



FIGHTING INDIANS

OFFICIAL SELECTION
MAINE
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
2021

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26TH RED NATION
INTERNATIONAL
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THE AUTHENTIC VOICE OF AMERICAN
INDIAN & INDIGENOUS CINEMA

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SAN FRANCISCO • 2021

“Fighting Indians” Press Kit

Synopsis

On May 16th, 2019, The State of Maine made history by passing LD 944 An Act to Ban Native American Mascots in All Public Schools, the first legislation of its kind in the country. For Maine's tribal nations, the landmark legislation marked an end to a decades long struggle to educate the public on the harms of Native American mascotry. Fighting Indians chronicles the last and most contentious holdout in that struggle, the homogeneously white Skowhegan High School, known for decades as "The Home of the Indians." This is the story of a small New England community forced to reckon with its identity, its sordid history, and future relationship with its indigenous neighbors. It is a story of a small town divided against the backdrop of a nation divided where the "mascot debate" exposes centuries old abuses while asking if reconciliation is possible.

Website

FightingIndians.com

Contact

stove.up.productions@gmail.com

Social Media

facebook.com/FightingIndians

instagram.com/FightingIndians

Trailer

vimeo.com/stoveup

Screener

Send email request to

stove.up.productions@gmail.com

Production Stills

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Bb62WjIxu6ou2Sp6G37S2W8DMDUTLb-K?usp=sharing>

IMDb

www.imdb.com/title/tt15222258

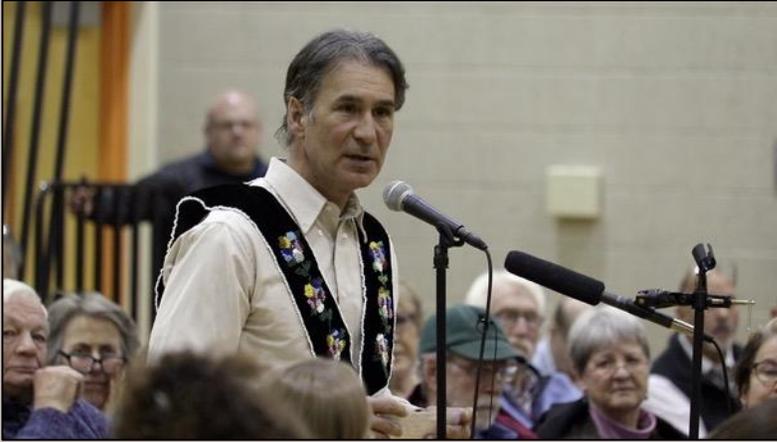
Film Distributor

The Video Project

(Educational Rights US & Canada)

www.video-project.org

Production Images



Former Penobscot Chief Barry Dana calls on MSAD 54 school board to retire its “Indian” mascot.



Maulian Dana, Penobscot Tribal Ambassador, delivers a Request on behalf of Maine’s Wabanaki tribes to the MSAD 54 school board to retire its “Indian” mascot.



Skowhegan Area Highschool Yearbook Photo



MSAD 54 School Board meeting

Production Images



Passamaquoddy Nation Cultural Preservationist Dwayne Tomah calls on MSAD 54 school board to retire its “Indian” mascot.



Passamaquoddy ceremony, Passamaquoddy Indian Township.



Public Forum on the Skowhegan “Indians” mascot issue.



Skowhegan “Indians” football game

Endorsements

"'Fighting Indians' is not only a good film, it's an important one. Over the past 60-years of the no-mascot movement, the pro-mascot justifications have not changed and, while opponents always think they're being original, they're not. This film shows that predictable arc by focusing on race-based stereotypes and cultural appropriation at one school, as they are contested and as minds and hearts are changed. This is a rare glimpse of grassroots-level democracy at work to achieve a peaceful and just end of a longstanding slur against Native Peoples in Maine."

~Suzan Shown Harjo

"'Fighting Indians' is a powerful and moving film which captures the contentious landscape that communities navigate when retiring harmful Native "themed" school mascots while elevating tribal sovereignty and championing Native voices. The thorough and well-researched documentary presents the common arguments made by mascot supporters and debunks them with the proud voices of tribal leaders and scholars. NCAI supports further dissemination of the film and urges each community immersed in this issue to engage with the documentary and related research, grapple with the true effects of their mascot, and consult directly with the Tribal Nation(s) who have stewarded the land they presently occupy since time immemorial."

