



## Film Synopsis

Mom & M is an intimate portrait of modern American parenthood. Meet Nikki, a transgender writer; Elise, a social media influencer; and Sansa, their adopted daughter who battles leukemia. Together they navigate what happens when your partner comes out as transgender while caring for an ill child and that remission is not the end to life's challenges. The Richard family offers a deep-seated glimpse of love's power in surviving extraordinary circumstances.



## Film Specs:

Director: Jena Burchick. Contact: Jenaburchick@gmail.com PH (USA): 443-682-4419

Location: Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Running Time: 60 minutes, 35 seconds.

Available Formats: DCP, File (H.264), English Captions

Website: <https://jenaburchick.com/mom-m>

Screener Link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/15tyVVeTG3WcR0QYjQQYT5LyJUL8WP76v>

## Director's Statement

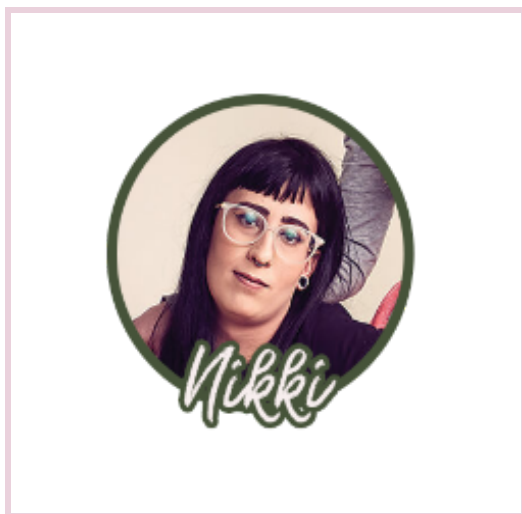
A film about choosing family over *everything*.

I made this film because Hollywood statistically limits or silences the voices of minorities and often times uses cisgender actors to falsely represent transgender narratives. It is vital now, more than ever, that minority voices are heightened. That they are not just visible, but that they shine.

When I became a film professor, I met an incredibly talented young student who happened to be transgender. I was invited into his living room and into his story. This taught me that my goal in documentary filmmaking could and should come with ally-ship through empathy and activism.

When I met Nikki, Elise and Sansa: I knew immediately that the world would be a better place by meeting them. They selflessly came on-board this journey nearly two years ago and invited me into their living room, to share their lives. Through this film they consistently depict a theme very near to the hearts of many; that family is more than blood, it is a choice. I hope this film can begin many conversations about the strength and love inside of non-traditional families like the Richards.

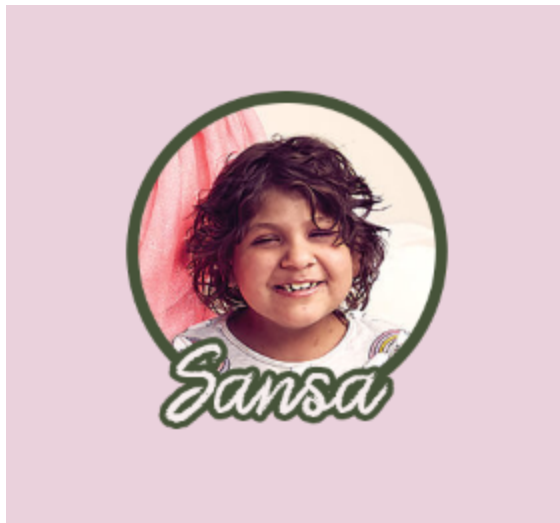
## Meet the Richards



**Nikki:** is a self proclaimed "sensitive queer writer with moods and coping mechanisms." She hails from conservative deep south Louisiana. She is working to publish her first YA queer dystopian novel, *Demon in the Whitelands*. She is determined for the health of her daughter and wears her heart on her sleeve for her wife. Throughout the film we live alongside Nikki as she faces rejection from her biological family in her transition from male to female, and teaches us about what self-acceptance means in the process.

**Elise:** is the financial root, emotional constant and optimistic source within her family unit. She is vibrant, bubbly and fearless. She works tirelessly as the breadwinner for her family. She is also a social media influencer, model and Youtube channel host.

