

**FOUR CORNERS  
PRODUCTION NOTES  
2013**

**INTRODUCTION**

Four lives will change forever as the destinies of a reformed prison 'general,' a local cop, a charismatic gang leader and a surgeon back from London intersect with a young boy's coming of age in a tale of family lost and family regained in the unknown world of South Africa's Cape Flats.

**THE STORY**

Four Corners is a multi-thread, coming of age drama set in a unique and volatile South African sub culture. At times raw and violent, at other times touching and true, the four lives of Farakhan, Leila, Tito and Gasant converge around Ricardo, weaving universal themes of love, loss, kinship, betrayal and redemption.

Cape Town today - home to South Africa's toughest maximum Security prison – Pollsmoor. When Farakhan (Brendon Daniels), a general in the Century old Numbers Gang, is released after 13 years, he wants a quiet life and a 'river of peace'. But he finds himself in a world more violent than when he left it. Now ruthless street gangs control the ghetto streets, crack and guns are sold openly, and young boys are disappearing, victims of a serial killer. In this turbulent world, Farakhan seeks to make contact with his son, whom he's never known.

13 year old Ricardo (Jezriel Skei) is at a crossroads. A chess prodigy, he is lured in equal measure by the thrill of warfare on the chessboard and the seductive prestige of joining a powerful street gang. Drawn into gang life by the charisma of Americans gang leader Gasant (Irshaad Ally), Ricardo takes his first steps into gang initiation. With no father to guide him, the one adult he looks up to is Captain Tito Hanekom (Abduragman Adams), a career cop hell bent on tracking down the serial killer of young boys. When another boy goes missing, Tito's focus shifts away from Ricardo.

Meanwhile Leila Domingo (Lindiwe Matshikiza) a London trained doctor, returns home for her estranged father's funeral. The memories evoked in her father's house, in a suburb that's now part of a running turf war, trigger a wave of conflicting emotions as she struggles to decide what to do with her life. Leila comes across Farakhan, recognizes him as the boy who lived next door, and finds herself drawn into his world.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Four Corners is the first film to delve into the hundred year old war of South Africa's Numbers Gangs, the 26 and the 28. It blends Sabela (the secret language of the Number Gangs,) Tsotsi taal, Cape Afrikaans and English dialects.

Four Corners (die Vier Hoeke) is South African prison slang for the world within the four corners of a prison cell.

**DIRECTORS STATEMENT**

Strength of family was a starting point and inspiration for this film. Having experienced both bonding and loss as a child, I discovered late in life that my father had twice experienced loss of family, a history that was covered up to protect later generations. This piqued my strong passion for the notion of family as a great binder but also as the impenetrable custodian of losses and pains that can remain forever hidden from view.

From this personal passion I hoped to evolve a film about family lost and family regained, and to show it from many shifting perspectives, especially from the point of view of a young boy, because I know that story. I wanted to make a film that dealt with these trials and conflicts, the desire for family, and the absence of

family, and the desire to reform and make things whole within the context of gangsterism. I wanted to look at how difficult it might be for a father, a gangster, to turn the clock back and set things right. I planned to set the film in the particular world of the Cape Flats where the chances are very high that a boy will grow up in a single parent or no parent fatherless home. I hoped to portray a gangster film in a largely unknown world. And reveal it in a fresh way.

This was my process when I met Hofmeyr Scholtz to discuss writing the project. I explained that I wanted to tell a redemptive story about family - about a father, about a son, about a cop who is watching family and young children threatened, and life eroded from outside. The creative process was organic, at a later stage we added a daughter who had lost her father from 'before' he died. We decided she should be an outsider returned who knows and reacts against the tough landscape of her youth that she had wanted to escape from, yet feels its roots pulling her back - a common sensation that South Africans and Africans in exile experience. We developed a 'surrogate' father that a boy in need of a father might find. So there we had it - Four corners, four lives and sounding boards influencing one boy's life, reflecting the Four Corners of a chessboard and the Four Corners of a prison cell (literally 'die Vier Hoeke' in Sabela prison slang) And each of these simple stories connected with the next to make up the Four Corners in the chessboard of Ricardo's life.

Decisions made by Ricardo's coming of age would cause all four surrounding stories to converge and become his unique single story, with a single resolve during a significant week in his life. I knew structurally this would be exciting but challenging to achieve but would reflect a bit of how life really is, where chance encounters can lead to dramatic events and significant resolutions that echo from one generation down to the next.

