

# *Information Kit*

EARLY WORKS



# PEACE PILGRIMS

Conscience versus law

Producers Philippa Campey, Samantha Dinning: FILM CAMP, Writer Director John Hughes

Developed and Produced with the assistance of Film Victoria

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# PEACE PILGRIMS

Information Kit:

Issues in 21st Century Australian  
Peace Studies

Christian peace activists penetrate the militarized 'Joint Facility' Pine Gap just outside Alice Springs, to protest and lament victims of American drone strikes. They face 7 years in jail.

In September 2016 five 'Peace Pilgrims' trekked overnight through the central Australian bush into the secretive military facility Pine Gap, 18 kms east of Alice Springs. Their plan of action, according to the police record of interview, was to "pray for a miracle". They were spotted by surveillance CCTV around 3.30 a.m. as they approached the 'prohibited area' and were arrested about an hour before sunrise. When the sun came up on September 29, 2016 Margaret Pestorius, Jim Dowling, Jim's son Franz, Timothy Webb and Andy Paine were to be charged under the Defence (Special Undertakings) Act. A law originally designed to protect 1950s British nuclear tests on Montebello Island, Emu Fields and Maralinga.

The day before the Pilgrims' 2016 trespass, a drone strike at Shadal Bazar in Iraq targeting the home of a man entertaining guests on his return from pilgrimage to Mecca, killed 19 civilians. This was a year to the day after another US drone strike destroyed a *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors Without Borders) trauma hospital in Kunduz, northern Afghanistan, killing 42.

It wasn't the first time that Christian activists had breached the boundaries of the Defence 'joint facility' Pine Gap. Jim, and his wife Anne were involved in a 1987 protest at the base, and again in 2005 as part of the group 'Christians Against All Terrorism'.

Margaret's aim in protesting at the base was to "stop (people) pretending it didn't exist." When it came time to defend their actions in court before Federal Court Judge John Reeves - himself once a member of anti-base group 'Concerned Citizens of Alice Springs' - the accused argued that they had to act urgently to prevent war crimes conducted by those in charge of the base.

They said extrajudicial killings mounted by drone strikes - resulting in the deaths and injuries to civilians in countries with which neither the United States nor Australia was at war - were targeted through the functions of the base. But the Court directed these arguments irrelevant.



# Catholic Workers

PEACE PILGRIMS approaches its story with a 'human interest' focus on Jim Dowling and his son Franz, and on Margaret Pestorius. The Pilgrims are a diverse group. They share a remarkable modesty and a devout focus. They are self-deprecating and funny, talented, committed and brave. Each of them drawing on their faith and commitment to peace and to 'living simply so others might live'.

Jim and Franz, along with their New Zealand 'Pine Gap 5' colleague Timothy Webb and Brisbane friend Andy Paine, are associated with Brisbane's Dorothy Day 'house of hospitality', named after a co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement. It was established by Franz and his sister Rebecca. Franz continues to manage the house and works with a 'Food not Bombs' program offering healthy meals for free to anyone who chooses at the 'people's park' laneway in Brisbane's West End.





Jim Dowling moved into a newly established Catholic Workers house in Brisbane's West End in 1982, later, with his wife Anne and seven children they hosted others on rural land at Dayboro.

These days they live north of Brisbane at Peter Maurin Farm, named in honor of the other co-founder of the Catholic Workers. Jim and Anne's home is a model of low energy living, and a welcoming refuge for troubled individuals down on their luck.



Margaret, a social worker and professional musician carried her viola so that she and Franz (who carried his guitar) could perform a lament for those who died in Iraq, in Syria and Yemen as a result of the base's work.

Margaret - whose preparations for the trek into the 'prohibited territory' included a personal trainer - believes strongly in the transformative power of lament; and for her, gathering with friends on prohibited ground is liturgy and witness.



