

STRONGER THAN PRETTY

Donna

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

JARET MARTINO PRODUCTION PRESENTS A LOVE WINS PRODUCTIONS | PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH STRONGER THAN PRETTY LLC
MUSIC BY ERIK DELONG EDITED BY MICHAEL AMUNDSEN PRODUCTION DESIGN DOREEN CREEDE COSTUME DESIGNER STEPHANIE LINDSEY
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JON SCHWEIGART EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JARET MARTINO KINGSTON SHEAHAN WINFRED SHEAHAN ANGELO CAPORIZZO
PRODUCED BY JARET MARTINO WRITTEN BY JARET MARTINO AND PAT BRANCH DIRECTED BY JARET MARTINO



Director Jaret Martino and his mother Donna.



“My first words to Donna were, “I’m not here to judge your choices. I just want to tell your story as authentically as I can.” She allowed me into the deepest, darkest, most intimate corners of her psyche & I tried to exploit that privilege without sensationalizing it. I’m from West Philly. & Harlem; such different worlds from Long Island, but the Martinos welcomed me like I always belonged & then they let me stay. I was even able to weave a little of my own family’s narrative into the film about this family that has *adopted* me and assured me that just like my blood family, they, too, are home. It’s a journey, a family, & a home that I am quite proud to be a part of.”

“It’s not so much what “Donna”, both the movie & the woman, has meant to me as much as what it, & she, has meant to everyone who has worked on and seen it.” Domestic Violence crosses every demographic & exposing this aspect has enabled so many women and men to open their hearts and minds to how we begin to heal and grow and, love again, as human beings.”

- Pat Branch

“This Film, dedicated to my loving mother, Donna, whose bravery, sacrifice, smile, and heart have shaped the man I am today, was realized to be used as a tool to inspire and empower other families to try to break free of negative conditioning, stereotypes, patterns, and cycles. It honors the strength of women all over the world and hopefully it will also encourage men to acknowledge and share their emotions with the women and children who love them. May we unite in solidarity and collective spirit to spread love in the face of adversity and shift to a global consciousness that propels movement towards helping undo thousands of years of damage.

It is also dedicated, in loving memory, to all of the beautiful souls who have lost their lives due to domestic violence.”

- Jaret Martino



Co Writer Pat Branch

Director/Producer: Jaret Martino

One Man's Hollywood Sized Mother's Day Gift

"Believe in yourself," a mantra Donna Martino repeated.

That's a simple concept, yet so often overlooked. We're embarking on a time when strength is more powerful for women than ever before. A time when #StrongWomen is trending and strong is sexy. Yet, belief in oneself is still not innate. It's a lesson most of us must learn at a costly price. For Donna Martino, believing in herself was the one lesson she was determined to teach three sets of eyes who watched her every move.

Fairytales...you're supposed to meet your Prince Charming, fall in love and have your "happily ever after." Donna Martino thought she found it, until the antagonist soon revealed himself. Bruises and booze replaced her happy ending, as her three children looked on. So, during an unpopular time, Donna Martino chose to believe in herself and made a decision to rewrite her story.

"I see someone's decided to trade-in her glass slippers for some warrior boots," a social worker says in *Stronger Than Pretty*.

Most mother's will do anything for their children and Donna Martino was no exception; she was a warrior. Jaret Martino watched his warrior mom, Donna Martino struggle, juggling many odd jobs to provide for him and his two siblings. There weren't rallies or marches celebrating her cause. It was simply her and her will. Jaret Martino was shaped by his mother's beauty that was born from her strength to survive. While she learned to believe in herself, she taught her children the strength of their souls. Her perseverance engrained a work ethic unmatched.

"My mom used to find free things to do with us. Community theater was my escape since age six," Jaret Martino said. He remembers looking up at her saying, "that's what I want to do when I grow up. And then I will buy you a gold house where you'll always be safe." Jaret Martino has been acting ever since, landing roles in *The Middle* and *30 Rock*, and worked on a world tour campaign with Usher and Lady Gaga. Jaret Martino Productions then began

three years ago. His projects have been seen in festivals worldwide, most recently landing a distribution deal.

In a love letter to his mom, Jaret Martino wrote and produced *Stronger Than Pretty*, a short film based on her life. It created quite a buzz when the short coincidentally screened in The Indie Lounge at the Sundance Film Festival the same weekend as the National Women's Day march down the streets of Park City, Utah.

Because of the overwhelming conversation *Stronger Than Pretty* sparked, Jaret Martino Productions began producing another project called *Inner Warrior*. This doc-series shares both women and men's stories of tragedy and survival, and how they chose strength to define their future.

"Most of the people we interviewed created advocacy programs. These overcomers are giving back after living through adversity," Jaret Martino said.

