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END OF THE LINE

THE WOMEN OF STANDING ROCK

A Film by Shannon Kring

USA/FINLAND | 2020 | 90 min | 4K

END OF THE LINE:
THE WOMEN OF STANDING ROCK

LOGLINE

Indigenous women risk their lives to stop the oil pipeline construction that desecrated their ancient burial and prayer sites and threatens their land, water, and very existence.





END OF THE LINE:
THE WOMEN OF STANDING ROCK

SYNOPSIS

END OF THE LINE: THE WOMEN OF STANDING ROCK is the incredible story of a group of indigenous women who risk their lives to stop the Dakota Access oil pipeline construction that desecrated their ancient burial and prayer sites and threatens their land, water, and very existence. In the process, they must face the personal costs of leadership, even as their own lives and identities are left transformed by one of the great political and cultural events of the early 21st century.

Featuring exclusive footage including never-before-seen law enforcement video surrendered to the filmmakers by a disgraced police officer, END OF THE LINE is both an exploration of the rise of indigenous and feminine power in the areas of social and environmental justice, and a searing and deeply personal story of four brave women: Sky Roosevelt-Morris, a human rights activist in her 20's torn between the call to action and her own need for healing; Wašté Win Young, a mother born into the American Indian Movement who, at first resisting her family heritage of activism, emerges from the trauma of Standing Rock both scarred and transformed; veteran indigenous rights activist Phyllis Young, whose example of unbowed courage and endurance serves to rally the movement to persevere in defense of Mother Earth; and LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, who emerges as an undaunted leader, despite seeing the bones of her



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SYNOPSIS

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ancestors unearthed in Dakota Access pipeline's wanton act of destruction.

Rich commentary is provided throughout by author and activist Pearl Daniel-Means, widow of Lakota freedom fighter Russell Means, first National Director of the American Indian Movement. Expert testimony on the effects of colonization and the history of U.S. violations of Indian treaties is provided by Madonna Thunder Hawk, co-founder of Women of All Red Nations. Vanessa "Sioux-Z" Dundon, the front-line water protector shot and blinded by Dakota Access security, provides additional analysis of the harrowing cultural and personal PTSD associated with colonization.

END OF THE LINE also features searing testimony of the Indian boarding school and foster home atrocities, and the shocking record of forced sterilization programs. Exclusive interviews with Zintkala Mahpiya Win Black Owl (who gave birth at the Standing Rock protests) and visionary commentary from medicine woman Linda Black Elk, PhD, give END OF THE LINE an authentic grounding in the essence of American Indian heritage, and the struggle for survival in the face of genocide.

Placing the courage of the women of Standing Rock in its true historic perspective, END OF THE LINE cuts to the essence of this astonishing event — "the hearts of the women."



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THE TRIGGERING EVENT

On April 1, 2016, five members of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe establish Sacred Stone, a peaceful camp in protest of the \$3.8 billion Dakota Access oil pipeline. The pipeline, the Sioux say, is the toxic “Black Snake” of which their ancestors warned. On September 2, 2016, in federal court, the tribe files evidence documenting that a portion of the pipeline’s proposed route would cut through multiple ancient burial and prayer sites. Early the next morning, Dakota Access bulldozes the sites, which are miles from where construction is taking place. Hundreds rushed to the scene. Guards attack with dogs and pepper spray. It is the anniversary of the 1863 Whitestone Massacre that took place on the same lands. Within a week, the camp’s population exceeds 10,000. Among them is humanitarian and documentary filmmaker Shannon Kring.



