

# PRESS KIT

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# UNDERGROUND

## THE JULIAN ASSANGE STORY

cinema  
plus





### A CINEMA EVENT SCREENING FROM MARCH 2013.

Matchbox Pictures' **UNDERGROUND: THE JULIAN ASSANGE STORY** will have a national theatrical run from 17 March to launch **Robert Connolly** and **Footprint Films**' new **CinemaPlus** initiative.

**Underground** enjoyed a successful debut on Network Ten in October 2012, which was watched by over **1.3 million viewers** around the country. It was also invited to screen at the **London** and **Toronto International Film Festivals** where it received rave reviews. Now the official Festival version of the feature will hit cinemas screens in Australia.

For a strictly limited season, **Footprint Films** is pleased to present the theatrical edition of **UNDERGROUND: THE JULIAN ASSANGE STORY** at Cinema Nova and Palace Brighton Bay in Melbourne; Palace Chauvel in Sydney; Palace Electric in Canberra; Palace Centro in Brisbane; Palace Nova in Adelaide; and Luna Palace Leederville in Perth.

The release platform '**CinemaPlus**' is a new initiative from Footprint Films. A number of films will be released under this umbrella in the coming months, including **THE TURNING**, a bold cinematic event based on Tim Winton's best-selling collection of short stories featuring performances and directorial debuts by a number of leading Australian performers and artists across a diverse range of art forms.

"CinemaPlus is simply a new way at looking at the theatrical release of films", said Robert Connolly, writer/director of Underground and Director of Footprint Films. We want to be able to provide a different experience for cinema goers, to support the film with talks, Q&As and take-home content. To not only give people a film to watch, but a context."

Each CinemaPlus event screening will feature a value-added live event, including director and cast Q&A sessions, live musical performances, and political action forums. All attendees at CinemaPlus event screenings of Underground will receive a package containing a DVD-ROM with special features, including behind the scenes featurettes, the screenplay, an extract from Suelette Dreyfus's eBook of "Underground", music from the soundtrack, production photographs and a link to stream the Director's Commentary.

For more information visit [www.undergroundthemovie.com.au](http://www.undergroundthemovie.com.au)

Or follow up at [facebook.com/CinemaPlusEvents](https://facebook.com/CinemaPlusEvents) and on Twitter @CinemaPlusEvent

Listing information:

Sunday 17 March	Melbourne	Cinema Nova	6.30pm
Tuesday 19 March	Melbourne	Cinema Nova	6.45pm
Wednesday 20 March	Melbourne	Cinema Nova	6.45pm
Thursday 21 March	Melbourne	Cinema Nova	6.45pm
Friday 22 March	Melbourne	Cinema Nova	6.45pm
Sunday 24 March	Melbourne	Palace Brighton Bay	4.00pm
Wednesday 27 March	Sydney	Chauvel Cinema	7.00pm
Thursday 4 April	Canberra	Palace Electric	7.00pm
Friday 5 April	Byron Bay	Palace Byron Bay	7.00pm
Sunday 7 April	Brisbane	Palace Centro	4.00pm
Thursday 11 April	Adelaide	Palace Nova Eastend	7.00pm
Friday 12 April	Perth	Luna Leederville	6.45pm

#### FOR ALL MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES CONTACT:

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## SYNOPSIS

Julian Assange is one of the most significant figures of the twenty first century. But before he was famous, before WikiLeaks, before the internet even existed, he was a teenage computer hacker in Melbourne. This is his story.

In 1989, known as 'Mendax', Assange and two friends formed a group called the 'International Subversives'. Using early home computers and defining themselves as 'white hat hackers' – those who look but don't steal – they broke into some of the world's most powerful and secretive organisations. They were young, brilliant, and in the eyes of the US Government, a major threat to national security.

At the urging of the FBI, the Australian Federal Police set up a special taskforce to catch them.

But at a time when most Australian police had never seen a computer, let alone used one, they had to figure out just where to begin.

Police ingenuity and old-fashioned detective work are pitted against nimble, highly skilled young men in this new crime frontier. What follows, is a tense and gripping game of cat and mouse through the electronic underground of Melbourne.

