

Illumine Presents

In association with Ager Meillier Films and First Nations Institute

A film by Sanjay Rawal

Executive Producers: Jason Momoa, Brian Mendoza, Jennifer Buffett, Wendy Schmidt, Christine Schantz.

“GATHER”

74 min feature documentary



US Distribution:
Monument Releasing
releases@monumentreleasing.com 718-312-8210

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/396047064/c31396a809>

Website: www.gather.film
Instagram @ gatherfilmproject Facebook @ gatherfilm



LOG LINE

Gather is an intimate portrait of a growing movement amongst Indigenous Americans to reclaim their spiritual and cultural identities through obtaining sovereignty over their ancestral food systems, while battling against the historical trauma brought on by centuries of genocide.

SYNOPSIS

Gather follows the stories of natives on the frontlines of a growing movement to reconnect with spiritual and cultural identities that were devastated by genocide. A indigenous chef embarks on a ambitious project to reclaim ancient food ways on the Apache reservation; in South Dakota a gifted Lakota high school student, raised on a buffalo ranch, is proving her tribes native wisdom through her passion for science; and a group of young men of the Yurok tribe in Northern California are struggling to keep their culture alive and rehabilitate the habitat of their sacred salmon.

All these stories combine to show how the reclaiming and recovery of ancient food ways is a way forward for native Americans to bring back health and vitality to their people.



FEATURING:

NEPHI CRAIG / WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE



On the White Mountain Apache Reservation in Arizona, Nephi Craig, acclaimed chef and founder of the Native American Culinary Association, is attempting to establish a first-of-its-kind indigenous cafe where Apache chefs prepare Apache grown produce for Apache diners.

As a legacy of his foray into the high-paced world of fine dining and French cuisine, Nephi has personally had to battle addictive and violent behavior that destroyed his last marriage and threatened to estrange his son. Through this period of recovery, Nephi realizes the importance of reconnecting with his Apache identity through food.

ELSIE DUBRAY / CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE



A gifted 17-year old scientist, Elsie is taking a research project to the Regional Science Fair, analyzing the comparative health effects of eating a beef-based diet versus a traditional Lakota diet based on Buffalo.

Her father Fred has dedicated his life to bring the buffalo back to traditional lands. Fighting the powerful cattle industry has been an uphill battle though, and Elsie is performing research that directly threatens that industry. Despite this, Elsie holds steadfast in her unshakeable belief that Native wisdom and food practices can begin to heal the scourge of health disparities that plague Native communities.

SAMMY GENSAW / YUROK TRIBE



In Northern California, Native tribes are in a crisis. Overfishing, dams and climate change have almost eliminated salmon populations vital to tribal food supplies and spiritual practices.

A ragtag group of teenage boys called "The Ancestral Guard", led by Sammy Gensaw of the Yurok Tribe, take it upon themselves to fight for their river and preserve their ancient practices.

With no jobs and a sick river, the boys struggle to keep their culture alive. However, their determination catalyzes their rise in the growing global communities of indigenous cultures fighting oppressive governments and corporations.

TWILA CASSADORE / SAN CARLOS APACHE



Twila is master forager, an elder and medicine woman of the San Carlos Apache tribe. Haunted by a childhood of abuse, Twila battled addiction until she discovered healing through her tribe's ancestral ways of harvesting and foraging.

Now she is on a quest to help youth, introducing them to diets and foods that are foreign to western palates. As an example of this, Twila takes Mae, a 12 year old abandoned by her family, on a hunt of a traditional local delicacy - the gloscho - or a common "pack rat."



BACKGROUND

Centuries before Native North Americans encountered Christopher Columbus lost at sea tens of thousands of miles from his destination, indigenous peoples lived in harmony with the Land - cultivating and maintaining a thriving food system across the entire Western Hemisphere.

In the early 1600s Europeans marked a push to settle the Americas. Unable to best Natives through weaponry alone, Americans took to asymmetrical tactics – killing women and children, inducing famine and demoralizing warriors. The most effective of these tactics was the annihilation of food systems. This attempt at extermination motivated not only military policy but social and political policy. It is by design that Indian Country remains food insecure – dependent on the same ration system enacted to settle Natives adjacent to Military Forts, freeing their ancestral lands for unabated resource extraction.

The west was won by starving Indians and yoking them to government support – a system which endures to this day.



PRODUCTION STYLE

The film is intimate and character-driven, focusing heavily on creating an emotional and intellectual flow so that the narratives seamlessly tie together.

The film is shot without talking-heads and instead woven together through a series of scenes based on traditional dramatic structure. The stories are not told through experts but the characters' journeys and carefully curated archival.