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STYLE AND FILM MATERIAL

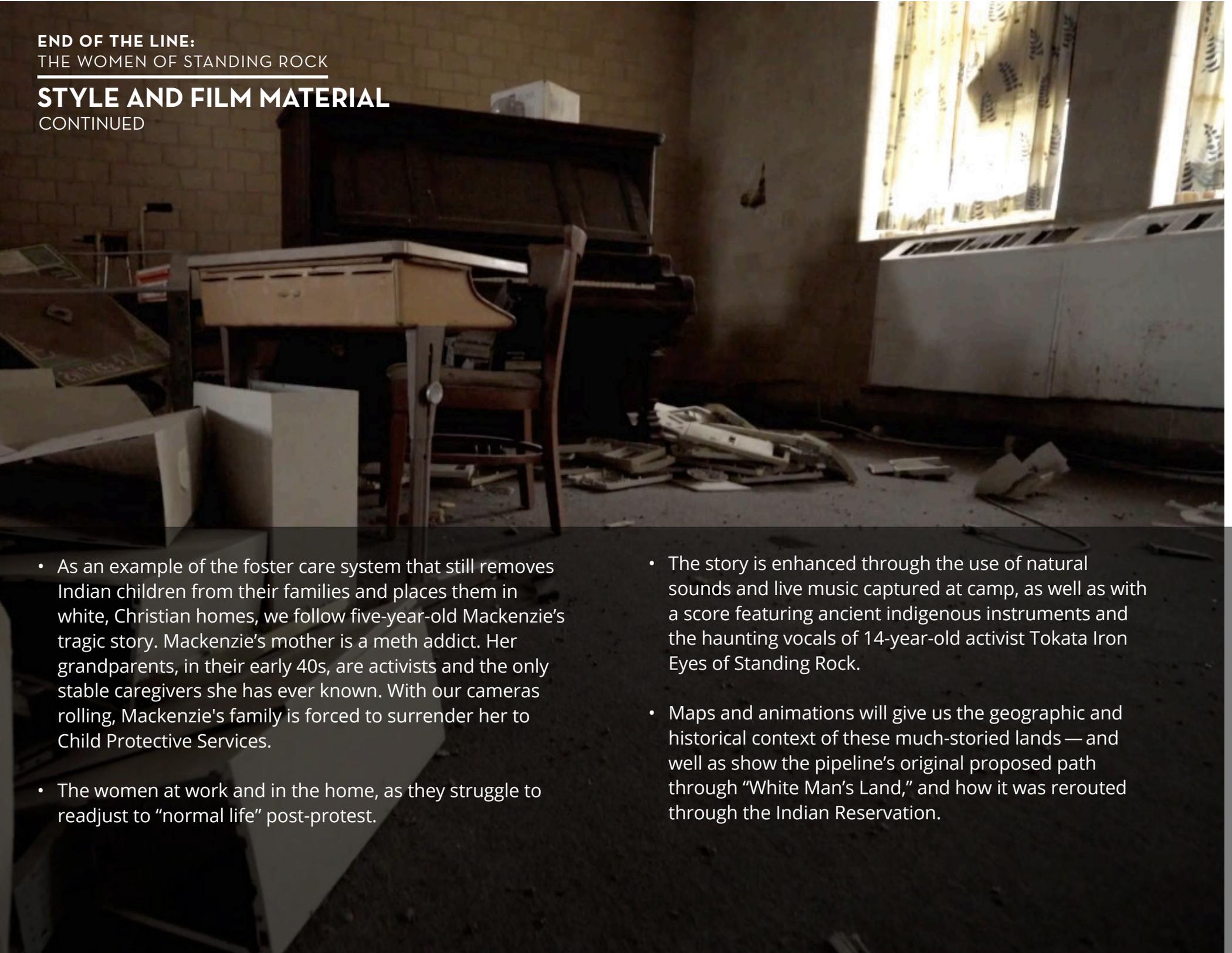
Told through a combination of cinema verité, interviews, handheld, Ronin, drone, GoPro, and archival footage, **END OF THE LINE** captures history in the making as the largest gathering of Native Americans in more than 200 years takes place on the Great Plains of North Dakota. Highlights include:

- Exclusive footage of the Backwater Bridge Incident, in which law enforcement and tactically trained militia attack unarmed protesters with water cannons, concussion grenades, rubber bullets, tear gas, pepper spray, sound cannons, and unknown chemical agents.
- Exclusive footage shot at Marty Indian School, opened in 1924 under the “Kill the Indian, Save the Man” initiative. Here, survivors recount physical, sexual, and emotional abuse inflicted in the name of God.
- The women taking their message on the road: to the UN in New York and Geneva, a California civil rights summit, a Washington DC Indigenous Women’s March, the central banks of Europe, and beyond.
- Exclusive interviews with Zintkala Miyapiya Win Black Owl, who gave birth by herself in a tipi at the protest, and with frontline water protector Vanessa “Sioux-Z” Dundon, who was shot and blinded by Dakota Access pipeline security.

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STYLE AND FILM MATERIAL

CONTINUED

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- A photograph of a cluttered room, likely a home. In the center, there is a dark wooden upright piano. To its left is a light-colored wooden desk with a chair tucked under it. The floor is covered with various items, including papers, cardboard boxes, and what appears to be a broken piece of wood or furniture. In the background, a window is visible with patterned curtains, and a white radiator or heater is positioned below it. The lighting is somewhat dim, with a strong light source coming from the window, creating a somber and lived-in atmosphere.
- As an example of the foster care system that still removes Indian children from their families and places them in white, Christian homes, we follow five-year-old Mackenzie's tragic story. Mackenzie's mother is a meth addict. Her grandparents, in their early 40s, are activists and the only stable caregivers she has ever known. With our cameras rolling, Mackenzie's family is forced to surrender her to Child Protective Services.
 - The women at work and in the home, as they struggle to readjust to "normal life" post-protest.
 - The story is enhanced through the use of natural sounds and live music captured at camp, as well as with a score featuring ancient indigenous instruments and the haunting vocals of 14-year-old activist Tokata Iron Eyes of Standing Rock.
 - Maps and animations will give us the geographic and historical context of these much-storied lands — and well as show the pipeline's original proposed path through "White Man's Land," and how it was rerouted through the Indian Reservation.

KEY CHARACTERS

PHYLLIS YOUNG, 69, is a founding member of American Indian Movement (AIM) and Women of All Red Nations. In her 20s, Phyllis left Standing Rock to fight for indigenous rights within the US Department of State and the UN. She is the leader of the Oceti Šakowin Camp. Only twice during our year and a half of following Phyllis do we see any discernable emotion. Unlike the other women (most especially the young ones), Phyllis seems to become more determined — not less — from every defeat. “I was born for this,” she tells us when Trump takes office and immediately orders the pipeline’s completion. “We still have 55 more pipelines to fight.” We leave her in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she receives an award from MIT for her environmental activism. When she received the invite, Phyllis asks us what MIT is. By the time she arrives, it is clear she’s done her homework. During her acceptance speech, Phyllis challenges the school’s leadership to come to Standing Rock and collaborate on initiatives that will break America’s dependence on fossil fuels. MIT broke ground on the Standing Rock-MIT Alternative Energy Lab in January 2018.

TOPICS COVERED IN PHYLLIS’ STORY:

Treaty violations, current affairs, law enforcement.





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KEY CHARACTERS

CONTINUED

WAŠTÉ WIN YOUNG is Phyllis' 36-year-old daughter. When we meet her, she calls herself an "AIM Baby" — the child of an American Indian Movement leader. AIM Babies raised themselves, she says. Wašté Win wants her kids to have a different life than she had, and makes it a point to show her children affection and to make them a priority. "I'll never be an activist," she tells us when we meet in September 2016. As the months unfold, she shaves the sides of her head, and dyes her remaining hair hot pink. Her Facebook posts are shared by tens of thousands. She is arrested on the front line. Wašté Win becomes the most-recognized face of the Standing Rock Movement, after which her husband of 13 years leaves her. ("You want to be famous instead of a wife and mother? Go for it!") In one of her last interviews, at the Native Nations March in Washington, DC, Wašté Win tells us that her life path is to travel the world in defense of her people. We leave her in Geneva, where she speaks at the UN and makes televised appearances. Now reunited with her husband, she splits her time between activism and motherhood and struggles to adjust to her life back on the Rez.

