

LUTHULI DLAMINI APIWE MKEFE SIBULELE GCILITSHANA

LETTERS OF HOPE



a VUSI AFRICA film

PRODUCED BY MEDIA 24 AND JET SET CREATIONS, THE NATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FOUNDATION, THE GAUTENG FILM COMMISSION
A VUSI AFRICA FILM LETTERS OF HOPE BY APIWE MKEFE, SIBULELE GCILITSHANA, LUTHULI DLAMINI, JET MOKONA
CASTING BY WALEDI BRIGACINI, NOPYAT BEHWA MOKOENI COSTUME DESIGNER WUSI AFRICA, HALEDI BRIGACINI PRODUCTION DESIGNER WUSI AFRICA EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
EDITED BY NYEMOZI MCAJIBI PRODUCED BY VUSI AFRICA

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Trial by Media
in association with
Jet Set Creations
The National Film and Video Foundation
and
The Gauteng Film Commission

Present
A Vusi Africa Film

LETTERS OF HOPE

Directed by
VUSI AFRICA

Starring
APHIWE MKEFE
SIBULELE GCILITSHANA
LUTHULI DLAMINI
JET NOVUKA

Producers
NALEDI BOGACWI
NDIYATHEMBA MODIBEDI

Screenplay
VUSI AFRICA
NALEDI BOGACWI
Cinematographer
NYEMBEZI NCABA

Synopsis

Set in 1976 apartheid South Africa, Letters of Hope tell the story of 16-year-old Jeremiah, who really wants to be a policeman and can't understand why his father Robert won't let him. Robert is the local postman and expects Jeremiah to take after him. When his father is killed, Jeremiah discovers that his father was operating a secret courier service that delivered letters from freedom fighters in exile and prison. Will Jeremiah step up to take over from where his father left off – delivering letters of hope to the families of freedom fighters?

Logline

After the death of his father a teenage boy is forced to take over his father's risky job, of delivering secret letters, going against the laws of apartheid

Tagline

In a country without hope one letter can save us all.

About the film

In 2010, director Vusi’Africa, who was a student at the time, embarked on a historical research project commissioned by the African National Congress (ANC) and facilitated by Prof Thabo Pudi. The aim of the research was to interview more than a thousand individuals who were involved in shaping the history of the country since the birth of the ANC in 1912.

It was during his research that Vusi’Africa met Patrick Sibande, the son of legendary political activist Gert Sibande who was once an ANC operative in the country during apartheid.

In South Africa’s darkest hour, it was people like Patrick Sibande who ensured that the people living in the country still had some kind of hope. In a time where people were going missing and getting arrested without charges someone had to keep track of these events and inform family members who were left destitute.

Patrick Sibande was that person, he narrated to Vusi’Africa how he used to smuggle letters into the country and out of various prisons. These letters were written on different materials like toilet paper and t-shirt cuttings, and then rewritten in a presentable form before they were presented to the families of the loved ones.

Patrick Sibande’s story inspired Vusi’Africa to write the film Letters of Hope. Although the film is a fictional account, the events detailed in the film are based on actual history.

Letters of Hope was in competition with 12 films at the Durban International Film Festival 2019 and walked off with the Artistic Bravery Award.

Director's Statement

Films are thoughts that have been given the opportunity to be seen. Because of the importance of their messages they demand to be heard.

Letters of Hope is that film. Its desire is not only to exist, but to exist with the purpose to inspire hope and transformation for those who come into connection with it.

In making this film I wanted people to walk away with a sense of understanding that there are heroes we never discovered who gave their lives for South Africa's new political dispensation.

Their stories have never been told, and neither have they been whispered about; the story told in this film is one of those stories.

About the filmmakers

VUSI'AFRICA – Director

Vusi' Africa was born in KwaNdebele and was raised in Witbank, Mpumalanga. He began his career as stage playwright and director before he ventured into film.

His first short film Die Kaal Kraal set him apart as contemporary filmmaker.

Letters of Hope is his debut feature film and like his previous projects, his voice for justice and equality continues to dominate his work.

Vusi is currently doing his master's in film and television with the Tshwane University of Technology.

NALEDI BOGACWI – Executive Producer/Producer/Writer

Naledi Bogacwi is commonly known for her passion for film, a fire starter of note.

Founder and Executive Producer for Trial By Media , she was previously Head of Department for Film at City Varsity Johannesburg before joining AFDA Johannesburg as a screenwriting lecturer.

NDIYATHEMBA MODIBEDI – Producer

Ndiyathemba Modibedi is an inventive and enthusiastic filmmaker and actor with a passion for storytelling. 'Ndiya' was born in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape. He has an assertive and dynamic work approach. With a background in performing arts, he is an emerging filmmaker who has gained professional experience in various media sectors. He has collaborated with Vusi' Africa in all his films as a producer and actor. Letters of Hope this is their first feature together with him as producer and Vusi' Africa as director.

About the cast

APHIWE MFEKE – Jeremiah

Up-and-coming actor Aphiwe Mkefe clinched the lead role on Mzansi Magic's drama series Nkululeko in 2018, playing the role of a young boy from Khayelitsha whose intelligence makes him an odd character to his peers.

