EXILE AND THE KINGDOM

A feature documentary made with the
Yindjibarndi, *Ngarluma*, *Banyjima* and *Gurrama* tribes of Roebourne,
North-Western Australia

Awards received by *EXILE AND THE KINGDOM:*

MAJOR MEDIA PEACE AWARD
United Nations Association of Australia with
The Council For Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1993.

BEST DOCUMENTARY &
BEST ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUND
Australian Film Institute Awards, 1993.

BEST DOCUMENTARY
Louis St John Johnson Media Awards, 1994.
For excellence in the reporting of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia

Australian Human Rights Award for
BEST DOCUMENTARY,1994.

Directed by Frank RIJAVEC
Produced by Frank RIJAVEC & Noelene HARRISON
Narrated by Roger SOLOMON

RUNNING TIME
Runs continuously at 111 minutes
and is also formatted as:
Part One (55mins) &
Part Two(55.5mins)

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EXILE AND THE KINGDOM—Precis

In the beginning, when the world was soft, Creation beings lifted the earth out of the sea. Then the world became hard — Colonisation, slavery, mining booms. This is the story of the Aboriginal people of Roebourne — their Law, their tribal voice, their survival.

EXILE AND THE KINGDOM
Multi award-winning feature documentary

Made with the Yindjibarndi, Ngarluma, Banyjima and Gurrama people of Roebourne, in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

An account in of the experiences of a community of Aboriginal people from pre-colonial times to the 1990s. This film makes the connection between Aboriginals in chains in the 19th century and Aboriginal people in prisons today, providing an incisive understanding of how the violence and denials of the past inform the present. Ultimately, the film gives conviction that with their extraordinary resilience, the Indigenous peoples of Australia will survive and flourish.

The documentary argues that the relentless removal of the Yindjibarndi/Ngarluma people from their hinterland estates into coastal ghettos has led to the community's current problems. However, as the film moves us through the period of British colonisation, unearthing appalling facts about slavery and the violent rule of pearling and pastoral overlords, to the abuses of the 1960s iron ore mining boom and problems of alcohol, it never allows the viewer to forget the significance and influence of spiritual homelands — the bedrock upon which Yindjibarndi tribal law is based. Above all, the film is a beautifully logical and persuasive argument for land rights.

EXILE AND THE KINGDOM
Synopses

2 line SYNOPSIS

A story of the extraordinary resilience of Australian Aborigines and their culture in the face of systematic repression by colonisers which continues into the present.

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7 line SYNOPSIS

A film made collaboratively with Aboriginal people of North Western Australia which reveals their traditional Law, their heroic struggle in the face of systematic oppression, their tribal voice. It is the story of Creation, of spirits that lifted the sky and *soft world* out of the sea, and of slavery under colonial pearlers and pastoralists. Today the Injibandi and Ngaluma tribes are exiled in a coastal ghetto surrounded by wealthy mining towns, however ultimately, the film gives conviction that with their extraordinary resilience, Australia's indigenous people will survive and flourish.

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17 line SYNOPSIS

Exile and The Kingdom is the first complete account in Australian film history of the experiences of a single group of Aboriginal people from pre-colonial time to the present.

The film argues that the relentless removal of the Injibandi/Ngaluma people into coastal ghettos has led to the community's current problems. However, as the film moves us through the period of British colonisation, unearthing appalling facts about slavery and the violent rule of pearling and pastoral overlords, to the excesses of the 1960s mining boom and problems with alcohol, it never allows the viewer to forget the significance and influence of spiritual homelands, the bedrock upon which Injibandi/Ngaluma tribal Law is based. Above all Exile is a beautifully logical and persuasive argument for land rights.

Using a poetic mix of historical recreation, compelling argument, testimony, creation story and song, the film never deviates from its intention to let the tribal people tell their own story. It makes the connection between Aborigines in chains in the nineteenth century and Aborigines in prisons today so providing a deeper understanding of how the abuses and denials of the past inform the present. Ultimately, it gives conviction that with their extraordinary resilience, the indigenous peoples of Australia will survive and flourish.

Synopsis 254 words
Exile and The Kingdom

Exile and The Kingdom is more than just a totally admirable, engrossing and moving documentary, it is a very important cultural/historical statement that takes the viewer on an epic journey from pre-colonial time to the present. The film both celebrates the culture and expounds the history of the Roebourne tribes, a community of Aboriginal people in the Pilbara region, 1600 kilometres north of Western Australia's capital, Perth.

The film argues that the relentless removal of the Yindjibarndi and Ngarluma people into coastal ghettos has led to the community's current problems. However, as the film moves us through the period of British colonisation, unearthing appalling facts about slavery and the violent rule of pearling and pastoral overlords, to the excesses of the 1960s mining boom and problems with alcohol, it never allows the viewer to forget the significance and influence of spiritual homelands, the bedrock upon which Yinjibarndi and Ngarluma tribal Law is based.

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Ultimately, it gives conviction that with their extraordinary resilience, the indigenous peoples of Australia will survive and flourish.

" ***Exile and The Kingdom*** goes pretty close to being a masterpiece".
Philip ADAMS (The Australian, July 3 1993)

"Exile and The Kingdom"
800 WORD SYNOPSIS

> "In the Language of this country, the name of this river is YARNDA NYIRRA~NA, 'Sun Mirror'. This is the story of the people who belong to the river, and the forces that took them away". With these words Roger SOLOMON begins the story of his people's connection to, and exile from, their country.