TOPICS COVERED IN WAŠTÉ WIN'S STORY:

The sacrifice of activism, abuses at the hands of Dakota Access, sisterhood/strength that emerged as a result of the protests.

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KEY CHARACTERS

CONTINUED

SKY ROOSEVELT-MORRIS, niece of AIM leader Glenn Morris, is a 26-year-old Native American activist who resides in Denver and comes to Standing Rock only when called to do so and when she feels she won't be a burden on her sisters at the camp. She represents Native American and women's issues at the UN. Sky is presently completing her PhD in Indigenous Studies at University of Colorado, where she teaches. She also works as a landscape architect, saying it keeps her grounded. Sky is perhaps the most articulate of all the women we interviewed, as well as one of the best educated. Raised by Uncle Glenn, her father, and "Uncle Russ" (Russell Means), Sky spent her childhood wishing she were white, and that her name was Theresa or Melanie. Her abusive mother, "a product of Colonialism", is a lifelong drug addict. Raised by a white foster family, Sky's mother was taught to hate the color of her skin. "This was the only thing my mother taught me," Sky says, showing us her scars from self-mutilation. "So I know what Mother Earth feels when we cut her open to put in pipelines."

TOPICS COVERED IN SKY'S STORY: The effects of Colonialism, the absent mother/fighting for Mother Earth phenomenon, the responsibilities of the 7th Generation, Native resilience.





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KEY CHARACTERS

CONTINUED

LADONNA BRAVE BULL ALLARD, 63, is the leader of the Sacred Stone Camp, the original protest camp on the Cannonball River. Formerly the Standing Rock Tribal Historian, LaDonna considers her fight a personal one. Her ancestors are among those whose bodies were exhumed by Dakota Access Pipeline. LaDonna's camp, just across the Cannonball River from Phyllis', is smaller and far more organized. She builds a kitchen, a school. Donations pour in from around the world. She becomes a celebrity. "We're the fifteenth biggest town in North Dakota," she proudly exclaims. When the Army Corps is denied their easement, LaDonna appears to be the only skeptic among the 10,000 at the now snow-covered camp. She tells us she is willing to die to protect her land, but it doesn't come to this. We are in Washington, DC, with the younger women when we learn that Sacred Stone was bulldozed by the Army. She did not fight it, and refuses to speak to us for the next three months.

TOPICS COVERED IN LADONNA'S STORY:

The history of Standing Rock, grave desecration, the American Indians' right to raise their own families.



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STORY STRUCTURE

In deeply personal footage and exclusive interviews, the women of Standing Rock give voice to the ongoing effects of colonization: the breakdown of the family. Rampant addiction. Cultural genocide. Ultimately, **END OF THE LINE** is a story of heartbreak and triumph that shatters the myth that the struggle of the American Indian is a thing of the past.

ACT 1. THE DAKOTA ACCESS OIL PIPELINE PROTEST.

We begin on the shores of the Cannonball River, the former Oceti Šakowiŋ Camp. It is May 2017, three months after the US Army forcibly removed protestors. The pipeline has been flowing under the river for less than a month. It has already sprung three leaks. Wašté Win Young stares out across the desolate lands. She is heavy in body and spirit. Taught to never let “them”—the white man—see her cry, she fights back tears. She recounts the thousands of people from around the world who came to stand in solidarity beside her people. Māori. Sámi. Indian Nations with whom the Lakota had long ago battled but never called a truce. “They can never take that, that one moment in time that was Standing Rock, away from us.” The camp comes alive in the colors and sounds of better days.

