



## **REMEMBER YOUR GIFTS.**

Marvel Studios presents “Echo,” spotlighting Maya Lopez as she is pursued by Wilson Fisk’s criminal empire. When the journey brings her home, she must confront her own family and legacy. The gritty, grounded, five-episode series is a self-contained story that follows Maya’s pursuit of power and revenge. But at the heart of the action-packed series is a burgeoning antihero with roots in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

“Echo” stars Alaqua Cox (“Hawkeye”) as Maya Lopez. The series also stars Chaske Spencer (“Wild Indian,” “The English”), Tantoo Cardinal (“Killers of the Flower Moon,” “Stumptown”), Devery Jacobs (FX’s “Reservation Dogs,” “American Gods”), Zahn McClarnon (“Dark Winds,” FX’s “Reservation Dogs”) and Cody Lightning (“Hey, Viktor!” “Four Sheets to the Wind”), with Graham Greene (“1883,” “Goliath”) and Vincent D’Onofrio (“Hawkeye,” “Daredevil,” “Law & Order: Criminal Intent”), who returns to the villainous role of Wilson Fisk aka Kingpin—showcasing his complicated past with a young Maya has a huge impact on her future.

The story of “Echo” follows Maya’s dramatic introduction in Marvel Studios’ 2021 series “Hawkeye” in which she ultimately finds herself face to face with D’Onofrio’s Kingpin—exactng the revenge she sought while putting herself in grave danger as a result. The climactic conclusion is revisited in “Echo,” ensuring new and existing fans are ready to take part in Maya’s intense and very personal journey. Says director Sydney Freeland, “She has to flee to the last place that people would look for her, which is where she grew up in Oklahoma’s Choctaw Nation.”

The setting opened the door for a compelling exploration of not only Maya’s past—but that of her ancestors. “One of the big differences in the character that jumped out at me was that she’s not a generic Native American character,” says Freeland, “but someone with specificity in her heritage who must embrace the language and traditions of her culture.”

Director Catriona McKenzie was thrilled to be part of the storytelling. “I’m an Indigenous filmmaker and when I heard about this project, I knew I had to be a part of it in some

way,” says McKenzie. “It was very inspiring that Marvel Studios was taking on this story. Having native filmmakers and producers created an infrastructure around me that allowed me to just do one job and feel confident that the story was going to be told in a culturally correct way.”

## **ACTION!**

On April 25, 2022, “Echo” began production at Trilith Studios in Fayetteville, Ga. Before the cameras rolled, Choctaw Nation’s Teri Billy performed a traditional native blessing ceremony for cast and crew, followed by a traditional Choctaw hymn. The ceremony concluded with a Choctaw walk/dance welcoming members of the cast and crew as a commemorative symbol to the ancestors. “A blessing ceremony is done to first acknowledge our creator, the gifts and talents that he’s given people and that the work that’s to be done gets completed successfully with favor, grace, creativity and wisdom,” says Billy. “It’s very important to our people that the story be told authentically—whether that’s language, music, costumes, props or set design. After touring the different departments during the first week of production, we found it so rewarding because every department we went to there was so much attention to detail that went above and beyond our expectations.”

Episodes of the series are directed by Sydney Freeland (Navajo) and Catriona McKenzie (Gunaikurnai). Executive producers are Kevin Feige, Stephen Broussard, Louis D’Esposito, Brad Winderbaum, Victoria Alonso, Richie Palmer, Jason Gavin (Blackfeet), Marion Dayre and Sydney Freeland. Co-executive producers are Jennifer L. Booth and Amy Rardin. Marvel Studios’ “Echo” launches in the U.S. on Disney+ and Hulu Jan. 9, 2024.

## **CHARACTER LINEUP**

### **TALENTED CAST BRINGS COMPELLING NEW CHARACTERS—AND A PAIR OF RETURNING FACES—TO LIFE**

Maya Lopez takes center stage in “Echo”—surrounded by characters who make up her estranged family as well as members of Kingpin’s criminal enterprise. Led by actors Alaqua Cox and Vincent D’Onofrio, a host of talented performers came together to bring the characters to life. “We were blessed to get so many established and heralded actors like Tantoo Cardinal, Graham Greene and Chaske Spencer, as well as, rising stars like Devery Jacobs and Cody Lightning,” says producer Richie Palmer. “They are all so talented and brought so much authenticity to their respective characters which elevated everything and was so important for the proper representation.”

