

= Kids Can Say No ! =

Kids Can Say No ! is a 1985 British short educational film produced and directed by Jessica Skippon and written by Anita Bennett . It is intended to teach children between ages five and eight how to avoid situations where they might be sexually abused , how to escape such situations , and how to get help if they are abused . In the film , Australian celebrity Rolf Harris is in a park with a group of four children and tells them about proper and improper physical intimacy , which he calls " yes " and " no " feelings . The film has four role @-@ playing scenes in which children encounter paedophiles , with Harris and the children discussing each scene .

Harris said that he came up with the idea for the film on a 1982 Canadian tour when he saw Vancouver 's Green Thumb Theatre production of Feeling Yes , Feeling No , a play about child sexual abuse . Kids Can Say No ! , released in October 1985 on VHS in the United Kingdom , was the first British children 's film about sexual abuse and was purchased by police forces , educational institutions , and libraries across Europe . Upon the film 's release , The Times obtained opinions from four sexual @-@ abuse experts , who unanimously opposed using Kids Can Say No ! or any other film to teach children about the subject . The Australian Broadcasting Corporation received a positive response to its 1988 broadcast of Kids Can Say No ! and therefore broadcast it a second time that year . Harris and Skippon collaborated on the 1986 sequel Beyond the Scare , which advises teachers about what to do if a child discloses abuse . Showings of Kids Can Say No ! eventually decreased as VHS became less popular .

Kids Can Say No ! resurfaced in 2014 , when Harris was prosecuted for twelve counts of indecently assaulting young girls . The prosecutors found Kids Can Say No ! on YouTube and wanted to show it at trial to illustrate its unintentional irony , but the film was not admitted as evidence . Harris was found guilty of all counts . During the trial , it was learned that , while Harris was filming Kids Can Say No ! , he was in the midst of a casual sexual relationship with his daughter Bindi 's best friend and , by its release , he had committed nine of the twelve assaults . According to Richard Guillatt and Jacquelin Magnay in an article in The Australian , Harris ' campaign against paedophilia in Kids Can Say No ! can " be seen in retrospect as either monumental self @-@ delusion or a sign of deep , self @-@ lacerating guilt " .

= = Contents = =

In Kids Can Say No ! , Australian celebrity Rolf Harris appears with four children between the ages of seven and eight and warns them about paedophiles . The film begins with its theme song , " My Body " , which has the chorus " My body 's nobody 's body but mine . You run your own body . Let me run mine . " During the song , children ride a seesaw , skip rope and cycle . Harris sits under a tree in a park with the children ? two girls and two boys ? and tells them about proper and improper physical intimacy , which he calls " yes " and " no " feelings ; a parent 's hug is given as an example of a " yes " feeling . In vox populi segments , children give other examples of " yes " and " no " feelings ; one child says that being tickled by his father is a " yes " feeling , and another says that being squeezed hard is a " no " feeling . Harris leads the children in a chant of " Go away ! " as an exercise in how to respond to " no " feelings . He teaches the children about stranger danger , and that adults they know can also be a threat .

The film includes four role @-@ playing scenes . In the first , a man tells a girl that he will buy her a toy if she goes home with him . In the second , eight @-@ year @-@ old Natasha goes to her friend 's house and finds that only her friend 's father is home ; after he intentionally spills water on her clothes , he tells her to take them off . The film cuts to Harris , who says , " She should look him straight in the eye and tell him to stop , go away " . In the third scene , a group of older boys try to lure young children into their " special club " ; they lead one young boy to a secluded , wooded area and try to convince him to remove his clothes . In the last role @-@ playing scene , Sophie 's father offers her a secret bubble bath ; afterwards , he tells her not to tell anyone because he would go to jail and it would be her fault .

During and after each of the role @-@ playing scenes , Harris and the children discuss the situation

and what the child should do . Harris tells the children not to be afraid to tell someone if they have been improperly touched , saying , " Some people don 't act right with kids , and they need help . You can 't protect them from trouble that they themselves have caused , and it 's better to say something so that you and the family can get the help you need . You know nothing gets better by keeping quiet about it . " Harris says that , if it is difficult to explain where they have been touched , they can draw a picture or point to the place on a doll . The film ends with " My Body " sung by a group of people including Harris , two police officers , and some children .

