



History. Learning. Love. Resistance.

IN MY BLOOD IT RUNS

Directed by Maya Newell

In Collaboration with Djujan Hoosan, Carol Turner,
Megan Hoosan, James Mawson, Margaret Anderson



LOGLINE

When Djujan cannot run nor fight alone, he faces the history that runs straight into him and realises that not only has he inherited the trauma and dispossession of his land, but also the resilience and resistance of many generations of his people which holds the key to his future.

SYNOPSIS

Ten-year-old Djujan is a child-healer, a good hunter and speaks three languages. As he shares his wisdom of history and the complex world around him we see his spark and intelligence. Yet Djujan is 'failing' in school and facing increasing scrutiny from welfare and the police.

As he travels perilously close to incarceration, his family fight to give him a strong Arrernte education alongside his western education lest he becomes another statistic. We walk with him as he grapples with these pressures, shares his truths and somewhere in-between finds space to dream, imagine and hope for his future self.

"When you go out bush every week, you learn how to control your anger, and you learn how to control your life"

"Aboriginals have
still survived here."

LONG SYNOPSIS

Ten-year-old Djujan is a child-healer, a good hunter and speaks three languages. As he shares his wisdom of history and the complex world around him we see his spark and intelligence. Yet Djujan is 'failing' in school and facing increasing scrutiny from welfare and the police.

As he travels perilously close to incarceration, his family fight to give him a strong Arrernte education alongside his western education lest he becomes another statistic. We walk with him as he grapples with these pressures, shares his truths and somewhere in-between finds space to dream, imagine and hope for his future self.

Director Maya Newell's first feature *Gayby Baby* (Hot Docs, Good Pitch Aus, London BFI), sparked a national debate in Australia when it was banned in schools. Told through the lens of four children in same-sex families during the fight for Marriage Equality, the film offered the voice of those being ignored. Made in collaboration with Djujan and his family *In My Blood It Runs* tackles another heated topic, First Nations education and juvenile justice and places the missing voice of children front and centre.

Filmed candidly and intimately, we experience this world on the fringes of Alice Springs through Djujan's eyes. Djujan's family light candles when the power card runs out, often rely on extended family to drop around food and live alongside the ingrained effects of colonization and dispossession. Every day in the classroom, Djujan's strength as a child-healer and Arrernte language speaker goes unnoticed. While he likes school, his report card shows a stream of 'E's, which make him feel stupid. Education is universally understood as a ticket to success, but school becomes a site of displacement and Djujan starts running away from the classroom.

"This man came on a
ship, and he was the
first man on Australia.
The first white man."





In stark contrast to his school behaviour, on his ancestral homeland surrounded by his family, Djujan is focused, engaged and learning. We begin to see Country as a classroom – a place where the resilience can grow and revolution is alive.

But the pressures on Djujan in Alice Springs are ever encroaching – educational failure, domestic violence, child removal and police. In May 2016, images of children being tortured at the Northern Territory’s Don Dale Youth Detention Centre are leaked and spike global uproar. In fact, 100% of children detained in the Northern Territory are Indigenous. We begin to realize that Djujan’s world does not exist in a vacuum, but is a microcosm of a much larger political and historical battle being waged in Australia. This event offers a stark insight into a potential future for Djujan. How will his family and community rise above?

In My Blood It Runs looks beyond the ‘problem’ to see the people. Instead of seeing this Aboriginal boy as a ‘criminal’, we see a child who has experienced systematic abuse; instead of ‘bad parents’, we see a family who has been systematically stripped of all agency yet undeniably love their kids; instead of a ‘failure’ at school, we see a child whose talents have been completely overlooked. And crucially, this child observes the inequality of the world he is presented with.

In the end, when Djujan cannot run nor fight alone, he faces the history that runs straight into him and realises that not only has he inherited the trauma and dispossession of his land, but also the strength, resilience and resistance of many generations of his people which holds the key to his future.

“This movie is about me, and what I think is, stop taking kids away. That’s wrong”



THE MAKING

In My Blood It Runs was shot in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Sandy Bore Homeland and Borroloola Community, Northern Territory, Australia over three years. However Maya, the director, has been making films alongside Arrernte Elders and families at an NGO called Akeyulerre for a decade. This film arose organically from those relationships.

