



COMPLICIT

JHAVARSKE JACKSON

LAKEITH SMITH

LE'ANTHONY WASHINGTON

Producer // Chloe Gardner
+61 413 724 755
chloe@arterialfilms.com.au

ARTERIAL
FILMS

Director // Stephen de Villiers
+61 449 637 878
stephen@arterialfilms.com.au

LOG LINE

Complicit is a gripping, true-crime documentary series that exposes how Joint Enterprise and Felony Murder laws across Australia, the UK, and the US condemn people for crimes they didn't commit — revealing the flaws in a justice system that can't tell the difference between guilt and association.

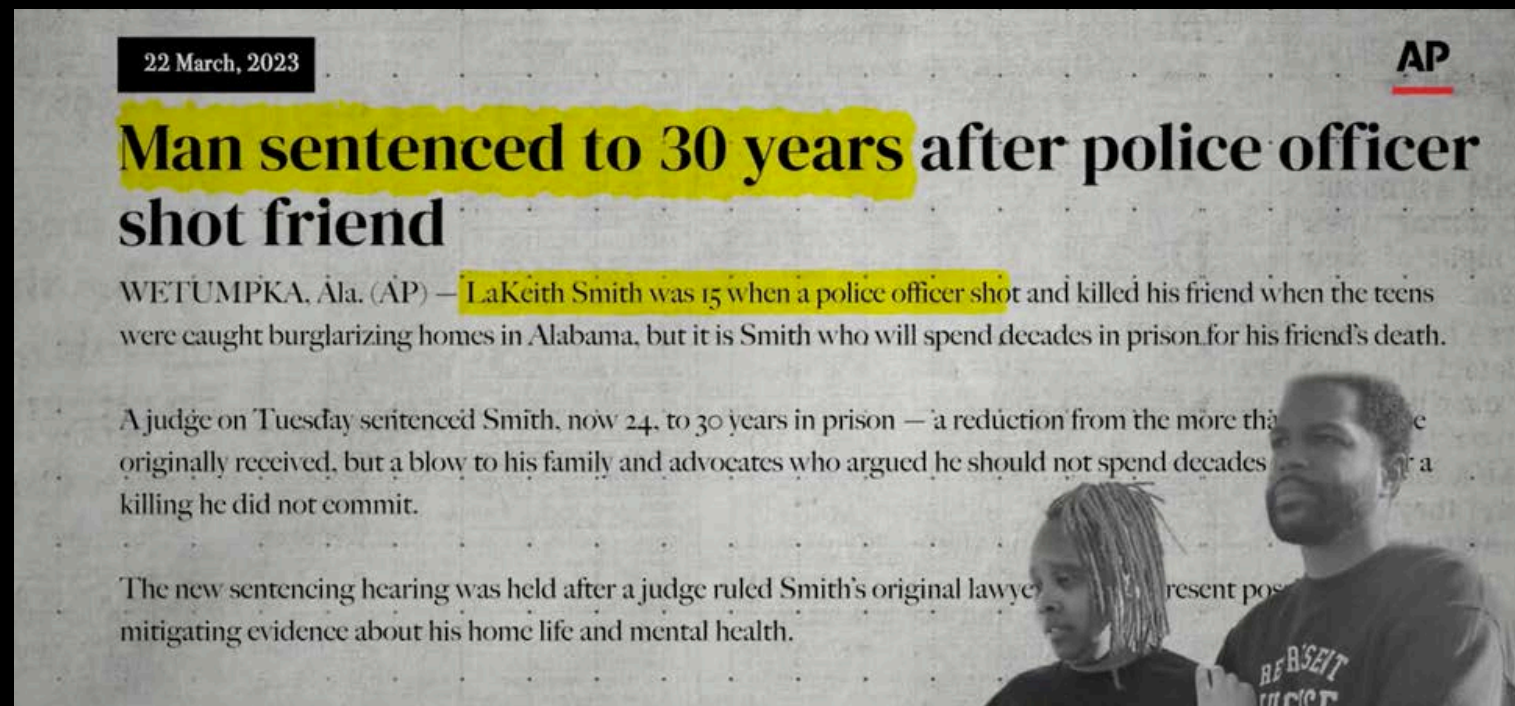
FORMAT

3x 1-hour documentary series

GENRE

True Crime, Investigative

VIEW TRAILER <https://f.io/56lB32Jp>



SYNOPSIS

Complicit is a 3x 1-hour documentary series exposing the fault lines of “guilt by association” laws across Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Known as Felony Murder in the US and Joint Enterprise in the UK and Australia, these doctrines have condemned hundreds of thousands of individuals to decades behind bars for crimes they did not commit.