Just a few kilometres from where I live in Cape Town is the unique world of the Cape Flats where gangsterism is rife and where a boy like Ricardo, the hero of our story, might be drawn by the power and prestige of the gangs.

In this world I knew actors would be able to find a special connection to their characters if we were able to absolutely truthfully portray the world that the characters inhabited, without resorting to complex themes or a predictable view of the power of the gangs.

The world of the Cape Flats is so unique and such a different world that I knew the more we told the more we would need to tell. It wasn't only with the actors that I wanted to achieve the sense of being 'in the moment' - I wanted that from the audience as well if that was possible, so that when finally there is a chase or there is a gun fight, which are staples of the gangster film genre, I wanted people to really feel and be in those moments and experience them, just as the community of families in the Cape Flats experience gangster turf outbursts from day to day on the streets, school-fields, playgrounds and block yards which are the chosen 'battlegrounds.'

Brendan Daniels, who plays Farakhan, said that he hoped to play this part because he saw Four Corners as the first opportunity 'to tell a Coloured man's story in South Africa on film'. 'Coloured' is a term that is a misnomer elsewhere in the world, but in South Africa it marks a very real culture, area, history, language and population grouping that is not Black, not White, not Asian, but Coloured. Farakhan's Cape Flats story is about a man whose life has arrived at a critical juncture and his story demands to be told.

We wanted the performances and the reality of the story to be immediate, spontaneous and visceral, to blur the boundary between real life and film, so we looked both among actors and also non-actors who had intense experience of life in the Flats. We found in rehearsal that the actors learnt from the non-actors just as much as the non-actors learned from the actors. We shot the film in communities where "fighting for turf" and "turf war" is a daily reality. Sometimes we cast ex gangsters, ex prisoners, kids from tough neighbourhoods like Belhar where there's an intense gang war, who know first hand what this story is really about.

We knew we needed to make our film in the real districts of the Cape Flats, in the shadows of the turf war because our first responsibility was to tell the truth, as much as we could. The film is about darkness and light, and the interplay of both these aspects in the human conflict that is flow of life. That interplay was present on the set every day.

So my creative cues in Four Corners came from my own life, and the lives and inspirations that we found in the Flats. I was casting and scouting all our locations for a year as my visual approach to Four Corners grew. We realised that more and more of the film had to be 'found', not brought in or changed as is often the film making tradition. My intention was to allow the audience to become direct participants in the Cape Flats events onscreen with its flavour and sound and uncertainty; to allow the audience to be caught up by what they saw and heard without manipulating events too much, so that there's a link to their own reactions as they get drawn into the story.

I hope to leave the audience with an experience that will stay with them after they leave the cinema. If they remember that this special world of the Cape Flats exists and is not only more dangerous, but also much richer than they knew, that will be very satisfying for us as film makers and for the communities and families we worked with.

No matter the danger, no matter the pain, no matter the emotional drain, if you were to decide to claim or reclaim your home and your family in the middle of a turf war, because it was the only family you ever hoped for, you would likely do what people in the Flats do every day as gang wars erupt around them: they go to work if they have the good fortune to have work, they go to school, they stand up and remind us, that they have rights.

Isn't that what we all want, the chance for family to prevail, so that our stories can be told and retold, so we can be heard and seen, so we can see that we're understood, and that the life of our family will live on?

### **ON THE NUMBERS GANGS**

'Crime has a history and a future, a canon of myths and legends by which its practitioners understand what happened in the past which helps them decide how to act in the present' ( Johnny Steinberg, The Number )

This quotation struck me and also reminded me that families too have their myths and legends that are repeated and are fashioned from one generation to the next. Myths and legends of South Africa's 100 year old Number Gangs have slowly seeped out of the prisons where the Number proclaim its home, into communities where street gangs prevail. Street gangs base their activities and structures on these myths and legends, and the secret code of the Number Gangs. In our story these codes become a conundrum that we set for ourselves and for our characters to work their way through to get to the far side, to the winning edge of our narrative.

