

VIDEO TRANSCRIPTS

1. Out of the Sea Like Cloud



[Panflute music, waves crashing]

Man called Joe: The ship rose up out of the sea like cloud

[Wooden floorboards creaking, wind blowing]

Joe: And it kept me at land for three or four days.

[Woman singing faintly in background, underneath soft and peaceful music]

Joe: One day, it came very close at Takky Wooroo. And they saw many men walking around on it.

[Floorboards creaking, footsteps]

Joe: They asked each other who were these strangers? And where were they going?

[Birds chirping, water lapping]

[Horse whinnying, cart rattling, dog barking]

Joe: Hello there, my love.

[Knocking on door]

[Ominous oriental-style harp music starts playing gently]

[Whip lashes]

[Ominous music continues]

[Match ignites]

Man in background: C'mon, Joe, tell us a story.

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Joe: Captain Cook came down the east coast of Australia. He pulled up there around Takky Wooroo. My mob was up there on the headland. And he thought we were Indians. He pulled out his eyepiece. And he goes, 'By Jove. Look at those Indians over there on that headland there, Banksy.' And Banksy turns around and he goes, 'Well, Cooky, that's something for the journal.'

And my people, they're up there on Takky Wooroo. And he's looking like that, because we never need them eyepiece and he's going, 'Ehhhy brother, look at that stupid whitefella out there,' and the fella sitting down there beside him goin', 'Wow that, brother,' and he lookin' back out there and he go, 'he must be the silliest whitefella I ever seen in my life' and he goes, 'how come?' — 'Well, that'd be the first time I ever seen any idiot try to play the didgeridoo through their bloody eye.'

[Laughter]

White man: Joe, that's a tall story.

Joe: That wasn't a tall story brother, that was true. My people even made up a song about Captain Cook when he sailed past our land.

White man: Really, can you remember that?

Joe: Ohhh brother, I can remember the song. Wish I could remember the words.

[Whispering in background, sound of smoke being exhaled]

A man and a woman sing: The ship rose up out of the sea like a cloud, and it kept near the land for three or four days. One day it came very close at Takky Wooroo, and they saw many men walking around on it. They asked each other, who were these strangers, and where were they going. They asked each other, who were these strangers, and where were they going.

[Clapsticks clap, a woman hums and sings in Badtjala language, leaves rustle, birds chirp]

[Didgeridoo plays, singing continues]

[Singing continues, footsteps in sand]

[Peaceful music plays as credits roll]



2. A Quintessential Act

[Acoustic guitar reggae music]

Fiona: Doesn't take much to understand that many people spilt their blood on this land, defending their land. And that's Aboriginal people.

Fiona: When you came to Australia as a young child from Wales, what fascinated you about the tensions from Queensland and led you into the field of race relations?

Professor Raymond Evans: Well, that's a pretty big story, Fiona. We arrived here as 10 pound migrants from Wales in 1948. And I went to school in 1949. And you heard very little about Aboriginal people at all in those days, and, and much less about what white people have done

to Aboriginal people. So it was a bit of a mystery to me, growing up exactly what had happened here. You know, we weren't told the history of the country, we weren't told the frontier story. And so I suppose as a child, I picked up lots of little clues, but I couldn't quite put them all together into a, into a coherent picture.

[Reggae music: ...don't really give a damn. Stealing things, steal Aboriginal land...]

Fiona: Just following on from that, in 2004, I created a public sculpture titled 'Witnessing to Silence' in part inspired by your publication, 'Fighting words: Writing about race', and what I came across in that particular publication was that the Badtjala people put up a twenty-year resistance. Do you think it's important for all Australians to understand that Aboriginal nations stood and fought for their traditional lands?

