

The Present

PRESS KIT

PRODUCTION NOTES

Writer	Sarah Boddy
Director	Thomas Robins
Producer	Jeremy Macey
Key Cast	Eryn Wilson Saba Girmay
Production companies in association with	Godwit Films KHF Media NZ Film Commission
Country of production	New Zealand
Completion date	2013
Shooting format	2K
Screening format	HDCam, QT ProRes
Aspect ratio	2.35:1
Duration	11 mins 21"
Genre	drama/family/action
Colour	
No dialogue	

INTERNATIONAL SALES

NZ Film
www.nzfilm.co.nz
+64 4 382 7680
lisa@nzfilm.co.nz

LOGLINE

A workaholic banker makes a surprise leap into the world of a 9-year-old girl to help her fight imaginary enemies.

SYNOPSIS

With the work Christmas party finished, workaholic banker Michael has to finish his report but is left wrestling with a faulty printer. Cleaning the apparently empty office is Manut's job. She's confined her imaginative 9 year old daughter Safal to one corner only. Problem is - right in front of Safal, teasing, sits a lit up Christmas tree with enticing presents below. Safal wants the biggest present. The one with the shiniest bow. It's just a matter of choosing the right moment to open it....

Unbeknown to Michael, he is being watched by Safal. When he munches on chips and makes a mess that her mother will have to clean, Safal decides she is going to teach him a little lesson. From an empty Christmas present under the tree she produces an imaginary gun and stalks Michael until he surprises both himself and her by producing his own gun - at this point both their guns become visible to the audience! They mock-fight, she defeats him and he atones for his mess-making by picking up spilt chips in front of her mum.

They join forces against an imaginary enemy as their fantasy brings the office to life around them. An unlikely bond grows from their battle. Safal realizes Michael isn't quite the person she assumed he was, and he in turn realizes there is more to life than finishing his report.

WRITER'S NOTES

I wanted to write about an unlikely friendship that though fleeting had an impact of sorts.

The basis for the idea came from personal experiences - as a child I roamed my father's office at night having all sorts of wild adventures. As an older person I worked with a group of Ethiopian women and was struck by our ability to cause mischievous chaos and communicate with no ability to speak the same language. Meanwhile dear friends of mine were losing their hair working ridiculous hours as stock brokers and wishing they weren't.

One night in Wellington I saw a woman cleaning a bank and wondered how she would manage when her child care arrangements fell through and she simply had to work to earn the money. It was raining, there were no umbrellas, my kids were pulling my hands in different directions and I watched this woman emptying bins but smiling. There was no gloom and doom coming from her and I admired her instantly.

That night I sat down to write about a cleaner with a secret. Her children at the teller desk creating wild adventures. From there it grew.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I was approached to direct *The Present* and chose to do so for two reasons: I thought it was a wonderfully uplifting and fun idea, and because I wanted to direct a short film where people felt better when they left the cinema than when they walked in. Call me old fashioned but I wanted to direct a film that would be a pleasure to watch. I also really embraced Sarah and Jeremy's attitude towards shooting a film. OK, that's more than two reasons but I think they're all excellent ones.

From the start I likened *The Present* to making two short films. I suggested to the team that we'd be making a gorgeously quaint New Zealand short film and the *Bourne Ultimatum* rolled into one. Everyone seemed to grasp this idea and it was a truckload of fun to make with plenty of laughs along the way. Stylistically it was a very rewarding experience. Being able to change pace and performance to suit the two films we were making was a refreshing experience and Saba and Eryn delivered on all fronts.

My ultimate goal with this film is for the audience to be entertained and moved in equal measure. I was asked during production, if I was watching this film in a cinema, who did I imagine would be sitting next to me? My answer was that on one side would be my 8 year old son, and on the other side I would see myself. Visually there is a lot to entertain the young ones and emotionally there are two very simple, yet exceptionally important messages...

Take time to stop and smell the roses.

Don't be afraid to disappear into your imagination like you used to... it just might solve everything.