The intimacy of the film and the delicacy with which it has represented the complex struggles of Dujan and his families lives has been achieved through a deep and collaborative process between the filmmaking team and the family.

The Arrernte and Garrwa families in the film and the board of Advisors to the film are core partners and have been involved in robust consultation at all stages of production. This has been a deep and ongoing process to ensure that each individual comprehensively understands the terms of involvement and the control they have over how their stories and images portrayed.

Some of the core pillars of our protocols include; fair credits 'Collaborating Directors' and 'Advisors', formal recognition of Traditional Owners of the land we filmed, meaningful and ongoing consultation, shared ownership and profit with those represented, capacity building for First Nations peoples within the film team and a team structure that has both Indigenous and non-Indigenous as the core creatives.

On release, the film will have an adjacent impact campaign driven by our Arrernte and Garrwa advisors and their vision for change.





"I love her until I grow old"

IMPACT STRATEGY

In My Blood It Runs has been supported by a number of philanthropic organisations and donors via the Good Pitch Australia initiative. This support has enabled us to plan a multi year strategy for social impact that dovetails with our distribution. We are currently in the design and consultation phase and plan to address issues around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education programs, truth telling and reckoning with our Australia's past, and juvenile justice reform.

Key Messages:

- Aboriginal people have solutions
- Aboriginal people's knowledge systems and culture are alive and well
- Children have agency, and can speak truth to power
- Aboriginal people love & care for their children
- Aboriginal people should have right to determine and lead the terms of their education
- Australia needs to be honest about our past in order to build a future
- Aboriginal people live with racism everyday and it causes harm
- We need restorative approaches to juvenile justice rather than punitive approaches

All of these goals and messages have been identified in close consultation with Djujan and his family as well as an advisory group of senior Arrernte and Garrwa Elders and leaders.

"Right now my heart is beating that fast I can't feel it"

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Maya Newell

Over the last decade, I have had the privilege to be repeatedly invited to make films with two Arrernte-led organisations in Alice Springs, Akeyulerre and Children's Ground. These films showcased the empowering work families are doing to educate their children and keep their language and culture strong. Over these years, I have sat with Elders as they recorded songlines for their grandchildren for fear they may be lost, seen kids visit their country for the first time and heard children speaking confidently and fluently in their first, second or third language.

I was shocked to learn that our mainstream education system perceives these same children as failures at school. And it's no surprise, when Australia and in many Western countries, First Nations children are only taught in English and their successes are measured by western values. Rarely do we see into the inner lives of First Nations children growing up as they navigate the rich and complex bicultural society they are born into. *In My Blood It Runs* is a film to dispel the conventional myths of failure, trauma and dysfunction of First Nations families and instead amplify the resilience, strength and love that is often exempt from our screens.

When I made my first feature documentary *Gayby Baby*, I learnt that children are rarely given the agency to tell their own stories. But when they do, people stop and listen. When *Gayby Baby* was banned in Australian schools by the government, the film spurred a national debate about the welfare of Gayby children. *IN MY BLOOD IT RUNS* takes on another heated national debate; about how Australia treats Indigenous children; and presents a missing voice – the voice of the kids themselves.

It has been a privilege to have had the opportunity to learn from Djujan over these years. I have often been inspired by Djujan's courage to speak his truth to the camera. Along the way, I have been struck by his innate moral code and his heartbreaking wisdom. He is so resilient yet also so vulnerable. He is growing up to be a strong young man and I believe his truth-telling has much to teach Australia and the World.

Over these years filming *In My Blood It Runs*, it is clear to me that the systems that are meant to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are often what are doing so much damage. We need systematic and radical change. Consistently, it was the solutions offered by Djujan's own family that were what ensured his safety. I have no doubt that it is the solutions created by First Nations peoples and communities that will be what leads to real change.



PRODUCER STATEMENT

Larissa Behrendt

In My Blood It Runs sees the world through the eyes of Djujan, an Aboriginal boy who tries to navigate his way between a culture he loves and a family who loves him against the pressures of a world that has preconceived ideas about him with attitudes that work against him. He gives us an honest, unmediated account of what it is like to grow up being considered gifted by your own community for your healing powers but at the same time being seen as a failure by a school system that can't seem to accommodate him.

