

PRESSKIT



Written and directed by Tony Krawitz
Produced by Darren Dale
Based on the book 'The Tall Man' by Chloe Hooper

BLACKFELLA FILMS

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Writer/Director	Tony Krawitz
Producer	Darren Dale
Production Company	Pier 4 Productions Pty Ltd
Genre	Documentary
Language	English
Shooting Gauges	Super 16mm, 5D
Aspect Ratio	16:9
Duration	78 minutes 35 seconds
Sound	Stereo

ONE LINE SYNOPSIS

Life in paradise. Death in custody.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

This is the story of Palm Island, the tropical paradise where one morning Cameron Doomadgee swore at a policeman and forty-five minutes later lay dead in a watch-house cell.

This is the story of that policeman, the tall enigmatic Christopher Hurley who chose to work in some of the toughest and wildest places in Australia, and of the struggle to bring him to trial.

The Tall Man is a story in luminous detail of two worlds clashing – and a haunting moral puzzle that no viewer will forget.

LONG SYNOPSIS

When Cameron Doomadgee was found dead in the Palm Island police station, his injuries were like those of someone who'd been in a fatal car crash. The police claimed he had tripped on a step. The Palm Islanders rioted and burnt down the police station. The subsequent trial of Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley – who had been decorated for his work in Aboriginal communities – made headlines day after day, shadowed by Queensland police threatening to strike.

The Tall Man tells the gripping story of the trial, of the complex Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley, and of the Doomadgee family as they struggle to understand what happened to their brother.

Atmospheric, gritty and original, *The Tall Man* takes the viewer into the courtroom, into the once notorious Queensland police force, and into the Indigenous community of Palm Island of Australia's Far North – places where people live lives like no others, have a relationship with the land like no others, and a history, culture and a catastrophic present like no others.

This is Australia, but an Australia few of us have seen.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

On 19 November 2004, Cameron Doomadgee allegedly swore at Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley. He was arrested and 45 minutes later he was lying dead in the island's police cell from massive internal injuries. These two men, both the same age but from completely different worlds, crossed paths tragically that morning with repercussions that are still being felt across Australia.

This is a tragic true crime story. Hurley is the first policeman charged with the manslaughter of an Aboriginal man in the history of Queensland – and has always maintained his innocence. The truth shifts like a mirage through this case, buried in a web of rumour and conspiracy theories. One of the key witnesses was drunk. The police were misleading and colluded with each other in the subsequent investigation, trying to obfuscate the truth. This story runs from the Palm Island community, the Police, the office of Queensland's DPP and all the way up to the Premier of the Queensland, Peter Beattie.

The Tall Man explores the complexities of racial politics in Queensland, its people and its justice system. The events surrounding Doomadgee's death form the central narrative as we go over the details of those 45 minutes from the shifting angles and perspectives of the witnesses, the community and the police force. We have employed a circular narrative with the aim of creating an escalation of tension, drawing the audience not only into the details of what happened as the two men fell through the door but also into the characters and the world of Far North Queensland.

Palm Island is a large tropical island on the edge of the Great Barrier Reef, It is a unique Aboriginal community, the reality of which is complex. It was set up as a type of penal colony for "recalcitrant" Aborigines in the early 20th century, people were thrown together from many different tribal groups. According to the Palm Island resident doctor, one of the central issues facing Palm Islanders is that of domestic violence. It also has one of the highest levels of arrests per capita in Queensland. Because of this and many other challenges, the relationship between the Islanders and police has always been strained.

This film also tells the story of the strength and dignity of the Doomadgee family and Cameron's partner, Tracy Twaddle. They refused to give up their legal fight, assisted by their lawyer Andrew Boe. The family have faced untold tragedy but remain steadfast and unified in their struggle for justice. In the end they feel that the system failed them but what shines through is their loyalty to Cameron and to each other.