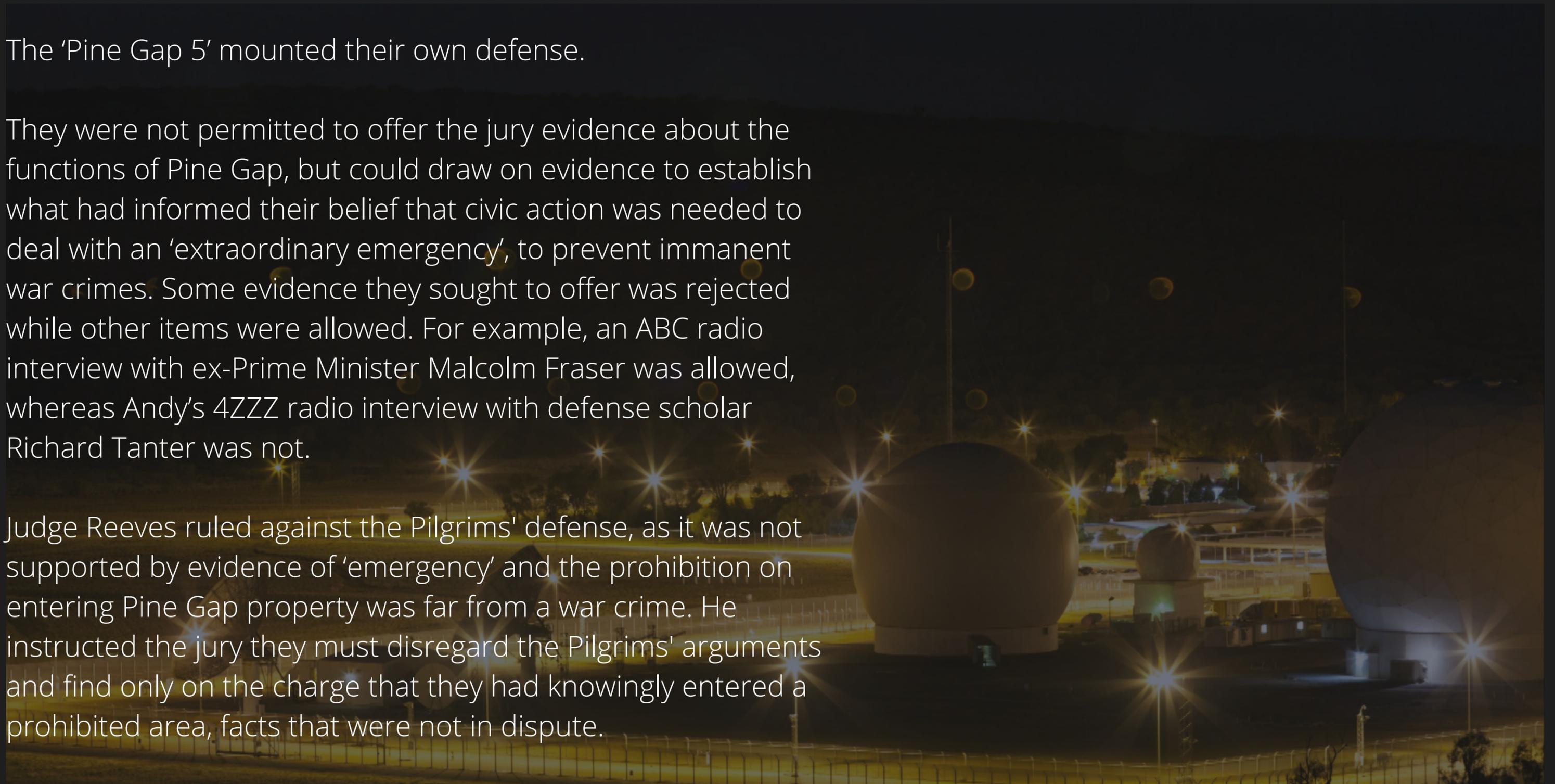
PEACE PILGRIMS is informed by Kieran Finnane's book *Peace Crimes* (QUP 2020)

In PEACE PILGRIMS we meet Kieran Finnane, the Alice Springs journalist whose initial impetus to tell the Pilgrims' story was inspired by the work of young photographer Kristian Laemmle-Ruff. Kristian's art is also driven by an ethical imperative; his photographic practice in tune with the contemporary 'counter-surveillance' art movement. Kristian describes for the film his capturing of dawn images of Pine Gap that have now become iconic, following their publication in exhibitions, books and scholarly articles.

The 'Pine Gap 5' mounted their own defense.

They were not permitted to offer the jury evidence about the functions of Pine Gap, but could draw on evidence to establish what had informed their belief that civic action was needed to deal with an 'extraordinary emergency', to prevent imminent war crimes. Some evidence they sought to offer was rejected while other items were allowed. For example, an ABC radio interview with ex-Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser was allowed, whereas Andy's 4ZZZ radio interview with defense scholar Richard Tanter was not.

Judge Reeves ruled against the Pilgrims' defense, as it was not supported by evidence of 'emergency' and the prohibition on entering Pine Gap property was far from a war crime. He instructed the jury they must disregard the Pilgrims' arguments and find only on the charge that they had knowingly entered a prohibited area, facts that were not in dispute.



