



KEEP QUIET

Directed by Joseph Martin & Sam Blair
Produced by Nicole Stott, Danielle Clark & Alex Holder

Featuring Csanád Szegedi

Official Selection, Tribeca Film Festival

2016, UK/Hungary, 93 minutes, in Hungarian
and English with subtitles

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THE FILM

Three years ago, a vehemently anti-Semitic Hungarian far-right politician discovered that he was Jewish. Rejected by his party and unable to uphold the pillars of his previous life, he set out on a remarkable personal journey to confront, learn about and practice his Jewish faith. *Keep Quiet* charts his astonishing transformation.

SYNOPSIS

Csanád Szegedi's story is astonishing. As vice-president of Jobbik, Hungary's far-right extremist party, Szegedi fervently espoused anti-Semitic rhetoric and was a vocal supporter of the Holocaust denial movement. He was a founder of the Hungarian Guard, a now-banned militia inspired by the Arrow Cross, a pro-Nazi party complicit in the murder of thousands of Jews during the Second World War.

Then came a revelation: a long-buried secret was exposed that upended his career and turned his life on its head. Szegedi was confronted by a disgruntled Jobbik party member with the shocking news that not only were his maternal grandparents Jewish, but his beloved grandmother was actually a survivor of Auschwitz, who had hidden her faith for fear of further persecution.

Life as Szegedi knew it, was over.

Lengthy, painful and soul-searching conversations with his mother and grandmother revealed not only their Jewish identity, but also his own. Suddenly, the very religion he had despised for over three decades had become an undeniable part of his inner life.

Although Jobbik considered retaining Szegedi as the party's "tame Jew" in order to combat accusations about their anti-Semitic ideology, Szegedi was eventually forced to quit.

Horrified and angry, with his political career in tatters, Szegedi realised he needed to begin searching for his roots and heritage. Unsure of how to navigate his new identity, Szegedi approached Rabbi Baruch Oberlander, the leader of the Orthodox Jewish community in Budapest. Together, the two most unlikely of allies embarked upon a journey to confront Szegedi's dark past and reflect on his new future.

Keep Quiet charts Szegedi's three-year voyage of self-discovery as Rabbi Baruch Oberlander guides him from the depths of personal turmoil and crisis, to the possibility of hope. Rabbi Oberlander's guiding ethos is simple: he believes it his ethical duty to embrace every Jew regardless of their past. Enabled by this acceptance, Szegedi – whilst engaged in a period of intense religious instruction – re-evaluates, and is forced to tackle, the painful truths of his familial legacy, his own wrongdoing and the turbulent history of his country.

Szegedi is now a practicing Orthodox Jew. He observes Shabbat, attends synagogue, is studying Hebrew and is trying to familiarise himself with the Talmud (the code of Jewish law) to observe the 613 commandments. He has adopted the Hebrew name Dovid and is even considering making Aliyah to Israel.

But is Szegedi's astonishing transformation evidence of genuine atonement and spiritual awakening, or simply the volte-face of a desperate man who, having failed to suppress the truth, has nowhere else to turn?

IN SHORT

HUNGARY'S TURBULENT PAST

The far-right is relentlessly ascending to power in Hungary, supported by increasing numbers of citizens who approve of its nationalistic views and anti-Semitic rhetoric. In scenes chillingly reminiscent of the Nazi era, uniformed guards march the streets waving flags displaying the swastika-like Arrow Cross. The nationalist Jobbik party sits proudly in parliament, and one of its 44 MPs has suggested that all Jews be registered as posing a threat to national security. Considering that the Final Solution reached its zenith in Hungary – with over 600,000 Jews transported to, and killed, in the gas chambers of Auschwitz – the political state of Hungary today is accompanied by a frightening sense of déjà vu.

The Holocaust convinced many European Jews who survived the Second World War that they would always be marked as such, even in the countries of their birth. Consequently, many survivors emigrated in the hope of finding acceptance elsewhere. But for those who remained in Communist Europe, a Jewish identity remained a stigma. Out of fear of history repeating itself, many Jews, including Szegedi's grandparents, decided to conceal their identity.

