

= Blackrock (play) =

Blackrock is a play by Australian playwright Nick Enright that was first performed in 1995 . It was adapted from a 1992 play by Enright , entitled A Property of the Clan , which was inspired by the murder of Leigh Leigh in Stockton , Australia in 1989 . The plays were both well received critically , though they did attract criticism from both Leigh 's family and the media due to the fictionalisation of an actual murder . Despite repeated statements from Enright that the plays were a work of fiction , they have both often been considered by viewers to be a factual account . A Property of the Clan was shortlisted for a New South Wales Premier 's Literary Award in 1993 , and Blackrock won the AWGIE Award for Best Play in 1996 . Blackrock was developed into a feature film of the same name in 1997 .

= = Plot = =

Blackrock is an Australian beachside working @-@ class suburb where surfing is popular among youths like Jared . He has his first serious girlfriend , Rachel , who comes from a much wealthier part of the city . One day Ricko , the local surfing legend , returns from an 11 @-@ month trip . Rachel 's brother Toby 's 18th birthday party is being held at the local beach club a few days later , and Jared decides to merge a ' welcome home ' party for Ricko with the event . The party is unsupervised with alcohol freely available . The following morning , it is revealed that 15 @-@ year @-@ old Tracy Warner was killed at the party .

Three youths from the party , Davo , Scott , and Toby , tell Ricko that they raped Tracy , though left her alive . The three boys are later arrested for the sexual assault . Ricko confesses to Jared that he killed Tracy . He says he was attempting to have sex with her when she bit him and kicked him , so in a moment of rage he grabbed a rock and struck her . He has already told police that he was with Jared all night and asks Jared to confirm his alibi in the name of mateship ; Jared is torn between telling the truth and protecting his friend . After witnessing Ricko 's abusive behaviour towards their friend Tiffany , Jared decides to tell the truth . Ricko is detained by police and hangs himself in his cell .

Jared 's silence leads to the breakdown of his relationships with both Rachel and his mother Diane . In the play 's last scene , Jared confesses to Diane that he witnessed the three youths raping Tracy , though he did not intervene . He is unsure why he did nothing though he believes it was out of loyalty to the boys who were his mates . Ricko left Jared a suicide note giving him his panel van , though Jared asks his cousin Cherie to throw the keys to the vehicle in the ocean when she goes out surfing .

= = Development = =

= = = Origins as A Property of the Clan = = =

The play originated as Enright 's A Property of the Clan , a theatre @-@ in @-@ education piece written for Freewheels Theatre in Education in Newcastle which premiered in 1992 . Enright was approached by the director of Freewheels , Brian Joyce , who suggested the murder of Leigh Leigh as a subject for a play . Enright initially refused , but Joyce argued that the actual subject of the play would be the victim 's peer @-@ groups . Enright agreed , after being convinced a play could be made out of the conflicting responses to the crime . The title was taken from a quote in the psychological report that was made on Mathew Webster , the man who murdered Leigh , in preparation for his trial . The first decision regarding the play was to omit the criminal acts and the actual murder from it , instead focusing on the drama , its participants and the aftermath of the murder .

= = = Redevelopment as Blackrock = = =

In 1994 the Sydney Theatre Company commissioned Enright to develop the original 45 @-@ minute play into a full @-@ length production . Blackrock retained the original four characters but also added nine others . Associate professor Donna Lee Brien of Central Queensland University considered it to be a more fictionalised version of Leigh 's murder , though many viewers still considered it to be a factual account of the crime . The narrative and emphasis were reshaped for an adult audience outside of a specifically educational environment , also shifting the play 's focus . While A Property of the Clan focused on the possible motives for rape , Blackrock was said to centre on the boys involved in the crime , portraying them as victims of their society .

Blackrock was first performed at Wharf I , a theatre run by the Sydney Theatre Company , on 30 August 1995 . It also played at the Australian Theatre Festival in Canberra that same year . Blackrock continued to be performed at the Sydney Theatre Company throughout 1995 , and performed a sold @-@ out season at Wharf I in 1996 . It has since had many productions throughout Australia , including being performed by a Newcastle @-@ based theatre company , Tantrum Theatre , in 2010 . The 2010 version contained a few minor updates , such as referring to surfer Layne Beachley instead of Wendy Botha .

