



### **Lousy Little Sixpence**

*Director:* Alec Morgan

*Production Company:* Sixpence Productions

*Assistance:* The Creative Development Branch of the Australian Film, Aboriginal Arts Board, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Women and Labor Conference Trust Fund

*Producer:* Alec Morgan

*Co-producer:* Gerald Bostock

*Associate Producer:* Lester Bostock

*Research:* Alec Morgan, Gerald Bostock

*Photography:* Martha Ansara

*Additional Photography:* Jaems Grant, Fabio Cavadini

*Editors:* John Scott, Ronda MacGregor

*Editing Assistant:* Frans Vandenburg

*Music Director:* Ralph Schneider

*Sound:* Lawrie Fitzgerald, John Whitteron

*Sound Editor:* Roy Mason

*Narrator:* Chicka Dixon

*With:*

Margaret Tucker

Geraldine Briggs

Bill Reid

Flo Caldwell

Violet Shea

Australia 1983

54 mins

Video

### **Utopia**

*Directed by:* John Pilger, Alan Lowery

©: Secret Country Films

A Dartmouth Films production

*Produced in association with:* SBS-TV Australia

*Written, Produced and Presented by:* John Pilger

*Executive Producer:* Christopher Hird

*Co-Executive Producer:* Tim Beddows

*Associate Producers:* Paddy Gibson, Chris Graham

*Line Producer:* Sandra Leeming

*Archive Producer:* Alec Morgan

*Additional Research:* Amy McQuire

*Director of Photography:* Preston Clothier

*Additional Camera:* Gideon Jennings,

Leighton DeBarros

*Edited by:* Joe Frost

*Online Editor:* Andy Nicholson

*Post-Production:* Directors Cut, London

*Post-production Manager:* Charlotte Hawkins

*Colourist:* Andy Elliott

*Map Graphic:* The Station

*Additional Music:* Joe Frost

*Sound Recordists:* Robert Pover, Tim Parrats,

James Nowiczewski

*Re-recording Mixer:* Kate Davis

*Sound Editor:* Thaddaios Yianni

UK-Australia 2013©

115 mins

Digital

## **HIDDEN TRUTHS: JOHN PILGER AND THE POWER OF DOCUMENTARY**

# **Lousy Little Sixpence + Utopia**

+ pre-recorded intro by Dr Alec Morgan and statement from Amy McQuire

### **Lousy Little Sixpence: why the film was made**

Open any volume of Australian history and try to find any reference to William Cooper, Bill Ferguson and the Cumeroogunga strike. Most likely you will find nothing at all.

The same is true about Australian film, music, social and political history. For many years most historians and anthropologists have ignored the lives of the Aboriginal people who lived in the southern states during the years 1909-1946. It was in those years that a New South Wales government department carried out a policy of genocide and slavery of the Aboriginal people. In those years the first Aboriginal political manifesto was written, the first Aboriginal organisations were set up and the first Aboriginal strike took place.

In the cities of the south, Aboriginal organisers made white Australians aware that they were a people determined to survive and win. After years of struggle, they defeated the Aborigines Protection Board's plan to break up the Aboriginal communities. None of this was achieved without many casualties. Thousands of Aboriginal children were stolen from their families before the Protection Board could be stopped.

Even today, the residue of the Aborigines Protection Board's policies influence welfare thinking. These need to be removed forever. It was for these reasons that we made *Lousy Little Sixpence*. We wanted to make a film that would fill the dangerous vacuum in Australian history and give to future generations more information than we grew up with.

Raising the finance to make this film was a long struggle. It is hard to forget those dark, sad days when we would receive word that a person, whom we wanted to record on film, had passed away. We hope this film is just the start and that it has forced a wedge in the door of history that was about to close forever.

Dr Alec Morgan and Gerald Bostock, production notes

### **John Pilger on Utopia's background**

The world is facing a desperate hunt for resources. The most powerful economies demand the fossil fuels and minerals that ensure their dominance and survival. Only one western country escaped the economic earthquake of 2008 – the vast, ancient and fabulously rich continent of Australia.

Australia has become the source of the 'last gold': a hidden trove of gold, silver, uranium, iron ore, bauxite, zinc, lead, diamonds, and unlimited reserves of liquid gas. The struggle for this treasure is an epic story rarely told, illuminating the very notions of power and greed, justice and human rights, war and peace. It is the story of Utopia.

