

Scarlet Road



Scarlet Road follows the extraordinary work of Australian sex worker, Rachel Wotton. Impassioned about freedom of sexual expression and the rights of sex workers, she specializes in a long over-looked clientele – people with disability.

Electronic Press Kit

Scarlet Road

Feature Version 70 minutes

www.scarletroad.com.au

Director/Co-Producer

Catherine Scott

Producer

Pat Fiske



PO Box 7402 Bondi Beach, NSW Australia 2026

pafiske@bigpond.com / cscott@ihug.com.au

+61 407 813 255 / +61 405 338 186

Production Company:

Paradigm Pictures Pty. Ltd. has been making films since 1999. The company's goal is to make documentaries that shift and challenge the way people see the world. Films are about controversial social issues with a strong emphasis on characters at the core of the story. In 2000, Paradigm Pictures completed the award winning two-part series called *Business Behind Bars Part 1: USA & Part 2: Australia* about the private prison industry in the USA and Australia in 2000. The international version of episode one, *Profits of Punishment*, has sold internationally in over 12 countries. *Selling Sickness* was the company's next project and was an international co-production with SBS TV, CBC Canada and France 2. It was aired on TV channels internationally and viewed at both festivals and community screenings around the world. *Scarlet Road* is the company's third project with Catherine Scott and Pat Fiske working together.

Director / Co-producer:

Catherine Scott is an independent Director/Producer in Australia. She was a former member of the Paper Tiger TV collective for ten years in New York City. She was Director/Co-writer of *Selling Sickness* and Director/Co-producer of the Walkley award-winning *Business Behind Bars* screened on SBS and many TV markets around the world. Her productions include *Breathless*; *Drawing the Line at Pitston* and *Staking a Claim in Cyberspace*. She has been a frequent Coordinating Producer/Director for Deep Dish TV producing *Who's Afraid of the Little Yellow School Bus?*, *Lock Down USA*, (WNET) *The Last Graduation*. Cathy was a coordinator and Co-producer of the Gulf Crisis TV Project, a timely ten-part series about the Gulf War by Paper Tiger TV and the Deep Dish Network, aired on PBS affiliates nationally, Channel Four (UK), SBS television (Australia). Catherine produced *TV Connections*, which was part of the *Signal to Noise* series, and ITVS funded project broadcast on the PBS network in the USA.

Producer:

Pat Fiske is an experienced director and producer and is recognized as a prominent member of Australia's independent film making community. Pat produced *Business Behind Bars*; *Selling Sickness*; *Beats Across Borders* and *the River of No Return*. Among the other films she has directed and produced are the award-winning documentaries: *An Artist From Eden*, *Following The Fenceline*; *Leaping Off The Edge*; *'Doc', a portrait of Herbert Vere Evatt*; *For All The World To See, a portrait of Prof Fred Hollows*; *Night Patrol*; *Australia Daze*; *Rocking The Foundations, a history of the NSW Builders Laborers' Federation and the Green Bans and Woolloomooloo*. She was active on the boards of Filmnews and the Australian Screen Directors Association for many years. In 1999–2000, Pat worked as the Documentary Consultant at SBSI for 18 months. In March 2001 at the Australian Documentary Conference in Perth she was awarded the third prestigious **Stanley Hawes Award** for her outstanding contribution to the documentary industry in Australia. She was Co-Head of the Documentary Department at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School from 2002–2008. For the last three years, Pat has worked part time as a curator for Australian Screen Online, has been producing *Scarlet Road* and developing projects.

SCARLET ROAD – SYNOPSES

One Sentence Synopsis

Scarlet Road follows the extraordinary work of Australian sex worker, Rachel Wotton. Impassioned about freedom of sexual expression and the rights of sex workers, she specializes in a long over-looked clientele – people with disability.

