



# **ONE THOUSAND ROPES**

PRESS KIT

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## ONE LINER

When a father reconnects with his estranged teenage daughter, he is given a rare chance to reshape the future of his family in unexpected ways.

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

From the Writer and Director of *The Orator - O Le Tulafale*, *One Thousand Ropes* is a story of a father reconnecting with his youngest daughter and together putting to rest the ghosts that haunt them.

She arrives vulnerable: badly beaten and heavily pregnant. He struggles with the inner temptation and the encouragement from the men in his life, to take revenge in the way he knows best on one hand and on the other, to build the new family and companionship so desperately missing from his life.

*One Thousand Ropes* is a deeply moving film about connections, redemption and new beginnings.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

From the Writer and Director of *The Orator - O Le Tulafale*, *One Thousand Ropes* is a story of a father reconnecting with his daughter, set in Wellington New Zealand.

Maea, once lived by his fists, but now old, has turned his powerful hands to healing and bread making. He strives to live a simple and peaceful life, remaining in the same housing estate he came to when he emigrated from Samoa many years ago, but his family have gone. He atones for his past by easing the pain of child bearing for young pregnant women and their families who seek his help; resisting the authorities who want him to modernise. He also contends at work with the threat of losing his job at a local bakery as new equipment takes over, and at home an abusive spirit who has moved in with him, relentlessly taunting him while providing company.

When his youngest daughter returns to him, she arrives vulnerable: heavily pregnant and badly beaten. He struggles with the inner temptation and the encouragement from the men in his life, to take revenge in the way he knows best on one hand and on the other, to build the new family and companionship so desperately missing from his life.

If he can return to his daughter, what he had taken from her mother, all their destinies will be reshaped.

*One Thousand Ropes* is a deeply moving film about connections, redemption and new beginnings.

## KEY CAST AND CREW

Writer/Director	Tusi Tamasese
Producer	Catherine Fitzgerald
Executive Producers	Andrew Mackie and Richard Payten
Associate Producer	Michael Eldred
Starring	Frankie Adams (Ilisa) Uelese Petaia (Maea) Sima Urale (Seipua) Beulah Koale (Molesi) Ene Petaia (Debt) Anapela Polataivao (Dorothy)
Cinematographer	Leon Narbey
Editor	Annie Collins
Samoan Dialogue	Maea Tamasese
Composer	Tim Prebble
Sound Design	Tom Scott Toft
Production Designer	Shayne Radford
Art Director	Chris Ulutupu
Costume Designer	Nic Smillie
Make Up Design	Frankie Karena

## FACT SHEET

Production Company	Blueskin Films
In Association with	New Zealand Film Commission and Fulcrum MediaFinance
Technical	Colour; ARRIRAW/DCP, 1.85:1 97 mins 55 secs Digital 5.1
Location	Shot in Wellington, New Zealand
Australian/New Zealand Distributor	Transmission Films
New Zealand Marketing	Trigger Marketing & Publicity
International Sales Agent	Mongrel Media
Website	<a href="http://www.onethousandropes.com">www.onethousandropes.com</a>

## ABOUT THE FILM MAKERS

### TUSI TAMASESE–WRITER AND DIRECTOR

**About Tusi:** Tusi Tamasese is a Samoan New Zealander. Tusi has a Master of Arts in screen writing from the IIML Victoria University of Wellington, having graduated from the NZ Film School in Wellington, and prior to that with a Bachelor's degree in social sciences from the University of Waikato. In 2015 he was named a new Generation NZ Arts Laureate. He now lives in Wellington with his wife and three children.

### FILMOGRAPHY

*Venice 70: Future Reloaded (2013)*

*The Orator - O Le Tulafale(2011)*

*Va Tapuia (2009)*

### AWARDS

#### 2012 “Moa” New Zealand Film Awards

Best Film: *The Orator*

Best Director: *The Orator*

Best Screenplay: *The Orator*

#### 2011

Venice Film Festival Special Mention in Orizzonti (New Horizons) section

Art Cinema Award from CICA E Jury (European arthouse cinema association)

CinemaAvvenire Film Award (Il cerchio non e rotondo) — given by a young person's jury to two films best promoting peace and dialogue between cultures

New Zealand's first-ever entry into the best foreign-language film category for the Academy Awards

#### Other Awards and nominations

Brisbane International Film Festival - Winner Audience Award,

Nara International Festival 2012 – Golden Shika Award for Best Film

Luxembourg City Film Festival – Special Jury Mention;

Wairoa Maori Film Festival 2012 - Best Film Award;

“Moa” NZ Film Awards 2012 Winner of, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Best Costume Design, Best Sound, Nominated for Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Composer, Best Production Design

Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2011 - Finalist Best Actor;

NZ Writers' Guild Scriptwriters awards NZ - Finalist Best Feature Script –Award

**Additional Festival selections to date:** Sundance, Palm Springs, Portland, Prague, Kosmorama, Hawaii, San Francisco, Beijing, Los Angeles Asia Pacific, Cannes Antipodes (in Cannes 2012 Cinephiles programme), Munich, Seattle, Edinburgh, Toronto (First Peoples

Cinema), Pacific Festival of the Arts – Honiara, St Tropez, the San Diego Asian Film Festival, Inverness, Hanoi Film Festivals and Film Festival of India CANDAS IFF in Brunei, Berlinale 2013, 答复: 答复: New Zealand Film Festival, Beijing, Exground festival Wiesbaden, The International Indigenous Film Showcase of Venezuela

## **DIRECTORS STATEMENT**

If I give you a list of my favourite films you will notice that most of them are about antiheroes, characters like Michael Sullivan (*Road To Perdition*), Pale Rider, Scarface, Travis Bickle, Hauptmann Gerd Wiesler (*Life of Others*) or Sanjuro Kuwabatake (*Yojimbo*). These characters showcase people at the ends of despair who through the strength of the human spirit find their way out. I'm fascinated by these characters because of their transformation, their search for redemption. I'm fascinated because of that small speck of goodness lurking in the deepest pits of their souls.

