

DIRECTED BY ERIKA COHN

# What You'll Remember



#HOMEISNOTABUILDING

FEATURING ELIZABETH HERRERA DAVID LIMA DAVID LIMA, JR. EZEKIEL LIMA GABRIEL LIMA ROBYN LIMA  
EDITOR JEN BRADWELL SUPERVISING EDITOR ANDREW BLACKWELL CINEMATOGRAPHER ELIZABETH HERRERA COMPOSER OMAR FADEL  
CONSULTING PRODUCER CORY WINTER ASSOCIATE PRODUCER YVONNE ASHLEY KOUADJO SENIOR COMMISSIONING PRODUCER CHRISTINE KECHER  
CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LINDSAY CROUSE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ADAM ELLICK EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PAULA SMITH ARRIGONI NICO OPPER  
PRODUCED BY MARCIA JARMEL DIRECTED BY ERIKA COHN



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# What You'll Remember

## **Logline**

Through a raw love letter to their children, two young parents reframe their experience of homelessness in WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER—an achingly beautiful short portrait about home, family and security.

## **Synopsis**

After 15 years of bouncing from unsafe apartments to couches to shelters to the streets, a young family moves into their first stable home during the pandemic. In WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER, parents Elizabeth and David, write a letter to their children, recasting their experience of living in a car while waiting for housing assistance as an extended camping trip—sleeping in parks, showering at the beach, dressing for school in gas station bathrooms. Intimately filmed by Elizabeth, this short film plays as a love poem, expressing the parents deep belief that family can create home when there is no house.

**[Click to watch the film via The New York Times Op-Docs](#)**

Assets (stills, headshots, posters etc.) downloadable at: <http://bit.ly/WYR-Photos>

# Erika Cohn

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



Producer Marcia Jarmel and I, San Francisco residents, met Elizabeth Herrera and her family early in the pandemic through Hamilton Families, the organization that helped them secure temporary housing. I was immediately struck by their familial bond and unconditional love. They are the kind of family every child wants to have growing up...where imagination knows no bounds, every day a new adventure, playful and innovative. Elizabeth and her husband, David, wanted to tell an unconventional story about housing instability...one that would force audiences to confront their own biases about homelessness.

We began exploring themes and found that their family's love for each other and commitment to staying together at all costs was actually a barrier to receiving support. Housing assistance was more readily available for single parent families, but they couldn't imagine splitting up their family. They vowed to stay together and reframed their experiences of living in the car as endless camping trips, barbecues in the park and beach excursions (which provided showers). Despite David working multiple jobs, including for PG&E, it was never enough to secure consistent housing in the Bay Area. Through it all, Elizabeth documented their living conditions with an iPhone and gimbal, creating an authentic world through her inspiring and intimate cinematography. While all my films are deeply immersive and collaborative with film participants, WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER provided a unique, creative opportunity for Elizabeth's keen cinematic eye to guide us through past and present, highs and lows, adventures and challenges.

In this pivotal life moment, against the backdrop of a global pandemic, Elizabeth and David finally had the space to pause for a moment and reflect. Although it was their children's first stable address, Elizabeth revealed she hoped they would never forget where they came from. "Never forget that home is not a building. Home is where your family and the people you love are." Marcia and I suggested framing the narrative spine of the film as a letter to their children, and the idea deeply resonated with Elizabeth and David. They came back with what became the raw and intimate narration that transports us through this beautiful portrait of "home," family, and security.

Increasing income inequality, a rapidly growing wealth gap, unprecedented unemployment numbers and cumulative housing instability have all been dramatically exacerbated during the pandemic. These disparities are even more pronounced in the Bay Area, one of the world's most visually stunning places, a place of opportunity, but also a place with tremendous inequality and deprivation.

The beauty of WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER lies in the grey – between the black and white of society's definition of home, between the lines of security and stability, within the juxtaposition of freedom and fear. Our documentary short confronts the American dream and examines the stories we're told about success, family and housing. I hope it catalyzes audience reflection on the stories we've all been told...how life was framed, the splendor of imagination, the loss of childhood innocence, the meaning of home and the stories we tell ourselves now. In the midst of a pandemic, WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER plays as an offering – a tribute to resilience and creativity in a time when so much is out of our control.

## BIO

ERIKA COHN is a Peabody, Emmy and DGA Award-winning filmmaker who [Variety recognized as one of 2017's top documentary filmmakers to watch](#) and was featured in [DOC NYC's 2019 "40 Under 40."](#) Most recently, Erika directed/produced the New York Times Critic's Pick and Peabody Award nominee [BELLY OF THE BEAST](#), featuring the 2021 Oscar shortlisted original song, "See What You've Done" by Mary J. Blige. This powerful exposé of human rights abuses in women's prisons opened in theatres and was broadcast on PBS' *Independent Lens* series last fall. Her current releases also include The New York Times Op-Docs short film, [WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER](#), a beautiful portrait of a family who reframes their experience of homelessness, now playing in theatres and major film festivals. Previously, Erika directed/produced [THE JUDGE](#), a Peabody Award-winning and Emmy-nominated film about the first woman judge appointed to the Middle East's Shari'a courts, which premiered at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival and was broadcast on PBS' 2018 *Independent Lens series*. She co-directed/produced, [IN FOOTBALL WE TRUST](#), an Emmy award-winning, feature documentary about young Pacific Islander men pursuing their dreams of playing professional football, which premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival and was broadcast on PBS' 2016 *Independent Lens series*.