Short Synopsis

Impassioned about freedom of sexual expression, Australian sex worker Rachel Wotton has become highly specialized in working with clients with disability. Rachel's philosophy, that human touch and sexual intimacy can be some of the most therapeutic aspects to our existence, is making a dramatic impact on the lives of her clients, Mark and John. Both have nothing but praise for her talents. Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis 26 years ago, John now drives around in a chin-controlled wheelchair, but after ongoing sessions with Rachel, he has regained body movement that he thought was lost forever. His self-esteem and overall improvement have amazed his doctors. Mark, a client with Cerebral Palsy, has gone through life trying to establish an intimate relationship. Confined to a wheelchair and speaking via an electronic communication board, dating has not been easy. Mark has come to love his body and has always dreamt of falling asleep with a woman and waking up beside her in the morning.

While Rachel's clients give a glimpse into their sexual self-discovery, *Scarlet Road* follows Rachel as she strives to increase awareness and access to sexual expression for people with disability. Rachel is also an active campaigner for both policy makers and the general public to recognise that sex work is *work*. She has been a part of an international movement to try to gain rights for sex workers and to end the social stigma and discriminatory practices that surround their occupation. To bring greater understanding of her work she has helped set up 'Touching Base' and has travelled overseas to present at conferences. On a journey to the UK, Denmark and Sweden, Rachel meets up with sex workers and people with disabilities, as well as making quite an impression as a speaker at the World Congress on Sexual Health. Up against a hectic work schedule Rachel is endeavoring to graduate from the University of Sydney, with a Masters degree in Sexual Health. She has big dreams and hopes to secure funding for Touching Base to expand their training workshops for organisations and sex workers. Eventually Rachel hopes to help create the world's first not-for-profit brothel – a centre of excellence for training that enables sex workers to upskill and share their knowledge when providing services to clients with disability.

Scarlet Road

Director's Statement

Catherine Scott

Rachel and I met over a decade ago. We hit it off immediately and she has been part of my circle of friends ever since. In the early days we always flirted with the idea of making a documentary about her and that stayed in the back of my mind. I ended up moving to Kenya for a few years and when back and after having a son, it occurred to me it would be a great moment to embark on the film. I approached Rachel about the idea, and we discussed what possible angles I could take and I picked up the camera and started filming. The focus of the documentary shifted and changed and finally centered on the work Rachel was doing with her clients with disability. Everything fell into place. This was the area in Rachel's life she was most passionate about and very few documentaries have tackled this subject matter. I set off on the arduous task of trying to find interest for the film. I ended up having a second child while this was all coming together and when Charlie was 5 months old, he came on the road with us when we filmed in Europe. In retrospect the timing of the documentary could not have been better because of what ended up unfolding in Rachel's life once we started production.

Rachel's openness about what she does I found disarming and her honesty and views on sex intriguing. She deeply cares about others who work in the profession and has a duality about her, on the one hand being a 'naughty' girl, who for a fee, is delighted to cater to her client's various fantasies and desires, and on the other, a passionate advocate engaged with the cultural and political battles that surround this clandestine world.

Representation around both sex workers and people with disabilities is a minefield and I really wanted to tackle stereotypes head on. One of the aims of this film is to represent people with disabilities' view of their own sexuality. People with disability have often been viewed as 'non-sexual' beings and on the other hand sex workers are often seen as 'oversexed', 'victims' or 'damaged goods'. I really wanted to shift past all these preconceived ideas and get the audience to think about this in a whole new way. So when it came to filming Rachel with her clients it was a delicate balance. I wanted to show the touch and intimacy, without objectifying Rachel or her clients and reveal the sexual tenderness without titillating or shocking the audience.