Although the blatant presence of modern anti-Semitism is hard to ignore, Hungary has never come to terms with its role during the Holocaust. In the aftermath of the war, the Stalinists who took power operated a brand of Communism, which repressed, denied and distorted Hungarian history to deny their implication in the anti-Semitic persecution of the previous years.

After Communism, the teaching of history was fiercely contested. As a result, previously repressed events were revived whilst others were removed from the curriculum. Szegedi remembers being shown a film at school, which questioned how many had died at Auschwitz. He knew that in the past, banned films had sometimes told the truth: was the Holocaust, he wondered, yet another Communist exaggeration?

The '80s and '90s saw a strong revival in Hungarian nationalism. Indeed, when Szegedi published a political autobiography, he proudly proclaimed to the ability trace his father's ancestors back to pre-Christian Hungary and his own connection to an "ethnically pure" Hungarian past.

Today, Hungary's Jewish population is less than a fifth of what it was before the war. What little remains is overwhelmingly concentrated in Budapest, the country's capital.

INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKERS

JOSEPH MARTIN & SAM BLAIR, and producer ALEX HOLDER

What motivated you to make this film?

JOSEPH MARTIN: I was approached by Alex Holder, who was interested in making a film focused on the rise of the far right in Hungary. At the point of initial research trips, Csanád's story had been in the press but was largely based on rumours. When we spoke to Csanád and found out more detail, we were immediately hooked. Everyone agreed it was a once in a lifetime story.

SAM BLAIR: I came to the project at first in a "Consulting Director" role, ostensibly to help guide the film creatively towards completion, which I thought would be an interesting challenge and a chance to further my experience in the realm of features. That it would also give me the opportunity to work with Passion Pictures again was a big motivator, as was their enthusiasm about the film and its potential. But as the weeks turned into months and my role and involvement expanded, I found myself completely wrapped up in the film's themes and emotions, and of course as a filmmaker that drives you more than anything.

What is the film about?

JOSEPH MARTIN: I think the main theme of the film is redemption. Redemption for Csanád. For his grandmother. For Hungary as a whole. The film poses the classic question of whether past actions can ever be forgiven, but also reminds us that we have to take responsibility for our own actions. No one can escape their past.

SAM BLAIR: I think the most interesting thing about Csanád's story is that, however outrageous his revelation and transformation may at first appear, closer inspection reveals that he is far from an anomaly, but rather a product of a particular time and place. It's fascinating and troubling to see the way in which an individual is affected by the past and how history repeats itself. It's a film about the way seismic events, both personal and political, echo through generations – how scars can be concealed but must eventually be confronted.

I also find the theme of identity particularly fascinating. Csanád was so utterly convinced of who he was, so completely wrapped up in the narrative that he and Jobbik espoused, yet his story turns out to be just that – a story, with a beginning, middle and end which bear little resemblance to reality. If identity is a story we all tell ourselves, how much truth does it ever bear?

ALEX HOLDER: This film shows the rampant rise of anti-Semitism permeating the fabric of Hungarian society through this remarkable personal story. It is a story of identity, faith, family, learning the lessons of the past and perhaps redemption. Csanád's story allows us to explore the human side of extremism and specifically the ability of the far right to influence and pervade so many through its destructive rhetoric.

Tell us about an obstacle you had to overcome in the process of making the film and how you overcame it

SAM BLAIR: One of the toughest nuts to crack in the film was capturing Csanád's identity change and particularly the sense of him "becoming Jewish". He had already been working with Rabbi Oberlander for months by the time the film started shooting, so it meant retrospectively finding ways to portray these first steps towards his new identity. As Csanad states in the film, an identity shift takes years and it's a subtle, internalized process. Add to this that, the politician that he is, Csanad doesn't give a huge amount away on camera; it was a challenge to reveal what was happening inside him. I think we overcame it by searching for nuance – scrutinizing his interactions with Rabbi Oberlander, his family and Bobby and finding clues to his thought process in the questions he asks, the Freudian slips he makes, the small gestures or looks that reveal his inner workings

What were the main challenges in making Keep Quiet?

JOSEPH MARTIN: Early on, we were arranging to have a research meeting with a Hungarian holocaust survivor, Eva 'Bobby' Neumann. At the time, it was 70 years since the liberation of Auschwitz. We realised this would be one of the last films to document the experiences of a survivor. It was a huge challenge – and a huge honor – to document first hand a testimony of this unique tragedy.