MAYA LOPEZ is a force to be reckoned with. She’s skilled in martial arts and hand-to-hand combat—and is at home on her motorcycle. When she flees New York City after assassinating the crime boss Kingpin, she’s forced to reunite with the family she left long ago under tragic circumstances. “In ‘Hawkeye,’ Maya was a villain,” says director Sydney Freeland. “And while she’s our protagonist in ‘Echo,’ we wanted to embrace those darker sides and flaws within the character who is on an extreme emotional journey trying to

navigate the pent-up anger inside her. She's a very nuanced character with culture and ancestry in the Choctaw community which is something we hadn't seen before."

Cox left her home on the Menominee Indian Reservation in Keshena, Wis., to join the "Hawkeye" cast just a few years ago. "When I jumped into the Marvel world, it was a big transition for me, but I was so grateful for the opportunity and journey," says the actor, who learned about plans for "Echo" while filming "Hawkeye." "I felt so overwhelmed and shocked because it was a lead role in my second project which seemed kind of crazy. I remember telling my family and it just meant so much because it gives Indigenous people a leading character and real representation in an authentic way. It feels amazing to be able to have the opportunity inspire and empower a future generation of people."

In addition to the character's cultural background, Maya's physical prowess underscores her mental toughness and is indicative of her soon-to-be antihero status. Stunt coordinator Mark Scizak was impressed with Cox's determination. "Alaqua was extremely dedicated in pre-production and came in every day to train and work with us on building the various fights," says Scizak. "She's so tough—I had to pump the brakes sometimes because she never held back. In designing the fights, we incorporated the fact that she can do bigger blocks with her prosthetic leg since she wouldn't feel pain there. She also used it as leverage, holding her leg back to get as much power out of her kicks as possible. Her style of fighting is a very grounded mix of MMA and a bunch of martial arts."

The use of her prosthetic leg in her fighting style was something that pleased Cox who loved taking part in her own stunt work. "For me, the stunt work was so much fun and my favorite thing to do on the show," says the actor. "Our stunt team had such great bubbly personalities and were so enjoyable to work with. In pre-production, I would do stunt training five days a week because I had so many stunts to do on this show. I had to learn so many different jabs, punches and kicks. It's been a fun journey."

The actor is keenly aware of what the character's physicality will mean to others in the amputee community. "I wanted to show people that amputees and people with disabilities can do anything," says Cox. "Although I am deaf and an amputee, I was able to do a lot of my fighting and stunts and it was important to me to show my prosthetic leg and not try to hide it under clothes. Maya Lopez is a badass, and I wanted people with disabilities to have someone that they could look up to and see within themselves."

Cox's Echo is the second deaf hero to join the MCU (Lauren Ridloff starred as Makkari in "Eternals"). Filmmakers built on this past experience to employ a variety of strategies to aptly represent the character and ensure ideal communication between Cox, crew members and fellow castmates. Consulting producer and American Sign Language (ASL) master Doug Ridloff worked on both the "Eternals" and "Hawkeye" sets, working with the production team long before cameras rolled. "I would look at each line in the script for each character and then translate that into ASL," he says. "Then I'd sit down with the actors and provide them with translations to mimic back, which gave me a barometer of their linguistic ability. Actors can use different variations of ASL as some variations are more in ASL grammatical order and some are in more English word order."

After a few sessions of working with each actor, I would shape my translations to adhere to the variation that best suited the actor.”

Cox says, “Doug is an ASL master. He did a great job helping the hearing actors who didn’t have any signing experience. His work allowed the actors to do the right signs and show all the expressions which made scenes with the hearing actors so much better.”

The production also provided weekly group learning sessions for the filmmakers and crew to help with the overall communication on set. “All the people on the crew were able to take sign language classes for a few months before we actually started filming, which was really cool,” says Cox.

It was important to filmmakers that the storytelling and approach to production embraced the character’s preferred way of communicating with others. In fact, many scenes feature no spoken dialogue. Says director Sydney Freeland, “After studying ASL and talking with Doug Ridloff, one of the things that became apparent was that the hands are an extension of one’s emotion and expression. The hands are the text, and the face is the subtext, and you need those two things together to get an idea of what a person’s feeling. We built our entire visual language with that in mind.”

WILSON FISK was once known as “Uncle” to Maya, who looked up to him after relocating to New York City with her father as a child. Fisk was long ago crowned Kingpin by the NYC criminal underworld. He was rightly feared by all—nobody dared challenge Kingpin—at least not until Maya Lopez discovered that he gave the orders to have her father killed. Their final encounter ended in a gunshot—but Fisk has the kind of power that always seems to eclipse even the grimmest circumstances.