Our aim was to let the interviewees take us through the complexities of this case. We didn't want to have a narrator or outside voice telling us what to think. In a similar vein we used no dramatic recreations in the film. We wanted to tell this story as much in the first person as possible, to put the audience in the position of a jury, trying to work out the facts of the case themselves, to decide who and what to believe.

What was instrumental in helping us achieve this was gaining access, via the Queensland Coroner's Court, to the video interviews the police conducted with Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley, Sergeant Leafe, Lloyd Bengaroo (the Police Liaison Officer) and Roy Bramwell, the central witness. All the videos were recorded the day after Cameron's death. Chris Hurley did not respond to our requests for an interview but we have used his voice from the trial. This runs through the film, giving the viewer access to his version of events as the story unfolds and helping to keep them in the position of a jury trying to unpick the complicated strands of the case.

We also spent months negotiating with the Queensland Police Service to see if there was anyone in their organisation willing to grant us an interview. After protracted deliberations, they declined to be involved.

In Palm Island the law are seen as pigs, scum that can't be trusted. It is not an easy place to be a police officer. The audience will be drawn to question what drove Hurley, what led him to serve in such difficult communities, the ultimate outsider but also the hand of the law. Was he like a

character from Conrad's *Hearts of Darkness*, addicted to his own power? Or was he a good man trying to change things in an unjust world?

In Palm Island you can almost feel the layers of history lying just under the surface. It feels like all it would take is the smallest scratch for all the hurt and anger to be revealed. Our aim was to make an engaging, powerful and visually arresting film that takes the audience into a world where the truth is never clear and sometimes seems to be directly related to how you perceive the world.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Tony Krawitz wrote and directed the film *Jewboy* which premiered in Un Certain Regard at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival, and went on to screen at many major festivals including Pusan, Jerusalem and Sundance.

For television he has directed on *The Surgeon* for Channel Ten and *City Homicide* and *All Saints* for Channel Seven. Tony was the Second Unit Director on the telemovie *The Silence* for ABC TV.

Later this year he will be directing *Dead Europe*, based on the book by Christos Tsiolkas.

PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY

Producer Darren Dale began his career with Australian public broadcaster SBS Television in 1997. He has been a production manager for various SBS TV programs and was associate producer on *Headlines Across Australia*, an Indigenous news and information series. He produced short films *Mimi* for director Warwick Thornton and *Flat* for Beck Cole, both of which screened at numerous overseas festivals including Sundance and Edinburgh. He has co-curated the film program for the Message Sticks Indigenous Festival at the Sydney Opera House since 2002.

Since 2001 Darren has been a company director of Blackfella Films, Australia's premier Indigenous production company. In 2007 Darren series produced five half hour documentaries for SBS with emerging director/producer teams. Darren also produced, together with Rachel Perkins, the landmark multi-platform history series *First Australians*, broadcast on SBS in 2008 to over 2.3 million viewers. In addition to the series a significant interactive website has also been produced and a companion book. In 2009 Darren produced two short films, *Jacob* and *The Party Shoes*, as well as the award winning documentary *Lani's Story*.

Following the premiere of **The Tall Man** at the 2011 Adelaide Film Festival and its broadcast on SBS, Darren will produce *Mabo*, a telemovie written by Sue Smith (*Bastard Boys*, *Remote Area Nurse RAN*), and to be directed by Rachel Perkins (*Bran Nue Dae*, *First Australians*). He has also commenced development on *Redfern Now*, a 6 x 1 hour drama series for the ABC, to be overseen by renowned UK writer Jimmy McGovern.

EDITOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Rochelle has worked in postproduction for film and television for over twenty-three years. Her recent credits as Film Editor include the box office feature hit musical *Bran Nue Dae*, the critically acclaimed documentary series *First Australians*, the UN Peace Media award winner, *Lani's Story*, and now *The Tall Man*.

Rochelle began her career assisting editor Jill Bilcock on films such as Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* and *Moulin Rouge*, *Head On*, *The Dish* and Phillip Noyce's *Catch a Fire*. She has worked both in the US and the UK in her roles as First Assistant Editor and Visual Effects Editor.

