

FILM INDEPENDENT

July 1, 2016

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am glad to write this letter on behalf of Edo Natasha. I learned about Edo's work when reviewing his film amongst the 6,000 submissions we received for consideration to the 2016 LA Film Festival. His film immediately stood out as ambitious, original, and full of vision. Our team discussed his film at length during our evaluation process. We were impressed with the film's engagement with the action genre, infused with issues of racism, interracial relationships, and corruption. Particularly, I was moved by the development of the film's characters, each of whom had a distinct and heartfelt voice. The film also had a palpably lush and atmospheric sensibility that captured particular perspectives of Hawaii that have rarely been taken up cinematographically. Hawaii would be proud.

The LA Film Festival only considers world premieres. Edo had received offers from various film festivals, and asked if our team might be able to make an early decision. Our panel of 13 programmers discussed the film at length, but was not able to come to consensus. In my experience as a programmer (previously I was at the Tribeca Film Festival), films that provoke long discussions, as Popolo did, are indicative of a filmmaker who has much to say, and the boldness to say it directly and without fear.

Popolo has gone on to win many awards, such as Platinum REMI for Best First Feature at WorldFest International Film Festival Houston, Best Feature Film at International Filmmaker of World Cinema in London, Best Hawaii Film at Honolulu Film Festival, Best Drama at San Diego Black Film Festival, Best Director at Charlotte Black Film Festival, and a closing night film for Honolulu African American Film Festival.

Edo has a natural talent for visual storytelling, and while he has not been to film school and is self taught, I do believe that with further training, support and resources, Edo has the tenacity and drive to become a notable director in the film and television industry.

Sincerely,



Roya Rastegar
Director of Programming, LA Film Festival

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9911 W Pico Blvd, 11th Floor
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