SAM BLAIR: As the majority of the shooting had taken place by the time I came on board, the challenges for me were more editorial and revolved mainly around the struggle with structuring the film and finding cunning ways to conceal gaps in our story. It was also very difficult to source archive as despite Jobbik's public image, a lot of what they said and did wasn't recorded or broadcast by mainstream media.

The two hander is a classic documentary trope, how did it feed into the storytelling?

JOSEPH MARTIN: Csanad is inherently an interesting character, but the moment we saw him with Rabbi Oberlander we knew we had gold. Rabbi Oberlander is a wise-cracking New York Rabbi with a big heart and a lot of wisdom. He was always tough on Csanád, never shying away from correcting him or pointing out his mistakes. It meant every scene between them had an element of conflict, which helped the storytelling. Furthermore, their odd couple friendship developed and was a great narrative device to chart Csanad's growth.

SAM BLAIR: I'm not sure I agree its a two-hander. Csanád and Rabbi Oberlander definitely make an engaging double act, but I think Csanád's interactions with his grandmother and with Bobby (and to a lesser extent with his mother) are just as central to the film. There's no doubt that Rabbi Oberlander becomes a guide for Csanád's and leads him through the second half of the film, but because a lot of what happened between them took place before there was any filming, we had to find ways to explore Csanád's inner world, and his interactions with his grandmother and Bobby were great conduits for that.

Would you consider *Keep Quiet* a political film?

JOSEPH MARTIN: *Keep Quiet* is a political film in the sense that it holds a mirror to Europe; the continuing issues of anti-Semitism and the rise of the far-right that we often like to pretend no longer exists. However, I like to think that the human side of the film transcends the politics, involving the audience in a timeless family saga. If the film is to have any kind of political impact it will depend on audiences being moved by the stories of decades-old tragedies, buried secrets and ultimately, of hope.

SAM BLAIR: One of the main focuses in the edit was actually to minimize the political dimension of the film and to always try to emphasize the personal. In a story where the politics is so dense and so complex we just found it would slow the film down or make it too much of a lecture when we really want to be getting wrapped up in our main character. But a wider understanding of the political situation and history of Hungary absolutely needs to be there and so Anne Applebaum's role in the film is vital as she is able to give us the bigger picture with incredible sharpness and expertise.

ALEX HOLDER: I think the beauty of this story is that it's not a political film per se. Obviously, we should all view the rise of the far-right as a dangerous problem facing not just Hungary but Europe in general. However, the film focuses more on the human story, a man faced with the challenge of confronting his dark past and embarking on a new future.

Did you experience any security measures during the shoot?

JOSEPH MARTIN: We filmed the far-right Jobbik party "family day", a surreal experience that included bouncy castles, face painting, beautiful children picnicking with their families... but with book stalls just outside the gates selling the infamous protocols of the elders of Zion. This was a festival in the centre of Budapest, but beneath this veneer of a family day out, were symbols of hatred. While we were there, party officials announced over the Tannoy that people shouldn't speak to the "foreign press" in attendance, claiming we were only there to attack the party. A group of skinheads forcibly told us to stop trying to interview a mother who was cradling her baby. The surreality of the day sums up the current situation in Hungary.

What was your "wow" moment while making your film?

SAM BLAIR: When we were filming *Csanád* in the synagogue in Budapest there was a moment during the ceremony where it falls silent, Rabbi Oberlander stops leading the prayer and the worshipers pray quietly to themselves. *Csanád* was on a radio mic and I could hear him whispering when suddenly there was a power cut and all the lights in the synagogue went off and the mood completely changed with *Csanád* lit by the muted daylight which was coming through the windows above him. It was a subtle moment which felt significant somehow.

How do you think Hungary will respond to issues raised in the film?

JOSEPH MARTIN: A Hungarian Holocaust survivor explained that the very fabric of Hungary was wounded deeply by the Holocaust. Before that wound could heal the Soviet regime had taken control, suppressed free speech and religion and essentially acted as a kind of field dressing for Hungarian society on the issue. But the wound was still there. Since the fall of the Berlin wall, Hungary has peeled back the dressing only to find those old, now infected wounds, still open.