Jim Dowling and Franz had sought permission to enter the base; from traditional owner Peter 'Coco' Wallace, a widely acknowledged Eastern Arrernte custodian of the land on which Pine Gap was built. Franz: "We did ask permission, we asked permission from the people who really matter."

'Coco', with Felicity Hayes, another Eastern Arrernte traditional landowner of this country, tells us "Nobody explained this to the elders. Still no explanation, we got nothing. We didn't know about this."

In his advice to the jury, Judge Reeves remarked, "You will probably be left with no doubt about the sincerity of the beliefs held by the accused and the strength with which they hold them. Nevertheless, those beliefs [...] do not override their obligations as citizens."

The jury took little time in finding the Peace Pilgrims guilty, and while the Crown prosecution demanded they serve time in jail, when Justice Reeves instead imposed fines, the Brisbane court house erupted in cheers from the Pilgrims supporters.



**"Jesus called us", says Jim  
"Blessed are the Peacemakers"**

PEACE PILGRIMS was first broadcast with  
*Compass*, on ABC TV and iview



# Curriculum Links

## Australian Curriculum: General Capabilities - Ethical Understanding

PEACE PILGRIMS can be linked to the National Curriculum's General Capability, Ethical Understanding, for all year levels.

Understanding:

- Ethical concepts, values, and character traits
- How reasoning assists with ethical judgment
- Accountability in a democratic community
- Areas of contention
- Ethical positions
- Experiences and positions of others



# Curriculum Links

## Australian Curriculum: Year 8 Civics and Citizenship

PEACE PILGRIMS can be linked to Year 8 Civics and Citizenship with reference to the National Curriculum.

Overview:

- The responsibilities and freedoms of Australian citizens
- How Australians can participate in their Democracy

Key Questions:

1. What are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens in Australia's democracy?
2. How are laws made and applied in Australia?
3. What different perspectives are there about national identity?

Civics and Citizenship Topics:

- **Government and Democracy**, including the freedoms enabling active participation in a democracy, i.e freedom of assembly.
- **Citizenship, Diversity and Identity**. The Christian traditions that have influenced Australian society, democracy and law.
- **Questions and Research**, finding a range of perspectives like that of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- **Problem-solving and Decision Making**, and using empathy to do so.

# Curriculum Links

## Australian Curriculum: Modern History Unit 4

PEACE PILGRIMS can be linked to Modern History with reference to the National Curriculum.

Modern History

Unit 4: The Modern World Since 1945

Overview:

- Changes to the nature of world order
- International tensions, alliances and power blocs
- International attempts to create peace and security

Modern History Unit 4 Topics:

- **The Changing World Order**, including the involvement of Australia in the Cold War, foreign policy, the arms race, and the threat of nuclear war.
- **The Struggle for Peace in the Middle East**, including the consequences of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union's involvement in both conflict and the peace process.
- **The Search for Peace and Security**, and the development of post-war peace movements, with particular reference to disarmament in response to the Cold War and non-violence.

# Post-Viewing Activities

As a class, discuss the following questions:

- Why do the Peace Pilgrims want Pine Gap to close?
- How does their faith interact with their activism?
- Why are they willing to risk imprisonment for trespassing at Pine Gap?
- How is Pine Gap related to conflicts of the past and present?
- Why is Australia home to a US surveillance base?
- Should Pine Gap be closed?



# Post-Viewing Activities

## ICAN

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) started in Carlton, Melbourne in 2006. It is now an international coalition of NGOs advocating for the **prohibition of nuclear weapons**. Their campaign is grounded in opposing the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental potential of nuclear weapons and their goal is global elimination of nuclear weapons.

In 2017, ICAN won a **Nobel Peace Prize** for its work promoting adherence to the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a treaty ICAN itself lobbied for. The treaty prohibits the use, possession and development of nuclear weapons, and demands that nations assist victims of nuclear weapon use and testing. Many Indigenous Australians addressed the United Nations as survivors of nuclear testing, their testimonies demonstrative of nuclear weaponry's catastrophic harm.

86 countries have since signed the treaty, and 55 have ratified it.

**Australia has not yet signed the UN's nuclear weapons treaty** and cannot while facilities like Pine Gap continue to operate. Pine Gap is a key element of US nuclear command and control, and its joint operation in Australia would be outlawed if the treaty were ratified here. Australian officials have said signing the treaty would be inconsistent with US alliance obligations.