### **THE CAPE FLATS FOR FOUR CORNERS**

'This house is now mine again. As it was when the government first dumped us here. I'm staying. No-one takes away this house again.' Farakhan (Brendon Daniels)

Aeolus, the mythological Greek God of the Winds gave his name to the vast drifts of Aeolian sand that comprise the tidal remains of a 450 million year old coastal plain called the Cape Flats. This 30 kilometres of shifting marine dunes beneath Table Mountain stretches from Robben Island in the west to False Bay in the east. Largely uninhabited until the 1950s, the Flats became the dumping ground of choice for successive apartheid governments striving to push families of mixed race ( slave, Khoi San, Afrikaans, Malay, Indian and Xhosa descent (the Cape Coloureds)) out of South Africa's pristine 'Mother' City, Cape Town. With a mix of Muslim, Christian and tribal sects, the Cape Coloured predominant languages spoken to day in the Cape Flats, are Cape Afrikaans and Cape English dialects . Unofficial estimates put the population of the Cape Flats at 2 million, making it the majority sector of Cape Town's population.

Four Corners was shot entirely on the Cape Flats, from Lavender Hill to Elsies River, Hanover Park, Mannenberg, Tafelsig, Phumlani, Khayelitsha, Eastridge, Macasar and the informal settlement at Vatverniel. In a region often referred to as 'forgotten' by its own inhabitants, firstly by the apartheid government and, today by the current democratic government, the opportunity to tell a fragment of the Cape Flats own story was enthusiastically received by local inhabitants wherever the shoot took us.

The Four Corners producers have planted 300 trees in the Cape Flats since filming commenced in mid 2012 and plan to plant a total of 1000 trees in the coming 4 years.

### **IAN GABRIEL – DIRECTOR BIO**

Ian's background in drama can be traced to his work at Dorkay House, Johannesburg's famous multi-racial theatre venue in the '70's and '80's where he worked with many of South Africa's legendary jazz and theatre greats. Today Ian Gabriel is one of South Africa's leading filmmakers. Ian's work as a Commercial Director, has earned him a reputation throughout the world, for creating distinctive narratives, often combining iconic performance and live action photography on an epic scale. Ian has worked with talents and personalities as diverse as Nelson Mandela, Alek Wek, Cristiano Ronaldo, Charlize Theron, Haile Gebrselassie, Miriam Makeba, Desmond Tutu etc.

Ian Gabriel's first film *Forgiveness*, influenced by the post-Apartheid Truth Commission hearings, was a Golden Leopard Nominee at the 57th Locarno International Film Festival where Ian was the recipient of the Human Rights Award and the Youth Jury Best Film Award in 2004.

*Forgiveness* also received the Jerusalem Film Festival Spirit of Freedom Award and several Audience Choice Awards and has featured in programs focusing on conflict drama and reconciliation at festivals in Jerusalem, Teheran, Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro, London and New York and at Cambridge and Princeton Universities. At home, *Forgiveness* received the Best South African Film and Best African Film Award followed by Best Music Score and Best Actress Award at the 2005 South African Film and Television Awards.

Ian's second feature film, *Four Corners*, is structured around shifting notions of family, fatherhood and the gangs as a young boy comes of age in tough circumstances in the special world of the Cape Flats.

Ian is co-author of *Forgiveness: A Study Guide* published by Oxford University Press in 2006. The book introduces South African senior school students to the study of film and conflict resolution.

Ian Gabriel is a mixed race South African of Indian descent. He has four children.

### **Cindy Gabriel | PRODUCER BIO**

Cindy Gabriel is Executive Producer and Founder of Giant Films one of South Africa's leading film and television production companies, producing award winning television and cinema commercials, feature films, music videos and documentary films.

Aiming to bring a range of talent and diverse work into the company, Cindy was instrumental in the development of the Giant Films documentary and feature film division, developing and producing long form projects for the company.

*Four Corners*, Giant Films' most recent feature film, produced by Cindy Gabriel with Genevieve Hofmeyr, and directed by Ian Gabriel, was recently selected as the official South African foreign Language entry for the 2014 Academy Awards race.

Cindy previously produced *Forgiveness (2004)*, lauded by CNN's African Voices as one of the top ten African Films of the last decade. The film received numerous awards including the 2004 Best African Film and Best South African Film accolades, the Human Rights Award at Locarno, and the Youth Jury Best Film Award at Locarno, as well as being a Locarno Golden Leopard Nominee. *Forgiveness* won a total of 10 International awards and was distributed in over 20 countries worldwide via Fortissimo Films.