At the heart of the story, this is about a family's love of a child. But it also shows how many of the real dangers to Djujan come from the broader community around him. Djujan's story and that of his family encapsulates the reality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families across Australia. It shows the way in which the shadows of child protection, juvenile justice, state welfare and education policies all infringe on the lives of an Aboriginal family. As an Indigenous filmmaker, lawyer and advocate for social change, I see an important role being played by *In My Blood It Runs* in highlighting the impacts of what schools and governments are doing on a young Indigenous boy and his family without the need for long legal and policy arguments.

Djujan's voice represents the experience of his generation and I am proud to be a part of bringing his story to a broader audience. *In My Blood It Runs* makes clear that Djujan and his family know what is best for him to grow up as a strong, proud young man. If only the world around them would listen more intently about what that is.

"Stop crueLLing kids"



CHARACTERS/ COLLABORATING DIRECTORS



Dujan Hoosan



Megan Hoosan



Carol Turner



Margaret Hoosan



Colin Mawson



James Mawson



Jimmy Mawson

ADVISORS



William Tilmouth



Margaret Kemarre Turner
OAM



Agnes Abbott



Jane Vadiveloo



Amelia Turner

BIOGRAPHIES



Maya Newell

Director / Producer / DOP / Editor / Impact Producer

Maya is an Australian filmmaker with a focus on social impact documentary. She has directed award-winning short documentaries, *Two* (AFI Docs, Slamdance, Winner AIDC emerging talent) and *Growing Up Gayby* (ABC TV) and her feature documentary *Gayby Baby* (2015). *Gayby Baby* was selected for GoodPitch² Australia 2014, premiered at Hot Docs, screened at London BFI, Doc Leipzig, Doc NYC, is on Netflix US and reached No. 1 on iTunes doc charts during its UK release. In Australia, the film famously caused a national stir when it was banned by the Australian State Government and is acknowledged as significant in the fight for Marriage Equality and Adoption Equality in Australia. *In My Blood It Runs* was selected for Good Pitch Australia 2016, the Sundance Documentary Fund and Sundance Skywalker Music and Sound Design Labs and is due for release in 2019.

Sophie Hyde

Producer

Sophie's debut fiction film *52 Tuesdays* (director/producer/co-writer) was set and shot every Tuesday for one year and won the directing award in World Cinema Dramatic at Sundance and the Crystal Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival. Her second film *Animals*, based on the acclaimed novel by Emma Jane Unsworth and starring Holliday Grainger and Alia Shawkat premiered at Sundance in January and will release in 2019. Her first episodic series *F*!#ing Adelaide*, which she created, produced and directed screened at Berlin Film Festival and Series Mania in 2018 and screened on Australia's ABC1 and was the most watched show made specifically for their Iview platform. She produced and co-directed the acclaimed feature documentary *Life in Movement*, winner of the Australian Documentary Prize in 2011 and the Cinedans Jury and Audience prizes. She has been commissioned to make screen based work for the National Portrait Gallery, Carriageworks and the Art Gallery of South Australia. She also works as a Producer and believes strongly in nurturing new voices. She was recently mentor and executive producer on *A Field Guide to Being A 12-year-old-girl*, the directorial debut of Tilda Cobham-Hervey which won the short film *Crystal Bear* at Berlin Film Festival last year. She produced Matt Bate's feature documentaries *Shut Up Little Man!* *An Audio Misadventure* and *Sam Klemke's Time Machine*, which both premiered at Sundance. She is currently in production as creator/director/producer of *The Hunting*, a 4x1 hour series for SBS. She is a co-founder of film collaborative, Closer Productions.



Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson

Producer

Rachel is a critically acclaimed Iñupiaq/Norwegian/Sami filmmaker and educator. She received the Sundance Fellowship in 2009 for her *Iñupiaq Fantasy* trilogy and short film, and her *History of the Iñupiat* was the first Native-funded, produced, written and director history documentary series in the United States. Rachel has worked in native educational reform Across Alaska, and led educational initiatives in Australia with communities in Sydney, Yirrkala, Jabiru, Cape York and country Victoria and worked alongside native education reform colleagues in Hawaii, Canada and New Zealand.



