

Aboriginal Law Time in the Pilbara region of North West Australia.

Texts written for DVD covers.

Initiation at Bellary 2002-03

Law Time in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia

Each Summer Innawonga, Banyjima and Niyiparli people gather at a Meeting Camp to prepare for initiation ceremonies for young men (marlulu). In late 2002 through to early 2003, Innawonga ceremonies were held at a ceremony ground near the community of Bellary, between the Pilbara towns of Tom Price and Paraburdoo. The young man was firstly 'grabbed' by the initiated men by placing a human hair belt around his waist. The youth was then taken on a journey around the Pilbara and into the Western Desert with his escorts. Towards evening two weeks later, the boy and his escorts returned, to be greeted by waiting families who offered gifts of flour and food to the 'mangali' who would conduct the initiation. That night, the marlulu shared a meal with his parents and cousins. Then, after the women danced the bundut, ceremonies were held at the men's Law Ground near the Bellary Meeting Camp. Next morning, blankets and gifts were exchanged with the mangali and visitors before they left the camp. One month later the initiate, now known as a nuju, returned to his families. The public ceremonies recorded on this video were only a small part of the initiation cycle which takes up to eight weeks. In replace of the missed sections of filming, the father of the initiate, Mr Stuart Injie senior, and the uncle, Mr Ken Injie senior, describe how the nuju was reintroduced to society after the all night singing of the wardilba song cycle on the final night.

The Innawonga, Banyjima and Niyiparli elders have allowed the filming of these ceremonies (which are rarely seen by outsiders) as evidence for native title that their laws and customs survive in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

Camera: Bill Day

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Cane River Law Time - DISK ONE:

In December 2003, plans were made to 'grab' two young men for initiation at the Cane Rive Law Grounds on Peedamulla Station, near Onslow, Western Australia. In Moonah Street, Tom Price, men placed a human hair belt around the chosen man who then became a marlulu. In the Gumala office, Liaison Officer Greg Tucker telephoned Port Hedland telling his contacts that the marlulu was on the road to gather a 'mob' from which the manggali would be selected. Two days later the marlulu was filmed at his grandfather's unit with the men who will take him to the meeting camp. A week later, when the families have gathered at Cane River, another young man is 'grabbed' and taken out to the approaching 'mob.' The two marlulu are then 'run through' the ceremonies at the meeting camp and the visitors are offered gifts of food. After a last meal with their families the two marlulu are taken to the Law Ground where they will stay in seclusion for over a month. Special thanks to Greg Tucker, Jimmy Cox, Steven Hubert, Travis Parker, Terence Dowton, Peedamulla station and everyone at the Cane River Meeting Camp for their assistance in the making of this DVD.

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Cane River Law Time - DISK TWO:
the Wardilba night.

After spending five weeks in the bush being instructed by the elders, at last the nuju were ready to

be returned to their families. Excitedly, people came from all over the Pilbara to celebrate the wardilba song cycle. Around the meeting camp, children gathered bark to throw next morning. That night, while the women and children lay in darkness on bedding behind a barricade of vehicles while the men sang from sunset to sunrise inside a 'yard' of branches a hundred metres away. At sunrise the two initiates were escorted back to their waiting families. Children threw bark at the approaching men, while the mothers and thurdu (big sisters) waited beside a smoking fire. Then the nuju ngali were cleansed in the smoke before they were reunited with their families. Special thanks to Greg Tucker, Jimmy Cox, Steven Hubert, Travis Parker, Terence Dowton, Peedamulla station and everyone at the Cane River Meeting Camp for their assistance in the making of this DVD



CANE RIVER 2002

Law Time in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia

Each Summer, Innawonga, Banyjima and Nyiyaparli people gather at a Meeting Camp to prepare for initiation ceremonies for young men (marlulu). In 2002, ceremonies were held beside the Cane River on Aboriginal-owner Peedamulla station. The young men were firstly 'grabbed' by the initiated men when a human hair belt was placed around their waist. They were then taken on a journey around the Pilbara and beyond with their escorts. Towards evening two weeks later, the boys returned with their escorts from neighbouring tribal areas and were greeted by the waiting families. That night, ceremonies were held at the Cane River men's Law Ground near the Meeting Camp. Next day, gifts were exchanged and the visitors left the camp. One month or more later the initiates, now known as nuju, returned to their families after the all night singing of the wardilba song cycle.