Raymond: Yes, well, first of all, the Fraser Island story just very, very quickly. That is a particularly intense story of resistance, because they had the island to fight from. And you know, they had it like a fortress, and they could fight from it and it went on for at least 20 years, maybe longer. And they were still fighting, you know, they started fighting in the early 1850s, or maybe even in the late 1840s. And then they're still fighting by the early 1860s. So it's a really long struggle. But you find this struggle going on all over the country, and Queensland is a very big place. 1.8 million kilometres, it's two thirds the size of Europe. We've got about 200 Aboriginal, small First Nations here. And the white takeover of the land, the dispossession of the Aboriginal people is occurring in this piecemeal manner, as you've got a moving frontier, so we've got a kind of a frontier war going on.

[Reggae music: ...don't really see it like that, intervention...]

Raymond: At the moment I think, white people in Australia have gotten very little conception of this. And when the story of this is placed before a lot of people, they don't want to know it, they're in denial about it, they get angry about it. I'm not saying everybody is like this. There are a number of people now that are ready to listen. But there are still a lot of people in this country that want to follow the line, that it has been a peaceful, or relatively peaceful history, maybe the odd massacre here and there — unfortunate but, you know, as John Howard said, a blemish on our past. You know, when you look into the real story of what went on, this is not a blemish. This is genocidal behaviour that the white settlers indulged in, that the white government indulged in, particularly in Queensland, using the native police force, as a sort of an exterminatory force all over the state.

Raymond: So it's very, very important that we come to terms with the realities of our history. It's a very, very unpleasant history. And this is the kind of history you get, when you are a white settler society, you've come in and taken the country off other people, and you've taken it by force. The dispossession is the central act of violence and all these other violences that we talk about flow from that central act of dispossession. We've got to realise that our beginnings are in this dispossession, as a white society, and we have got to come to terms with it in some way. But at the moment, we're not coming to terms with it. In the recent past, we've had the so-called History Wars, in which the mass media here, more or less went along with those who are saying, "this just didn't happen". And these historians such as myself and Henry Reynolds and Lyndall Ryan and so forth, have been making it up, they've been telling you porkies about the past, you know, that for some left wing conspiracy reason, they've been doing this. And of course, people — white people here, non-Aboriginal people, would like to think that they don't have this horrific past. So it's much nicer to go along with the happier story. But it's not nicer for Aboriginal people, for people to go on with this happier story. One, because it's a lie. And two, because it ignores the suffering, the shocking suffering, that these people endured over generations.

Raymond: When you look at the Queensland Aboriginal population, we think now that there were probably 250,000 people here, when the whites arrived. By the years of World War One, that population was down to about 17,000, let's say 20,000, to be generous, if you work that out, that's a decline of about 95% of the population. Now, when you look at the Holocaust, in Europe, in World War Two, and we know how shocking the Holocaust was, it caused a reduction in Jewish population of Europe of around 67%. The Aboriginal population were reduced by over 90%. It is a really, really serious story. And we've got to stop beating around the bush about it and talking about blemishes. Not only John Howard talked about blemishes, Kevin Rudd talked about blemishes in his apology to the stolen generation. Now that was an important thing to apologise to the stolen generation. But he did not apologise for the frontier war. That is the big one. Because the stolen generation is just one result of the dispossession. Now we've got to come to terms with the central act of what occurred, and the war that occurred in this country to take the land of the Aboriginal people.

[Reggae music]

Fiona: So following on from that, I'd like to ask you what sorts of reparations needs to be made by the federal government towards Aboriginal descendants from state-inflicted violence through mass shootings, raping, kidnapping and poisoning?

Raymond: It's a very hard subject, isn't it to think about there. You know, it's very, very hard to work that through. I've got so many problems of trying to come to a position on that. One, because this happened, largely, the main patterns of violence occurred between 1788 and the 1930s. So it's not so much like the stolen generation situation, which went on into the 1970s, and so on, you know, and most of the frontier violence occurred in the 19th century. And the recording of it is problematical as well. Because whereas you had all these individual and group killings, and massacres, and so on, if that had happened with the white population, it would be a crime scene. And you would have the collection of evidence that could stand up in a court of law. But in this situation, you do not have that collection of evidence, you have the opposite. You have the suppression of evidence. So you don't have the data. You have police instead of acting as people investigating a crime, they're often conducting the crime. And, and so the pattern of evidence to bring it forward like a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as in South Africa, is not there. The evidence that stands up in a court of law is not there, so then it's very, very hard to make a legal case for reparations.