I find that the most interesting and colourful journeys are from tinted characters, complex people who are desperately flawed who make sacrifices for others. These characters show the true colours and nature of being human, we are graced with goodness and plagued with flaws. So when I sat down to write a film about a violent man, who is a traditional midwife, who is a baker, who is a father, I began to understand that this is no more a film now but a glimpse into life, the essence of humanity.

This film has challenges ahead, it is confronting, entertaining and emotional. It deals with violence, courage, and birth, it exams love and remorse. It asks many questions "*can violence heal?*", "*can an abused woman find her courage, dignity and self-worth by giving birth alone?*" "*can a violent man become a father?*" It will demand the viewer take an emotional journey towards an unforgettable and rewarding end.

*One Thousand Ropes* is a human story, with Samoan characters seen through universal spectacles and eyes. It is a film that looks foreign and unseen but feels and sounds familiar. It is a film easily understood, whoever you are or wherever you are.

- Tusi Tamasese

## **IN HIS OWN WORDS**

### **Describing *One Thousand Ropes***

It is a film about a man who is responsible for destroying his family. With the same hands that he destroyed the family, he will mend the family - well he will try to.

### **The Shooting style**

I believe the way to see a new unseen world is by taking on a restrained and observant position. This is very important for me because we are dealing with an anti-hero, a person with a dark past, a person who has more humanity in him than his action hero counterparts. I do not want to glorify or romanticise him nor anyone else in this film, but simply as human beings who are given choices.

I explore how words like shyness, fear, courage, loneliness and vulnerability can be translated into a shot or image.

I think there was a chance to explore and bend cinematic rules with this film. I wanted to incorporate shots that have no specific POV, or using transitions shots similar to the style of Ozu. I also explored if it is possible to switch POV within a long take. I think this helps immerse the spectator in the world and character journey.

This film has a dreamlike element to it. I have written scenes that will make spectators work to distinguish where they are, in reality or in a dream.

I also wanted to make the spirit character Seipua more human than our typical phantom stereotype. I believe that the closer a monster is to being a human or it being humanised, the more frightening it is, which is why a character like Seipua is not a typical ghoul. This is not a horror: it is a drama that is frightening at levels, heartfelt at moments and satisfying at its conclusion.

### **The World**

*One Thousand Ropes* is a film that plays on metaphors and symbolisms. The symbolism of an unborn child trapped in between three worlds the womb, the spiritual and the real, is constantly replayed throughout the film.

The symbolism of a father wanting a family, his instinct of burying the placenta of his children in the housing projects hoping for their return. The symbolic meaning and power of giving birth alone and unassisted to regain mana, self-worth and dignity.

Maea exists in a world that blends or blurs the lines between real and unreal. It is world where baking and massaging is in union where good and evil energy is exchanged.

This is a dark unforgiving world where we see humans at their worst. But we also see humanity in its immaculate form, sacrifice and love. At one level it works to your sub conscious, as if we are inside the womb. On another we are exposed to a concrete world, hard and violent which awaits us.

The world of the film offers the questions, "is there any good in violence", "Can violence heal?" These were questions I explored because in a way, massages and baking have an element of violence. A deeper insight into Maea's character will reveal a man who lives because of violence, who is dependent on violence to survive. It is interesting how a man desperate to free himself from violence is blind to the fact his strength has the power to bring relief to others.

### **Setting**

The story takes place in Wellington, New Zealand in the City Housing Projects in Newtown. The Housing Project to me is an unseen world, an unseen part of the New Zealand landscape: the richness of the cultures that reside side by side and the culture practices that go on, day in and day out. The people and the ordeals in their everyday lives are alien to



many Kiwis. It is not a place to spend one's life in. It is only a place where one awaits a chance and a hope for something better and leave – a place of transition.

The setting plays an important role in signifying our fragility in a world that is concrete, solid and dangerous. For me, the concrete and solid world of Wellington city is a contrast to the softness of the world Maea tries to preserve – the massaging, pregnant stomach and the womb. The healing power of massage, is such a simple and unassuming yet such a relieving and lifesaving act.

### **Midwifery**

Midwifery or Traditional Birthing Attendants is one of the subjects of the film. Midwives have always been an important role in societies around the world. They are the assistants, the guardians, the protectors and the facilitators of life.

The film depicts the new faces of the traditional midwives. Maea tries to hold on to the old concept where he does not determine the payment he gets for his services. Payment is solely dependent on the patient and whatever is given must be accepted. The film also deals with the adaptation of the traditional midwife to modern day medical services. There is still a lot to learn from old and ancient knowledge.

The character of Maea is controversial because he is a Fa'atosaga. The word is Samoan – Fa'ato means to "plant", saga means "a seed" – to plant a seed. They are more spiritual and often frowned upon by religion as fa'atosaga tend to interfere with God by instigating or facilitating the pregnancy of women, especially women who have been regarded as incapable of childbearing. Maea is the best.

I was fascinated by traditional healers, their understanding or knowledge of women, of humans in relationship to the environment. I wanted to explore this understanding and this role in society this was one of the main reasons I wanted to create this story.