“Kingpin was like a father figure to Maya, and he taught her what it meant to be a family in his own weird, twisted way,” says executive producer Richie Palmer. “But with a villain like Kingpin as a mentor, she learned violence, fear and intimidation—not respect and love. Kingpin taught her how to be like him.”

Adds Freeland, “One of the great things we get to explore in this series is Kingpin’s reach outside of New York City. We know he’s a criminal mastermind inside of New York, but we get to see how far-reaching his criminal empire is.”

Vincent D’Onofrio, who portrays the larger-than-life villain, readily embraces the heart of the new series. “I love that ‘Echo’ is Maya Lopez’s origin story,” says the actor. “You get introduced to this Native American world and it’s intense, spiritual and deeply emotional—it’s all about her family and ancestors. Kingpin is both a physically and emotionally brutal character. There is a strong layer of a father-daughter thing with Kingpin and Maya. It’s a great way to bring out all kinds of intensities and emotions and their dynamic has this flavor that’s completely unique.”

HENRY “BLACK CROW” LOPEZ is Maya’s well-intended uncle who owns the local roller-skating rink. But Henry has a troubled past that he can’t quite escape—including ties to Fisk’s criminal underworld.

Chaske Spencer, who fills Uncle Henry’s shoes, says not only is he the brother of Maya’s late father, William, he still has his hands in the very business that led to her father’s untimely death. “Henry feels guilty about his brother’s death and there’s a lot that Maya brings to the situation that I don’t think Henry is ready to face yet,” says Spencer.

Wise, funny, and kind-natured, SKULLY owns the town pawn shop. He is a grandfather-figure to Maya, offering his support, warmth and guidance along the way. Unlike many of her estranged family members, Skully is willing to set aside any differences and move forward with love.

“When Maya was a young child, he was going out with her grandmother, Chula,” says Graham Greene, who portrays Skully. “Maya comes back into his life after she damages her prosthetic leg and wants him to repair it for her—it helps rekindle their relationship.”

CHULA is Maya’s estranged grandmother. Chula’s overwhelming anger following the tragic loss of her daughter, Maya’s mother, led to the hasty departure of Maya and her father. Maya, so young and impressionable, shared in Chula’s grief—but the distance between them has only grown in the years since they last saw each other.

For award-winning actress Tantoo Cardinal, her character’s maternal instincts are being tested by Maya Lopez so many years later. “In the beginning of the series, Maya and Chula’s relationship is pretty fractured and they are not in a good place,” she says. “Maya comes from strength, but she also comes from a place of confusion.”

BONNIE is Maya’s estranged cousin and childhood best friend who works as an EMT in Tamaha, Oklahoma. She and Maya were like sisters as kids and Bonnie took it hard when Maya left. She’d love nothing more than to be close again with Maya.

Filmmakers called on Devery Jacobs to play Bonnie. “Maya Lopez is so badass, and she goes through the world very guarded,” says Jacobs. “But it’s through glimpses of interacting with Bonnie that we really get to see Maya’s heart and vulnerability.”

BISCUITS is Maya’s well-meaning cousin who helps her get settled when she returns home to Oklahoma.

Played by Cody Lightning, Biscuits is fun-loving and good natured, which makes him Maya’s go-to when she needs help in her self-prescribed mission. “Biscuits is Maya’s sidekick who provides some comic relief for her,” says Lightning. “He’s like a big earnest puppy dog, but he’s very resourceful and always figures out a way to get things done for

Maya. He's very loyal and will do anything for his family, even if that means getting into some trouble."

## **FILMMAKERS STRIVE FOR CULTURAL SPECIFICITY** **APPROACH TO CHARACTER, PRODUCTION AND** **CREATIVE CHOICES GROUNDED IN CHOCTAW NATION**

In Marvel Studios' "Echo," Maya Lopez is a member of Choctaw Nation. According to executive producer Richie Palmer, that cultural specificity naturally developed in the writer's room. "There were many talented writers from different backgrounds working together to bring the most authentic version of this story to life," he says. "We felt that the most compelling stories to tell onscreen were those that were coming from our Choctaw writers who provided many personal stories of family and generational history that would anchor our storytelling."

According to director Sydney Freeland, grounding Maya's background in Choctaw Nation provided the perfect foundation for the character's journey. "Within all that was a very powerful story about the definition of family, and what family means to different people," says Freeland. "I saw a very clear arc for Maya that goes from a definition of family that is selfish to one that is more selfless, but still retaining the edges of the character."