Capturing the natural beauty and the sharp contrast of poverty on the reservations was important for the filmmakers. The film is shot in 8K 2.39:1 on the RED Monstro and drones were used to set locations, albeit sparingly. Other specialty photography such as underwater has been used to enhance the viewers' experience of the surroundings.



DIRECTORS STATEMENT



I'm in a very privileged position as a non-indigenous director to make a film on Native American food sovereignty under the guidance of one of the most vaunted NGOs in Indian Country – First Nations Development Institute (FNDI). The access their relationships in Indian Country have afforded us allowed us to make a film on these vital issues with depth and nuance we never could have reached otherwise.

As it happens, I have a track-record working with and for various indigenous groups around the world which informed my ability on Gather to simply listen and be present in an observational manner – allowing our Native American characters to drive their own narratives. I worked in human rights for 20 years, some of which was spent running a foundation that funneled millions of dollars of support to water infrastructure projects of the Dogon (Mali) and the Samburu (Kenya). My first film, Food Chains, chronicled the rise of a group of tomato pickers in Florida who were displaced Oaxacan, Chiapan and Guatemalan indigenous. My last film, 3100: Run and Become, delved deeply into Navajo and Kalahari San Bushmen running traditions with rare access granted by elders themselves.

At the same time, I come from a family and tradition from India that vehemently and sometimes violently opposed the British colonization. While my experience of historical trauma is not analogous to Native Americans, I feel alignment in my approach to de-colonization of economics and my belief in human and civil rights.

It is with this perspective that I approached my role in Gather. My job was to listen and serve. I understood that my abilities are limited as a non-Native but, like in all my films, I relied on the subjects to drive the narrative. I took their lead, guidance and just trained the cameras on them in a way that would expose and honor their traditions.

PRODUCTION TEAM



Sanjay Rawal / Director

Sanjay spent 15 years working on human rights campaigns globally. Sanjay's first feature, *Food Chains* (2014), was produced by Eva Longoria and Eric Schlosser with narration by Forest Whitaker. The film won numerous awards, was released theatrically in 40 cities by Screen Media and was acquired by Netflix. Sanjay's second effort took a sharp turn into non-traditional filmmaking. Applying narrative cinematic technique, Sanjay directed a sweeping expedition film. *3100: Run And Become* was released theatrically in the US in 20 markets last fall.

Sanjay's work has been supported by Ford, Bertha, BritDoc, Fledgling, 11th Hour Project, NoVo, and the Omidyar Network. His work has won an assortment of honors include a James Beard Media Award.



Tanya Meillier / Producer

In 2007, Tanya produced and edited her first feature documentary film, *Obscene: A Portrait of Barney Rosset and Grove Press*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, played theatrically and acquired worldwide. In 2012 she produced the feature film *Alias Ruby Blade: A Story of Love and Revolution*, which premiered in competition at the 2013 Tribeca Film Festival and was subsequently acquired by Netflix and Al Jazeera America. *Alias Ruby Blade* was awarded a prize for "Most Valuable Documentary of the Year" by the Cinema for Peace Foundation in 2014. More recently she produced the feature film "*3100: Run and Become*" which had a theatrical release in the summer of 2018.



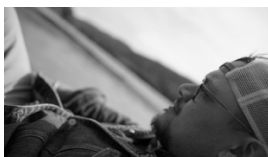
Alex Meillier / Editor

Alex's first feature documentary *Obscene*, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and broadcast on Sundance Channel U.S. Other professional credits include *3100: Run and Become* (Editor), Amir Bar-Lev's *Long Strange Trip* (Add'l Editor), *Alias Ruby Blade* (Director), Michael Moore's *Capitalism: A Love Story* (Editor), *Born To Fly: Elizabeth Streb Vs. Gravity* (Editor, Emmy award nominee), the HBO documentary *Happy Birthday To A Beautiful Woman* (Editor) and numerous commercial credits.



Renan Ozturk / Cinematographer

Renan Ozturk is a National Geographic photographer with an Instagram following of 800k+ and renowned for his stunning imagery of mountains and landscapes. He shot the award-winning feature doc *Meru*, in which he also starred, as well as *Sherpa* and *Valley Of The Gods*. He is a founding member of Camp 4 Collective.



Sterlin Harjo / Producer

Sterlin Harjo (Seminole, Muskogee). Sundance Fellow (2004). His first narrative short *Good Night Irene* premiered at Sundance 2005. His next 3 narrative features (as director) also had Sundance premieres and were distributed theatrically and now digitally.

