

The New Adventures of Gidon Lev

The story of a Holocaust Survivor and the Writer Who Loved Him.

A documentary film by award-winning director Yaniv Rokah

An Israeli widower and Holocaust survivor met a middle-aged American woman who left the United States for Israel on the heels of grief and loss. Despite their almost 30-year age difference, the two clicked immediately. They fell in love and wrote a book. Then they went viral on Tiktok. The New Adventures of Gidon Lev explores this tender, unique relationship and the lessons it has for all of us.

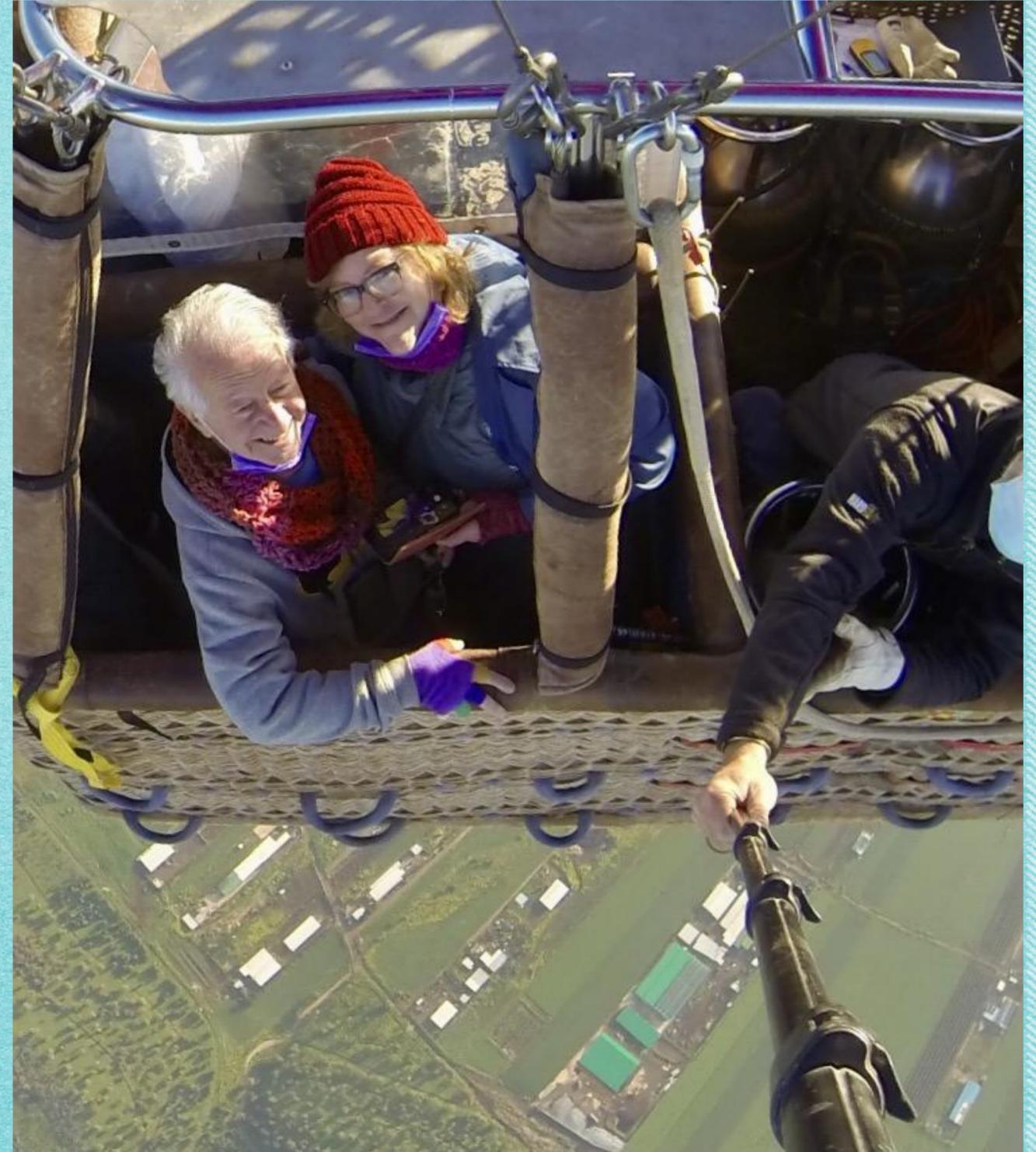


Thelma and Louise meets Harold and Maude

Sometimes funny, sometimes heartbreaking and always illuminating, the film is a love letter to serendipity, unlikely relationships, aging well and the power of refusing to be defined by the past.