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Thomas is an Emmy® Award winning director based in Wellington, New Zealand. He is the co-owner of KHF Media a production company who specialise in the production of drama for TV and cinema. In 2009 he won (along with his colleague David) New Zealand's first ever international Emmy® award for the interactive drama series Reservoir Hill. Throughout his career he has co-produced, created and directed various TV projects including the award winning series' Freaky, The Killian Curse as well as the romantic comedy series Girl vs Boy.

Over the years Thomas has also turned his hand at acting being cast as the lead in Peter Jackson's mockumentary *Forgotten Silver* as well as landing the role of Deagol in *Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The Kind* and as Young Thrain in the recently released *The Hobbit*.

Thomas is currently developing three feature films with KHF Media: two psychological thrillers and theatrical version of Reservoir Hill.

PRODUCER BIOGRAPHY

Jeremy Macey studied Russian and German language and literature at Victoria University of Wellington, and worked in theatre before crewing in art department and production on shorts and TVCs. In 1997–2001 he lived in Moscow where he initially worked in TVC production at BBDO. He then freelanced as interpreter/fixer on documentaries and features. He produced and directed the documentary *Shpilt Mir* about the revival of klezmer in the former Soviet Union.

In 2001 Jeremy came back to New Zealand to study documentary and to freelance in TV and film. He produced and directed the documentary *Highnote*, following the National Youth Choir tour to East Europe and Russia. He worked as development coordinator at the NZ Film Commission before returning to the industry as producer of the feature *Hook, Line and Sinker* which was released theatrically in 2011. In 2012 Jeremy produced two short films under his banner Godwit Films including "I'm Going to Mum's". He is currently developing further projects as producer and writer.

CAST

Michael Eryn Wilson
Safal Saba Girmay
Manut (Mum) Aksumawit Berhe

CREW

Written by Sarah Boddy
Directed by Thomas Robins
Produced by Jeremy Macey

Executive Producers Maile Daugherty
Michael Bennett
A Collective Intake of Breath

Director of Photography David Paul

Production Designer Nick Riera
Costume Designer Gabrielle Stevenson
Editor Gretchen Peterson
Visual Effects Trevor Brymer
Sound Design Don Paulin
Music Composed by Tom McLeod

Casting Tina Cleary
Miranda Rivers
Production Manager Emily Roper
Production Assistant Anthony Faifai
Production Runners Sky Adams
Kupa Warner
First Assistant Director Robin Wilson
Continuity Karen Alexander
Focus Puller Charles Edwards
Camera Assistant Graham Smout
Data Wrangler Gene Warriner
Gaffer Adrian Hebron
Best Boys Chris Murphy
Mark Matchett
Lighting Assistant Sam Wynn
Grip Will Matthews
Grip Assistants Jared O'Neale
Tristan Maxwell
Props Buyer/Set Dresser Sandra Brosnan
Special Effects Karl Chisholm
Makeup Sonia Dolan
Lizanne Proctor
Sound Recordists Tony Spear
Benoît Hardonnière
Stunt Coordinator Rodney Cook
Location Scout Ian Macdonald
Location Manager Leigh Kangaroo
Location Assistant Keryn Johns
Unit Manager Elliot Stevenson
Unit Assistants Charlotte Dallison
Alistair van Hattum
Safety Officer Paul Andreassend
Stills Photographer Mike Clare
Rehearsals Stand-In Ralph Robins
Surfing buddies Nick Kapica
Ali Whitton
Script Advisor Costa Botes
Catering Deborah Logan
Ministry of Food

Score Supervisor Sarah Lineham
Sound Mix Phil Burton
Foley Artist Joshua Stewart
Foley Recordist Eamon O'Neil
Title Design Greg Pawsey
Legal Services Sarah Cull
Accounts Assistant Sophie Hathaway
Insurance Crombie Lockwood
Camera equipment Cameraworks
Grip equipment Rubber Monkey
Lighting equipment Portsmouth Rentals
RTs Wireless Warehouse
Security Total Harbour City Guards

Offline edit facility KHF Media
Foley and mix facility Underground Sound

Picture services Park Road Post Production
Head of Production Dean Watkins
Producer Emma Bartlett
Colourist Clare Burlinson
Online Editor Francisco Cubas (Paco)
Taperoom Supervisor Victoria Chu

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