Larissa Behrendt
Producer

Prof. Larissa Behrendt is a Eualeyai/Kamillaroi woman. She is the Professor of Law and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney. She is admitted to the Supreme Court of the ACT and NSW as a barrister. She is the author of several books on Indigenous legal issues and won the 2002 David Uniapon Award and a 2005 Commonwealth Writer's Prize for her novel *Home*. Larissa is a Board Member of the Museum of Contemporary Art, a board member of Tranby Aboriginal College and a Director of the Bangarra Dance Theatre. She was named as 2009 NAIDOC Person of the Year. She wrote and directed the Walkley nominated documentary, *Innocence Betrayed* that aired on NITV in 2014. Her short film, *Under Skin, In Blood*, screened at Sydney Film Festival and Melbourne International Film Festival in 2015. Her short film *Clan* won Best Documentary at the Canberra Short Film Festival and the Shorts Film Festival in Adelaide in 2015. She is the host of ABC's *Speaking Out* on the National Radio network. Her feature documentary, *After the Apology*, which premiered at Adelaide Film Festival 2017 and screened at festivals internationally.



Felicity Hayes
Cultural Executive Producer

Felicity Hayes is an Arrernte Elder, educator and the recognised Traditional Owner of Mparntwe/Alice Springs. Felicity has campaigned for decades for social justice for her people, the right to live on her country and the right for Arrernte families to teach their children. Felicity has been instrumental working within the formal education system, sharing and teaching Arrernte language and culture. Felicity is one of the grandmothers who form the backbone of Children's Ground in central Australia, providing leadership and direction on the learning, wellbeing and development of children at her home, Irrkerlantye (Whitegate Town Camp).

Alex Kelly
Associate Producer / Impact Producer

Alex Kelly is a filmmaker, artist and communications and campaign strategist committed to social justice. Alex worked for ten years with Big hART as Creative Producer of Ngapartji Ngapartji and was National Producer from 2012-2014. Alex's documentary credits include producing *Island of the Hungry Ghosts*, *THE ISLAND*, *Nothing Rhymes with Ngapartji* and co-producing *The Namatjira Project* production managing *Coniston: Telling it True* and directing *Queen of the Desert*. Alex was the Global Impact & Distribution Producer on Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything* project. In 2013 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship and explored at models for social change documentary impact and engagement in UK, Canada and USA. Alex was a 2016-2017 Sidney Myer Creative Fellow.



Lisa Sherrard
Associate Producer / Impact Team

Lisa came to the film industry after a career in banking and has a strong background in accounting and finance. Lisa worked on the distribution and impact campaign for *Gayby Baby* (2015) and with Screen Impact on the distribution of *Motorkite Dreaming* (2016). In 2018 Lisa gained her Diploma in Production Accounting from the Australian Film and Television School.

Directed by
Maya Newell

Collaborating Directors
Dujuan Hoosan, Carol Turner, Megan Hoosan, James Mawson, Margaret Anderson, Jimmy Mawson.

Produced by
Sophie Hyde
Rachel Naninaaq Edwardson
Larissa Behrendt
Maya Newell

Associate Producers
Lisa Sherrard
Alex Kelly

**Executive Producer/
Senior Traditional Owner of Alice Springs**
Felicity Hayes

Cinematography by
Maya Newell

Edited by
Maya Newell
Bryan Mason
Simon Price

Composed by
Benjamin Speed

Additional Music by
Amit May Cohen

Sound Design by
Kim Patrick

Impact Producers
Alex Kelly
Maya Newell

Tech Specs
Runtime: 84 mins
Colour: Colour
Aspect Ratio: 1.85
Shooting Format: HD
Cameras: Sony FS5, 5D Mark III, Iphone
Sound: Stereo & 5.1
Exhibition Format + Frame Rate: DCP (24)
Language: English, Aboriginal English, Arrernte

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We acknowledge the Arrernte and Garrwa peoples of Mparntwe and Borroloola whose land we have been filming on and the Kuarna people of Adelaide, whose lands we have been editing on. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging as Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land.