### **Language**

The language in the film is dominantly Samoan as it is a film that revolves around people trying to live their culture outside of their home countries. The mannerisms and the poetry of love, affection and anger are important elements of his world. I think that to be truthful and authentic to the world we use the common tongue of this world.

However, there is English spoken in the film. The characters that speak English speak in a proper manner, not the fobish or "fresh off the boat" English. But English that his spoken from a tongue that is fluent in the nuances of both languages. It is like one who emanates awe and identity when speaking in a foreign tongue.

### **Giving Birth - alone**

I believe giving birth is the pinnacle of life. Giving birth alone is the ultimate measure of courage. It is where mana radiates, dignity becomes invulnerable, self-worth flourish.

### **Directing style**

For the main actors we talked a lot but basically I wanted to give them information so they could translate it to their own and bring that to set. I had a specific idea of what I wanted

but I was always open, because I am hoping what they would bring would be better than what I thought, which is what I try to achieve, that the actor brings something more than what I was thinking. Luckily for me, especially with the main actor he had experience with midwives – he used to follow his grandmother.

### **Themes**

I think redemption is a really important theme – it sums up what this character is trying to achieve. He is responsible for destroying the family and now he is responsible for bringing them together. It is sad relationship, because it is a repetition. There is a sense of unspoken love, and it is also about missed opportunity. About this man not caring about his kids when he was younger and now he regrets it. It is also a father's attempt to save his daughter from that life.

Love and forgiveness are also important themes.

### **CATHERINE FITZGERALD - PRODUCER**

**About Catherine:** Producer and owner of Blueskin Films, Catherine is an Officer of the NZ Order of Merit for services to film, a Member of the Asia Pacific Screen Academy and has received "South Pacific Pictures Award For Achievement In Film 2014" (WIFT NZ Awards) and SPADA NZ Independent Producer Of The Year Award 2011, among other prizes and honours.

She also Chairs the NZ Film Festival Trust, has consulted for the Berlinale NATIVE, and served on the Berlinale Generation Jury. She also serves on the SPADA, WIFTNZ and Playmarket Boards, and the Governance Group for the review of tertiary qualifications.

Catherine's credits include *Two Cars, One Night* (2004), *Rain of the Children* (2008) and *The Orator* (2011).

### **IN HER OWN WORDS**

#### **Describing *One Thousand Ropes***

A strong rope is formed by many strands and this is a film that is weaving multiple strands to become something strong and powerful.

It is a film about a man who is very much haunted by regrets and remorse, he is a good man but he is held back.

Those ropes that connect you to one another, to the places where you belong, to your culture, to your family, to your environment, to your past, to your present and to your future are actually going to hold you back until you know what to let go of and what to hold on to. I think this film is very much about hope for the future and how Maeaby letting go of things in his past, really empowers his daughter to create quite a different future for her daughter. So for me it is very much a film about empowering women, and about learning humility, courage, strength and what you can do with that – that's love.

Something that is really interesting about Maea is a man of his hands, very powerful, beautiful, strong, flexible, elegant hands that are scarred. They have been used in boxing, but also with the same energy and strength he kneads bread and he massages women. All of these things need emotional strength and you create something good. It's about finding how to use strengths well.

Maea's daughter Ilisa is somebody who can actually live out the potential her father saw in her, but she hasn't been. When she comes back, she and her father reconnect, but not in the way that either of them expect. You think 'what did she want when she came back?' he actually asks her that, and what does he expect will happen? It is about finding something beyond your expectations. You walk out of the film feeling very hopeful that things can be different.

Tusi has no interest in sermonising or lecturing people so his films don't have 'a message' but I think there is a transforming power of experiencing a film like this. It gives you a chance to open your heart a little more, to think differently about the world and find the hope that gets us through in a very imperfect world.

### **Similarities or differences from *The Orator***

*One Thousand Ropes* is a different story with different characters, in a different land and in quite a different environment but many of the themes are similar: The themes of love, and courage, redemption and learning humility and that courage that actually frees you. It's also about defying expectations. That you can get caught in what people think about you and the roles they have given you and that you can actually break free from those and change things.

One of the things Tusi talked a lot about in development was a Japanese concept of the beauty in imperfections- Wabi-Sabi. The beauty of things that are not perfect, whether that is architecture, an over ripe fallen lemon, a man or and young woman. So there is beauty in what is not perfect and exploring the potential of humankind – the things that give us insight into what it means to be human. I think this is a theme explored in both films.

### **Working with Tusi**

Tusi and I have worked together now for several years over several films and a lot of development. I find myself really privileged to work with Tusi, he's an amazingly organic, dynamic and creative person. You have a discussion and ideas come up and then they are transformed into something you never expect.

I guess the thing I find most exciting about Tusi is that he watches films from all over the world, he looks at art from all over the world, he thinks about people and ideas and traditions and then he brings it all together and makes it into something new. He has a real magic touch, his work is really beautiful - it's not like anything you have seen before so that is really exciting, but it is also really challenging.

As a Producer the most exciting part of development is like being an elite sports coach, it is a lot about providing that environment and allowing people to push themselves further than they could or should go on their own – because you are watching out for them.

For me it is the art of asking a good question, it is much better than thinking I have any answers. So if I can think of a good question, then hopefully that is really stimulating and creatively useful to Tusi.

### **MAEA TAMASESE – SAMOAN DIALOGUE ADVISOR**

**About Maea:** Maea is Tusi's younger brother. He lives in Samoa where he works as a producer and director, and as a mechanic.

