



A LIFE LIKE THIS

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A LIFE LIKE THIS

ONE LINE SUMMARY:

A young New Zealander and his father explore their family's refugee story as survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime.

THREE LINE SUMMARY:

A young New Zealander doesn't know much about his father even though they have lived together for almost twenty-five years. Isaiah decides to make a film about his dad, a survivor of the Khmer Rouge regime in the hope that it will bring them together. Using animation the two work together to explore Huat's untold refugee story.

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SYNOPSIS:

Huat is a survivor of the Khmer Rouge regime. A regime where over two million lives were lost. He is also a father of four, and works at a box factory, a job which he has been doing for almost 40 years. Working the evening shift, Huat would leave for work just as his son, Isaiah would come home from school. This meant that they didn't see each other much. As the two grew older, they grew apart.

Now at the age of 25, Isaiah has decided to make a film about his father, in the hope that it will help bring them together and learn more about each other. Isaiah meets with his father at their family home in South Auckland, New Zealand. They begin to sift through boxes of old photos and letters. This reignites memories for Huat and he begins to let his guard down, sharing details of his past with Isaiah for the first time.

Isaiah uncovers a photo of an old woman. Huat tells Isaiah that it's Jou Ma. Huat's grandma. A woman who played a pivotal part in his life. He looks at the photo with a warmth. Jou Ma looked after Huat more than his own mother.

Huat recounts how difficult it was to live in Cambodia during the Civil War. He left home at the age of 14 to get a job to support his family. Sacrificing an education, Jou Ma supported Huat's decision and accompanied him to Pailin, a countryside province close to the border of Thailand.

Huat convinced his grandma to get a job in Thailand, leaving him alone. Things then took a turn for the worst. Huat describes the gruelling moment the Khmer Rouge took over and how he had to make a decision. One that would change his life.

Through animation, Isaiah relays his father's story back to him. They work together to visualise what happened to Huat in his past, and the implications it has on their relationship now. Isaiah learns that his father has had to make sacrifices, and by coming to New Zealand as a refugee he has had to rebuild his life. Although fortunate that his family survived the Khmer Rouge, Huat's main priority in life has always been to give his family a "better. Stronger" life.



ISAIAH TOUR

The Filmmaker:

Isaiah Tour has always been passionate about storytelling.

From a young age, writing in his spare time quickly evolved into filmmaking. During his studies at Papatoetoe High School in South Auckland, Isaiah was quick to pick up a camera and taught himself how to make a short film.

Isaiah decided to step out of his comfort zone and learned to animate in 2D animation, which allowed him to win awards in youth based film competitions, such as the *Youthtown Short Film Challenge*, and the *Cut! Short Film Competition* by Wintec. Isaiah studied film, television and media studies at the University of Auckland, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts. During this time that Isaiah attempted his first stop frame animation, *The Bin Mistake* which was awarded the New Zealand Film Commission Filmmaking Achievement Award at *The Outlook for Someday 2012*.

He has since worked at Omnicron, a small multimedia production company as a Production Manager, PB Technologies as a Video Producer, as well as numerous freelance jobs. He is now a Creative Content Producer for MediaWorks, one of New Zealand's largest multiplatform media businesses, generating content for TV and digital. Isaiah continues to be passionate about stories through film, and has been a motivational speaker, mentor and judge for numerous events.

“Making a film about my dad was one of the most challenging things I’ve ever done.”

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AARON LY

Director of Photography:

Aaron Ly is a graduate of Victoria University of Wellington where he majored in film (theory and film production), media studies and theatre. He has over 8 years of industry experience as a cinematographer, director and editor on a multitude of short films, music videos, corporate video and online video promotions. Some of his work include digital projects for NZ On Air, The Bachelor NZ, 7 Days, Family Feud and The Block NZ. Currently, he is the Digital Video Lead for all the brands at MediaWorks Radio.

Aaron's style of cinematography is rooted in the emotion of a story. His strength is in his ability conjure up expressive emotion through composition and lighting to produce evocative images.

Aaron brings a creative flair, great eye for detail; and knows how to get the best images out of whatever equipment is on hand. His passion and dedication to every project, reflects in his work.

