



# lunatic fringe

A TELEVISION MINI SERIES



# **lunatic fringe**

Written by  
**Paul Davies**

**A Mini Series in Ten Parts**

Concept  
Bill Hughes and Susan Haworth

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"The Farm" Kalang Road Bellingen. NSW 2454 Australia. Ph 61 (0)66 550089 Fax 61 (0)66 552028  
email<kuranyafarm@peg.apc.org> <<http://www.peg.apc.org/~kuranyafarm>>



**“Lunatic Fringe” is the story of a woman who heals her emotional scars through a connection with the earth. In the process she learns to love both herself and the leader of the forest dwelling ferals.**

**SALLY is the woman, environment is the issue and survival is the theme.**



# **lunatic fringe**

## SYNOPSIS

"Lunatic Fringe" is the story of SALLY MORANTS and her connection with the Earth.

It is set on the north coast of New South Wales in the highly unusual and sometimes bizarre rural town of Bullumbah.

A once dead place, mined out, logged out, over grazed and desperate for new life it's the sort of town to which the hippies fled in the 60's and 70's. It's now peopled by a volatile mixture of 'alternatives' and 'red necks'.

SALLY arrives in the Shire of Bullumbah not knowing that from the moment she sets foot in the valley her life will change forever. Her emotional rehabilitation from a recent tragedy will be achieved through a connection with the people and the place.

Through her involvement with an alternative way of thinking and doing - SALLY will be healed. She will also be 'greened'.

Her healing and her greening are about a complete change of mind, about having the blinkers lifted, being confused, disillusioned and shocked at discovering that her old assumptions don't work anymore.

At first she recoils from Bullumbah - the heat, the ticks, the rats, the snakes, the isolation, the ferals, the 'lunatics'.

The ten hour format allows a journey time for SALLY where she will learn to live on the fringe and to love the lunatics, in so doing she will learn about herself. She will uncover concepts of a new world to come, she will become emotionally embroiled in the complex matrix of relationships which bind us - and sometimes tear us apart.

Counterpointing the strong central theme of the healing and greening of SALLY are the weekly episodic stories which focus on the madcap characters living out their lives in blissful ignorance of the big city. The crazy Vietnam Vet who fires arrows at helicopters, the happy go lucky street poet, the forest people with their drums and feathers - often humorous, sometimes tragic - it is the unique mix of humans, wildlife, the environment and lifestyles which gives this series it's charm and it's character.

Set in paradise amongst the old growth rainforests and the sparkling Pacific Ocean the series will entertain, enlighten and open a new window on contemporary Australian culture.

SALLY is the person, the environment is the issue and survival is the theme.

## THE TOWN - BULLUMBAH

The town is situated in an ideal climate, nestled at the foot of the Great Dividing Range half way between the mountains and the sea. A fifteen minute drive due west takes us up the escarpment to the rain forests. Fifteen minutes due east along the lush river flats, the road follows the river as it meanders down to the Pacific Ocean. The river and the sea meet at Busted Heads, a clean, wide expanse of fine golden sand famed for it's rolling surf.

A one pub town, a newsagent, a bank and two chemists. A butcher, baker and several candlestick makers. An alternative health centre, one real estate agent, an environment centre, the grain and feed store and an up market yuppie inspired cafe which fronts a huge arts and craft gallery.

Bullumbah? A typical story, an Aborigine points something out to the early explorers who believe that they are being told the name of the place. Wrong.

Bullumbah means rain.

## THE VALLEY

Once you leave the bitumen a badly maintained gravel road winds about 15 kilometres into the Gang Gang Valley. The whole area was once timber and dairy country. Structures have appeared on former paddocks and amongst the regrowth a variety of shelters from bamboo houses to tepees and hardwood homesteads have sprung up. Over the last twenty years or so a disparate group of people have formed a community more by accident than design.

Some people have bought impractical land with poor soil, no water, or steep southern slopes. No matter, they had no ambition to be farmers. Others, a few, live and work as did their grandparents and parents before them.

Some have realised, or are working to realise, the dream of self-sufficiency while increasingly professionals try to maintain a city career from the bush setting only to find that modern communication technology fails miserably when trees fall and the phone lines are down and the power is off.