#### **IN HIS OWN WORDS**

##### ***Storytelling and Language***

Tusi and I are very passionate about language and storytelling. This is the new way of storytelling, first we had the falolo which was where our grandmothers used to tell the story, but now we have moved on to telling the story through image. Language is identity and it is who we are. Other countries have painting that is their art, but Samoan for us in our oratory. Our language is our art so we need to hold on to it.

This story is not just Samoan, it is a universal theme about separation and isolation. It is a story about someone who yearns to be loved and yearns to be touched, but what he did before has made him isolated.

##### ***Massage (Mili)***

Maea is a Fa'atosaga (traditional midwife) this is his talent. To me it is a dying art because people are starting to move on to a more modern way of doing things. Sometimes traditional ways can teach us some things modern can't explain. Modern and traditional can go hand in hand.

A lot of people use the fofu- they think of the rough way of massaging but from what I have learned mili is more tender. In mili you are being careful because you are touching a pregnant lady's belly and you want to protect the baby as well so it is a different way of doing it.

##### ***Working with Tusi***

I have always been involved with my brother Tusi's work. Ever since he was at film school we have talked about telling our stories - especially Pacific stories.

Not everybody can say they get the chance to work with their brothers. For me being the younger brother I am always there to help him out. It is good because we understand each other. I know when things aren't going well so I always try and make him happy, I google a joke and tell it to Tusi to ease the mood - as any brother would do!

### **LEON NARBEBY NZCS – DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

A NZ Arts Laureate, Leon is an acclaimed and award winning Director of Photography, and Director, of enormous experience. Narbey was educated at the Elam School of Fine Arts, specialising in sculpture. As well as *The Orator*, his extensive career as a cinematographer includes *Whale Rider* by Niki Caro, *My Talks with Dean Spanley*, *Giselle*, *Number Two* and *The Dead Lands* by Toa Fraser, and *Rain of the Children* by Vincent Ward.

Leon co-wrote and directed two films, *Illustrious Energy* and *The Footstep Man*.

### **SHAYNE RADFORD – PRODUCTION DESIGNER**

Shayne Radford is an art director and production designer, whose credits include *Boy*, *Once Were Warriors*, *Young Hercules*, *Desperate Remedies* and *River Queen*.

### **ANNIE COLLINS – EDITOR**

Editor Annie Collins worked on the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and won awards for her editing work on *Scarflies* and *Out of the Blue*. She has also worked on a number of documentaries including *Patu!* and *The Neglected Miracle*.

### **ANDREW MACKIE & RICHARD PAYTEN – EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**

Andrew Mackie and Richard Payten of Transmission Films are Executive Producers and the distributors in Australia, NZ and the Pacific. Richard and Andrew's 23-year partnership has seen them release over 250 films and generate over \$300 million at the box office. The films they have acquired and distributed have won 9 Palme d'Ors and been nominated for 44 Academy Awards.

Transmission successfully released *The Orator* and such films as; *The King's Speech*, *Amour*, *Samson & Delilah*, *Carol*, *Brooklyn*, *The Railway Man*, *Calvary*, *Shame*, *An Education*, *Tracks*, *The Painted Veil*, *Quartet* and New Zealand smash hits *Boy*, *The Dark Horse*, *The World's Fastest Indian*, *Chasing Great* and *The Dead Lands*.

### **MICHAEL ELDRED – ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Michael Eldred started his career in 1994 with Dendy Films in Australia, shortly before that company launched the highly successful *Once Were Warriors* to Australian audiences. He went on to roles with Polygram Filmed Entertainment, Dendy Cinemas and Hoyts Distribution before relocating to New Zealand in 2005.

In New Zealand, he set up the local office of Dendy Films and has worked with Madman NZ for a number of years. Michael is now the General Manager of Transmission Film in NZ.

Amongst the many films he has released in NZ are successful local films *What We Do in the Shadows*, *The Dead Lands*, *The Dark Horse*, *Out of the Blue*, *Chasing Great* smash hit *Boy* and the acclaimed *The Orator*.

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

### **UELESE PETAIA as MAEA**

**About Uelese (Tui):** Uelese lives in Samoa, and holds the chiefly titles Tuiasau Leota. He starred in *Sons for the Return Home* (1979) an adaptation of Albert Wendt's book, it was the first feature film to explore the Samoan experience in New Zealand. He was awarded Best Actor, shared with Al Pacino, at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival for this performance in 1980. He also had roles in television series *Flucht ins Paradies* (1995) and *Heroes* (1984), and presented youth TV in New Zealand. He has worked extensively as a presenter in Samoan television.

### **IN HIS OWN WORDS**

**Introducing Maea:** Maea is a complex man, he has a past that he would like to forget. He is seeking redemption from what he used to be. It takes many turns and he is still tied in many ways to his past which makes him long for company. He is scared of the future and is scared of being alone; his wife has died and his children have left him, so when he gets the chance he tries to make good.

**Preparing for the role of Maea:** When I first got the script it was quite revealing. I have done a bit of boxing as a young person. It is a very strong part of his being and it's also a very strong part of the Samoan male. So part of doing the research was understanding how that very macho sport became part of his world. He is a baker, a healer, a traditional masseuse and traditional midwife - those things were always things that women did. He was always good with his hands, a fighter yet there is that very calming side to him, which he used to forget his past.

