



LYNMAR
ENTERTAINMENT

presents

THE WIND & THE RECKONING

Written by John Fusco
Directed by David L. Cunningham

Publicity contact:

Melissa Anschutz
(616) 836-5362

mpublicitymedia@gmail.com

Film Stills

Erika Hoveland
248.228.5881

erika@lynmarfilms.com

Lynmar contact:

Dale Johnson
Lynmar Entertainment
310.569.6101

dale@lynmarfilms.com

The Wind and the Reckoning

Logline

As an outbreak of leprosy engulfs 19th-century colonial Hawai'i, a small group of infected Native Hawaiians resist government-mandated exile, taking a courageous stand against the provisional government in a story inspired by real-life events.

Short Synopsis

1893. The Hawaiian Kingdom has been overthrown by a Western power just as an outbreak of leprosy engulfs the tropical paradise. The new government orders all Native Hawaiians suspected of having the foreign disease banished permanently to a remote colony on the island of Moloka'i that is known as 'the island of the living grave'. When a local cowboy named Ko'olau (Jason Scott Lee) and his young son Kalei (Kahiau Perreira) contract the dreaded disease, they refuse to allow their family to be separated, sparking an armed clash with brutal white island authorities that will make Ko'olau and his wife, Pi'ilani (Lindsay Marie Anuhea Watson) heroes for the ages. Based on real-life historical events as told through the memoirs of Pi'ilani herself.

Long Synopsis

The Wind and the Reckoning reveals the real-life story of a Native Hawaiian ranching family that defies the oppressive new colonial government and faces down American mercenaries rather than have their freedoms callously ripped away. For the first time in a feature film, one of the most epic events in Hawaiian history, the Battle of Kalalau, unfolds through the eyes of the islands' indigenous people.

After the overthrow of Hawai'i's traditional monarchy by American land barons in 1893, leprosy, carried to the islands by foreigners, spreads rapidly through the vulnerable indigenous population. Driven by racism, fear and greed, the newly declared republic's president orders all Native Hawaiians suspected of being infected forcibly removed from their communities and permanently exiled to Kalaupapa, a remote colony on the island of Moloka'i, their marriages legally dissolved and property distributed to their heirs.

But when Ko'olau (Jason Scott Lee), a well-known and respected cowboy, and his young son Kaleimanu (Kahiau Perreira) refuse to be separated from their home and wife and mother after contracting the disease, a confrontation with armed police leaves a sheriff dead. Ko'olau, his wife Pi'ilani (Lindsay Marie Anuhea Watson) and Kaleimanu flee to an isolated valley on their home island of Kaua'i, where they survive with a small band of other infected Hawaiians. When the provisional government dispatches a ruthless Civil War commander (Henry Ian Cusick) and a group of battle-hardened mercenaries to pursue him, a

sympathetic marshal (Johnathon Schaech) tries to broker peace, but the victims resist in a revolt that will transform Ko'olau and Pi'ilani into legendary Hawaiian heroes.

Inspired by the writing of Pi'ilani, directed by David L. Cunningham (*To End All Wars*) and written by John Fusco (*Young Guns*, *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron*, *Hidalgo*), with dialogue predominantly in the Native Hawaiian language, ***The Wind and the Reckoning*** brings to cinematic life an inspiring story set against a dark and painful period in Hawai'i's history.

The Wind and the Reckoning stars Jason Scott Lee (*Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story*, *The Jungle Book*), Lindsay Marie Anuhea Watson (*Finding 'Ohana*, *One Million Dolla*), Henry Ian Cusick ("Lost," "Scandal"), Johnathon Schaech (*That Thing You Do!*, "Ray Donovan"), Kahiau Perreira, Hoku Pavao Jones, Mark Medeiros (*Go for Broke*, "Magnum P.I.") and Ron Yuan ("Sons of Anarchy," *Mulan*). The producers are Angela Laprete ("Hawaii Five-0," *Hanalei Bay*) and Dale Johnson (*The Lost City of Z*, *Pawn Sacrifice*). Co-producers are Wainani Young Tomich (1st A.D. "I Know What You Did Last Summer," "Magnum P.I."), Erika Hoveland (*Anchor Baby*) and Joel Angyal (*Midori in Hawaii*, *The Heart of Man*). Executive producers are Lorenzo Clonfero, Noah Hamilton (*Soul Surfer*, *The Tiger Rising*) and Peter M. Lenkov ("Magnum P.I.," "Hawaii Five-O").

Director of photography is Scott Lee Mason (*38 Minutes*, "Destination X: California"). The film is edited by Kyle Gilbertson ("Fatal Beauty," "Girl Missing"). Music is by Elia Cmiral (*Ronin*, *Altered Mind of 20-20*). Costume designer is Genevieve Tyrrell (*Freaky Friday*, "Lethal Weapon"). Native Hawaiian wardrobe is designed and built by Siona Fruean. Art department supervisor is Alvin S. Cabrinha Jr. (*Point Break*, *The Descendants*). Hawaiian cultural advisors are Leinā'ala Fruean, Kumu Ka'ea Lyons, Kumu Kauhane Heloca and Kumu Na'auao Viva.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Screenwriter John Fusco was on his honeymoon in Hawai'i in 1985 when he first learned the true story that inspired his latest film, *The Wind and the Reckoning*. "It spoke to so many areas of interest for me: indigenous culture and the plight of indigenous people, the overthrow of the Hawaiian government and the *paniolo*, or local cowboy, culture of the islands," says the award-winning writer of films including *Young Guns* and *Thunderheart*. "I said then that I would make a movie of this one day."