SIBULELE GCILITSHANA – Maria

Sibulele Gcilitshana is a talented and versatile actor, dancer, singer and theatre workshop facilitator, who graduated in 2000 from the Tshwane University of Technology with a National Diploma in Musical Theatre.

In 2002 she was nominated for an FNB Vita award for Best New Actress. Theatre highlights include the highly acclaimed James Ngcobo production of Thirst, as well as her title role in Sunjata where she once again teamed up with Ngcobo. She performed in the touring production of Truth in Translation for five years. The show won a Fringe First award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2008.

Some of her TV credits include the award winning Tjovitjo (2017), Bedford Wives (2017), Saints and Sinners (2015-2016) and Soul City (2004-2006). Most recently, Sibulele appeared in two US films, Revolt which premiered in 2017, as well as Beautifully Broken (2018).

LUTHULI DLAMINI – Robert

Luthuli Dlamini is a Zimbabwe-born South African film and television actor. He was raised in England, where he did much of his schooling before he returned to settle in South Africa. He is known for his portrayal of Stan Nyathi on the e.tv soap opera, Scandal!. Dlamini has also had roles on Generations, Jacob's Cross, InterSEXions, Rockville, Room, Tempy Pushas, and Uzalo.

Luthuli is one of the finest actors in South Africa and once again proved his talent in 2019, scooping the Best Actor award at the prestigious Nice International Film Festival in France, where he impressed judges with his role as doctor and mentor to a woman nearly crippled by an accident in the film The Furnace.

JET NOVUKA – Tomas

Jet is a trained theatre actor and a seasoned TV and film actor. He graduated from Fuba School Of Drama And Visual Arts in 1985 and trained at Funda Arts Centre. He is known for his role as Zakes in the SABC1 drama series Yizo Yizo and as Andile Makhubu in the M-Net Original Productions drama series Jacob's Cross. His other credits include roles on Montana, 4Play: Sex Tips for Girls, Isidingo and Home Affairs.

In 2014, he had a starring role in the SABC1 drama series Mfolozi Street. In 2016 he played the role of Khonjwayo in Mzansi Magic's Igazi.

He recently bagged a new role on hit SABC1 telenovela Uzalo. The 49-year-old star plays the role of fierce policeman, Captain Yamkela Mpambani.

End Credits

Cast

Jeremiah		Aphiwe Mkefe
Robert		Luthuli Dlamini
Maria		Sibulele Gcilitshana
Tomas		Jet Novuka
Linda		Lerato Walaza
Grace		Sibongile Nojila
Oupa		Sello Ramolahloane
Zenzo		Otto Nobela
Sompisi		Thulani Tsoga
Reverend		Stephen Mofokeng
Themba		Joseph Komani
Pano		Ndiyathemba Modibedi
Kgomotso		Sphumudzo Sidzumo
Widow		Seipati Ditsoane
Child		Christina Mthimunye
Pano		Tshepang Koloko
Zef		Ndiyathemba Modibedi
Policemen		Hugh Becker
Mandla		James Sithole
Sipho		Thato Moeng
Delila		Kefilwe Mello
Smangaliso		Sheldorn Marema
Funeral Pastor		Siyabonga Lerumo
Post Lady		Xolile Silombo
Soldier		Ronald Manganye
Uncle		Sam Mbeje
Cousin		Zolile Jamekwane
Father		JP Besselaar
Nun		Clarissa Diedericks

Crew

Director		Vusi’Africa Sindane
Writers	Naledi Bogacwi	Vusi’Africa Sindane
Producers		Naledi Bogacwi

Letters of Hope
Production Notes

Executive Pro.	Ndiyatheba Modibedi Naledi Bogacwi Ndiyathemba Modibedi Jet Novuka
Produ Manger	Sarin Drew
Line Producer	Ndiyathemba Modibedi
Prod Assist	Qenehelo Lukhele
Unit Manager	Siyabonga Lerumo
First AD	Kholeka Khoza
Cinematography	Nyembezi Ncaba
Camera Assist	Pheneas Setoba Sibusiso Tsotetsi
Focus Puller	Nicholas Sewape
Jib Operator	Boitumelo Motlape
Photographer	Pompi Sethebe Xolani Mkhabela
Production Design	Lungile Cindi Sbusiso Khwinana
Wardrobe	Lukhanyiso Kona Vuyiswa Ntombela
Make-Up	Refentse Maselesa
Lighting	Villy Nkoana Dumi Dlamini Thabo Lehloka
Grips	Boitumelo Motlape
Best Boy	David Mofokeng Mohau Phoole
Sound	Jarrod Cooper Lesego Madiba
Music	Nebo Mafabatho Ben Amato Sibusile Xaba
Music Producers	Nebo Mafabatho Ben Amato Sibusile Xaba

Nonhlanhla Dube
Nhlanhla Craftman Mpila

Editor		Vusi' Africa Sindane
Data Grading		Russell Mccallaghan
Sound Editor		Lesego Madiba
		Jarrood Cooper
		Peter Khanda
Foley Artist		Jarrood Cooper