"Exile" begins in Roebourne, an "Aboriginal town" 1,600 kilometres north of the Western Australian capital, Perth. Roebourne's image as a "trouble town" was created in the late 1960s by journalists who came to record the horror visited on the community by thousands of white men who flooded in to construct railways and new towns for the iron mining industry. More recently the press came in the wake of the national outcry that protested the killing of a 16 year old boy in police custody. This death, perhaps more than any other, triggered the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Tribal elders set out to subvert this media tradition of negative stereo-typing by taking us on a pilgrimage to the Tablelands, to the beginning of the world where they reveal the places of creation. They speak for the 'holy ground' where the first Law ceremony was sung and danced into the 'soft world'. The sustaining strength and deeper identity of the community is revealed in a contemporary initiation ceremony of young men into the Law of their tribal country and spiritual ancestors**.**

Soon after British colonisation in1863, the discovery of pearls brought a rush of white treasure hunters to **Ngaluma** shores. A well organised system of **slavery** quickly developed to supply luggers with divers in the hot season and sheep runs with labour in the cool. Aborigines accused of "absconding" from their masters or killing stock were put on the chain by police patrols and packed into colonial jails.

Maban Men (shamans) used their power to bring droughts, floods and plagues of dingoes down on the squatters, and warriors assassinated slave-traders and pearlers, but the "smell of the white man" (disease) and his guns proved too much.

By the turn of the century the colonial government had established ration camps on the Tableland where old and sick people too frail to work the stations were collected. In the 1930s the administration decided to cut its costs by concentrating all these camps from the tablelands to the coastal lowlands at Roebourne. All but those fit enough to be working on the pastoral stations were effectively exiled from their tribal lands.

Later Aboriginal workers who had supported the pastoral industry throughout the 1940s, 50s and 60s were also evicted when equal wages for Aborigines were introduced in 1967. Squatters said they could not pay proper wages, so workers were forced to join the others in the Roebourne Native Reserve where government agencies controlled virtually every aspect of life.

In 1964, 100 years after colonisation, a bonanza of iron-ore development swept the North-West spawning several new mining towns, simultaneously government consolidated Roebourne as a ghetto to keep Aborigines out of the way of economic exploitation - "Police, pub and welfare, that's all we got here."

The 1960s mining boom echoed the pearling boom a century earlier. Both booms saw a rapid influx of white males, exploitation of local women, alcohol abuse and high rates of imprisonment, however, while the first boom enslaved local people, the second excluded them from the workforce.

In 1975, with conditions on the reserve at an all-time low, it was closed and its internees told to live in a cluster of state houses around the town's cemetery. Alcoholism, violence, suicide and homicide worsened as the young generations born into the upheaval of the mining boom grew up in increasing alienation and anger. Conflict with police and time in jails became a way of life. The Roebourne ghetto created by decades of expedient state-planning is a monument to Australian-style apartheid.

The 1980s saw the community's struggle against alcohol abuse gain ground, and elders' efforts to re-connect their town-bred grandchildren with their roots, revive. Cultural re-affirmation has given the community vision for a future beyond the chaos of the seventies - children are learning corroborees and increasing numbers of teenagers are going through the Law.

The battle for rights to land which underpins Law and culture is most imperative today. In its closing sequences the film comes full circle to the meeting of families from all over the Pilbara at the Roebourne Law Ground. Traditional Law is shown to be an unbroken stream of power that has empowerd the Roebourne tribes to survive 130 years of colonial occupation - and which sustains them in the continuing struggle against the new colonial order of the twentieth century.

"Exile and The Kingdom"

SYNOPSIS - 1

"In the Language of this country, the name of this river is YARNDA NYIRRA~NA, 'Sun Mirror'. This is the story of the people who belong to the river, and the forces that took them away". With these words Roger SOLOMON begins the story of his people's ties to the country, their suffering and their hope.

Roebourne is an "Aboriginal town" 1,600 kilometres north of the Western Australian capital, Perth, into which the Pilbara tribes were herded by state administrative policy. After British colonisation in1863, it was at the centre of the pearling boom and Injibandi/Ngaluma people were enslaved to create wealth for pearlers and pastoralists. 100 years later in the1960s, the mining boom took the Pilbara by storm, and Roebourne became a ghetto designed by government administrations to get Aborigines out of the way of the economic exploitation of the resource-rich North West.

Today, 130 years after British occupation, surrounded by the wealthy new mining towns; Dampier, Tom Price, Karratha, Wickham and Pannawonica, tribal owners are exiled from their country, and with the power of tradition and tribal Law, continue to struggle against the new colonial order of the twentieth century.

PREHISTORY: **"WHEN THE WORLD WAS SOFT"**
Creation Mythology, Cultural History, Contemporary Traditional Law Practice

Tribal elders make a pilgrimage to the Tablelands, to the beginning of the world and reveal the places of creation shaped by the **Marga** (Creation spirits) and **Mingkala** (Skygod). They speak for the 'holy ground' where the **Marga** sang and danced the first Law ceremony into the 'soft world', a ground that, in a later age, became hard, preserving the circular track of their dance for all time, for all to see.

We are given the rare privilege of being invited into the heart of the community as it celebrates the initiation of their young men into tribal Law . The rites of this ceremony bind them to tribal country and the **Marga,** their spiritual ancestors**.** It provides a poetic insight into the sustaining strength and deeper identity of the community.

CONTACT HISTORY: **"THEIR EYES ARE WATCHING"**
Colonial Occupation, The Pearling Boom & Slavery, Colonial Prisons & Concentration Camps, Working on the Stations, State Administrative Policy,
The Modern Ghetto.

CHAINHAND
The discovery of pearls and pearl shell in the 1860s brought a deluge of white treasure hunters to **Ngaluma** shores overnight. A system of slavery quickly developed to supply luggers with divers in the hot season and sheep runs with labour in the cool. Police patrols would put on the chain anyone accused of *absconding* from his master or killing stock, these prisoners were packed into the Roebourne jail. The **Injibandi** word for policeman, still used today, is **Munda~maranga,** which translates as **"Chainhand"**.