The Innawonga, Banyjima and Nyiyaparli elders have allowed the filming of these ceremonies (which are rarely seen by outsiders) as evidence for native title that their laws and customs survive.

Camera: Pam McGrath

Bill Day

Contact

PO Box 425

MAYLANDS

WA 6931

Mobile 0408 946 942



Initiation at Cane Rive, Pilbara Western Australia:

11-12 February 2006

On New Year's Day, 2006, Aboriginal families gathered beside the Cane River on Peedamulla Station to prepare for the initiation of five young men. The initiates, known as marlulu, had been 'grabbed' several weeks previously by the placing of a traditional hair belt around their waists. Since then,

their instructors had been travelling with them through the Pilbara to return with a convoy from distant tribes from which the mangali would be chosen to perform the initiation ritual. Waiting for the return were members of the boys' language groups with the boys' families, divided into jangali and kangu, or workers and close family. The visitors were greeted with gifts of food before the young marlulu shared a last meal with their families before they were taken into the Law Ground for the first stage of their initiation into manhood. Next morning, blankets and other gifts were exchanged with the visitors before the mangali returned to their communities. For the next six weeks the mothers and sisters of the initiates lived under bough sheds preparing meals which the men took into the bush where the boys were receiving instruction. After six weeks, when it was agreed that the time was right, relatives returned from as far as Hedland, Tom Price and even Carnarvon to the Cane River meeting camp for the final night, The day before, heavy rains fell to the east, causing the Cane River to rise overnight and flood the road crossing the river from Onslow. However, not a drop of rain fell at the meeting camp or Law Ground. On the final night, initiated men sang the Wardilba songcycle from sunset to sunrise, before reintroducing five initiated men, who were now called nuju. During the moonlit night, the women waited behind a barricade, shaking tins of stones to drown out the words of the sacred songs. At the first light of dawn, the nuju were brought to their waiting sisters and mothers while small children playfully threw chips of bark from baskets they had filled the day before. To see the men raucously dodging the bark added humour to the otherwise solemn event. To conclude the ceremonies, the nuju and their mothers dipped their heads into thick smoke from a smouldering fire to cleanse themselves of any lingering spiritual force. The weary men then embraced as if in mourning, as families posed for photos with the five elaborated decorated young men, blackened from head to foot with crushed charcoal and wearing a high crested head dress of coloured wool and woven grasses. For the past two years the annual ceremonies have been filmed by Gumala Aboriginal Corporation for the native title holders.

Camera by Bill Day



An interview with Kevin Cox filmed in Tom Price, Western Australia in 2005 by German filmmaker, Kerstin Mlynkec. Kevin talks of growing up as an Aboriginal male and discusses his opposition to racism in Australia.

The disk concludes with a music video showing scenes of Aboriginal activism accompanied by the song You Gotta Be Strong sung by the late George Rrurrambu.



Mulga Downs and Wittenoom

Cultural History -

PART TWO

In May 2005, senior men of the Wirrilimarra Clan of the Banyjima people returned to Mulga Downs and Wittenoom to make this DVD recording of the station life and cultural activities of Banyjima people of the area. As this DVD shows, some Banyjima people maintained their connection to their land and their customs by working for the Hancock family or living in the asbestos mining town of Wittenoom. In Part One Alec searches for his mother's grave in the Wittenoom cemetery, and identifies the sites where other elders were buried in bush graves around the station property. Alec Tucker, Archie Tucker, Greg Tucker and Lloyd Tucker share yarns of tailing sheep, windmill runs and

other activities. On the station they point out 'meeting camps' and bundut circles where the traditions, laws and customs were passed on to the Tucker family by their elders. Near the homestead, the group inspect one of the corrugated iron huts where Alec and his family once lived. After a tour of the station and the townsite, there are memories of the Wittenoom race meetings. To the north of the race course the men found evidence of camps set up when approaching 'willy willies' threatened people from visiting tribes gathering for the annual 'pinkeye' time when boys were initiated. The rusting yards of 'piggy mia' still stand on the outskirts of Wittenoom near where Greg spent weeks of isolation after his initiation on his traditional lands. He tells how in the 1980s Aboriginal families from Wittenoom were moved to Karratha and Wickham by the State Government and their homes were demolished. Previously, Aboriginal residents of Wittenoom had not been warned of the dangers of the asbestos that littered the schoolyard and the streets.

