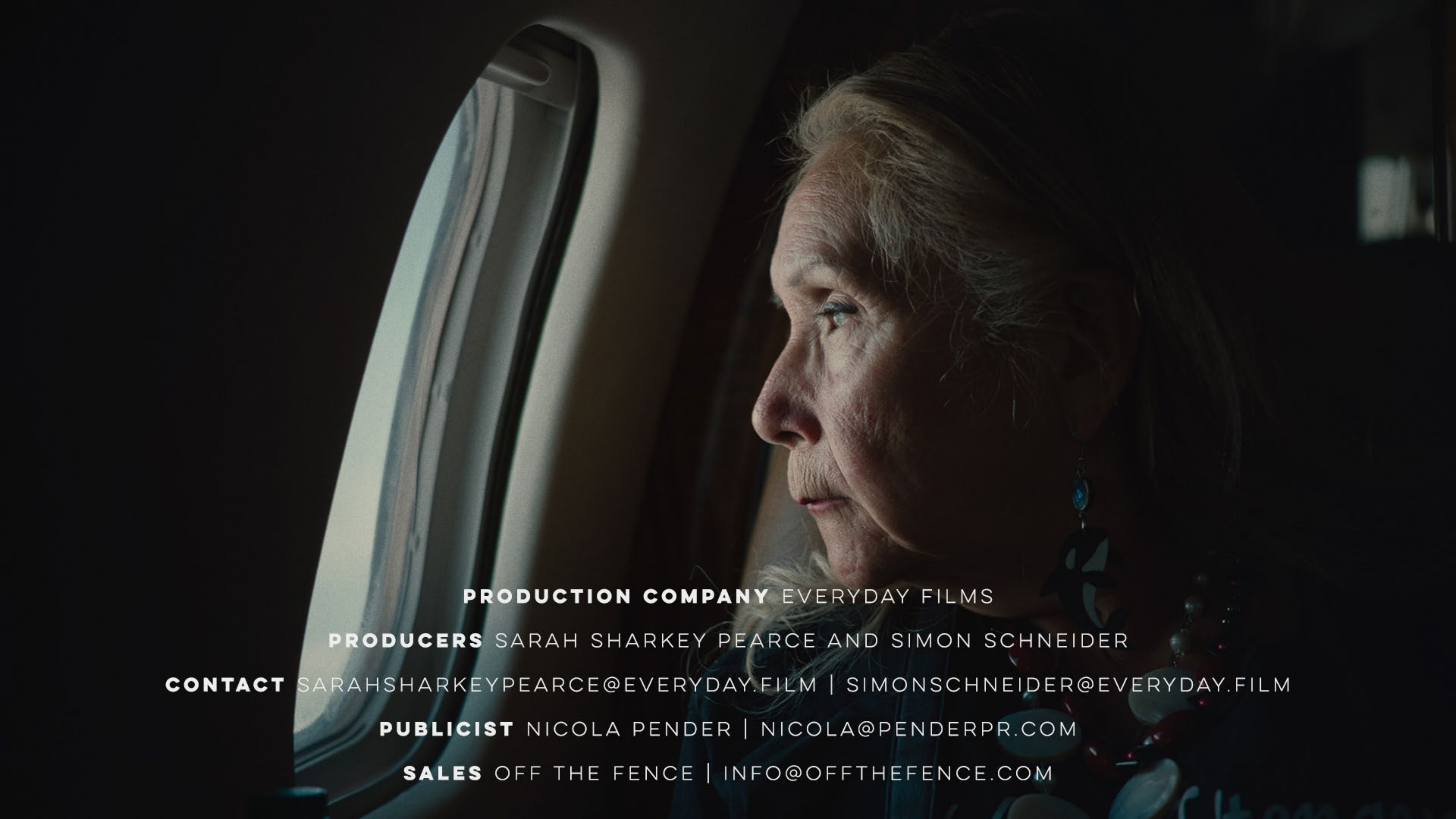
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS Squil-le-he-le Raynell Morris, Tah-Mahs Ellie Kinley, James Costa and Lynne
Kirby, Sarah Sharkey Pearce, Simon Schneider, Romney Grant, Melissa Gaucher

A CRAVE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTARY PRODUCED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CANADA MEDIA FUND AND
ROGERS DOCUMENTARY FUND

ENGLISH TITLE RESIDENT ORCA
YEAR OF PRODUCTION 2024
DURATION 97:16MIN
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN CANADA
GENRE DOCUMENTARY
SCREENING FORMAT DCP 2K SOUND: 5.1 SURROUND ASPECT RATIO: 16:9
LANGUAGE ENGLISH

TRAILER [LINK](#)
WEBSITE [LINK](#)
INSTAGRAM [LINK](#)





PRODUCTION COMPANY EVERYDAY FILMS

PRODUCERS SARAH SHARKEY PEARCE AND SIMON SCHNEIDER

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