Maban Men (shamans) used their power over nature to bring droughts, floods and plagues of dingoes to discourage the squatters, and warriors assassinated slave-traders and pearlers, but the "smell of the white man" (disease) and his guns proved too much.

LONELY COUNTRY
By the turn of the century the colonial government had established ration camps on the Tablelands where old and sick people, too frail to work the stations, were collected and fed.

In the 1930s the administration decided to cut its costs by concentrating all ration camps from the tablelands to the coastal lowlands at Roebourne. All but those fit enough to be working on the stations were effectively exiled from their tribal lands.

STATION DAYS
The pastoral industry continued to depend on Aboriginal labour throughout the 1940s, 50s and 60s until degradation of grazing lands and price falls for wool saw station economies wane. The final straw was the introduction of equal wages for Aborigines in 1967. Station workers were told there was no longer a place for them, and they had to pack their bags and join the others in town.

"Exile and The Kingdom"

SYNOPSIS - 2

THE TOWN RESERVE

Roebourne had been mainly a white town servicing pastoralists until those pushed off the stations and ration-camps began crowding into the Roebourne reserve. Here government agencies controlled virtually every aspect of life. Some could apply for special citizenship rights (**"dog licences"**) which allowed them to live in the town, buy a drink at the pub and send their kids to the white school. These '**Citizen-men'** were then prohibited from mixing with their people on the reserve - but most risked disqualification by defying this prohibition when Traditional Law - time came.

MODERN HISTORY

The Iron-Ore Mining Boom and its Impact, The Neo-Colonial Prison, The Welfare Town and Economic Apartheid.

In 1964, the bonanza of iron-ore development swept the North-West by storm spawning several new mining towns. A new Regional capital, **Karratha,** was built and State administration transferred all but the basic service/welfare - related infrastructure from Roebourne.

The 1960s mining boom echoed the pearling boom a century earlier. Both booms saw a rapid influx of single white males, exploitation of local women, alcohol abuse and high rates of imprisonment, however, while the first boom enslaved local people, the second excluded them from the workforce. The social fabric of the community was torn.

In 1975, with conditions on the reserve at an all-time low, it was closed and its internees told to live in a cluster of state houses around the town's cemetery. This was a tragic administrative fiasco that ignored requests for living areas out of town, in smaller communities on tribal country.

While elders had struggled to sustain traditional systems of respect and discipline on the old reserve, these broke down altogether in the new Village. Alcoholism, violence, suicide and homicide worsened as the generation of children born into the upheaval of the mining boom grew up in increasing alienation and anger. Conflict with police and time in jails became a way of life - many teenagers didn't survive.

ALWAYS CHAINS

While boom-time politicians had promised that everyone would reap the benefits of iron-ore development, Roebourne was made an exception: "Police, pub and welfare, that's all we got here." The ghetto created by decades of state-planning is a monument to Australian-style apartheid.

RECOVERY: **KNOW THE SONG, KNOW THE COUNTRY"**

The Power of Traditional Law, Passing on Tradition and Language, Land Rights

A HOME IN THE SOFT COUNTRY

The 1980s saw the community's struggle against alcohol abuse gain ground, and elders' efforts to re-connect their town-bred grandchildren with their roots, revive. Cultural re-affirmation has given the community vision for a future beyond the chaos of the seventies - children are learning corroborees and increasing numbers of teenagers are going through the Law.

The battle for rights to land which underpins Law and culture is most imperative today. The eighties saw construction of a dam destroy the most sacred valley in **Ngaluma** country, now government controlled national parks and water bores suck the life out of the heart of **Injibandi** homelands at **Millstream (Nunga~nuna).**

The **Injibandi** have made lease application in this holyland, and despite being snubbed by the Water Authority who subleased their claim to a neighbouring pastoralist for cattle, they keep the struggle alive.

In its closing sequences the film comes full circle as we return to the meeting of extended families from all over the Pilbara at the Roebourne Law Ground. Traditional Law is shown to be an unbroken stream of power that has enabled the Roebourne tribes to survive 130 years of colonial occupation with their language and culture intact.

Now the lonely country is waiting for their homecoming.

BACKGROUND & ANECDOTES

Exile and The Kingdom

(Frank RIJAVEC, January 1994)

Like most Australians, the only contact I had with Roebourne prior to making **"Exile and The Kingdom"** came via mass media reports around the time of John PAT's death in police custody and the trials and Royal Commission that followed.

In 1987, with assistance from the Aboriginal Police and Community Relations Committee , I embarked for Roebourne to undertake preliminary research for an educational video.

I landed in Roebourne green, knowing no-one and with only a few contact names. After a few days asking people what they would like to make a film about - given the choice - I realised that no-one was interested in discussing Police/Aboriginal relations. People were sick to death of visiting journalists looking for material to flesh out their 'death in custody' stories. They wanted to show their culture and tell the stories of the country they came from.

I was invited by Violet SAMSON to a culture-camp organised for children during the school holidays. Once out in the bush things came into magic focus. A wonderful community spirit swelled around daily games, expeditions and meals, and the craft and dance activities organised by elders for the children. I videoed some of these and encouraged a couple of the teenagers to play a part by shooting interviews. At night a television was hooked up to a generator and the day was played back . The response was overwhelming. Newly arrived parents and grandparents responded with great joy and emotion as they watched their kids learning corroborees sung by James SOLOMON (Roger's father) - ones they had not seen danced for many years.

The positive experience of recording this event convinced the community of the value of making a film, and formed the foundations of the working relationship between me and the community, one which sustained the making of **"Exile and The Kingdom"** over the following years.

THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The film was shot in stages between July 1988 and January 1990, although the ideas and research kicked off in July 1987 and the editing was not completed until January 1993. Throughout this period key groups in the community were continually consulted and given opportunities to feed back, initially in regard to the footage as it returned from the laboratory and later during the various stages of editing. New energy and ideas flowed from these screenings. Sometimes there were requests to re-film sequences where elders felt they had not presented strongly enough or had missed some important element. The early assemblies also elicited requests for further filming in areas that had not been covered or for re-arrangement of scenes - particularly in the creation/tribal law sequences.

The first draft of the commentary was written by me using material from unused interviews and years of notes collected in conversations with members of the community and from extensive research undertaken by Noelene HARRISON into the colonial period. The Western Australian archives and a series of other sources including linguists, anthropologists, historians and pastoralists who owned stations in the Pilbara in the 1950s, unleashed an avalanche of material, much of which had never been made accessible to a general public before.

Closest control by elders over filming applied to the descriptions of Creation, Law, ceremony and country. During initial discussions elders made it clear that if a film was to be made it needed to begin up in the Tablelands, not in the town, but in the country where the people originally came from. All the scenes for these sequences were chosen and orchestrated by elders in the community.

During filming we applied a working rule by which the camera was not turned on without the consent of all those appearing a particular scene. There was no filming of drunk people for example, or anyone who was not directly involved in process of the film work.

BACKGROUND & ANECDOTES

After returning to Perth for editing further funding had to be found since we had the material to make a two hour film rather than the originally planned one hour. While our major investor, the Australian Film Commission was initially nervous at this prospect, they rallied behind the project after making assessments of the rushes and recognising their unique value.

Throughout the filming individuals from the community were employed in various roles such as translator, location guide, narrator and singer, and fees were paid to people involved in the filming to cover their costs for travelling and food etc. NGURIN ABORIGINAL CORPORATION also gained substantial funding to invest into the film's production so that the community became equity holders. Consequently a percentage of returns also goes directly back to NGURIN ABORIGINAL CORPORATION. Additionally a $10,000 fee was paid to NGURIN from production finances for the right to use traditional music, images of country and sites in the film.

TAKING TIME

In the beginning we found that pressures to keep costs down on rented film gear and wages were forcing us to push the pace of events, rush people into filming expeditions before enough ground work had been done. We learned very quickly that our perception of time and the exigencies of production scheduling did not fit the terrain, the extremes of the climate or the people. Life in the community did not revolve around the film. Subsequently we decided to purchase an old 16mm camera, reduce the crew to two (Rijavec and Harrison), move to Roebourne and forgo wages, so enabling us to work with greater flexibility and pleasure.

THE PREMIERE

After a local premiere in Roebourne, 40 members of the community decided to travel to Perth to present the film to audiences at the city premiere. The film was introduced by Roger SOLOMON and several elders after which the Injibandi/Ngaluma Dance Group performed three corroborees. The opening night was sold out and the film received a standing ovation. This together with feedback from a screening in Karratha which the community also introduced, elicited positive and passionate feedback which has in turn given rise to a feeling of pride in the community for our collaborative work.

The film screenings and subsequent video distribution seem to work as a *calling card* for the community. In non-Aboriginal communities it warms audiences to more open and friendly discussion with Roebourne people, and the grapevine continues to bring back extremely supportive feedback from Aboriginal communities all over the state and beyond.

COMMITMENT

Plans for filming began with a series of unforgettable 'research' trips with several elders up into the Tablelands, along the course of the Fortescue River to the fantastic Hamersley Ranges.

One of the earliest journeys took me to ***Ullumarri,*** a remote gorge at the end of a kidney-shattering drive from Roebourne. On the way I listened to an account of the creation Myth of the Fortescue River which tells of the great serpent who travelled from the sea and cut the gorge out of the hill that divided the upper and lower courses of the river. On arrival Woodley KING, an Injibandi elder, led me to a precipice overlooking the gorge, the river and the rolling spinifex hills beyond. It was incredibly beautiful... Woodley angrily pointed out flood monitoring equipment installed by the Water Authority on the walls of ***Ullumarri*** during a feasibility study for a dam. He regarded this as an outrages insult to his people and the 'holy' status of Ullumarri***.*** It was at that moment that my commitment to the film and the people of Roebourne was resolved.

THE SHEEP LOVING OVERSEER

Research is a strange animal. You find the most striking and surprising things when you're least intent on getting 'the drum'. On one occasion we were dodging claypans on our way out to check some locations with Woodley. We were in the backblocks of old MILLSTREAM STATION when he started yarning about one old overseer, a white fella with an obsession for keeping sheep counts. They were mustering on the country we were bouncing through when this overseer had pulled up for another count. He used to stand high in the saddle and point out each sheep. Woodley and his fellow Aboriginal stockmen were joking about him in their own language; "Oh there he goes again, counting the ewe's bums..." Suddenly he turned around and growled - he caught them out because he had learned Injibandi on a station further south !

BACKGROUND & ANECDOTES

'TURKEYS'
On any trip out into the country there was always a rifle, or two, or three, bristling at the window of our vehicle. It was like a gunship. Kangaroo, goanna or turkey were always pencilled in for the evening meal. On one of the first of many of such expeditions it became obvious to Noelene where 'turkey' gained its disparaging connotations. A turkey was spotted. We stopped. Me and Noelene could never see anything until it was carefully pointed out. There ! A bird's head stretched above the spinifex seed. A shot was fired, the bird didn't move, but suddenly three other turkeys popped their heads up out of the spinifex to see what was going on! And lunch was bagged.

BUSH TUCKER
There were a few master chefs who were always a pleasure to travel with. Trevor, Roger's brother , was one of them. One of the arts was to cook in the ground without getting sand through everything. Trevor's 'Turkey Baked in River Sand' and eaten with raw onion, fresh damper and billy tea was always popular. I also learned to do quite a good kangaroo stew in the camp oven. Noelene and Peter (Kordyl, our first cameraman) were a little squeamish at the sight of one of my fine stews cooked the previous evening and brought back to life after travelling in the back of our 4 wheel drive for 14 hours. They opted for the canned mussels. Not long after they were green and groaning. The mussels I think.