Raymond: Because what you had in this country, let's call it a war, but it's an undeclared war. So with an undeclared war, you don't have the Geneva Convention and the reparations that come to the losers of the war. You don't have treaties. We don't have a treaty in this country. We have, we had total dispossession and Australia was the only western country in which the dispossession was absolutely total.

Raymond: Where do you start with this? You know, how do you make reparation? For all the things you just mentioned there, and so many others, we could name and that Aboriginal people are still struggling with today in their hearts and their souls. And as we were saying before, Fiona, the trauma that is passed down through the generations of Aboriginal people, into the children of today, how can you repay that? How do you do it? What do you give, to make recompense for that? I can't put my head around it. I really can't, because it's so huge.

[Reggae music: ...politicians all wear the same hat...]

Fiona: From your research, I'm keen to know — what role did white women play on the frontier?

Raymond: Well, the first thing is, white women on the frontier are enormously outnumbered by

white men. They can be up to eight men for each woman, perhaps in some regions, they are there usually as bystanders, but they're not innocent bystanders. And I can think of individual cases where a white woman actually shows the native police where the Aborigines are and says "go to them, kill them." I can remember another case where a white woman conducted a mass poisoning in Queensland, herself. I can remember another case where a white woman talks about carrying guns against Aborigines. On the other hand, I can think of a white woman who hid Aboriginal girls in the loft of her home when police had come onto the property and were just indiscriminately shooting down the Aboriginal workforce. These weren't Aborigines that were attacking. And she hid those two, two young girls and saved them from massacre by the police. I don't even think that was the native police, I just think that was the normal police — the white police, and other times too, white women who would take an Aboriginal child out of a massacre scene, you know, and then raise the child. So white women sometimes have a temporising influence, but it's hard to say they would totally temporizing. And also, they probably know what's going on. And they don't do anything about it. I can't think of a white woman on the Queensland frontier that speaks out on the cause of Aboriginal people, I can't think of a single white woman that speaks out on the cause of Aboriginal people, men, women or children.

[Reggae music: ...new politician, old politician, all wear the same hat...]

Fiona: The other question I'd like to ask you — we're sitting in front of the work *Dispersed*, a sculpture that I made in 2008. This is a word that that's very prominent in government reports. Would you like to make some comments on this particular word and how it was used?

Raymond: Well, I think this is probably Australia's original weasel word. You know, that this is one of these euphemistic words that covers up the fact that you are slaughtering people en masse, or you're killing them individually. The point that needs to be made about these slaughterings and massacreings and group killings and individual killings is that the state does nothing to treat these things as a crime. The whole legal system, the whole British system of justice fails the Aboriginal people. No non-Aboriginal person in Queensland is ever tried and found guilty of killing an Aboriginal person until the beginning of the 1890s. So the whole legal system fails the Aboriginal people in the 19th century. And this is the word that was used by the native police which of course is a state instrumentality, to write in their reports that they had encountered an Aboriginal group and that they had fired on them and tried to kill as many as they could.

Raymond: I mean, this word disperse originally means to scatter people, it doesn't mean to slaughter them. It doesn't mean to kill them. But as we see with the bullets and the letter 'D' there, that's really what it was all about. And those bullets look very formidable. But the bullets the native police guns were using were even more formidable. They were like the bullets from a buffalo gun with a soft leaded head to the bullet, which would spread on impact. So the gun didn't have to be particularly accurate. Because if you got one of these bullets going through you, with no medical follow up, you'd have very little chance of surviving. You see, so this word is the word that's the cover-all word. 'Dispersed' sounds much nicer than 'slaughter'. It's a word really that sends a chill down my spine to tell you the truth. Even sitting in front of it, it sends a chill down my spine.

