



THE BYSTANDER STORY

We are all witnesses now

Synopsis

The Bystander Story fuses studio re-enactments, interviews, archival, bodycam and CCTV footage. To tell a radically new story about psychology's bystander experiments. It begins in the 1960s with Kitty Genovese. And ends with George Floyd. The Bystander Story investigates how strangers come together to help strangers.

The Bystander Story - Director's Statement

Night. City. You're walking home. You hear shouting. Turning the corner, there's a group of people throwing punches and shoving. One of them may have a knife. Do you try and help? Call the cops? Start filming? Or do you walk away? I often wonder what I'd do in such a situation.

Yet another story on your news feed claims that bystanders failed to assist in an emergency. Instead, they watched the violence unfold. Psychology's 'bystander effect' experiments were inspired by one such story from 1964: the rape and murder of Kitty Genovese in New York. Thirty-eight witnesses watched the attack – and did nothing. Allegedly. Psychologists claimed that the more onlookers on a scene, the less likely it was that any of them would help. Yet there is growing evidence to the contrary.

As a filmmaker, false narratives are something I can tackle. I sought help. UK-based social psychologist Mark Levine has spent much of his career investigating how bystanders do help in crises. We began collaborating. In a workshop with actors we explored ways of recreating incidents drawn from CCTV and phone footage. The events captured were fast-moving, shot from a distance, often in low light – and partially obscured. We worked together to fill in aspects of the stories missing from the recordings – and from the public narratives.

'An eyewitness demonstrates to a collection of people how a traffic accident took place ... The demonstrator acts ... so that those looking can form an opinion about the incident,' wrote Brecht in 1938. This resonated for me.

I cast the net wider. Pulled in more stories. Records of bystander incidents: verbatim accounts; transcripts; court cases; bodycam footage. Director of photography, Anna Howard, joined the team. An emergency services volunteer on her days off, she shared my fascination with bystander dynamics.

With a tilt at documentary noir, The Bystander Story is an investigation. Our studio becomes a streetscape. A minimalist set and imaginative lighting let us shift the action from Sydney to London to Seoul – and elsewhere. Our ensemble of six actors play a range of contemporary urban dwellers. Sometimes they're onlookers who find themselves caught up, or intervening in threatening situations. Sometimes they're people trying to make sense of it afterwards. Analysis from psychologist Mark Levine provides the film's narrative spine. Think of him as our expert witness.

The Bystander Story begins with Kitty Genovese. It ends with George Floyd. It focusses on the myriad ways people come together to help in crisis situations.

The Bystander Story aims to spark conversations. I've got a bystander story – most of us have. What's yours?





Kathryn Millard Writer/Producer/Director

Kathryn Millard is a writer and filmmaker with a passion for big ideas. Her films are internationally recognised and much awarded. Psychology, mental health, popular fallacies and the afterlife of images are recurring themes in her body of work which spans award-winning feature dramas, documentaries and hybrids. Kathryn's films have been selected for dozens of major festivals including Chicago, Sao Paulo, Mill Valley, Philadelphia, Pordenone, Kolkata, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, screened at Brooklyn Art Museum and on the Sundance Channel.

With a wealth of experience collaborating with actors, Kathryn's work is acclaimed not only for its striking cinematic style, but also for its insight into the understories of human behaviour. Her feature *Travelling Light* (2003) received four Australian Film Institute nominations and won 'Best Supporting Actress,' Sacha Horler. *Parklands* (1996) which featured Cate Blanchett in her first film, won an Australian Film Institute award for Best Cinematography and a San Francisco 'Golden Gate' award for Drama. In recent films (*The Bystander Story*, *Experiment 20*, *Shock Room*, *The Boot Cake*) Kathryn has carried her distinctive approach to performance into non-fiction and encounters with the real.

Kathryn is Emeritus Professor of Screen at Sydney's Macquarie University. Her new book *Double Exposure: How Social Psychology Fell in Love with the Movies* is published by Rutgers University Press and due out in March 2022.



Select Filmography

Writer/Producer/Director, The Bystander Story, 30 mins, verbatim documentary, Charlie Productions, 2021

Writer/Producer/Director, Experiment 20, 15 mins, verbatim documentary, Charlie Productions, 2018

Writer/Producer/Director, Shock Room, 74 mins, feature documentary, Charlie Productions, 2015. (World sales: Cat&Doc, France).

Winner 'Best Australian Documentary' Antenna Documentary Festival.

"A riveting seventy minutes that explores the dark side of human nature...Kathryn Millard's excellent direction of dramatic re-enactments drew us into the many uncomfortable scenes that put us in a position to ponder - when would we just stand up and say No!" Antenna International Jury

Writer/Producer/Director, The Boot Cake, feature documentary, Charlie Productions, 74 mins, 2008.