From the highly acclaimed TV series *knot at home*, written and directed by young marginalised people across Australia to working as a visual effects editor in Los Angeles, Rochelle has successfully dealt with a huge diversity of subject matter and differing budget sizes in both drama and documentary, television and theatrical release.

In her career in post production, Rochelle has been instinctively drawn to projects that matter.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY'S BIOGRAPHY

Germain McMicking is a Director of Photography who has worked extensively within documentary, narrative film, television and commercial works. In 2010 Germain photographed two feature projects both of which are premiering at the 2011 Adelaide Film Festival: the feature documentary *The Tall Man* directed by Tony Krawitz, and the narrative feature *Hail*, directed by Amiel Courtin Wilson for Flood Projects.

In 2009 Germain filmed the second instalment in the award winning *Wilfred* series with director Tony Rogers for Renegade Films and SBS. In that year Germain also filmed the ABC's *John Safran's Race Relations*, having previously lensed the AFI award winning series *John Safran Vs God*.

Previous work with director Amiel Courtin Wilson includes the AFI nominated feature documentary *Bastardy* and the experimental documentary short *Cicada* which screened at Directors Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival in 2009.

In 2008 Germain filmed the AFI nominated feature documentary *Lionel*, directed by Eddie Martin which was released theatrically. The film screened at Melbourne Film Festival and won the Silver Palm Award at the Mexico Film Festival 2009.

Germain continues to work extensively within television commercial production both here and overseas and is currently attached to a number of future film projects.

SOUND DESIGNER'S BIOGRAPHY

Sam Petty and his company BigEars have a wealth of experience in sound production and Design. He has also worked in theatre with directors such as Neil Armfield and George Ogilvie, and collaborates on projects with his father Bruce Petty.

Spanning features, documentary, short film and theatre, his large list of credits include *The Boys*, *Three Dollars*, *The Bank*, *Rain* (NZ), *Romulus*, *My Father*, *Somersault*, *Disgrace*, *Balibo*, *Animal Kingdom* and the forthcoming *Sleeping Beauty*.

Sam has gathered numerous AFI nominations over the years, and has won AFI awards for *Somersault*, *Little Fish*, *Global Haywire* and *Animal Kingdom*, as well as winning IF awards for *Little Fish*, *The Square* and *Balibo*.

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Antony Partos is an internationally awarded composer whose passion lies in morphing acoustic instruments with electronic elements in his scores in order to create a palette that is innovative and unique. An in demand composer, Antony's career has embraced feature films, commercials, television series, documentaries as well as dance and theatre work.

Antony received the AFI Award for Best Original Music Score for the feature film *Animal Kingdom* (starring Guy Pearce and Ben Mendelsohn), which won the grand Jury prize at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival. Along side *Animal Kingdom*, his beautiful score for the film *Accidents Happen* (starring Geena Davis) is now available on itunes. He has recently completed the feature film *Mei Mei*, to be released in 2011.

Other credits include the AFI winning scores for the feature films *The Home Song Stories* and *Unfinished Sky*, whilst his score for *Disgrace* (starring John Malkovich) was nominated for best score at the Australian Guild of Screen Composers. Antony's television credits include writing the theme for ABC's *At the Movies*, the series *White Collar Blue*, the telemovies *The Silence*, *Saved* and *Valentines Day* as well as the documentaries *Contact* and *Celebrity*.

David McCormack was the lead singer/songwriter of the band Custard, which toured the world and released 7 albums. Both Custard and his new group The Polaroids have had significant commercial success and won an ARIA (Australian Record Industry Award). Since Custard's demise David has continued to release solo albums throughout the world. His latest album 'Little Murders' scored a 5 star review in Rolling Stone Magazine.

David's recent screen compositions include the score for Alex Proyas' *Garage Days* for which he and Antony Partos were nominated for an IF Award. On the small screen, David has composed for *Always Greener*, *All Saints* and *White Collar Blue*, *Valentine's Day*, *Honey Bee Blues* and the animated TV series *Deadly* and *Dex Hamilton*.

