

GD BRUNY'S "BUSHRANGER ORIGINS": A STORYBOOK DRAMA MINI SERIES.

While numerous books and articles have been written on the subject of bushrangers and bush-ranging, in-print pieces lack the dynamic impact and greater life-like appeal of moving pictures and sound. The origins of the sub-culture of bush-ranging are largely unknown to screen audiences in Australia and indeed the rest of the world. Bushrangers and bush-ranging is bigger than America's so-called 'Wild West' bad men.

Bushranger Origins, the self-funded, 2 x 1-hour *storybook mini series* was planned. It began life in July, 1999, while researching and writing was being undertaken on a period cinema motion picture. After several months of initial research and writing, Bushranger Origins was shelved, until early 2004, when development work recommenced. In early 2007, the shooting of live-action drama scenes, for an hour part, began.

The *storybook mini series* would be made-up of the following:

GENESIS: In 1805, several convicts on the island-jail, Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania], were sent out into the wilderness to hunt for food, at a time of famine in the tiny settlement of Hobart Town. The convicts didn't return. The name "*Bush Rangers*" was sloganeered, giving rise to the first and mightiest bush-ranging epoch [1805-1848].

GOLDRUSH: From 1850, Vandemonian brigands migrated to the new, non-convict Colony of Victoria; located on the Australian continent. This occurrence gave rise to the second bush-ranging epoch [1850-1870] -- at the time of Victoria's great gold-rush [1851-1859].

Bushranger Origins was built as a *cavalcade* of historical characters, events and dates. The almost non-existent factual pictorial archived material, did not allow for a documentary per se story-telling approach. As a consequence, hundreds of purpose-built, black and white watercolor-wash illustrations were created / constructed, over many months. These semi-realistic illustrations would then be arranged in frame-by-frame scenes and sequences.

The illustrated segments approach was also meant to assist in side-stepping numerous production difficulties; often associated with setting-up and shooting live-action drama scenes outdoors. [*eg: People riding horses, costumed crowd-scenes and the use of old buildings, at locations, topped off with often unreliable weather and many related monetary considerations*]

Unlike random costumed live-action shots, sometimes included in documentaries, Bushranger Origins would have dramatic scenes; with a beginning, middle and end, played-out by actors exchanging dialogue. In addition, scene-sequences would give audiences a sense of a character's growth. In other instances, all-action scenes would be supported by voice-over narration, sfx or music where applicable.

The conventional use of on-camera Historians and / or a Presenter was substituted for reports-to-camera, by key players; to impart a believable, happening now, impression.

Costumes, dating from 1780-1880, would be accurate replicas of the originals; not inferior non-descript party-hire pieces.

Props and interior sets would faithfully represent the 1800-1860 period.

Interior drama-scene lighting was designed to give a feeling of the old-world; window-lit and / or candle-lit ambience.

Exterior drama-scenes would be set in selected parts of the Australian bush; to give an impression of how it might have looked in early settlement times.

Typical bushranger, convict, settler men and women make-up would give a rough-hewn, real-life appearance; whereas officials and their wives would be somewhat manicured.

The theme music-track would be emblematic of the common-folk, as in Australian Colonial settlement times and would have a spirited freedom-seeking edge to it.

The general perception has tended to be, Australia had only one so-called 'wild west' bad man: *Ned Kelly* [1860-1880]. The fact is, there were many more colorful and swashbuckling bushrangers, long before Ned was born. A trained bushranger, Ned Kelly was a late-comer in bushranging's almost 100-year existence.

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