

Cassie Jaye's Red Pill too truthful for feminists to tolerate



Cassie Jaye at the world premiere of *The Red Pill* earlier this month. Picture: Ian Stroud

Bettina Arndt, *The Australian*, 12:00AM October 29, 2016

“*The Red Pill*: The movie about men that feminists didn’t want you to see.” This was the provocative headline that ran in Britain’s *The Telegraph* last November, a teaser for a documentary made by a feminist filmmaker who planned to take on men’s rights activists but was won over and crossed to the dark side to take up their cause.

Despite a ferocious campaign to stop the movie being made, it’s finally been released and the Australian screening was due next week in Melbourne. However the gender warriors have struck again, using a change.com petition to persuade Palace Cinemas to cancel the booking. Palace took the decision after being told the movie would offend many in its core audience but by yesterday 8000 had signed petitions protesting the ban. Organisers are now scrambling to find another venue.

Clearly this documentary has the feminists very worried — with good reason. Cassie Jaye is an articulate, 29-year-old blonde whose previous movies on gay marriage and abstinence education won multiple awards. But then she decided to interview leaders of the Men’s Rights Movement for a documentary she was planning about rape culture on American campuses. As a committed feminist, Jaye expected to be unimpressed by these renowned hate-filled misogynists, but to her surprise she was exposed to a whole range of issues she came to see as unfairly stacked against men and boys.

As news of this very public conversion started to leak out, Jaye came under attack. She was smeared, told she was committing “career suicide” and saw her funding dry up to the point where it looked as if the movie would never be made. Prominent feminists she had planned

to interview refused to participate; none of the “human rights” funding she hoped to attract proved available for a documentary on men’s rights.

Then a Kickstarter fund raised \$211,260, ensuring the movie’s cinematic release. Over the past month there have been screenings in the US, and hopefully Australian audiences will eventually get to see what the fuss is all about.

The title *The Red Pill* refers to a scene in *The Matrix* when Keanu Reeves’s character takes the red pill to expose “the truth” that challenges his closely held beliefs. Jaye’s *The Red Pill* reveals a world where the cultural dialogue is dominated by feminists still complaining that men have all the power, yet the “truth” in most Western countries is that many laws, attitudes and social conventions make life tough for men. Her fly-on-the-wall technique includes interviews with Men’s Rights Movement leaders such as Paul Elam and feminists who oppose the movement, graphics and animations revealing facts about family law and child custody, male suicide rates and the not-so-privileged side of traditional manhood, such as the 90 per cent of workplace fatalities that are male.

There’s a powerful interview with Erin Pizzey, who is no longer allowed near the British women’s refuge she started back in the 1970s, the first in the world. Pizzey ran afoul of the sisterhood by campaigning to expose the truth about women’s role in domestic violence.

Jaye shows feminist protesters shutting down a talk at a Toronto campus by men’s activist Warren Farrell, screeching at a young man who tried to attend and berating him as “f..king scum”, and on another occasion setting off a fire alarm in a building where a men’s rights lecture was to be held. There’s discussion of men’s lack of reproductive rights, which includes a clip from a chat show where the audience cheers when a woman whose husband is resisting a second child says she’s considering going off birth control without telling him.

Reaction to the movie has been mixed, with the flamboyant anti-feminist Milo Yiannopoulos describing it as “a powerful film on a complicated, important, yet woefully unaddressed issue”. He applauds Jaye for “having the intestinal fortitude to not only tackle this subject, but to do so fairly”. Predictably, the movie has been panned by the left-wing *The Village Voice*, which calls Jaye an “MRM-bankrolled propagandist”, and the *Los Angeles Times*, whose reviewer claims she failed to understand “patriarchal systems”.

Stephen Marche in *The Guardian* admits that “men do sometimes suffer mistreatment from the courts or from the women in their lives”, but suggests the film fails to demonstrate any systemic cause. “Instead, the author of men’s troubles here is always that vague bugaboo feminism, which we’re told is designed to silence its opponents,” sniffs Marche.

That’s pretty ironic, given this “vague bugaboo” persists in trying to silence Jaye’s attempts to tell this story. As she points out in her movie, the issues she examines came as a revelation not only to her but to many others exposed to the material she put together. That bugaboo carries a lot of clout.

Details of the new venue for the November 6 viewing of *The Red Pill* will be on my website next week. bettinaarndt.com.au.

