

# ***THE HONOURABLE WALLY NORMAN***

*Directed by*

Ted Emery

*Starring*

Kevin Harrington

Shaun Micallef

Alan Cassell

Roz Hammond

H.G. Nelson

<b>Australian National Release Date:</b>	<b>Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2003</b>
<b>Rating:</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Running Time:</b>	<b>88 minutes</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	

## CAST LIST

Wally.....	KEVIN HARRINGTON
Dolly.....	ROZ HAMMOND
Laurie.....	OCTAVIA BARRON MARTIN
Normie.....	TOM BUDGE
Willy.....	ALAN CASSELL
Ken Oats.....	SHAUN MICALLEF
The Chairman.....	H.G. NELSON
Richard Nicholls.....	BRYAN DAWE
Rebecca-Jane.....	MELISSA MADDEN GRAY
Myles.....	NATHANIEL DAVISON
Gary.....	PAUL KELMAN
Barry.....	REG EVANS
George the Foreman.....	PAUL BLACKWELL
Duncan.....	LEN FIRTH
Terry the Cop.....	GUY O'DONNELL
Unsavoury Meatworks Owner #1.....	KEITH ROBINSON
Unsavoury Meatworks Owner #2.....	BRUCE VENABLES
Caprice Cerise.....	EMILY O'LOUGHLIN
Prime Minister.....	JOHN SINGLETON
Guy Thrown Out of Seat .....	The Hon MIKE RANN MP, Premier of South Australia
Old Racegoer.....	MAURICE HOWIE
Merv O'Grady.....	DAVE FLANAGAN
Journalist #3.....	PATRICK DUGGIN
Old Codger.....	HARRY STAPLETON
Principal.....	IAN BOYCE
Saucy Grandma.....	ANN ALLEN
5GH DJ.....	DENIS NOBLE
Murray Gray.....	DARYL GOODWIN
Princess Amegarak.....	CONI LARANJEIRA
Interpreter.....	JEREMY VAN ZYL
Bookmaker.....	PAUL MAKIN
Battler Mum.....	NINA PEARCE
Floor Manager.....	PHILLIP LOWE
Captain of Local Industry.....	PETER GREEN ....

## CREW LIST

Director.....TED EMERY  
Producer.....JONATHAN SHTEINMAN  
Producer.....EMILE SHERMAN  
Associate Producer.....RICK KALOWSKI  
Screenplay .....ANDREW JONES &  
.....RICK KALOWSKI  
Line Producer.....BARBARA GIBBS  
Editor.....STEPHEN EVANS  
Director of Photography.....DAVID FOREMAN A.C.S  
Sound Designer .....FRANK LIPSON  
Script Editors.....MARK LAZARUS  
.....TED EMERY  
.....JOHN ALSOP  
Original Music .....JIM CONWAY  
.....ARNE HANNA  
.....PAUL ROBERT BURTON  
Production Designer.....RITA ZANCHETTA  
Costume Designer .....ANITA SEILER  
Casting Director .....GREG APPS

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

THE HONOURABLE WALLY NORMAN is a feature comedy by Australia's foremost comedy director Ted Emery (KATH & KIM, THE CRAIC), produced by Jonathan Shteinman (ANGEL BABY, THANK GOD HE MET LIZZIE) and Emile Sherman (THE NIGHT WE CALLED IT A DAY) of Ocean Pictures, and written by Andrew Jones & Rick Kalowski. THE HONOURABLE WALLY NORMAN stars Kevin Harrington (THE DISH, SEACHANGE), Shaun Micallef (MICALLEF TONIGHT), Roz Hammond (MURIEL'S WEDDING), Bryan Dawe (THE GAMES, THE CASTLE) and H.G. Nelson (THE DREAM) as 'The Chairman'. A warm-hearted, delightful film, it tells the tale of a poor country meatworker (Kevin Harrington) who, when accidentally nominated to run for federal parliament, decides to try to win office, hoping to stick one up slick party politics and restore a little dignity to the bush.