The documentary intertwines the past and the present in a touching and inspiring invitation to go on a fascinating journey with Gidon and Julie, as the two mine memories for truth, inspiration and healing in what is arguably the most storied place on earth- Israel.

Tackling issues ranging from the importance of studying and preserving the subject of the Holocaust to the unexpected life chapters we can encounter at any age, the documentary is a love letter to love and recovery from trauma.

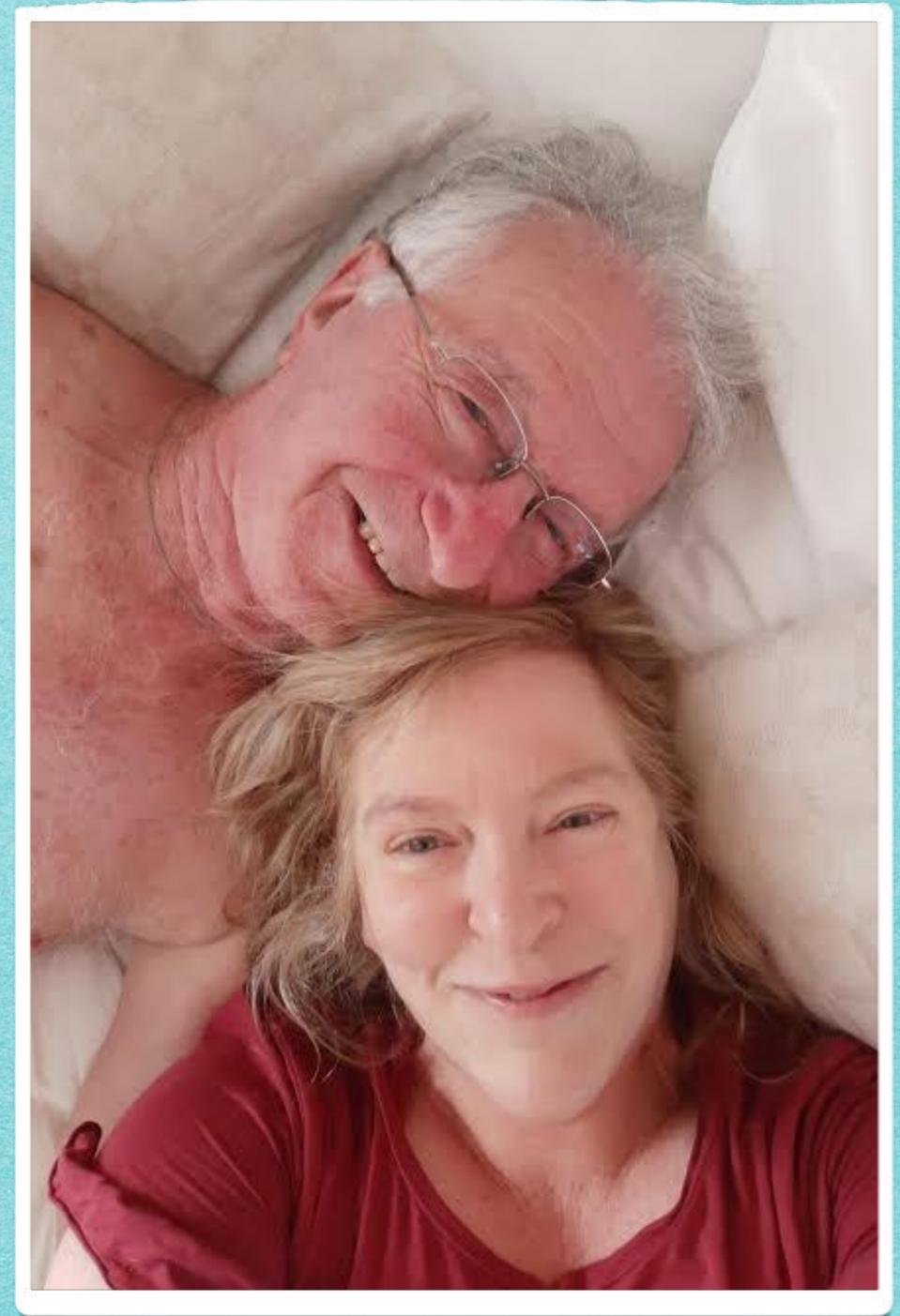


Synopsis

Of the 15,000 children imprisoned in or transported through the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt, fewer than 92 survived. Gidon Lev is one of those children.