The events of *The Wind and the Reckoning* take place during a defining moment for the Hawaiian islands, when the monarchy has been toppled by foreign interests and an outbreak of leprosy is spreading. The Hawaiian government, now led by American profiteers, has decreed that anyone infected with leprosy be exiled to Kalaupapa, a remote colony on the island of Moloka'i. When a *paniolo* on the island of Kaua'i named Kaluaikoolau and known as Ko'olau refused internment, a violent confrontation led to the death of a white sheriff. The cowboy went on the run with his wife Pi'ilani and their son, sparking what came to be known as Ko'olau's War.

"I find that few Americans know much about Hawaiian history in general," says Fusco. "And few Hawaiians know the story of Ko'olau's War, but it's all a part of American history. I started looking for anything I could find on Ko'olau, 19th-century Hawai'i and the overthrow of the monarchy. I thought it was one of the best untold stories I had ever run across."

Fusco shared the story with his friend, director David L. Cunningham, a resident of Hawai'i since childhood. "I feel a real connection with David," says Fusco. "He is a rare breed of a director. He's a unique blend of cutting-edge visual storytelling with a deep understanding of digital filmmaking. He's a disruptor, pushing the envelope on that level, and yet he has such a strong story sense and a real gift for cinematic narrative. I thought he'd be a great partner for this."

As Fusco explored the history of Ko'olau's War, an invaluable piece of historical material emerged. Ko'olau's wife Pi'ilani had written a first-hand account of their ordeal. Originally published in Native Hawaiian in 1906 after the death of her husband and son, [The True Story of Kaluaikoolau: As Told by His Wife, Pi'ilani](#) was not translated into English until 2001.

"Until then this book had been a hidden gem," says Cunningham. "It is written in verse and we use her actual words in the movie. John's ability to transport you to another place and time combined with Pi'ilani's first-hand perspective is what pulled the story together."

Cunningham says he jumped at the chance to work with Fusco. "John's got a real heart for indigenous people. He asked me if I had heard of Ko'olau. I am from Hawai'i and I'm fascinated with its history, but I was embarrassed to say that I hadn't."

With Cunningham's help and encouragement, Fusco was able to connect with Hawaiian historians who gave him an even deeper understanding of the story. "I studied everything I could on the arrival of

Europeans in Hawai'i," he says. "I learned about leprosy, Kalaupapa, and how the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy was involved. I explored why Native Hawaiians call Moloka'i the 'land of the living grave.'"

Digging Up the Truth

Fascinated by the story, Fusco continued to scour archival material. Through newspaper articles from the time he learned of the provisional government's ongoing frustration at Ko'olau's ability to elude even its most seasoned troops. Ko'olau, Pi'ilani and their son were joined by other resisters in a heavily forested valley on Kauai. The story is laced with classic Western themes of rugged individualism and resilience, one of the hallmarks of *paniolo* culture, the writer says.

The *paniolos*, he explains, predate mainland cowboys. King Kamehameha was gifted a small herd of longhorn cattle by Captain George Vancouver of the British Navy, who advised him to let them run free and breed. After 25 years, Mexican vaqueros were brought in to train local men to wrangle the now feral steer. "A Hawaiian cowboy had to be a marksman, a great horseman and fearless," says Fusco.

The *paniolos* were tasked with bringing the cattle down from the volcanic mountaintops, sometimes through live lava flow, adds Cunningham. "Then they drove them into the water to swim to awaiting ships. *Paniolos* with spears were in the water with them to drive off any sharks lurking there."

After decades as a screenwriter, Fusco has learned the stories he loves best typically have all the characteristics of classic Westerns, in an unexpected location and era. However, to classify *The Wind and the Reckoning* as a Western would be an oversimplification, he says. "The themes and the history run much deeper. But Ko'olau is the last of a breed in a changing world. When his family and rights are threatened, he fights for justice as a lone hero — that elusive, uncatchable hero of the people that Hawaiians call a *kepua*."

A Page Turner

In 2013 Fusco was back on the Big Island and found himself with some free time. "I was immersed in the beautiful Hawaiian culture and feeling the spiritual energy of the island," he recalls. "Ko'olau came back into my mind. I realized I had five days free. Five days later, I handed David a spec script. I said, 'It's a true Hawaiian story. How great would it be to shoot it here with you directing, me writing?' And that truly began *The Wind and the Reckoning* journey."

Five years later, Cunningham approached producers Dale Johnson and Erika Hoveland, co-founders of Lynmar Entertainment, with the script. "Dale and Erika have championed independent films made in Hawai'i," he says. "We thought it was a good idea to put them together with this script and continue developing it."

Johnson says Fusco's screenplay was "a real page turner" and he could instantly picture the movie as he read it. "Erika and I have always been drawn to true stories that inspire people and give them something to think about when they leave the theater," says the producer, whose credits include *The Lost City of Z* and *Pawn*

Sacrifice, both of which are inspired by real-life events. “The more I learned about the injustice the Native Hawaiian people have experienced, the more I was surprised so few people know this story.

“As a lifelong resident of Hawai‘i, David has such a heart for the Native Hawaiian people,” he adds. “We felt his passion for the story. He’s a fantastic storyteller who understood the importance of bringing this story to the world.”