= = Production = =

Kids Can Say No ! is a twenty @-@ minute British short educational film intended to teach children about sexual abuse . Harris said he was naive about the subject and was motivated to make the film by a female teacher who told him that , when she spoke to her students about abuse , a traumatised girl ran out of the room ; the girl later disclosed that she was being abused by a family member . According to Harris , he came up with the idea for the film on a 1982 Canadian tour when he saw Vancouver 's Green Thumb Theatre production of Feeling Yes , Feeling No , a play about child sexual abuse . He was also inspired by a similar Australian production and a Swedish film about two children befriended by a large man on a farm . In an interview , Harris said that , when he saw the Swedish film , he thought the man was going to abuse the children , but that his expectations were incorrect and that " the film was completely innocent ; I was not " .

Harris , then host of Rolf 's Cartoon Time , approached the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ( NSPCC ) and the Tavistock Clinic with his idea about making a film on child sexual abuse . Both organisations were receptive . Harris had previous connections with the NSPCC , having appeared in films in 1963 and 1973 promoting the NSPCC League of Pity , and a NSPCC official suggested that he use child actors in Kids Can Say No ! Harris approached director Jessica Skippon , with whom he had made a film about water safety , and said that he wanted to make Kids Can Say No ! to protect children . Harris later said that production was hampered by colleagues opposing the idea that children should be told about sexual abuse .

Kids Can Say No ! was made in London with input from Carolyn Okell Jones , an expert on child abuse , and was filmed on Hampstead Heath in 1985 . The child actors were students at the Barbara Speake Stage School . Skippon directed and produced the film . Funding was difficult because neither the Department of Health and Social Security nor the Home Office considered the film under their jurisdiction , and each office referred Skippon to the other . Childwatch , a charitable organisation , donated £ 15 @,@ 000 and technical facilities were provided by Barclays Bank Video . Harris covered the rest of the film 's production costs and American children 's songwriter Peter Alsop wrote the theme song . American Anita Bennett wrote the script , which was reviewed and approved by a NSPCC committee . Kids Can Say No ! was the second film from Rolf Harris Video , an educational video production company Harris founded in 1980 . In an interview , he said that his role of talking with children about sexual abuse in the film was a natural one because " my track record has made me a believable person . I have never betrayed the kids ' trust " .

Kids Can Say No ! was the first British children 's film about sexual abuse . The film is intended to teach children between ages five and eight how to avoid situations where they might be abused , how to get out of such situations , and how to get help if they are abused . Skippon later said that , although the people working on the film tried to keep it from being frightening to children , the task was difficult . She said that the film was not intended for home viewing and that only well @-@ informed adults trained in the subject should present it to children .

In April 1986 , Harris met with Western Australia Police officials and members of several state @-@ government departments in Mount Hawthorn to propose another film for children about how to handle sexual predators . Despite Harris ' offer to work for free , the officials declined and instead developed a broader campaign on the subject without Harris .

= = Release = =

Kids Can Say No ! was released in the United Kingdom in October 1985 on VHS with notes for teachers and two relevant books , and was distributed by Skippon Video , Skippon 's UK @-@ based company . Although several other short children 's educational films about sexual abuse were on the market in the UK including several also released that year , Kids Can Say No ! was the only British film ; the others were made in Australia , Canada and the United States .

In August 1986 , Jones presented the film at the Sydney Opera House in Australia as part of the sixth International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect , the largest conference in the world on child abuse . The 56 @-@ year @-@ old Harris , who was chosen to be master of ceremonies for the three @-@ day conference 's opening event because of his celebrity and involvement with the film , told the audience that paedophilia was finally " coming out from under its veil of secrecy " .

Copies of Kids Can Say No ! were purchased by police forces , educational institutions , and libraries across Europe . The VHS tapes circulated widely in schools and rape crisis centers in Australia ; although showings began to decrease as VHS became less popular , the film was a significant teaching tool . The Australian Broadcasting Corporation received a positive response to its 1988 broadcast of Kids Can Say No ! and therefore broadcast it a second time that year .

= = = Sequel = = =

After the release of Kids Can Say No ! , many teachers who showed the film to their students reported receiving disclosures of abuse . Because many of the teachers said they were unsure of how to deal with the disclosures , Harris and Skippon collaborated on the 1986 sequel Beyond the Scare . Kids Can Say No ! encourages children to report abuse they experience and Beyond the Scare advises teachers about what to do if a child makes such a disclosure .

Beyond the Scare , filmed in a North London school , consists of role @-@ playing scenes with actual teachers . The film instructs teachers to listen to the child , to discuss the incident with the child 's parents and to contact the appropriate authorities . The Tavistock Clinic helped with the film 's production , and an expert from the organisation appears on @-@ camera to promote child protection projects in schools . Although Harris appears in Beyond the Scare , his role is less prominent than in Kids Can Say No ! and his activism against child abuse ended soon afterwards .

