



real2reel

Fearless

"The *Fearless* series is well named both for its subjects and the crew who filmed them, observes *Fearless* co-producer/co-director Peter Du Cane.

"It is also timely, resonating as it does with important issues affecting the everyday lives of hundreds of millions of people."

When work began on *Fearless—Stories from Asian Women*, no one foresaw how topical the program would become.

Co-producer Samantha Kelley suggested the series focus on the personal and ethical dilemmas faced by Asian women who had taken a stand against social injustice.

Growing up, Doris Nuval had a privileged life. Her father was friend and adviser to the president, Ferdinand Marcos. But at the age of 28, she planted a bomb designed to bring world attention to the Marcos dictatorship. In the first episode of the series, *Explosive Devices*, Doris reflects on her double-life as tourism official and terrorist and describes her transformation from public enemy number one to respected public broadcaster.

In 1994, a young poet plunged Bangladesh into a wave of general strikes and mass protest. Her crime: to write her thoughts about how religious fundamentalism has consigned women to a secondary role in modern society. For her outspokenness, the nation's religious leaders issued a

fatwa against her, literally putting a price on her head. *The Price of Freedom* talks to Taslima Nasrin in Sweden, where she now lives in exile.

In India, Fathima Burnad is working to empower the landless, lowest caste—the Dalits or "untouchables". *Breaking the Caste* follows her struggles to overturn a social system that has existed for over 3000 years, where she is under constant threat of physical violence and where communal anger is often exploited by those in power.

The final episode, *Heart on the Sleeve*, was filmed in Melbourne. Hien Tran, a former Vietnamese refugee turned trade union representative, is the voice for thousands of Australian outworkers who are employed under archaic conditions. Very few people are willing to talk openly about this exploitation but Hien has the courage to speak out. The shoot however was nearly called off due to another act of generosity by Hien—she was about to donate her kidney to her sick son.

"At each step of this journey we were amazed at the courage and sheer determination of these women, says co-director Mathew Kelley."

A Film Australia National Interest Program in association with Mask Productions, *Fearless* was produced and developed with the assistance of ScreenWest and the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia, and produced in association with SBS Independent.

This series will screen weekly on SBS-TV at 8pm from Friday 12 September.

Banff Rockie Award for Ted's Evolution

Ted's Evolution has won the 2003 Banff Rockie Award in the Popular Science and Natural History category, announced in June at the Banff Television Festival in Canada.

The Banff Rockie Awards recognise excellence in television programming from around the world.

The one-hour documentary, which screened in Australia on 12 June on ABC-TV, looks at the work of Australian scientist Ted Steele, who has taken on the scientific establishment in a battle that could revolutionise the theory of evolution.

"Congratulations to producer David Noakes and director/producer Lou Petho for this significant award. *Ted's Evolution* was competing with numerous popular science and natural history programs from many different countries and it is a tremendous honour for them, and for Film Australia, to have the quality of this program internationally recognised," said Sharon Connolly, Chief Executive of Film Australia.

The film will screen in Canberra in August as part of Scinema, organised by the National Museum of Australia and the CSIRO, along with two other National Interest Program productions—*Silent Storm* and *Muddy Waters—Life and Death on the Great Barrier Reef*.

Ted's Evolution and *Muddy Waters* have also been invited to screen in Hungary at the International Scientific Film Festival.

Muddy Waters is participating in the Japan Wildlife Festival starting 21 August, where it is a finalist in the award section.



Left: Sound recordist Laurie Chlanda and DOP Ian Pugsley by a frozen lake in Sweden filming the episode, *The Price of Freedom* in March 2002.

Right: Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin, whose story is told in *The Price of Freedom*.



Dhakiyarr vs the King: (left) sound recordist Chris West and (right) DOP Allan Collins recording a funeral ceremony for Dhakiyarr's grandson at Dhurupitjipi homeland, northeast Arnhem Land.

In production

Australian Biography Online

Producer Ron Saunders, website director Thomas Ashelford and their production team have completed the first two stages of the *Australian Biography Online* project: the construction of a website, to be hosted by the National Library of Australia, with video and transcripts from seven episodes in the *Australian Biography* series.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

The Capitalist Drive

Writer/director/producer Barbara Chobocky turns the camera on her extended family in Australia and the Czech Republic to explore changes in the life and values of the two countries. This very personal account of post-war history will reveal the way that ordinary people cope with social, political and personal upheaval. Jeff Bruer is editor, co-writer and DOP. Damien Parer is co-producer.

