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Kanyini, a powerful and personal story

WHAT is most extraordinary about this beautiful and gracious one-hour film is that we have never heard this word before. *Kanyini* — or the complex interconnectedness that underpins Aboriginal culture — is such a simple and powerful idea, and so sublimely explained by Bob Randall, the wise old narrator of the film, that all Australians should be aware of it.

It helps us understand what it means to be part of the land and, more significantly, part of the 40,000-year-old culture that has developed on that land.

Director Melanie Hogan, realising she had no contact with, or understanding of, the traditional people of the nation, travelled to the desert "to learn about indigenous Australia — in a blackfella way — through communication and relationship."

Kanyini (PG).

At Electric Shadows

★★★★

Reviewer: Simon Weaving

There she found Randall, or Uncle Bob as he is more fondly referred to. Uncle Bob tells us his personal story and explains the significance of *Kanyini*. In doing so, he also tells us the history of the Aboriginal people. We are slowly seduced into the storytelling world with some exquisite photography from the red centre of Australia, and with Uncle Bob's magical voice.

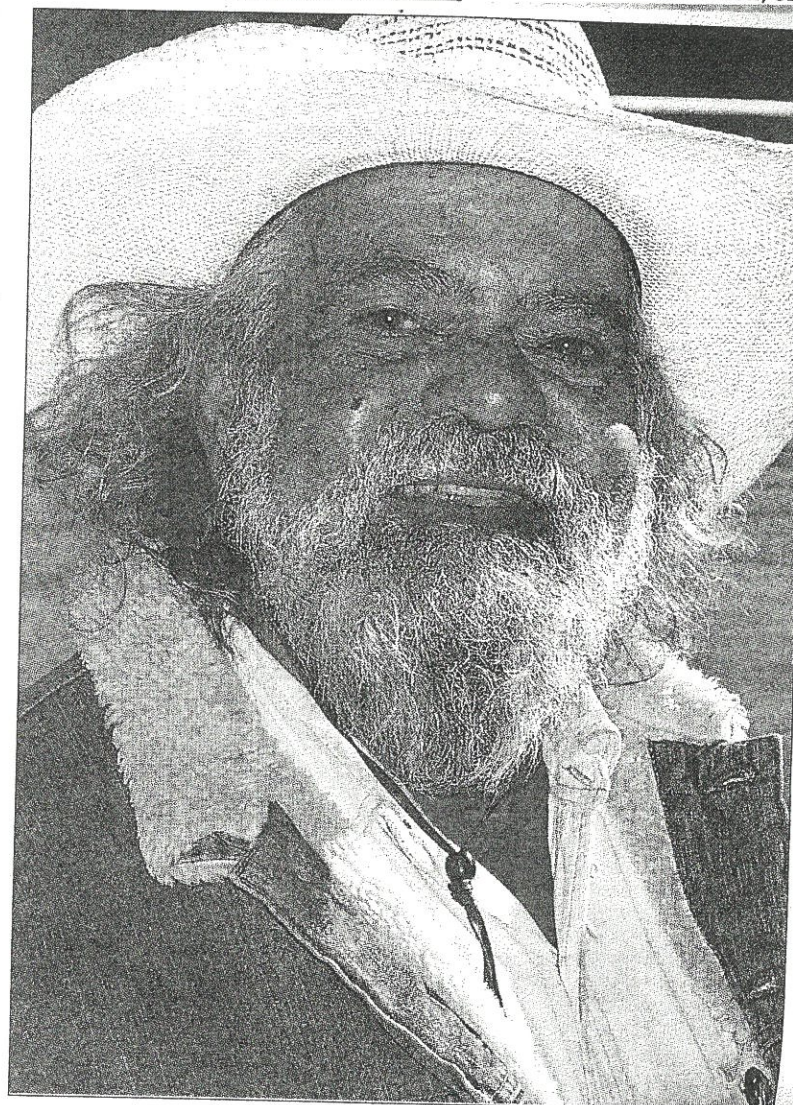
When combined with historical footage of Aboriginal people living around Uluru, a sense of wisdom and authority emerges. We learn, as if from a great sage speaking the truths of an old culture that has much to tell us. Yet Bob is too close to the pain to remain the impartial

guru for long: once he has us listening to him carefully, he tackles issues of the Stolen Generation, Aboriginal massacres, and contemporary policy. There are some confronting moments when polarities are foregrounded: white/black, rich/poor, wealthy tourists/petrol sniffers, you/me.

We have no space to escape and, despite Bob's ironic laughter, it is impossible not to see the anger and sadness in his old eyes.

But before the film becomes another sad profiling of the current state of Aboriginal affairs, and before the narrative is lost to divisiveness, Hogan and Uncle Bob bring us back to *Kanyini*, and the concept of a oneness that could provide us with a different, shared future.

Uncle Bob explains how *Kanyini* makes us all brothers and sisters, all part of the same oneness, all with the same mother — Australia.



COMPELLING: Bob Randall is the central voice of *'Kanyini'*, a documentary that focuses on his difficult journey and the hardships still facing indigenous people.