

From Murderer to Mentor: 'RESERVATION REDEMPTION' Docu Film Chronicles Native Teen's Transformative Journey Behind Bars

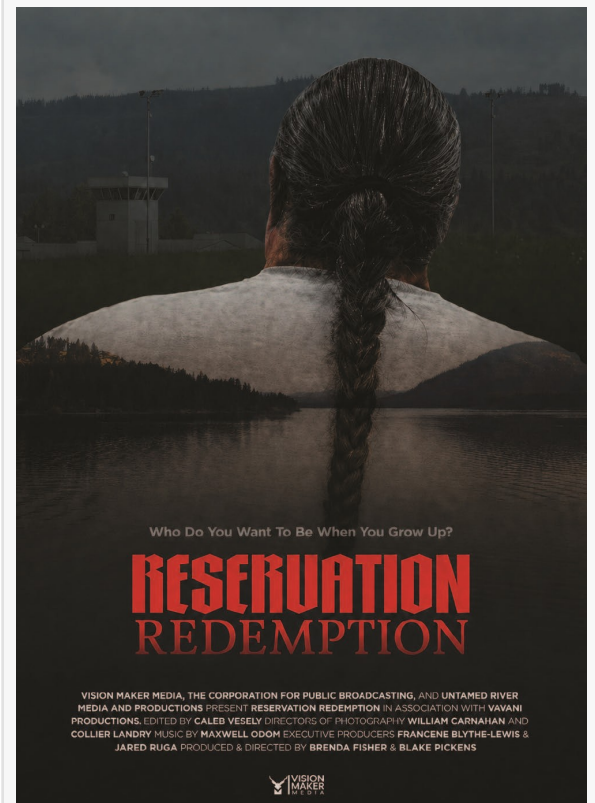
Heads to Angeles Documentary Film Festival on August 30, 2026

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Award-winning documentary film, [RESERVATION REDEMPTION](#), chronicles the transformative journey of "Chief" Marchand Rice (Colville), from a teenager convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole, to a respected leader and mentor throughout Washington State prisons. This festival favorite will next screen on August 30th at the Angeles Documentary Film Festival, an event dedicated exclusively to documentary filmmaking.

Reservation Redemption unveils the crisis, root cause and unbroken spirit of the most incarcerated race in Washington State, Native Americans, as told through the lens of one man's transformative journey. As a teen in prison, Chief met Francis Cullooyah, a Kalispel spiritual leader, who asked him point-blank: "Who do you want to be when you grow up?" The film explores his journey from this pivotal moment to his "Red Road" to redemption, uncovering his deep commitment to culture and spiritual healing which now inspires countless others.

The film is co-directed and co-produced by Native American filmmakers Blake Pickens (Chickasaw) and Brenda Fisher (Yakama By Descent).

The response to Reservation Redemption has been powerful, earning top prizes at Spokane Int'l Film Festival, deadCenter Film Festival, London Women Film Festival, Paris Women CineFest, and Sweden International Film Festival, along with official screenings at Seattle Int'l FF, Dances with



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Films, NatiVisions, Imagine This Women's FF, Portugal Int'l FF, Canada Independent, Inthrive, Poulsbo and numerous others.

In addition, the film has received positive feedback from the Innocence Project and Native organizations that support reentry, such as United Indians and Chief Seattle Club. Overall, the impact of the film has not only affected those reentering society and those currently incarcerated, but it has also opened the minds of those who think that once you are deemed a "criminal," you are never going to be anything else.

"We hope to expose how the loss of culture has devastated Native families and contributed to the generational trauma and harmful repercussions of not knowing one's roots, including the consequences of the way the world views us," adds Fisher. "The film showcases how Chief has become an activist for Native spiritual rights while behind bars and his impact in being of service to others. It will educate people to the power of our culture."

The documentary combines research data, interviews with activists, historical recounts, and in-depth sit-downs with experts, examining the prison systems, native culture, and the families affected by this systemic oppression. It offers audiences an understanding of the profound impact of one man's transformative domino effect on Native inmates and activists.

Pickens shares, "Growing up, a lot of my family was doing life on the installment plan. It was actually so common in my family that I thought it was a rite of passage - I thought I would graduate high school, go to prison, then I'd start college. And often times they would get locked up for something as trivial as stealing food so they could eat. So, prison reform has always been an issue that really hits home for me. When Brenda told me the story of Reservation



Redemption, I knew how powerful it could be, and I had to be a part of it."

Reservation Redemption is a fiscally sponsored project of the International Documentary Association (IDA), a nonprofit organization that supports the vital work of documentary filmmakers and helps them fundraise for their project. The film was also awarded funding from Vision Maker Media's (VMM) Public Media Fund for Research and Development which supports projects that represent the cultures, experiences, and perspectives of Native Americans and Alaska Natives. VMM will distribute the film for broadcast on public television later this year.



The story has special meaning for Fisher who explains, "I grew up with 'Chief' on the Yakama Reservation and witnessed a lost boy's self-destruction culminate into a life sentence. Years later, he had become a man who discovered his culture and had taken responsibility for his past and created a future."

Fisher is a director, executive producer, talent manager, social justice advocate, and Yakama Descendant (Her mother was an enrolled member). Under her Untamed River Media and Productions banner, she hosts the Reservation Redemption YouTube series sharing Native American stories, interviews and voices not included in the documentary, and has executive produced Native American lore horror-thriller The Windigo. Fisher is also a talent manager and founding partner of Untamed Artists LA.

Pickens is an Emmy Award winning Chickasaw comedian and filmmaker best known for producing Sundance Film Festival favorites The Land, which released theatrically by IFC Films, and Wild Indian distributed by Vertical Entertainment. He garnered an Emmy for producing the P&G commercial The Talk and an MTV VMA for his work on John Legend's music video, Surefire.

For more about RESERVATION REDEMPTION and upcoming screenings visit:

[ReservationRedemption.com](https://www.reservationredemption.com)

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