In the Bubble

As often happens with independent productions, the project faced a series of scheduling delays. But then in 2020, as COVID-19 spread around the globe and movie and TV production had almost completely shut down, the filmmakers realized the story they wanted to tell was more relevant than ever. They decided to try to move ahead by creating an isolated set where cast and crew could work in safety. “I knew of a 50-acre ranch on the Big Island that we could use to create our own bubble,” says Cunningham. “Most of the TV and film crews and actors were out of work. We started calling friends and pitching them on the idea.”

Johnson says he was actually surprised at how quickly the process went. “In many ways, we hit the ground running. It was an incredible team effort. In particular, Angela Laprete, one of the producers on the film, and Wainani Young Tomich, who was our first A.D., were responsible for putting together an incredible crew. Almost everyone was based out of Hawai‘i, and they were all top-tier.”

The filmmakers’ effort to hire people of Hawaiian descent and those with a deep connection to the island was greatly appreciated, says Tomich. “David is hands-down one of my favorite directors. He is a conscientious and respectful person. As a director, he wants to tell a good story, but he also wants to be true to the history of the people.”

Laprete remembers the overwhelming sense of the unknown in those early days of the pandemic. “In Hawai‘i, no one had started shooting yet,” she says. “There was a steep learning curve to ensure we could make this happen on our tiny budget. We had to coordinate with several unions. We had to implement COVID guidelines that were not fully developed yet. That ate up about 10 to 20 percent of the budget.”

Shooting on *The Wind and the Reckoning* took place in October and November of 2020. Tomich and Laprete agree that it was the most difficult project they had ever done — and one of the most satisfying. “We were out in the wilds of Kohala,” says Tomich. “The terrain is very rough. We were hiking up hillsides with cameras and tables and chairs and lighting equipment. The actors were in heavy period costumes.”

The production team also included co-producer Joel Angyal, executive producer Noah Hamilton and executive producer Peter M. Lenkov, a film and television veteran whose numerous credits include “Hawaii Five-O” and “Magnum P.I.” “Noah and Joel were totally hands-on when it came to finding and championing local people and resources under difficult conditions,” says Cunningham. “Peter’s many years of bringing Hawai‘i to the world and cultivating jobs in the various crafts through those shows allowed us to benefit from an excellent, experienced local crew.”

The challenges of filming *The Wind and the Reckoning* brought cast and crew together in a way that Johnson doesn't remember experiencing on another set. "There's a word in Native Hawaiian — 'obana,'" he says. "In part it means family, but it means so much more. There was truly a sense of 'obana around this film. We stayed together, we worked together, after hours we had campfire singalongs. The retreat center really was off the grid — there was no TV for the most part. It was a unique moment in all of our lives, telling a story about an epidemic while living through one."

Ko'olau's 'Ohana

When it came to putting together the actors for *The Wind and the Reckoning*, Cunningham and Johnson depended on personal contacts rather than bringing in a casting director. Jason Scott Lee, a longtime friend of Cunningham and a fellow resident of the Big Island, was approached to play Ko'olau. Lee was interested in telling an inspiring Hawaiian story that he felt was not yet well-known.

"David had spoken to me about the idea in the past, but when the pandemic shut down most of the filming here, he sprang into action," says the actor, whose credits include Disney's live-action *Mulan* and the current Disney+ series "Doogie Kameāloha, M.D." "He and John Fusco were able to pare the story down to a bare-bones, almost guerrilla filmmaking version that had a beautiful simplicity. My only condition was that my family be able to go into quarantine with me."

Lee says because of his own Native Hawaiian heritage, he tries to be very picky when it comes to films about the islands' indigenous people. "Knowing that David and Dale were involved gave me confidence there was something there. David, along with a few other people, has built an infrastructure for films here on the Big Island. He has a Hawaiian heart and a passion for film, and he had the will to get this done, which made him the perfect person to direct it."

The character and his story are steeped in what Lee sees as hallmarks of Hawaiian culture: simplicity, honesty and passion. Those were qualities he tried to instill in his portrayal of Ko'olau. "I saw him as a quiet man who leads a simple life doing work he excels at as a foreman for a local rancher. I wouldn't call him naïve, but he is an innocent in many ways. When he and his family are wronged, he fights. They are simply sticking to their culture to an extreme degree when they refuse to be separated."

Lee was a natural leader on the set, according to Johnson. "He immediately understood the importance of this story to the Native Hawaiian people, being a part of that community himself. He was so committed to embodying the Ko'olau character. He had a fire in his belly for playing the part."

The filmmakers selected up-and-coming actress Lindsay Marie Anuhea Watson, who had recently completed her first feature film, *Finding 'Ohana*, to play Pi'ilani. "Lindsay is just such a talent," says Johnson. "Both Angela and Wainani had worked with her, so she came highly recommended. She's a fantastic actor and she had the strength that Pi'ilani required. Those were big shoes to fill for a young actor. She did a remarkable job."

After meeting with Cunningham, Watson says she was confident the tale of Pi'ilani and her family was in good hands. "David was super passionate about the film," she says. "He understands that our Hawaiian stories are so delicate and so precious to us. I just knew he would do it justice."

Watson says she was honored to play a character of such uncommon courage and resilience. "Pi'ilani has to watch the love of her life and their son waste away, watch their bodies deteriorate and their minds become weak," she observes. "She was a rock for them but it had to be so hard to always be strong in the face of so much death and pain."

The actress is also pleased to be part of a historical film with a powerful female character at its center. "Ko'olau is not the only hero," she says. "It's Pi'ilani's story perhaps more than anyone else's. This is her voice. She's the one who lived to tell it. She is not the little woman who stood behind the man. If anything she is where Ko'olau found his strength. She persevered and then made sure their story lived on. And she wrote it in the most poetic way."