## **Genevieve Hofmeyr | PRODUCER BIO**

Genevieve Hofmeyr is widely regarded as one of South Africa's most skilled and accomplished Producers, who has made a significant contribution to the growth of the entertainment industry in South Africa by procuring over 50 productions across the spectrum of film production including major US studio projects, independent co-productions, episodic television/miniseries and indigenous South African films.

Genevieve has worked with award winning filmmakers such as Clint Eastwood, Edward Zwick, Michael Mann, Marc Forster, Martin Campbell, Bruce Beresford, Roland Emmerich, Phillip Noyce and Mira Nair, as well some of Hollywood's A-List or Oscar winning stars including Denzel Washington, Leonardo DiCaprio, Angelina Jolie, Charlize Theron, Hilary Swank, Ryan Reynolds, Matt Damon, Daniel Craig, William H Macy and Gerard Butler.

The Hollywood Reporter listed her as one of the three most influential women in South African Cinema today. Genevieve is currently the South African Producer on "The Giver", a film directed by Phillip Noyce for The Weinstein Company.

Other film credits include "Mad Max: Fury Road" by George Miller for Warner Bros, Daniel Espinosa's "Safe House" for Universal Pictures, Clint Eastwood's "Invictus" for Warner Bros., Revelation and Malpasso, Edward Zwick's "Blood Diamond" and Roland Emmerich's "10,000 BC" for Warner Bros., "Catch a Fire" by Phillip Noyce.

South African content produced by Genevieve includes "Four Corners" – South Africa's selected film for the Best Foreign Film category at the 2014 Academy Awards; "Skoonheid", SA's first Afrikaans film in competition in Cannes 2011; Mukunda Dewil's thriller, "Retribution"; and Anthony Fabian's multiple international award-winning "Skin" (starring Sophie Okonedo, Sam Neill and Alice Krige).

### ***From the crew***

#### **HOFMEYR SCHOLTZ | WRITER**

**...on Mondays, if you're still alive, you go back, to attend classes.**

Not far from the picturesque beaches surrounding Cape Town's iconic Table Mountain, but a world apart from it, lies the Cape Flats, a sprawling shack land collapsing into gridlocked concrete dormitory towns. School grounds on weekend nights are designated gang war zones. In the old days the older gangsters reminisce about massed 'armies' rushing each other, armed with pangas and bin lids; but nowadays it's strictly guns; the fights inevitably ending in fatalities.

Police choppers regularly sweep the area with spot lights, clearing it sporadically but always the gunfire returns. Young gangsters go there to test their mettle.

And on Mondays, if you're still alive, you go back, to attend classes.

In search of the story that we wanted to tell, I went to the Flats, I met with gangsters and gang bosses inside and outside Pollsmoor Prison. Hung out with beat cops and Violent Crime detectives. Also with schoolteachers, rappers and chess players.

Competitive chess is well established on the Cape Flats. Regional and National champs regularly hail from the Flats. Kenny Solomon, a consultant on Four Corners and a former prison chess tutor is South Africa's first Grand Master. He was born and bred in Mitchell's Plain.

Most poignant however for me were meeting the youngsters of the ghettos. I met a twelve-year-old boy, really sweet kid with a soft lilting voice; awaiting trial for a double murder. Already he's wearing his flag, a mark of pride and of some protection, tattooed on the back of his hand. He's one of the legion of Mongrel Kids, or Nice Time Kids, or Young Americans. They're all going one way. Nowhere. Fast.

As our story evolved Ricardo made his appearance and forced himself to the fore. That wasn't our intention, we'd started developing this as a multi thread adult story. Ricardo forced his way in, causing the themes of belonging and identity to step up, also the truism 'like father like son' - this is when Four Corners became a more relevant and meaningful tale of who and where you are in a world which offers little choices. We based some of the story loosely around the true events of a serial killer who preyed on young ghetto boys, killing and burying them in shallow graves on the dunes between the Atlantic Ocean and the Cape Flats.

The three male identities were well established when Ian asked me to add a fourth story/character thread. Leila, a surgeon from London, but born and bred on the same street as Farakhan, sent away to what her father believed was a better life.

When she returns to bury him, she too discovers what she had missed all her life: a sense of identity and belonging. Her character presented another dimension to our theme.

We used the four story threads as a way to enter into the many worlds of the Four Corners, to tell this story about families of the gangs and lost families that would ultimately become a story about choice and about belonging and identity, universal concepts in a unique world that could be understood and felt for by audiences the world over.