Mysterious and haunted in her MCU introduction, Maya left a lot to be explored—especially when it came to her culture, her family, and her roots. "When we were developing this show, we wanted to make sure it really felt like Maya Lopez's origin story," says supervising producer Eleena Khamedoost. "Culturally, there's such a specificity that we hadn't explored with the character. It was important for us to take Maya out of New York City and showcase a world we have never seen in the MCU. The idea of setting the story in Tamaha, Oklahoma, was attractive because this small, intimate rural town feels like a character in the show."

The world came to life very organically, and once Choctaw became the prevailing tribal influence in the writing process, filmmakers reached out to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. After meeting at Choctaw Nation headquarters in Durant, Okla., filmmakers and Choctaw Nation agreed to work together to ensure that Maya Lopez's story was told authentically and respectfully. "Marvel was extremely supportive in letting us take our department heads to Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma to do research," says Freeland. "The trip allowed us to immerse ourselves in the Choctaw language and everything that encompasses the local culture and ancestral history. Everyone was able to see and experience first-hand the Choctaw people and the culture. We went to a powwow and got to mingle with the participants and spend time with the Choctaw Nation leaders and Chief Batton. It proved to be an immensely valuable visit for us and opened our eyes to all things Choctaw."

Production worked alongside key members of Choctaw Nation including Chief Gary Batton, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Dr. Ian Thompson and Executive Director of Cultural Services Seth Fairchild. "Everyone at Choctaw Nation saw this as an opportunity

to really lend our voice and culture on a scale that would otherwise not have been possible,” says Fairchild. “My normal job is to educate people on Choctaw language, culture, history—so, to collaborate on a show like ‘Echo’ was something that rarely comes along. After our initial conversations, we quickly saw that the filmmakers were serious about doing this project the right way. Having a Choctaw like writer Steven Paul Judd involved was important for us because if you’re trying to be authentic, there’s a certain way that you need to approach it. They had Natives who were part of the process from the beginning and it clearly showed in their approach to the show and the script, which felt so authentic to the Choctaw community.”

Says Freeland, “Establishing those relationships was paramount to the success of ‘Echo.’ We had Choctaw representatives with us anytime we shot something of substantial cultural significance to the Choctaw Nation or Indigenous people in general. Seth, Dr. Ian and all of Choctaw Nation helped guide us from start to finish during the filmmaking process.”

Adds producer Richie Palmer, “They really felt like a part of the family weighing in across all aspects of production and we couldn’t be more thankful for their help in showing the richness of Choctaw culture and creating a character whose strength and story draws directly from that culture and history.”

With the series scripted to take place predominately in Oklahoma and the production filming in Georgia, the filmmakers were challenged to find practical locations in the Peach State that could double for the region. Executive producer Jason Tamez says their initial scout to Choctaw Nation greatly influenced the search for practical locations in the series. “When we went out to Choctaw Nation for the powwow, we also location scouted all of the small towns in and around Durant to get a visual sense for the environment and what people’s lives are like,” he says. “We used the information and reference photos taken on that trip to find houses, buildings and terrain in Georgia that best matched the locations on the scout.”

## THE ROLE OF COSTUMING

The costume department of “Echo” leaned into the partnership with Choctaw Nation. “Being able to collaborate with the native artists and community was critical,” says Ambre Wrigley, costume designer for the series alongside Stacy Caballero-Foushee. “You can’t put a price on the value of that kind of access. I spoke with at least five different tribal leaders and historians. The willingness and the joy they had in sharing the information elevated our work. We wanted to make sure that no matter what, they were heard, respected, and represented. The fact that they trusted us and believed in us enough to share that information was one of the most beautiful moments of my life.”

For cultural coordinator Peshawn Bread, working with Wrigley and her team was a truly collaborative experience. “They were very open and would listen to what I and Choctaw Nation had to say,” she says. “In the real world each tribe tends to have their own individual look, so we enlisted the help of a group of Choctaw artisans who made everything from jewelry to clothing to shoes to beadwork. Anything production needed

they could buy directly from Choctaw people, which is something that they implemented throughout the costume department as well all other departments.”

## ECHO EMERGES

Another big collaboration for Wrigley and her team was Maya Lopez’s hero suit which makes its debut in the series. “Choctaw artists were a huge part of the process,” says Wrigley. “We had Roger Amerman making the belt, Hollis Chitto creating all the beading and Brent Cherry doing all of the leather work that you see on her hand, forearm and shoulders. Our head tailor Ben Walsh custom-built that suit in house and so much thought, love and care went in to making sure it represented Choctaw Nation as well as the powerful reveal for the character.”

