

2 Law Way: Talkabout Walkabout

A production by Corrugated Iron Youth Arts in collaboration with Indigenous Artists

Thursday 26 and Friday 27 May 2011

Review by Ted Egan

2LAWWAY, A UNIQUE THEATRICAL PRESENTATION EXPLORING ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE AUSTRALIAN JUSTICE SYSTEM, HAS BEEN CREATED FOR THE CENTENARY OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY. 2LAW WAY CONTRIBUTED SOME TOP END PERSPECTIVES TO THE NATIONAL DEBATE SURROUNDING THESE ISSUES AND INCLUDED FILM, THEATRE, CORROBOREE AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE WAY FORWARD. THIS PRESENTATION WAS THE RESULT OF COMMUNITY RESEARCH IN DARWIN AND WAS CO-DIRECTED BY ALI MILLS AND DAMIEN A. PREE.



I must say that I accepted the invitation to attend 2Law Way with considerable apprehension.

I thought:

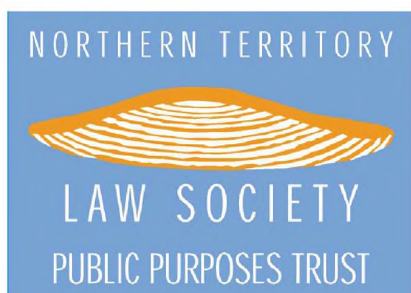
"This will be yet another occasion where people of indisputable First Australian descent, but possessed of miniscule knowledge of Aboriginal language and customs, seek to lambast the "white" legal eagles with hefty emotion-charged outbursts about 'our traditional law' as they demand the right to engage in ritual spearing and other

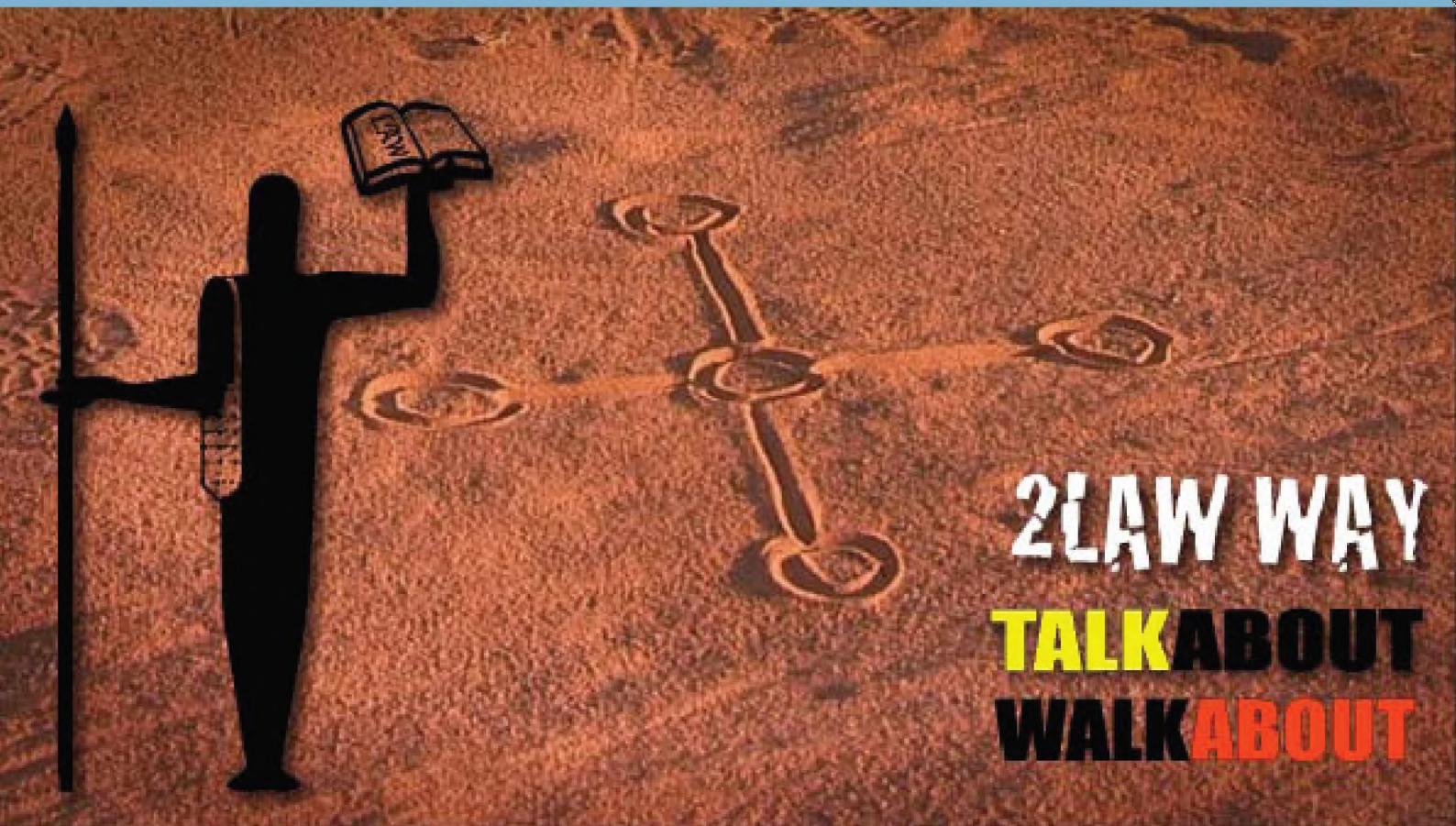
forms of payback that, in reality, they know little about".

There was a bit of that, but there was also a wonderful expose of the actual shortcomings of our British/Australian legal system as it applies to people whose first language is Australian and whose minimal understanding of the sophisticated English used in court proceedings places them, almost invariably, in that Kriewaldtian position whereby they might as well not be there while their legal fate is being determined by the so-called 'experts'.

In the 2Law Way courtroom scenes

2Law Way was kindly supported by:





Sand drawing courtesy of Bush Law film

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the “cases” presented had all of us squirming: they were such real and everyday exposures of the need for re-appraisal of almost every aspect of the trials, highlighting, as they did, the legal position of First Australian people. We tend to say:

“Oh, we’ve got the blackfellas worked out now: we have Forster CJ’s ‘Anungu Principles’”.

But Forster CJ has done little other than (commendably) scratch the surface. We need comprehensive reassessment around the taking of First Australian evidence and the REAL use of REAL interpreters.

In the Supreme Court Chancellery, for Part Two of *2Law Way*, the symbolic use of the rope and the positioning for the various arguments presented were both dramatic, forceful and, by my judgement, very effective.

The players certainly had me alert. I had a look around and I could see the impact the play made on the many judges in the audience.

I hope the entire play was filmed effectively. If so, I would love to be a participant in an appraisal. I think Riley CJ would be perfect as the convenor of such a gathering, as I know that, on the night, he was deeply moved and impressed. ●