Executive Producers: Mike Roberts (Tlingit), Ray Foxworth (Navajo), Adae Briones (Kiowa/Cochiti), Jackie Francke (Navajo), Jennifer Buffett, Wendy Schmidt, Christine Schantz, Jason Momoa and Brian Andrew Mendoza.

ORIGINAL MUSIC



Raye Zaragoza provided the original music for the film including the end credit track which was written for the film out of inspiration of the subject.

Raye is an award-winning singer-songwriter who carries an acoustic guitar and a message. Her quiet yet powerful song “In the River,” written in response to the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline near the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North Dakota, garnered half a million video views, national media coverage, and a Global Music Award and Honesty Oscar. Her forthcoming sophomore LP recorded with Tucker Martine (The Decemberists, First Aid Kit) will be released in 2020.

Writing about social issues comes naturally to Raye. "As a woman of color in America, social issues are things you deal with and see every day of your life," she says. "I write about my experience and oftentimes my existence has been laced with injustice."

Raye's debut album, *Fight For You* (independent, 2017), displays her compassion, dedication to justice and equality for all, and keen eye for the seemingly small daily moments that become our most meaningful memories. About the record, Raye says, "This album is about finding yourself and finding your voice. It's about maturing and realizing that you can make a difference if you so choose."

Raye performs her music all over the United States and Europe. Her music has been featured on *Billboard*, *Popmatters*, *Earmilk*, *Democracy Now!* and on numerous lists of the best modern-day protest songs, including those by *Paste Magazine*, *What Culture*, and *Overblown*. She has also performed live sessions for *Paste*, *Daytrotter*, and *FNX*.

Raye has spoken on panels at *Bonnaroo* and *SXSW* on topics ranging from preventing sexual violence to engaging her fanbase as an independent artist. She has toured in support of *Dispatch*, *Nahko and Medicine for the People*, *Kiefer Sutherland*, *William Elliott Whitmore*, *Dar Williams*, *Donovan Woods*, and many more.



FIRST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

New Documentary Film Provides Hope After a Glimpse of Life After the Apocalypse

LONGMONT, Colo. (May 15, 2020) – First Nations Development Institute (**First Nations**) today announced the release of *Gather*, a full-length documentary film that explores the importance of Native food systems that were once deliberately destroyed and the heroic “post-apocalyptic” efforts underway to rebuild them.

The film is the result of a two-year collaboration between First Nations and Indian-American documentary film director Sanjay Rawal, and in many ways, it reflects the words of Pulitzer Prize-winning author N. Scott Momaday, who wrote in *House Made of Dawn*, “They have assumed the names and gestures of their enemies, but have held on to their own, secret souls; and in this there is a resistance and an overcoming, a long outwaiting.”

“This an important sentiment as America and the world look for a hope and an overcoming in light of COVID-19,” said Michael Roberts, First Nations President and CEO.

Indeed, *Gather* focuses on the growing Native American food sovereignty movement and raises national and international awareness of the need to invest in Native food systems, which is more important now than ever. Roberts said the film provides a much-needed view into how Native communities are rebuilding food systems, along with a call to action for improved policies and regulations, increased funding, and more long-term efforts to sustain and improve those systems.

“*Gather* is a celebration of Indian resilience and our ‘secret souls.’” he said. “But it’s also a reminder of the overcoming that will happen with greater awareness, more investments in Indian Country, and a reconnection with our lands and our food.”

The film features many of First Nations’ community partners through its Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative, as well as others who are advancing Native food sovereignty as a way of asserting tribal sovereignty, reclaiming control of Native food systems, and helping restore the health and well-being of Native communities.

The film also builds on First Nations’ recognition that accessing healthy food and supporting traditional food systems is a challenge for many Native American families and children. And, without access to healthy food, including traditional foods, a nutritious diet and good health are out of reach. To increase this access, since 2002, First Nations has awarded 318 grants totaling more than \$7.8 million to Native organizations working improve the health and nutrition of Native children and families.

The *Gather* film and its related journalism effort were underwritten by NoVo Foundation and The 11th Hour Project of the Schmidt Family Foundation. It was directed by Sanjay Rawal and produced by Tanya Meillier and Sterlin Harjo (*Seminole/Muscogee*).

Nationwide distribution of the film will begin in June 2020, and screenings will be held in Native communities as public health guidelines surrounding COVID-19 allow. More information and the trailer of the film can be accessed at <http://www.nativefoodsystems.org/>.