## SYNOPSIS

You know how sometimes meatworkers accidentally get nominated for federal parliament? Well it's about to happen again...

WALLY NORMAN (Kevin Harrington) is a poor country meatworker with a loving family. He has a healthy distrust of politicians, a morbid fear of public speaking, and a pet goat named 'Aussie Carmen'. Unfortunately, Wally's home town is also the must-win Seat that will decide the upcoming federal election.

The Australian People's Party plans to unseat crooked local member KEN OATS (Shaun Micallef), by bringing back legendary WILLY NORMAN (Alan Cassell), a one-time local member and prime ministerial hopeful. But WILLY is now a hopeless drunk. And come nomination night, he accidentally nominates *Wally* instead of himself. What's worse, the rules say the nomination can't be changed.

So, with the backing of the befuddled party CHAIRMAN (H.G. Nelson), WALLY is offered the chance to run for parliament, never told the real reason why. The sudden closure of the local meatworks, and the theft of his and his mates' entitlements, apparently with KEN OATS' knowledge, convinces WALLY to accept.

But WILLY and KEN OATS have conspired to destroy WALLY. And so WALLY's campaign is a total disaster. Journalists including RICHARD NICHOLLS (Bryan Dawe) seem to delight in the screwups. Only wife DOLLY (Roz Hammond) keeps WALLY in the race.

Finally, just days before the election, with a little help from his hungry pet goat, WALLY is forced to speak a few heartfelt words of his own about the crisis in the Bush. The electrifying public response hurtles WALLY back into contention.

Everything comes down to the election eve debate, where WILLY and KEN have some nasty surprises in store. But WALLY may just be planning a few surprises of his own. After all, every underdog has his day...

## PRODUCTION STORY

THE HONOURABLE WALLY NORMAN is an old-fashioned Aussie comedy written by first time screenwriters Rick Kalowski and Andrew Jones and produced by Jonathan Shteinman and Emile Sherman of Ocean Pictures. Kalowski and Jones, lawyers with a bent for comedy, came up with the idea when they discovered a peculiar feature in Australian electoral law.

Kalowski explains: "If a person has been nominated to stand for a federal seat and there's been an error in the name that appears on the nomination, you've either got to find a candidate who answers that name, or the nomination is invalid. It set us thinking – what happened if you nominated a guy by accident? The idea struck us as potentially funny." Kalowski and Jones then came up with the premise of the film.

"When we finished writing the script we hoped we had a movie which would be funny," says Kalowski. "But we also realised it might reflect things we saw happening in Australia that made us annoyed – like businesses and industries closing with employees losing their entitlements, a massive divide between the city and the bush, and a growing disillusionment with Australian party politics. While the movie turns on a coincidence, a classic comic set-up, it's no accident Wally Norman runs for parliament. When he sees what's happening around him, he really has no choice."

Kalowski took the script to film producer Emile Sherman (*The Night We Called it a Day*) of Ocean Pictures whom he'd known throughout school and university. Sherman was familiar with Kalowski and Jones's comic ability. As students in the Faculty of Law at The University of New South Wales they'd written and directed the law revues for several years. Sherman then showed the script to his Ocean Pictures partner Jonathan Shteinman (*Angel Baby, Thank God He Met Lizzie*) who was impressed with the concept.

Shteinman says: "It's the quintessential film about the Aussie battler hero. Australian audiences have an abiding interest in films that depict the larrikin overcoming the odds of the system. That's what attracted us to the film. The script was very funny, but the basic story was also strong".