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STORY STRUCTURE

CONTINUED

It is September 2016 when we first meet a much different Wašté Win on the same shore. She is happy, hopeful. The key events of the pipeline protests provide the backdrop for the much deeper story of the systematic disenfranchisement of Wašté Win and our other women of Standing Rock.

ACT 2. THE ONGOING TRAUMA OF COLONIZATION. Prior to colonization, the American Indian lived within a matriarchal structure void of domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, rape, and poverty. This act explores systematic genocide, forced sterilization, the removal of children from their homes, addiction, and shame. As the women delve deeper into their personal stories — stories most are sharing for the first time — the changing seasons and events of the pipeline mirror their morale. As the women prepare for winter, they fear blood will be shed. A child is taken from the only home she has ever known. A child is born. Our women brace themselves for the worst.



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STORY STRUCTURE

CONTINUED

ACT 3. THE RESILIENCE OF THE WOMEN OF STANDING ROCK.

This act illuminates the startling costs of activism for the mothers and grandmothers who sacrificed their safety for the sake of the greater good. Here, we explore our women's personal storylines in the days immediately prior to and the 18 months following the camp's closure. By now, they have endured gross human rights violations: sexual assault on the front line. Being forced to strip for male correctional officers and held naked in their jail cells for up to two days. Being marked with numbers on their forearms, and then locked in dog kennels when the number of arrests exceeded jail capacities. Denial of legal representation. Threats of losing their children. Twenty-four-hour surveillance. And yet somehow the spirit of these women has not been broken. Despite the Black Snake slithering beneath their feet, the women maintain their vow to protect Mother Earth and all her inhabitants. It is their responsibility to the ancestors and to the seven generations to come.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

"Is this really *your* problem?" This sentiment from a top Hollywood executive is something I've heard plenty over the past three years.

One could argue that the ongoing oppression of indigenous peoples is more my problem than anyone's. I was born white in the United States of America, and therefore with privileges unfathomable to those I document. Through years of systematic racial, economic, gender, geographic, and religious oppression, my subjects have been left vulnerable and voiceless.

Their fight played out on the world stage, but the women of Standing Rock have a story that is both timeless and universal. Through them, we bear witness to the agony and triumph inherent in the struggle for identity.

I cannot atone for what people who look like me have done to indigenous lands and civilizations the world over. No one can. But I have a voice. Lending it to the women of Standing Rock has been one of my life's greatest honors.

— Shannon Kring



THE PRODUCERS

SHANNON KRING (Producer/Director – USA) is an Emmy-winning producer and humanitarian whose work has been presented by dozens of governments, and by institutions including the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Smithsonian Institution Museum of the American Indian, NASA, MIT, the British Museum, and UNESCO. She is a UNWTO Liaison and serves as Honduras' Goodwill Ambassador. Shannon works with the UN, US Department of State, USAID, UNEP, and other global bodies on issues concerning the indigenous and other marginalized members of society, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation. In 2018, she became the first US director and only third woman to receive the backing of the Finnish Film Foundation. Shannon is a 2019 Stella Artois - Women in Film Finishing Fund grantee for this film.

MARC GERKE (Director of Photography/Executive Producer – USA) is an Emmy-nominated director of photography who previously worked for 10 years as a documentary editor. Among his 100+ director of photography credits are the multi-E Emmy-winning documentary series AMERICAN MASTERS; SUPER SOUL SUNDAY; NATURALLY, DANNY SEO; 48 HOURS; and THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW. His documentary film credits include the Peabody-winning MAYA ANGELOU: AND STILL I RISE and MILES DAVIS: THE BIRTH OF COOL, a Sundance Institute project. Marc's corporate clients include L'Oreal, Adidas, Nike, Microsoft, Wilson Sporting Goods, the NFL, United Airlines, and dozens of others. His work has appeared on all major U.S. networks.