"Isaiah and his father's refugee story as a survivor of the Khmer Rouge regime resonated with me as a fellow refugee. It's a touching tale about overcoming adversity for a chance for a better life. It was a pleasure to help be a part of bringing his story to the screen."

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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

I never thought that I would ever make a film about my father. I also never envisioned that I would be in front of the lens. Growing up I knew my father was a refugee, but he never really shared anything more than that. We were never really that close. I attribute this to his absence. He was always working, and we barely saw each other.

In the media, there was a lot of conversation around refugees, and this made me think about my father. I thought about the challenges and difficulties he must have faced when trying to make a new home in New Zealand. To be honest, I was a bit naïve, and I had no idea what he had faced. That is how *A Life Like This* came into fruition.

I thought that by making a film about my father's life as a refugee it would help me get to know him. A man who has always been so private. A man who tends to focus on his life in New Zealand and never his past. By making this film I got to know my dad. He shared with me the horrors he faced during the Khmer Rouge, but he also shared the love his grandma had for him. She was my father's rock. A woman who empowered him to make bold decisions and that is the reason we are here today.

A Life Like This is not a story about the Khmer Rouge, it is more than that. It is a story about love, hope, trust, family and acceptance. It is a film that shows what it really means to be human.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share this story, and deliver it with all the learnings I have picked up over the years.



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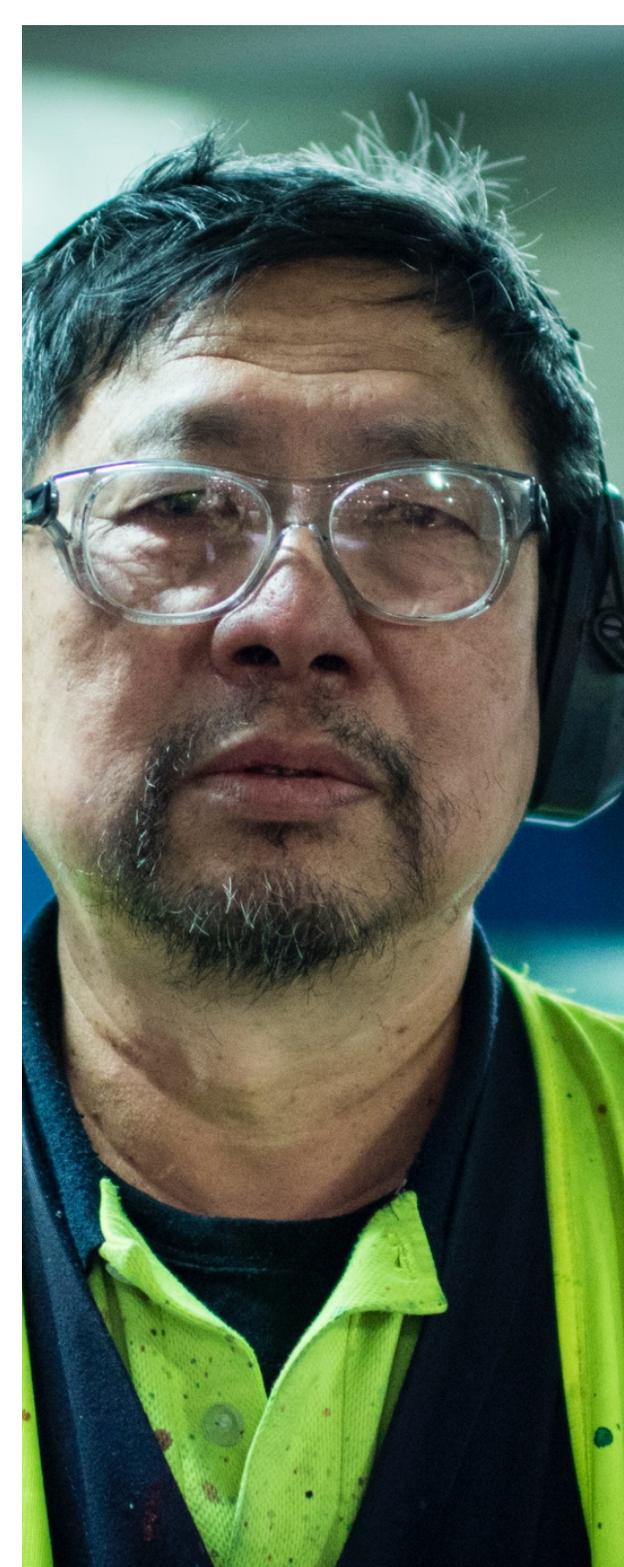
DIRECTOR ANSWERS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q. What made you decide to make a film about your father?