SAM BLAIR: I think all responses are possible, but it would be nice if it provokes conversation, debate and reflection. When the film was completed I flew with Alex to New York to show the film to a group of New York-based Hungarians and as the film started I became incredibly self-conscious that this story was about their country, their culture, and who on earth were we to be telling it? So I became hyper-sensitive to their every reaction. In the first act of the film there was a lot of head-shaking and tutting going on – palpable anger – which I misread as being directed towards the film when it was actually directed at the film’s portrayal of the rise of Jobbik. As the film developed there was more and more emotion in the room with tissues being passed around and I was amazed by the feeling it was clearly triggering in people. At the end we had a long discussion and I was very moved by the way the film had registered so personally for them. It was clear that Csanád’s story is emblematic of wider issues of identity – political, racial, religious – in Hungary. The turmoil of the second world war and what followed politically has left a huge mark on the country and its people with many things still unresolved and buried below the surface.

ALEX HOLDER: Csanád’s story could only have happened in Hungary. As Anne Applebaum says: “A state built on lies and falsehoods...” will lead people to hide their true identities, terrified of what might happen. I hope that Hungarians will view this film as a chance to also confront their own past and not let the far-right play into their insecurities.

How do you think the Jewish community will respond to the film?

SAM BLAIR: I think any response is possible and I’m just interested to see what debate it provokes. As the film shows, not everyone in the Jewish community agrees with Rabbi Oberlander’s decision to take Csanad under his wing.

JOSEPH MARTIN: I’m not sure. We filmed multiple talks Csanád’s gave to the Jewish community where he has been shouted down as a fake. Some Jewish individuals have sworn never to forgive him. Rabbi Oberlander and Csanád’s grandmother both received a lot of criticism from the Jewish community when the story broke. I think the film will help to abate that criticism, cutting through assumptions and confusion. Hopefully the film will reveal Csanád’s grandmother to be a victim – not just of the Holocaust – but of fate. While Rabbi Oberlander will hopefully be seen in the context of his own story: the son of Hungarian Holocaust survivors who escaped to New York, now returned to Hungary to help heal the community his parents fled in such a fractured state.

ALEX HOLDER: It’s going to be interesting to see the reaction. Obviously the major question will be in whether Csanád’s is a charlatan. I have already seen an interesting split: The Orthodox community holding its arms out and embracing Csanád’s, whereas the non-Orthodox have treated Csanad with skepticism. Either way, I hope that this film will show Jews around the world that you no longer need to hide your identity and can stand up proud.

Do you have an opinion on Csanád Szegedi’s metamorphosis?

JOSEPH MARTIN: Csanád is a larger than life character who took the Hungarian far-right by storm. He was one of the youngest ever members of the European Parliament. Everything he does is at full throttle. He’s a human whirlwind.

He is taking the same approach to his transformation to religious Jew. It’s this approach that has attracted such skepticism. I think he (and the media) have created a false dichotomy where he is

neither a “Nazi” nor a pillar of the Jewish community. Ultimately, isn’t the opposite of a far-right activist just a productive member of society? In the same way the opposite of hate is indifference and not love. I’m not sure if Csanad will remain a religious person, but I am sure that he will never again advance the cause of hatred and persecution. That in itself is an achievement.

SAM BLAIR: I’m agnostic and ambivalent about it, but I never subscribed to the idea that his transformation was a cynical political manoeuvre or a lie in any way. I just think it’s a complex situation and I believe the statement with which he ends the film is an indication of a new-found honesty and wisdom, although some may read it differently.

ALEX HOLDER: To go from one extreme to the other will always pose difficult questions. How can a leading neo-Nazi whose entire life was based around an extreme far-right ideology become an orthodox Jew? To be honest, I don’t think even Csanád has an opinion yet. Would I be surprised to learn in five years that Csanád returned to Jobbik? Yes – but that would be a good sequel!

What responsibility do you think Csanád has given his experiences?

JOSEPH MARTIN: The process of making this film was over a number of years and Csanád inevitably changed and developed as we made it. It seems he does take increasingly more and more responsibility for his past actions but it is an ongoing process.