Through intimate access to families, prisoners, campaigners, and legal experts, Complicit reveals how the justice system rationalises collective punishment—and asks viewers to decide whether those convicted were truly responsible for the crimes they were convicted of.

Beginning and ending in Australia, the series moves through the UK and US to show how these laws have evolved—and endured. In Manchester, once dubbed “Gangchester,” we meet Ade Adedeji, sentenced to twenty years for sending an angry text after his friend’s murder, and Ameen Jogee, whose murder conviction was overturned in a landmark Supreme Court ruling. Yet Joint Enterprise continues to ensnare groups of predominantly young black men under the banner of combatting gang violence, with music, fashion, and friendship weaponised as proof of intent and evidence of foresight.

In the United States, Felony Murder extends this logic to its extreme. Tony Vigeant is serving life without parole for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. LaKeith Smith was fifteen when police shot and killed his friend during a botched burglary—yet he was charged with that murder and sentenced to sixty-five years without parole. In America, even lending someone a car can lead to life behind bars.

Back in Australia, Complicit investigates how rising mandatory sentences and falling crime rates expose the contradictions of a system that claims fairness as its foundation. Within Victoria’s Sudanese community—still scarred by the 2025 machete attacks—and in the Northern Territory, where being young and Aboriginal can be enough to invite police suspicion, “guilt by association” continues to punish those already on society’s margins.

At its heart, Complicit asks whether these laws reflect systemic prejudice and political fear, or an imperfect system struggling to protect the public and deliver justice to victims. Have potentially hundreds of thousands been wrongly convicted—and if so, what should be done about it?

Stylised and deeply human, Complicit weaves together stories as intricate as the cases it examines—from the streets of Los Angeles to the halls of Cambridge University, from the Supreme Court in London to regional South Australia. Through rare case access, striking visuals, and stories that are both deeply personal and profoundly political, the series peels back the curtain on some of the most compelling and cryptic true-crime cases, while exploring the nature of accountability and responsibility—and what justice looks like when complicity is uncertain.



ARTERIALTM

FILMS

Co-founded by Stephen De Villiers and Chloe Gardner, Arterial Films is an Australian Production Company, built on nearly two decades of filmmaking experience. Supported by our sister company, Watchpost, we are an end-to-end entertainment company and co-production partner. Our work has been commissioned or acquired by leading broadcasters, platforms, and festivals across both fiction and non-fiction, television and feature film.

Notable credits include **The Run** (2025), our most recent feature film starring Callan Mulvey (300: Rise of an Empire) and Charlotte Maggi (Rebel Moon), which is being sold internationally by Global Constellation. **Bloom** (2025), a Screen Australia funded direct-to-audience series, **The Burnt Half** (2023), our feature documentary, which was acquired by SBS with X4 handling international sales. **The Rover of Tobruk** is a non-fiction half-hour special, which was acquired by the 7 network, SBS, Fox Sports US and BT Sports UK. Further highlights include **Stuck In Time** (2018) a broadcast documentary commissioned by SBS/NITV, Super Sounds one of our standout shorts, which screened at over 60 festivals, with numerous wins and nominations and was acquired by Virgin Airlines for their in-flight Entertainment. In 2023 we produced Finding Jia, which was funded by Screen Australia and AFTRS and began its festival round in 2024.

Our diverse team is comprised of skilled in-house professionals and a global network of collaborators and partners. We are focused on developing and commercialising a diverse range of projects across drama and non-fiction. While our work spans formats and genres, the unifying element that distinguishes the films we touch is an insatiable curiosity, a belief that life is beautifully complex, and tireless creative rigour that defines the way we approach each project.

Our vision is to be recognised globally as one of Australia's leading independent entertainment companies, renowned for producing remarkable film and television content, where we consistently deliver and commercialise bold, successful fiction and non-fiction projects. Our film and television projects are known for their ability to inspire, provoke, and entertain, built upon the strength and creativity of our diverse and talented team. By blending artistry, entertainment and empathy our work reflects and shapes our vision of a more positive society for future generations.