For Alaqua Cox, the costume was love at first sight. “I have a bunch of different costumes in the series, but my [climactic] look is absolutely my favorite because the bead work is done by an Indigenous artist,” says Cox. “I love the designs on it with the sun and the symbolism for happiness and power that’s related to the Choctaw tribe. There are also a lot of gems that symbolize the skin from a western diamondback rattlesnake. The Choctaw respect it because it’s a very powerful animal and has venom. I think many Indigenous people will freak out with joy when they see it.”

“It’s not just a suit, it’s a war record,” adds Palmer. “It’s a unique and symbolic costume and represents Maya coming into her own and accepting her spot in her real family. It is her saying, ‘I am Maya Lopez,’ and I echo the powers of the ancestors not just in my kickass abilities, but in the way I dress, the way I braid my hair and down to the details on my prosthetic leg.”

## POWWOW PRODUCTION DESIGN

Cultural coordinator Peshawn Bread and the Choctaw Nation also contributed to ensuring the authenticity of the production design in the series. One of the biggest sets in the series was for the powwow. The production worked with hundreds of Native Americans who regularly participate in powwows around the country. With their authentic powwow regalia, sequence performers included jingle dancers, tribe royalty, junior princesses, drum circle drummers, flag carriers and the arena director.

According to production designer Chris Trujillo, creating the massive powwow set was something he and his team were looking forward to doing since his first trip to Choctaw Nation. “We were lucky enough to spend some time at a real Choctaw powwow in Oklahoma,” says Trujillo. “I wasn’t really prepared for how powerful it would be. But after seeing one live, I knew it was critical for us to pull out all the stops in bringing our powwow to the screen. We wanted it to feel big where hundreds of people could come, and we found a rural county fairground that had this great tone, texture and character. So, it was a matter of building a dance ground, which in the Native culture is a sacred place. We also wanted to include people who perform on the powwow circuit because we knew that was the most authentic way to recreate it.”



At the end of three nights of shooting the sequence, director Sydney Freeland reflected on the months of preparation by all departments to pull off the powwow—something she says was part of her experience growing up. “To bring it into the MCU was such a beautiful experience,” says Freeland. “So much effort went into it, but it was worth it as I think we got some very beautiful imagery.”

On the last night shoot of the powwow, the director brought all the crew together in the center arena with powwow participants for a circle (round) dance. A hand-drumming group sang ceremonial songs while everyone moved arm in arm around the drummers. As the sun began to rise, cast and crew shared a moving cultural experience with the native and Indigenous participants. Says Alaqua Cox, “For me the experience of being part of this series felt so empowering. We were able to tell our stories authentically and I’m so proud of Marvel for bringing in Indigenous people from all over the country to represent these characters accurately. I just think it’s so amazing, because this is the first Indigenous antihero in the MCU. This is just the beginning for us to tell our stories and our experiences, uplift Indigenous voices and let the world know that we are still here and a proud culture.”

## **MARVEL SPOTLIGHT**

“Echo” is the first series under the Marvel Spotlight banner, which brings more grounded, character-driven stories to the screen. Under the new banner, “Echo” can focus on street-level stakes over larger MCU continuity—viewers don’t have to watch any other Marvel series to understand the plot.

Marvel Spotlight is rooted in Marvel Comics’ 85-year publishing history: Spotlight was an anthology comic book series first introduced in 1971 and was the origin of beloved Marvel characters like Ghost Rider and Spider-Woman.

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

**ALAQUA COX (Maya Lopez/Echo)** is a Native American actress who made her acting debut in Marvel Studios’ “Hawkeye,” which launched on Disney+ in 2021. The performance marked a historic moment in entertainment, with Cox representing both disability (as a deaf and single amputee) and Indigenous communities as Super Hero, Maya Lopez.

With “Echo,” Cox continues to break new ground with Maya Lopez aka Echo, a member of Choctaw Nation, giving her an identity informed by cultural specificity. “Echo” marks the first time Maya’s story has been told from an Indigenous perspective.

Born and raised in the Menominee Indian Reservation in Wisconsin, Cox is part Mohican.

**VINCENT D’ONOFRIO (Wilson Fisk/Kingpin)** reprises his role as fan-favorite Marvel character Wilson Fisk aka Kingpin—first seen in “Daredevil.” He can be seen in the recent Craig Gillespie feature “Dumb Money” opposite Seth Rogen, Paul Dano, Pete

Davidson, Sebastian Stan, Talia Ryder and Myha'la Herrold. He also recently wrapped Gary Gray's "Lift," starring opposite Kevin Hart for Netflix. D'Onofrio can be seen in Michael Showalter's "The Eyes of Tammy Faye," opposite Jessica Chastain and Andrew Garfield for Fox Searchlight, and Nora Fingscheidt's "The Unforgivable," opposite Sandra Bullock and Viola Davis for Netflix.