### **Terence Hammond | SCREENWRITER**

#### **A screenwriter's experience – The ring of truth**

I spent thirty years growing up in South Africa before moving to Australia, I still have a strong connection to my roots. So when I was invited to get involved in Four Corners while working on another collaboration with Ian Gabriel, I was immediately attracted to the originality of the material, and the authenticity of the South African setting and subculture it portrayed. But there was more. The themes Ian and Hofmeyr Scholtz were exploring were powerfully universal – disaffected youth, the lure of crime, the search for family, the primacy of choice. My distance from the action, quite literally as I now lived in Melbourne, also allowed me to see this uniquely South African film from a world perspective. I was able to bring an outsider's view to the writing process in the development of structure and story arcs.

What resulted was a truly collaborative effort that leapt from the page under Ian's direction and the powerful performances by a talented and committed cast. I travelled to South Africa to attend the film shoot and saw the dialogue and action come to life in a very visceral way. As a writer it was an adrenaline-charged few days. What I was seeing had the powerful ring of truth.

Terence Hammond's screenwriting credits include Last Dance, a hostage drama that premiered in 2012 at the Melbourne International Film Festival. Last Dance was also an original screenplay Finalist at Australia's 45th Annual AWGIE Awards and won the Cannes Senior Competition of Cannes Cinephiles, 2013.

### **THE ACTORS**

#### **Brendon Daniels | FARAKAHN**

Brendan Daniels grew up in the Cape Flats and moved into acting in film, theatre and then television in 2005. Four Corners is Brendon's first lead role in a feature film.

**I am extremely privileged to have been a part of Four Corners, as the film offered the opportunity to shine a spotlight on a segment of the South African community that has many stories to tell, yet are seldom told on film.**

The various communities we worked with welcomed Four Corners warmly into their midst. Shooting in actual locations made my process as an actor that much more rewarding and definitely assisted me in my performance. I would love to work with the director Ian Gabriel again - he was encouraging and open to suggestions from the moment I was cast, and this allowed for a great start to the characterisation and

exploration of Farakhan, which gave us permission to develop a fascinating character. Theatre is my great love. I had several small roles in a few films until Four Corners. Since then I've been cast in two more films.

Four Corners has created a great opportunity for me.

### **Lindiwe Matshikiza | LEILA**

Lindiwe was born in exile in England. She is an actress playwright and director. She has won strong praise internationally for her appearance alongside Idris Elba and Naomi Harrison in Long Walk to Freedom playing the daughter of Nelson Mandela.

'When I heard about the role of Leila in the film, there were some uncanny parallels with my own history: I spent some formative years in London, having been born there while my family was in exile, and coming back young enough to adapt to South Africa, but old enough to have strong memories of somewhere else. I could relate to Leila's conflict about where 'home' is, what it means, and what it would mean to have to confront those ideas later in life, with the added responsibility of sorting out her dead father's affairs. As fate would have it, we shot one of that character's most emotional moments of grief on the fourth anniversary of my own father's death.

To add another layer to the personal significance of Four Corners, the film takes place in Cape Town where my mother's family comes from, drawing on the complex cultural heritage and history that everyone in that part of the world inherits and inhabits. In short, the story alone had many resonances for me. To get to work with such a strong ensemble of thoughtful and personally invested actors, and with a director who trusted that ensemble so much and gave such poignant, insightful notes and guidance, added to the overall sense of authenticity and care that defined the process for me.

**It's the kind of work actors hope to always be doing in that sense, along with the chance to play in a story that deals with human beings, the triumphs and tragedies that make us up, the uncertainty of one's decisions, our complexity, vulnerability, strength...**

### **Irshaad Ally | GASANT**

In 2006 I was cast in a reality show 'Survivor' that awakened a desire in me to act in film.

Growing up on the Cape flats, I definitely had an archive from which to work from, when I was cast in Four Corners. Still I did intense research, especially for character building to understand the disposition of a gangster like Gasant.

I would deliberately commute by minibus-taxi to random places on the Flats. I sat and eavesdropped and watched people in taxis, barber shops and corner stores and I sought out a couple of Dudes who I knew as a kid, who'd taken the gangster option in their lives.

Ian Gabriel knows how to get the best out of an actor whilst allowing you the freedom to be as honest as you feel you should be when action is called.