I knew about spiritual healing because I always used to go with my grandmother. She was one of those women who could do anything, she was a farmer, she was a masseuse, she was a healer, she was a midwife - she was a midwife to my mother for 12 of her children. I always used to go with her and carry her little bag to wherever she went, I would sit behind the curtains and watch her do her thing. So I felt that I knew that side of it, but I had to learn to bake!

**Bringing the character to life:** There are a lot of things and a lot of people that I drew on. I spent a bit of time just sitting watching people at markets. I thought a lot about the men that I sit with in the Samoan village fono. I have got some similarities to Maea but I also paid more attention to these men who sit around making decisions for the village, for the families. I tried to pick up on the little things they would do and different mannerisms that bring out different things that highlight what Maea is.

I also looked at the young kids who had left their homes, just wondering why. I wanted to find out what made Maea's kids leave and why they came back. It is about the ties that hold you together particularly in the Samoan culture we are bound in many ways.

**Working with Tusi:** Tusi challenges you in so many ways and draws things out of you that you don't want to show. I feel grateful that I was able to work with him and I hope there are a lot more Samoan storytellers that will follow who are not afraid to tell Samoan stories

### **FRANKIE ADAMS as ILISA**

**About Frankie:** Frankie is an actress best known for her role on popular New Zealand TV series Shortland Street (1992 - 2014). She most recently has starred as Bobbie Draper in US TV show Expanse season 2, and Wentworth as Tasha Goodwin.

This is Frankie's first feature film role.

### **IN HER OWN WORDS**

**Introducing Ilisa:** Ilisa is the daughter of Maea. They have had a very rocky past together, he was abusive towards her mother and so Ilisa hasn't been living at home for a while. She has now found herself in a very similar situation with her boyfriend, so she returns back home. She is a gorgeous soul with a couple of broken wings, you see her journey and growth, it is heart-breaking but there is hope.

**Bringing the character to life:** I really connected with Ilisa as soon as I read the script because I know people who have been through similar situations. I also understood her in the way love makes you do some funny things and makes you stay in some awful situations. I was genuinely excited to bring her to life.

I was drawn to the theme of the broken relationship with her father. I liked the idea of exploring that relationship and seeing where it could go. They are figuring out how to trust each other.

I think forgiveness is really important in everyone's lifetime and not many people get the chance to do it, so this was a relationship where I could show that.

**New Beginnings:** There are so many babies and mothers, births and pregnancies in this film and I think it quite beautiful - the idea of new beginnings. New beginnings are particularly important to Ilisa as she strives for that fresh start. I really admire that she recognised that she needed to get out of that relationship for her bubba. To me her baby represents Ilisa getting back her strength and mana and rebuilding the relationship with her father.

**Working with Tusi:** I have never been involved with a Samoan film so I really wanted to be a part of this to learn more about my culture and hear more of the language. It is really nostalgic to hear the language because my mum spoke Samoan to us all throughout our childhood.

## **SIMA URALE as SEIPUA**

**About Sima:** Sima is a well-known New Zealand filmmaker, with more than 15 years' experience in the industry as a director of prize winning film, commercials and television.

Sima won the Silver Lion for Best Short Film at the Venice Film Festival for *O Tamaiti (The Children)* in 1996 and released her feature debut *Apron Strings* in 2008.

### **IN HER OWN WORDS**

**Introducing Seipua:** I just knew when this role came along that it was ultra-special. Roles like this are very rare so I just couldn't say no to it. I only stepped out from behind the camera because of Seipua's role. Seipua is a very unusual character; she is in a different timeline to everyone else, different space, different universe, different reality but same world. I really feel for Seipua, I feel for her because she is frustrated with the world she is in - she is an unhappy woman that's for sure!

*One Thousand Ropes* is actually set in New Zealand and I think that is what makes her so interesting. What kind of spirit is she? What would be her history here? Maybe she is more contemporary? There is still something really Samoan about her, in many ways Tusi has made her a familiar spirit, like every family has one.

**Bringing the role to life:** I really enjoyed the role - I think it is probably because I haven't acted for about 20 years! For so long I have expected actors to give me what I want as a Director and now I am back in their shoes. It is a privilege really, to be on both sides of the camera.

The main preparation for this role was getting fit – lots of yoga. Seipua is an unusual character, she is a spirit so I needed to be more flexible, more fit and also more zen.

**Working with Tusi:** Tusi has given me a lot of freedom, but he has also given me some wonderful notes that have helped with my physicality. Interpretation of movement is a weird thing, you could do a movement and it doesn't really say much so then it's about actually putting a motivation and a reasoning behind it, so it's trying to find that together with Tusi. I always want my actors to give more than they think they can give, so hopefully I am doing that for Tusi.



## **BEULAH KOALE as MOLESI**

**About Beulah:** Beulah has worked in TV *Shortland Street* and on the stage, most recently in *The Events* (2015). He has also starred in New Zealand films *The Last Saint* (2014), *Fantail* (2013) and *The Kick*(2014). Beulah has been cast in his first international film *Thank you for your Service* directed by Jason Hall (*American Sniper*).

### **IN HIS OWN WORDS**

**Introducing Molese:** Molese is a young kid, a troubled kid. He has a lot of heart, but he gets pushed in the wrong direction. He has made some bad decisions but he is on the mend - he really wants to break out of it. In the film he is stuck in a room with two men who make it really hard from him to stop going to the bad side.

**Bringing the role to life:** Like most films, I always draw on my own life experiences. There is nothing better than making emotions or memories real, instead of having to make them up. I haven't needed to go too far to research what is going on this film and that's what I love about what Tusi is writing - he is writing stories that are relevant now. I really wanted this role, after seeing *The Orator* and the success of *The Orator* I really wanted to do a movie that a lot of Samoans would watch, my people, I wanted to be a part of that story.

