

RABBIT-PROOF FENCE

AUSTRALIA, 2002Z

PHILLIP NOYCE



TECHNICAL DATA

Director: Phillip Noyce
Producer: Phillip Noyce, Christine Olsen, John Winter
Cast: Evelyn Sampi, Kenneth Branagh, David Gulpilil
Music: Peter Gabriel
Cinematography: Christopher Doyle
Runtime: 94 min

SYNOPSIS

Based on Doris Pilkington's autobiographical book *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*, this film is the true story of three Aboriginal girls who are forcibly taken from their families in 1931 to be trained as domestic servants as part of official Australian government policy. Gracie and Daisy cling to Molly for support, and Molly decides they need to return to their parents. Molly plans a daring escape, and the three girls begin an epic journey back to Western Australia, travelling 1,500 miles on foot with no food or water, and navigating by following the fence that has been built across the nation to stem an over-population of rabbits. For days they walk north, following the fence and eluding their pursuers, a native tracker and the regional constabulary.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Noyce was born in Griffith, New South Wales, attended Barker College, Sydney, and began making short films at the age of 18, starting with *Better to Reign in Hell*, using his friends as the cast. He joined the Australian Film & Television School in 1973, and released his first professional film in 1977. Many of his films feature espionage, as Noyce grew up listening from his father's stories with the Z Special Force during World War II, and has an interest in the theme.

After his debut feature, the medium-length *Backroads* (1977), Noyce achieved commercial and critical success with *Newsfront* (1978), which won Australian Film Institute (AFI) awards for Best Film, Director, and Screenplay.

Noyce worked on two miniseries for Australian television with fellow Australian filmmaker George Miller: *The Dismissal* (1983) and *The Cowra Breakout* (1984).

Miller also produced the film that brought Noyce his greatest acclaim in the United States — the thriller *Dead Calm* (1989) which turned Nicole Kidman into a star. His greatest commercial success to date has been the Tom Clancy spy thriller *Clear and Present Danger* (1994) starring Harrison Ford.

After 1998's *The Bone Collector*, Noyce decided to take a break from Hollywood. He made in his native Australia the "stolen generation" picture *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, which achieved great acclaim and won the Australian Film Institute Award for Best Film in 2002. Noyce also achieved great acclaim in the United States for *The Quiet American*, a 2002 film which gave Michael Caine an Academy Award Best Actor nomination. After doing *Catch a Fire* (2006) in South Africa, Noyce decided to make another big budget studio film with 2010's *Salt*.

He has described *Rabbit-Proof Fence* as "easily" his proudest moment as a director: "Showing that film to various Aboriginal communities around the country and seeing their response, because it gave validity to the experiences of the stolen generations".