Kalowski and Jones wrote several drafts of the script between 1999 and 2001 while Shteinman and Sherman sought funding. Production began in 2002. Along the way, drafts of the script were shown to director Ted Emery (*Fast Forward, Kath & Kim*). "He became more enthusiastic with every draft," says Sherman. "In the early stages the script was based on sketch comedy, which is what the writers had been used to doing. But as it developed the comedy grew more and more character based." Emery was the perfect director for the project. "He brought many visual comedic touches to the film, little things that weren't there in the script and things we wouldn't have thought of," says Shteinman. Sherman adds, "He's also brought an enormous amount of heart to the film."

Kalowski and Jones had written the script with many of their favourite Australian comedians in mind. The character of Ken Oats, the elitist, villainous MP, was written for Shaun Micallef (*Full Frontal*, *The Micallef Program*). “We were thrilled when he actually took the role,” says Kalowski who had long admired Micallef’s work in Australian comedy.

Micallef is characteristically tongue in cheek when discussing his role. He says: “I based my character on Richard III, assuming he was played by an appalling actor who couldn't remember his lines.” While Ken Oats does have a touch of the villain about him, Micallef turns in an excellent performance. Loved for his TV characters, big screen comedy presents a challenge. “It certainly is more embarrassing if you get it wrong. In television a failed gag can be passed off as whimsy – or sweetened in audio to give the impression people actually laughed at it. No such trickery or fudging with film.” In *The Honourable Wally Norman*, Ken Oats provides many out loud laughs.

H.G. Nelson (*The Dream*) also adds to the comic line-up. “I play the Chairman of the Australian People’s Party. My side has a chance to right the balance through skulduggery, fair means and good old-fashioned Aussie ingenuity”. He adds: “It’s a timely fillum, it’s a reminder that Australia is a democracy and people can get out there and change governments. And who isn’t interested in meat?” Says Emile Sherman, “H.G. Nelson is an Australian icon, and we really wanted an icon for the role.”

Kevin Harrington (*The Dish*, *SeaChange*) plays the lead role of Wally Norman, the smart but unsophisticated Aussie bloke thrown in the deep end of party politics. Harrington says: “I liked the role because it was funny, it’s a comedy with loads of laughs, but it also reflects that thing that happens occasionally in Australian politics – people power.” Harrington, who did Melbourne stand-up comedy in his early years as an actor, was also looking forward to working with experienced comedy director Ted Emery. “I love comedy and it’s great to work with the best around.” He also enjoyed working for the second time with emerging star Tom Budge (*Australian Rules*) who plays his onscreen son. “Tom will grab and nail any comic moment,” says Harrington.

Even the members of the press are funny in this film. Bryan Dawe (*The Games*, *The Castle*) plays a TV reporter who, once an ex-ABC news journalist, is now relegated to animal and human interest stories. His glamorous colleague Rebecca-Jane, played by Melissa Madden Gray (*Big Bite*), continually sidelines him. Says Madden Gray of her baritone-voiced character: “Her wardrobe is not particularly sensible, but she’s in training for the Middle East.” The film appealed to Madden Gray’s natural comic flair, and she was delighted when she was offered the role. “I laughed out loud as soon as I started reading the script.”

The film also features Roz Hammond (*Muriel’s Wedding*, *The Eric Bana Show*) as Wally’s wife Dolly Norman. Hammond describes her character as “lovely. I really liked the story. It has such good heart.” Hammond enjoyed working again with Ted Emery who had directed her on *The Micallef Program* and *Full Frontal*. “He’s a delight to work with. He’s very generous and kind on set. He’s got a silly, grumpy exterior, but he’s a good comic director because he gets the joke really quickly, he knows what’s funny.” She also loved working with

Shaun Micallef again: “We’re very good friends, although I only have one scene with him. He’s absolutely fabulous.” But Hammond rates her onscreen son Tom Budge as funniest co-star. “Tom would have us doubled over all day in between takes. We’d come out with the sauciest things to say to each other and I’d think God, I’m playing his mother! He’s a very funny boy.” And playing opposite Kevin Harrington was also a joy. “It was really easy to love Kevin,” says Hammond. “He’s just so delicious it was easy to play the supportive wife.” Hammond also admired her onscreen daughter Octavia Barron Martin. “We just clicked straight away. It was nice that our family got along really, really well. We had a great time being in Adelaide. We’d all come down from Sydney and Melbourne for the shoot so it was kind of like being on camp, it was lots of good fun.”

