



DEFENDERS OF THE DAWN

Written and narrated by Silver Donald Cameron

Directed by Chris Beckett

Produced by Chris Beckett and Erika Beatty

INTRO

The original nations of northeastern North America make up the Wabenaki Confederacy. Their territory is “the dawnlands,” and they are “the people of the dawn.” Today the dawnlands are being assaulted by reckless industrialism, and the people of the dawn are joined by settlers from many other places in asserting the human right to a healthy natural world: clean air, clean water, clean earth.

ACT ONE

Canadians don't have a legal right to clean air and water. Ask the people of Harrietsfield, NS, who have agitated for a dozen years against the toxic contamination of their wells by a construction waste site – and are still only spectators at a regulatory minuet between government and industry. Ask the townspeople of Pictou, who have no legal standing to stop some of the dirtiest smog in Canada, belched forth by the same pulp mill whose effluent has poisoned a small estuary once so important to the Pictou Landing First Nation that they called it “Ah-seg,” the Other Room of their home.



Boat Harbour

ACT TWO

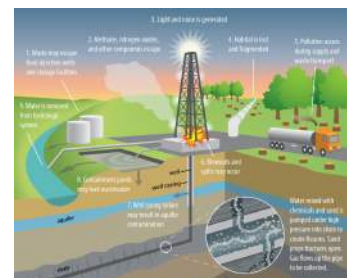


Tony Oposa

Unlike Canada, most nations do recognize their citizens' environmental rights. We visit Argentina, where a landmark legal case led to a spectacular cleanup of the Richuelo River, once ranked the eighth most-polluted place on earth. We touch down in India, Ecuador, South Africa. We meet Antonio Oposa, Jr., a Filipino lawyer who sued his government, on behalf of the Philippines' unborn children, to stop logging in old-growth forests and to clean up Manila Bay – and won recognition of the environmental rights of future generations.

ACT THREE

Maritimers are now demanding recognition of their own right to a healthy environment. In New Brunswick, a unique alliance of parents, educators, health workers, First Nations and civil servants is lobbying the provincial legislature for a Bill of Rights to Protect Children's Health from Environmental Hazards. In Inverness County, Nova Scotia, prompted by the Council of Canadians, other citizens and the Waycobah First Nation, the municipal council passed a unique and inspiring bylaw forbidding hydraulic fracturing as a threat to environmental security and an infringement of human rights.



ACT FOUR



In 2013, after David Alward's Conservative government had given a Texas oil company permits to explore and frack a huge swath of unceded Mi'kmaq terrain in New Brunswick, a fierce confrontation exploded between the oil company, the government and the RCMP on one side, and an unprecedented alliance of First Nations, Acadians, and English-speaking settlers on the other. In the end, the government was defeated, the oil company retreated, a new Liberal government passed stern regulations on fracking, and a public inquiry began scrutinizing the partisan conduct of the RCMP. Now, two separate "people's lawsuits" are seeking to consolidate the

victories, challenging the validity of the original permits and arguing that the Charter guarantee of "security of the person" necessarily includes the right to a healthy environment, free from the risk of climate change.

EXTRO

A new day is breaking in the dawnlands. The Wabenaki are now allied with Acadians, Anglophones and other settlers – all the people who know and love this realm. The conscience of these people, coupled with their courage, is a force that will transform the dawnlands. Indeed, it already has.