# Post-Viewing Activities

## ICAN

Visit ICAN's website and watch the video about their beginnings to answer these questions

- What is ICAN and what is its mission?
- How did ICAN begin?
- When and why did ICAN win a Nobel Peace Prize?
- Why hasn't Australia ratified the UN treaty?





# Post-Viewing Activities

Visit Australian Map's Nuclear and Uranium Site map and use independent research to find the answers to the following questions:

- What parts of Australia are prohibited under the Defence (special undertakings) Act 1952?
- What regions of the Northern Territory are set aside for US/Australian military exercise? What are these activities?
- What areas of South Australia are set aside for Space research and weapons development out of Woomera?



# Post-Viewing Activities

## War Powers

Since 1991, Australia has been party to four wars in the Middle East, all initiated by the United States. Currently, **no parliamentary debate is required for the country to enter into war**, ergo parliament was not consulted ahead of Australia's involvement in any of these wars. Australian troops can be deployed with only the Prime Minister or Executive's approval. Such are Australia's war powers.

Moreover, while facilities like Pine Gap continue to operate, **Australia cannot resist involvement in American wars**. Even without sending troops, Australia cannot stop America from using Pine Gap to target drones and American weapons systems in acts of war.



# Post-Viewing Activities

## War Powers

Use the links below and your own research to answer the following questions about war powers:

- Under current Australian war powers, who has the power to commit Australia to war?
- What is the proposed alternative to the current war powers model?
- What are the two stated objectives of Australians for War Powers Reform?
- How do Australian war powers differ from other countries? How is it decided when the UK or the US go to war?

***"We have ceded Australian sovereignty, over matters of peace and war, to the United States."***

– Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser

<https://warpowersreform.org.au/>

[https://warpowersreform.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/AWPR\\_BOOKLET\\_WEB\\_FINAL.pdf](https://warpowersreform.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/AWPR_BOOKLET_WEB_FINAL.pdf)

<https://theconversation.com/explainer-australias-war-powers-and-the-role-of-parliament-31112>

# Post-Viewing Activities

## Australian Weapons Industry

Pine Gap is a weaponised facility involved in delivering and coordinating weapons of mass destruction. It is used in drone operations and surveillance, and has the capacity to coordinate warfare in space.

### **A Case Study in Australian Weapons:**

Australia has an active munitions export industry, regulated by the government. Over the last 6 years, the Australian Defence Department has approved the export of over 100 shipments of locally-manufactured weaponry, missiles, ammunition, armoured vehicles and military vessels to Saudi Arabia and the UAE for use in the Yemen war.

The conflict in Yemen has been labelled a humanitarian crisis as hospitals, markets, schools and weddings have all been targeted, causing hundreds of civilian casualties. As a result, the UN asked countries to cease supplying munitions to countries involved in the conflict. Instead the Australian government declared the Middle East a “priority market”.

Read Michelle Fahy’s investigation into weapons exports in Yemen as a case study for understanding Australia’s weapons industry.

<https://www.michaelwest.com.au/revealed-australia-defies-un-pleas-over-atrocities-in-yemen-escalates-weapons-exports-to-saudis/>

# PEACE PILGRIMS Links:

**Richard Tanter et. al. Nautilus Institute, *Pine Gap Project***

<<https://nautilus.org/briefing-books/australian-defence-facilities/pine-gap/the-pine-gap-project/>>

**Phillip Adams, ABC Radio National**

<<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/pine-gap-peace-crimes/12674824>>

**Peter Cronau, *The Base: Background Briefing*, ABC RN**

<<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/the-base-pine-gaps-role-in-us-warfighting/9115558>>

**Margaret Pestorius et.al. Wage Peace**

<[www.wagepeaceau.org](http://www.wagepeaceau.org)>

# Key Creatives

## Writer, Director, Producer: John Hughes

John Hughes' creative practice traverses film, television, gallery installation and video art. Recent credits as producer and director of broadcast documentaries include *Love & Fury* (ABC, 2013, 2014), *Indonesia Calling* (ABC, 90 minutes, 2009), *The Archive Project* (ABC, 2006 98 minutes). Among industry and critical awards he is the recipient of the Stanley Hawes Award (2006), Joan Long Award, achievement in film history (2006), Australian Writer's Guild Best Broadcast Documentary (2010), NSW Premier's History Prize (audio-visual) 2007, Critics Circle Best Feature Documentary (2006). Hughes produced and directed several series of TV 'micro-docs' with Betty Churcher (*Take 5* and *Hidden Treasures* 2000-2008) and films for SBS and ABC TV (*The Art of War*; 2005; *An Unstoppable Force* 2008). Hughes was Commissioning Editor, Documentary with SBS Independent (1998-2001). He was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 2017. *The Films of John Hughes: a history of independent screen production in Australia* (Cumming, 2014) is published by ATOM. Website: [www.earlyworks.com.au](http://www.earlyworks.com.au)