Fiona: Professor Evans, are there any other comments that you'd like to make about *Witnessing to Silence*?

Raymond: Your installation in front of the magistrate's court, I think is one of the most subversive pieces of art ever presented in Australia. It's a very cheeky installation indeed. Because, you know, as we were saying before, all of these issues occurred, all these massacres occurred without legal intervention. And you've managed to place that right in front of the magistrate's court that should have been doing its work in the 19th century to protect, under law, every British subject. And of course, Aboriginal people were supposed to be British subjects, but they weren't

treated as British subjects. And you have shown that with your installation, because you've got what is it 94 massacres that are outlined there. And with Tim's book that we were talking about before — 'Conspiracy of Silence', he's pushed the number up to about 167. But you've got it engraved in the pavement outside of the Brisbane Magistrate's Court, which is a wonderful coup.

Fiona: Well, I felt very subversive doing it and I felt like I had carried on the tradition as a Badtjala Warrior.

Raymond: You sure did. Sneak attack.

[Fiona and Raymond laugh]

[Reggae music: ...I'm not the messiah, no way, no way...]

Fiona: I'm not accountable for people's ignorance. I think this information's on the public record and if you want to remain in that land of milk and honey that has nothing to do with me, and it's up to you to educate yourself about the real history that happened here in Australia.

[Reggae music: ...I'm not the messiah, no way, no way...]

3. Vexed

[Black cockatoos crow]

[Soft acousting guitar music, leaves rustle]

Man: Prostitution was unknown in pre-contact Aboriginal society, but then so was suicide...

[Guitar music continues, cockatoo crows]

Man: ...there would've been no stolen generation if the white man had have kept his hands off our Aboriginal women...

[Cockatoo crows, clapsticks clap and echo over soft ethereal music]

Man: A lubra is one of the greatest pioneers of the Territory. For without her, it would have been impossible for the white men to have carried on.

[Soft ethereal music]

Man: White men have made huge fortunes in outback Australia, but their black co-husbands live in poverty.

[Soft ethereal music plays, cockatoos squawk]

Man: In 1900 at Ardoch Station in Queensland, nine Aboriginal women were kept in a fenced compound for the use of the white station hands.

[Ominous music plays – clapsticks, electronic piano and guitar]



[Clapsticks echo and fade, cockatoos crow]

Man: The white bosses tried to drive a wedge between Aboriginal men and Aboriginal woman.

[Cockatoos squawk]

Man: The black man's rage is directed not against the oppressor, but against himself.

[Fire crackles, music continues, cockatoos squawk]

[Second man plays clapsticks and sings in Indigenous language]

Second man: I'm the trickery man... come with me... I'll tell you a story of debauchery and decadence and treason and love between a man and a woman...

Second man: See, my story's about my girlfriend and lost love. Her name is Nguthuru Nur, which means phantom spear. She was out fishing one day, and some oyster fishermen stole her. And how would you feel if someone took your Waltzing Matilda and had a lend of you? Would you call that true blue?

Second man: [singing] True Blue... is it me and you? Was it mum and dad? Was it Bob and Bill?

Second man: I'm asking you Australia — did you stick up for your Aboriginal mate when he was in a blue? And which one of you mongrels killed the black cockatoo? True Blue. That's the fair dinkum way."

[Plays clap sticks and sings in Indigenous language]

Second man: Well I don't really give a stuff who it was, just you better bring back my girl — Nguthuru Nur.

Second man: [singing] True Blue. Is it me and you? Is it mum and dad? Is it standing by your mate? Or will she be right? True Blue. Is it me and you? Is it your mum and dad? Is it standing by your mate when he's in a blue...



4. Bliss

[Wind roars, petals rustle, birds chirp intermittently]

FIONA FOLEY

VEILED PARADISE

TRANSCRIPTIONS

 The speaker symbol correlates with the work that has been transcribed for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