I used an up-close, handheld and personal shooting style so viewers could be drawn into a complex and sometimes confronting issue in a direct and accessible way. It is Rachel's voice and the events in her life that take us through the film. At times the camera was observational, following Rachel and the people she encounters – allowing scenes to simply unfold. This is intercut with interviews with Rachel and the other characters filmed over three years. As a filmmaker I relished Rachel's comfort with the camera and her humor and ease with me being there in her life. This rapport came from our long friendship but even so, we still had to develop a new trust in one another. Rachel had to trust that I was not going to do what most media people typically do and I had to trust that she knew what was most important to show about her life and let go of some my sometimes conventional expectations. Being a sex worker, Rachel is very good at negotiating her boundaries and at times in the beginning I felt like I was bumping hard up against them. However the more I engaged Rachel in the process of the film, the more she opened up and let me into her world. Even though I had known Rachel for years, there was so much more to learn about her life and experience in the world. I think it's the dynamic between us that really made 'Scarlet Road' a wonderful film to make and hopefully to watch.

As the director I hope this documentary will help shed more light on the truly fascinating area of sexuality and disability, and demystify the stereotypes that often stigmatise sex workers and have led to repressive policies around the world. Ultimately I think it is Rachel's view of her world and her access into the lives of clients and fellow sex workers that can truly surprise and challenge the viewer.

SCARLET ROAD CREDITS

Single cards

Director/Co-producer
Catherine Scott

Producer
Pat Fiske

Editor
Andrea Lang ASE

Rolling Credits

Original Music by
Antony Partos David McCormack

Music recorded and produced at
Sonar Music

Colour Grade and Mix
Michael Gissing, Digital City Studios

Sound Design
Mike Jones

Cinematographers
Catherine Scott Bonnie Elliot

Story Consultant
Rachel Wotton

Additional Consultant
Saul Ibister

Additional Camera
Jo Parker, Pat Fiske

Production, Sound & Edit Assistant
Jessie Hildebrand

Additional Production & Sound Assistant
Felicity Anderson Maloney

Technical Edit Support
Mark Stewart-Pearson

Production Accountant
Jannine Barnes, Mandala Production Services

Production Stills
Bonnie Elliot, Belinda Mason, Pat Fiske

A very special thank you to Rachel Wotton, Saul Isbister
John Blades and Mark Manitta for sharing their stories with us

Thank you

Elaine and Tony 'Spag' Manitta,	
Denise Beckwith	Matt Jones
Lucy Baxter	Otto Baxter
Belinda Mason	Liam & Dieter Mason
Pye Jakobsson	Rachel's Mum
Anne Scott	Jim Terrie
Patrick Jury	Steen Rees

Dr. Patricia Weerakoon

- Coordinator, Graduate Program in Sexual Health, University of Sydney

Debby Doesn't Do It For Free

Sex Worker Performance Group

People with Disability Australia

Scarlet Alliance

- the Australian Sex Workers Association

Touching Base Inc

and

Ali Moosavi Jazari	Aline Jacques
Anna Broinowski	Alison Jeffries–Thierry
Alison Lyssa	Alan Momberg
Bruce Blades	Connie Chien
Dick & Hilary Lang	Dame Julie Bates
Duncan Thomson	Ginger Snap
Grisha Dolgopolov	James Rees
Jodie Fog	Justin Ong, <i>Bluemango</i>
Kylie Prats	Laura Leersnyder
Liza Spence	Mandy Rudd
Marianne Leitch	Mark Gould
Martin Williams	Maj Christensen
Manny Gasparinatos	Melanie Robinson
Mike Majkowski	Mitzi Goldman
Murray Loudon	Nathan Gorman
Ned Lander	Nerida Moore
Paul & Rowena Scott	Paul Andre Thierry
Ray Couchi	Richard Fielding
Suzie Wicks	Surfish Seafood Café
The Loop Orchestra	Tom Zubrycki
Trevor Graham	2 MBS FM 102.5

Legals

Shaun Miller, Shaun Miller Lawyers

Insurances

HW Wood Australia Pty Ltd

Website created by

Red Gaffa

Intimate Encounters exhibition Images
Courtesy of Belinda Mason

Additional Music

Club Heaven

Composed by Darwinian

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Screen Australia Investment and
Development Manager, Documentary
Julia Overton

SBS Executive Producer
John Godfrey

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Single Cards

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