Some 200 miles north-east of Alice Springs, in the 'red heart' of Australia, lies Utopia. The ghost-white trunks of eucalyptus rise from skeins of fine red sand and strange rock shapes. Some 2000 people live here, the most enduring human presence on earth.

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## **HIDDEN TRUTHS: JOHN PILGER AND THE POWER OF DOCUMENTARY**

### **I Am Not Your Negro**

Sat 26 Oct 20:35; Sat 9 Nov 15:30;

Thu 21 Nov 18:30

### **Seniors' Free Talk: The Quiet Mutiny + intro and Q&A with author Anthony Hayward**

Mon 28 Oct 11:45

### **Seniors' Free Matinee: The Last Day + intro with author Anthony Hayward**

Mon 28 Oct 14:00

### **The Pilger Effect**

Mon 28 Oct 18:15

### **The War You Don't See**

Mon 28 Oct 20:35; Sat 16 Nov 18:10

### **Death of a Nation: The Timor Conspiracy + Palestine Is Still the Issue**

Sat 2 Nov 15:00

### **The Golden Dream** La Jaula De Oro

Tue 5 Nov 20:45; Thu 14 Nov 18:10;

Sun 24 Nov 15:30

### **Lousy Little Sixpence + Utopia**

Sun 10 Nov 14:50

### **Year Zero: The Silent Death of Cambodia + Breaking the Silence: Truth and Lies in the**

### **War on Terror**

Mon 18 Nov 18:10

### **Burp! Pepsi v Coke in the Ice Cold War + Flying the Flag: Arming the World**

Sat 23 Nov 17:45

### **The Coming War on China**

Sat 23 Nov 20:10; Fri 29 Nov 18:15

### **The Ballymurphy Precedent**

Tue 26 Nov 18:10 (+ intro by director Callum  
Macrae); Sat 30 Nov 12:20

**The documentaries in this season contain  
distressing scenes of both violence and racism  
related to the events they cover**

### **With thanks to**

John Pilger, Jane Hill, Sam Pilger, Christopher Hird,  
Matt Hird, David Boardman, Marcus Prince

Programme texts compiled by John Pilger,  
Jane Hill, Sam Pilger, Christopher Hird, Matt Hird,  
David Boardman, Maggi Hurt and David Somerset

Selections from Hidden Truths can be found  
on **BFI Player**

For more information about John Pilger's films  
go to [johnpilger.com](http://johnpilger.com)

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**SIGHT  
AND  
SOUND**

Until the 1970s, these First Australians were invisible; unlike the pastoralists' sheep, they were not counted. On 16 August 1975, something changed dramatically. Standing in the heat of Utopia, the red sand spilling from his cupped, outstretched hand, Australia's great reforming prime minister Gough Whitlam symbolically handed back Utopia to Vincent Lingiari of the Gurindji people. 'I put into your hands this piece of the earth itself,' said Whitlam, 'as a sign that we restore [these lands] to you and your children forever.'

Three months later, Whitlam's government was overturned in sinister circumstances, using imperial 'reserve powers' – preventing Whitlam from implementing radical legislation that would have given land rights to all Aboriginal Australians, a first step in ending their dispossession and impoverishment and in sharing Australia's wealth.

The following year, limited land rights were granted in the Northern Territory. Intended as a token gesture to 'quieten the lobby', it inadvertently made the people of Utopia legal custodians over the riches in their midst. Since then, every Australian government, backed and bankrolled by the world's biggest mining companies, has sought to claw back these rights, often secretly.

A group of politicians, self-styled historians and journalists – all sharing views of cultural supremacy – erected a 'respectable' façade to the claw-back campaign. According to them, there had been no racism in Australia, no genocide, no theft of land.

Prime Minister John Howard spoke in passionate support of the revisionists, whose theme was that the first Australians had no right to the land. They were savages, it was whispered, noble and otherwise. The National Museum of Australia was forced to 'revise' its Aboriginal section. Educators were pressured; Australia's most distinguished historian of black Australia, Professor Henry Reynolds, was pilloried for his 'black arm-band' view of history – which was the historical truth behind the tourist postcard image of Australia.