MOLOSOVIC's BOTTLES
Many nights were spent around at Roger SOLOMON's house in the Village. We would huddle around a drum of fire, and yarns would spin out into the cold of morning. Roger's accounts of his teenage years and run-ins with the police were classics. One of my favourites concerned a Constable Molosovic. He had picked up Roger on suspicion of pinching a car and had him in the station seeking a confession. Roger was innocent on this occasion and would not wear the charge. Molosovic insisted that Roger was guilty and at one point pushed him in the chest sending Roger back to hit a wall. Roger said he will never forget the look Molosovic's face as he hit the wall. On a shelf above Roger's impact, Molosovic kept his prized collection of old bottles, painstakingly excavated from the colonial town of Cossack. The bottles shook and teetered and Molosovic froze with horror. Fortunately none of the bottles fell, and Molosovic dropped his enquires.

BECOMING PART OF THE FAMILY
Roger's father James Solomon had allocated me a 'skin colour' or marriage section on my very first visit. I was Banaka, same as Roger, his son, because Roger and I became friends so quickly. So Noelene automatically became Burungu, the right marriage partner for Banaka. We were adopted by Roger's family and came to call James dad, and Roger's mother Dora, mum. Becoming part of the family had its obligations - errands to run for the elders, driving brothers out on hunting trips - and many more pleasures.

When Law Time came we were automatically invited. We did not ask to film the ceremony, but were asked to. Along with the rest of the families we left town and camped out on the Law ground. When the nights fell we would watch and listen to the men singing the Law songs. Noelene was asked to join in the Bundut dance around the men as they sang. Noelene cherishes this as an honour and the high point of our stay. She mastered it quite well and a few of the elders were very complimentary on her style.

RESPONSIBILITY
I became acutely aware of the privilege being extended to me, and of my responsibility as a filmmaker and a friend to make something that equally honoured my hosts.

Very early on we had agreed not to film anyone without their consent. This was necessitated by the continual abuses of mass media. Once during Law time we went back to Roebourne for supplies and found a news crew in the main street. They were following up on the Equal Opportunities Report that pointed out how Roebourne was being discriminated against by the shire administration which was based in the predominantly white regional capital, Karratha. They were trying to elicit responses from a few drinkers outside the Victoria Hotel. We saw the coverage later in which these drunken vox pops were inter-cut with the journalist righteously pointing out how impoverished and despairing the community was. He closed with a shot of the sign outside the Pilbara Aboriginal Church reading "You are all equal in Jesus", and the quip that "There's always the Lord to fall back on". An irony, since 20 minutes drive from the pub, out on the Law ground, a fantastic ceremony that showed all the strengths and beauty of the community was in full flight.

On another occasion we observed a man across the street from the hotel holding a stills camera half concealed by his side, he quickly brought it up and snapped a series of shots of people outside the pub on his auto-wind. He was spotted by one of them who raised the alarm. The photo-journalist sprinted to his gleaming white Commodore parked up the street and fled. The people across the road justifiably yelled abuse at his retreat.

OLD MEMORIES

During the years we had gathered together quite a large collection of slides from pastoralists which showed workers and their wives and kids out on the station. Slide nights would always be a full house. These images, which went back 30 years, brought a flood of memories from the old people. Each slide often stayed up for 20 minutes as yarns unravelled. The old stockmen would remember a wealth of detail, down to the horses' names and their idiosyncrasies.

THE HARD MOUTHED HORSE

There was one very nervous horse they called Hard Mouth who at the slightest provocation would take fright and break into a hairy gallop. Well, something had to be done. It was getting so bad that Hard Mouth would sprint at the sound of a match struck by its rider to light a cigarette. The problem was fixed one day by one of Hard Mouth's reluctant riders when he discharged his rifle a few inches from the horse's ear. The shock of it seemed to make the horse more tolerant, less skittish, and possibly half deaf !

THE FALSE ALARM

Woodley KING had made his camp in some rough country accessible only by kidney bruising road. We had been in regular contact via solar phone while planning several shooting expeditions when one week we just couldn't find him. People at his camp thought he was in Roebourne. No-one in Roebourne had seen him for days. We got worried that he had broken down in the bush while kangaroo hunting. Our fears were fed by locals who kept asking if we had seen him. We informed the police who seemed unconcerned... it wasn't unusual... he'd turn up. We decided to go out and look for him in any case accompanied by Kenny Jerrold and Woodley's brother Yilbie Warrie.

We had a clue. Someone had seen him several days earlier camping by one of the mining access roads. We found his tracks and started following a rarely used dogging track. We continued after the sun set using spotlights which picked out the spinifex flattened by Woodley's wheels. An hour or two later we thought we saw some lights. They were there and then they weren't. At the same time Kenny saw a large blue light sailing down to earth off to one side. He knew what it meant but wasn't too keen to tell us. Meanwhile the lights ahead, which we had hoped were Woodley's tail lights had multiplied into a cluster. They seemed to be hovering in the air and moving. We were all spooked. I tried to convince everyone it was probably a miner's prospecting camp. We bravely forged on. The lights got bigger until the realisation finally dawned, they were the lights of Woodley's home camp, which because of our unusual route of entry, no-one recognised. Woodley was there in his house eating some supper, totally bemused by our adventure and touched by our concern.