Executive Producers: Anna Grieve and Penny Robins

Colour of War—The Anzacs

Produced in association with TWI, the Nine Network, Television New Zealand, NZ On Air, the New Zealand Department of Defence and ScreenSound Australia, this three-part series will tell the story of Australia and New Zealand at war in a way never seen before—using only colour footage. One episode has been completed, editing is underway at Film Australia on a second and a third is in the final stages of scripting.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Dhakiyarr vs the King

Seventy years after a controversial murder trial, the families of an Aboriginal leader and a white policeman are joining the Northern Territory government in a bold act of reconciliation. The makers of a new one-hour documentary recently travelled to Darwin to film a historically significant *wukadi* ceremony at the NT Supreme Court. The program will tell the story of tribal leader Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda and a clash between Yolgnu law and white man's law. Produced by Graeme Isaac and directed by Allan Collins (who is also director of photography) and Tom Murray (who is also writer), it will screen on ABC-TV.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

The Last Great Amateurs

The filmmakers continue to follow the fortunes of the Melbourne Phoenix netballers, who are set to repeat last year's national championship win. The program will provide an insight into the demands of elite-level amateur sport on both the club and the players. Sue Thomson is directing this one-hour documentary for ABC-TV. Richard Keddie is producing with Andrew Wiseman and writing with Angela Buckingham.

Executive Producers: Franco di Chiera and Anna Grieve

A Matter of Choice

Genetic medicine gives us the ability to design our descendants...and it is happening today. Australia is at the forefront of this new technology, known as pre-implantation genetic diagnosis or PGD.

A new documentary will explore a wide range of perspectives on this complex and emotionally charged issue. Written and directed by Sean Cousins and produced by Stuart Menzies and Tony Wright of December Films, this one-hour program for SBS-TV was developed with the assistance of Film Victoria and the AFC, and produced with the assistance of Film Victoria.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

The Safe House

Award-winning animator Lee Whitmore is creating a half-hour program for SBS-TV based on her own experiences as a young girl. It's the story of her brush with the real-life spy drama known as the Petrov Affair. Denise Haslem is producer.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Troubled Minds—The Story of Lithium

Writer/director Dennis Smith and producer John Lewis will explore the life and work of John Cade, the Australian scientist who revolutionised the treatment of mental illness. Cade's trials, which began in the 1940s, involved the use of lithium to treat severely ill people with bi-polar disorder. It was the beginning of psychopharmacology—using drugs to manage psychiatric conditions.

The one-hour program is being produced in association with Omar Khayam Films and SBS Independent, and was developed with the assistance of Film Victoria.

Executive Producers: Franco di Chiera and Penny Robins

Woomera

As Australia's only purpose-built defence village, Woomera has been famous for its rocket range, as a home to Americans from the Nurrungar base and, most recently, for its refugee detention centre. But now the detention centre has closed and the town is in danger of closing too. This one-hour documentary for ABC-TV will tell the story of ordinary people in a small town caught up in big events. Steve Thomas is writing, directing and co-producing with Kim Anning.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Recent acquisition

Film Australia has recently acquired the independently produced documentary *Yum Cha Cha* for distribution. Written and directed by Boyd Britton, who co-produced with Anthony Buckley, *Yum Cha Cha* is a compelling journey into the life and art of Nancy King. In the late 1940s, King was one of China's most promising landscape artists. However, on the brink of her professional debut, she suddenly withdrew from the art community and over time her name gradually faded into anonymity. In 1988, after a 35-year hiatus, she resurfaced in Sydney and has since developed a profound connection to the Australian people and the landscape. King's love for her adopted homeland has rekindled her artistic ambitions and she is now, at 72, ready to embark upon a solo art exhibition.

ATOM Awards

At the Australian Teachers of Media Awards in May, *A Million Acres a Year* was named Best General Documentary, Science, Technology and Environment category. *Two Thirds Sky—Artists in Desert Country* received a special award for Best Documentary, Art and Culture and was a finalist in the General Documentary, Social and Political Issues category along with *In Limbo* and *Black Chicks Talking*. All four titles are independently produced programs distributed by Film Australia.

Human Contraptions, a Film Australia National Interest Program production, was a finalist in the Best General Animation Category.

In other award news, Joel Peterson was awarded a distinction in the Documentary Category of the National Australian Cinematographers Society Awards for his work on *Two Thirds Sky*. Valeriu Campan was a finalist for the *Rosa's Story* episode of *East Timor—Birth of a Nation*.

Film Australia's Outback DVD was shortlisted for *The Australian Award for Excellence* in the Secondary Technology Showcase Category.

Black Chicks Talking was a finalist in the TV Week Logie Awards for Most Outstanding Documentary.