Julie Gray is a writer and editor from California. After losing her brother to suicide she moved to Israel for much needed reinvention and healing. Quickly realized she had moved to the heart of the most complex conflict in the world and was completely on her own. She was lonely and had no sense of purpose. One day, in 2017, Julie met Gidon Lev. He was the first Holocaust survivor Julie had ever met.

Neither knew it at the time, but they were about to change the direction of each other's lives forever.



Synopsis

Through their new friendship, Julie discovered that Gidon is a former kibbutznik, served in the Israeli Defense Forces, had two marriages, six children and fifteen grandchildren. He delivers flowers, has piles of unpaid parking tickets and loves political demonstrations. Gidon, in other words, is not the average octogenarian. To the shock of everybody who knew either of them, and despite their 29 year age difference and cultural gaps Julie & Gidon fell in love. Neither knew it, but that was just the beginning of their adventures together.

Gidon & Julie traveled to Prague, California, New York and Germany. Together, they wrote *The True Adventures of Gidon Lev*. They went camping, ziplining and on a hot air balloon over the Jezreel Valley. And they documented it all.

In 2021, the two created a Tiktok account that went viral in less than six months. Suddenly, Gidon was the face of the Holocaust on the largest social media platform in the world.

THE TRUE ADVENTURES — OF — GIDON LEV

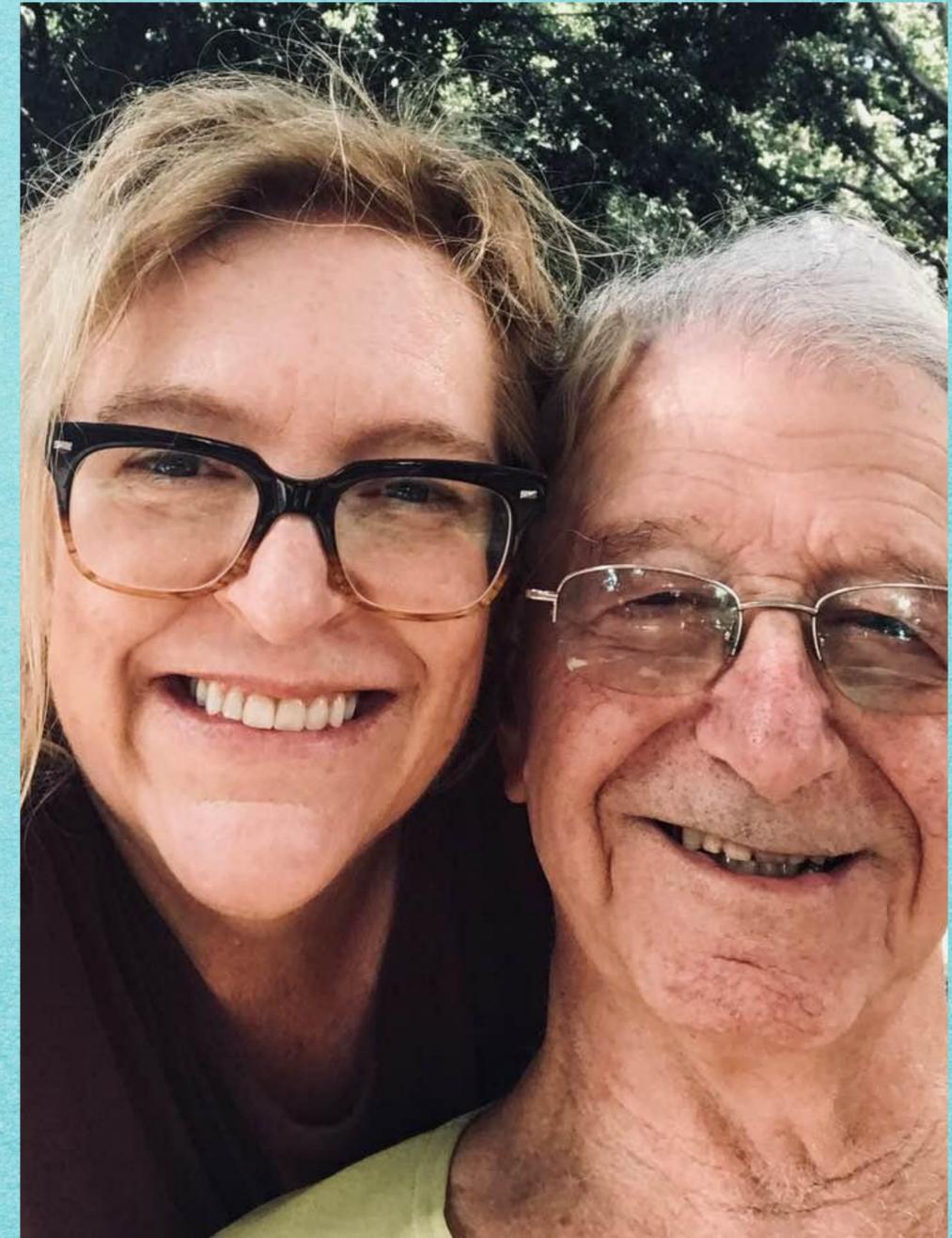
Rascal. Holocaust Survivor. Optimist.