**CAST**

Christine Assange	Rachel Griffiths
Detective Ken Roberts	Anthony LaPaglia
Julian Assange	Alex Williams
Electra	Laura Wheelwright
Prime Suspect	Callan McAuliffe
Trax	Jordan Raskopoulos
Jonah	Benedict Samuel

**PRODUCTION CREDITS**

Director	Robert Connolly
Writer	Robert Connolly
Producer	Helen Bowden
Executive Producers	Tony Ayres, Rick Maier
Production Company	Matchbox Pictures
Australian Broadcaster	Network Ten
International Sales Agent	NBC Universal
Home Entertainment	Universal Sony Pictures Home Entertainment
Australian Theatrical Distributor	Footprint Films





## RACHEL GRIFFITHS as Christine Assange

One of Australia's most prolific thespians, Rachel Griffiths is an Academy Award nominated and multi-award winning actress. After a successful career on the Australian stage, Griffiths burst onto the international scene in 1994 with P.J. Hogan's much loved *Muriel's Wedding*. Her performance opposite Toni Collette earned her both the Australian Film Critics Circle Award and the Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Rachel followed the success with a very different role as 'Arabella' in Michael Winterbottom's 1996 release *Jude* before returning to Australia to star in *Cosi* and *Children of the Revolution*. In 1997 she was reunited with P.J. Hogan on the hit comedy *My Best Friend's Wedding*, which also starred Julia Roberts and Cameron Diaz.



Other film credits include: *Amy*, *Divorcing Jack*, *Among Giants*, *Blow*, *The Rookie*, *The Hard Word*, *Angel*, *Step Up* and *Ned Kelly*. Her recent film credits include *Burning Man* and Rachel Ward's directorial debut *Beautiful Kate*, for which Rachel's moving performance earned her both an AFI Award and the Film Critics Circle Award for Best Lead Actress. Rachel has also earned international appreciation for her work, namely for *Hilary & Jackie*, for which she received an Oscar and Screen Actor's Guild nomination for her role as one of the volatile Du Pre sisters.

In 2002, Rachel's portrayal of 'Brenda' in the critically acclaimed HBO/Alan Ball drama *Six Feet Under* garnered a TV Critics Association nomination and the Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Television Series. Rachel received a 2008 Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series for *Brothers & Sisters*.

**ANTHONY LAPAGLIA**  
as Detective Ken Roberts



Anthony LaPaglia is a multi-award winning actor who has an extensive and diverse list of credits across film, television and theatre. In 2012, Anthony was seen in *Mental* alongside Toni Collette and the independent film *Long Time Gone* opposite Virginia Madsen.

Most recently Anthony starred in *Balibo*, on which he served as Executive Producer. His performance as 'Roger East' in the film earned him the AFI Award and Film Critics Circle of Australia Award for Best Actor. His numerous feature film credits also include the critically acclaimed *Lantana*, for which he was awarded the AFI Award, IF Award and Film Critic Circle of Australia Award for Best Actor, *Happy Feet 2*, *Betsy's Wedding*, *The House of Mirth*, *Sweet and Lowdown*, *The Client*, *Company Man*, *Summer of Sam*, *Autumn in New York*, *Brilliant Lies* and *The Architect*.

Anthony received widespread critical acclaim for his portrayal of 'Jack Malone' in *Without a Trace*, for which he won a Golden Globe Award and earned an Emmy Award nomination and two SAG Award nominations for Outstanding Male Actor and a SAG Award nomination for Outstanding Ensemble. Other television credits include a recurring role in *Frasier*, for which he earned an Emmy Award for his portrayal of 'Daphne's' brother 'Simon Moon'.

Anthony most recently starred on stage in Stanley Tucci's *Lend Me a Tenor* for the Music Box Theatre. He won a Tony Award, Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics Circle Award for his performance in the Arthur Miller classic *A View from the Bridge*. His additional stage credits include *The Rose Tattoo*, the Off-Broadway productions of *Bouncers*, *Northeast Local* and the Off-Off-Broadway production of *The Guys*, which went on to become a feature film in which he starred with Sigourney Weaver.

## ALEX WILLIAMS as Julian Assange

A 2011 graduate from the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), Alex is destined to become one of Australia's top young actors. At WAAPA, Alex played 'Stiva' in *Anna Karenina*, 'Puck' in *Blood Will Have Blood*, 'Matt Galloway' & 'Doc O'Conner' in *The Laramie Project*, and 'Aspro' in *The Kid*.

Alex's performance in **UNDERGROUND: THE JULIAN ASSANGE STORY** is his first role out of drama school.