Exile and The Kingdom, Awards & Screening History

Awards

- Major Media Peace Award (United Nations Association of Australia with the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1993)
- Best Documentary (Australian Film Institute,1993)
- Best Achievement in Sound in a Non Feature Film (Australian Film Institute,1993)
- Voted 3rd Most Popular Documentary (Sydney Film Festival)
- Best Documentary (Louis St. John Johnson Media Awards WA,1994. 'For excellence in the reporting of Aboriginal affairs in WA')
- Best Documentary (Australian Human Rights Award, 1994)

Theatrical Release

Five week theatrical release at the Lumiere Cinemas in Perth (achieved box office record for a documentary in to that date at the Lumiere).

Television Screening

Screened on ABC TV as the special Wednesday TV feature (7 July 1993) commemorating the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Festivals

- Aboriginality – Aratjara, GDR
- Vancouver
- Singapore
- Pacific Arts Symposium
- Earth Peace, Burlington, USA
- Sydney
- Melbourne
- Wellington
- Aukland
- Brisbane
- Australian Film Institute

CREDIT TITLES

EXILE AND THE KINGDOM

Producer	**Frank RIJAVEC**
Director	**Frank RIJAVEC**
Co-producer	**Noelene HARRISON**
Narrator	**Roger SOLOMON (Yirra~Birndiri)**
Writers	**Frank RIJAVEC** **Roger SOLOMON**
Cinematographers	**Frank RIJAVEC** **Peter KORDYL**
Editor	**Liz GOLDFINCH**
Sound recordist	**Noelene HARRISON**
Research	**Noelene HARRISON** **Frank RIJAVEC**
Script Editor	**Jon COUTTS**
Sound Editors	**Lawrie & Roslyn SILVESTRIN**
Music	**David MILROY**

BIOGRAPHY
Roger SOLOMON - Narrator/ Co-Writer

ABORIGINAL NAME: ***Yirra Bindiri ('Teeth like Stars')***

Roger grew up on Warrambie sheep station where his Injibandi mother and Ngaluma father worked, the Roebourne reserve, and later in the State Housing Commission Village.

He was educated in the Aboriginal school, which was segregated from the whites, and later the Roebourne Primary school. Roger was 12 years old when the mining bonanza of the 1960s changed his life and his town forever. He is a child of the most traumatic period in his peoples' living memory, but, unlike many of his peers, has survived.

The strongest influence of his early life was his grandfather, Liverman (Jack FISHOOK), who would regularly take him out of the reserve and go bush where he would teach Roger Injibandi/Ngaluma names for all the birds, animals, hills and creeks, and fill his head with stories of their lore.

After school he drifted from one job to another as a station hand in the Pilbara and Gascoyne districts, and when station work declined, returned to Roebourne where he struggled with unemployment and alcohol.

In 1984, soon after his nephew was killed in police custody, he gave up drinking once and for all, and not long after began work as an alcohol councillor with Marwarnkarra Medical Service. Here he championed the promotion of cultural values as a force against alcohol addiction, and together with his father James and his brother David, formed the ***Ngaluma/Injibandi Dance Group*** which brought back many corroborees that had not been seen since old Reserve days.

While still with Marwarnkarra he began working with RIJAVEC and HARRISON on **EXILE AND THE KINGDOM** and during its production won a position as Heritage Officer for Pilbara with the Aboriginal Sites Department.

Roger is 39 years old, he is married to Esther PAT and has two children, Roberta and Joshua.

He communicates with an ease, humour and authority that has made him one of the major spokesman for his community, and is regarded with great respect in traditional Law. The filmmakers close rapport with him has been a sustaining power over the life of the project, and his contribution by way of advice, liaison and direct authorial input has been vital.

The film could not have found for a more articulate, better qualified or eloquent voice.

Roger saw the film premiered in Perth but tragically died on Easter Monday 1993 of mesothelioma, contracted as a nine year old from asbestos which was transported through his community.

BIOGRAPHY
Frank RIJAVEC
Director, Co-Producer, Co-Writer
for *Exile and The Kingdom*

Frank was born in 1957 in Manjimup, Western Australia to Benedikt and Ivanka Rijavec five years after their emigration from Slovenia. He has two older brothers, Dusan and Ivan and lives in Albany with his partner Noelene Harrison and son Breyten. He grew up in Albany and was educated there and then at John Curtin Senior High School in Fremantle and at the Western Australian Institute of Technology.

After winning several awards for student films (1977-80) in the Western Australian Filmmaker's Festival *(Best Film*; *Best Script; Most Professional Film; Best Filmmaker of the Year),* Frank worked as a film editor in Sydney and Perth and in 1984 was nominated for an Australian Film Institute *Best Editing* award for *"How The West Was Lost"*. In the mid-80s he wrote and directed the environmental documentaries *"The Last Stand"* (1986/SBS) and *"Skin Of The Earth"* (1988/SBS), followed by *"Black Magic"* (1987/ABC /GWN), a social/political history of Noongars in Australian Rules Football.

In 1987 Frank embarked on a 5 year journey with Roger Solomon, Noelene Harrison and the Aboriginal people of Roebourne to make *"Exile And The Kingdom"*. *Exile* received several major awards and was featured on ABC-TV to commemorate the 1993 International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Frank was awarded an Australian Film Commission Documentary Fellowship in 1998 and has served on the boards of the Film & Television Institute (1991-92) and Screenwest (1997-98).

Other writing/directing credits for television documentary include: *"Requiem For A Generation Of Lost Souls"* (ABC /1996), awarded *Best Documentary, WA Film & Video Festival and Certificate of Merit , Social History,Chicago Film Festival; "The Habits Of New Norcia"* (1999/SBS); *"Irrepressible"* (2002), awarded *Ben Drayton State Award for Initiative in Aboriginal Education, WA; "A Million Acres A Year"* (2003/SBS), awarded *Best Documentary Science, Technology & Environment, ATOM Awards and Outstanding Achievement Award, Editing, WA Film & Video Festival.*

Several of Frank's works tackle the colonialist misrepresentation of Australian history and the pattern of abusive exploitation of its environments. He says that as much as possible he has tried to employ the mainstream system of production to make films that air points of view or oppositional perspectives usually marginalised in the mainstream. His approach is one of striking up alliances with subjects who become collaborators in the filmmaking process, and he considers himself accountable to them before the broadcasters, producers, commissioning agents or financiers of his projects.