Some are not sure why they came to the Gang Gang valley, but they have plenty of time to work it out. Some probably are mad, but there is heaps of room along the Gang Gang Road.

## **THE PEOPLE**

The people of Bullumbah are something like people who live and work in places like Nimbin, Byron Bay, Bellingen and Mullumbimby on the north coast of NSW.

People exploring lives not yet illuminated in our literature and drama. People from a variety of backgrounds involved in the mass exodus from city to country.

The employed, unemployed and the unemployable.

People with perceptions of a new world to come as the millennium approaches.

People who will dare to struggle for what they believe is right for the planet.

## MAIN CHARACTERS

### Sally Morants

She grew up in a city, went to a 'good school' and was a model student. She even got on with her parents. When she made it to university she realised that she was very good at two things - foreign languages and communicating ideas.

She sat down next to Ruth Abrahams in the cafeteria one day and instantly knew she had met a life long friend. They travelled the world together before Sally managed to turn her twin skills into a job with UNESCO in Paris.

By her 30th birthday she was running her own department, producing radio programs for in house training and publicity. She followed an ideal about helping the world via her work at the UN. Driven by ambition and an energy flow that allows no rest, Sally stands tall amongst her peers.

Initially she enjoyed her work and was seduced by Paris - the romance, a city brimming with art and ideas. Over the last 12 months or so the dream has slowly been eroding.

Her marriage to Peter Richardson has been disintegrating in front of her eyes as he became more and more obsessive and dependent. A commercially unsuccessful artist he began taking his frustrations out on Sally.

One night things got out of hand and Sally was raped. By Peter.

Suddenly Sally changed. She couldn't trust anyone. She lost her sense of self worth and she felt she could no longer control the world around her.

This is the Sally Morants who arrives in Bullumbah.

### Ben Woods

If you saw Ben on the road hitching you'd think twice about picking him up. Long dreadlocks, a not particularly clean looking bloke of about 28 years.

Ben is a seasoned environmental activist who is committed to forest issues. He is extremely well read and he's fired up about the destruction he sees around him. His energies are directed to the cause and he will happily choose direct action and protest when his lobbying fails.

Ben left school early and trained as a rigger on building sites in Sydney and when he moved to the bush and became involved in the struggle to save the old growth forests this rigging experience proved invaluable in designing tripods, monopoles and cantilevers. These devices are used with spectacular success by the ferals in forest blockades.

He is a self taught flora and fauna expert and is adept at tracking down and identifying endangered species in the wild.

Ben lives on the dole which he regards as his rightful "social wage" for the work he does saving animals and trees.

Incongruously, Ben spends a lot of time on his mobile phone.

### **Ruth Abrahams**

Ruth is the daughter of wealthy Jewish parents who made their fortune in real estate in the sixties and seventies and transferred a lot of that capital to the Gold Coast where they have now more or less "retired".

If Ruth suffered the JAP syndrome (Jewish Australian Princess) it doesn't show. She may have been spoiled, but the idea sits poorly with her evident generosity and her abstemious lifestyle. Everything she owns personally can be comfortably fitted into one medium sized backpack (apart from the two shops she was given in South Yarra).

Ruth is never stationary, she has a wanderlust, a passionate desire to experience new things, new people, new distractions.

Always the new is the best yet. The new boyfriend, the new place to go for summer, the latest book, film, diet, alternative healing therapy or aerobic exercise program.

Yet somehow these things soon lose their appeal, their magic. She moves on, the boyfriends drop behind. She comes back to Sally spreading enthusiasm and positive thought as she goes.

One day it will probably all catch up with her and she will have to settle down. But not yet, not until that certain relationship comes along which would tempt her to do so. Perhaps a child would anchor her, perhaps not.

Ruth runs on all cylinders all the time and that frightens people off, it wearies them. But they take the life she offers.



## **Ted Scanlon**

Ted Scanlon is in his 60's, has been a sawmiller all his life and now finds himself caught between a rock and a hard place. His mill is being squeezed by the larger, multinational timber companies and his supply of logs is being further threatened by the conservationists who seem hell bent on "locking up" every forest in the country.

