



**OPENING
SHOT**

DEFENDANT 5
MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 9.30PM



#openingshot

OPENING SHOT IS BACK WITH FIVE HALF HOUR DOCUMENTARIES FROM AUSTRALIA'S NEXT GENERATION OF DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS.

DEFENDANT 5

MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 9.30PM



Young filmmaker Heidi Lee Douglas goes to Tasmania to make a film about the effect of logging on the community. She discovers that one company is profiting most from the logging of the old growth forests, Gunns Ltd, the biggest wood chipper in the Southern Hemisphere.

As the campaign to protect the old growth forests escalates, Heidi takes more risks and crosses the line from filmmaker to activist. Community support to protect Tasmania's forests spreads across Australia and around the world. But the issue is divisive, with timber workers, many of whom work for Gunns, believing their futures are at stake.

Without warning, Heidi and 19 other critics are sued by Gunns for \$6.4 million dollars for allegedly conspiring to harm the company's business. The defendants are a disparate group - elected politicians, campaigners, a doctor, a dentist, an author and students. Together they become known as the Gunns 20.

Heidi discovers Gunns wants to use her footage as evidence of its allegation of conspiracy. She faces a crisis of conscience as the footage she had been gathering to help the community now threatens to harm them. She is asked to stop filming independent protests because it's believed she is under surveillance. With her privacy and rights under question, Heidi turns the camera on herself.

Defendant 5 is the personal story of one young woman who learnt that fighting for what she believed in had repercussions beyond her wildest nightmares.

Writer/Director: Heidi Lee Douglas

Defendant 5 is Heidi's first long form documentary and television commission. Heidi's previous short films have been nominated and awarded in film festivals around the world, including screenings at Fantastic Fest (USA), Dungog Festival (Aus), Melbourne Underground Film Festival (Aus), Stranger With My Face Film Festival (Aus), Aotearoa Reel Earth Environmental Film Festival (NZ), International

Wildlife Film Festival (USA), Forest Film Festival (USA), Earth Vision International Environmental Film Festival (USA), Exploding Cinema (Aus), and Wild Spaces Environmental Film Festival (Aus). Heidi has provided video production training and made content with remote Aboriginal communities across Australia from the Pilbara to Arnhem Land, Cape York, arid South Australia and Flinders Island, and with communities in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. Heidi was cinematographer on the drama film *Muffled* that screened at the Palms Springs Short Film Festival, Chicago Reeling Festival, and Newfest - New York's premier LGBT Film Festival. Heidi wrote and directed the short gothic thriller film *Little Lamb* about a convict woman in 1829 Van Diemen's Land that premiered at this year's Fantastic Fest in Austin Texas.

Producer: Ruth Cross

Ruth is a producer and head of development for Smith&Nasht, managing the company slate since its inception in 2011. Immediately prior to **Defendant 5**, she produced *The Vasectomist* for SBS, CBC, VPRO and DR, and its groundbreaking outreach campaign, World Vasectomy Day collaborating with two-time Oscar nominee and Emmy Award-winning director Jonathan Stack. Alongside production, Ruth has a background in film programming for the Adelaide Film Festival and the First Factual Films Festival (F4) for the Australian International Documentary Conference, where she also managed the industry marketplace programs and was seconded to the Sheffield Doc/Fest team to produce the UK Meet/Market. Ruth holds an MA in Documentary Production from the University of Salford UK and was selected to participate in an exchange program with the prestigious Cuban film school, EICTV. She subsequently founded and ran a UK-based independent production company for several years during which time she was one of the first recipients of the Channel 4 BRITDOC fund. She is currently a Board member and programmer for Antenna Documentary Festival in Sydney.

DEFENDANT 5 is a Smith&Nasht production