Twelve-year-old Kahiau Perreira makes his feature-film debut in *The Wind and the Reckoning* as Ko'olau and Pi'ilani's son, Kaleimanu. Also infected with leprosy, Kaleimanu proves himself to be as determined a warrior as his parents during their years in hiding.

"Kahiau is actually a neighbor of mine," says Cunningham. "I've known his family most of my life. We really scored with him. This may be his first movie, but he grew up performing traditional Hawaiian chants and dance. He's just a really confident kid. And he has a great look."

A fluent Native Hawaiian speaker, Perreira attends a Hawaiian immersion school where the majority of the curriculum is taught in that language. "He is such a young leader in his own right," says Johnson. "He was able to bring many things from his schooling and his background that contributed in huge ways. It was a very easy choice when we saw his commitment to the story and to the language."

In fact, the young actor is more familiar with Hawaiian history than many of his senior colleagues. "In the time that my character lived, you could be beaten, jailed or even killed for speaking Hawaiian," he explains. "If you had leprosy, you became an outcast. You were taken from your family and sent to a camp where you would stay until you died."

Henry Ian Cusick plays John McCabe, the cold-blooded commander of a mercenary force dispatched to bring Ko'olau in — dead or alive. "What can I say about Ian?" Johnson asks. "He's such a good actor. He immediately gravitated to wanting to play McCabe. It's a bit outside of the characters he's played in the past, but he embodies the role so well."

After falling in love with Hawai'i when he starred in the television series "Lost," Cusick moved his family to O'ahu. He says he became familiar with Ko'olau's story while living there. "It's a heroic story of resilience as well as a beautiful love story. It truly celebrates a lot about Hawaiian people."

Cusick's character is named for a Civil War veteran who was part of the hunt for Ko'olau and his family. "We took some liberties," says Cusick. "For simplicity's sake we combined a few people. I had to ask

myself why I would want to play such a vicious, racist character. I'd never played a character like that before and I have always been curious to see what that would be like. I eventually realized that he is an ignorant man who sees Hawaiians as lesser beings and people with leprosy as lesser still."

The entire experience was a terrific adventure, says the actor. "It was very physical and demanding but there was a great energy to it. David knew exactly what he wanted so we had a little bit of rehearsal in the hotel and then we shot. Most of the people who worked on the movie were from the islands, which is pretty rare. Now we know we can make movies here without bringing in a lot of folks."

To cast the role of Edward G. Hitchcock, Marshal of the Hawaiian Republic and another of Ko'olau's pursuers, Johnson contacted his friend, actor Johnathon Schaech. "Johnathon, who lives in Nashville, got on a plane and came to the wilds of Hawai'i in the middle of a pandemic to play the role. He brought something really special to Hitchcock, an empathy we needed that character to have."

The real Marshal Hitchcock gained a reputation for fairness when he insisted on prosecuting a group of white islanders for the lynching of a Japanese immigrant who tried to unionize workers at one of the sugar plantations. "He was born and raised in Hawai'i by missionary parents, ironically on the island of Moloka'i," notes Schaech. "When Hawai'i became a republic, he became the marshal of the entire Hawaiian islands. Hitchcock was known as an excellent tracker and one of his jobs was to track people like Ko'olau's family and send them to Kalaupapa. He doesn't want to see bloodshed. He doesn't want to see anyone harmed, and he definitely doesn't want anyone killed."

Hitchcock's conscience serves as a foil to the vicious determination of McCabe. Schaech says that he was in some ways channeling his own father while playing the character. "My father was a Baltimore police officer in an area that was almost entirely African-American," he says. "He was the only white person around. Like Hitchcock, he believed in law and order. He believed in a higher law at times but he never thought he was above the law. He always said the most important thing was that he came home safe at night and that the people he protected also came home safe at night."

"I really drew on that feeling for the action sequences," the actor adds. "Hitchcock does not want to see the worst thing happen. He will wait till the last moment before acting in a way that will endanger anyone. McCabe on the other hand has already made a name for himself for being ruthless. He's here because he wants to gather another trophy."

Making this film has been a life-changing experience, says Schaech. "I'm now a man who's lived in an incredible place. You will see some unique locations that have never been filmed. That in itself is amazing. But I've also taken part in a film that makes it clear why we can't remain silent. We each have a voice and can fight for the things we truly believe in. Hitchcock stands against the tide of McCabe by staying true to his principles."

‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and Aloha

To assure the cultural and linguistic accuracy of the film, an advisory committee of Hawaiian cultural experts was assembled. “As someone who has had four generations of family on this island, it was important to me to get it right,” says Cunningham. “When you live on an island you’ve got to keep short accounts because you’re going to see everybody at Costco.”

The committee’s responsibilities included ensuring the script was translated into Native Hawaiian correctly. They were also present on set and gave notes while filming. But perhaps their most crucial task was to help the actors learn to speak their lines properly, says cultural advisor Leinā’ala Fruean, a Native Hawaiian with a passionate interest in the history of the South Pacific in general and Hawai‘i in particular.

“The actors had less than three weeks to learn their lines while trying to master unfamiliar words, as well as gestures and posture and so many other things,” says Fruean, who is an accredited teacher, or *kumu*, of the Hawaiian language and holds a master’s degree in intercultural studies. “We were always watching to see if the correct words were used or if the context was appropriate. We were on the lookout for anachronisms. There was another group responsible for keeping the costumes authentic. But the biggest challenge was always language.”