PEARL DANIEL-MEANS (Co-Producer – USA) is a producer, activist, and author who speaks around the world on matters concerning indigenous issues, human rights, and environmentalism. She was born into the Ashiihi (Salt) Clan of the Navajo Nation. Her Lakota name, Iyoyanbya Izanzan Win, translates loosely to "Bright Light". Pearl walked alongside the late American Indian activist, author, artist, and actor Russell Means, as his wife, business manager, and collaborator. She is on the board of directors of Red Nation Film Festival.

SOPHIA EHRNROOTH (Co-Producer – FIN) is an acclaimed visual artist and cultural entrepreneur. She made her directorial debut with a documentary short in 2017. It has gone on to compete in festivals throughout Europe, and received honorable mention from movie critic Carmen Gray (THE GUARDIAN, SOUND & SIGHT) at DocPoint 2018. Previously, Sophia directed and produced a series of short-form video interviews on traditional wisdom.

LESLEY KUBISTAL (Editor – USA) is an acclaimed documentary film and television editor. Most notably, she for 14 years served as senior editor of THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW, and at Winfrey's HARPO PRODUCTIONS and OWN. Her recent documentary film credits include the award-winning SAME GOD and Kartemquin Films' ALL THE QUEEN'S HORSES. Lesley's work has appeared on television networks and in cinemas worldwide.

THE PRODUCERS

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JOONA LOUHIVUORI (Editor – FIN) has 18+ years experience editing documentaries and fiction films. He has twice been nominated for Best Editor in Finland's Jussi Awards, with additional features and documentaries also receiving nominations in their respective categories. From 2010 to 2015, Joonas served as a commissioner in the Finnish Film Foundation. One of his initiatives resulted in a short film that was nominated for an Oscar.

NEIL KRING (Composer /Music Supervisor– USA) is a self-taught musician and composer based in Wisconsin's Northwoods. His work has appeared on ARTE, Al Jazeera, PBS, and others. Neil's music was featured in an award-winning indigenous art installation that toured the national museums of El Salvador, Honduras, the UK, Spain, Guatemala, and Switzerland.

NARA GARBER (Camera Operator – USA) has for the past 20 years produced and shot documentaries about indigenous issues and family trauma. Most recently, she was director of photography on KEEP TALKING, which explores the Alaskan Native women struggling to keep alive the dying Alutiiq language.

VILLE TANTTU (Composer – FIN) is a director, cinematographer, musician, visual artist, photographer, and writer based in Helsinki.

TIIA VESTOLA (Sound Engineer – FIN) is a sound engineer whose credits include sound design for many titles within the ANGRY BIRDS franchise, and for top-grossing Finnish-, Swedish-, and English-language films.

JUKKA HELLE (Executive Producer – FIN) is CEO of Solar Films, Finland's leading production company. Here, he serves as a producer. His credits include more than 40 feature-length films and hundreds of hours of television drama and entertainment. Jukka is active in the Producer's Association, as well as in the Copyright Council of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland.

MARKUS SELIN (Executive Producer – FIN) is the most successful producer in the rebirth of popular Finnish cinema. He is a producer at Solar Films, the company he founded in 1995. Since its inception, His movies have won nearly 50 Jussi Awards to date.

PEKKA KARJALAINEN (Sound Designer – FIN) is an award-winning sound designer and a partner in Meguru Oy, Finland's leading film sound studio. His credits include approximately 100 films. Pekka has also worked as a composer and director on several films.

JUKKA KUJALA (Post-Production Supervisor – FIN) is co-founder and producer of Post Control, one of Scandinavia's top post-production houses.

BING LIU (Camera Operator – USA) is a 30-year-old Chicago-based filmmaker whose critically acclaimed documentary MINDING THE GAP has earned more than 50 award recognitions since its premiere at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, where it took home the Special Jury Award for Breakthrough Filmmaking. Bing is a 2019 Academy Award and 2019 Primetime Emmy Award nominee.

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