Previously, D'Onofrio starred in the Epix series "Godfather of Harlem," opposite Forest Whitaker and in the Netflix limited series "Ratched" for Ryan Murphy. He was also seen in a starring role on the CBS All-Access series "Interrogation." In 2019, D'Onofrio made his directorial debut with "The Kid" starring Chris Pratt and Dane DeHaan (in which he also co-starred).

D'Onofrio made his mark in features by creating indelible characters in films directed by masters Stanley Kubrick, Barry Sonnenfeld, Robert Altman and Oliver Stone. He was also seen starring in Eli Roth's "Death Wish" for MGM/Paramount, opposite Bruce Willis. He was an integral part of the presale package that financed James Franco's adaptation of the Steinbeck novel "In Dubious Battle" playing an agricultural labor advocate "Al Anderson" opposite Franco, Nat Wolff, Bryan Cranston and Selena Gomez. D'Onofrio starred as the (human) villain in "Jurassic World," which made \$205 million in its opening weekend at the U.S. box office and has gone on to gross over \$1.5 billion worldwide. He played the heavy in Warner Bros. "CHIPS" reboot opposite Michael Pena and Dax Shepard and starred in Antoine Fuqua's remake of "The Magnificent Seven" for MGM with all-star cast Chris Pratt, Denzel Washington and Ethan Hawke. He can be seen in "Run All Night" with Liam Neeson, "The Judge" with Robert Downey Jr., "Emerald City," and Tarsem Singh's modern reimaging of the Wizard of Oz as "The Wizard."

**CHASKE SPENCER (Uncle Henry)** stars as the co-lead opposite Emily Blunt in Hugo Blick's limited series "The English" (Amazon/BBC) in which he has been recognized for his work by the BAFTA Awards and Royal Television Society (RTS) Programme Awards with a 2023 leading actor nomination. On the feature side, he starred in "Wild Indian" which premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival for which Chaske was nominated for best supporting actor for the 2022 Independent Spirit Awards. Chaske stars in "Wind River: The Next Chapter" with Jason Clarke.

When Chaske was young, he dreamt of becoming a photographer, but before long, he also found himself in *front* of the camera. Chaske moved to New York City and in between bartending and waiting tables, he was cast in his first off off-Broadway play, "Dracula," as the title role. He went on to perform at The Public Theater in NYC and The Roundabout, and soon was discovered by casting director Rene Haynes.

Chaske is well known for his portrayal of Sam Uley in the "Twilight Saga: New Moon," "Eclipse" and "Breaking Dawn I and II." He starred in the Susanna White-directed feature "Woman Walks Ahead" opposite Jessica Chastain and Sam Rockwell, which made its world premiere at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival. His most notable television credits include NatGeo's "Barkskins," NBC's "Blindspot," Netflix's

“Jessica Jones,” the Emmy® Award-winning Cinemax series “Banshee,” Netflix's “Longmire,” and the Amazon series “Sneaky Pete” with Bryan Cranston.

Chaske Spencer was born of the Lakota Sioux tribe and raised on Indian Reservations in Montana and Idaho.

**TANTOO CARDINAL (Chula)** is an award-winning actress of Indigenous descent who will be seen with Robert DeNiro and Leonardo DiCaprio in Martin Scorsese's “Killers of the Flower Moon,” which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2023.

Recent TV series work includes playing Sue Lynn Blackbird in the ABC series “Stumptown,” and playing opposite Alfred Molina in the series “Three Pines” on Amazon (produced by the same producers of “The Crown”).

Cardinal has appeared in over 120 film and television projects over the course of her 50-year career. She is a multi-award-winning performer, including the Earle Grey Award (a lifetime achievement award by the Canadian Screen Awards), is a member of the Order of Canada and is a CBC/Playback Hall of Fame inductee and a recipient of the 2020 Governor Generals Artistic Achievement Lifetime Achievement Award—Broadcasting and Film (awarded in 2021). She has honorary doctorates from five Universities and is receiving her own star on Canada's Walk of Fame.

Her credits include numerous plays, television programs and feature films, including the features “Legends of the Fall,” “Dances with Wolves,” “Black Robe,” “Falls Around Her,” “Wind River,” “The Grizzlies,” “Where the Rivers Flow North,” “Maina,” “Chasing Shakespeare and Eden.” Television credits include “SEE,” “Westworld,” “Longmire,” “Mohawk Girls,” “Frontier,” “Blackstone,” “Lonesome Dove,” “Nobody's Girls,” “Godless and Penny Dreadful” among others. Theatre work includes playing Gertrude in “Hamlet,” Regan in the production of “King Lear” and the role of Pelajia in a production of “The Rez Sisters.” She was awarded the Theatre Critics Award for best supporting actress for her work on “The Inheritance” at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles.

