

A man in traditional clothing, including a grey knit hat with a red pom-pom and a blue and green patterned shawl, sits on a grassy hillside. He is looking towards the right. In the background, a large flock of sheep is grazing on the hillside, and a person in a long grey coat and a tall, pointed hat is walking away. The landscape is hilly and dry, with mountains in the distance under a clear sky.

KABELO

A FILM BY CARL HOUSTON MC MILLAN

KABELO FILMS
PRESENTS

KABELO

a film by
Carl Houston Mc Millan

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN: LESOTHO AND SOUTH AFRICA

TECHNICAL: DCP | 1:9 | SOUND 5.1 | COLOUR

PRODUCTION YEAR: 2024/2025

LANGUAGE: SESOTHO

DURATION: 95 MIN

CONTACT

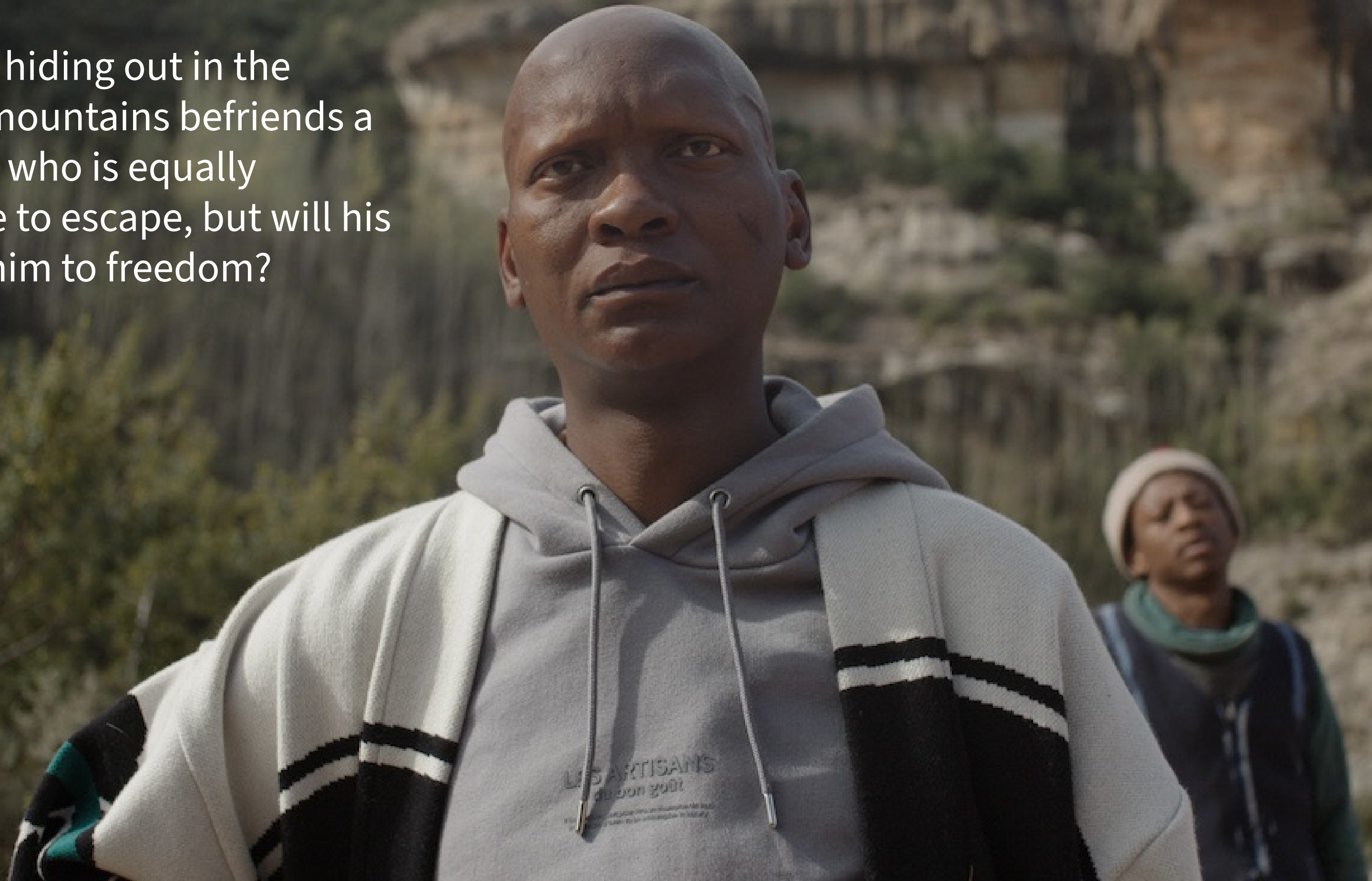
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PHOTOS AND PRESSKIT DOWNLOADABLE ON WWW.KABELOFILM.COM

A fugitive hiding out in the Lesotho mountains befriends a shepherd who is equally desperate to escape, but will his lies lead him to freedom?





SYNOPSIS

In the mountains of Lesotho KABELO a shepherd determined to escape the shepherd life meets MASTER a fugitive from South Africa hiding out in the village. Master cons Kabelo promising that he will take him to Johannesburg and mentor him in his many businesses.

A desperate companionship forms and we realise that these are just two people from different walks of life both seeking freedom. The film invites you to journey through the realms of identity, where a shepherd's humble existence intertwines with the fleeting shadows of a fugitive. Each frame captures the essence of longing and belonging, painting a vivid portrait of two souls searching for their place in a world that often feels too vast and unwelcoming.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

There is a mystical energy in the highlands of Lesotho, a gritty beauty that I have always been drawn to. Visitors are often intrigued by the shepherds, standing strong on the edges of cliffs with their balaclavas and customised blankets blowing in the wind. These shepherds stay for months at a time with flocks of goats and sheep high in the remote mountains. They have their own unique rhythm of speech and way of living, they also endure very harsh conditions, especially in winter, yet they display toughness and patience. However, there is a class divide and stereotype of them in Lesotho. They are sometimes seen as stupid, dirty, and mischievous.