A. In the media, there was a lot of conversation about refugees and this made me think about my father. My father was a refugee during the Khmer Rouge. After trying to recall what I knew about him, I realised that I didn't know much about his past. He worked a lot which meant that we didn't really see each other much. We also have a bit of a language barrier. I can only speak English, whereas my father knows four languages, but English is his weakest. We have trouble communicating and articulating what we want to say. I thought that by making a film about his past I would be able to get to know him, and in the process, strengthen our relationship.

Q. Why did you decide to use animation?

A. Animation has always fascinated me. When I was in high school I taught myself how to animate and ever since I have tried to find as many opportunities to utilise this. When brainstorming *A Life Like This*, I thought about the material I had access to. As it is a true story, I found that re-enactments would be quite difficult to reimagine in live action. By using animation, I could get the essence of my dad's story and portray it in a stylistic way. It also helps connects myself to the film, as the re-enactments are a part of my perception. By showing him the storyboards and drawings, I feel that this helps build authenticity. Although the animation is stylised, the story is very real – it's just a unique way of telling a story.



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Q. What is the most surprising thing you learnt about your father?

A. The most surprising thing that I have learnt about my father making *A Life Like This* is that he had to make very serious choices at a very young age. I couldn't imagine being 14 years old and deciding to leave home to work and earn money for my family. When I was 14, I was heavily ingrained in school and money didn't really cross my mind.

Q. What was most challenging when making *A Life Like This*?

A. The most challenging thing about making *A Life Like This* was trying to tell my father's story and doing it justice. The documentary nature of this film really threw me off when I started having interviews with my father. It was extremely difficult trying to get someone who has never spoken in front of a camera to open up on such personal matters, and I found during the early stages that there was a lot of resistance. Eventually my father came around, but I think there was a lot of compromising, and sidestepping before finally reaching a point which felt right.

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CREDITS:

A Film by **ISAIAH TOUR**

Featuring
HONG HUAT TOUR

Director of Photography
AARON LY

Original Music Composed by
JOSHUA CAMP

Production Mentor
LEANNE POOLEY

Animators
KYLIE SULLIVAN
RODNEY QUACH
ISAIAH TOUR

Illustrators
SO YOUNG CHO
VIVIAN NGWERUME
RODNEY QUACH
JONATHAN FONTANA
HELEN MAI
ISAIAH TOUR

Assistant Music Supervisor
PHILIP DIBLEY

Additional Camera
ISAIAH TOUR

Special Thanks
JEFFERY LLOYD

TRACEY TUKI
ARIELLE SULLIVAN
DUNCAN TANG
LISA DO
JUDY LI
PUTERI RAJA ARIFF
JACK PENNIKET
ANUKSHA NARAYAN
REEM RASSAM
CATHERINE MONTFORD
JONATHAN POTTON
ALEX HARDING
SHARLEEN KUMAR
CHANELLE CARRON
ASHLYNNE MOUNTAIN
ELAYNE CHAN
ANDREA KWOK
THE TOUR FAMILY
ORORA KIWI PACKAGING
& ALL THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE WHO BACKED THIS FILM!

[REEL TINY LOGO]
2017

Someday Stories (Logo)

Picture Grading
DAVID McLAREN
COLOURSPACE

Sound Mixing
DAVID LIVERSIDGE
RADIATE SOUND

Legal Services
MICHAEL STEVENS
STEPHENS LAWYERS

Health and Safety Consultant
WILLY HEATLEY
LIFEGUARD & SAFETY

Accountancy Services
O'HALLORAN NORTH SHORE

Digital File Delivery
DIGITAL PIGEON

Production Coordinator
ARIA DEHAR

Production Accountant
HELENA MUHAMMAD

Series Publicist
JULIA HYDE

Series Titles
JOÃO IMAI

Coordinating Production Mentor
FRASER BROWN

Series Producer
CHRIS WIDDUP

Executive Producer
DAVID JACOBS