This truth was that Australia's past was the opposite of benign. More than 100,000 children were taken from their mothers as part of an official policy to 'breed out the black' – then used as a form of slave labour: the girls as servants in middle class families, the boys as labourers on the great cattle stations. This was the Stolen Generation, whose suffering then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologised for in 2008. But the 'stealing' of children and its assimilationist cruelties have not stopped. Indigenous children are being removed from their families at twice the rate as during the 20th century.

Australia is the world's 12th largest economy, yet the First Australians have the lowest life expectancy of any of the world's Indigenous peoples. Thousands never reach the age of 40. An entire black rugby league team, champions in the 1980s, no longer exists, the victims of preventable disease and suicide. Young black men are incarcerated at eight times the rate of apartheid South Africa in vast, rich Western Australia, home to the current 'resources boom'.

Unknown to most Australians, Indigenous communities like those of Utopia are being socially engineered into urban 'hubs' where they must be 'economically viable'. This policy was initiated in 2007 when Howard and his minister Mal Brough declared a state of emergency in the Northern Territory and sent the army into Indigenous communities 'to save the children'. They claimed that paedophiles were operating in 'gangs' and in 'unthinkable numbers'. This was later shown to be false – but it proved an effective generator of a familiar moral

## TEAR THIS BUILDING DOWN: JAMES BALDWIN ON FILM

### Go Tell It on the Mountain

Mon 21 Oct 20:30; Fri 22 Nov 18:10 (+ intro)

### If Beale Street Could Talk

Tue 22 Oct 14:30; Fri 22 Nov 20:40;  
Sat 30 Nov 17:50

### I Heard It through the Grapevine

Thu 24 Oct 20:40; Sun 3 Nov 13:30

### A Raisin in the Sun

Sat 26 Oct 15:30; Sat 9 Nov 18:10;  
Thu 28 Nov 20:30

### I Am Not Your Negro

Sat 26 Oct 20:35; Sat 9 Nov 15:30;  
Thu 21 Nov 18:30

### Color Adjustment

Fri 1 Nov 20:55; Mon 4 Nov 18:10

### James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket

Fri 8 Nov 18:15; Mon 18 Nov 20:35

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panic with hidden agendas. The Howard government told Aboriginal elders that unless they agreed to hand over the leases to their land they would be denied basic services like the provision of decent housing and sanitation – it was an echo of apartheid.

John Pilger, 2014

*Utopia* was shown in communities across Australia to large Indigenous audiences. At the open-air premiere in Sydney in 2014, on a piece of vacant land known as The Block, a crowd of more than 4,000 people rose and applauded for more than five minutes, many holding candles in the air. They were acclaiming one of the few voices to tell the truth of their lives to a wide domestic and international audience.

John was proud to be one of the few white Australians honoured by the issue in his name of a symbolic Aboriginal 'passport'.

**Amy McQuire, researcher for *Utopia*:** I was so honoured to work on *Utopia* and witness John Pilger's incomparable journalism. *Utopia* was groundbreaking in the way that it uplifted the voice of Aboriginal witnesses and supported their testimonies. For this, it was deemed threatening and biased to Australia's mainstream legacy media so they did everything they could to delegitimise it. But *Utopia* told essential truths about the reality of representational violence as well as state sanctioned violence. It spoke to the unfinished business in this country. Personally, I was honoured to watch John hold politicians like Mal Brough to account and as a young Aboriginal journalist it was a lesson I will always be grateful for. *Utopia* is still widely watched and shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over here. John's work as a truth teller who understood and honoured Black resistance in all its forms will be sorely missed but through *Utopia* – it will never be forgotten.

Amy McQuire, Darumbal journalist and writer

**Dr Alec Morgan** is a multi-award-winning filmmaker with productions that have screened in many countries. His documentary credits include the landmark *Lousy Little Sixpence*, that first exposed the story of the Stolen Generations and *Admission Impossible* that uncovered the secret history of the White Australia Policy. His innovative hybrid feature *Hunt Angels* won 8 awards including the prestigious Joan Long Australian film history award. Alec has co-ordinated the repatriation of archival film to Indigenous communities for the purpose of identification and was archival producer on numerous history productions including John Pilger's *Utopia* and the acclaimed series *First Australians* with Indigenous director Rachel Perkins. He recently collaborated with Tiriki Onus on *Ablaze*, a feature documentary about the search for the 'lost films' made by Tiriki's Indigenous grandfather William Onus. He is currently working on *The Great Deceivers*, a feature documentary that explores race impersonators and the construction of Australia's national identity.