

Stories of the water serpent, Kulunada, which inhabits a permanent waterhole in the arid desert country of central Australia.



Crookhat ^{and the} Kulunada

A film by David Tranter

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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER



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Casey Akemarr Holmes

Nganampa Anwernekenhe

Crookhat and the Kulunada is part of the *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* television series. *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* is produced by Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) Productions, the film and television production branch of CAAMA, in partnership with Imparja Television.

Over 180 programs have been produced since the *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* television series was initiated in 1988. The primary aim of the series is the maintenance of Aboriginal languages and culture. *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* also provides an opportunity for Indigenous filmmakers to work on an Indigenous language television series. Each program must have an Indigenous Australian in the key creative roles which include writer, director, cinematographer and sound recordist.

Visit Australian Screen at <http://aso.gov.au/titles/series/nganampa-anwernekenhe/> to learn more about *Nganampa Anwernekenhe*.

About the filmmaker

'One of the main things about a Nganampa is to keep it simple and straight in the same way that our old people tell their stories. My grandfather used to tell me about this story of how the serpent was shot in the eye. The opportunity to convert this oral history to a Nganampa allows me not only to tell the story but also to show the way our old people pass on our stories. I believe it's important to add them to our archive. The reason we have a narrator and a witness to tell the story is so the story is told right way. It's the same for a Nganampa. You can't bend the story or change it to try and make it fit a format. It has to be told straight.'

– David Tranter, Director

David Apwerl Tranter is an Alyawarr man from the central desert region of Australia. His skin name is Apwerl. His mother's father comes from the Tjowa estate where the Kulunada lives.

David first began working with CAAMA as a trainee sound recordist in 1989. Since then Tranter has worked on hundreds of CAAMA film and video productions.

In 2009, Tranter won the Australian Screen Sound Guild award for Best Sound on a feature film for *Samson & Delilah* (Warwick Thornton). In 2010, Tranter was a recipient of an AFI Award for his work as a sound recordist for the film.

Tranter's directing career began in 2004. His credits as a director include *Karli Jalangu*, *Living Country*, *Crook Hat and Camphoo*, *Willaberta Jack*, *Karlu Karlu* and *Crookhat and the Kulunada*.

IN THE ARID DESERT COUNTRY of the central Northern Territory there is a strip of green where an underground spring feeds a waterhole. Kulunada, the rainbow serpent of the Dreaming, lives in the waterhole.

A four wheel drive journeys through the bush and arrives at the waterhole. The three men who emerge are Donald (Crookhat) Akemarr Thompson, Alec Apetyarr Peterson and Casey Akemarr Holmes. They talk about their journey. They greet the spring and Kulunada.

The men converse as they gather firewood and prepare a camp. They share their knowledge of the place. When they come to the slab that was the foundation for the old station homestead, they recollect the old days, when white men arrived and established cattle stations.

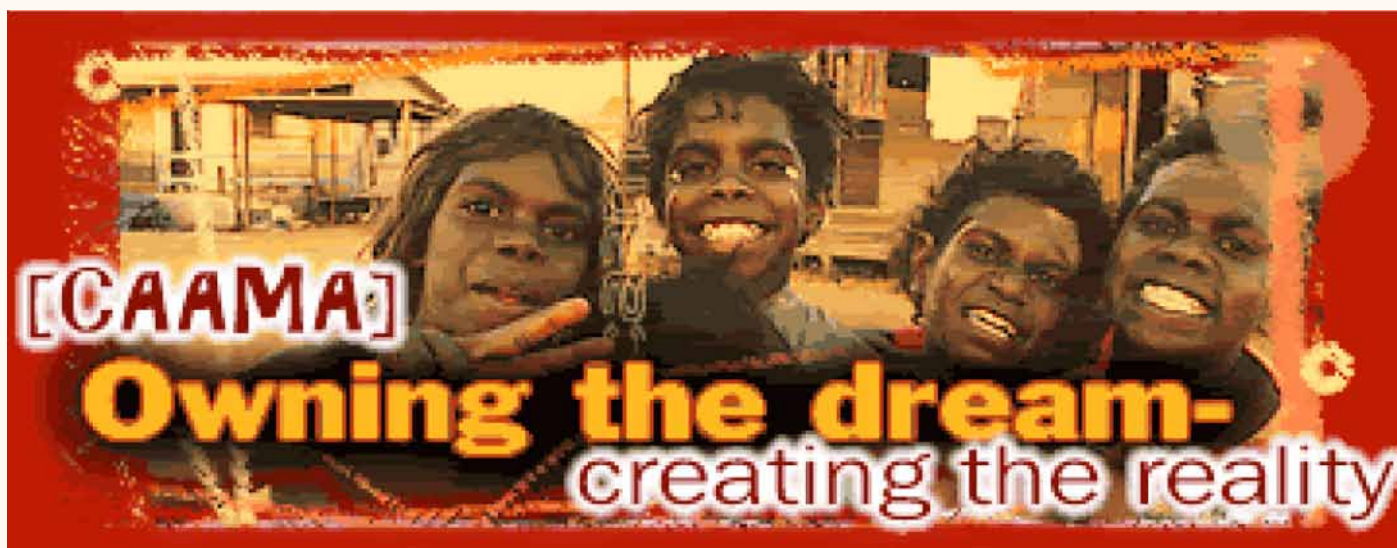
As the campfire sends sparks into the clear desert sky, Crookhat tells stories of Kulunada.