### On landing his first major role...

*I finished drama school, WAAPA, at the end of 2011. I really didn't expect to walk out, do my first audition, and then get the role. It's been great, you can't ask for anything more, I was very, very fortunate.*



### On working with Anthony LaPaglia and Rachel Griffiths...

*Working with Rachel and Anthony was fantastic. You learn a lot – their experience on set and how they conduct themselves and get things done. They're extremely, extremely supportive of younger actors. If you don't think you got it, they make sure you get another take and that sort of thing. You learn from just being near them and watching some of their scenes, which I did a few times.*

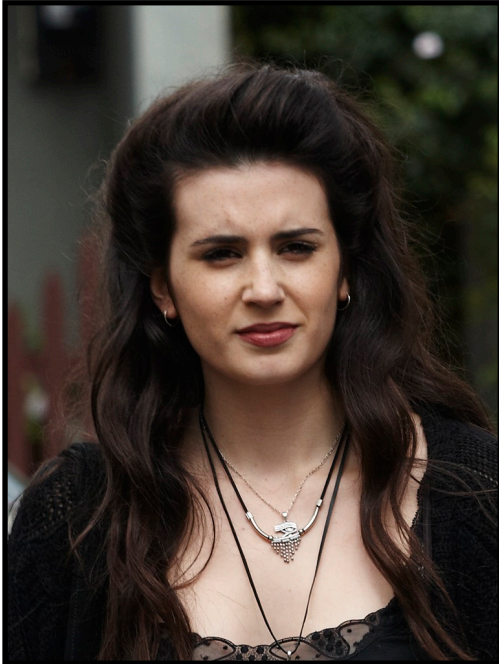
### On preparing to and playing Julian Assange...

*Playing Julian Assange is a challenge I guess, but so is any character. I think the main thing for me was being able to look at things differently. Probably the hardest thing about any role is to change your mindset, to think about things in a different way, especially when you're playing someone highly intelligent.*

*Getting the idea of his childhood was mainly what I wanted to focus on; I really didn't want to focus on what he is like now. I am playing him when he's around 19, he's now in his 40s – a lot can happen in twenty years, and I didn't want to let public perception affect me too much. I wanted to get a realistic feel of what he is like and mainly that came from reading about him.*

*Within the film he's got a physical threat, a mental threat and a moral threat. These are the three conundrums that I really wanted to play with. His character sort of comes up against these three real factors, which basically change him into the man that I assume he is today.*





**LAURA WHEELWRIGHT**  
as **Electra**

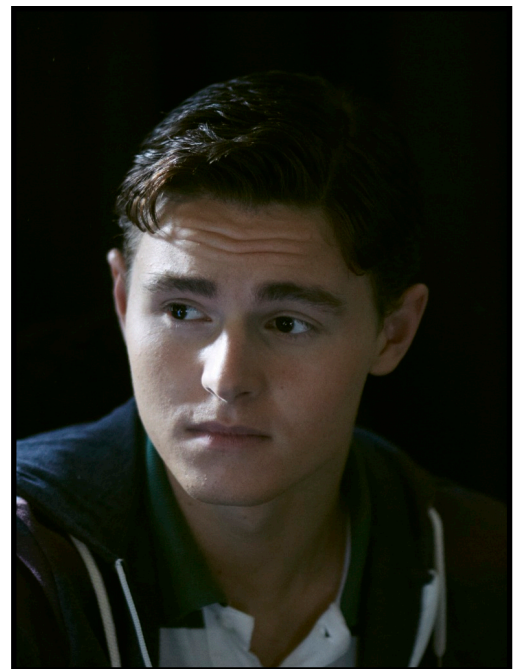
In 2010 Laura Wheelwright received an AFI nomination for Best Supporting Actress for her outstanding performance as 'Nicky Henry' in *Animal Kingdom*. Laura also featured in *Charlotte's Web*.

More recently Laura had a recurring role in the ABC's breakout hit *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and will be seen across a number of episodes in the second series of *Winners and Losers*. Laura also starred in St Martin's Youth Theatre's production of *Motor Mouth* and *Suck Face*. She has studied at 16th Street Acting Studio and the VCA.

**CALLAN McCauliffe**  
as **Prime Suspect**

Callan is a rising star in Hollywood and has been named as one of the eleven faces to watch by film industry magazine *Encore*. Callan recently finished production on Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* in which he plays 'Young Gatsby' to Leonardo DiCaprio's starring role of the adult 'Jay'. In 2011 he played a lead role in the DreamWorks action feature, *I Am Number Four*, directed by D.J. Caruso and executive produced by Steven Spielberg.