About First Nations Development Institute

For nearly 39 years, using a three-pronged strategy of educating grassroots practitioners, advocating for systemic change, and capitalizing Indian communities, First Nations has been working to restore Native American control and culturally-compatible stewardship of the assets they own – be they land, human potential, cultural heritage or natural resources – and to establish new assets for ensuring the long-term vitality of Native American communities. First Nations serves Native American communities throughout the United States. For more information, visit www.firstnations.org.

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PROGRAM CONTACT:

A-dae Romero-Briones, First Nations Director of Programs for Native Agriculture and Food Systems

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Amy Jakober, First Nations Senior Communications Officer

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FULL CREDIT LIST

Elise DuBray is now studying biochemistry as a undergraduate at Stanford University
With a minor in Native American studies

Samuel Gensaw and the Ancestral Guard continue to advocate for the health of the
Klamath and other rivers worldwide.

For more information on the movement for Indigenous Food Sovereignty, visit:
www.nativefoodsystems.org

Featuring

Twila Cassadore *San Carlos Apache*
Nephi Craig *White Mountain Apache*
Elsie DuBray Cheyenne *River Sioux and MHA*
Fred DuBray *Sioux and MHA*
Samuel Gensaw III *Yurok*
Peter Gensaw *Yurok*
Jon Luke Gensaw *Yurok*
Clayton Harvey *White Mountain Apache*
Margie May Bendle Stevens *San Carlos Apache*

Cast in order of appearance

Leander Fall *White Mountain Apache*
Kris Bergen *White Mountain Apache*
Josh Severns *Yurok*
Kristoffher Chee *Diné/Navajo*
Frank Lara *Yurok*
Zechariah Gabel *Yurok*
Jaden "Weesh" Green *Yurok*
Chucky Carpenter *Hupa*
Michelle DuBray *Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation*
LuAnne Lindskov
Beau DuBray *Cheyenne River Sioux and MHA*
Jandi Craig *White Mountain Apache*
Kaia Minzey *White Mountain Apache*
Tawny Craig *White Mountain Apache*
Uriah Cheng *Hupa*
Nat Pennington
Emily Maheaux
Seth Pilsk
Michael Henry Sr. *White Mountain Apache*
Leshana Sanchez *White Mountain Apache*
Ari Craig *White Mountain Apache*
Rowley Craig *White Mountain Apache*
Danielle Hill *Mashpee/Wampanoag*

This film could not have been made without partnerships with
First Nations Development Institute
Rainbow Treatment Center
Ancestral Guard
Native American Journalists Association
Tanka Bar / Tanka Fund

Western Apache Diet Project
Thunder Valley CDC

Executive Producers for First Nations

Mike Roberts *Tlingit*
Raymond Foxworth *Navajo*
Jackie Francke *Navajo*
A-dae Romero Briones *Cochiti/Kiowa*

In Memory of Maria P. "Percy" Romero Cochiti Pueblo

Directed by Sanjay Rawal
Produced by Tanya Meillier
Edited by Alexander Meillier
Producers
Sterlin Harjo *Seminole/Muscogee*
Sanjay Rawal

Executive Producers
Jennifer Buffett
Wendy Schmidt
Christine Schantz

Director of Photography
Renan Ozturk

Sound Recordist Jim Choi
Assistant Camera Scott Daharb
Composer Michael A. Levine
Original Songs by Raye Zaragoza
Assistant Producer Efrat Kashai
Additional Camera
Craig Atkinson
Caleb Heller
2nd AC Graham Deneen
3rd AC Sarah Jaffe
4th AC Albi Sheridan
AE Efrat Kashai
AE Sarah Laties
Assistant to Composer Bijan Olia
Additional Sound Richard Flemming
Additional Sound Turner Curran
PA Shaandiin Tome *Navajo*
PA Sarah Wells
Archival researchers
Melissa Totten
Svetlana Zill

Legal
Shatzkin & Mayer P.C

Insurance
Film Emporium Inc

Digital Intermediate Colorist Will Cox
Digital Intermediate Online Editor Kevin AllenCaby
Digital Intermediate Producer Caitlin Tartaro
Digital Intermediate Manager Drew Kilgore
Digital Intermediate Technical Supervisor Sandy Patch
Digital Intermediate Executive Producer Will Cox
Post Production Services Final Frame

Re-Recording Mixer Tom Efinger
Sound Designer Abby Savage
Dialog Editors Jeff Hinton
Sound Editors Emmett Ceglia & Jake Mittelman
Audio Post Facility Red Hook Post

Voice Over Cast
Tracy Humphrey
Fred Keeler
Wally Fields

Support from
NoVo Foundation
11th Hour Project
Ford Foundation
Kalliopeia
Neda Nobari Foundation
Panta Rhea Foundation
DocLands / California Film Foundation
LEF Foundation
Sustainable Agriculture Food Systems Funders Group