Unearthing the truth about nuclear fallout

Did fallout from nuclear testing contaminate Australia's milk supply? Writer/director/co-producer Peter Butt went looking for the answer. Here he details the story behind the new Film Australia National Interest Program production, *Silent Storm*:

"In late 2001, I read Roger Cross's book *Fallout* about CSIRO scientist Hedley Marston's top-secret fallout experiments during British atomic testing in Australia in 1956. In the aftermath of two of the tests, Marston had measured worrying levels of radioactive iodine in the thyroids of sheep and cattle. Marston's attempt to alert the public about the presence of a dangerous isotope in the fallout—Strontium 90, which causes leukemia and bone cancer—was largely thwarted by both the physicists on the Australian Weapons Test Safety Committee and the government.

The issue of Strontium 90 had a strange resonance. I recalled a newspaper report a few months earlier concerning the secret testing in Australia of tens of thousands of human bones for Strontium 90 in the 1950s.

I contacted Roger Cross and told him my suspicion that the stories could be linked. He agreed that there could be a connection.

I set about researching the Strontium 90 bone survey in the archives. My suspicions were quickly realized. The Safety Committee scientists—with whom Marston clashed over his claims of Strontium 90—had instigated the bone survey almost immediately on receiving his report. In the report Marston argued that the proof would be found "in the bones of children". Indeed, documents from the Safety Committee revealed a pre-occupation with the bones of babies, stillborns and infants.

I knew this was a documentary just waiting to be made. Film Australia Executive Producer, Anna Grieve, enthusiastically agreed. In early 2002, with Roger Cross on board as historical consultant, I set about researching the complete story. Interviews with scientists who worked with Marston as well as hundreds of top-secret documents, personal correspondence and Marston's ASIO file helped flesh out the story.

However, precious little was available of Marston on film. It became clear that the only way to tell his story was to dramatise it. An actor would have to be found to play the large and larger-than-life character.

Bille Brown as Hedley Marston in *Silent Storm*

Soon after, I saw the film *The Dish*. Actor Bille Brown, as the down-to-earth, suffer-no-fools Prime Minister, John Gorton, jumped off the screen. He looked and sounded just like Hedley Marston!

A few days later, I met with Bille Brown in Sydney and he agreed to play the part.

In September 2002, with the support of SBS Independent, *Silent Storm* commenced production. Over the coming months we set about recreating the world of Hedley Marston. Miraculously, his corrugated iron-clad field station at Robe, South Australia remained in original condition. The façade of his Adelaide laboratories and office also remained, but the interiors had been modernised. After a desperate search, suitable period laboratories and offices were found at the University of Sydney.

For the production, I wanted a 'filmic look'. I worked with cinematographer Calvin Gardiner and post-production house Engine on a lighting style and colour-grading solution to make digital video look like 35mm film shot in the 1950s.

We also decided to use Super 8 home movie film to bring the audience closer to Marston, who by all accounts was not averse to being the centre of attention. Indeed, in real life he was painted by leading artists Dobell, Murch and Gruner, and feted by industrialists, photographers and the crème of society."

Silent Storm, which was co-produced by Rob McAuley, will screen on SBS-TV.

Festival update—wild for Wildness and Film Australia titles

At the Sydney Film Festival in June, *Wildness* won the audience award for best documentary at the State Theatre.

At the Dendy Awards, which precede the festival, a Film Australia distribution title *The Mascot* won the prestigious Rouben Mamoulian Award as well as the Community Relations category. *Welcome to the Waks Family* was a finalist in the same category. The Sex episode of the *Human Contraptions* series was highly commended in the Yoram Gross Animation Award and *Two Thirds Sky—Artists in Desert Country* was highly commended in the Documentary category.

Wildness, which has been nominated for an Australian Writers Guild Award in the Documentary, Public Broadcast category, has also been selected to screen at the Melbourne International Film Festival and the Brisbane International Film Festival.

Other MIFF selections include *The Mascot* and *Human Contraptions*, with Bruce Petty taking part in a forum discussion.

BIFF has also programmed two episodes from *Human Contraptions—Global and Education*—as well as *Breaking the Caste* from *Fearless—Stories from Asian Women*.

Wildness has attracted international attention too. It recently participated in the screenings-on-demand section of the Cologne Conference International Television Festival in Germany, the biggest media event of its kind in the world.

The one-hour documentary examines the legacy of two of Australia's greatest wilderness photographers, Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis. Made in association with Big and Little Films, it was developed with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission, and produced with the assistance of Screen Tasmania, Film Victoria and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Wildness will screen nationally on ABC-TV on Sunday 24 August at 9.30 pm.

