



Finding Frank pieces together a young man's encounter with ancient forest dwellers and coastal village cultures across a vast archipelago of islands north-east of Australia through the photos he took there. Frank Oakley Cutler was a surveyor. He arrived in (ex-German) New Guinea in 1917 with Australia's WW1 expeditionary forces.

Frank was in New Guinea until the Japanese occupation at which time a lucky escape had him arrive in Cairns on board the MV Malatia in February 1942. One of his closest post-WW1 colleagues, Victor Pratt and 100s of Australian civilians and families were not so fortunate. Victor was executed in August of that year and the rest are said to have lost their lives on the ill-fated Japanese freighter Montevideo Maru torpedoed by a US submarine on the morning of the 1st of July 1942. Frank never returned to New Guinea.

How Frank escaped and why Victor was unable to, what lay ahead for the New Guineans he had met and those who worked with him and what, if any legacies remained from the work of the expeditionary forces are some of the questions the filmmakers ask in the making of **Finding Frank**.

The film

Finding Frank is told through Frank's photo archives, the scant notes he wrote on them, interviews with surviving members of his family, WW1 archivists, anthropologists and the Papua New Guinea artist, Leonard Tebegetu, reacting to Frank's photos and post cards, perhaps the first of his country folk to have seen these photos since Frank left in 1942.



Stylised animation is proposed to bridge the themes of the film together as stories emerge through interviews and ongoing research. A cinematic production design is also intended for the film

through which voice would be given to the people Frank had photographed, particularly to those who had worked with him. **Finding Frank** no doubt finds a voice for Frank himself who shared little of his life in New Guinea once he returned to Australia.

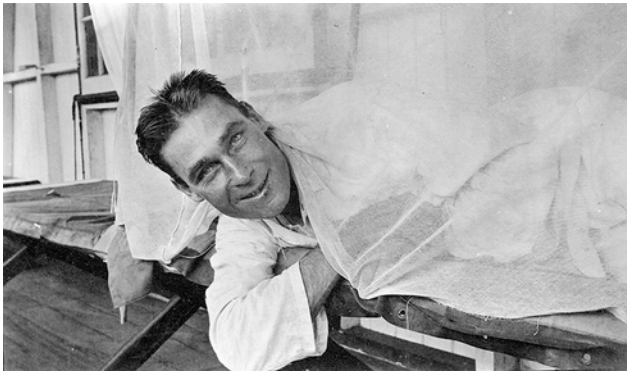
The film's script would be anchored to the scant notes Frank wrote onto the back of many of his photos and postcards. These are narrated by renowned voice-over artist Bob Knowles in a tone characteristic of the early 20th Century. Other voices, via interviews, emerge through analysis of select photos where it may be possible to describe the activities that took place at the time they were taken.

The photo archive

Along with his wife Elsie, a wood carver who joined him in the late 1930s, Frank took some of the earliest photos of New Guinea including Bouganville, New Ireland, New Britain, Samarai and Enus Islands, Keita Harbour, Kaewieng and Port Moresby.

Frank's images reveal New Guineans in their villages, their response to him, performing dances, hunting and celebration. There is a sense of a developing love for the country and its people.

There are some 257 photos taken by Frank himself, many never before seen in the public domain, only a handful available through the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.



Finding Frank includes photos taken by family members visiting Frank and Elsie all of which have been expertly scanned at the highest resolution feasible. Documenting and researching each photo continues to be an exhaustive exercise undertaken by Producer Anne Musgrove, Frank's granddaughter.

The interviews

The interviews will be conducted at Swinburne University's production studios courtesy of the Department of Media and Communication. Select images will be viewable on a large LCD screen. Ambient light from the screen would highlight the interviewees faces catching their response in as intimate manner possible – a mix of close-ups and mid-shots, the eyes, brow, breath.

Cutler family

- Anne Musgrove
- Genevieve Cutler and / or voice-over drawn from her memoirs
- Christopher Davy (Institute of Archaeology, La Trobe University)

Pratt family

- Sally Tighello (granddaughter of Linda Pratt)
- Eve Harrison (daughter of Ronald Pratt, Victor's son from his first marriage)
- Vaughan Pratt (son of Ronald Pratt) TBC

Specialists

The following are recommendations only. These would focus on the value of the photos from a technical, artistic, historical and research perspective.

- Werner Hammerstingl – award winning photographer, lecturer and writer on photography and media arts practice
- Martha Macintyre – Assoc. Professor, anthropologist in PNG studies, University of Melbourne
- Jo Chandler – Journalist specialising in PNG
- Specialist from the Australian War Memorial Museum, Canberra

PNG Nationals

- Leonard Tebegetu – artist and former aspirant lawyer from New Ireland, PNG.

The filmmakers

Finding Frank is a Secession/Films production in collaboration with Anne Musgrove and the Cutler family. Principles include:

Writer / Director / Editor – Andrew Garton

Andrew's work spans the genres of non-fiction film-making, short-format documentary, non-linear radio documentary drama, projected video and sound installations. In recent years Andrew has collaborated on short films and sound works with the last forest communities of Borneo ([Sarawak Gone](#)), an extensive media arts project with young people from refugee backgrounds ([Bamiyarra](#)) and bush fire affected communities ([Forged from Fire](#)). Andrew co-founded the online media arts collective, Toy Satellite (1995-2005), creating unique and collaborative works for festivals, broadcasters and cultural institutions across Asia, Europe and Australia. He was the inaugural Program Director for Open Channel (2005-2007), Producer and Operations Manager for [EngageMedia](#) (2009-2011). Andrew is presently working on his short-film musical [We Should Be So Smug](#) with townships in the Shire of Nillumbik and the feature documentary [Ocean in a Drop](#) in association with the Delhi based Digital Empowerment Foundation. He founded Secession/Films in January 2016.

[Andrew's portfolio and blog](#)
[Secession/Films](#)

Director of Photography / Colourist – Mike Wilkins

Mike is an independent video producer and director of photography with an extensive post-production background. As a DOP he has shot documentaries, TVCs and numerous video products for organisations ranging from Tourism Australia, global mining companies, universities and Australia's biggest banks. His work has taken him to locations such as the Atacama Desert in Chile, Burma, Nepal, and The Simpson & Tirari Deserts in outback Australia. In 2004 he filmed a 400km return journey by catamaran riding the flooded Warburton river through the Australian outback to the normally inaccessible Lake Eyre. Mike's post-production background includes working on feature films & documentaries and as a post-production supervisor and online editor. This work has also included colour grading and vfx work on TVCs, documentaries and corporate videos.

[Mikes Folio showreel](#)