

A black film strip with white sprocket holes along the top edge. The word "fish" is written in a white, stylized, handwritten font in the bottom right corner of the film strip.

fish

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We were delighted to hear such praise for *Calle Malaga*, our last film. Wasn't the performance of Carmen Maura wonderful? Though some found the open end of the last scene troubling!

Don't forget to write FISH AGM in your diary...20th September. The cinema door will be open at 9am, the meeting will begin at 9.30 when the doors will be locked until we finish at approximately 9.50.

Best wishes to all,

Roz Garwen.

The word "fish" written in a stylized, handwritten font, slanted to the right.

fish

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

President: Roz Garwen 4886 4142 & 0414 820 890

Guest Enquiries: Deborah Blay : 0400 411 004

TEXT ONLY minimum 24hours notice

Website: www.fish.org.au

Email: fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com

Membership: Fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com

Membership is closed

Enquiries: fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com

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ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 20th September 2026

8.15 pm Tuesday 22nd September 2026

A Thousand Lines
[Germany 2023]

DIRECTOR: Michael Herbig

RUNNING TIME: 93mins

RATING: M

Synopsis:

Truth matters – although the editors at the fictional *Die Chronik* take some convincing in this satirical film inspired by a real-life high-profile media scandal involving De Spiegel.

Review: Penelope DeBelle

Based on journalist Juan Moreno's non-fiction expose *Tausend Zeilen Lüge*, issues of fake news, alternative facts and public relations mingle with ideas of truth. While a story about uncovering the biggest fraud scandal in German journalism could have been an earnest, investigative affair, this is far from it.

At the outset, the fictional magazine *Die Chronik* – it was *Der Spiegel* in real life – has dispatched an experienced Spanish journalist from Berlin, Juan Romero (Elyas M'Barek), to Mexico to write about refugees hoping to cross the US border.

On the American side is their star feature writer, Lars Bogenius (Jonas Nay), who has to do the same with those who don't want the refugees to come. In just three days he infiltrates the notorious Wolf Bandit vigilantes who he calls by their nicknames – Nail, Ghost, etc – and who brazenly shoot at Latinos in front of him because they trust him that much.

The film is so much more than the story of how Bogenius's frauds came to light, although the final reckoning is worth the wait. You mean the boy whose graffiti started the war in Syria wasn't real? It slipped by the fact checkers because the boy had since disappeared, another tragic victim of war, according to the journalist. The frauds here are fictional but the real ones written by journalist Claas Relotius and published by *Der Spiegel* weren't much different.

The film's style, with its Tarantino flourishes, is particularly engaging as it follows the charismatic Romero, who keeps being mistaken for a cab driver, on the trail of the truth. His personal life – father of four delightful children and

married to a woman he loves – is part of the film’s warmth and generosity, even when he neglects them as obsession takes hold.

A Thousand Lines is wonderfully satirical – not funny as such, but with biting portrayals of a newsroom where journalists are driven to be the best. Romero’s senior editors at first defend their turf and are furious with him for making trouble; obviously he is jealous. An email to them listing all the inconsistencies in the US border story is all a bit of a nuisance.

There is a lot of insight into the culture that made Bogenius who he was. Feature writers are instructed not to be boring and to seek out a story that has a dramatic arc and offers emotion, conflict and, finally, resolution. Even when Bogenius is caught, the meaning of truth becomes a slippery thing. The facts may not have been right but the story was justified because it had emotional truth... or so he argues.

This is a good story anyway, but the confident direction by Michael Herbig gives it real flourish. A straightforward piece of dogged journalism that uncovered the truth becomes a morality tale filled with emotion, wit, conflict and resolution, told on the big screen.

Source: www.indailysa.com.au ~ Penelope Debella 4/5/2023, updated 18/3/2025
Edited extracts accessed 19/5/2026

COMING UP:

October	<i>The President’s Cake</i> [Iraq/Qatar/US]	Sunday 18 th & Tuesday 20 th
November	<i>The Thread</i> [France]	Sunday 15 th & Tuesday 17 th
December	<i>The Golden Spurtle</i> [Australia]	Sunday 13 th & Tuesday 15 th
February ’27	<i>Number 24</i> [Norway]	Sunday 14 th & Tuesday 16 th

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Some thoughts on: *Calle Malaga*

There was so much to love about this delightful film. Maria's beautiful and expressive face and eyes tell us from the first frame that she is happy and content in her neighbourhood, embedded into it. The Tangier street scene below her apartment is crowded with small shops, all individual and run by people whom she knows by name. It's full of life and there's not a supermarket in sight. Food is made, displayed and bought daily and the street is as much a theatre for social life as for shopping.

Maria's apartment is spacious and full of her memories and belongings. She is a woman who is grounded into her context. She is obviously looking forward immensely to the visit from her daughter from Spain, but this makes it all the more shocking when Clara appears and declares unilaterally that her mother is going to have to move. Poor Clara, drab, unhappy and obviously feeling unloved – she knows only that she can give her mother no choice and that she must insist on her own plan for the future over any other consideration.

It's from this point on Maria's gift for fun and adventure become plain. She appears to submit to the sale of her belongings, to the move to the retirement home (Free! To citizens of Tangier – enlightened Morocco!) but the bullying cheerfulness of the nurses who want to cut her hair eventually galvanises her into rebellion. She stages a masterful exit and returns to the now empty apartment and over the next period of time, we see her reclaim her belongings, find a way of blackmailing the real estate agent into not telling her daughter that she is there, and starting to forge a relationship with Abslam.

She finds a talent as an entrepreneur and makes some money by holding gloriously rowdy football parties at her house with impassioned supporters of various clubs celebrating or despairing at their fortunes. The visit by the police is subverted by her skill as a hostess but she stands no nonsense in her own home and we see Abslam watching this with admiration.

The love affair between Maria and Abslam is simply beautiful. There is no effort to hide aging flesh, wrinkles and blemishes and the sex scenes are tender, authentic and full of joy. There is nothing voyeuristic nor performative about them – just genuine delight. And even more delight for us, the audience, when Maria describes her night in graphic detail to the silent Sr Josefa who gets hot under the collar in more ways than one. Maria is completely unapologetic – she says it was “magical”. Later, when Maria says to Josefa's dead body, I will miss you, we understand that it's true. Josefa was counsellor, mentor, confessor – all without a word. Her silence and therefore her acceptance made it possible for Maria to open up about everything without judgment or comment, and thus to both celebrate and to mourn her life and experiences.

It's true Clara is cruel and rigid with her mother – but she too is in an impossible situation. Presumably her father putting her name on the deeds of the Tangier apartment in order “to make it easier” was for financial reasons – but in fact, it made everything far more difficult. Had Maria had ownership, would Clara have had to ask, to consult, to explain – and possibly to persuade Maria? Would they each have tried to contact the other more often? As it is, Clara behaves autocratically – perhaps trying to deny her guilt because she knows that of course her mother will never accept it.

The film had a delightful, light-hearted feel, despite the impending doom of the apartment's inevitable sale – and yet, so many questions. What will happen to Maria? Will Abslam offer her a home? And how would that work? The gorgeous days of magical sex and fun excursions would inevitably slow down to ever-older age and possible illness. Would financial security cheer up Clara, who spends the whole film looking thin, miserable and stressed? Or would Clara change her mind and allow her mother to continue to live there? Will Clara and Maria find a way of accepting each other?

Wonderful acting from every single character in this film – but a standout for Carmen Maura as Maria, who is apparently a legend in Spain. Thank you to FISH for this lovely, funny, sad, questioning film.

TRISH TOPP.

Many thanks again Trish!