He admires the activism of Noam Chomsky and takes encouragement from his example: "…the responsibility of a writer as a moral agent is to try to bring the truth about matters of human significance to an audience that can do something about them… and furthermore (another important qualification), it should not be seen as an audience, but as a community of common concern in which one hopes to participate constructively. We should not be speaking *to*, but *with*."

In 2004 he joined Murdoch University's School of Media, Communication & Culture as a Research Fellow, Master of Philosophy. He also worked as consultant/ collaborator with

Juluwarlu Aboriginal Corporation in Roebourne on the revision/republication of the booklet "Know the Song, Know the Country" and on a major program of digital video recording of Yindjibarndi and Ngarluma cultural/social history.

In 2005 he suspended his candidature at Murdoch University for 12 months to join Juluwarlu Aboriginal Corporation in Roebourne as fulltime Media Production & Training Coordinator.

During 2005 Frank has been working with Juluwarlu to design and install systems for digital archiving, video production, television broadcast and training of Indigenous media practitioners so that in the long term the Roebourne community can maintain and deploy their own routine, autonomous and sovereign media voice.

In June 2005 his submissions to the Australian Broadcasting Authority on behalf of Juluwarlu gained an Open Narrow Cast television licence for Roebourne – JTV-34.

Frank acknowledges the Aboriginal People of Roebourne for their encouragement and comradeship and for sharing their knowledge and experience during key periods of his working life. He also credits his mother Ivanka, who as a partisan in Slovenia resisted fascism and as an immigrant to Australia persevered and shared with him accounts of the spirit.

SNAKEWOOD FILMS
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BIOGRAPHY
Noelene HARRISON
Co-Producer, Researcher, Sound Recordist
for *Exile and The Kingdom*

Noelene HARRISON was born into a sixth generation Australian family with convict and free settler ancestry in rural Victoria. Both sides of her family have rich oral traditions, an interest in history and storytelling that has endured into Noelene's professional life.

Childhood holidays in the country always included running commentaries about writers, outlaws, local legends... and most memorably, colonial massacres of Aborigines. When her entire "Aboriginal history" lessons at high school amounted to one half hour lesson, these accounts left an indelible impression.

Noelene's interest in film was a teenage obsession made difficult, but never extinguished by, country isolation. She would catch trains to the city, sometimes with friends, sometimes alone to watch a string of films on spare Saturdays.

It was not until she moved to Western Australia to study literature and film theory at Murdoch University that she seriously considered becoming a filmmaker. Noelene became a founding member, then Treasurer and finally Administrator of ***Cinematrix*** (Women in Film and Television), which successfully organized filmmaking workshops to assist women in developing film projects.

She met co-producer/director Frank Rijavec at a screening of one of her films and a friendship developed. The two first worked together on the documentary ***"Black Magic"***, which was produced in association with the Southern Aboriginal Corporation in 1986.

Their next project developed into the feature documentary ***"Exile and the Kingdom"***. Starting out as a video about Aboriginal and Police relations in Roebourne, ***"Exile"*** quickly emerged as a much bigger story.

She has been involved in a number of award winning films and has herself won an AFI best sound award for her work on ***"Exile and the Kingdom".***

After the birth of her son, she has taken a more back room role in projects, production managing the award winning animation series ***"Bobtales", "Nannup",*** and ***"A Million Acres a Year".***

She is currently working for Juluwarlu Aboriginal Corporation in Roebourne researching and acquiring assets for their cultural/historical archive as well as compiling a database of cultural sites for Juluwarlu's Cultural Mapping Project .

MAJOR PARTICIPANTS IN
EXILE AND THE KINGDOM - 1

Johnny WALKER - Injibandi

Johnny's Aboriginal name is *Jiliwi.* He is in his sixties and one of the best respected organisers of *Bidara* Tribal Law in the Pilbara. For the ceremony covered in the film, he is the "*Boss Kangu"* or master of ceremonies, and symbolic father for several of the young men undergoing initiation. In his working life he was highly respected for his skills as a station manager. He taught his masters alot about running cattle and sheep.

Alan JACOB (Deceased)- Injibandi

Aboriginal name Gigili - named after the he pool he was born at near the headwaters of the Tunkawanah Creek high up in the Tablelands near Millstream. Alan was one of the elders who involved himself in the early planning of the film. He was very clear and adamant that the film must start up in the Tableland where his people come from. It was he who revealed *'The Footsteps of the Gods'* and determined this as the proper place to begin the stories of Creation.

Karri MONADEE- Injibandi

Karri worked all of her life on the sheep and cattle stations. She had a reputation as a fine horsewoman and accompanied the men on mustering drives. For the film she describes the battle of the serpents and life in the ration camps and might be likened to an elder statesman or 'queen' of the community.

Yali KING (Deceased) - Injibandi

Mother for Woodley KING. Before her death, she was the grandest matriarch in the community. She talks for *'Barrimindi'*, the great water snake who created permanent water along the Fortescue River. This myth belongs to the heart of her tribal country who's centre is Millstream.

Yilbie WARRIE- Injibandi

Yilbie is leader of the Cheeditha Community a few kilometres out of Roebourne. He is one of the two or three primary song custodians for the Law and works extremely hard during Law season by leading the singing. He is also carries the songs of *Barmbadu*, a legendary Injibandi song-maker who left an opus of fantastic songs dreamt in the Tableland. Two of these songs are sung in the film and their verse translated.