AN ARTERIAL FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH BEANPILE PICTURES 'THE BURNT HALF'
 WRITTEN BY STEPHEN DE VILLIERS PRODUCED BY CHLOE GARDNER AND WILSON TRAN DIRECTED BY BENJAMIN DOWIE
 CO-PRODUCED BY MARISE FABRY AND BENJAMIN DOWIE EDITED BY MICHAEL FARRELL
 SUMMER 2023
 WWW.ARTERIALFILMS.COM.AU



EXILE FILMS AND GLOBAL CONSTELLATION PRESENT AN ARTERIAL FILMS PRODUCTION 'THE RUN' WRITTEN BY STEPHEN DE VILLIERS
 STARRING CALLAN MULVEY CHARLOTTE MAGGI AND FELIX CAMERON MUSIC BY ALEXANDROS OZAS PRODUCED BY CHLOE GARDNER AND STEPHEN DE VILLIERS
 DIRECTED BY MARISE FABRY AND MICHAEL TESSARI EDITED BY JUSTIN PRUNSETTI COSTUME DESIGNER JUSTIN ASTORBY
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ANDRUSHA ZARKESH AND ANITA SEILER
 EXILE ARTERIAL



SCREEN AUSTRALIA AND CANCER AUSTRALIA PRESENT
 AN ARTERIAL FILMS, CAMP QUALITY AND CARTOON PRODUCTION
 A SERIES THAT EXPLORES THE CHALLENGES OF TEENAGE CANCER
 'BLOOM' AN ARTERIAL FILMS PRODUCTION STARRING ZOE MORGAN WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY STEPHEN DE VILLIERS & ALICE YANG EP 1
 COOVED BY CHLOE GARDNER, MARISE FABRY & ROBBIE GREENWELL DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL TESSARI EDITOR WILSON TRAN PRODUCTION DESIGNER EMMA HUGHES
 COSTUME DESIGNER EMMA WICKES HAIR & MAKEUP MADE-LENN MORANT SOUND AND MUSIC SUPERVISOR FAZZ FARRELL VFX SUPERVISOR HOLLY MAO



STARRING JOY JIANG, VICKY LIAO, JOHNNY YICHENG XIA AND OLLIE XU PRODUCED BY MARISE FABRY
 WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ALICE YANG MUSIC BY SATOMI OHNISHI EDITOR WILSON TRAN PRODUCTION DESIGNER EMMA COOMBS
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CHLOE GARDNER AND STEPHEN DE VILLIERS

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My vision for Complicit is to craft a documentary that balances both sides of a complex and often polarising debate. It will be a series that is provocative, divisive, and challenging – but also deeply human, empathetic, and enlightening.

I first became interested in Joint Enterprise laws when I was approached to create a short documentary for SBS/NITV in collaboration with Dr Simone Deegan. That film followed Howie, an Indigenous teenager who was just 15 when he found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time – a street fight that tragically resulted in someone's death. He and five others were charged with murder and sentenced to life in prison under joint enterprise laws. Although Howie didn't inflict the fatal blow, and never knew there was a knife or a death, simply being at the scene – for mere moments – was enough to upend his life.

Humanising a statistic was an eye-opening experience. Learning about the intricacies of Joint Enterprise was confronting, leaving me with more questions than answers. Why are these laws necessary, and what purpose do they truly serve?

Are they an instrument of justice, or do they convict people for crimes they didn't commit?

The deeper I delved, the more I found myself wrestling with difficult questions:

- What does justice really mean?
- What is the role of the criminal justice system?
- How are laws being weaponised?
- How prevalent are racial biases within that system?
- And who should be held accountable when it's uncertain who delivered the fatal blow?

Perhaps the most fundamental question I'm exploring in this series is:
Is it just to convict someone for a crime they didn't commit?



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The quest for the answers to these questions are what drive the narrative of this series - yet with each answer, we tend to expose new questions. That is what makes *Complicit* compelling, gripping, and important. What I've found, and what I hope viewers will also discover, is how easy it is to leap to conclusions of complicity – to form lazy assumptions based on statistics. But when we humanise these cases, we see that the devil is in the details, and that many miscarriages of justice have occurred in the very pursuit of justice itself.

Even so, with such a divisive and complex topic, I remain committed to objectivity – following both my own curiosity and that of the audience. At a time when nearly everyone on both sides of the debate acknowledges that the laws and the system are imperfect, I believe this series can spark meaningful conversation and perhaps even contribute to genuine reform, galvanising public support and holding institutions to account.