SAM BLAIR: Csanád is a public figure and, for better and worse, has made a career out of standing up and letting the world know what he thinks. But, ultimately, his responsibility is no different to anyone else’s and that is to try to be honest, which isn’t always easy.

What are you hoping audiences will take from the film?

JOSEPH MARTIN: I think those of us who are in the mainstream of society can adopt a reductive simplicity in our knee-jerk reactions about the far-right. It is easy to dismiss these extreme individuals as evil rather than question what has led to such a mindset. That is in no way to try and justify their beliefs, but to instead argue that we need to get to the heart of what has gone so wrong to engender such hatred and fear.

Csanad and his family’s story is a timely reminder that almost anyone can be lured into a culture of hate, no matter what their background. It reminds us that every decision made by an individual is influenced by a lifetime of collected experiences and influences. I would hope as such the film acts as a catalyst for debate.

SAM BLAIR: I’m interested to see what it prompts in people superficially unconnected with the story – what non-Jews and non-Hungarian’s make of it. We wanted to leave the film open to interpretation, and, as with any film, I simply hope it takes an audience somewhere inside themselves.

FILM TEAM

Director – JOSEPH MARTIN

Channel 4 commissioned Joseph Martin to direct the critically well-received WIN A BABY straight out of film school as the youngest documentary director in the history of the channel. Joseph's next documentary for Channel 4, SCIENTOLOGISTS AT WAR, premiered at Sheffield Doc/Fest 2013 and was named one of the best five films of the festival by Indiewire. The film hit the top ten of the documentary charts on the US iTunes store in VOD release. BAFTA shortlisted Joseph for the Breakthrough Brits Award for his work on the film.

Joseph is currently transitioning into feature films with 2016 seeing the release of his documentary and narrative feature debuts. US AND THEM is a darkly comic fiction film that explores inequality in a microcosm of Western society whilst Keep Quiet shows Joseph once again exploring themes of redemption in the remarkable story of Csanád Szegedi

Director – SAM BLAIR

Sam Blair is a graduate of the UK's National Film and Television School. His debut feature, PERSONAL BEST, was supported by the BFI and played in cinemas nationwide. In 2014 he directed MARADONA '86 for ESPN's acclaimed 30 for 30 series. The film was produced by Passion Pictures and premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival 2014. Since completing work on Keep Quiet, again with Passion Pictures, Sam has been directing an episode of the Netflix original series, CAPTIVE, produced by Lightbox.

Producer – ALEX HOLDER

Alex Holder has produced numerous documentary films with a focus on the Holocaust over the past five years, becoming well-versed in dealing with the nuances relating to fascism in Europe during the 20th Century. Having produced a variety of biographical and documentary films under the AJH Films banner, Keep Quiet, Alex's first feature documentary, will have its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival. Keep Quiet itself is testament to his talent in raising finance for documentary films, finding the stories of the moment and bringing the very best in industry talent together.

Producer – DANIELLE CLARK

Danielle Clark is a Royal Television Society award-winning producer. A year after graduating from the University of the Creative Arts, she produced WIN A BABY as part of Channel 4's flagship First Cut strand. This led to her being picked as one of Broadcast's Hot Shots in 2010. Danielle then conceived and produced Channel 4's SCIENTOLOGISTS AT WAR, which premiered as part of the Sheffield Doc/Fest 2013 and was part of CBC's Passionate Eye series. Forthcoming films include US AND THEM, her debut narrative feature set for release in 2016, and SUCK THE MARROW, which is currently in development.

Producer – NICOLE STOTT

Nicole Stott creatively drives the prolific feature film slate at Passion Pictures alongside veteran producer John Battsek. With over nineteen years' experience in the film industry, Nicole has had key creative and production roles on over thirty produced films from concept through to completion. Her filmography

includes: co-producer of 2013 Academy Award winner SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN (BAFTA Best Documentary 2013, Sundance 2012 Special Jury Prize and Audience Awards); executive producer on triple Emmy nominated BETTER THIS WORLD (2011 Gotham Awards Best Feature Documentary) and 2014 Sundance Audience Award winner THE GREEN PRINCE. More recently, Nicole co-produced Stevan Riley's 2016 BAFTA nominated and 2016 Academy Award shortlisted LISTEN TO ME MARLON.