MAJOR PARTICIPANTS IN
EXILE AND THE KINGDOM - 2

Carol LOCKYER - Gurrama

Carol's grandfather was a white station owner and her father became a citizen long before these rights were given to the rest of her people. Carol went to the white school and remembers with some pain the efforts made there to make her white. As a young woman she pioneered the participation of Aboriginal people, and more particularly Aboriginal women, in the administration of "Native Welfare" (later Department of Community Services) and at retirement was one of the longest serving public servants in the state.

Woodley KING- Injibandi

Fiercely independent, Woodley has struggled with undying energy to re-unite his people with their tribal country. In the mid-1980's he pioneered the first outcamp within Injibandi tribal country since his people's exile to Roebourne. While the government would only allow him a small 'rubbish camp' on the fringes, he keeps his dream of a home in the 'soft country' at *Jindawarrina* (Millstream), alive.

Lilla SNOWBALL

Lilla is mother for Alan JACOB and matriarch of the Alan clan. She saw several of her grandchildren die during the dark years of social upheaval following the mining boom. Her spirit remains unbroken and defiant. She has not forgotten the outrages of government policy and practice and speaks passionately for the country she raised her children in, country now inundated by the Harding Dam.

James SOLOMON - Ngaluma

James is Roger SOLOMON's father and another of Roebourne's great traditional singers. He carries the songs and corroborees passed on to him by Coppin DALE and Robert CHURNSIDE and was the creative force behind the revival of corroboree dancing in Roebourne in the late 1980s.

Tim KERR - Ngaluma

Tim lives in a shanty on the outskirts of town because he cannot bear the overcrowding in the Village. He is a highly skilled station man who worked stations all over the Pilbara for "matches, tobacco, boots... worked for nothing those days..." When station work declined he dug asbestos out of the gorges in Lang HANCOCK's original mine at Wittenoom. Today he fights for running water and basic abolution facilities for his camp.

Algie PATERSON - Marduthunia/Gurrama

A distinguished professor and living encyclopedia of cultural knowledge. He is in his eighties and the sole carrier of many songs and myths belonging to the diminishing Marduthunia people. Another man who never got used to living in the reserves and overcrowded ghettos and who prefers to camp along the *JAJI~URRA* (Robe River) or in a disused station outcamp. His love and deep respect for the knowledge of the *old people* makes him a spellbinding speaker.

FRIENDSHIP and RESEARCH

EXILE AND THE KINGDOM

A careful, extended and collaborative research period was the key to the film's success. The word research is not limited here to suggest the gathering of information, but is used to encompass the interactive processes that enabled the filmmakers and the community to understand one another and learn about the special methods and skills that characterised their respective worlds.

After the willingness to learn and share, time was the most important factor of this journey. The filmmakers relocated from Perth periodically for extended periods of time over five years during the film's conception and production.

The 'research' continued throughout the life of the whole project and did not simply cease when filming began. Infact the evidence of the filmed material itself, which was played back to major participants as it was printed, became important in the on-going learning process because it provided a concrete reflection of the many hours of discussion and reconnaissance. Since the film was not scripted in its entirety before filming began, but was built brick by brick, month after month, the research continued during the often lengthy breaks in filming.

Obviously, over five years the relationship between the filmmakers and particular community members became more than 'professional'. Rijavec and Harrison became very close with the narrator Roger SOLOMON and his family in particular, but also with several of the other extended families who's elders worked on the film. It was the supportive and joyful nature of these personal relationships which inspired the filmmakers to stay and nurture the working relationships, ones which only become possible through mutual trust and shared time.

Rijavec was given a *marriage section* on his first visit to Roebourne in 1987 by Roger's father, James. James called him *Bananga*, which placed him in son relationship to himself and brother relationship to Roger. The allocation of marriage section to non-Aboriginal newcomers is not arbitrary, but calculated by elders according to the natural affinities the newcomer has with particular community members. RIJAVEC's associate and partner, Noelene HARRISON, then automatically became *Burrungu* , the correct or 'straight' partner for *Bananga*.

This persoanl association, which has sustained the production of the film, and to a predominant degree lent the finished film its distinctive qualities, continues, as does RIJAVEC's involvement in other community projects.

THE MUSIC IN
EXILE AND THE KINGDOM

You will not hear the sound of a didgeridoo in **EXILE AND THE KINGDOM.** Didgeridoos were not traditionally used in the Pilbara and elders in the community were clear that they should not be used in the film's sound track.

Instead, accompanying the various styles of song we hear boomerangs and rocks being clapped and the scrape of the ***Mirru,*** a spear thrower grooved with corrugations and stroked with a long twig.

There are several distinctive styles of traditional song heard and performed in the film. ***Jawi*** are folk songs usually sung and 'dreamed' by an individual and performed by the person to whom the song was 'given' or, after their death, anyone talented and willing enough to *carry* those songs.

Tommy Wiliguru BARMBADU ('the blind one') is the most celebrated of the INJIBANDI ***Jawi*** 'dreamers' and his songs, 'Bilin Bilin' and 'Cumbuli~na', as sung by Yilbie WARRIE, feature in the film. Their remarkable poetry is also translated.

The elders in the community were very adamant that these songs are not simply 'made up' by a man, but are passed on to him in his dreams from the spirit world, complete in lyric and melody. When he wakes up in the morning the man who has been visited by the spirits can pick up his boomerangs and sing the 'given' songs straight out, without rehearsal.

Nunda are corroborees, or literally dance songs. They are also given to a man in his dreams by the 'Wanda' spirits and passed on to willing singers.

Bundut are ritual songs whose origin can be traced back to creation, to a period 'when the world was soft'. There are many songs in this cannon or song cycle which are sung during the public parts of the Law Ceremonies in which boys are initiated into manhood. They belong to the whole community and are carried by the men.