Elise is extroverted and energetic but must face her tendency to box up her emotions with the transition and growth in her family and marriage.



**Sansa:** is the 6 year old adopted daughter of Nikki and Elise. She has battled acute lymphoblastic leukemia since birth, which is a cancer that attacks the blood and bone marrow. She was born in Hungary where Nikki and Elise traveled to adopt her at 18 months of age. She is the thread that ties her family together. Sansa is in love with books and music and her spirit is infectious.

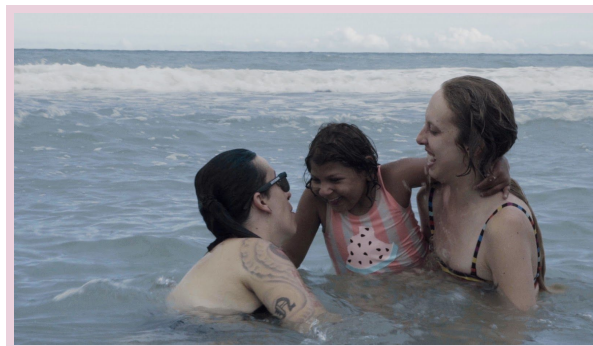
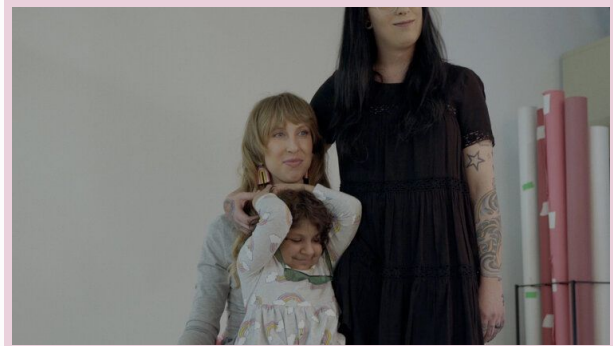


## A NEW STYLE OF PARTICIPATORY DOCUMENTARY

This film celebrates the ideation of collaborative filmmaking by utilizing Nikki and Elise's own smart phone "home movies." The lens of Nikki and Elise is an important invitation into how they see the world with an emphasis on sharing their story as opposed to extracting it. The culture of iPhone "life" capturing is very indicative of American Millennials and it adds a timestamp to the film that is culturally important. Watching their lives through this style of modern home movie making allows the audience to ask the question:

**"HOW DO WE MAKE AND STORE OUR OWN  
MEMORIES IN THIS DAY AND AGE? "**

All other aspects of Nikki, Elise and Sansa's lives have been filmed observationally with a few interviews to clarify and lead us through their narrative. My intention is to balance the lens and invite the Richard's to participate in co-authoring their narrative.





Director. Cinematographer. Editor.

Jena Burchick

Born and raised in Baltimore, Jena has always been passionate about empathetic, community driven stories. She is a documentary filmmaker, an Assistant Professor of film at Towson University and an MFA graduate from VCFA as well as a proud IATSE Local 487 Lighting Technician. The combination of these skills and interests has led Jena to focus her work on tying together all of her passions: to tell stories rooted in light and truth. She has a focused interest in the human condition and themes related to gender, sexuality, trauma and marginalization.



Co-Producer

Tyler C. Peterson

Tyler is a Baltimore-based writer, director, and producer. In 2015, he founded Lux Daze Media, an independent production company and film collective. Tyler created Lux Daze Media with the goal to produce projects that challenge industry ideologies, and create a safe, inclusive space for artists to tell stories. His latest work is the award winning short film "Summer Hill", which is available now to stream on Amazon Prime Video in the US and UK.



Co Producer

Mei Linn Lau Mann

Mei Lin is a Panamanian filmmaker based in Baltimore, Maryland. Mei has a Masters degree in Film and Video Production from American University. She has worked in several ads and commercials, feature films and well-known TV shows in the DMV area. Mei is currently Lux Daze Media's Producer and is constantly looking to produce new, challenging content. Mei is also the Associate Producer for Baltimore-based production company, Rock Shore Media.

# Promotional Poster