Special Thanks

Adam Piron Kiowa / *Mohawk*
Amy Cordalis *Yurok*
Anna Lappe
Bird Runningwater Cheyenne / *Mescalero Apache*
Bob Geary Elem *Pomo*
Lavina Bowers
Cara Mertes
Charlotte Cote Tseshaht/*Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation*
Chi-Hui Yang
Chris Burkard
Danielle Vigil-Masten *Hupa*
David Eckles
Diana Cohn
Diane Mattz
Dr. Raymond Cajete *Rio Rancho Pueblo*
Dustin Martin *Diné/Navajo*
Ed Iron Cloud *Pine Ridge Lakota*
Elizabeth Castle
Emily Maheux
Emmanuel Vaughn Lee
Forest Woodward
Freddie Briones Big Valley *Pomo*
Gini Reticker

Greta Caruso
Gensaw family *Yurok*
Hannah Merriman
Heather Rae
Helen Siegel
Hester Dillon *Cherokee*
Hillary Renick Sherwood *Pomo*
James Johnson *Tlingit*
Jana Fisher
Janet Brown
Janet Mattz *Yurok*
Janie Hipp *Chicksaw*
Javier Kinney *Yurok*
Ian Tetzner
Joni Cooper
Julie Marshall
Karlene Hunter *Pine Ridge Lakota*
Keely Badger
Lekha Singh
Lindsay McCovey *Hupa/Yurok/Chimariko*
Lyda Kuth
Margaux "Moana" Meillier
Marva Jones *Tolowa Dee-ni*
Matthew Wheeland
Michael Roberts
Mike Cladoosby *Swinomish*
Minette Nelson
Naomi Starkman
Nick Hernandez *Pine Ridge Lakota*
Paul Wilson *Karuk*
Rana Lapine *Mohawk*
Randy Blauvelt
Romero Family *Cochiti*
Roxanne Swentzell *Santa Clara Pueblo*
Ryan Redcorn *Osage*
Sara Archambault
Sarah Bell
Seth Pilsk
Stephanie Stevens *San Carlos Apache*
Stephen Most
Sue Masten *Yurok*
Tania Morrison
Taylor Rees
Thomas Dunklin
Tricia Mosquino *Cochiti*
Vanessa Bowen *Diné/Navajo*
Vi Orcutt *Hupa*
Virginia Clarke
Shalitha Peaches
Wa'okiye Mani *Pine Ridge Lakota*

Civil Eats
Columbia River Intertribal Fishing Cooperative
James Beard Foundation
The I-Collective
Wings of America

Yale School of Forestry
Timber Lake School
High Plains Regional Science and Engineering Fair

Gather Journalism Project

Kim Baca Diné / *Santa Clara Pueblo*
Allie Hostler *Hupa*
Adam Sings in the Timber Crow
Chelsey Lugar *Turtle Mountain Chippewa / Standing Rock Lakota*
Thosh Collins *Salt River Pima*
Debra Krol *Xolon Salinan*
Kalen Goodluck *Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation*
Genesis Tuyuc *Maya Kaqchikel*
Jonathan Sims *Diné / Navajo*
Jenni Monet *Laguna Pueblo*
Taylor Rees
Tara Duggan

Archival material

Heidi Knott
Josué Rivas Mexico/Otomi
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Klamath-Salmon Media Collaborative
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Diane Mattz
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E History
Plains Indians Museum
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Humbolt State University
Emily Maheaux
Mekko Harjo
Ndee Bikiyaa
UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library, C. Hart Merriam Collection of Native American Photographs
KIEM TV, Red Wood News
The Courier Journal
North Wind Picture Archives
CBS News

Shot on Location on

White Mountain Apache Reservation
Yurok Reservation
Hoopa Valley Reservation
Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation

San Carlos Apache Reservation
Noyo River Pomo Land
Elem Indian Colony Reservation
Sherwood Valley Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California
Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation
Mashpee Wampanoag Reservation

Music

Warrior

Composer: Raye Zaragoza
Performed by: Raye Zaragoza
Courtesy of: RAYEMUSIC

Red Moon High Tide

Composer: Raye Zaragoza
Co-writer Madison Malone
Performed by: Raye Zaragoza
Courtesy of: RAYEMUSIC

Mother We'll Meet Again

Composer: Raye Zaragoza
Co-writer Ben Wylen
Produced by: Ben Wylen
Performed by: Raye Zaragoza

Courtesy of: RAYEMUSIC and RESTLESS YOUTH ENTERTAINMENT

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