Ted is on the verge of retirement but doesn't want to hand over a dud show to his two boys Sean and Brad. His concern for them to get another trade is born of the sad realisation that the days of the family company may be nearing their end.

Through the series Ted will change. He will, at first reluctantly, come to the conclusion that he and the green movement have more in common than he first thought. The point at which they see eye to eye is the issue of "sustainability."

Ted knows that, the way things are going, even the multinationals will eventually run out of useable logs.

It was probably inevitable that Ted should favour Brad, the older son, over young Sean but he tries not to appear biased. Perhaps it was something to do with the fact that Ted was already middle aged when Sean was born.

Strictly speaking everything will be shared equally between the sons and always has been. But there is a kind of "spiritual blockade" in Sean's personality that Ted has never been quite able to breach and which certainly he has never felt comfortable with.

## **Sean Scanlon**

Unfortunately Sean's story is not exceptional.

Sean is 20 years old and the face of the new, young conservatism. If anything he probably identifies with the American cowboy more than anything indigenous.

He has no spiritual home and can see no viable future. That's a part of Sean's problem. His self image is somewhere else and there appears to be no one who reads his problems correctly.

Sean has a lot of restless energy but in a town as small and intense as Bullumbah there is nowhere to go. He burns some of it off on the footy field. But already he drinks too much and he finds it difficult to relate to the opposite sex. His relationship with girlfriend Deborah is not a happy one.

His self esteem is very low indeed.

### **Max Wittwer**

Max is a tall, quietly spoken, classically good looking sort of bloke with a science degree in Biology.

He emigrated from Germany some years ago to escape the crowds and the pollution of Europe. He is vitally concerned with atmospheric and aquatic pollution.

When a Catchment Management Committee was set up to monitor pollution in the Gang Gang area Max was a natural for a committee member.

His work on the committee has been largely frustrated by the fact that while he can turn up many instances of things going wrong with the river his approaches to the relevant authorities to do something about it has born little fruit. Max is a theorist and tends to report things and then imagine that something will happen.

Of course it rarely does.

When Sally enters his life it's like a breath of fresh air. Here is finally someone with energy and enthusiasm to tackle the bureaucracies head on.

Max is happy to supply her with the data which she is then able to turn into powerful media capital. He feels they make an excellent professional team and would like to extend that into a more personal relationship.

### **Mark Mansfield**

Mark is very handsome (knows it), beautifully built (works at it lazily) and has behind him a moderately successful career as singer. His musical career peaked in the early 80's and occasionally his agent will ring with a job offer which Mark always finds some reason for rejecting.

The reason usually comes out as having to do with disillusion with the business, the people in the business ("wankers") or the quality of the gig offered him.

There is some truth is all of this.

A fuller explanation might be that Mark is beyond excitement. Apart from paranoia over the police finding his dope crop there is little that can arouse him.

Which might mean that he is simply lazy. It might mean that he had too much too soon, or it might mean that he truly and profoundly cannot see the point of ambitious endeavour.

Mark is generally a happy person, and is genuinely well liked, a fact which is only slightly jeopardised by the fact that he is cohabiting with a woman a generation younger than him.

### **Dimity Bates**

Dimity is sixteen and she signed off school at the first opportunity. Not that Dimity is stupid, she just isn't the academic type. Dimity is a country girl through and through. She revels in the bush, loves riding horses, and will strangle a goanna with her bare hands if she has to - not just because they're stealing the chooks eggs but also because there's just "too many of the buggers."

It would be a mistake to consider the saronged Dimity as some sort of hippy waif. That is far from the truth. Here is the barefoot competence of real and pragmatic bushcraft.

Mark and Dimity have built their own bamboo house, they have absolutely no debts and live in blissful ignorance of the world outside Bullumbah.

### **Jack and Margaret Bates**

Jack and Margaret have a grand daughter - Dimity - who they have virtually raised as their daughter. Dimity's mother did a bunk shortly after she was born. It's the town's worst kept secret.