**After reading the script for the first time I was immediately energised to tell this story - because we get the feeling that our gang issue and how it affects our youths often falls on deaf ears and blind eyes. I was glad to learn that there were people out there who wanted to talk about the subject in an insightful way.**

**Four Corners is my big break.**

### **Jezriel Skei | RICARDO**

### **I'm 13 now, when I grow older I'd like to be a full time actor.**

When I met Ian Gabriel he told me to sit in a casting session and argue with Jody Abrahams (actor, comedian, director) and make sure that I didn't let Jody get the better of me. We sat there arguing about stuff for 20 minutes. After that Ian sent me to work with Leslie Manim and I rehearsed with all the actors and with Jody. I also had voice lessons with Dorothy Ann Gould. It was cool working with actors who were so well trained they taught me a lot. Everyone said I had a good habit because I listen a lot.

I love acting, it's fun and it's your chance to really tap into your dormant abilities in front of the camera or on stage. I would definitely like to work in the USA.

### **Abdurahman Adams | TITO**

**Four Corners encapsulated my own artistic philosophy: Make performance for the people, with the people in their own communities.**

Abdurahman Adams was born and raised in Mannenberg, one of the marginalised communities featured in Four Corners. A former nurse, Abdu started his acting career at age 26 and graduated cum laude from the University of Stellenbosch where he lectures in Acting, Voice and South African Theatre History and is currently conducting his Master's research in the Representation of Cape Muslim identity in SA theatre. He is the artistic director/ head writer of 'NANCY!', a commissioned work challenging homophobia in South Africa.

'Director, Ian Gabriel allowed me to find and shape Tito. Being a cop in the Flats is a very real job with many complexities. SA cops have potbellies, families, communities that are crime riddled. What I most appreciated about the script and the guidance Ian gave was the authenticity regarding the language and representation of the communities that we portrayed. With the painstaking work all the departments did to create authenticity, you could really be 'in the moment' feeling the community and its needs on a sensory level, all the time, all around you.'

Abdu has a keen sense for language and spearheaded the workshopping of the many Cape dialects at play in Four Corners.

### **PERFORMANCE COACH | LESLEY MANIM**

**On my first reading of the script of "Four Corners" I felt cellularly re-arranged! It took me on a journey so compelling, so potent, raw, so full of despair and pain and radiance and redemption that I was both exhausted and exhilarated.**

The preparation of the young leads for "Four Corners" was my immediate exciting brief. I was working with a group of youngsters as diverse as the Flats, all with little or no performance experience.

My approach was multifaceted: the primacy of breath as the vehicle of life, presence, voice and how it is affected by and reflects emotion, thought and intention; sensory investigation of touch, sight, sound, hearing, taste etc ; the exploration of where and how emotion is experienced and held in the body and how all of these interface and to make up character and performance.

Awareness is a crucial skill for an actor - it's the foundation for the perception of the sensory, emotional and cognitive aspects that make up character. In life, without awareness, there is no choice. The theme of choice is a strong motif in the stories that are told and interwoven in "Four Corners." The first step of awareness is to "Arrive" in the present moment, to be in the body, embodied.

We started our workshop sessions with an exploration of the sign "Arrive Alive"- a billboard campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving. In their individual responses to this signage, the young actors became more aware and perceptive of what it means to "arrive", what it means to be "alive". As Keeno (Denver) said, "You can be somewhere but you haven't arrived."



In conversation with Jezriel (Ricardo) we noticed the differences between “living” and being “alive” and we explored physically how those differences may express themselves. We used aspects of the individuals’ lives and experiences to explore the themes and events of the script.

We explored improvisationally Frankie and Ricardo meeting. We did this first without words, each actor thinking the thoughts and feeling the feelings but not saying them. We then explored the same scene thinking the thoughts, feeling the feelings, noticing the moment when the need to speak was compelling. In this way the young actors could experience and understand how words arise out of thought and feeling and this helped, to avoid the pitfall of “saying the lines” and to allow the words to arise out of the situation.

As we progressed with our sessions we developed an on set shorthand of physically rooted reminders to “Arrive Alive. Stop and Drop (any unnecessary baggage)” so that the actors would have a way of rooting, grounding and contextualising themselves, giving them a sense of confidence that they could find a safe place in themselves during the processes of rehearsal, filming and life in general.