Stylistically, *Complicit* draws inspiration from documentaries like *13th* – a powerful, emotive examination of the justice system – and Nick Broomfield's *Last Man Standing*, which poses poignant questions about society's moral compass. Other references include *Frontline* and *Aileen: Life and Death of a Serial Killer*, both of which blend topical political and legal inquiry with extraordinary access, asking the question: 'are they, or are they not guilty?' – and if they are, 'what is a just punishment?'

Visually and structurally, the series will combine bold, cinematic master interviews with rich archival and news material from each case. To illustrate the murky details of these stories, I plan to employ a distinctive, stylised form of animation to visualise the incidents that led to our participants' incarceration.

By setting the series across three interconnected yet distinct countries, I hope to explore what both unites us as humans, and how our differences present an opportunity for investigation and discovery. Ultimately, I hope that *Complicit* takes viewers on a global journey – one filled with intrigue, moral tension, and profound insight into questions we should all be asking.



Stephen de Villiers
Director

PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

As filmmakers, we are drawn to stories that challenge perspectives and *spark meaningful conversations*. *Complicit* is a series born from a deep curiosity about what justice really means, and how seemingly archaic legal doctrines like Felony Murder and Joint Enterprise continue to result in harsh sentencing outcomes for individuals who were only peripherally involved in crimes.

As a middle-aged woman, with the primary audience being middle-aged women, my goal is to present the facts, opinions, and research on these cases in a way that is compelling as well as thought-provoking and accessible. This project is about more than just highlighting injustices—it is about engaging viewers in a complex, often uncomfortable discussion about the law and its consequences.

We are privileged to be working closely with Dr. Simone Deegan, whose extensive knowledge and insights in this area bring depth and authority to the storytelling. This has been instrumental in making these cases come alive. Through her expertise, we explore the intricacies of the law and, in particular, question the sentencing of young individuals caught up in these legal frameworks.

We are committed to an objective and rigorous approach, ensuring that audiences are given the space to form their own opinions. By blending observational documentary filmmaking with in-depth interviews, archival material, and real-time legal battles, *Complicit* aims to be a powerful, thought-provoking series that raises fundamental questions about justice and accountability.



Chloe Gardner
Producer | Arterial Films

TEAM



CHLOE GARDNER
PRODUCER

Chloe is a creative producer and entrepreneur with extensive experience across film, television, and education. As Senior Producer at Arterial Films and Watchpost since 2019, she has overseen projects for local broadcasters and international SVODs, including the multi-award-winning *My Name is Gulpilil*. A Winnovation Award recipient and MBA graduate, Chloe previously founded South Australia's leading youth film school, Kids Camera Action, and the Adelaide International Youth Film Festival. Her credits include Netflix's *A Second Chance: Rivals* and *Gymnastics Academy: A Second Chance*, and she recently produced *The Run*, *The Burnt Half*, and *Bloom*.



STEPHEN DE VILLIERS
WRITER / DIRECTOR

Stephen de Villiers is a writer, director, producer, with two decades' experience across drama, documentary, and television. Originally from South Africa and now based in Australia, he is co-founder of Watchpost and Arterial Films. His credits include *The Run* (writer/director/producer), a dystopian feature represented by Global Constellation; *The Burnt Half* (director/producer), an SBS feature documentary; *Bloom* (writer/director), a Screen Australia-funded youth series; *The Rover of Tobruk* (director, Channel 7/Fox Sports/BT Sport); and *Gymnastics Academy* (episode director, Netflix). An AFTRS alumnus, Stephen's work has screened at 60+ international festivals including AFF, Giffoni, Flickerfest, and San Francisco IFF.

TEAM



SIMONE DEEGAN
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER / CONSULTANT

Simone is a criminologist, researcher, and former criminal defence solicitor with a deep focus on crime, punishment, and justice reform. As a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social Impact, Flinders University, she has led over \$2 million in research funding, including an ARC Industry Fellowship on the abuse-to-prison pipeline and a Churchill Fellowship on joint enterprise injustice. Her award-winning work on homicide and life sentencing has informed government inquiries and appeared in leading journals. Simone first collaborated with Arterial Films on the SBS documentary *Stuck in Time* (2018).



