

FRAME-UP

John Hinde

Irina Dunn's *Frame Up* is much more of a minority film (or it is for the moment, as cinema) largely because of distribution problems. A clever, analytical, largely unemotional but deeply committed documentary like this is much closer to television than to cinema, and commercial television is interested in it. So it may be reaching a very wide audience soon; but for the moment, in NSW for instance, the only way to see it will be at 6 p.m. on any of the next six Sundays at Sydney's Trade Union Club or alternatively (I understand) at Sydney's Criminal Investigation Branch. The CIB was the first to ask for a copy of *Frame Up*. Admittedly the last I heard unofficially was that the CIB had been quoted \$500 for a showing, so that a session might not come off.

The film's about what's come to be known as The Hilton Bombing and what far too many people believe was the conviction and jailing of three members of the Ananda Marga for that bombing. In fact the Hilton never was actually bombed. There *was* a bomb in a public rubbish bin outside the Hilton during a high level international meeting. It exploded in the rubbish collecting van with tragic results that may never have been envisaged by whoever planted the bomb. A good deal later, three Ananda Margas, Tim Anderson, Ross Dunn and Paul Alister, were charged and, after two trials, convicted of conspiring to murder Robert Cameron, a leading figure of the neo-nazi national front; but there were cross-references during the trial to the so-called Hilton bombing and the media took these up so enthusiastically that it left this lasting idea behind that the three had been sent up for 16 years for the "Hilton affair".

The question that *Frame Up* takes up with commitment and hard logic and a lot of forensic skill is whether we were for some good reason *meant* to believe this and whether a police informer "framed" the original charges concerning Cameron and the account of the bomb that he alleged had been prepared to kill Cameron so as to introduce, or in fact rather dramatically remember in the middle of the trial, the alleged link with the bomb outside the Hilton.

Well, Irina Dunn is a journalist and this is her first film. She and Nick Power and Graham Double put the film together for an incredible couple of thousand dollars by working for nothing in all their spare hours, such as from 2 a.m. to 7 a.m. and then after work the same evening, working like that for more than two years. She got stuck with the cause of the three Margiis while she was editing the paper for inmates at Sydney's Long Bay Jail. She met the three and became convinced that they were innocent. So she and her collaborators settled down to sift the evidence, and they talked to jurors and found some of them full of doubts.

The figure who brings home the doubts and inconsistencies most discomfortingly of all is Ross Clarke, the foreman of the first jury, the one that couldn't agree. Clarke is a man of no pretensions but high intelligence and integrity, and great curiosity, the sort of juror you would simply long for if you had faith in your own cause whichever side you were on. And time after time we hear Clarke reflecting on the character of Seary, the po-ice informer, who infiltrated the Ananda Marga and who was in the car alongside the alleged bomb that was allegedly meant for Cameron the night that the Margiis were arrested.

Clarke reflects with a lot of concern about the way that Seary would remember new and crucial evidence from time to time as the case went on, and how he'd not recollect the evidence that he'd given at the committal hearing; and Clarke concludes with this: 'if you turned all the evidence around, aimed it at Seary and put him on trial, you'd find him guilty in ten minutes, I reckon. And another juror says that it was when *his* jury felt that these fellows must have been involved in the Hilton that they decided then and there that "they should be put away".

More famous figures such as Senator Gareth Evand and MP's such as George Petersen and Joan Coxsedge and the lawyer-broadcaster, Tom Molomby, express their doubts about the way that the cases were handled in the political and emotional atmosphere of the time.

And yet, in the end, my own conversion was an essentially emotional one, as possibly conversions only can be when an essentially emotional case such as this one is examined, however well, in a space of barely 50 minutes. For me, it was a combination of what I'd seen and heard for the first time of the three Margiis, and the linking of that with the ugly verbals that the police case had submitted as a sort of proof of the Margiis' plan to murder Cameron. Verbals are unsigned transcripts of alleged statements made during police interviews, and the ones credited to the three accused here were so coarse and neurotically foolish that I remember when they were first published shrugging in a way and thinking, "Oh well, here are three more low grade western neurotics perverting the easy side of Indian mysticism". But, by the time the

verbals came on in Frame Up, I'd seen the three Margiis (who by the way are now in the sixth year of their 16-year sentence, with their appeal verdict only now about to be announced.) But I'd seen them and heard them talk, and it was impossible for me to believe that these men had made those statements.

Well, it's not possible to deal with a closely committed analysis of a criminal case such as this, unless (I imagine) you can give it just about as much time as it gives to the case. You can't really otherwise sum up all it achieves nor the pitfalls of conscious or unconscious partiality; but it is a beautifully argued documentary, fascinatingly handled. It's hard to come away from Frame Up feeling that justice was at all times clearly seen to be done in the Ananda Marga case.



WHO BOMBED THE HILTON, WHO DIDN'T
A DOCUMENTARY



RICHARD SEARY, the police informer who alleged that the Margis had told him they had 'done the Hilton bombing'.

These allegations, which were widely reported in the media at the time, are now known to have seriously prejudiced the jurors, even though the judge told them to put them 'out of mind'.

This is the only evidence ever linking Tim, Paul and Ross with the Hilton bombing.

THE
PRISON STRUGGLE
 Changing Australia's Penal System



George Zdenkowski
 and
 David Brown



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 SYSTEM**



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WOMENS ISSUE.

People wishing to contribute to, or be involved in producing a special womens issue please contact one of the following people:

Wendy Bacon c/o National Times, Sydney

Meredith Quinn c/o NSW Bureau of
Crime Statistics

Nan Rogers c/o Redfern Legal Centre.

Front and back covers: Display by the then newly formed Tactical Response Group. Photos: Jackie Haynes, courtesy of John Fairfax and Sons.



Anzac Day, Sydney 1983

POLICE HARASSMENT OF MINORITIES

Postscript to the public meeting

A coalition, known as the Minorities Group, has been established to fight police harassment in NSW. The Group comprises the following organisations:

Aboriginal Legal Service
Ananda Marga
Australian Prostitutes Collective
Council for Civil Liberties
Gay Rights Lobby
Marrickville Legal Centre
Motorcycle Riders Association
National Organisation for Reform
of Marijuana Laws
Prisoners Action Group
Sydney Women against Rape
Collective
Womens Action Against Global
Violence

The Group's programme of action will include campaigns against:-

- the new street offences law.
- verbals and unsigned records of interview.
- the NSW Special Branch.
- procedures for investigating complaints against the police.

In addition, the Group has undertaken to compile a list of names of volunteers who can be contacted after hours to monitor police raids and instances of selective intensive policing. It will also look at ways in which an after hours legal service can be provided for the Sydney Metropolitan Area.

Individuals who are interested in contributing to the Group's activities should contact Tony Katsigiannis, Council for Civil Liberties, P.O. Box 201, Glebe, 2037. Tel 660-7582.