**Working with Tusi:** Working with Tusi has been very special. He is a special kind of Director; I have never met any Director like him. He directs me in Samoan and I understand it more than when he speaks to me in English. He's very artistic visually - I could visualise what the film looked like in my head.

Tusi talks a lot about feeling, he says don't show me in your face - let me feel it. From then on everything else should fall into place if I just let the other actors know what I was feeling.

## **ENE PETAIA as DEBT**

**About Ene:** Ene has starred in *Sione's Wedding* (2006), *Shortland Street* (1992) and *Haka & Siva* (2004).

### **IN HIS OWN WORDS**

**Introducing Debt:** Debt is security at a night club. I think as he gets older he finds that he has to prove himself, so physically he thinks that he has to fight to prove he is still on his game. Debt is the opposite of the now peaceful, or trying to be peaceful Maea.

**Bringing the role to life:** I auditioned for the main part, but I didn't get the part because the character didn't fit my physic and description. They ended up casting someone from Samoa who happens to be my older brother Uelese Petaia! Neither of us knew this until we arrived on set, so it's another milestone for me to finally work with Uelese.

Playing Debt was quite a challenge. I am normally a happy person, people would know me as laughing and always in good spirits. So I had to work hard to think about what he believes in and to try and embody this angry character, it pushed me to my limit.

**Working with Tusi:** Tusi is a quiet man, he lets you explore your potential. But then you have to respect his point of view as a writer. There are things actors need to listen to and understand for the story to take shape.

## **ANAPELA POLATAIVAO as DOROTHY**

**About Anapela:** Samoan-born and South Auckland raised, Anapela Polataivao is a celebrated actress on the stage, tv and film.

Anapela is a Toi Whakaari graduate. She is a co-director of KilaKokonut Crew, who performed New Zealand's first Pacific musical *The Factory* at the 2013 Auckland Arts Festival. Anapela starred in award winning shortfilm *Nightshift (2012)* and is currently on screening in NZ TV Drama *Filthy Rich*.

Anapela lives in South Auckland and teaches full time at Pacific Performing Arts (PIPA) in Avondale.

### **IN HER OWN WORDS**

**Introducing Dorothy:** Dorothy is a matriarch. She is quite formidable both in stance and also in her spirit. She calls the shots; she tells the men how to do things - it is her bakery. Dorothy doesn't waver much; she is quite steady but there is a softness - particularly towards Maea.

**Bringing the character to life:** I was inspired by Aunties and Mothers that have the same staunch energy about them. It is really firm but there is so much love there.

**Working with Tusi:** When you are directed in Samoan it is choreography, it is a dance. Not only are you dancing in the language but you hold your body differently because you are so rooted by the language.

I loved it how Tusi constantly reminded me Dorothy is always in power, so very little needs to be done to capture that.

## THEMATIC IDEAS RELEVANT TO THE FILM

### *One Thousand Ropes*

**Maea (character name)** - One translation of Maaeaeafe (our character name is Maaeaeafe shortened to Maea) is a thousand ropes, as in the film's title, or a multi-strand sennit. A multi-stranded rope is a symbol of strength and power; it will bind a fale (house) and will keep you safe in a storm at sea, and equally tether you to a safe harbour.

### **Connectedness:**

"When we try to pick out anything by itself we find that it is bound fast by a thousand invisible cords that cannot be broken, to everything in the universe. "

- John Muir July 27, 1869

Va Tapuia – the forces that connect us to the world, to each other, to the past, to the future.

**Family** – what ties us together (the family “tree”).

Umbilical cords and placentas

All over the world there are similar traditions associated with the placenta and umbilical cord. The most common one is that the place where your placenta is buried is your “land”. In the languages of the Pacific *whenua, fonua, fanua, fenua, honua, henua* (NZ Maori, Tongan, Samoan, Tahitian, Hawaiian Marquesan) all mean both the placenta and the land....

**Boxing** – ropes of the ring



**Bread** – the dough is “ropey” and bread made of twists and plaits of dough



**Massage** – smoothes out knots, the tense ropes of the muscles, causing pain, tension, and makes them supple again. Many cultures use massage for relieving the stresses and discomfort of pregnancy.



## Maui

The ropes which bind Maui – and create the “day”



And you see Maui rays when the sun comes through the clouds...