I was struck by Shiefaa’s combination of inner stillness, luminosity, and intelligence. Jezriel has charm and presence and an extraordinary ability to focus and stay with the process moment by moment. I think he is his own version of a young Denzel Washington. Keeno ( Denver) stole my heart with the fierceness of his vulnerability, his sensitivity to taking direction and his astounding courage as a kid from the notorious ganglands of Belhar.

Being a part of this journey has been a privilege and a delight.

#### **VICCI TURPIN | CINEMATOGRAPHER**

**Perfection for me is for the recreation of realism and natural light.**

Even though we were under a tight schedule, the collaboration Ian and I have with wardrobe, set design and locations is always something Ian pays attention to and it is so important to me for my end result as a cinematographer. So Ian was my main reason for taking on “Four Corners “ - I know we see the same way visually and he never takes on a project without finessing it in all areas as his passion dictates.

It was always going to be a hard job but I like to shoot fast as Ian does. The locations were very challenging as we shot in the real locations that Ian had scouted himself – we were surrounded by great textures and tones I strongly wanted to go with anamorphic lenses on Four Corners. The depth drops easier and the highlights become more natural. I strive to keep the realism in light in my camera –there is a magic that comes from shooting on film that I wanted to recreate on HD. I think this really suited the situations we were in in Four Corners. Women view the world in a particular way, I felt my eye had a great opportunity to contrast well with the harsh realities of our subject.

I believe we need to show the world like it is and to recreate that ‘second of light’ you get in photojournalism. Finding enough time to shoot a scene in that ‘second of light’ is something that takes thought and teamwork and I knew I would get that from Ian - he not only strives for performance but has always, on all the projects I have worked with him, striven for the whole picture, capturing that special moment on film when everyone is working together toward one objective.

I used a lot of natural light/day for night and soft light to work with available light to read the details in all the characters and interesting real locations Ian had chosen. The natural light had to always be “controlled”, so there was a lot of upfront thought in the scheduling which we tried to stick to and Ian is always so good at that. We worked together in hard circumstances and kept a “look” going as much as we could.

Four Corners has that “look” we strove for and it releases the characters that Ian had cast from areas no one else would’ve found. That makes a cinematic dream come true.

My favourite visual references are from the Reuters photographers daily. They are now and real. So is this film.

## **MARKUS WORMSTORM | COMPOSER**

**'Inflections in the score articulate the subtlest variations in an actors performance'.**

For Four Corners Markus Wormstorm combined classical arrangement with electronic programming to create an integrated score. The themes ebb and flow unnoticed and at times swell to articulate the tension and drama of the film.

Classical themes are accompanied by Xhosa vocals to create emotive themes in the film. Extended classical techniques were combined with hip-hop and electronic elements to articulate the tension in the film and feel the real sounds of the Cape Flats.

'The Cape Flats hip-hop is sort of strange and familiar at the same time. So it will grab attention wherever it gets heard. The music is part of the Gangster swagger, and part of Cape Flats saying 'here we are.' We worked to make sure that all the tracks in the film are South African, not because that's the only music that gets heard but because we're expressing how the Cape Flats feels.

People unfamiliar with South Africa will discover that so much is familiar yet strange – like hearing the hip hop or discovering there's a gang called the Americans, or that the stars on an American flag represent bullets to the gangs. The familiar made strange – Four Corners is full of that.'

Markus Wormstorm is a writer and composer who lives in Cape Town with his wife and cat. Over the last ten years he has remixed and collaborated with many local and international artists including MF Doom, Sibot, and Spoek Mhatambo. He has released many EP's and albums around the world.

His fantasy art project The Blackheart gang, which creates sculptures, books animation and prints is praised for shining an international spotlight on South African animation. In 2007 he won a special distinction award for the gangs work at the Annecy Festival in France. His company Biblo.tv, founded in 2012, offers a fresh approach to music licensing. He owns two sound studios in Cape Town called Honeymoon Studios.

'Now that I've finished scoring the film there's a gaping hole – from eating sleeping and working the movie. Loved this gig and the collaboration.'

## **MOONYEEN LEE | CASTING DIRECTOR**

**'There's talent in this country, instinctive, genuine and generous'**

I was really excited when I read the script of " Four Corners"!

Such great characters! I immediately thought of Lindiwe Matshikiza. For me, there was nobody else. Jerry Mofokeng was also a perfect fit.

The other parts were not that obvious...There were so many variables. Who goes with whom? Where would we find all the young performers? What about language, who spoke what? Fortunately Ian gave me time. And lots of inspiration!