Erika grew up attending the Sundance Film Festival as a native Utahn, where she first began her career. She studied at Chapman University (California) and Hebrew University (Jerusalem) and has degrees in Film Production, Middle East Studies, and Acting Performance. In 2013, Erika founded Idle Wild Films, Inc., which has released 3 feature documentaries, 2 short films, and produced numerous branded content and commercial spots, including [Gatorade's "Win from Within" series](#), for which she received a 2016 Webby award nomination. In her spare time, Erika is an avid documentary photographer, music editor and performing artist. Erika is currently in development with her fiction feature debut and is represented by APA. Erika is represented by APA.





# Marcia Jarmel

## PRODUCER

MARCIA JARMEL has produced and directed a slate of award-winning films for PatchWorks Films including LOS HERMANOS/THE BROTHERS, currently in release. It won the Best Documentary Prize at the Woodstock Film Festival, was nominated for the Best Music Documentary Award by the International Documentary Association, and will air on PBS in the fall of '21. Previous films include HAVANA CURVEBALL, SPEAKING IN TONGUES, and THE RETURN OF SARAH'S DAUGHTERS. She also works as a consultant and impact strategist on a broad range of films, including the Oscar nominee LAST DAY OF FREEDOM and HBO's Emmy-nominated 50 CHILDREN. Her work has been funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Independent Television Service, Latino Public Broadcasting, the Center for Asian American Media, the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation and many others.

Marcia has taught both undergrad and graduate film courses at NYU and Chapman University and been honored with residencies with Working Films, the Fledgling Fund, SFFilmHouse, and BAVC Media Maker. She has served as a juror for the Emmys, BAVC MediaMaker, and many film festivals and currently heads Filmmaker Services at the Jewish Film Institute.





# Elizabeth Herrera

## CINEMATOGRAPHER

ELIZABETH HERRERA is a California native and proud mother of four, who is committed to helping end family homelessness. As an emerging filmmaker, she strives to bring new stories to life. Her

most recent project is the documentary short, WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER, which she filmed and is featured in. Shooting from an iPhone and providing the narration, Elizabeth captured her family's story in the form of a love letter to her children. Elizabeth collaborated with director Erika Cohn and producer Marcia Jarmel, to create WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER, now playing in theatres and major film festivals, soon to premiere on July 20th via The New York Times Op-Docs. Elizabeth is currently pursuing a certificate in video production at BAVC, where she recently created a short documentary about how young people are experiencing life during Covid-19, featuring her son. She's also a creative producer on a short audio documentary in development with BAVC and Hamilton Families. In her spare time, Elizabeth likes to cook and practice yoga. She currently resides in San Francisco.

## STATEMENT

Thousands of American families experiencing housing instability and homelessness fall through the cracks in the system every year. Faced with tough life changing decisions, many ultimately fall apart in the process. Working on this project has been such an amazing opportunity reigniting a lost passion for storytelling and awakening a new passion for advocacy. Being able to capture and share the beauty and reality of everyday life through a cinematic lens has been a dream come true. I'm incredibly thankful to be able to share our journey and to help shed a little light on a growing issue that has managed to stay out of society's sight and mind. I have great hopes viewers will walk away with a different understanding of what homelessness can look like. I am so thankful to Erika Cohn, Marcia Jarmel, everyone at BAVC, and Hamilton Families for making this chapter possible. As our time in transitional housing comes to an end, and though things remain uncertain, I'm excited to see where the road leads us next. I have great hopes.

# Facts & Statistics



171,575 homeless people in families were counted nationwide on one night in 2020.

[U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

Families make up about 30% of the homeless population in the U.S.

[National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

6.5 million Americans spent more than 50% of their income on housing in 2018.

[National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)

25% of the homeless population is employed.

[Urban Institute](#)

## Primary Cause of Homelessness<sup>+</sup>



Top 6 Responses<sup>A</sup>

**26%**  
Lost Job

**18%**  
Alcohol or Drug Use

**13%**  
Eviction

**12%**  
Argument with Family/Friend

**8%**  
Mental Health Issues

**7%**  
Incarceration

[San Francisco Homeless Count and Summary](#)

There was over 15% increase in U.S. public school students experiencing homelessness from 2015-2018.

[National Center for Homeless Education](#)

California is home to more than 1/4 of all homeless Americans.

[Bay Area Council Economic Institute](#)

## OBSTACLES TO PERMANENT HOUSING

**63%**

*Can't afford rent*



**37%**

*No job/income*



**19%**

*No money for moving*



**15%**

*No housing available*

[SAN FRANCISCO HOMELESS COUNT AND SUMMARY](#)



# Facts & Statistics

California's homeless population increased 31% from 2010-2020, despite a national decrease.

Bay Area Council Economic Institute

Nearly 40% of Americans can't cover an unexpected \$400 expense.

