



## Pū'ā Foundation

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### **If President Grover Cleveland recognized Hawaii as a sovereign nation, why is that not the case today?**

*“Ua Mau ke Ea: Sovereignty Endures”, part of the Pacific Showcase at the Hawaii International Film Festival, provides factual evidence that question the history we have been taught*

**Honolulu, Hawaii (Oct. 10, 2012)**--- When this year's 2012 Hawaii International Film Festival (HIFF) draws to a close, “Ua Mau ke Ea: Sovereignty Endures”, a documentary by local film-maker Kau'i Sai-Dudoit, hopes to leave festival-goers with a more accurate understanding of Hawaii's history.

The documentary explores the period of Hawaii from the 18<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of King Kamehameha I to the present day. Using documents and testimony from the islands' most respected scholars, the film challenges the accuracy of previous events which have been, and continue to be taught, in classrooms today.

The story unfolds with the migration of the *Kanaka* (natives from the Marquesa Islands) and covers key events where historians may not have accurately portrayed the facts. The most significant event that has been muddled by historical spin doctors is the recognition of Hawaii as a sovereign nation. Long before the sons of missionaries overthrew Queen Lili'uokalani to further their business interests, Great Britain, France, and the United States recognized Hawaii as a nation in its own right with its own constitution. President Grover Cleveland, after an investigation of the overthrow, declared that it was an “...act of war without the authority of Congress” and ordered federal troops to withdraw and replace the United States flag with the Hawaiian flag. He presented an Agreement to the Queen that would re-instate the Hawaiian government and requested amnesty for the illegal perpetrators, which she granted. Why wasn't this Agreement carried out? Why was the recognition by Great Britain and France not enforced?

The film offers evidence that have always existed but not exposed because it challenged those in power. The easy-to-follow narrative flows like a conversation between friends, using historical prints and footage to tell the story. Viewers may also be surprised to know that King Kamehameha V proved to be a visionary leader well ahead of his time when he removed the monarchy's last remnant of absolute privilege in the constitution and placed sole authority of governance in the executive branch of government. This was a bold move for a monarch to make.

“As the film took shape, I struggled to contain my pride and excitement” explained Toni Bissen, executive producer and director of the Pu'a Foundation. “I am moved by what I've discovered while working closely with the writers, researchers and film makers. My history, *our* history, is ready for viewing. My emotions have at times run the gamut of bursting with pride to a coarse, almost acrid disdain for what I was seeing. The film is powerful, it is liberating...it is who we are. And, who we are is who we *were*. Let us reconcile the past to the present so that together as a Hawaiian community, we can build a better future together.”

The film, “[Ua Mau ke Ea: Sovereignty Endures](#)” screens at HIFF on Sunday, 5:45 p.m., October 21 @ Dole Theaters, Cannery E in Honolulu. The event is free to the public. Please visit [www.uamaukeea.org](http://www.uamaukeea.org) for additional info.

#### **About the Pu'a Foundation**

The [Pu'a Foundation](#) develops projects that foster an understanding and holistic context of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy through research, knowledge sharing and open dialogue.

#### **Contact:**

Aireen de Peralta, MakeStory Marketing  
[Talkstorytome@gmail.com](mailto:Talkstorytome@gmail.com), 415-713-5783

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