Jack and Margaret grew up in Bullumbah and so did their parents and their grandparents before them. Jack's grandfather came to the valley as a young man with original cedar cutters in the 1860s.

It's not quite accurate to say that Jack and Margaret farm their property - although the visual appeal of the valley would be greatly enhanced if he got rid of all the rusting car bodies that surround their house.

Jack drives the school bus, from which he delivers the mail (or more accurately the little kids deliver the mail) he reads the weather by the flight of the parrots and pontificates on a whole range of local issues.

By dint of being in Bullumbah so long Jack has inherited one of the real perks of country life - he holds the office of Captain of the local bush fire brigade which gives him a four-wheel drive, some powerful pumps and a C.B radio.

Margaret has a heart as big as Ayers Rock. She is never far from an infectious laugh although she is dangerous if crossed. She privately bemoans the passing of the good years - the time before the new comers allowed the forest regrowth to reclaim the paddocks and spoil the view.

### **Ray Conner**

One of the first things you will find out about Ray is that he went to Vietnam - as a conscript he will hasten to add. There is something engaging about Ray, his quirky, wry sense of humour, his disdain for "wankers" and "bullshit artists."

Ray keeps very much to himself at the head of the Gang Gang. He has a beautiful spot and a house with a commanding view. The commanding view is deliberate. A fortress mentality keeps his back to the hills - he holds the high ground.

Ray has a problem. Like many of his former comrades he is a victim of "agent orange." The exposure to this chemical agent that he received in Vietnam still continues to haunt him. He has absolutely no tolerance to chemicals whatsoever and tends to "spin", that is "spin out" if he ever encounters them.

Ray chose to settle in the Gang Gang valley after a lot of research believing it to be one of the least polluted places he could find. Unfortunately this has turned out to be a bit of an illusion. Because even here, in "paradise" there are still chemical problems.

Ray still harbours some bitterness towards people who took part in the anti-vietnam protests. He doesn't dwell much on it now but at the time he regarded the moratoriums and such as a form of treachery.

### **Phil, Jacqui and Tom Belmont**

The Belmonts are fundamentalist Christians.

They don't call themselves "fundamentalist" but that's what they are.

Their "church" consists of a small fellowship of a few local families. There is no pastor or priest in charge. The leadership of the group formally rotates but more often than not it's Phil who dominates the assembly.

The intricacies of the Belmont family take a little time to unfold but basically Phil developed his taste for fundamentalism while in prison.

Tom is his eleven year old son by his first wife who ran off with another man while Phil was doing time for assault.

It was the climax of an inglorious career - bouncer, a bit of stand over, strong arm, collecting debts for various colourful racing identities.

Phil is a darkly brooding, moody character. Poorly educated, city working class. The dark good looks probably come from his Spanish ancestry. The moods are something else.

As part of her outreach work with the Presbyterian church Jacqui visited him in prison. She was not so fundamental about her religion until she met Phil. When he was released they got married and recovered Tom from a fostering arrangement.

Jacqui is not a strong personality and is pretty well dominated by Phil. She is a believer in the basic good in all people. Her primary concern now is for Tom - who she never formally adopted and still has some problems relating to as a step mother.

Tom is a quiet, shy, gentle boy who suffers at school because of his parents' fundamentalism. His nick name is "Double B" (Bible Basher) which he deeply resents.

### **Angus and Deanna Forbes**

When Angus retired three years ago he was at the top of his particular corporate tree. He took with him a handsome pension and a very healthy lump sum super payout which he immediately converted into the house and land they now occupy in the valley. Polished wood and immaculate lawns. An outstanding two storey house.

It was a spectacular mistake (the land) from Deanna's point of view because they really ended up in the wrong valley. Their sort of people all live over at main arm - the adjoining valley.

It's been a sore point between them since they arrived but basically they bought too quickly. Deanna blames Angus and will not let him forget it. He stuffed up badly.

Angus and Deanna were exponents of the best city life - they knew the restaurants, graced opening nights and charity balls, they moved easily amongst members at the exclusive golf club. Indeed Angus can still be seen knocking a ball around his front paddock which he keeps manicured for the purpose.