= = Harris ' trial = =

Kids Can Say No ! resurfaced in 2014 when Harris , then 83 years old , was prosecuted for twelve counts of indecent assault between 1968 and 1986 against four young girls ; the youngest was seven years old . The prosecutors found Kids Can Say No ! on YouTube and wanted to show it at trial for its unintentional irony , but the film was ruled irrelevant to the case and not admitted as evidence .

After the trial began , Skippon warned media outlets that it was illegal to use the film without written permission . The director wrote to The Independent that no complaints were made against Harris during the making of the film . In an article about the allegations against Harris , The Sunday Telegraph noted that Kids Can Say No ! was commissioned by the NSPCC ; a NSPCC spokesperson responded , " The film was made independently by Rolf Harris and a film company nearly 30 years ago ... We did not commission it , fund it , make it or distribute it " .

Southwark Crown Court found Harris guilty of all twelve counts of indecent assault . During the trial , it was learned that , while making Kids Can Say No ! , Harris was involved in a casual sexual relationship with his daughter Bindi 's best friend ; the relationship began when the victim was 13 years old and lasted for 15 years . Harris had committed nine of the twelve counts by the film 's release , including the assault of fifteen @-@ year @-@ old Tonya Lee in London three months before the release . The first victim was about the age of the children in Kids Can Say No ! The last assault of which Harris was convicted occurred several weeks after his meeting with officials in Western Australia to propose another film about child sexual abuse . A former child actor from the Barbara Speake Stage School who appeared in Kids Can Say No ! said that Harris ' behavior with older girls at the school made Harris ' eventual arrest unsurprising .

= = Reception = =

Reviews of Kids Can Say No ! have generally been negative , with initial reviews doubting the benefit of showing the film to children and later reviews focusing on Harris ' hypocrisy . In a 1985 Times review , Caroline Moorehead writes that the film 's avoidance of an explicit discussion of sexual abuse was both a requirement and the film 's greatest weakness . According to Moorehead , an explicit discussion might have terrified children and prevented parents from consenting to their children 's viewing of the film ; however , its oblique approach prevents children from understanding the issue . She calls the film 's theme song " catchy , one of those irritating snatches of music that is hard to forget " .

The Times obtained opinions from four sexual @-@ abuse experts , who unanimously opposed using Kids Can Say No ! or any other film to teach children about the subject . Northampton social worker Helen Kenward said that she would not show the film to children . Psychiatrist Brendan McCarthy called it simplistic . According to teacher Clare Rankin , children under five would not understand the film . Physician Paula Drummond was concerned that it might inspire children to falsely accuse adults they disliked , although McCarthy said that children were unlikely to make false abuse accusations . McCarthy was especially critical of the film , calling it " no clearer to a child than the Gorbachev @-@ Reagan talks " . Moorehead summarised the experts ' comments as suggesting that Kids Can Say No ! is " muddling , evasive and pussy @-@ footed , best not for children at all , but as ... aids for parents and professional workers to alert them to paedophilia and incest " .

In a 1988 Sydney Morning Herald review , Judith Whelan writes that Harris is more serious in the film than he was when performing " Jake the Peg " . According to Whelan , the film " would best be seen by children in a group , with an adult ( teacher or parent ) nearby who could encourage discussion after the show or answer children 's questions during it " .

When Kids Can Say No ! resurfaced in 2014 , Peter Walker wrote in The Guardian that the film " illustrates with grim eloquence , in retrospect , the prosecution notion that [ Harris ] was a man of two distinct sides : the avuncular and trustworthy public figure , and lurking behind , the groper and abuser " . Walker notes that the scene in which a man assaults his child 's friend mirrors what Harris did to his daughter 's best friend , and that the closing sequence has " an accidental resonance that would only emerge more than 25 years later " because of the two police officers behind Harris .

According to Richard Guilliat and Jacquelin Magnay in an article in The Australian , Harris ' campaign against paedophilia in Kids Can Say No ! can " be seen in retrospect as either monumental self @-@ delusion or a sign of deep , self @-@ lacerating guilt " . NSPCC chief executive officer Peter Wanless appeared on Good Morning Britain saying that Harris ' appearance in the film was hypocritical . In an Irish Daily Mail article , Paul Bracchi writes that Harris ' work on Kids Can Say No ! at the same time that he was abusing girls was " one of the most sickening examples [ of ] hiding in plain sight " . In 2014 , theme composer Peter Alsop said that Harris may have used the film to groom children because it encouraged trust by parents .