Jaret Martino's goal is a humble one. He wants to get these stories out to single parents and their kids. Reliving this story, "it has been one of the more difficult times in my life. I'm inspired when I hear I've helped someone in some way. That's what keeps me on this path."

As in my case, it's not a proverbial cape, blog or TV show that makes me a warrior. But, like Donna Martino, I have this undeniable energy to never give up. As a mother, I too know what empowers me when I'm exhausted. I see far more beauty in my veins than my reflection. I am persistent and consistent, because maybe my daughter will write me a love letter one day, in her own unique way. And hopefully through my actions, she will know she can do anything. While she may be gorgeous in my eyes, her strength is the main character of her fairytale.

The logo for HUFFPOST, featuring the word "HUFFPOST" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a black background, with a green vertical bar on the left and right sides of the text.



DONNA first met the Actress Kate Amundsen who would be playing her at our first staged reading in 2015. Over the 7 year development process the screenplay went through notes from top industry professionals and numerous table reads.



Kate Amundsen can be seen on Shameless, Westworld, The Mindy Project and a myriad of other TV shows and Films.



The Independent

EVERYTHING EAST END



‘Donna: Stronger Than Pretty’

BY | NANETTE SHAW

The Retreat presented a film screening of “Donna: Stronger Than Pretty” at Guild Hall in East Hampton on Thursday, July 18. It was an awareness-building event for The Retreat, a domestic violence agency. The film features the true-life story of Donna Martino, as presented by her son, filmmaker Jaret Martino. Following the screening, a panel of domestic abuse survivors, moderated by author and survivor Leslie Morgan Steiner, answered questions and told their personal stories.

NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

NCADV



Jaret presented the teaser at The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence for DONNA Stronger Than Pretty to over one thousand advocates from all over the world

‘Donna’ Screens Months Before Wide Release, For a Cause

By Michelle Trauring

Donna, Stronger Than Pretty

Domestic abuse crosses all socio-economic lines, and affects all genders and all ages – and, yet, it is a private tragedy. It is always happened to someone else.

In reality, it could be a neighbor. It could be a family member. It could be a best friend. And together with The Retreat, filmmaker Jaret Martino is hosting an open forum and discussion with those who have survived it, following the screening of “Donna, Stronger Than Pretty” on Thursday, July 18, at Guild Hall.

“I am compelled to tell stories where women are the heroes who save themselves,” Martino said in a statement. “‘Donna, Stronger Than Pretty’ is an empowering film about the journey of a woman finding her voice. Women often must fight for social and economic equality. This was my mother’s reality and the inspiration of ‘Donna, Stronger Than Pretty.’”

The film follows a young mother’s “American Dream” that quickly turns into a living nightmare, until she finds the inner strength to listen to a voice she hadn’t heard before: her own. After the screening, the panel of domestic abuse survivors will answer questions and tell their personal stories, moderated by author and survivor Leslie Morgan Steiner.

In conjunction, Guild Hall will display “Warrior Portraits,” a photography series by Lindsay Morris and journalist Emily Weitz that puts a face on the hidden stories of domestic violence.

For more information, visit allagainstabuse.org.

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Finding Women's Strength

by Beth Young



The arc of an abusive relationship can be a long one, and no one knows that better than the domestic violence survivor advocates at The Retreat in East Hampton.

On Thursday, July 18, The Retreat is taking over East Hampton's Guild Hall for a special screening of the new film "Donna: Stronger Than Pretty," with a special talk with filmmaker Jaret Martino.

The evening begins at 7 p.m. General admission tickets are \$60, and sponsorships range from \$250 to \$2,500. Tickets are available online here.

"Donna: Stronger Than Pretty" is a romantic tragedy — an unlove story — that spans three decades in the life of a gentle young woman, Donna, as she tries to live up to the traditions and expectations of her Italian roots and the American Dream. That dream becomes a living nightmare and nearly breaks her, until she finds the silent force of her inner voice.

The film follows Donna on her journey to break free from a husband who refuses to be responsible for her, his children, or his own actions.

As Donna works to maintain stability and security for her kids, in spite of their father, she is able to redefine her own dreams and graduate from college, something that she had pushed aside to start a family, like the good girls of her era were expected to do.

The film is based on producer and co-writer Jaret Martino's mother's experience raising her family in the 1970s.

"As an artist, I create projects that make a difference in the world and shed light on subject matters deserving of more attention from society and the filmmaking community," said Mr. Martino. "In particular, I am compelled to tell stories where women are the heroes who save themselves. Stronger Than Pretty is an empowering film about the journey of a woman finding her voice. Women often must fight for social and economic equality. This was my mother's reality and the inspiration of 'Stronger Than Pretty.'"