They run a few head of cattle but its mainly for show rather than any need to provide further income.

Angus has always had a gift for making money and made damn sure that their retirement would be a comfortable one.

Deanna tries to impose a vision of society on the people of the Gang Gang with garden and dinner parties that are quite inappropriate. But the valley people are tolerant and they enjoy the food - no matter what they say and however much they snigger behind her back.

### **Monty**

Monty is a 1.5 metre long diamond python who has lived in and around the house on 'The Block' for many years. He has seen the humans come and go. It's his home and as long as people don't bother him then he allows them to get on with their lives.

He keeps the rats and the mice in check and generally just hangs about.

### **OTHER CHARACTERS**

Thumbnail sketches are included in the detailed storyline for characters who, although not detailed here, are critical to the mix in the Valley.

# lunatic fringe

## Thumbnail Storylines Eps 1-10

Detailed Storylines available.

## "LUNATIC FRINGE"

### EPISODE 1 "A SLICE OF PARADOX"

Sally Morants comes to Bullumbah in order to sell a property and so finalise a messy divorce from her husband Peter. However, she is astonished to find that their land is occupied by a tribe of "forest dwelling ferals" involved in an attempt to halt logging in the adjacent State Forest. When Sally innocently attempts to investigate the situation she becomes unwittingly caught up in the demonstration and quickly arrested.

Outside the local police station she meets Ben Woods, one of the organisers of the protest and also discovers, much to her surprise, that he is a tenant on her land.

The primitive living conditions and the seemingly hostile environment has an unsettling effect on Sally. There are moments of pressure when she succumbs to disturbing flashbacks from her life in Paris where she works for the UN. We sense a troubled past but nothing at this stage is clear. Nor will she talk about it, not even to her best friend Ruth Abrahams.

With the loggers triumphant, Sally watches the defeated protest camp move off her land and while she still faces the problem of her "tenant" Ben, she and Ruth decide to celebrate their survival thus far with an expensive meal in a highly recommended local restaurant. An hour after leaving the place, Ruth, affected by some kind of food poisoning, is soon fighting for breath.

Immediately concerned, Sally takes her on a mad dash to hospital, along the way seeking directions from her weird neighbours, Phil and Jacquie Belmont.

A wild middle of the night drive on an insanely dangerous dirt road in pelting rain gets Ruth to the tiny local hospital just in time.



## EPISODE 2 "BULLUM TIME"

Sally returns to the restaurant to tell the owner about the food poisoning and is met with blank disbelief, bordering on outright hostility. She reacts angrily to this and after picking Ruth up from hospital nearly collides with the local school bus. The trauma triggers flashbacks to Paris revealing a little more of a crumbling relationship with Peter Morants, her husband of five years.

Determined to sell the property and so finish with him once and for all Sally throws herself into a frenzy of cleaning and minor repair work. Ruth is not such a great help. She is still feeling very fragile from the food poisoning/allergy.

Alerted by Ben to the potential value of the timber on her land Sally sets out on a discovery walk around the 100 acre property. But without proper fence lines she and Ruth soon become lost and literally bump into Mark Mansfield - doing his early morning Tai Chi - naked !

Sally unwittingly accepts a cup of "loco tea" at Mark's place, not realising it has been made with marijuana. She becomes paranoid and more dislocated on the walk home and for a growing number of reasons, Sally seriously freaks out.

In her distracted state she unwittingly is the cause of the Forbes' family cow being shot by Phil Belmont - an aloof and mildly threatening character with very fundamental Christian beliefs.

A round of apologies to the Forbes and the Belmonts reveals to Sally that the valley seems peopled by odd characters and eccentrics of all kinds. She seems to be surrounded by lunatics.

It firms her resolve to get out of the place as soon as possible. Accordingly, Sally and a recuperating Ruth throw themselves into a final lather of renovation . . . only to find the house passed in at auction with no real bids.

Despite her best efforts to escape Sally realises she is going to be stuck with the place for some time !

### EPISODE 3 "CHEMICAL SOLUTIONS"

The abject failure of the auction forces Sally into a drastic rethink of her whole financial position. Her time off work is rapidly running out and she figures that more fixing needs to be done to her house to attract buyers.