Executive producer – JOHN BATTSEK

Since conceiving and producing the Academy Award-winning ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER, John Battsek has since been responsible for over thirty high-profile feature documentaries. These include: SERGIO (based on the book by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Samantha Power, Academy Award shortlisted 2010); Academy Award-nominated RESTREPO; THE TILLMAN STORY (Academy Award Shortlisted, 2011, Winner Best Historical Doc Emmy 2012); Bart Layton's 2013 BAFTA Outstanding Debut Winner, THE IMPOSTER; and Malik Bendjelloul's SEARCHING FOR SUGAR MAN, which won the 2013 BAFTA for Best Documentary and the 2013 Academy Award for Best Documentary. John recently produced Stevan Riley's LISTEN TO ME MARLON, which premiered at Sundance 2015 before a theatrical release in the US and the UK in 2015. The film was 2016 Academy Award shortlisted and 2016 BAFTA nominated for Best Documentary.

John has been nominated three times for a PGA Award and was the recipient of 2013 prestigious Grierson Trustees Award for Outstanding Contribution to Documentary.

Composer– PHILIP SHEPPARD

Philip Sheppard is a virtuoso cellist, composer, producer and creative thinker. Philip's talent for bridging musical genres, media and industries has led to some interesting collaborations. He has worked with David Bowie, Alexander McQueen, Jeff Buckley, UNKLE, Pretty Lights, The Weeknd, and Queens of the Stone Age. He has composed and produced new stage works for actress Juliette Binoche, dancers Sylvie Guillem and Akram Khan, and virtuoso percussionist Evelyn Glennie. Philip has scored more than thirty films including IN THE SHADOW OF THE MOON, winner of the Sundance Audience Award; and LOVE, MARILYN, starring Uma Thurman and Glenn Close. His cello can even be heard in space thanks to Astronaut Cady Coleman. Indeed, continuing the space theme, his music was recently used by JJ Abrams and Disney to promote STAR WARS VII: THE FORCE AWAKENS.

Editor – BEN STARK

Ben Stark works in a variety of genres, but predominantly in feature documentaries. His skill is in finding the wonder and joy where you might least expect, creating a "clean" and moving narrative from often vast amounts of footage gathered over years. His previous films have garnered great acclaim and include Henry Singer's BAFTA nominated THE FALLING MAN; BAFTA nominated A BOY CALLED ALEX; BAFTA nominated (Best Editing) BOXING DAY TSUNAMI, and the THE SUMMIT, which premiered at Sundance and for which Ben won the Sundance Cinema Editing Award.

Since completing work on Keep Quiet with Passion Pictures, Ben has finished a feature documentary for Moxie New York and is about to start work on editing an episode of the Netflix original series, CAPTIVE, produced by Lightbox.

Director of Photography – MARTON VIZKELETY

Marton Vízkelety graduated as a Director of Photography in 2007 from the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest, Hungary. After finishing his MA studies, he worked on documentaries, short films, commercials as a DP, and on features and TV series as a camera operator (BIRDSONG, TYRANT). In 2015, Marton shot the features Keep Quiet for AJH Films and Passion Pictures, and TRAIN TO ADULTHOOD for HBO Europe and production company Éclipse Film (Golden Dove Award of the Next Masters Competition at DokLeipzig in Germany).

CREW AND CAST

Directed by....Joseph Martin, Sam Blair

Produced by....Alex Holder

Produced by....Danielle Clark, Nicole Stott

Editors....Ben Stark, Kim Gaster

Original Score....Philip Sheppard

Director of Photography.....Marton Vizkelety

Executive Producer....John Battsek

Executive Producers....Kami Naghdi, Andrew Ruhemann

Contributors/Subjects....Csanád Szegedi, Anne Applebaum, András Dezső, Zoltán Ambrus, Rabbi Boruch Oberlander, Katalin Molnár Szegediné, Imréné Molnár, Eva 'Bobby' Neumann

Post Production Supervisor....George Chignell

Archive Producer....Paul Gardner

Assistant Editor....Andy Jadavji

Consultant to AJH Films....Philip Goodman