The Wind and the Reckoning will be one of the very first movies with international distribution that is primarily in *‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i*, the Native Hawaiian dialect, according to Cunningham. Just before the turn of the 20th century, a law was passed that made English the official language of the republic and effectively banned the teaching of Native Hawaiian in public and private schools. By the late 1940s, the language was almost completely stamped out. But an effort was made to reintroduce the language and a number of Hawaiian immersion schools were established.

With so few of the actors fluent in the language, it was a leap of faith to expect them to learn their lines in such a short time, acknowledges Fusco. “David just believed in it,” says the writer. “I’m just so proud. It makes every line of dialogue so much deeper, more beautiful and poetic.”

The filmmakers assembled a group of four *kumus* to lead the learning process. “Each was assigned to an actor and worked with them via Zoom,” explains Cunningham. “Kahiau was one of the few who was already fluent, so we had a 12-year-old teaching the adults. Jason and Lindsay can attest to the difficulties.”

Watson admits she never imagined she would be speaking Hawaiian on camera. “That was a big weight on my shoulders,” says the actress. “We have high hopes for where this film will go. If it showed up on a big screen somewhere and I was butchering our language, I would be embarrassed for myself and my people.”

Mastering the dialogue required more than just pronouncing the words correctly, says Lee. “It’s about cadence and speech patterns. Before I read the script, I thought there would be little Hawaiian language in it. Then I realized that our lines were about 80- to 90-percent Hawaiian. I panicked a bit and offered to

bow out if David wanted to hire a native speaker. He convinced me to hang in there for the next couple weeks and our teachers did the rest.”

For the filmmakers, it was always the intention for the language to be a key element of the storytelling, according to Johnson. “Indigenous people have had their language lost so many times in history,” says the producer. “It’s very important for all people to feel heard and understood, and nothing is more important in that than the preservation of a people’s language. It’s something the entire team feels very proud of.”

The film’s musical score features singing in *‘Olelo Hawai‘i* by the Kamehameha Schools Children’s Chorus. “That goes back to having a voice,” says Johnson. “The Kamehameha Schools is a private school system that cultivates the Native Hawaiian tradition. So the entire choir was young kids that are of Native Hawaiian descent. And just to have that element and the innocence of these kids added into this impactful story was an incredible experience.”

Traditional costumes also came into play, especially for the infected outcasts hiding in the valley. “Our costume designer Siona Fruean made sure that it was all authentic to the period,” says Cunningham. “Siona is a brilliant artisan who used materials that were available in the islands in 1893. The silhouettes are a striking combination of cloaks for the fugitives who must hide their sickness in the daylight. When they’re alone, they take that stuff off and they can be vulnerable with each other. We used historical photographs for inspiration, like a judge who wore a bowler hat just like our judge does.”

Over the last century and a half, much Hawaiian history and culture has been lost, notes Leinā’ala Fruean. But other traditions that have faded are now being reclaimed. “So many Hawaiian people don’t even know this story,” she says. “More than half of the advisory team hadn’t heard it. But the history of leprosy and Ko’olau has become a part of our history and our people have to walk through it. Certain concepts never change.”

Words like *‘ohana*, *aloha*, *kuleana* and *mabalo* are in common usage in the islands, but each has a meaning that defies simple translation. “Together they say the family is the core,” explains the advisor. “That includes feeding and nurturing. It says that respecting your elders and caring for the land is your purpose. When we talk about *aloha*, it’s not hello and goodbye. It’s a way of life, of speech and of action, which always speaks louder than words.”

A movie that includes the Hawaiian language is a step forward, she says. “There are still not enough people speaking it. But the Hawaiian voice is growing louder. One has to stand up against the odds for *‘ohana* and for *aloha*. The Hawaiian people are very spiritual people and their connection is to the environment, land and space. It is our universe and our responsibility. This sense of grace and graciousness and peacefulness is the spirit of the islands, which is *aloha*.”

An Unknown Story Becomes History

Although the story of Ko'olau may not be widely known, it takes place against the backdrop of one of the most significant events in Hawaiian history, according to Cunningham. "The forced abdication of the queen and the subjugation of Hawai'i remains a deep wound for the people of this place, and it has never been reconciled," says the director. "This film is not a history lesson. It's a very intimate, simple family story. Still, I urge audiences to look a little further and discover for themselves everything that went into creating these events."

Cunningham says he hopes the film will raise awareness of Hawai'i's long history and begin a dialogue about moving forward. "It's a relevant conversation that indigenous peoples are having around the world. Understanding history is key to not repeating it. We would like for people to see Hawai'i as more than a tourist destination. There's a host culture here that is very special."

If people walk out of the theater realizing this is just one of the important stories about the place that they have never heard, Fusco says he will be gratified. "Perhaps they will get a glimpse into the resilient and indomitable indigenous Hawaiian culture. I also hope it will build more awareness of Kalaupapa and its unmarked graves and forgotten ones. Perhaps it will foster a deeper understanding of the importance of indigenous wisdom. If we can help do that, it will deepen the meaning of this whole experience for us."

The Wind and the Reckoning

Historical Backgrounder

Hawai'i's first settlers traveled more than 2,000 miles northwest by canoe from the remote Marquesas Islands to the then-uninhabited archipelago about 1,500 years ago. They established farms and fishing communities on seven of the 137 volcanic islands, each led by a local chief. A deep spiritual connection with the land and sea that sustained them, known in the Hawaiian language as *Aloha 'Aina*, is a central idea of Native Hawaiian thought, founded on a sense of all living things being connected. Starting in the 18th century, Hawai'i's first monarch, Kamehameha I, united the far-flung communities into a single kingdom.