WILSON TRAN
EDITOR

Wilson is a veteran editor and colourist known for his intuitive storytelling and meticulous approach to craft. Since joining Watchpost and Arterial Films in 2017, he has served as editor across a wide range of projects, including the SBS-acquired feature documentary *The Burnt Half*, the award-winning documentary *25zero: East Africa*, and Netflix's *Gymnastics Academy: A Second Chance*, where he served as colourist. His recent editing credits include the Screen Australia-funded, and AACTA award-nominated web series *Bloom* and the feature film *The Run*, a dystopian action thriller being sold internationally by Global Constellation.

PARTICIPANTS

In June 2025 we went on a preliminary trip to the US to establish our access, conduct early interviews with our participants and unlock the essence of this complex narrative. We conducted a similar trip to the UK in September 2025. As a result of these trips we have confirmed the following participants. Starting in Oct 2025 we will begin to establish our Australian participants and cases.

UNITED STATES

Anthony Vigeant — Witness to a Killing, Sentenced for Murder

At just 19, Anthony Vigeant watched in horror as a U.S. Marine corporal murdered a man during what was meant to be a simple confrontation over a stolen laptop. Anthony didn't touch the victim, didn't plan the attack, and wasn't armed — yet he was charged with first-degree murder under California's felony-murder rule.

The Marine — the actual killer — took a plea deal and received a lighter sentence. Anthony, who merely stood by, was sentenced to life without parole, meaning he will die in prison. His mother, Joanne Scheer, founded the Felony Murder Elimination Project after witnessing how the justice system punished proximity over guilt — turning bystanders into murderers. She campaigns tirelessly for thousands of convicts across the US.

LaKeith Smith — Fifteen, Unarmed, and Blamed for a Cop's Bullet

When police opened fire on a group of teens fleeing a burglary in Alabama, they killed 16-year-old A'Donte Washington. But it wasn't the officer who fired the shot who faced a murder charge — it was A'Donte's friend, LaKeith Smith, just 15 years old at the time.

Convicted under America's felony-murder doctrine, LaKeith was held responsible for his friend's death — a killing committed by police. Initially sentenced to 65 years, later reduced to 30, his case epitomises how the felony-murder rule can appear warped and unjust, and turns victims of circumstance into killers in the eyes of the law. With a new legal team, LaKeith's family holds hope of an imminent and early release for him.



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PARTICIPANTS

UNITED KINGDOM

Ameen Jogee — The Case that Changed the Law

Ameen Jogee shouted encouragement from outside a doorway during a drunken argument that turned deadly. He didn't know about a knife, didn't wield the knife and didn't deliver the fatal blow. Yet he was convicted of murder under the UK's joint-enterprise law — a doctrine so broad that *foresight of another's violence* was enough to destroy a life.

After years in prison, Jogee's case reached the UK Supreme Court, which ruled the law had taken a “wrong turn” for over 30 years. His conviction was quashed and reduced to manslaughter, and he was released soonafter. Yet thousands remain imprisoned under the same logic that made mere association a crime.

Laura Mitchell — Guilty by Presence

Outside a Yorkshire pub, a drunken brawl erupted over a taxi. A man was killed. Laura Mitchell, 22, didn't throw a punch. She didn't plan or participate — she was simply there. Yet prosecutors argued her presence amounted to “encouragement,” and the jury convicted her of murder under joint enterprise.

Laura received the same mandatory life sentence as the man who delivered the fatal blow. Her case underscores the chilling reach of joint-enterprise law — how silence, fear, or failure to flee can be interpreted as intent to kill.

Ade Adedeji — Convicted by Group Chat

Ade Adedeji, a Manchester teenager, was head boy and on a scholarship to study law in London. Yet he was portrayed as a gang leader because of an angry text message sent after his friend was murdered in a senseless knife crime. He didn't carry a weapon, didn't attack anyone, and months passed before someone else committed a revenge attack on those who killed his friend John. Yet he was convicted under joint enterprise and sentenced to eight years.

In 2025, his conviction was quashed when the Court of Appeal found the evidence “unsafe.” Ade's case captures the new face of joint enterprise: algorithmic guilt built on photos, lyrics, and friendships — a system where digital traces replace proof.



PARTICIPANTS

AUSTRALIA

We filmed with Howie Rigney when we created our 15 min SBS/NITV short documentary, *Stuck In Time*, and we are considering revisiting Howie's case, as it is a text book 'guilt by proximity' case.