# **FULL CREDITS**

**ONE THOUSAND ROPES**

**WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY TUSI TAMASESE**

**Starring**

**UELESE PETAIA**

**FRANKIE ADAMS**

**VAELE SIMA URALE**

**ANAPELA POLATAIVAO**

**ENE PETAIA**

**BEULAH KOALE**

**ATINA LIPA PATAU**

**LAGI FARANI**

**LILY VITALINA FA'AINA FRETTON**

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**CINEMATOGRAPHER**

**LEON NARBAY NZCS**

**EDITOR**

**ANNIE COLLINS**

**COMPOSER**

**TIM PREBBLE**

**SOUND DESIGNER**

**TOM SCOTT TOFT**

**SUPERVISING DIALOGUE EDITOR**

**CHRIS TODD**

**COLOURIST**

**CLARE BURLINSON**

**SENIOR RE-RECORDING MIXER**

**MIKE HEDGES**

**PRODUCTION DESIGNER SHAYNE RADFORD**

**COSTUME DESIGNER NIC SMILLIE**

**MAKE UP DESIGNER FRANKIE KARENA**

**CASTING DIRECTORS TINA CLEARY AND MIRANDA RIVERS**

**1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ROBYN GRACE**

**LINE PRODUCER NICOLA OLSEN**

**PRODUCED BY**

**BLUESKIN FILMS**

**IN ASSOCIATION WITH**

**THE NEW ZEALAND FILM COMMISSION**

### CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

MAEA	Uelese Petaia
LITA	Nikki Si'ulepa
LITA'S DAUGHTER	Eseta Alesana-Patea
APPLE	Ethan Alaimoana
SEIPUA	Vaele Sima Urale
APAUULA	Atina Lipa Patau
DEBT	EnePetaia
MOLESI	Beulah Koale
CUSTOMER/ WORKER	Natano Keni
DOROTHY	Anapela Polataivao
NUISILA SIONE	Leiataua Afega Si'ulepa
MIDWIFE	Helen Pearse-Otene
TUPE	Nive Schmidt
APAUULA'S SONS	Titimaea Harry Tamasese Iosefo Christian Salaki Siu
SIMI	Makesi Stowers
FRANKIE, AVA MIXER	Guy Davis
JOE, AVA DISTRIBUTOR	Augie Davis
AVA PATRONS	
TaioaloTauvelaloane	Andrew Bevins
Yousef Mazraeh	Semu Fa'alogo
FaaaligaSiu	Atuaia UnutoaTeo
MoseseTuivoavoa	Jireh Merita Tutagalevao
FololeTogiatama	
LIMA	Jeremiah Tauamiti
ILISA	Frankie Adams
IUNI	Moana Ete



SHADOW BOXER	Ali Ismatullah
ELEKISE	Levaopolololoelu Fili
TRAINEE MIDWIFE	Charlotte Tausilia
COMMUNITY HALL MOTHERS	
Kayla J Hawea	Faaiulelei Keil-Mai
Katie Mua'au	Sefulu Pou
HENRY PASI	Maiava Nathaniel Lees
ELENA	Gabrielle Solomona
ELENA'S AUNTY	Joy Vaele
SKIMPY LAU	Esther Lees
ELENA'S DAUGHTER	Nimilote Fatialofa
ELENA'S GREAT UNCLE	Masoe Melesala
ELENA'S BROTHER	Salemona Mafileo-Tuala
EVA	Lagi Farani
EVA'S HUSBAND	Felix Filipino
EVA'S SON	Bradley Melesala
BABY SHOP OWNER	Bharati Patel
BUSINESS MAN	Kyosuke Segawa
JULY	Asia Kisega Sola
ANA	Desiree Tuaoi
ANA'S DAUGHTER	Alice Sopoaga
MIA	Quizel Framhein
FIA	Pauline Sauvao
ILISA'S DAUGHTER	Lily Vitalina Fa'ainaFretton Jalayne Leau-Sulusi
MOTHERS	
Chanelle Nicole Katene	Erika Rasch
June Lealaisalanoa	Sina Esera

Theodora Esera Lynn Faiaogo  
LahleinaFeaunati

YOUNG MAEA Tui Dilitati  
MAEA'S WIFE Wallenda Tolai  
BABY ILISA Mikayla Tolai  
MAEA'S SON Lavakhi Tolai  
YOUNG EVA Nevaeh Tolai

#### BAKERY CUSTOMERS

Daniel Misa Damon Tafatu  
Ashley Johnston Dominic Brown  
Darren Cudby Fa'alava'au Matagimalie Eriki Sione  
Ta'ape Tauli Phanit Tan  
Fomai Savea Geoffrey Bridge  
Melva Bridge

#### JOGGERS

Melanie Porter  
Sharon Corbet Rose Wang

#### PASSERSBY

Seru Tuivoavoa Sidhant Thapa  
Teah Steel Letitia Bell  
Kamale Nzsim Nebo Aaron Shane Pouling  
Marigold Kani Aisha McBrien  
Ben Pringle Katie Bryer Sissons  
Jamie Woodford Tirhas Mehari

#### HOUSING ESTATE COMMUNITY

Ioane Petelo Aukusitino Connor Savea

Ethan Stowers	Filia Tamasese
Manuia Tamasese	Ian Blackburn
Junior Sulusi	Maria Alesana
Naomi Sopoaga	Taupena Asiata
Honour Asiata	Xavier-Aj Asiata
William Ackroyd	Toby Bourke
Daniel Misa	Victor Eang
Willy Eang	Alina Hart
Xuan Ming Hu	Rui Hu
Sina Ilaoa	Austen Keni
Salaki Keni	Dimitri Laris
Tao Ma	Katie Maua'au
Darius Hu Ngature	Tepora Samia
Kapeneta Setefano	Fiti Junior Fa'aaliga Siu
Amy Tiatia	Vaega Tiatia
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Stariana Framhein	Joseph Ausage
Lon So	Natalya Tauli
Jarrold Rangitaawa	Tola Newbery
Bailey Potoi-Pou	Kasia Jekielek
Scott Davidson	Carrie Green
Hilary Norris	Ria Simmons

Script Supervisor	Kathleen Thomas
Samoan Dialogue Supervisor	Maea Tamasese
Casting and Extras Coordinator	Natano Keni
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Stunt Rigger	Jamie Smith
Stunt Intern	Richard Freeman
1st Assistant Camera	Peter Cunningham
2nd Assistant Camera	Andrew Millar
Data Wrangler	Victor Naveira
Sound Recordist	Ken Saville
Boom Operator	Jo Fraser
Make-up Artist	Susan Durno
Make-up Assistant	Natalie Henderson
Additional Make-up	Kodi Dwsart
Prosthetic Colourist	Zoe Marsden
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Art Department Coordinator	Anne Chamberlain
Props Buyers	Blaise Orsman Rose Kirkup
Set Dressers	Tony De Goldi Dean Hudson
Scenic Artist	Alan Curreri