For more than a millennium, Native Hawaiians lived completely isolated from the West, until Captain James Cook of the British Navy and his crew became the first known Europeans to visit the islands in 1778. The islands' rich resources soon attracted attention in Europe and the U.S. First came the missionaries set on converting the polytheistic Hawaiians to Christianity, followed soon after by traders, whalers, sugar barons and businessmen eager to partake in the kingdom's natural wealth. But with them came diseases that devastated the native Hawaiian population on the once-isolated islands. With no resistance to infections including influenza, measles, syphilis, smallpox and leprosy, the Native Hawaiian population, estimated to be between 300,000 and 800,000 when Cook arrived, had been reduced to 70,000 by 1853.

Those stricken with leprosy, a disfiguring and, at the time, always fatal malady, were singled out. As hysteria spread faster than the disease itself, the infected — almost all Native Hawaiians — were exiled to Kalaupapa, a community on the island of Molokai, where they were quarantined for life. Anyone suspected of being infected was hunted down and ripped from their families and friends. Brought to Molokai by boat, those who didn't go willingly were thrown overboard.

Without medical care, people died very quickly. Internment was a literal death sentence for the infected, whose marriages were dissolved and property distributed to their heirs. Children born at Kalaupapa were taken away immediately after birth. It was a particularly cruel fate for a people connected by *ohana* (family), *aina* (land) and *kokua* (providing for those who cannot). They called it *mai ho'oka'awale*, or the separating sickness.

At the same time a brewing political battle for the soul of Hawai'i led to further degradation of its culture. Wealthy white businessmen forced King David Kalākaua to sign a new constitution at gunpoint. Power was wrested from the monarchy to a more settler-friendly legislature. Voting rights were granted only to landowners, disenfranchising most Native Hawaiians, who were unfamiliar with the concept of private ownership of land.

In 1891, David Kalākaua's sister, Queen Lili'uokalani, became the last monarch of Hawaii, reigning until 1893 when a coup replaced her with an all-white provisional government. In 1896, the teaching of the

Hawaiian language was outlawed. Two years later the U.S. annexed Hawai'i as a territory. It became the nation's 50th state in 1959.

More than 8,000 Native Hawaiians were sent to Kalaupapa. Efforts are now being made to build a monument that will name and honor those buried and forgotten in unmarked graves.

ABOUT THE CAST



JASON SCOTT LEE (Ko'olau) is an American actor and martial artist who is perhaps best known for his roles as Bruce Lee in the martial arts film *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* and Mowgli in *The Jungle Book*, a 1994 live-action adaptation of the Rudyard Kipling classic. His most recent role came playing Bori Khan in *Mulan*.

The actor was raised in Hawai'i and is of both Hawaiian and Chinese descent. He lives on Hawai'i Island with his ohana.



LINDSAY MARIE ANUHEA WATSON (Pi'ilani) is a Hawaiian native best known for her role in the 2020 Netflix feature film *Finding 'Ohana*. Maui-born and -raised, she is a Kamehameha Schools graduate who is fast becoming a well-known actor both in Hawai'i and abroad.



HENRY IAN CUSICK (McCabe) is a Peruvian actor and director. He is best known for his role as Desmond Hume on the U.S. television series “Lost,” for which he received an Emmy Award® nomination. Cusick also co-starred as Stephen Finch in ABC’s “Scandal,” Marcus Kane in the CW’s “The 100,” Dr. Jonas Lear in Fox’s “The Passage” and Russ Taylor in the CBS series reboot “MacGyver.”

Raised on the island of Trinidad, Cusick has lived on Oahu for the last 15 years.



JOHNATHON SCHAECH (Hitchcock) made his acting debut in Tom Hanks’ directorial debut *That Thing You Do!* Over the last 20 years he’s acted in over 160 Hollywood productions, working opposite some of the most acclaimed actors, producers, writers and directors in the entertainment industry.

Schaech recently captivated television audiences as the eccentric movie star in Showtime’s hit series “Ray Donovan” (2014). He portrayed comic-book legend Jonah Hex on the first three seasons of “DC’s Legends of Tomorrow.”



KAHIAU PERREIRA (Kaleimanu) is Hawai'i Island born and raised. He attended Kamehameha Preschool and then transitioned to Ke Kula 'O 'Ehunuikaimalino immersion school. Perreira is active in drum and chant performance and fluent in 'olelo Hawai'i. Currently Perreira is in Kamakani O Ka Moku 'Āina Performing Arts Academy, taking Polynesian drumming, and was entered in the Hawai'i Kuauli Fireknife Competition in June of this year.



HOKU PAVAO JONES (Keawe) is a staff member of the Maui Academy of Performing Arts (MAPA) and regularly performs in the school's Educational Theatre tour show. In recent years she has branched out and begun to develop her directing skills as well. For the last five years she has served as MAPA's front office administrator and academy registrar. Recently Jones took on a new and important role in the organization as MAPA's assistant artistic director.



MARK MEDEIROS (Kamu) has a strong passion for acting, songwriting and singing that is heavily influenced by his native culture's love for music. Medeiros' mastery of the ukulele has been seen in indie films such as *Go for Broke*, in which he plays a World War II soldier serenading a bar full of admirers. When Medeiros isn't acting or writing his next album, he seeks out new opportunities to give back by volunteering his time to help less fortunate families renovate their homes or employs his music talents to raise funds and awareness for a number of children's charities.