While in town organising tools and materials, Sally's expensive hire car breaks down. Against her better instincts she accepts a lift from another neighbour, Ray Conner - a moody and unpredictable Vietnam Vet.

Half way home, Ray goes ballistic. He bluntly evicts Sally from his car and speeds back into town. Walking the road Sally notices a truck spraying herbicide on the grass verge.

That evening a heavy rainstorm flushes the same chemicals directly into Sally's river - later she notices some dead fish. Ray turns up to apologise for his strange behaviour and explain about his "problem with chemicals". We sense a kind but troubled personality in Ray.

Acting as Ray's proxy Sally attends a community meeting about the "spraying problem" and discovers that the whole valley is keenly and loudly divided on how to control weeds and the spread of chemicals into the environment. None of which is really Sally's problem.

It's not long before her professional experience begins to guide and shape the community response. She can't help herself. She is a great organiser. She sees a problem, she has to fix it. Eventually, her promotional efforts are wildly successful. In the face of overwhelming media exposure the Council's spraying campaign is shelved.

Despite this success Sally's troubled past continues to haunt her. Bad dreams and unsettling flashbacks to a violent event are triggered by odd occurrences. We sense that Sally is changing, warming to the lunatic fringe but there remains an anxiety buried in her behaviour. A simple invitation to dance from Max Wittwer, a comrade in the anti-spray campaign, produces a strange reaction from Sally. She turns him down flat and runs away in tears.

## EPISODE 4 "SEDUCTION"

Sally is aware of a growing relationship between Ruth and Ben and while her surprising win over the council draws her ever more subtly into the community of the valley it also earns her some powerful enemies.

She is flabbergasted to discover that she has gained the attentions of the local weed inspector who slaps a weed removal order on her and suggests it be carried out with herbicides. This goes against all her instincts and the knowledge she has just gleaned from the whole anti-spraying issue.

Her financial problems accumulate with the ongoing failure to sell the property. The hire car is exchanged for a cheaper vehicle and at the garage where this happens Sally encounters Sean Scanlon - a troubled adolescent. A loose cannon ready to explode. His future is bound up with that of a family timber mill and due to lack of resources its prospects currently look about as dismal as he feels.

The "Weedie" makes another interesting discovery on Sally's land - Mark Mansfield's marijuana crop. Sally is completely ignorant of it but the blackmail potential of the situation is enormous. The Weedie makes Mark, the ex rock and roller, an offer he can't refuse.

While Sally, Ruth and Ben explore the next forest area to be logged, the annual Police helicopter raids begin in a spectacular and unannounced fashion. Because they're organised from the city neither the Weedie nor the local Sergeant are prepared. Consequently, both the Weedie and Mark are caught in the trap. The threesome in the forest are terrorised by the helicopters.

Sally is distraught.

Their journey brings them to a patch of forest that has been "clear felled" - a moonscape of giant stumps and churned up dirt. Sally's whole being churns at the sight of it.

A flood of emotions overwhelm her as she blurts out her anguish to Ruth - She has been raped - just before she left Paris - by Peter - her husband!

## EPISODE 5 "FREEDOM"

Crunch time is rapidly approaching for Sally. The house remains unsold and she MUST return to her job. But doubts are creeping in now about her whole position with UNESCO. Her husband also remains in Paris. It's part of a recent past she'd rather forget. And so the option of resuming her "normal" life daily grows less and less attractive.

Against this is her increasing sense of connectivity to the valley and its strange but curiously attractive assortment of characters. She makes real contact with close neighbour - Jacqui Belmont - after Jacqui's stepson Tom, runs away from home. Young Tom has always been there but Sally's been too preoccupied to take any notice to date. Something is changing in her list of priorities and it feels good.

In town Mark Mansfield is formally charged with trafficking and decides to use his case as a platform for reform of the anti-hemp laws. A virtual, spontaneous public carnival erupts in support outside the local court house - a mass "smoke-in" which overwhelms the local police. They are reduced to impotent witnesses as people break the law all around them.