Email: [jheworks3@gmail.com](mailto:jheworks3@gmail.com)

Website: [www.earlyworks.com.au](http://www.earlyworks.com.au)

## Producer: Philippa Campey

Philippa Campey is the founder of Melbourne-based production company Film Camp. Over the past 16 years Film Camp has produced many critically acclaimed and commercially successful feature documentaries including *Palazzo di Cozzo!* (Madeleine Martiniello, 2021), *Brazen Hussies* (Catherine Dwyer, 2020), *The Leunig Fragments* (Kasimir Burgess, 2019), *No Time For Quiet* (Samantha Dinning, Hylton Shaw, 2019), *Murundak: Songs of Freedom* (Natasha Gadd, Rhys Graham, 2011) and *Bastardy* (Amiel Courtin-Wilson, 2009). Her debut feature drama *Galore* premiered at Berlinale 2014, *The Face of Ukraine: Casting Oksana Baiul*, (Kitty Green, 2015) won the Short Film Jury Prize at Sundance 2015 and her debut short *Clara* won the Jury Special Mention in Cannes 2005. Other films have won awards at the AACTA, FCCA, AFI Fest, FIFO and Seminci Valladolid, and have screened at over 100 festivals in the world including Venice, Berlinale, Telluride, True/False, BFI London and Sheffield Doc/Fest.

Email: [pip@filmcamp.com.au](mailto:pip@filmcamp.com.au)

Website: [www.filmcamp.com.au](http://www.filmcamp.com.au)

## Editor: Uri Mizrahi

Uri Mizrahi is one of Melbourne's most highly regarded editors, whose work over thirty years includes drama for cinema and television as well as documentaries. His work has garnered him numerous nominations and awards including the Best Editing AFI Award for *Rainbow Bird & Monster Man* (2002) and the AFI Award for Best Visual Design with John Hughes for *After Mabo* (1998). Uri's recent work includes the telemovies, *Sisters of War* (2010) & *Parer's War* (2014) and the documentaries, *Puttuparri & The Rainmakers* (2015), *On Richard's Side* (2016), *My Mother's Lost Children* (2017), *Guilty* (2017) & *The Coming Back Out Ball* (2018)

# Full Credits

## Writer Director

John Hughes

## Editor & Sound Design

Uri Mizrahi

## Producers

Philippa Campey, John Hughes

Based on *Peace Crimes*  
Kieran Finnane (UQP 2020)

## Camera & Sound

Samantha Dinning  
Shane Mulcahy  
John Hughes  
Fiona Walsh  
Randall Wood

## Sound Mix

Andrew McGrath, Soundwaves

## Picture Colourist

Edel Rafferty, The Post Lounge

## Information Kit

Zoe Stinson

## Archive

ABC Archives (Lisa Chadlow & Clare Cremin)  
Jane Jeffes & Peter Beeh, David Bradbury  
Siobhan Dee (National Film & Sound Archive)  
Sarah Hope & Andrew Best (Salt Story Studio)  
ViaSat 2 courtesy of Viasat Inc.  
'Buffalo' Maralinga 1956 Courtesy National Archives of  
Australia (NAA: C571, 1337816)  
*Home on the Range*, Gil Scrine (1981) Courtesy Gil Scrine  
*Inside Pine Gap*, Robert Plasto (1987)  
Courtesy Tyge Landa Plasto  
*Pine Gap 4* (2009 ) Courtesy Jane Jeffes  
*Prayer intentions for June 2017*  
Courtesy Vatican News  
  
'Drone Lament: Demons of Hell'  
Written by Franz Dowling  
Performed by the Peace Pilgrims

## Legals

Shaun Miller Lawyers

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the custodians of the land in which we live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.

## With thanks to

Ben Abbott, Brett Aplin, David Bradbury, Alicia Brown (Film Victoria) Peter Butt, Peri Coleman, Samantha Dinning, Jessica Douglas-Henry (ABC Compass)  
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Sue Wareham, Rachel Wilson, Andrew Wiseman (Film Victoria), Tom Zubrycki

## Produced by

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with the Assistance of  
Film Victoria



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