RON YUAN (Lee) is an American actor, voice actor, martial artist, action director and stunt choreographer. Yuan has acted in numerous films and is well known for his roles on television series such as "Sons of Anarchy," "Prison Break," "Golden Boy" and "CSI: NY." Most recently, he played Sergeant Qiang in *Mulan*, Disney's live-action adaptation of the animated classic. Yuan also supplied the voice of Sergeant Fidelity Rusk in the video game series "Star Wars: The Old Republic" and voiced Scorpion in "Mortal Kombat 11."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

DAVID L. CUNNINGHAM (Director, Producer) is perhaps best known for the gritty WW2 drama *To End All Wars*, shot on the island of Kauai and starring Kiefer Sutherland, Mark Strong and Robert Carlyle. As a lifelong resident of Hawai'i, with four generations residing on Hawai'i Island, Cunningham has helped pioneer indie filmmaking in the state through the public/private content accelerator program and through the four Hawai'i-based indie features he has directed there.

Having shot in over 50 countries, Cunningham is also known for his international social impact initiatives. These include a production with the First Lady of Papua New Guinea on women's rights, a media campaign for the adoption of Ugandan orphans with special needs, a tiny-house building initiative for thousands of homeless families from the streets of Tijuana, and many other film-related initiatives.

JOHN FUSCO (Writer, Producer) has penned screenplays for major features such as *Crossroads*, *Young Guns*, *Young Guns II*, *Thunderheart*, *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron* and *The Highwaymen*. He is also the creator of the Netflix series "Marco Polo."

Fusco's research experiences on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation led him to pen *Thunderheart* in 1992, an acclaimed expose of federal abuses in contemporary Native American communities. Fusco also went on to write the native-themed ABC movie "DreamKeeper" (2003) as well as the popular Disney epic *Hidalgo* (2004).

DALE ARMIN JOHNSON (Producer) has collaborated with numerous top filmmakers in the industry and has a successful track record of getting films made with both seasoned and emerging directors and writers. With a focus on telling true stories, Johnson's recent projects include producing the features *The Lost City of Z*, with Brad Pitt's company Plan B, and *Pawn Sacrifice*, directed by Academy Award®-winning producer Ed Zwick and starring Tobey Maguire, Liev Schreiber and Peter Sarsgaard.

ANGELA LAPRETE (Producer) has more than 25 years of production experience in the Hawaiian film and TV industry. She has worked on all types of projects, from commercials and music videos to episodic TV, indies and major feature-film productions. Her long list of credits includes award-winning independent films and served as associate producer on "Hawaii Five-0" for four seasons.

Laprete enjoys educating and nurturing homegrown talent. She was involved in the early infrastructure of her state's film community and served on the Hawai'i International Film Festival board for over 20 years.

WAINANI YOUNG TOMICH (Co-Producer, First A.D.) is one of the most experienced producers and assistant directors working in Hawai'i today, with over 25 years of experience on both independent films and major studio productions. Her credits include work on such global blockbusters as *Jurassic World*, *The Hunger Games*, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, *Godzilla vs. Kong* and the *Jumanji* film series, as well as numerous episodes of TV series such as "Magnum P.I.," "Hawaii Five-0," "Lost" and "Star Trek: Voyager."

ERIKA HOVELAND (Co-Producer) is an experienced producer with a background in content and rights management. She interacts regularly with the industry's union and guilds, along with handling relations with some of the world's foremost film and television distributors, managing accounts receivables and tracking project deliveries.

Hoveland is also an accomplished actor who has appeared in various supporting roles in over 30 motion pictures, as well as numerous live theater productions over the course of her career.

NOAH HAMILTON (Executive Producer) Noah Hamilton's producing credits include "Soul Surfer", "I Can Only Imagine", "The Tiger Rising" and the soon to be released bio-pic "Reagan" starring Dennis Quaid.

Noah aims to work on true stories and historic films. It was a humbling experience and an honor to produce a film about a legendary Hawaiian from Kauai, a hero to the people. A film with a narrative that get us to questions our purpose, character, and history so that at the end of the day we can continue to grow and be inspired.

Hamilton hails from the island of Kauai, Hawaii, where he resides with his wife and two kids. When not producing Hamilton is a member of the IATSE 600 Camera Guild and works as a stills photographer and camera assistant.

SCOTT LEE MASON (Director of Photography) is making his feature film debut as a director of photography. He has always believed in the importance of storytelling and how it makes or breaks a film. Beginning his career in the camera department, Mason honed his skills as a digital technician (DIT) on the CBS series "Hawaii Five-0," moving to the role of camera operator on "Magnum P.I." (also for CBS).

Growing up in Kailua, Mason always had an affinity for filmmaking. He started when he was 12 years old making music videos, clay animation, magic tricks and anything else that he and his friends could create. Mason then graduated from Punahou High School and continued to further his passion for writing, acting, storytelling and filming. He attended Florida State University and graduated with a degree in creative writing. Eventually Mason came back home to Hawai'i and honed his skills as a filmmaker. There he worked on several movie projects including his own, which was featured at the Hawai'i International Film Festival.

KYLE GILBERTSON (Editor) has been a freelance filmmaker in Los Angeles for the past decade. An avid storyteller, he has a wide range of experience in both editing and VFX production management. Gilbertson's recent editing credits include the telefilms "Fatal Beauty" and "Girl Missing" as well as the feature *Running for Grace*.

