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**“MARCH POINT” FOLLOWS THREE TEENS FROM
THE SWINOMISH INDIAN TRIBE AS THEY
BECOME FILMMAKERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS**

*Film Premieres on the PBS Series Independent Lens on
Tuesday, November 18, 2008*

“This is a powerful and poetic environmental coming-of-age story.
In defending their tribal lands, three young men find a mission, even a vision!”
—*Sherman Alexie (Spokane, Wash./Coeur D’Alene, Idaho), poet, author and screenwriter*

(San Francisco, CA)—Travis, Nick and Cody have been friends almost all their lives, growing up on the Swinomish Reservation in northwest Washington. When they find themselves in trouble with drugs and alcohol, the teens are offered an opportunity to participate in Native Lens, a filmmaking program of Longhouse Media. Figuring it’s better than spending afternoons in drug court; they envision a film with car crashes and rap music. Instead, they are asked to make a documentary about the impact of two oil refineries on their tribal community. **MARCH POINT** follows the boys’ journey on their path from childhood to adulthood as they come to understand themselves, their tribe and the environmental threat to their people. **MARCH POINT** will have its television premiere on Tuesday, November 18, at 10 PM (check local listings) as part of the seventh season of the Emmy® Award–winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Terrence Howard,

For thousands of years, the people now known as the Swinomish flourished on the bounty of the coast of the Pacific Northwest. Clams, crabs and fish were plentiful, and as the tribal saying goes: “When the tide’s out, the table’s set.” But in the 1950s, Shell Oil built two refineries on land once owned by the tribe. Chemicals made their way into the water, tainting the seafood and shellfish that the Swinomish eat daily. And just as the toxins in the water seeped into the food, poverty, drugs and alcohol have seeped into the lives of the families who live there. Travis, Nick and Cody, like many young people today, didn’t know much of their ancestors’ history. By interviewing tribal elders, they learn that most of their land was taken away by the federal government in the Treaty of Point Elliott in 1855, leaving the Swinomish with basic health care, some fishing rights and a small reservation. President Ulysses S. Grant took more land in 1870, a move the tribe considers illegal.

Ambivalent environmental ambassadors at the onset of the filmmaking venture, the boys awaken to the destruction these refineries have wrought in their communities. Grappling with their assignment through humor, sarcasm and a candid self-knowledge, they begin to experience the need to understand and tell their own stories as well as the power of this process to change their lives and give back to their community.

–More–



To learn more about the film and the issues, visit the companion website for **MARCH POINT** at pbs.org/independentlens/marchpoint. Get detailed information on the film, watch video clips, read an interview with the filmmaker and find related links and resources to explore the subject in depth. The site also features a Talkback section for audiences to share their ideas and opinions.

MARCH POINT is a co-production with Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT). NAPT shares Native stories with the world through support of the creation, promotion and distribution of Native media. NAPT support makes it possible for public television audiences to view such quality programs as *A Native American Night Before Christmas*, *Way of the Warrior* and *The Oneida Speak*, a new documentary about the Oneida in Wisconsin who took part in a federal writing project.

About the Filmmakers

Producer/filmmaker Tracy Rector earned her master's in education and teacher certification from Antioch University's First Peoples program. She specializes in Native American studies, traditional plant medicine and documentary film. She is the co-producer of the award-winning films *Teachings of the Tree People* and *Teachings of the Tree People: The Work of Bruce Miller*. Her work has been featured at National Geographic's All Roads film project and at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of the American Indian, and she is a recent recipient of the Horace Mann Award. Rector's vision is to bring traditional and contemporary education together in a foundation based in environmental stewardship. **MARCH POINT** is an example of collaborating with youth filmmakers as a process of alternative education and inquiry into the world. Rector is currently working with the Seattle Art Museum as a consultant and Native naturalist for the Olympic Sculpture Park and in planning for the newly expanded Native American wing of the Seattle Art Museum and the traveling *Coast Salish* exhibit. She is also currently developing curriculum for IslandWood, an environmental education center. Rector is a co-founder of Longhouse Media/Native Lens.

Director/filmmaker Annie Silverstein majored in history and earned a B.A. from Macalester College; while doing so, she worked at Phillips Community Television in Minneapolis as the program coordinator of *Our Turn*, a monthly television show produced by youth about issues affecting them and the Phillips community. She moved to Seattle in 2002 to direct the Young Producers project at 911 Media Arts Center; shortly thereafter, she launched the Native Lens program in partnership with the Swinomish Indian tribe. In 2004, Silverstein wrote, shot, directed and produced *A Jew's Guide to Christmas*, a documentary short for PBS station KCTS-TV/Seattle. This humorous piece explores the yearning she felt as a young person during the Christmas holiday and Hanukkah and was presented as part of the Distinguishing Features program at the Seattle Art Museum. In 2007, Silverstein moved to Rio de Janeiro for a year, the result of having received a Fulbright scholarship to work on *Nossas Historias*, a case study on the social impact of teaching media-making to youth in Rio's *favelas*. Her experiences in Rio included working with homeless teens to create media that reflected their cultures and community. Silverstein is a co-founder of Longhouse Media/Native Lens.

Filmmaker Nick Clark, age 18, is a senior at La Conner High School. Clark has lived on the Swinomish Reservation his entire life, yet he is an enrolled tribal member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Oregon. Clark started filmmaking and acting with Native Lens in May 2004. His first film project, along with Travis Tom, was a public service announcement called *Native Pride*, a powerful short that challenges stereotypes about Native people. He co-wrote and co-directed as well as acted in *Rez Life*, an award-winning film about boys at the crossroads between childhood and adulthood, struggling with daily life on a reservation. Recently he has begun production on a film about the annual Tribal Canoe Journey in the Pacific Northwest.

Filmmaker Cody Cayou, age 18, is a senior at La Conner High School. He is half Swinomish from his father's side and half white from his mother's side. When Cayou lost his mother at the age of 10, he ended up failing the seventh grade and becoming heavily involved in substance abuse. In September 2005, after going through treatment, Cayou became involved in Native Lens, participating on a number of projects. He wrote, directed and starred in *Searching*, a short movie about a young man who is looking for something he is missing in his heart from the day-to-day chaos of life. Cayou, along with Travis Tom, wrote, directed and starred in the award-winning *Fifteen*, a short that examines the temptations of peer pressure and underage drinking.

Filmmaker Travis Tom, age 17, is a senior at La Conner High School. He is Swinomish and Lummi and has lived on the Swinomish Reservation his entire life. After his older sister passed away four years ago, Tom started using drugs. In 2004, he began working with Native Lens as part of his plan to turn his life around. His first project, along with Nick Clark, was a public service announcement called *Native Pride*. In his recent film *Fifteen*, Tom, along with Cody Cayou, played the main character and served as director. He enjoys all aspects of acting and filmmaking and hopes to continue doing both for the rest of his life.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about unique individuals, communities and moments in history. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen. Further information about the series visit: pbs.org/independentlens.

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