“I am compelled to tell stories where women are the heroes who save themselves,” says filmmaker Jaret Martino. “Donna, Stronger Than Pretty” is an empowering film about the journey of a woman finding her voice. Women often must fight for social and economic equality. This was my mother’s reality and the inspiration of ‘Donna, Stronger Than Pretty.’”



In Mr. Martino’s film “Donna, Stronger Than Pretty,” a young mother’s American Dream turns into a living nightmare, until she finds the inner strength to listen to a voice she hadn’t heard before—her own. The screenplay was co-written by Mr. Martino and award-winning writer Pat Branch and the film features Kate Amundsen (“Shameless,” “Westworld,” “The Mindy Project”) as Donna and costars indie film actor Anthony Ficco (“Drifter,” “Prodigal”) as her husband Nick. On Thursday, July 18, at 7 p.m., Mr. Martino, the film’s cast and crew, and a panel of survivors will appear at a screening of “Donna, Stronger Than Pretty” at Guild Hall in East Hampton, months prior to its national release.

The event is sponsored by The Retreat, an East End organization which provides services to victims of domestic violence. Following the screening, the panel of domestic abuse survivors, moderated by author and survivor Leslie Morgan Steiner, will answer questions and tell their personal stories. Ms. Steiner has written four nonfiction books, including the New York Times bestselling memoir “Crazy Love.” Her newest memoir, “The Naked Truth,” explores female sexuality, self-esteem, and dating after 50. She is also a columnist for The Washington Post and a speaker on work/family balance, appearing regularly on The Today Show, National Public Radio, ABC, NBC, CBS, and cable news networks.

During the event, Guild Hall will display Warrior Portraits, a series that put a face on the hidden stories of domestic violence. The individuals depicted were photographed by Lindsay Morris and their stories are told through journalist Emily Weitz. The entire series can also be seen at locations throughout East Hampton Village during the week.

THE RETREAT PRESENTS A FILM SCREENING OF Donna: Stronger Than Pretty

OVERVIEW

Join The Retreat and film maker Jaret Martino for a screening of Donna, months prior to its national release. In the film a young mother's "American Dream" turns into a living nightmare, until she finds the inner strength to listen to a voice she hadn't heard before: her own.

Donna is a romantic tragedy – an unlove story – that spans three decades in the life of a gentle young woman, Donna, as she tries to live up to the traditions and expectations of her Italian roots and the "American Dream." That dream becomes a living nightmare and nearly breaks her, until she finds the silent force of her inner voice. We follow Donna on her journey to break free from a husband who refuses to be responsible for her, his children, or his own actions.

As Donna works to maintain stability and security for her kids in spite of their father, she is able to redefine her own "American dream" and graduate from college, something that had been pushed aside in place of starting a family, like the "good girls" of her era were expected to do.

Jaret Martino, actor and award-winning producer of films like Driven, The Documentary, Ladybug and Bellz Angels, presents Donna, an empowering true story about one woman's courage to break free and to find her own voice.

As an artist, I create projects that make a difference in the world and shed light on subject matters deserving of more attention from society and the filmmaking community. In particular, I am compelled to tell stories where women are the heroes who save themselves. Stronger Than Pretty is an empowering film about the journey of a woman finding her voice. Women often must fight for social and economic equality. This was my mother's reality and the inspiration of Stronger Than Pretty. -Jaret Martino, Film Maker

The film features actress Kate Amundsen (Shameless, Westworld, The Mindy Project) and costars indie film actor, Anthony Ficco (Drifter, Prodigal). The screenplay was co-written by Jaret Martino and award-winning writer Pat Branch.



GUILD HALL



At the Guild Hall pre screening Jarret and Donna Martino sat on a Q&A panel amongst many survivors of domestic violence.



Leslie Morgan Steiner was the host for an industry pre screening of DONNA at Guild Hall.

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Donna Stronger Than Pretty is a film that touches everyone, not just the women who, after viewing the film leave feeling empowered.

- Renee

"Donna: Stronger Than Pretty" is a film for all ages too. Young girls can learn their value and live by the strength and support of women who have paved the way for understanding, re-calibration, and action.

- C. Rubano

"Donna: Stronger Than Pretty" is a film for young boys in which they can learn some values in the treatment of girls and women early on so that patterns of abuse are broken.

- Kingston

"Donna: Stronger Than Pretty" is a film that teaches believing in one's self to the point of success is no easy feat, but there is no alternative.

-Ruthan

Unfortunately, "Donna: Stronger Than Pretty" is almost every woman's story. The parallel lives that we live to mask only helps to compound the pervasive issue of domestic abuse. Fortunately, "Donna" has broken with this tradition, and has proven that being beautiful does not equate to weakness.

- Amy V.

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