In 2008, David produced a tribute album to legendary Australian band The Go-Betweens for Sony BMG and collaborated with Andrew Lancaster to compose the music for the feature film *West*. Most recently is producing a new album for Brisbane rockers Gentle Ben And His Sensitive Side, as well as working with Michael Lira and Antony Partos on the TV series *Rake*.

CREDITS

Writer/Director	TONY KRAWITZ
Producer	DARREN DALE
Based on the book 'The Tall Man' by	CHLOE HOOPER
Director of Photography	GERMAIN McMICKING
Editor	ROCHELLE OSHLACK
Sound Designer	SAM PETTY
Music	ANTONY PARTOS and DAVID McCORMACK
SBS Commissioning Editor Blackfella Films Executive Producer	JOHN GODFREY RACHEL PERKINS
Production Manager	JANE FORREST Esther Rodewald
Sound Recordists	GUNTIS SICS IAN GRANT Dean Ryan
Camera Assistants	JULES WURM CAMERON MORLEY ROBBIE MACKINNON
Clapper Loader	
2 nd Unit DOP Aerial Operator Boat Hire	BONNIE ELLIOTT NATHAN TOMLINSON EDDIE WALSH
Location Liaison Production Runner (Palm Island) Catering (Palm Island)	COL KENNA and OBE GEIA MALCOLM MABO WATERMARK RESTAURANT
Financial Controller Office Manager Archival Footage Research Transcriptions and Post Production Script	LEAH HALL JANE RODGER NAOMI HALL CLEVER TYPES
Stills Photographer	HAMISH CAIRNS
Assistant Editor Post Production Supervisor	JEFF PARKER HELEN LOVELOCK
Sound Post Production Facility Dialogue Editor/Sound Mixer	BIGEARS ROBERT MACKENZIE
Music Recorded and Produced at	SONAR MUSIC
Music Supervisor	KIM GREEN

Title Design and Key Art Creative Director Designer Producer	THE SOLID STATE DANNY LACHEVRE JULIAN REINHOLD MEGAN YOUNG
Post Production Facility Colourist Post Production Producers	OASIS POST AUSTRALIA MARTY PEPPER KATE BUTLER and SOPHIE ROENFELDT
Rushes Facility Producer Rushes Transfer - Film Rushes Transfer - Digital	THE LAB SYDNEY STEWART DEAN DWAINE HYDE CHRIS McHUGH
Blackfella Films Legals SBS Legals	FRANKEL LAWYERS Michael Frankel and Greg Duffy SALLY McCAUSLAND Adrian Craig
Film Stock Camera Equipment Lighting Equipment Laboratory Insurance Travel and Accommodation Freight Flights	KODAK MOTION IMAGING LEMAC FILM AND DIGITAL - Lynn Simpson PANALUX NEGLAB MOONEY'S INSURANCE BROKERS SHOWGROUP ENTERPRISES - Carolyn Dean GALAXY FREIGHT - Paul Beckett WEST WING AVIATION - Christine Rice SAVANNAH AVIATION DAY & DAY SHIPPING INDEPENDENT CAR RENTALS
Barge Car Hire (Palm Island)	

“(San Francisco) Be Sure To Wear Some Flowers In Your Hair”
 Performed by Scott McKenzie
 Written by: J. Phillips
 MCA Music Publishing a.d.o Universal Studios Inc.
 Administered by: Universal Music Publishing Pty Ltd
 Licensed courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment Australia Pty Ltd

“Mama He’s Crazy”
 Composed by K O’Dell
 Published by Kenny O’Dell Music
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KATHY GRAHAM, MAUREEN BARRON, PATRICK McDONALD,
MARY-ELLEN MULLANE, HANNAH LEACH, LIZ STEVENS,
DENISE ERIKSEN, MATT CAMPBELL, NERIDA MOORE,
MIRANDA DEAR, ERICA GLYNN, KATRINA SEDGWICK

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