ELIA CMIRAL (Composer) is a Czech composer for film, television, ballet and video games. He has worked on numerous projects across multiple genres, collaborating with filmmakers such as Wes Craven, John Frankenheimer, John Travolta and Ernest Dickerson. In addition to his Hollywood assignments Cmiral has also composed numerous scores for films made in Sweden and the Czech Republic.

Cmiral may be best known for his work on features such as *Ronin*, *Bones* and *Stigmata*. He also composed music for the first and third entries in the *Atlas Shrugged* film series and the CBS drama "Nash Bridges." In the video-game space Cmiral composed for the award-winning adventure game "The Last Express" and the third-person shooter "Spec Ops: The Line."

GENEVIEVE TYRRELL (Costume Designer) has built a career that spans decades and genres including both studio and indie features, television and music videos. Her costume design credits include features such as *Swingers*, *Freaky Friday* and *The Dukes of Hazzard* as well as TV series "Entourage," "House of Lies," "Mistresses" and "Lethal Weapon."

When she is not creating characters for screens big and small, Tyrrell enjoys landscape design and horticulture. The costume designer currently lives with her pit bull, Enzo, in Southern California.

ALVIN S. CABRINHA JR. (Art Department Supervisor) has worked on sets in Hawai'i since 1978, holding positions in the art department as prop master, greensman and art director on many esteemed television shows and films. Cabrinha's extensive list of film credits as a property master and greensman include *Godzilla*, *Jurassic World*, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, *Point Break*, *The Descendants*, *Pearl Harbor*, *Waterworld* and *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. He has served as property master on many of the TV series filmed in Hawai'i over the past 35 years, including "Baywatch," "Magnum P.I." and "Hawaii Five-0."

LYNMAR ENTERTAINMENT (Production Company) was founded by producers Dale Johnson and Erika Hoveland with the mission to produce purpose-driven motion pictures. Lynmar Entertainment has collaborated with numerous top filmmakers in Hollywood and has a slate of new projects being developed in partnership with both seasoned and emerging directors and writers. Projects include the features *The Lost City of Z*, co-produced with Brad Pitt's company Plan B, and *Pawn Sacrifice*, directed by Academy Award-winning producer Ed Zwick and starring Tobey Maguire, Liev Schreiber and Peter

Sarsgaard. Past projects include Mike Flanagan’s successful horror film *Oculus*, starring Karen Gillan and Katee Sackhoff, and the supernatural thriller *Before I Wake*, starring Kate Bosworth and Jacob Tremblay.

THE KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS CHILDREN’S CHORUS has been under the direction of Lynell Bright since 1989. The chorus is made up of 100 4th, 5th and 6th graders, ages 9–12, from the Kamehameha Schools – Kapālama Campus elementary division. The choir has performed at events around the world including “Good Morning America’s Christmas Day Special,” “Silent Night Around the World,” two concert appearances with Celine Dion and the world premiere of Disney’s animated feature *Lilo and Stitch*.

Kamehameha Schools was founded by the will of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the great-granddaughter of King Kamehameha the Great, founder and first ruler of the Kingdom of Hawai’i. Its mission is to create educational opportunities in perpetuity to improve the capability and well-being of people of Hawaiian ancestry.

ABOUT THE HAWAIIAN CULTURAL ADVISORS

HUI O HANO HANO (HOH) is a Native Hawaiian nonprofit organization led by President Leinā'ala Fruean. Fruean is recognized for her leadership ability to execute and deliver professional services in building community capacity. She has two decades of experience in nonprofit and for-profit executive leadership and project management. HOH's mission and goals are to connect, facilitate and develop culturally sound Hawaiian living habits including mental and emotional attitudes and the individual physical skills necessary to the practice and continuance of a traditional Hawaiian way of living. The organization has helped the Hawaiian community recover its former social stability by demonstrating Hawaiian food-living concepts, including food health habits.

LEINĀ'ALA FRUEAN carries a deep passion and desire for Hawaiian language and culture studies, with a flair for establishing rapport with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. She has worked at Aha Pūnana Leo as a kumu teaching Hawaiian language and also worked at the Hawaiian Immersion Kaiapuni school in Waimea for several years. Since 2009 Fruean has served as the president of a Native Hawaiian nonprofit called Hui o Hanohano (HOH).

Fruean has a master's degree in intercultural studies and is the owner of several local businesses on Hawai'i Island.

KUMU KA'EA LYONS has a passion for Hawaiian language, culture and hula. For 20 years Lyons has enriched the lives of our keiki as a kumu with several Hawaiian language programs from Pūnana Leo - Hawaiian Language Preschools to Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino - Hawaiian Language Immersion School.

KUMU KAUHANE HELOCA is a Hawaiian native born of Kona Hawai'i who has dedicated much of his adult life to being a Hawaiian cultural practitioner who shares his knowledge throughout the islands as well as overseas in Japan, San Francisco and Chicago. Heloca shares many cultural disciplines including pahu drum, fishhook making, kuku-kapa, ulana lauhala, mea kua, 'ohe and kāpala. He has taught the Hawaiian language as a kumu with Hāleo Hawai'i Institute since 2012.

KUMU NA'AUAO VIVA pursues a commitment to family therapy with a focus on Native Hawaiian mental health through the lens of a Native Hawaiian practitioner. He employs Hawaiian culture and language as a method of mental health treatment for Native Hawaiian children and families.

Viva has his master's degree in marriage and family therapy.