Thank goodness for actor Jody Abrahams! I spent a couple of weeks with him in Cape Town, mainly on the Cape Flats. He got me to places and people I would never have been able to access. Real Tik houses, real gangsters. Giant Films set up numerous schools we could go to. Chess was played at almost every one of those schools. We auditioned dozens of chess playing children, trying to put a team together.

We are so lucky in this country when we tell our own stories -

There is so much talent, not necessarily trained in the accepted sense, but instinctive and genuine, and truly generous.

Moonyeenn Lee has cast "Tsotsi", "Life Above All", and most recently "Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom".

## **JODY ABRAHAMS | PERFORMANCE COACH**

**To tell the truth we have to know we're in safe hands.**

Jody Abrahams is no stranger to the entertainment industry, debuting on the professional stage at the age of seven, winning the Sir Lawrence Olivier Award in 1999 on London's West End and a Tony nomination on Broadway for his performance in the acclaimed 'Kat and the Kings' but he is 'foremost a story teller from the tip of Africa born at the foot of Table Mountain.'

He is passionate about re-imagining our history and documenting our present.

'For many years I was angered at the way our communities stories were depicted and told on film, based on stereotypes, hearsay, voyeuristic interpretation. I decided to judiciously check out these 'people' behind Four Corners wanting to make yet another Cape gangster story.

Mistrust of the past dissipated and changed into positive belief: I supported and believed foremost in the story, the writers, director, producers and actors and decided to assist in any way that would facilitate this story being told as it sheds light on the truths that many face daily on the Cape flats.

As a rehearsal coach for kids one has to facilitate truth, trust and safety. Each individual has their own needs, so I assess each separately and apply different methods.

We all need to trust that we are in safe hands to tell the truth: Achieve that in rehearsals and on set and you can feel, 'mission accomplished!'

We can all gain something from Four Corners.

## **Ronelle Loots | EDITOR**

**"The patina of sounds that is the Cape Flats and the great unmistakable rhythm of Cape dialects were aspects of Four Corners narrative that Ronelle would continually re-visit, using the shades of sound to high light moments of drama and human expression in the film. As a film maker it was great for me to have an editor who was as accomplished in the sound structuring as in the picture structure."**

Ronelle Loots is an accomplished film and documentary editor, having worked on more than 30 feature films, including the Truth Commission drama Forgiveness, Ian Gabriel's debut feature in 2004. In the following year she edited Carmen in Khayelitsha directed by Mark Dornford-May, which won the Golden Bear in Berlin.

Durban Poison, directed by Andrew Worsdale and edited by Ronelle won the Best Film award at the 2013 Durban International Film Festival. Ronelle has also won the SAFTA Golden Horn award for editing for her work on Faith Like Potatoes (2006) and The World Unseen (2008) as well as the SilverScreen award for her work on Die Wonderwerker.

Ronelle has directed and edited several documentaries which include a collaboration with the poet Antje Krog, The Unfolding of Sky, which deals with issues post the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. Narrative of Betrayal won several Human Rights Festival awards in war-torn Angola. Ochre and Water, a documentary co-directed with Craig Matthew, has won her numerous editing and sound design awards.

Four Corners, directed by Ian Gabriel) was unanimously chosen as the Official South African Best Foreign Language Film entry for the 2014 Academy Awards.

## **BARRY DONNELLY | SOUND DESIGN**

**A world full of laughter, energy & decay**

10 years ago I was in Sweden mixing Forgiveness, starring Arnold Vosloo, with first time movie director, Ian Gabriel. About 30 mixes, numerous local and international awards later, it's great to team up with Ian again for his latest film 'Four Corners'. I was really drawn to this movie because I've lived in Cape Town all my life: What Ian has done with Four Corners is capture the spirit of Cape Town's underbelly that thrives and grows in the Cape Flats. Most Capetonians never visit the Cape Flats if they're not born there, but you can hear and see the sounds of life if you drive past, as you do on the way to the airport.

The sound design for this film called for something distinctive and unique - as it's about a part of Cape Town that people don't really talk about, and it lives with a secret language that is only spoken by a few. The biggest challenge for us was to create a sound that is raw and edgy but at the same time easy on the ear, something that speaks of the Cape Flats special world of always full of laughter and energy and decay.

**Four Corners**

**2103**