At its core this is a universal story of an orphan dreaming. A young man full of ideas and dreams not scared to express himself. but he is belittled and laughed at as he seeks validation. When he meets Master he receives the validation he has always sought but he cant let go.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Carl Houston Mc Millan is a writer/director with a deep connection to Lesotho. He is a hands-on filmmaker who never lets limitations get in the way of his vision. Carl has an interesting and abstract perspective on things which is reflected in his rich and slightly quirky characters. He works closely with actors and immerses himself in the process of finding the character. KABELO is his debut feature.



IDENTITY | DREAMS | FALSE HOPE | BELONGING | GUILT | SURVIVAL & RESILIENCE



WARREN MASEMOLA - MASTER

Imagine feeling a connection to a land you've never truly known, only to find that it holds the key to your identity. Meet Master, a South African whose journey takes him across the border into Lesotho. This isn't just a story of escape; it's about finding oneself and the soul-stirring experiences that come with it. With the exceptionally talented Warren Masemola taking on the role of Master, witness the transformation of a fugitive into a man seeking belonging.

Warren Masemola is a multiple award nominee and a four-time South African Film and Television Award (SAFTA) winner. He has played various roles on our local television shows such as Tjovitjo, The River, Is'phindiselo. His movies include iNumber Number, Eye In The Sky, The Widow, Five Fingers for Marseilles, Mayfair, The Hot Zone and Vaya.

@warrenmasemola



LEBOHANG NTSANE - KABELO

A character brought to life by the exceptionally talented Mosotho actor Lebohang Ntsane. From his unforgettable debut in The Forgotten Kingdom to his captivating performances today, Lebohang's journey has been nothing short of inspiring. Over the years, he has collaborated closely with visionary writer/director Carl Houston McMillan developing the character Kabelo. Their creative partnership flourished in 2017 with the hugely popular improvised short film Sir and Kabelo (Two Shepherds) that laid the groundwork for this feature film. The raw emotion and authenticity they captured together is a testament to their artistic synergy.

Lebohang's dedication to embodying Kabelo is truly admirable. He has taken the time to dive deep into the complexities of this character, exploring every nuance and emotion. It's this level of commitment that transforms a script into a living, breathing story that connects with the hearts of many.

@lebohang_ntsane.

INTERVIEW WITH Carl Houston Mc Millan

How does the film explore the concept of identity, particularly in relation to Kabelo and Master's backgrounds and journeys?

Kabelo is in an identity crisis, as a shepherd society has boxed him into an identity. He is desperate to break free from this and has a strong self-identity. Kabelo is outspoken, crying out loud to who he wants to be but his self-esteem is low and he is desperate for validation. Kabelo's journey in the film shows us that our circumstances don't fully define who we are. Master's journey with his identity starts on the surface as he is someone on the run hiding his identity and trying to acquire a new one. But in meeting Kabelo and through their desperate journey he learns a bit more of himself and finds an unexpected oneness with Kabelo.

How did the story come about?

I grew up in Lesotho and have always been drawn to the mountains and rural spaces. It is where I feel most inspired and free. I have shot many projects in Lesotho. In 2017, I made a short film with Lebohang Ntsane 'Kabelo' and Morena Leraba 'Sir', called Two Shepherds. It was a very simple improvised piece, more of a character study, It had no plot but because the character were so strong there was so much story. It proved to me the importance of character. The two characters never left my mind and I was compelled to do something bigger with it. Over the years I wrote a feature-length film with the same two characters Sir and Kabelo. It took a long time to get right. Tara and I went through many outlines and drafts until we were happy with the script.

What do you hope audiences will take away?

I hope that people will enjoy this film and really get sucked into the word and characters. It's a unique film with incredible performances. It's a very specific setting but there is a universal story at the core of the film and that is 'dreaming can make you vulnerable'. I enjoy hearing underrepresented voices as well as underdog stories. I want the audience to connect with the main characters but also laugh. Everyone will take away something different and connect differently to the themes. the main themes are identity, false hope, guilt, belonging and longing.

How long was the shoot?

We shot for 4 weeks in August 2024, in a variety of locations that include, mountain highlands, rural villages, natural sandstone valleys as well as some urban locations in and around Maseru city. With so many locations It was a very demanding shoot, as we shot at a new location every day. It was a very ambitious script for the size of the budget, but our crew managed to pull it off.

How did you cast for the film?

Lebohang Ntsane played Kabelo in the short film so he was always going to be cast as Kabelo. Lebohang and I spent time in the mountains visiting shepherds and discussing the character Kabelo. When I was writing Masters character I always had Warren Masemola in mind. Warren has a unique intensity and flamboyance that I have always enjoyed. I was so delighted when Warren read the script and said yes to play Master. Lebohang Ntsane and Warren had great synergy. The majority of our cast was from Lesotho as we wanted to be authentic to the culture and language (Sesotho).

KEY PRODUCTION CREDITS

DIRECTOR Carl Houston McMillan

WRITERS Carl Houston McMillan, Tara Desormeaux

PRODUCERS Pheello 'PJ' Makosholo, Carl Houston McMillan

DOP: Christian Denslow

PRODUCTION DESIGNER Motsatsing Ntsamai

STYLIST Tsepiso Seema

FILM EDITOR Quean Groenewald

MUSIC BY Steven Hogg



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