On Part Two, on the banks of of the creek next to Hester Mill, Greg remembers how he saved the life of Gina Hancock. Even rusting car wrecks have a story to tell. The visit to Mulga Downs concludes with a sentimental visit to the twisted tree where Alec's late brother and his sister were removed from their mother by Native Welfare and Police Officers in 1946. To end Part Two of these DVDs, Greg and Alec and their families enjoy a picnic at Crossing Pool in the beautiful Wittenoom Gorge. Camera and editing by Bill Day.

Mulga Downs and Wittenoom

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with a sentimental visit to the twisted tree where Alec's late brother and his sister were removed from their mother by Native Welfare and Police Officers in 1946. To end Part Two of these DVDs, Greg and Alec and their families enjoy a picnic at Crossing Pool in the beautiful Wittenoom Gorge. Camera and editing by Bill Day.

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The Funeral of the late Nicola Cook
Wakathuni
January 28th, 2006

Funeral service conducted by Guy Parker and Marshall Smith
Filmed at Wakathuni, near Tom Price, Western Australia
by Dr William B Day of Gumala Aboriginal Corporation
at the request of Joyce Drummond (mother) and Brendon Cook (brother)

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Pilbara Law Time

Each Summer Innawonga, Banyjima and Niyaparli people gather at a Meeting Camp to prepare for initiation ceremonies for young men (marlulu). Towards evening, boys return with their escorts from their two week journey through neighbouring tribal areas and are greeted by the waiting families. That night, ceremonies are held at the men's Law Ground near the Meeting Camp. Next day, gifts are exchanged and the visitors leave the camp. One month or more later the initiates, now known as nuju, are returned to their families after the all night singing of the wardilba song cycle. The Innawonga, Banyjima and Niyaparli elders have allowed the filming of these ceremonies (which are rarely seen by outsiders) as evidence for native title that their laws and customs survive.

Camera: Bill Day

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STATION HISTORY

PART ONE

Station History 2004

PART ONE

Mulga Yard, Rocklea, Coppin Pool, Marillana, Mulga Downs

Part One of Gumala's Station History DVD series records Mulga Yard, Rocklea Woolshed, Coppin Pool, Marillana Woolshed and Mulga Downs homestead, Hancock memorials and woolshed as they were in 2004.

Part Two records a visit to Old Shaw tin fields on Hillside station on July 20th, 2004. The next day the group visited Bamboo Springs and Warrie stations. As the DVD shows, many of the old structures have been unprotected and are lying in ruins. The old stock yards of bush timbers have memories to the men and women who worked on the stations - first with sheep and later with cattle. At Old Shaw, the memories are of yandying for tin and living in a camp where old cars were used for shelter. Gumala Aboriginal Corporation is recording these sites before they they disappear - destroyed by fire, flood, termites and souvenir hunters. This project also documents the role of Aboriginal labour in establishing the Pilbara pastoral industry.

Camera by Bill Day

BELOW: The old shearers' mess and meat house at Marillana woolshed.

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Station history 2004

Part Two

On July 20th 2004, Bonny Tucker and her family returned to Old Shaw tin fields. Amongst the rusting car bodies the litter told a story of Aboriginal life when pastoralism was the main source of employment along with yandying for tin.