Newcomer Octavia Barron Martin, who plays Wally Norman’s daughter Laurie, was thrilled with her first big screen role. “When I first got the script to read I laughed on the first page. Then when I got to Wally’s speech, I felt a tear in my eye. There’s a fantastic balance of comedy and drama,” says Barron Martin. Straight out of drama school, winning the role afforded her a big break. “I couldn’t believe the atmosphere on set. It was just a great family atmosphere.” She also admired her co-performers. “They all have really strong comedy backgrounds and impeccable comic timing. I realised I was in the company of real professionals.”

Adelaide discovery Nathaniel Davison was studying acting and working as a bartender when he auditioned for the role of the assistant to Willy Norman, played by Australian screen veteran Alan Cassell. Nathaniel also plays the love interest for Laurie Norman. He couldn’t believe it when he won the role. Says Davison: “It’s my first film, and it’s terrific to be in a great Aussie film – and one with a romantic subplot! And I’ve been around people I am very lucky to have been around.” Jonathan Shteinman praises Davison: “He gave a fantastic screen test. He’s a real discovery and I think he’s got a great future.”

Filmed in South Australia with the support of the South Australian Film Corporation THE HONOURABLE WALLY NORMAN features the idyllic landscape of the Adelaide Hills and Mount Barker. The semi-rural location adds to the film’s atmosphere, with many locals participating enthusiastically as extras. “Some of them are redundant meatworkers themselves,” says Kevin Harrington. “The locals really turned it on for us. They were really accommodating.”

THE HONOURABLE WALLY NORMAN is a rare film – a locally made comedy the whole family will enjoy. Kevin Harrington sums it up best: “It’s a funny film, and it’s funny for everyone – parents and kids. It’s a legitimate family film without being soppy or sentimental. It has loads of laughs, especially for the kids, and a bit of a message for the parents to contemplate. And the family in the film gets on fantastically. Like a lot of Aussie families, they take the mickey out of each other, with love.”

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

### **KEVIN HARRINGTON**

#### **Wally Norman**

Kevin studied at the Victorian College of the Arts and has been working in comedy on stage, television and in film since the mid-1980s. A recognisable face since his ongoing role in *Neighbours*, he also appeared in three series of *SeaChange* as the beloved character Kevin Findlay, whose sunset chats with his son closed every episode, and also featured in *Stingers* and *Blue Heelers*. On film Kevin was recently seen in *Australian Rules* (2002) and *The Dish* (2000).

### **H.G. NELSON**

#### **Chairman**

Legendary sporting character and Australian icon H.G. Nelson has appeared in the TV series *This Sporting Life*, *Club Buggery*, *The Ben Elton Show*, and *The Monday Dump*. Recent successes include *The Dream* and *The Ice Dream* Olympic coverage for Channel 7. He is currently joint presenter of *This Sporting Life* on Triple J.

### **SHAUN MICALLEF**

#### **Ken Oats**

One of Australia's most admired comedians, Shaun's early comic work was with Artist Services as a writer and actor for *Full Frontal* where he created a wide range of memorable characters and impressions. He co-wrote, co-produced and presented *The Micallef Program*, for which he twice received Logie Awards. Shaun also appeared in *SeaChange*, and co-wrote the acclaimed telemovie *BlackJack* (2003). He has most recently been seen on TV in *Micallef Tonight* and *Welcher and Welcher*, and in the film *Bad Eggs* (2003).