There are a number of other cases we are considering and we are currently looking to secure access to.

Somewhat paradoxically we have left Australia to the last, as we know we will do the most filming here and can leverage the Australian stories to close off the narrative as needed. Key cases we are looking into are:

Mitchell & Others v The King — When Foresight Became Murder

Four men broke into a rural South Australian grow house to steal cannabis. During the chaos, a guard was beaten to death — but no one knew who delivered the fatal blows. Unable to prove who killed, prosecutors used extended joint criminal enterprise, arguing the men's mere foresight of possible violence made them all murderers.

The High Court later overturned the convictions, ruling that prediction isn't proof and foresight isn't intent. But the case laid bare a hard truth about justice: when the system can't find one person guilty, joint enterprise lets it punish everyone instead — turning uncertainty into guilt.

Kimlong Rim — The Ghost in the Crowd

At a suburban party in Adelaide, a fight turned fatal when Thea Kheav was stabbed to death amid chaos and confusion. No one saw who held the knife — but Kimlong Rim, one of several young men at the scene, was charged with murder years later after returning to Australia.

Prosecutors argue that even if he didn't stab Kheav, Rim is guilty under extended joint enterprise — because he foresaw violence might erupt. The case exposes how, when facts are blurred and proof elusive, joint enterprise becomes a net cast wide — punishing everyone in reach of the crime, even when the killer remains unknown.



The documentary balances intimate observational filmmaking with investigative storytelling.

We embed ourselves within the lives of those directly affected—parents of victims, families of the convicted, defence attorneys, and prosecutors — capturing their emotions in raw, unfiltered moments.



Master Interviews:

These interviews provide depth and authority, featuring judges, barristers, criminal justice reform advocates, and law enforcement officials.

On The Fly Interviews and Observational Filmmaking:

We spend time with participants in their homes and towns, discovering where crimes took place, as they attempt to make sense of the moments that defined their lives.



Archival and News Footage:

Carefully curated footage of trials, media reports, and crime reconstructions help immerse viewers in each case's historical context.

Stylised Animation:

The help audiences understand the specific series of events, often fleeting, often unpredictable, we will look to craft stylised animation sequences to re-enact and re-create the crimes using first person accounts as well as case file evidence.



VISION

Our decision to produce *Complicit* across three countries is both creative and strategic. The injustices born of Joint Enterprise and Felony Murder — laws that punish association over action — are not confined to one nation. By tracing this shared legal DNA across Australia, the UK, and the US, we examine how the systems are both similar and distinct, and how those caught within them often echo the same plea for justice.

A global canvas allows us to build a richer, more connected narrative — one that transcends borders, sparks dialogue between regions, and positions *Complicit* as part of an international reckoning with “guilt by association.”

AUDIENCE

Complicit will resonate deeply with women aged 28–58 — the demographic that loves and appreciates the True Crime genre. Beyond this core audience, the series will engage social justice communities, legal professionals, policymakers, and families of both victims and the convicted — people seeking truth, accountability, and reform.

BROADCAST STRATEGY

We are working closely with TVF International (UK) and are in advanced discussions for global broadcast sales. Channel 4 in the UK has already expressed interest in a presale, and TVF is pursuing further partners in the US and other key territories.

As we move into advanced development and finalise our finance plan, our next step is to secure an Australian anchor broadcaster — one ready to champion globally resonant, socially urgent storytelling that aligns with the new wave of prestige true-crime series.





GENRE
**TRUE CRIME, INVESTIGATIVE
EXPOSE, SOCIAL CAUSE**

LANGUAGES
ENGLISH

FORMAT
3x 1 HOUR

BUDGET
AUD \$1.5m

SECURED FINANCE
AUD \$135,000

PROJECT STATUS
DEVELOPMENT/FINANCING

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTER
TBC

SALES AGENT
TVF (NEGOTIATING)

PRE SALES
**CHANNEL 4 (UK) - (Anticipated)
ABC (Aus) - (Anticipated)**

COUNTRIES OF PRODUCTION
**AUSTRALIA
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
UNITED KINGDOM**

ARTERIAL FILMS PRESENTS
COMPLICIT

THANK YOU

Producer // Chloe Gardner
+61 413 724 755
chloe@arterialfilms.com.au

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FILMS
www.arterialfilms.com.au

Director // Stephen de Villiers
+61 449 637 878
stephen@arterialfilms.com.au