Synopsis

Shot in in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the Negev desert and the fertile Jezreel Valley, and with interviews with friends and family, The New Adventures of Gidon Lev explores the many aspects and implications of Gidon and Julie's story.

We accompany this unique couple as they navigate the sometimes tricky terrain of media requests and interviews, their huge following on Tiktok, life in Israel and the deeper questions they both must face: Can this couple make a difference in Holocaust education and help counter the shocking rise of antisemitism? Is it validating or exhausting for Gidon to tell his story over and over again? What should the couple make of the shocking rise of antisemitism today? Will Gidon's story make an impact? How long will Gidon live and what will Julie do without him?



Director's Statement:

After my military service I left Israel and moved to New York, where I became an actor. I was fortunate to have a small role in Marc Forster's 2013 blockbuster, World War Z. In 2015, I debuted a documentary about Mimi Haist, an elderly homeless woman in Los Angeles. With appearances by Zach Galifianakis and Renee Zellweger, Queen Mimi screened at Haifa Film Festival and won best documentary at the Vail Film Festival, Hot Springs Film Festival and the St. Tropez International Film Festival. The film landed a global distribution deal through Netflix and Amazon Prime.

I believe the elderly have so much to teach the younger generation and I am passionate about ensuring that the stories of Holocaust survivors are told while we can still hear them. With fewer than 200,000 eyewitnesses to the greatest atrocity in human history still alive today, I believe that Gidon's extraordinary story must be told. His youthful spirit and optimism combined with his social media presence and zest for life drew me to his important and compelling story.

In The New Adventures of Gidon Lev, I will try to find out how the elderly in our society continue to survive and give us hope when our present times seem so gloomy. I will also examine whether survivors of trauma owe" to others some "deep message. Gidon & Julie's story is emblematic of so many important issues about hope, history and unexpected chapters in our lives. It is my greatest honor to amplify this story and this moment in time through the immersive medium of film. I hope you will join me.

Director's BIO:

A native Israeli, actor, director and producer Yaniv Rokah now resides in Manhattan. His narrative short film Black Hat, about a conflicted member of the Orthodox Jewish community won several film festival awards in 2019, including the prestigious Iris Prize and The San Francisco Jewish Film Festival Youth Jury Award. Black Hat was an official selection at the Tribeca Film Festival and landed a distribution deal with HBO Europe.

Yaniv also wrote a feature film 20 Miles about the refugee crisis in Europe, which is currently in pre-production and which he will direct in 2023 in Italy.



Budget:



USD 150,000

ROI: 20% upon distribution deal.

The film could also become a US tax deduction if structured as donation through fiscal sponsorship.