### **ROZ HAMMOND**

#### **Dolly Norman**

Roz is a Melbourne-based comedic actor who has appeared on TV in the comedy series *The Micallef Program*, and *The Eric Bana Show Live*. She has also appeared in the successful Australian feature films *The Dish* (2000) and *Muriel's Wedding* (1994). She has most recently been seen on television in *Skithouse*.

### **OCTAVIA BARRON MARTIN**

#### **Laurie Norman**

*The Honourable Wally Norman* is Octavia's first major role since graduating from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA). She also appeared in *Looking For Alibrandi* (2000)

### **TOM BUDGE**

#### **Normie Norman**

Tom has been seen in *Australian Rules* (2002) and *Takeaway* (2003).

## **NATHANIEL DAVISON**

### **Myles**

Nathaniel is an Adelaide based actor. *The Honourable Wally Norman* is his first film.

## **ALAN CASSELL**

### **Wally Norman**

Alan is a familiar face on Australian small screens, appearing in *SeaChange*, *Halifax f.p.*, *Vietnam* and many other series. He has also appeared in the classic Australian films *The Club* (1980) and *Breaker Morant* (1980).

## **PAUL KELMAN**

### **Gary**

Paul has appeared in the feature films *Mullet* (2001) and *Terra Nova* (1998). He is a familiar face on TV having made guest appearances in *The Flying Doctors*, *E Street*, *All Saints* and *Water Rats*.

## **BRYAN DAWE**

### **Richard Nicholls**

Bryan is a comic actor and writer. On television he has appeared in *Fast Forward* and *The Games*, and he is known for his performance in films including *The Castle* (1997).

## **MELISSA MADDEN GRAY**

### **Rebecca-Jane**

Melissa Madden Gray is a graduate of WAAPA. *The Honourable Wally Norman* is her first major role in film. She has also recently appeared on television as a writer/performer on the popular sketch comedy series *Big Bite*. Melissa is also a contemporary opera singer, whose work has taken her to London, Berlin, Zurich, Tokyo, Shanghai and New York's Lincoln Centre.

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### TED EMERY

#### Director

Ted Emery is a veteran director of TV comedy and arguably Australia's most successful comedy director. He has directed extensively for television including *The Micallef Program*, *Full Frontal* and *Fast Forward*, the classic, most-loved Aussie sketch show of all, which he also co-created and co-produced. His most recent success is the AFI-winning ABC comedy series *Kath & Kim*, of which he is currently directing a new series. He has also recently directed *Welcher and Welcher*, and episodes of the Seven Network's sketch comedy series *Big Bite*. In addition to directing, Ted has also been a producer on such programs as *The Eric Bana Show Live*, *Tonight Live with Steve Vizard*, and *Countdown*. He also directed the hit feature film comedy *The Craic* (1999), starring Jimmie.

### JONATHAN SHTEINMAN & EMILE SHERMAN

#### Producers

Jonathan Shteinman produced *Thank God He Met Lizzie* (1997), starring Cate Blanchett and Frances O'Connor, and *Angel Baby* (1995), for which he shared the AFI award for Best Film. His credits as executive producer include *The Night We Called It a Day* (2003) and he was co-executive producer of the AFI-winning *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002).

Emile Sherman produced *The Night We Called It a Day* (2003), and *Uncle Chatzkel* (2000), for which he was nominated for the AFI Best Documentary award. He also co-executive produced *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002).

### ANDREW JONES & RICK KALOWSKI

#### Writers

*The Honourable Wally Norman* is the first screenplay by the team of Andrew Jones and Rick Kalowski. Rick Kalowski also served as Associate Producer on the film. Jones and Kalowski met at the University of New South Wales where together they wrote and directed university law revues, and graduated with Arts/Law degrees. Before writing the film, Jones worked as a management consultant, while Kalowski practiced law, including a term as Associate to Justice Mary Gaudron at the High Court of Australia. Since completing the film, Jones and Kalowski have worked as head writers on the Seven Network's popular sketch comedy series *Big Bite*.