At the launch of *Wildness* at the State Theatre, Hobart on 27 June (from left to right): Special Minister of State, Senator Eric Abetz; *Wildness* producer, Michael McMahon; Film Australia Chairman, Rob Fisher; Film Australia CEO, Sharon Connolly; Melva Truchanas, widow of Olegas; Liz Dombrovskis, widow of Peter; Professor Tim Bonyhady; *Wildness* writer/director, Scott Millwood and Senator Bob Brown of the Australian Greens.



Kym Druitt joins FA

Film Australia has appointed Kym Druitt as Program Promotions Manager, starting 4 August at the company's Lindfield office.

Kym has been working in film and television for 11 years—most recently as Publicity and Marketing Manager for Southern Star Sales. Previously she was National Publicity Manager for Dendy Films and worked as a publicist at SBS and ABC TV. She has also been a publicist for ABC Radio and for Penguin Books.

Kym was a newspaper journalist in Victoria and the UK before joining the film and television industry.

"Kym's considerable experience in the promotion of television programs in Australia and internationally and in working closely with program makers will make her a great asset to Film Australia's marketing team," said Sharon Connolly, Chief Executive of Film Australia. "Kym takes over from Ambra Sancin who leaves after two years during which she's made a much appreciated contribution to enhancing the profile and reach of Film Australia National Interest Programs."

In other staff news, Julian Lynton will join the Production Department as Production Accountant.

New Program Promotions Manager Kym Druitt



Festival brief

Welcome to the Waks Family has been invited to screen at the Boston Jewish Film Festival and the San Jose Jewish Film Festival.

Everyday Brave—Media Nomads has been selected for the Second Taiwan International Ethnographic Film Festival in October.

Another *Everyday Brave* episode, *Saltwater Bluesman*, will be included in the inaugural Activating Human Rights Film Festival in Byron Bay, along with *Fearless—Stories from Asian Women*.

Buried Country and *Bush Mechanics—The Series* screened at the Sydney Indigenous Film Festival in Parramatta in July.

Inland with Sturt, a Film Australia classic from 1952, was included in Big Screen 2003 Gems from the Archive Program, a national touring festival visiting regional centres.

Antarctic Vigil, also from 1952, and *Frozen Images*, a short program on Frank Hurley from the *Rewind* series, screened in Tasmania in June at the Longest Night Festival.

Sales Update

In Australia, *Voices From the Page—David Williamson* has been licensed to Umbrella Entertainment for inclusion in a DVD release of *The Club*, and *Our Century* has been relicensed to Reader's Digest for DVD.

For Australian pay television, *Bush Mechanics—The Series* and *Surviving Shepherd's Pie* have been licensed to XYZ, and *Breathing Space*, *Mr Strehlow's Films*, *My Father My Country*, *Out of the Shadows*, *Tosca—A Tale of Love and Torture* and *Troubled Waters* have been licensed to Odyssey.

In the USA, *Human Contraptions*, *The Web*, *The Trouble With Merle*, *An Imaginary Life* and *Antarctic Pioneer* have been licensed to Chip Taylor Communications for non-theatrical distribution.

The Mascot and *Diverted to Delhi* have been licensed for non-theatrical distribution to Filmmakers Library, who has also licensed three episodes from *Fearless—Stories From Asian Women* for educational distribution in the US and Canada.

Today is News, *Bylines*, *Black Australia*, *Mary Durak* and *Snowy—Dream of Growing Up* have been licensed to BFS Media for inclusion in DVD releases in North America.

After Hours has been licensed to Carlotta Films in France for inclusion on a DVD release of Jane Campion films. *Mystique of the Pearl* and *Cane Toads* have been licensed to Multithematiques for pay television in France, *Ted's Evolution* to Media Park for pay television in Spain and *Slow Food Revolution* to TG4 for free television in Ireland. *The Mascot* has been licensed for free-to-air television to VRT Belgium and YLE Finland.

In Israel, *East Timor—Birth of a Nation*, *Black Chicks Talking* and *Plumpton High Babies* have been licensed to Noga Communications.

Slow Food Revolution has been licensed to TVB's Pearl Purchasing for pay television in Hong Kong and *Touring Australia* to Eko Shacto in Japan.

After the Warming has been licensed to Rose Entertainment for South America. Our agent DARO has licensed *Niagara's Gold*, *Risky Business*, *City of Dreams*, *Steel City* and *Lies, Spies & Olympics* for pay television to The Business Channel in Dubai and *Teachers of the World* to Channel 31 in the United Arab Emirates.

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