

MEDIA RELEASE

27 August 2019

Breaking the News - Documentary
Released on the Beamafilm streaming platform
<https://beamafilm.com/watch/breaking-the-news>
View for **FREE** with a library card log-in and
under Beamafilm's **FREE 30-day subscription trial**.

Before this post-truth epoch **Breaking the News** explored foreign media being targeted to broadcast political objectives. A P.M. resigns, later 'rebels' are eliminated and a President is shot and nearly dies.

For those familiar with the major crisis which rocked Timor-Leste independence period, documentary **Breaking the News** offers greater insights into the manipulation of news media as a soft power tool in conflict. During production (2006 - 2010), local journalists reported from the post-truth shadows but the legacy of missing evidence, injustice and social uncertainty remain from that time. **Breaking the News** sets out to highlight the ways politicians seek to 'break' the fact-finding function of news.

As Timor-Leste celebrates the 20th anniversary for independence local journalists are still calling for media development. "East Timor needs independent and critical journalists now," said Rosa Garcia. And fellow journalist Suzana Cardoso, "Now we have independence, we are a sovereign nation, we have a constitution, we have money but the people still don't feel all this freedom, which only came to a few people" (Antonio Sampaio, Lusa, 23 Aug 2019).

Critical of SBS and ABC reporting of the Timor-Leste 2006 crisis, it was not surprising **Breaking the News** wasn't broadcast on Australian TV, however it was offered a broadcast in New Zealand. The film speaks to the societal implications of a weak journalistic sector.

Filmed over four years in Australia's most misunderstood neighbour East Timor, documentary **Breaking the News** explores the high cost of being a truth-seeking journalist in an emerging nation.

East Timor is a developing media environment, but during the 2006 crisis it was the Australian media who were responsible for the major media failures.

During the worst violence, the majority of local media closed for fear of retribution. The highly resourced foreign journalists parachuted in and dominated reporting. Opposition politicians seized the opportunity, targeting and manipulating the foreign media. These news reports were regularly broadcast back into East Timor fermenting further protest and unrest.

It was during the Indonesian occupation (1975-1999), East Timor's clandestine movement successfully lobbied foreign media and governments, shifting world opinion. The manipulation of

foreign media through the 2006 crises was largely done with invisible hands, to obscure being traced. In 2006 the most powerful Australian media were fed and reported fabrications and lies, 'muckraking' the elected Prime Minister through compelling though false stories.

The resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri was celebrated in the same media. This extrajudicial coup a 'media decadence' would also 'weaken democracy', shaping the nation into what Australian political thinker John Keane refers to as a 'phantom democracy'.

Also

Labyrinths and Leaks: Cablegate Timor-Leste

Exploring overlapping media accounts over seven days of the 2006 crisis.

www.breakingthenews.com.au/idoc/

Breaking the News director Nicholas Hansen recently completed **Labyrinths and Leaks: Cablegate Timor-Leste** an interactive documentary prototype which extends on Breaking the News. This interactive explores methods for overlapping evidence from leaked US embassy cables, news media and documentary interviews, asking who knew what when, as political actors struggled for power during Timor Leste's 2006 crisis.

Director Biography

Nicholas Hansen is an award-winning documentary director and research graduate from RMIT Melbourne in the area of interactive documentary design. Previous work includes; *Breaking the News* (2011), *One Cup* (2007) and feature documentary *RASH* (2005) awarded Best Documentary at the Film Critics Circle of Australia 2005. Nicholas completed a Master of Design at RMIT in 2018. www.mutinymedia.com

We welcome news articles, image requests and media release re-posting.
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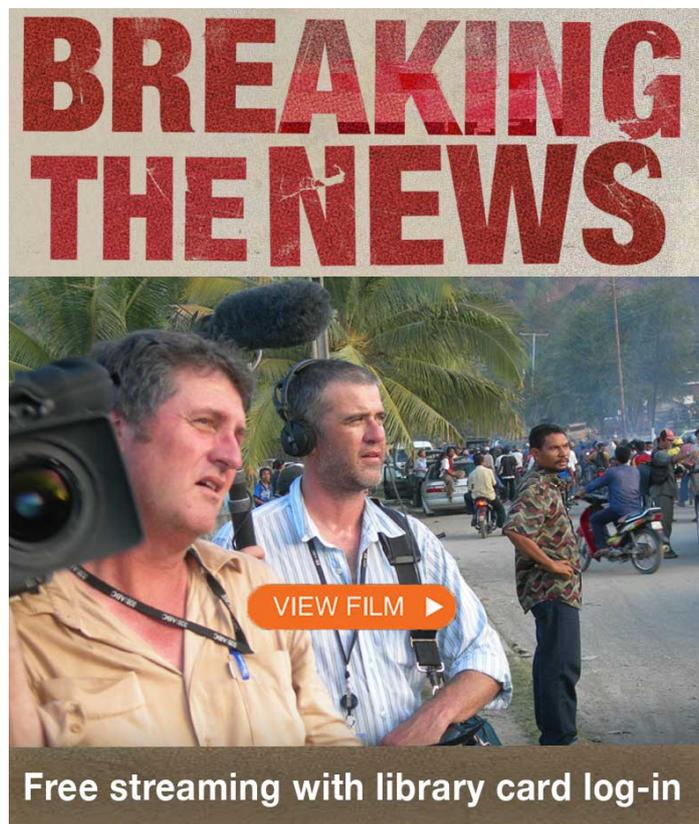


Image: Four Corners crew, Dili 6 June 2006.
Photo by Nicholas Hansen.