~National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)

"The most powerful film we have seen on the subject of using Native American people for sports mascots... unravels every excuse and argument made by those who falsely claim that their sports mascots are honoring Native peoples."

~Coalition of Natives and Allies

Audience Reactions

"I am grateful for the opportunity to have viewed this film. It was painful and hopeful, and also brought home the importance of marginalized groups supporting each other and helping to raise us all up. Thank you for this time together."

"This film gives us a glimpse of the history, a history that should be taught in schools to make people understand that Native Americans are people and they are a part of OUR American history."

"This is such an important film. I needed to go at 7, but here I am."

"This film stirred something within me, and it made me realize just how much i hope that i leave this earth in a better place than I found it."

"Beautifully done, tragically real."

"I am still aching witnessing the vicious, twisted, and yet heartfelt racism of so many people exhibited in the film, that there are so many people who genuinely see racism as a part of their heritage. That racism has morphed to disguise itself as "honoring" people, even when those very people are saying that they aren't being honored. There's so much gaslighting and twisted logic, that is so much a part of the legacy of American whiteness. I feel shame, and wonder how I can build from that to gather others of European descent, which is our job to do as white and non-native people."

"Overwhelming and powerful"

"I'm tremendously moved, saddened, and yet, hopeful. What other choice do we have, but to keep fighting, stay focused and remain hopeful? I have to go now...Enjoy the rest of your evening!"

"The film shows what ADVOCACY can accomplish."

"I honestly had not considered the impact that mascots had before the screening, but it is heartbreaking to see the harm and disrespect to someone's identity. I don't understand how this has lasted so long."

"An amazing film. I feel more empowered to keep fighting for change."

"I was struck by how timely this film is and believe that it is important for everyone to see it and understand and remember."

Featuring

Dawn Neptune Adams

Penobscot Activist & Filmmaker

Jeffery P. Beck, PhD

Historian & Professor

Maulian Dana

Wabanaki Alliance President &
Penobscot Nation Ambassador

Barry Dana

Former Chief, Penobscot Nation

James Eric Francis

Director of Cultural and Historic Preservation,
Penobscot Nation

Zach Heiden

Chief Counsel, ACLU of Maine

Dave McKenna

Sports Journalist

Washington City Paper, Deadspin & Defector

John Bear Mitchell, PhD

Penobscot Historian & Professor

Jesse Steinfeldt, PhD, CMPC

Sports Psychologist & Professor

Dwayne Tomah

Cultural Preservationist, Passamaquoddy Nation

Mike Wise

Sports Journalist

New York Times, Washington Post & ESPN

Key Creative Personnel

Mark Cooley: Director, Writer, Producer, Videography, Editor, Art & Graphics, Music & Sound Design.

Mark Cooley grew up in Maine and now lives in Virginia where he is a professor of new media and eco-art. Mark's works as an artist, musician and filmmaker have been exhibited, screened, and performed internationally in venues such as Exit Art, NYC; FADO Performance Art Centre, Toronto; St. Louis Science Center; MediaLabMadrid, Spain; Anthology Film Archives, NYC; The Phillips, D.C; and The Institute of Contemporary Art, London.

Derek Ellis: Director, Writer, Producer, Videography.

A lifelong resident of central Maine, Derek Ellis is a Maine Guide, Local 349 Union member, and a former MSAD#54 school board member. Derek co-directed the short film 10 Mile Yard Sale, which was an official selection in the 2018 Maine International Film Festival and can be seen in rotation on Maine Public Television.

Ryan Griffis: Writer, Editor, Videography, Art & Graphics.

Ryan Griffis is an artist, educator, and faculty member at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He works across media on stories about the intersections of social and environmental justice. "Between the Bottomlands & the World," a multimedia documentary about the environmental and social impacts of a large slaughterhouse in a small Illinois river town has been exhibited in universities and cultural spaces across the US. "The Earth Will Not Abide," an exhibition on land use and resource extraction premiered at the University of Illinois Chicago in 2017 before traveling to additional venues in Carbondale (IL), Portland (OR), and Rosario (Argentina).

John Harlow: Videography, Assistant Editor

John Harlow was born in 1989 in Waterville Maine and currently lives in Skowhegan. John studied New Media Art at the University of Maine Farmington. He is the Station Manager of Somerset Community TV and a staff member at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. John Has exhibited documentary photography work in galleries and museums across the state of Maine.