'Essential viewing...an astonishing testament to the far-reaching influence of silent cinema', David Robinson, film historian and Chaplin's biographer.

Writer/Director, Travelling Light, 82 mins, feature drama, Toi-Toi Films, 2003.

Writer/Director, Parklands, 53 mins, short feature, Soft Fruit Films, 1996

'Millard is more interested in emotional nuance than plot and is expert at getting it.'

Lynden Barber, The Australian

Writer/Producer/Director, Light Years, 47 mins, documentary, Lexicon Films, 1991

A portrait of photographer Olive Cotton...Kathryn Millard's film mirrors Cotton's elegant pictures.' Sydney Morning Herald.

Writer/Producer/Director, Saigon Doctor, 25 mins, drama-documentary, SBS, 1988





Mark Levine Social Psychologist

'Everything we think we know about the bystander effect is wrong. Our research shows, that actually, despite what people think, humans are incredibly helpful in real-life situations.' Mark Levine

Mark Levine, whose commentary features in *The Bystander Story*, is Professor of Social Psychology at Lancaster University. For more than twenty-five years, he has been researching bystander behaviour.

Mark's recent work examines the role of group processes in regulating perpetrator, victim and bystander interactions during violent incidents. Together with colleagues, Mark has analysed CCTV footage of real-life violent incidents and used virtual reality settings to study the behaviour of passersby and bystanders in emergencies.

More broadly, Mark investigates social identities and behaviour in the digital era, partnering with colleagues across psychology, sociology, computer science, engineering, mathematics and robotics. He has also collaborated with artists—dancers, animators and digital artists— and now a filmmaker.

Widely published, Mark's work has appeared in scholarly journals including : Behavioural and Brain Sciences; Psychological Science; American

Psychologist; Journal of Personality and Social Psychology; Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin; British Journal of Social Psychology; European Journal of Social Psychology and many others.

Mark is a frequent commentator on new research into bystander behaviour for media outlets. His work has been widely discussed in electronic and print publications including the BBC, NPR, The New Yorker and LA Times. Mark is currently working on a book about bystander intervention for a broader readership.



CREDITS

Writer, Producer and Director	Kathryn Millard
Social Psychologist	Mark Levine
Director of Photography	Anna Howard ACS
Sound Recordist	Phil Keros
Production Designer	Sarah Stollman
Editor	Jane St. Vincent Welch ASE
Motion Graphics Designer	Murray Vanderveer
Composer	Jackson Milas, Sonar Music

CAST

Jack Angwin
Thomas Campbell
Jeanette Cronin
Thuso Kekwape
Jane Phegan
Nikita Waldron

Line Producer	Catherine Flannery
Production Manager	Danni Janus
1st Assistant Director	Julian Ryan

Gaffer	Ken Pettigrew
Best Boy	Gouvray Ghandi

Grip Craig	Bartlett-Sweiger
Swinger Grip/Gaffer	Lachlan Gandy
Swinger Grip/Lighting	Bryan Solbrandt

1st Assistant Camera	Michael Fairbairn
Data Wrangler	Teg Saddler
Stills Photographer	Murray Vanderveer
Movement Consultant	Julie-Anne Long
Script Consultant	John Alsop



Boom Operator
Standby Props/Buyer/Dresser
Wardrobe/Makeup
Art Department Assistant

Chris Keros
Anna Gregory
Laura Venner
Paul Van Westling

Sound by Unison Sound
Sound Designer
Re-Recording Mixer
Dialogue and FX editor
Foley Artist
Foley Recordist & Editor

Luke Mynott
Wes Chew
Tania Vlassova
Andrew Simmons
Tom David

Technical Supervisor (Production)
Post-Production Supervisor

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Legals

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Naomi Hall
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The Bystander Story

Thanks

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Anna Levine Shrimpton
Alec Morgan
Ben Nash
Karen Pearlman
Richard Philpot
Tony Stevens

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'When will People Help?' (1976) excerpt courtesy of Daryl J. Bem

Bus incident quotes primarily from Tom Heyden, BBC News Magazine Online 'When One Hundred People Lift a Bus' 4/6/15

Bank incident is primarily based on a released civil court verdict 18/09/17

London Bridge footage courtesy of KNS News United Kingdom

Train incident CCTV footage courtesy of Public Transport Authority of Western Australia

Additional archival footage courtesy of Getty Images

Additional archival footage courtesy of eFootage, LLC

It is possible that not all appeal avenues have been exhausted in the State of Minnesota vs Derek Michael Chauvin

Audio excerpt Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr.

'I Have Been to the Mountaintop' kind permission of Intellectual Property Management (IPM)

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