Sally sees a chance to solve her cash flow problems by selling some of her biggest trees to the Scanlon family for saw logs. The concept is rejected outright by Ben. Heat is generated and the threesome argue at length. Eventually Ben offers a much less destructive way of realising the capital inherent in her land by raising the possibility of turning it into a "Multiple Occupancy" - a kind of communal subdivision.

A dinner party sees Max Wittwer wanting to stay over with Sally. She turns him down flat. In her other life Max would have been a serious proposition but Sally still doesn't feel comfortable with the whole idea of a "relationship" right now.

Relationships all round are rocked when Ruth announces that she is pregnant to Ben!

## EPISODE 6 "HOME AND FAMILY"

One indicator of Sally's growing involvement with Bullumbah and the valley is her initiation into the local bush fire brigade.

Unfortunately, her first training exercise goes horribly wrong and Ben's shack is burnt to the ground. He reacts angrily to the destruction of his home and his precious research archive. He now finds himself facing a parenthood he hadn't planned on and a relationship he's not exactly comfortable with.

The new role is confusing and uncertain. It doesn't exactly make for a pleasant household as both Ruth and Ben are forced by the fire to relocate into Sally's small house.

With Ben's urging, Sally conquers her pride and submits to the humiliation of going on welfare - the dole - only to find to her intense frustration, that she can't get any cash for six months! The penalty of resigning from her job overseas.

In the general downturn and centralisation of the logging industry, workers at Scanlons' mill are laid off. It puts added pressure on the family and Sean in particular starts having real problems with his girlfriend, Deborah.

Sally's attention is jolted firmly back to the subject of pollution and the quality of their water supply as Ruth has great trouble with her pregnancy, experiencing ongoing bouts of exhaustion and nausea.

Sally finds herself in constant conflict with Dimity's family - Jack and Margaret Bates with their fertilisers and their cows in the river are part of the problem as Sally sees it.

Jack Bates is particularly hostile and a strong opponent of her anti-spraying campaign. Jack has just about had a gutful from Sally.

He turns from a heated debate with her and jumps straight into his seat as the driver of the school bus. Drives it round an badly overgrown bend in the road - headlong into Angus Forbes' white Jaguar.

## EPISODE 7 "LEARN BY EXPERIENCE"

General responsibility for the bus crash is, by some, laid at Sally's efforts to stop spraying the weeds. The badly overgrown bend in the road is Sally's fault and that's the end of it. The rednecks have had enough.

Meanwhile, life on top of each other in Sally's overcrowded house exacerbates the tensions between Ruth and Ben. Nor is Ruth's pregnancy going all that well. The nausea and cramps continue.

To their mutual relief Ben "disappears" into the forest for a few days and leaves the two old friends alone for a while.

It's a measure of how far Sally is travelling on her own journey when a crate of all her Paris effects arrives and she realises how irrelevant most of it is to her now. She happily takes Ruth's suggestion of selling it off at the local market.

Here she makes contact with Ted Scanlon and is able to convince the saw miller that they have much in common. Sally also has a run in with the local koori community at the markets and finds yet another attitude to the traditional management of forests. It doesn't necessarily square with Ben's and the Green's position at all. The matter is much more complicated than she thought.

An unlikely alliance between Ben and Ted Scanlon fuels young Sean's growing estrangement from his father and causes him to pick a fight with Ben in the local pub. Ben ends up in hospital.

The same night as Ruth arrives suffering a miscarriage.

It brings matters to a head between them and after a reconciliation of sorts Ruth heads off back to Israel.

On the eve of his retirement Ted Scanlon publicly rams home his message on the abject failure of past and present logging practices.

That night his mill burns to the ground.

## EPISODE 8 "INDEPENDENCE"

Ben as the most visible "green extremist" is immediately blamed for the fire and it casts a harsh light on the "unusual" living arrangements at Sally Morants' place. With Ruth gone, Sally and Ben are thrown together in a defensive reaction against a tide of malicious rumour mongering. Ben protests his innocence but circumstantial evidence is against him. It is clinched by Sean's assertion that he saw Ben running away from the fire.

An atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust divides the town and is a serious setback to Sally's agenda for the coming forest fight - the saving of coup 66.