In 2011, Callan also appeared as 'Young Quick Lamb' in Showtime's critically acclaimed mini-series *Cloudstreet*, directed by Matthew Saville and based on the novel by Tim Winton. His other television credits include *Packed to the Rafters*, *Comedy Inc*, and *Blue Water High*.



**BENEDICT SAMUEL**  
**as Jonah**

Since graduating from the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in 2010, Benedict Samuel's star has been on the rise. Benedict has worked across stage and screen and even flexed his creativity behind the camera directing a number of short films.

Benedict's television credits include a memorable role as 'Hammer Pirovic' in Seven Network's *Home and Away*, John Edwards Southern Star's popular production of *Paper Giants: The Birth of Cleo*, and ABC's *My Place*. His theatre credits include the role of 'Holofernes' in *Judith* and *Tis a Pity She's a Whore* at the Malthouse Theatre.

Recently Benedict directed *Sanctuary*, a short film about a girl who after witnessing her father's murder has trouble distinguishing between memories and reality. The film stars his older brother, actor Xavier Samuel, in the leading role. Vogue Australia recently identified Benedict as an actor to watch with his inclusion on their next feature *Generation Next*.

**JORDAN RASKOPOULOS**  
**as Trax**

Jordan Raskopoulos is one of Australia's finest and most sought after comedic performers. Jordan has found success as an actor, singer, sketch comedian, stand-up comedian, comedy writer, improviser, voice over artist and professional cage fighter.

Jordan is best known as the front man of the comedy rock group The Axis of Awesome, which he formed with band mates in 2006. Over the past six years, The Axis of Awesome has been hailed as one of the finest musical comedy acts on the planet, selling out seasons across the world, including four sold out season at the Edinburgh Fringe and extensive tours throughout the US, UK, Europe, Asia and Australia.

Before The Axis of Awesome, Jordan gained fame as one of the creators and a principal performer and writer of Network Ten's sketch comedy program *The Ronny Johns Good Times Campfire Jamboree Half Hour Show*.



**ROBERT CONNOLLY****Writer / Director**

Robert Connolly is best known as the writer and director of the feature films *The Bank*, *Three Dollars* and *Balibo*. He has recently turned his attention to television, directed two episodes of the critically acclaimed, audience favourite *The Slap* and Network Ten's commercial hit *Rush*.

His first feature film *The Bank* went on to win an AFI Award in 2001 for Best Original Screenplay. In 2005 Robert's next feature, *Three Dollars*, won awards for Best Adapted Screenplay from both the AFI and the Film Critics Circle of Australia. Robert has received a Centenary Medal for services to the Australian film industry. His most recent film, *Balibo*, won the Interfaith and FIPRESCI Jury Awards at the Brisbane Film Festival and at the 2009 AFI's was nominated for Best Director and awarded Best Screenplay, Best Lead Actor for Anthony LaPaglia and Best Supporting Actor for Oscar Isaac. The film was also selected for the Toronto, London, Melbourne and Pusan International Film Festivals.

Robert also produced *Romulus, My Father* which starred Eric Bana and won Best Film at the AFI Awards.

**HELEN BOWDEN****Producer**

Helen was the lead producer of the award-winning eight hour mini-series *The Slap*, which screened on the ABC and the BBC in 2011. In 2012, *The Slap* won five AACTA Awards and was nominated for an International Emmy Award in the US; a BAFTA, a Royal Television Society Award and a Broadcast Digital Award in the UK; as well as a Rockie at the Banff Television Festival in Canada.

Helen has produced three feature films as well as numerous documentaries. Her first feature *Soft Fruit* screened in Critics' Week at Cannes in 2000, won the Critics' Prize at San Sebastian and was selected for Sundance in 2000. In 2002 she produced *Travelling Light* and in 2009 she produced *Lou*, starring John Hurt and Emily Barclay, with Tony Ayres and Michael McMahon. Her 2006 documentary *Girl in a Mirror* was the first Australian film ever to win the prestigious Rose D'Or Award in Montreux as well as winning many other documentary prizes.

Helen is the producer of *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* and is one of the five founding partners of Matchbox Pictures, the Australian film and television production company formed in 2009.