= = Reception = =

= = = A Property of the Clan = = =

Leigh 's family , who had learned of the play , attended a private screening of it ; some of them had not seen each other for two years . Leigh 's mother Robyn objected to the fictionalisation of her daughter 's murder , stating she would have preferred a documentary account . The rape and murder victim in A Property of the Clan was named Tracy , which Leigh 's family also objected to , as ' Tracey ' was the name of Leigh 's cousin and best friend . One of Leigh 's aunts asked Brian Joyce to change the character 's name out of respect for the family , however , the name remain unchanged , even after the play was rewritten and retitled Blackrock . The local media reported on the family objections to the play , and the day after the play opened , Freewheels faced " mounting disapproval " , and attempted to distance themselves from Leigh 's murder . Both Enright and Freewheels chairperson Sharon McMillan respond to the growing controversy . McMillan wrote in The Newcastle Herald , stating that media coverage of the play was " unfortunately " focusing on Leigh 's murder instead of the play 's message , also stating that some people reporting on it in this manner had not even watched the play . Enright stated that while the comparison to Leigh 's murder was of interest to the media , the play was actually about how any group of boys abuse any girl , and how they came to do it . Nevertheless , many viewers considered the play to be a factual account of the murder . Even though the rape and murder were not shown in the play , the audience were said to be able to fill in their blanks from their knowledge of Leigh 's killing .

Despite the controversy , the play was shown at various high schools in the Newcastle area , and following its positive critical reception , was shown nationally at high schools across the country over a period of eighteen months . However Newcastle High School , where both Leigh and Webster had been students , declined to book the play . The play was also shown at the National Institute of Dramatic Art in 1993 , and was shortlisted for a New South Wales Premier 's Literary Award that year .

= = = Blackrock = = =

John McCallum from The Australian gave a favourable review of the redeveloped play , also stating that the decision to transform the play from its original educational environment to a mainstream audience was a " bold move " that was " triumphantly successful . " Blackrock won an AWGIE Award for Best Play in 1996 . When the play was shown in Sydney , Joyce expressed disappointment at how it was misinterpreted as being about Leigh and " that community " .

People came up to me after and said " Is it really like that in Newcastle ? " ... I was very disheartened because I grew up on the Northern Beaches in Sydney and I didn 't see it as any different whatsoever . It was happening 20 years ago when I was young . I remember there was violence , there was rape , there was party rape and there was party rape with alcohol and a lot of violence associated with that .

When interviewed in 1996 while Blackrock was being adapted into a film , Joyce expressed regret that the media continually drawing connections between the play and Leigh 's murder had caused additional suffering for Leigh 's family , as he had initiated the play with the intention of aiding in the healing process of all the people affected by the murder . Reviewing a version of the play that was performed in 2010 , Caroline Wake from RealTime Arts likened the actors performing in the play to several of the initiation ceremonies that occur in the play itself , stating that to perform in Blackrock is to be " initiated into Newcastle ? s history , to learn that along with the mines and the beaches , the death of Leigh Leigh too is your ambivalent inheritance . "

The New South Wales Department of Education and Communities hosts curriculum material for high school classwork on both plays .

= = Premiere production = =

Blackrock 's premiere production was directed by David Berthold , and featured the following cast :

Jared : Simon Lyndon

Cherie : Rebecca Smart

Ricko : Paul Bishop

Davo : Dan Wyllie

Scott : Teo Gebert

Toby : Joel Edgerton

Tiffany : Kristina Bidenko

Stewart / Len / Roy : John Walton

Marian / Glenys : Julie Godfrey

Rachel : Kym Wilson

Diane : Angela Punch McGregor

All other roles were played by members of the company .

= = Film adaptation = =

While the revisions to the play Blackrock were still being finalised , Enright started working with first @-@ time director Steven Vidler to produce a film version , which would also be titled Blackrock . Blackrock was released in 1997 . Rebecca Smart reprised her role as Cherie in the film . Simon Lyndon who portrayed Jared in the play was cast as Ricko in the film .