**DEVERY JACOBS (Bonnie)** is an award-winning actress, writer, director and producer who is quickly establishing herself as one of Hollywood's most exciting rising stars. As a socially conscious voice from Kahnawàke Mohawk Territory, she uses her platform to advocate for Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ rights.

Jacobs currently stars as one of the leads in the groundbreaking, critically acclaimed series “Reservation Dogs,” which follows a group of four Indigenous teens who live on an Oklahoma reservation. For her performance as “Elora Danan” in the FX/Hulu series Jacobs earned a Critics' Choice Award nomination for best actress in a comedy series and a Gotham Award nomination for outstanding performance in a new series. In 2022, Jacobs and the “Reservation Dogs,” cast won an Independent Spirit Award in the category of best ensemble cast in a new scripted series.

Jacobs joined the “Reservation Dogs” writer’s room in season two and will be writing for the third season as well as directing an episode.

Up next is Jacobs’ producorial debut narrative film “Backspot,” which is also executive produced by Elliot Page. In addition to producing, Jacobs will star as one of the leads in the drama about competitive cheerleading, showcasing her skills as a former provincial champion gymnast.

Jacobs has amassed a significant body of work in several film and television productions with a wide reach in genres including Netflix original horror drama series “The Order,” Amazon/Starz fantasy drama series “American Gods,” Blumhouse Productions’ “The Lie.” Her first breakout role came when she was cast as the lead role in the award-winning feature film “Rhymes for Young Ghouls.” This role resulted in her nomination for best performance by an actress in a leading role at the 2014 Canadian Screen Awards.

In 2022, Jacobs landed on the cover of Teen Vogue’s New Hollywood issue, and in 2021, she was placed on the Out100 list. In 2017, the Hollywood Reporter named Jacobs as one of Canada’s Rising Stars, which featured a list of breakout actors who are making an impact in Hollywood. In the same year, she was also honored by Telefilm Canada at the 2017 Birks Diamond Tribute, celebrating women in film. Jacobs was given the title of TIFF Rising Star at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival.

Jacobs has also explored the other side of the camera, with her directorial debut of the short film “Stolen,” which won best aboriginal film at the 2017 Yorkton Film Festival. Her second short film, “Rae,” garnered best youth work prize at the imagineNATIVE Film Festival. It was also an official selection of the 2018 Palm Springs Short fest and was named as one of the best female-directed films by Refinery29. The feature film “This Place,” co-written by Jacobs, was named a recipient of the Talent to Watch fund from Telefilm Canada.

While pursuing her acting career, Jacobs studied to be a counsellor and worked at the Native Women’s Shelter of Montreal.

Outside of acting and filmmaking, Jacobs is fulfilling her goal of learning her Native language and taking Kanien’kéha (Mohawk) classes. Jacobs’ other passion lies in Indigenous rights and LGBTQ2S+ activism. She was an original founder of the Kahnawà:ke Youth Forum where she led and organized Protests and rallies. Recently, Jacobs has been focusing her activism through her art, hoping to create change within communities, and to alter the perspective of how modern Indigenous people are seen.

**ZAHN MCCLARNON (William Lopez)** is an award-winning film and television actor who has appeared in over 90 film and television productions. He is most known for his role as Hanzee Dent in the second installment of the critically acclaimed series “ Fargo,” his recurring role of Akecheta on HBO’s award-winning series “Westworld,” and his portrayal of Officer Mathias on the television series “Longmire.”

McClarnon is both an executive producer and lead actor in the AMC television series “Dark Winds.” The show is now in its second season, premiering summer of 2023. The show follows two Navajo police officers in the 1970s Southwest that are forced to challenge their own spiritual beliefs when they search for clues in a double-murder case.

McClarnon was also a series regular on National Geographic’s “Barkskins,” starring opposite Marcia Gay Harden and David Thewlis, and on the AMC show “The Son.” He co-starred in the crime-thriller “The Silencing” starring alongside Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, and in the Stephen King film “Doctor Sleep.” McClarnon appeared in the Disney+ series “Hawkeye” and the award-winning FX series “Reservation Dogs.”

Most recently, McClarnon appeared in Mel Brooks’ “History of the World Pt. 2” on Hulu, and the new Jennifer Lawrence summer rom-com “No Hard Feelings.”

