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Echo journalist makes powerful film about a Byron rape



Mandy Nolan

Echo photojournalist puts on her Cloudcatcher Media filmmaker hat in a film to be screened this weekend during the Byron Bay Film Festival.

In her powerful film *Faith*, Director Eve Jeffery shares one woman's story to highlight the impacts of what she describes as a pervasive rape culture in society at large.

With the film being commissioned (and screened) this year by the St Kilda Film Festival and screened at the London Feminist Film Festival, this will be the homecoming for *Faith* and the story of a brutal rape that happened in the sand dunes, near a public walkway in idyllic Byron Bay.

Ironically, after her ordeal Faith believes that she was lucky.



(<http://www.echo.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Faith-this-is-where-Faith-was-raped-Photo-Tree-Faerie-9W6A3513.jpg>)

During filming Faith returned to the place where she was raped in 1994.

Photo Tree Faerie

'She was trapped for five hours on the beach' says Eve, 'As she said herself, I was lucky the way I was raped, when I came out of that I was covered in sand, in bruises, I looked like I was raped. People have compassion for you. For many women who are raped who don't "look like it", the problem is compounded.'

This is a key part of rape culture which Eve believes stops many rape victims reporting their crimes.

'There is a common practise of calling rape victims survivors, but we have to acknowledge they are victims,' says Eve. 'The only reason they are survivors is because of their own resilience, they are strong, and there are plenty of women who are out there who are still victims of the attack, long after its occurred. It's like a weight around them. When I met Faith, I was struck by what a strong and resilient person she is, someone

who doesn't say all men are bastards... that's what rape culture does it creates a culture of saying that all men are bastards and we don't want that either!

As a film maker and a feminist, Eve is passionate about telling Faith's story, and communicating her belief that 'rape is the murder of the soul. Its an etheric murder of you. When you rape someone you are taking their life'.

The 10 minute hard hitting film is styled documentary / re-enactment to tell the story of the attack that happened in 1994 in the vicinity where ironically the Peace Pole now sits.

It was a beautiful balmy night, Faith was walking home from work along the Byron beach front when she was pulled into the sand dunes by her attacker at knife point. Over the next five hours her throat was cut and she was repeatedly raped. Her attack happened in a public place.

'People heard her in the sand dunes and thought it was two people having sex. So no one came to her help. If someone had asked, then she would have been rescued from her ordeal. If you hear someone having sex in a public place you should always ask are you ok? I would rather ask than find out the next day that she was raped.'

It is hard to believe such a vicious and violent attack could happen in beautiful Byron Bay. It's a place where people let their guard down. A place where people feel safe.

But not on this particular night in 1994.

'He cut her throat twice,' says Eve 'He would have killed her, but because he had a penknife she survived. He was caught and went to jail for 16 years but most of that was for attempted murder, not for rape.

Rape is not considered a serious crime.'

The story was prompted by Eve Jeffery's meeting with Faith in her capacity as a journalist for *The Echo* when the perpetrator was coming up for a parole hearing in 2011 and Faith urged Eve to carry her story. Since then the two have formed a friendship and Faith's full story has evolved into this film.

As a film maker Eve was mindful to keep the telling of the events as faithful to the original telling as she could. The major development in the film was the re-enactment which Eve was compelled to convey the terror of the attack but in no way create a sensationalised rape scene.

'I didn't want to put my actors under undue stress' says Eve. 'I feel I was able to convey the tension and the terror without showing the actresses' breasts. You know my big concern was that I didn't want to create a rape film, I didn't want to add to the problem by creating more 'pornography'. In the scene there is no blood, no guts no semen, I was able to give the impression of the attack without those things.

I don't want anyone getting off on that in the film.'

Eve made her film with the view to have a strong impact.

'It is a shocking film, it's why we have the trigger warning. Its not a 'nice' film. Its a hard film, I want people to be outraged.'



(<http://www.echo.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Faith-Police-Station-Byron-Photo-Tree-Faerie-9W6A3577.jpg>)

From the film 'Faith' outside the Byron Bay police station. Photo Tree Faerie



(http://www.echo.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Faith_-_EJ-IMG_2572.jpg)

Faith's second interview with Eve Jeffery for the Echo in 2014. Photo Tree Faerie.



Part of the uniqueness of this film is the way it was made. Being chosen as one of the six films commissioned by St Kilda Film Festival the crew had just three weeks to shoot and cut their film. And on equipment they weren't familiar with.

'We had to use their weird camera, The Olympus. It isn't a cinema camera. Its a lovely little camera but we weren't used to it. We got the extraordinary Matt Ottley to compose music, actors Jordan and Tom did the re-enactment of the rape. They were husband and wife so this made it a lot easier. The actors haven't met Faith. Nor has Tom. Its amazing, this beautiful man composed seven pieces of music for a woman he never met...'

Faith has its first Byron Bay screening at the Byron Bay Film Festival later this month

Faith can be seen twice this weekend at the Byron Theatre. The film will be screened with Cloudcatcher Media's other film, the activist "how to", *Citizen to Activist* at 11am on Saturday, and again on Sunday at 7pm. The cast and crew will be in attendance at both screenings.

For more information go to www.bbff.com.au (<http://www.bbff.com.au>)