Increasingly, she finds herself fulfilling the organising role normally played by a now somewhat withdrawn and inward looking Ben. In three short steps he has lost his home, his partner, his (almost) child and now stands accused of criminal arson.

Sally makes clumsy and unfamiliar efforts to organise fauna research in coup 66 and other affected forest areas but Ben is the expert and he can see that she is struggling. Sally presses on regardless.

She eventually turns the situation around by cleverly enticing Ben back to doing what he knows best. Police investigations notwithstanding, Sally and Ben soon become an efficient organising team and are being drawn closer together all the time.

Ted Scanlon grills his son as more doubts are cast on Sean's version of events at the fire - the uncertainty is holding up a vital insurance claim on the destroyed mill. Put directly on the spot, Sean crumbles and admits he can't be certain about Ben - but he saw someone! Ted is furious and lashes into his son, a scathing put-down.

That night as Sally, Ben, Max and friends celebrate the rebuilding of Ben's shack and his exoneration from arson charges, Sean Scanlon ends his young life by driving his high powered car straight into an enormous tree.

## EPISODE 9 "RED ALERT"

Sally finds herself playing the role of surrogate mother to young Tom Belmont as her neighbour, Phil Belmont, is correctly found to have started the mill fire out of anger at being retrenched.

The aftermath of Sean's death finds the Scanlon family shattered and determined to give the milling game away.

In addition to the on-going struggle to save forest coup 66, Sally forms a political partnership with Max Wittwer in an attempt to wrest control of the Shire Council away from Neil Bromhead and the traditional farming interests. The trigger for their decision is an over the top, high rise style development Neil is planning to build on pristine coastal wetlands at nearby Busted Heads.

Sally has grown from a woman who had to get out of this place to the woman who is committed to saving what's left of paradise.

Her land has by now become an organised training ground for the impending forest protest. People gather to learn about identifying endangered species and to learn the theories and practicalities of non-violent protest, about rigging "tripods" and barriers of all kinds. To Jack Bates and the local Police, these training sessions are a menace from hell and should be against the law.

The PR war against the developer brings smears from the opposition parties which include Sally in a supposed "love triangle" with Max Wittwer and Ben Woods. There is a triangle there all right but it's not as simple as the detractors would have it.

Sally is finally instrumental in turning the political tide when she discovers that Neil has abused his council position to push the Development Approvals through. Max Wittwer is elected to Council.

On the forest front there is grim news as the loggers tool up ready to assault coup 66. Sally uses the communications network of the greens to call on a "Red Alert"



## EPISODE 10 "A LINE IN THE SAND"

When it becomes clear that State Forests are ignoring a wealth of evidence about the high conservation value of coup 66 and are persisting in their determination to see it logged, Sally and Ben send in the troops to set up a blockade.

The stakes are high as this blockade is set to either make or break Government forest policy. Thanks to Sally's PR skills, the issue becomes headline news around the state. A swelling gang of media invades the town as the loggers counterattack with a blockade of their own - the environment office, from which Sally is setting into place her well laid plans.

Despite police reinforcements flooding in to the town this blockade holds. For the moment the loggers are forced to back down. Sally keeps up the momentum with various ingenious publicity stunts - including Mark and Dimity's wedding on a giant forest swing.

Eventually the police numbers become overwhelming and on the final night of the protest, with the last defences of their blockade audibly being chopped down around them, Sally and Ben finally come together in an embrace that seals their growing relationship. After the trauma of her rape and divorce from Peter, this wild and passionate lovemaking - outside-under the stars, also marks the final step on Sally's long journey towards her own healing.

Her changing values and her discovery of the natural world have all helped to restore faith in herself and allowed a final release from the pain and the "victimisation" of her rape.

Sally's healing has happened through her greening.

As the overwhelming force of the police goes in against the last obstructing monopole we freeze the action with Sally, Ben and their comrades, arms locked, holding the front line. A news item over the freeze tells us of a government moratorium on all logging in the state pending further research into sustainable practices and endangered areas...

# LUNATIC FRINGE



A 10 PART MINI-SERIES