STATION HISTORY 2004

PART TWO

Old Shaw, Bamboo Springs and Warrie

Photo below: Bonny Tucker at the grave of Anne Leete

On 21st July the visit continued on to Bamboo Springs and Warrie stations. Terry and Joy Leete gave the visitors a guided tour of the old buildings as he swapped yarns of the old days when the Tucker family worked and lived on the station. Warrie and Bamboo are now a part of Hillside station and little remains of the homesteads, yards and sheds. Gumala Aboriginal Corporation members are recording their memories at these historic sites that are disappearing through neglect, decay, the weather, fire and termites. Gumala's series of Station History DVDs reveal the importance of Aboriginal labour in establishing the Pilbara pastoral industry.

Camera by Bill Day

Below: All that remains of Rocklea shearing shed

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Law Time in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia

WAKATHUNI LAW TIME

WARDILBA NIGHT

17-18 NOVEMBER 2004 Each Summer, Innawonga, Banyjima and Niyaparli people gather at a Meeting Camp to prepare for initiation ceremonies for young men (marlulu). Towards evening, boys return with their escorts from their two week journey through neighbouring tribal areas and are greeted by the waiting families. That night, ceremonies are held at the men's Law Ground near the Meeting Camp. Next day, gifts are exchanged and the visitors leave the camp. One month or more later the initiates, now known as nuju, are returned to their families after the all night singing of the wardilba song cycle. The Innawonga, Banyjima and Niyaparli elders have allowed the filming of these ceremonies (which are rarely seen by outsiders) as evidence for native title that their laws and customs survive.

Wakathuni is a small community between Tom Price and Paraburdoo. This film was made over the last two days of the initiation, as the families prepare for the young men to return from the WAKATHUNI law grounds.

In memory of Wobby Parker, Banyjima elder

Born 1922, Passed away 11th November 2007

Camera: Bill Day

PO Box 425

MAYLANDS

WA 6931
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WAKATHUNI LAW TIME

2003 (PART ONE)

In 2003 the Aboriginal community of Wakathuni, 30 kilometres from the Pilbara town of Tom Price, became the setting for initiation ceremonies for four young men of the Nyiyaparli, Innawonga, Banyjima and Ngarlawangga language groups. When the young men returned as marlulu from travelling to neighbouring tribes they were welcomed by the kanggu (close families) waiting at Wakathuni. After the ceremonies, visitors were given gifts of food before the initiates shared a final meal with their families. Later that night they were taken to the Wakathuni Law Ground where they remained in seclusion for over a month. Early in the morning after the initiation, the boys' families exchanged gifts with the mangali who then returned to their homelands. For the next five weeks the Wakathuni community became a meeting camp, preparing food for the nuju in the bush while they received instruction from the initiated men.

Part One of this two-part DVD recording begins as the community prepares to welcome home the marlulu and ends as people prepare for the singing of Wardilba on the final night a month later. Part Two, on another disk, ends as the four initiated Nuju are returned to their families.

Camera and editing Bill Day PhD

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In 2003 the Aboriginal community of Wakathuni, 30 kilometres from the Pilbara town of Tom Price, became the setting for initiation ceremonies for four young men of the Nyiyaparli, Innawonga, Banyjima and Ngarlawangga language groups. When the young men returned as marlulu from travelling to neighbouring tribes they were welcomed by the kanggu (close families) waiting at Wakathuni. After the ceremonies, visitors were given gifts of food before the initiates shared a final meal with their families. Later that night they were taken to the Wakathuni Law Ground where they remained in seclusion for over a month. Early in the morning after the initiation, the boys' families exchanged gifts with the mangali who then returned to their homelands. For the next five weeks the Wakathuni community became a meeting camp, preparing food for the nuju in the bush while they received instruction from the initiated men.

WAKATHUNI LAW TIME

2003

(PART TWO)

Part One of this two-part DVD began as the community prepared to welcome home the marlulu and ended as people prepare for the singing of Wardilba on the final night. Part Two on this disk, begins on the evening before wardilba. The next morning at sunrise the four initiated Nuju are returned to their families. As they approach, children throw bark that they have gathered in preparation. The mothers sit waiting while the thurdu (sisters) bring the nuju one-by-one to be cleansed in smoke from a smouldering fire. The nuju wear tall head-dress and are painted black with the charcoal from a cork tree as they pose for photographs on disposable cameras.