CBS News

4 million Americans were unconventionally housed in 2018.

National Alliance to End Homelessness

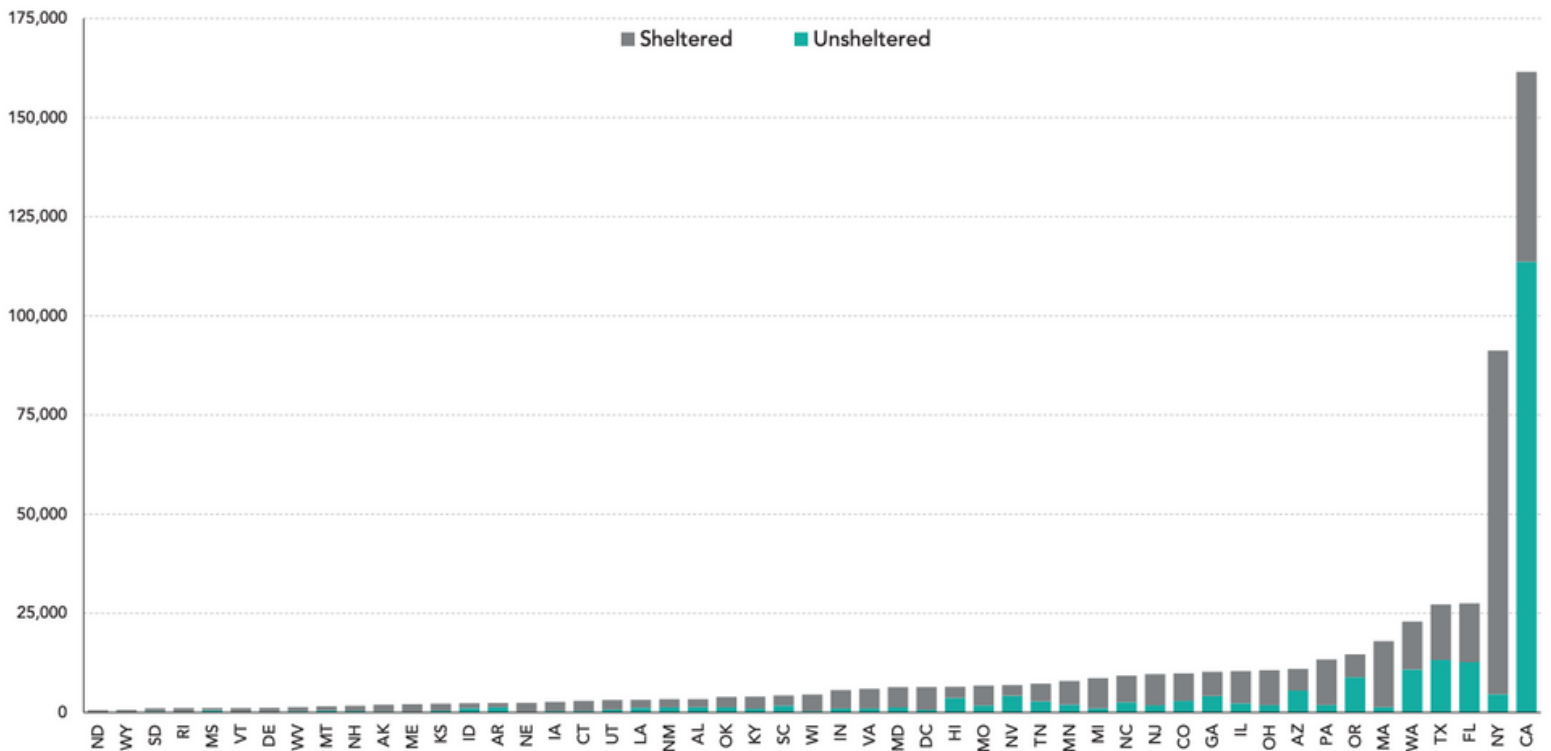


## Duration of Current Episode of Homelessness



SAN FRANCISCO HOMELESS COUNT AND SUMMARY

## TOTAL U.S. HOMELESS POPULATION (2020)



Source: HUD Point-in-Time Count 2020  
 Analysis: Bay Area Council Economic Institute



# Credits

**Directed by**  
Erika Cohn

**Produced by**  
Marcia Jarmel

**Executive Produced by**  
Paula Smith Arrigoni  
Nico Opper

**for Hamilton Families**  
Cory Winter

**For Op-Docs**  
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**Supervising Editor**  
Andrew Blackwell

**Executive Producer**  
Adam Ellick

**Co-Executive Producer**  
Lindsay Crouse

**Associate Producer**  
Yvonne Ashley Kouadjo

**Cinematographer**  
Elizabeth Herrera

**Editor**  
Jen Bradwell

**Composer**  
Omar Fadel

**Sound Design & Mix**  
Will Storkson

**Color Grading**  
Gary Coates

**Graphics**  
Matthew Baldwin  
Bay Area Film Company

**Additional  
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Sound**

David Lima  
David Lima, Jr.  
Ezekiel Lima  
Gabriel Lima  
Robyn Lima

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Herrera/Lima family**

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