

# STATEMENT ABOUT THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

## INNOCENCE BETRAYED

The impetus for the documentary came from the Bowraville community. It was their idea to do a film that would capture what they had been through and raise awareness of their fight to get these cases back into court.

The events are still really traumatic for the parents and we worked with them to negotiate what they felt comfortable doing. This helped us secure the first on-air interview of Rebecca Stadhams and Thomas Duroux.

The film was used in the recent NSW Parliamentary inquiry into the impact of the unsolved murders of the children. The video interviews formed testimony for the parents who didn't want to relive the trauma of their experiences again. For all of the technical legal arguments that can be made about why these cases need to go back to court and a serial killer put behind bars, the most powerful reasons are about the need for justice for the parents of the victims. This film seeks to make that argument in their own words.

In the crafting of the story, the town and the countryside were characters and this was captured in the visual choices made in the creation of the film.

**- Larissa Behrendt, writer/director**

---

The challenge at the beginning was how to interpret with images, such a sad and tragic story. Through being on location with the families, inspiration then came. Because the idea was not to use any literal re-enactments we set out to show the dramatic landscape and the Bowraville township to tell the story of the harsh and brutal reality of the murders.

The natural environment – the wide green landscape of the Nambucca Valley and surrounding mountains is spectacular, beautiful and powerful. Yet the sleepy, quaint town of Bowraville has a neglected feeling about it – a sense of abandonment hangs in the air. This was picked up in the imagery of the often empty streets and closed shops, the old petrol station, its bowsers broken and covered in spider webs. The sense of decay was something picked up on in the imagery of dead leaves and branches shown during descriptions of the locations where two of the victims' remains were found.

Images of the landscape and environment, along with key moments in the cases from archival news reports, were used to segue between different stages of the families' campaign for justice. The ups and downs of the families' 22 year long campaign is represented by nature. Crisp, white frost on bracken leaves represented the coldness in the hearts of the families when they felt like they were being left high and dry.

When the sun rises the frost melts, and droplets of water fall from the barbs of the blackberry bush, a metaphor that a new development is afoot: something that might bring change or a sign of hope for the families.

The city landscape jolts us back to the reality of the busy city lifestyle where people are unaware of the case and official decisions are made in colonial era buildings in its heart. Hopes are shattered along the way by the lack of will of the authorities to act. Yet the city is also the place where the families sought and got support from a committed team of lawyers at the Jumbunna Indigenous Research unit led by Professor Larissa Behrendt and a Detective, Gary Jubelin from the NSW Police.

**- *Fabio Cavadini, producer/director of photography***

## BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES

### INNOCENCE BETRAYED

#### **Writer/Director**

Larissa Behrendt is a Eualeyai and Gamillaroi woman. She is a lawyer, Indigenous advocate, an award winning writer and filmmaker. A graduate of the Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS), "***Innocence Betrayed***" is her debut documentary as writer/director.

#### **Producer**

Fabio Cavadini (Italian born) has worked closely on a number of films with Indigenous themes and on a documentary and short drama films with Indigenous Producer, Jason De Santolo. In the 1970's he worked with his brother, Alessandro on *Ningla A'Na – Hungry For Our Land*.

# LARISSA BEHRENDT - Director

Larissa is an award-winning author with a passion for telling the stories of Indigenous Australia. She is an award-winning writer of fiction and non-fiction. She has a legal background, is an experienced researcher, is involved with several arts organisations and educational programs. She wrote and directed the documentary, *Innocence Betrayed* which will air on NITV in early 2014. She is currently Professor of Indigenous Research at the University of Technology, Sydney. Find out more about Larissa Behrendt's writing visit [www.larissabehrendt.com](http://www.larissabehrendt.com).

## Screen Credits

- Director, Writer. *Innocence Betrayed*. (52 minutes) Lavarch Productions, to be aired on NITV in 2014.
- Director, Writer, Producer. *Stand Up, Deadly*. (90 minutes) Lavarch Productions, post-production. Due for completion 2014.
- Writer. *Who We Are 3*. (54 minutes) CAAMA/Foxtel; directed by Leah Purcell. Due for completion 2014.
- Producer. *Protecting Manuwangku*. (26 minutes) NITV. Due for completion 2014.
- Director, Writer, Producer. *The Syron's Call*. (14 minutes) AFTRS. 2013
- Director, Writer. *The Night Sky*. (8 minutes) AFTRS. 2013
- Director, Writer. *Clan*. (7 minutes) AFTRS. 2013

## Books

- *Indigenous Australia for Dummies*. Wiley: 2012 (non-fiction)
- *Australian Screen Classics: Rabbit Proof Fence*. Currency Press: 2012 (non-fiction)
- *Legacy*. St Lucia: UQP. 2008 (fiction)
- *Home*. St Lucia: UQP. 2004. (fiction)
- *Achieving Social Justice*. Annandale: Federation Press, 2002. (non-fiction)

## Short Stories

- "Under Skin, In Blood". *Overland Literary Magazine*, Vol. 203, Winter 2011.
- "The Space Between Us". *10 Short Stories you must read in 2011*. Australia Council: Surry Hills, 2011.

## Awards

- AW Myer Indigenous Award – AFTRS – 2012
- NSW Australian of the Year – 2011
- NAIDOC Person of the Year – 2009
- Victorian Literary Award – Indigenous Writing – 2009
- Commonwealth Writers Prize – Best first novel Asia/Pacific – 2005
- Queensland Literary Award – David Uniapon Award – 2002

## Qualifications

- Bachelor of Law/Bachelor of Jurisprudence (UNSW) 1992
- Master of Laws (Harvard Law School) 1994
- Doctorate of Laws (Harvard Law School) 1998
- Graduate Diploma in Screenwriting (AFTRS) 2012
- Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors 2013
- Graduate Diploma in Documentary (AFTRS) 2013

## Professional Achievements and Associations

- Fellow, Australian Social Sciences Academy
- Foundation Fellow, Australian Academy of Law
- Member, Australian Writers Guild
- Member and Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors

## Arts Boards

- Bangarra Dance Theatre: Board Member 2008; Chair 2010-present
- Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG): Board member: 2013-present
- Museums and Galleries NSW: 2012-present
- Judge, Premiers Literary Awards, Non Fiction – 2013-2014
- Museum of Contemporary Art Australia: Board member, 2007-2012
- National Indigenous Television (NITV): Inaugural Chair, 2006-2009

## Education/Literacy Projects

- Ambassador, Guwara Aboriginal Campus, St. Andrew's Cathedral School