

Film Review: Personal History Becomes International Mystery in ‘The Flat’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 1, 2012 - 2:32pm

- [Arnon Goldfinger](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Documentary](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Movie Review](#) [6]
- [The Flat](#) [7]



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “*Why do only third-generation Germans ask questions? The second generation didn’t ask what happened. You don’t understand and I’m glad you don’t understand.*” These very insightful words are spoken by an old friend of Arnon Goldfinger’s grandmother as the filmmaker is deep into a fascinating investigation about his own past in the fascinating “The Flat,” a film that turns a personal story into a commentary on international denial and healing after World War II.

We often don’t know people until after they’re gone. As we clean out their belongings, we see pictures of friends that may have been mentioned in passing. We find a book that clearly had meaning. And we start to ask questions we never asked about their younger days. Such is the case as Arnon Goldfinger begins to clean out his grandmother’s flat after her death at 98.



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “The Flat” in our reviews section.](#) [8]

Grandma happened to be a pack rat and he stumbles across a box that contains Nazi propaganda including a newspaper about Palestine and how the Jews should go there that originally gave purchasers a medallion with the Star of David on one side and a Swastika on the other. It turns out that Arnon’s grandfather was a German Jew and a Zionist. The Germans wanted Jews gone. The Zionists wanted them in Palestine. There was a mutual interest that’s historically fascinating.

And it gets deeper. Grandma and grandpa toured Palestine with a Nazi named von Mildenstein to enhance the propaganda that their own people should leave. Years later, von Mildenstein recruited Eichmann and the latter saw the former as his superior because he knew more about Judaism, a knowledge he got from the filmmaker’s grandparents. Interestingly, Arnon’s mother seems unfazed by this information. She becomes more fascinated when she learns that her parents and the Von Middlesteins became friends again after the war. After everything that happened. And yet Arnon and his mother didn’t know about them and so there clearly was a degree of secrecy. Why? Did his grandparents regret the role they may have played?



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “The Flat” review.](#) [8]

“The Flat” was written and directed by Arnon Goldfinger. It will be released in Chicago on November 2, 2012.



The Flat

Photo credit: IFC Films

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[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>

[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/documentary>

[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>

[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/movie-review>

[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-flat>

[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/20483/personal-history-becomes-international-mystery-in-the-flat>