Crookhat and the Kulunada is in Alyawarr language and is subtitled in English. Alyawarr language is spoken by approximately 1400 people.

This study guide to accompany *Crookhat and the Kulunada*, a documentary directed by David Tranter provides information and suggestions for learning activities in English, Humanities and Social Sciences, Indigenous Studies and Media.

Teachers should preview *Crookhat and the Kulunada* before showing it to students. The documentary would appeal to students in upper primary classes and is suitable for secondary students at all levels. *Crookhat and the Kulunada* is suitable for general audiences.

Duration: 23 minutes



CAAMA Productions

Crookhat and the Kulunada was produced by Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) Productions, the film and television production branch of CAAMA, in partnership with Imparja Television.

The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) began operations in 1980 and was the first Aboriginal group to be allocated a broadcasting license. The Aboriginal people of Central Australia own CAAMA and its objectives focus on the social, cultural and economic advancement of Aboriginal peoples. CAAMA produces media products that engender pride in Aboriginal communities, while informing and

educating the wider community.

Established in 1988 CAAMA Productions is part of the CAAMA media group. CAAMA Production's primary purpose is to represent Indigenous people, culture and language in film and television. CAAMA Productions was the recipient of the 2005 Film Australia Stanley Hawes Award for Outstanding Contribution to Australian Documentary.

Visit CAAMA at <<http://www.caama.com.au>> to learn more about CAAMA and CAAMA productions.

Imparja Television

Imparja Television is an Australian television network broadcasting to remote eastern and central Australia. 'Imparja' is an Arrernte word meaning footprints. The word is used to indicate Imparja Television's aim to service Arrernte people wherever they may live. Imparja Television describe their range as a footprint. The network is unique in Australia and the world, being totally owned and controlled by Northern Territory and South Australian Aboriginal shareholders.

Imparja Television delivers information and communication services to the community, while promoting Indigenous culture and values.

Visit Imparja Television at <<http://www.imparja.com>>.

Find out more about Imparja Television at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imparja_Television>.

CREDITS

Director and sound recordist: David Tranter
Photography: Eric Murray Lui
Editor: Dena Curtis
Series producer: Tanya Fraser
Executive producers: Robyn Nardoo and Ray Lillis

Crookhat and the Kulunada is a CAAMA Production for Imparja TV, in the *Nganampa Anwernekenhe* series.

Principal investor: Screen Australia

Crookhat and the Kulunada is available on DVD from Ronin Films, PO Box 680, Mitchell, ACT 2911. Ph: (02) 6248 0851. Email: orders@roninfilms.com.au

Another film featuring 'Crookhat' and directed by David Tranter is *Crook Hat and Camphoo* (2005) – also available on DVD from Ronin Films.



USING CROOKHAT AND THE KULUNADA IN THE CLASSROOM

Teachers may select from the following information and activities to support students' viewing and close analysis of *Crookhat and the Kulunada*.



MAKING A START

- Did you enjoy watching *Crookhat and the Kulunada*?
- Use the table on page 5 to make notes as you watch *Crookhat and the Kulunada*. Drawing on the contents of the table, spend time as a class discussing the content and purpose of *Crookhat and Kulunada*.
- Draw a concept map that shows the connections between *Crookhat and the Kulunada* and your world.