**CODY LIGHTNING (Cousin Biscuits)** is a Native American (Cree) multi-hyphenate, who wrote, directed and starred in “Hey Viktor!” which premiered at Tribeca 2023, and also screened at TIFF 2023, where he was also distinguished as a TIFF Rising Star for 2023. Best known for his role as Young Victor in “Smoke Signals” (Sundance 1998), Lightning also won an American Indian Film Festival award for best actor for his role of Cufe Smallhill in “Four Sheets to the Wind” (Sundance 2007). He is also a competitive skateboarder and snowboarder.

**GRAHAM GREENE (Skully)**, Order of Canada and recipient on Canada’s Walk of Fame, now resides in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. He was born in Ohsweken, Ontario, Canada. After working at several jobs, which included droughting, high steel work, welding, carpentry and audio engineering, Greene took up acting. He traveled to England and South America where he performed in and taught theatre. His many stage credits include “The Crackwalker,” “Jessica,” “History of the Village of the Small Huts,” and “Dy Lips Oughtta Move to Kapuskasking,” for which Greene won the Dora Mavor Moore Award for best actor.

Greene co-starred in “Dances with Wolves,” which garnered an Oscar nomination. Since then, his many film credits include, “Die Hard with a Vengeance,” “North,” “Green Mile,” “Maverick” and “Snow Dogs.”

Among his many television credits are “Exhibit A,” “Rocket Science,” “Wolf Lake,” “The Red Green Show,” “North of Sixty” and “Dudley the Dragon,” which awarded Greene two Gemini Awards.

Greene was also the recipient of several best actor awards for his roles in “Skins,” “The Education of Little Tree” and “Northern Exposure” at the First Americans in the Arts Film Awards, as well as best actor at the Japan Film Festival for “Skins” and a Grammy for his narration work with Winton Marsalis and Kate Winslet in “Listen to the Story Teller.”

Greene resides outside Toronto with his wife, Hilary, and a small army of cats where he continues to write, build boats and work in the entertainment industry. Greene received the Order of Canada in 2016.

Credits also include “Molly's Game,” “The Waterbearer,” “King Ivory” and “Without Consequence.”

## ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

**SYDNEY FREELAND (Director/Executive Producer)** is an Emmy-nominated film and TV writer and director. Her TV directing work spans a wide range of shows, including “Star Trek: Strange New Worlds,” “Grey’s Anatomy,” “Fear the Walking Dead,” “The Wilds” and “Rutherford Falls,” among others. Freeland also wrote and directed for the FX show “Reservation Dogs,” which is executive produced by Taika Waititi and Sterlin Harjo.

Freeland’s debut feature, “Drunktown’s Finest,” premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and was executive produced by Robert Redford. The film was influenced by her experience growing upon the Navajo reservation. Freeland’s second feature was the Netflix Original film “Deidra and Laney Rob a Train,” which premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Freeland is in post on the Netflix feature film “Rez Ball,” which she directed and co-wrote with Sterlin Harjo; it’s executive produced by LeBron James.

**CATRIONA MCKENZIE (Director)** is a critically acclaimed, award-winning Indigenous Australian director and writer of both film and television.

Raised in Sydney, but based in Los Angeles, McKenzie studied screenwriting and directing at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS) and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. McKenzie's film, “Satellite Boy,” which she wrote, directed and produced, won multiple awards at prestigious festivals including the Berlinale, and was nominated for the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Award (AACTA) for best film. McKenzie received a second AACTA nomination for her series “Kiki and Kitty.”

Equally adept at drama and comedy, McKenzie has shot four pilots for Australia's ABC and SBS networks and has directed over 50 episodes of television for Amazon, Apple, Hulu, Netflix, Starz, Disney+, NBC, ABC, FOX, CW, Freeform and all of Australia’s major broadcasters throughout her prolific career.

McKenzie relocated to the United States five years ago. Notable series include “The Boys,” “The Walking Dead,” “Shining Vale” and “Echo.” A member of both the Directors Guild of America and the Australian Directors Guild, McKenzie is a recipient of the ADG/DGA Finders Series Award.

Dedicated to developing emerging filmmakers, McKenzie has mentored in various film

education initiatives including the Sundance Native Lab. Before her career in entertainment, McKenzie played rugby, swam for Australia, started a circus and sought out her birth parents in the midst of her pursuit of a Ph.D. McKenzie credits her upbringing and wide-ranging life experience with developing her keen eye for people and their stories. When McKenzie is not directing, writing or producing, she enjoys spending time with her son, beekeeping and restoring classic cars.

She is in development with Causeway Films for her newest feature “Stolen,” a cultural thriller that explores the relationships between a family in an Aboriginal community in Australia.