Sign Writers	R Greenlagh & Ian Renwick
Art Department Assistant	Thomas Aitken
Carpenter	Sandy Wilmar
Prosthetics by Main Reactor	
Prosthetics Designer	Roger Murray
Senior Prosthetics Technician	Mark Knight
Prosthetics Co-ordinator	Felicity Letcher
Model maker	Rob Uivel, Human Dynamo Workshop
Photoshop Artist	Manan Fredriksson
Lemon tree	Jacinta Straker, Windsor Park
Boxing Tutor	Tauvela Ioane
Baking Tutor	Peter Kaiser
French Pastry Consultant	Thomas Holleaux
	Francis Motta
Midwives	Mary-Clare Speyer
	Pule Ahkuoi
Costume Standby	Chris Pickard
	Jenny Bain
	Seraphina Tausilia
Costume Maker	Sheila Horton
Gaffer	Byron Sparrow
Best Boy	Craig Farrand
Lighting Assistant	Gene Warriner
Generator Operator	Eddie Tyrie
Key Grip	Melissa Ririnui
Grip Assistant	Chris Emere
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	Andrew Galt
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	Adrian Medhurst
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Data Wranglers	Natalie Best

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Violin	Simeon Broom
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"How Maui Stole the Sun" produced by Camilla Anderson, directed by Shane Mason, based on the book by Peter Gossage, © 1983.

"In the Rubbish Tin" written and directed by Riwia Brown, animation by Phil Simmonds based on a story by Apirana Taylor, © 2013 Blueskin Films Ltd.

Hopper Street mural artist Sheyne Tuffery.

The Rintoul Street mural and Arlington Community Centre Ope Puketapu memorial murals artist Ellen Coup.

Filmed on location in Wellington City, Lower Hutt, and at Avalon Studios

With thanks to the residents of Arlington Apartments  
Arlington Apartments tenants Kaitiaki, Kishor Maharaj

[Wellington City Council logo]

City Housing

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Simon Clear	Facilities Maintenance Manager
Rebecca Barwood	Arlington Site 2 Project Manager
Corrina McGregor	Community Action team

Katie Frost and Screen Wellington, Mike Bradford and Trafficwise

Other locations with thanks to:

Rameth Baya, Jo Bloxham, Anais & Imogen Goldsmith, Suliava Savali & the Ioane Vito Centre, Leonard Kubiack & Dorothy's Bakery, Shaun McGarry, Bharati Patel, Simon Reid, Gary Watkins, Richard Lander and Anita Burnside

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EPK	Nikki Si'ulepa, Thunder Productions
Key Art	Jeremy Saunders
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**with special thanks to**

Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese & Masiifo Filifilia Tamasese

Beau and Anne Fitzgerald

Kat Fatialofa, Jacinda Elianna, Junior Sulusi, Maria Alesana, Millie Lupo, Tiare Tuffery.

Charlotte Mickie, Bob Lindberg & the NZ Boxing Association, Brett Mills, Dean & Fiona Thomas, Graeme Mason, Lucy & Pav McGinley, Makerita Urale, Robin Laing, Sharon Menzies, Wayne Bosch & Gary Stewart, Constance, Gerald & Susie and John Fitzgerald and families, Joan Tamasese, Noue Tamasese, Henry & Tasha Tamasese, Titimaea Olaf Tamasese, Tutasi & Jay Schuster, Meapelo Maiai, Melissa Porter, Phillip & Laititi Fuehring, Lei & Vala Mai, Joan Moamofoa Fong – and Melanie Porter.

**with thanks to**

Diana Smith, Fitu Ulutupu, Lelia Smith, Lucy Rodgers, Tupe Rodgers, and the whole Smith and Ulutupu Family.

Alan Collins, Angela Littlejohn, Angus Finney, Anita Narbey, Capital Scaffolding, Carl Bevan, Chalet Catering, Charlotte Cudmore-Neame, Darlene & Paul Mollo, Dave Kreft, DC Design Construction Ltd, Driscoll Motors, Emporio Coffee, Fiona Copland, Frank Ong, Gillian Ashurst, Gyula Gazdag, Henry Beattie, Italia Hunt, Jenny Jenkins, Jo Hiles, Julian Arahanga, Karen Warman at Resene, Langi's Island Styles, Leigh Minarapa, Letti Chadwick, Malissa Gisbon, Mark Woods, Matt Stutter, Michael Goldenberg, Mick Rose, Nasau Fuimaono & Go Wellington, Phillip Peek, PIPA – Pacific Institute of Performing Arts, Portsmouth, Richard Fletcher, Robin Wilson, Rocket Rentals, Rubber Monkey, Sandra Bestall, Simon Bright & Tindall Productions, Suivai (Vaia) Autagavaia, Talofa Variety Shop, Thierry Jutel, Toby Mills, Trevor Haysom.

International Sales by [MONGREL LOGO]

Australasian Distribution by [TRANSMISSION LOGO]

Financed in Association with Fulcrum Media Finance [FULCRUM LOGO]

and Media Super Limited [MEDIA SUPER LIMITED LOGO]

The filmmakers acknowledge the assistance of the New Zealand Government's Screen Production Grant

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