DONALD, ALEC AND CASEY

Crookhat and the Kulunada features Donald (Crookhat) Akemarr Thompson, Alec Apetyarr Peterson and Casey Akemarr Holmes. The men are Alyawarr elders. Each of them have a different role in the storytelling process. Crookhat and Casey are Kwertengerl Manager of Ceremony for the Tjowa

estate. This makes them the custodians of the story that's been told. Alec, as a senior man of the Alyawarr lands, oversees the storytelling to make sure that the story is told correctly.

- Use 'Think, Pair, Share' to discuss your impressions of Crookhat, Alec and Casey. Review the notes that you have made about the men in the table. Talk about your impressions of Donald, Alec and Casey with a partner. Share your conversation about one of the men with the rest of the class.
- What words would you use to describe the relationship between the three men? Match the words that you have selected with moments from *Crookhat and the Kulunada*.

THE ALYAWARR HOMELANDS

The Alyawarr homelands stretch north east of Alice Springs and follow the Sandover River up towards

Above:
Alec Apetyarr Peterson

DISCUSSION	VIEWING NOTES
<p>PLOT</p> <p>What happens?</p>	
<p>CHARACTERS</p> <p>Make notes about the story teller and the witnesses.</p>	
<p>SETTING</p> <p>Where does the story take place?</p>	
<p>THEMES</p> <p>What are the big ideas?</p>	



tices, histories, languages, laws and family relationships have been passed on in this way. These stories link past, present and future generations of Indigenous Australians.

Crookhat and the Kulunada continues this tradition. The storytellers featured in the documentary value their cultural stories and recognise the importance of sharing these stories. The stories were passed onto them by elders in their community and as elders they are now responsible for passing on the stories to the next generation.

- Donald Akemarr Thompson, known as Crookhat, is in his seventies and is a senior Alyawarr man from Antarrengeny and Hatches Creek. He is a proud man and the keeper of many stories for his country. Crookhat spent his early years as a stockman working on Kurundi Station, Murray Downs and other stations across the Barkly Tablelands. He also spent time mining. Crookhat has spent his whole life on his homelands.

Crookhat is the main storyteller in *Crookhat and the Kulunada*.

Alec Apetyarr Peterson and Casey Akemarr Holmes are the witnesses. They are Crookhat's advisors. The stories that Crookhat tells in *Crookhat and the Kulunada* have been checked by Alec and Casey.

Spend time as a class, discussing the different roles the men play in the telling of the Kulunada stories.

The men claim that telling the stories is their responsibility.

Why do they make this claim?

Why must the stories told by Crookhat be witnessed by Alec and Casey?

- 'We know this place because our old people told us but the young people need to keep it up. We want the young ones to be like us, and take on and pass on the stories.' (Donald Akemarr Thompson)

Why is it important that the stories of Kulunada continue to be told?

●●●●●●●● KULUNADA ●●●●●●●●

'This is the water serpent's home and this is where he came out a long, long time ago.'

– Donald Akemarr Thompson

Crookhat and the Kulunada tells a spiritual narrative about the rainbow serpent of the Dreaming.

The rainbow serpent is portrayed as a large, snake-like creature, whose Dreaming track is always associated with watercourses, such as billabongs, rivers, creeks and lagoons. It is the benevolent protector of the land and its people, and the source of all life. It is also a malevolent punisher of law breakers.

the Barkly Tablelands for a thousand kilometres.

- Have you ever visited Alyawarr country? Locate the Alyawarr homelands on a map of Australia. Use print and electronic texts to find out more about the Alyawarr homelands and about the Alyawarr people. Share your findings with others in the class. A useful starting point is the Indigenous Language Map located at <<http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/>>. Continue your research at <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alyawarre>>.
- Drawing on moments and statements from *Crookhat and the Kulunada* describe Crookhat, Alec and Casey's relationship with country.

●●●●●●●● ORAL TRADITION ●●●●●●●●

'We came to tell the history of this place, what the old people have said.'

– Donald Akemarr Thompson

The term 'oral tradition' refers to the transmission of cultural material through speech.