Camera and editing by Bill Day PhD (UWA).

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LAW TIME AT MULGA DOWNS

NOVEMBER 2004 - JANUARY 2005

In December 2004, Banyjima and Nyiyaparli people gathered at Wirrilimarra Meeting Camp on Mulga Downs to prepare for initiation ceremonies for nine young men (marlulu). Towards evening, boys returned with their escorts from their two week journey through neighbouring tribal areas and

were greeted by the waiting families. That night, ceremonies were held at the men's Law Ground nearby. Next day, gifts were exchanged and the visitors left the camp. Over one month later, the initiates, now known as nuju, were returned to their families after the all night singing of the wardilba song cycle. The Banyjima and Nyiyaparli elders have allowed the filming of these ceremonies (which are rarely seen by outsiders) as evidence that their laws and customs survive. Camera: Bill Day, Kerstin Mlyenkic. Commentary: Greg Tucker. Editor: Carlos Leal Garcia. Pictured below: The initiated young men and their elders on January 30, 2005. Back cover: Nuju Oliver Tucker (centre) A Gumala Aboriginal Corporation Film

by Dr Bill Day
PO Box 425
Maylands WA 6931

Also available:

- Cane River 2002
 - Youngaleena 2002
 - Wakathuni 2003 (Disks One and Two)
 - Bellary 2003
 - CaneRiver 2003-4 (Disks One and Two)
 - Wakathuni 2004
 - Cane River 2006
- and

Becoming a Man in the Pilbara. A film by Kirsten Mylenkec

LAW TIME AT YOUNGALEENA 2002

Law Time in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia

Each Summer, Innawonga, Banyjima and Nyiyaparli people gather at a Meeting Camp to prepare for initiation ceremonies for young men (marlulu). In 2002, ceremonies for one marlulu was held at Youngaleena, an Aboriginal community twenty kilometres east of Wittenoom, excised from Mulga Downs station. The young man was firstly 'grabbed' by the initiated men when a human hair belt was placed around his waist. He was then taken on a journey around the Pilbara and into the Westen Desert with his escorts. Towards evening two weeks later, the marlulu returned with his escorts in a 'mob' from neighbouring areas. The convoy of vehicles was greeted by rituals conducted by the waiting families. After the rituals, the visitors were offered gifts of food (kamri). That night, secret ceremonies were held at the Youngaleena men's Law Ground near the Meeting Camp. Next day, gifts of blankets and other goods were exchanged and the visitors left the camp. One month or more later the initiate, now known as a nuju, returned to his families after the all-night singing of the wardilba song cycle. As he approached the waiting mothers and sisters, children threw bark they had gathered the day before. To conclude the ceremonies, the nuju and his sisters were 'smoked' to release any remaining spiritual forces.

The Innawonga, Banyjima and Nyiyaparli elders have allowed the filming of these ceremonies (which are rarely seen by outsiders) as evidence for native title that their laws and customs survive into twenty-first century.

Camera: DR BILL DAY, CONSULTING ANTHROPOLOGIST
PO BOX 425, MAYLANDS WA 6931

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Becoming a man in the Pilbara,Western Australia.
A film to music by Kerstin Mylenkic of Berlin, Germany
Also Interviews in the Perth mall
January 2005

Becoming a Man in the Pilbara

At the invitation of the Banyjima people of the Central Pilbara Region of Western Australia, German filmmaker, Kerstin Mylenkic was present at a tribal gathering to initiate nine young men. The initiates lived for six weeks at a Law Ground separate from the women and their families who prepared meals in the meeting camp on Mulga Downs cattle station, where this film was made. During these weeks a funeral was held at Onslow, 500 kilometres away on the coast. The scenes have been set to music by various Aboriginal artists.

In PART ONE on this DVD , Mylenkic approached members of the public on Perth streets for their views of Aboriginal people. Also on this disk, an Aboriginal busker (since deceased) SINGS “My Boomerang Won’t Come Back.”

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See also Christian Aboriginal DVDs Index