The practice of telling oral stories is an important aspect of Aboriginal culture. Specific cultural prac-

Above: Donald Akemarr Thompson

- What is the meaning of the term 'Dreaming' in Aboriginal culture?
- What evidence does *Crookhat and the Kulunada* provide of Kulunada's benevolence? What evidence does *Crookhat and the Kulunada* provide of Kulunada's malevolence?
- What do the stories of Kulunada allow us to understand about Aboriginal people's lives and their relationship with the land?
- What does *Crookhat and the Kulunada* tell us about Crookhat, Alec and Casey's belief system?
- Create a PowerPoint that tells the story of Kulunada and how he watches over the spring. Or
Create a PowerPoint that tells the story of the pastoralists who came face to face with Kulunada.
Your role as storyteller is to adapt one of the stories told by Crookhat. Your PowerPoint should use words, images and sounds to tell the story. Before you begin, think about your audience and how best to engage their attention.
- There are innumerable names and stories associated with the rainbow serpent. Use the Internet to find out more about the rainbow serpent's place in Aboriginal mythology.

CONFLICT

'The cheeky white fellows came here at the same time as the bullock. They brought fear to the Aboriginal people, they killed them and made some leave the country in fear.'

– Donald Akemarr Thompson

Crookhat and Kulunada is also a collective history of early contact with white pastoralists.

The arrival of pastoralists in the late nineteenth century brought conflict to the Alyawarr region. The pastoralists established cattle stations in the most fertile areas. The local Aboriginal people were denied access to the land and its resources. The pastoralists also stole the Aboriginal women away from their husbands and families.

- How did the arrival of the pastoralists change life in the Aboriginal community featured in Crookhat's story?
- In arriving at an answer to this question, consider in what ways the Aboriginal people were dispossessed of their identity and belonging. You should also consider the following questions:
 - How did the arrival of the pastoralists change life for the Aboriginal men?
 - How did the arrival of the pastoralists change life for the Aboriginal women?
 - How did the pastoralists regard the land that they claimed as theirs?



Above: Casey Akemarr Holmes

- Spend time as a class, discussing the story that Crookhat tells about Tim from Barrow Creek country. What happens? Why does the pastoralist shoot the Aboriginal man who was breaking in the horses? Do you think the pastoralist's behaviour was typical of the times? What does Tim do? Were his actions justified?
- Why should the history of the conflict between the pastoralists and the Aboriginal people of the Alywarr homelands be documented and discussed?

RESPECT

Write the word respect in the middle of an A4 page.

Use the space around the word to make a statement about the documentary's exploration of this idea.

Use moments and statements from *Crookhat and the Kulunada* to support your claims.

Make sure that you provide notes on:

- Respecting the land
- Respecting people
- Respecting culture
- Respecting the past

BEHIND THE SCENES

- 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers should exercise caution when watching this program as it may contain images of deceased persons.'
Why is this warning shown at the beginning of *Crookhat and the Kulunada*?
- *Crookhat and the Kulunada* is an observational documentary.
What does this term mean, and why do you

think the filmmaker chose this approach?

- Who is the audience of *Crookhat and the Kulunada*?
- How does the filmmaker portray the Alyawarr homelands?

Spend time as a class, discussing the filmmaker's decisions about the settings featured in *Crookhat and the Kulunada*.

- Why do you think the filmmaker used the sounds of the natural world rather than music to create the soundtrack of *Crookhat and the Kulunada*?

EXTENDED ANALYSIS

- Complete a detailed analysis of *Crookhat and the Kulunada*. Your analysis should provide:
 - A synopsis of the documentary
 - A description of the roles played by Indigenous Australians.
 - An explanation of the filmmaker's purpose.
 - An assessment of the documentary's portrayal of Indigenous Australia.
 - A comment on how the documentary uses production elements.
 - Your judgement of the documentary's worth.

CREATE

'We want the young ones to be like us, and take on and pass on the stories.'

– Donald Akemarr Thompson

What stories are a part of your family's world?

Make a digital story about a story that is part of your family's world and that you think should be handed down from one generation to the next.

A digital story uses multimedia tools and visual and audio resources from personal archives. Most digital stories are approximately two to five minutes in length. Digital stories are a unique and powerful way to tell a story. You will need to construct a storyboard, write a script and source photographs and other keepsakes to compose the story. Then there are other decisions. Who will narrate the story? What sounds and music will be part of the digital story? What is an appropriate title? Include a dedication and end credits.

Further information about digital stories can be found on the website of the Australian Centre for the Moving Image <<http://www.acmi.net.au>> and by searching for 'digital stories' on the internet.

When you have finished, present your story to an audience.



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SCREEN
AUSTRALIA

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