

Native Stories

Selections by Vince LePlayv

With the upcoming screening of the critically acclaimed *Sugarcane* on the horizon, I thought it only right to present here a list of five profoundly powerful Native American stories. From classic odes to modern retellings, there's much to behold within these rich and textured American sagas that always need more viewership to expand the scope of what innovative and bold stories can be told going forward into the future of filmmaking. Here's to you.

Hostiles (2017)

Scott Cooper gives audiences a taut and visceral historic thriller with this under-the-radar find of a film. Christian Bale plays the U.S. Army cavalry officer tasked with escorting a Cheyenne war chief (a never better Wes Studi) and his family back to their home in Montana. Cooper focuses on the razor-thin line of trust that Bale and Studi must navigate in order to both make it out of the journey alive. Rosamund Pike kicks open doors as a tough backwoods woman of the frontier while supporting roles from vet Rory Cochrane and a then up-and-coming Tim Chalamet are hard to go unnoticed.



Little Big Man (1970)

Dustin Hoffman gives a highly unsung performance in this captivating Western/character study of a man attempting to reintegrate into society after spending years being a member of the Cheyenne nation. Arthur Penn's unwavering direction makes the relationship between white man and tribal member one of camaraderie and understanding while the landscapes of the American frontier rival that of any John Ford film.



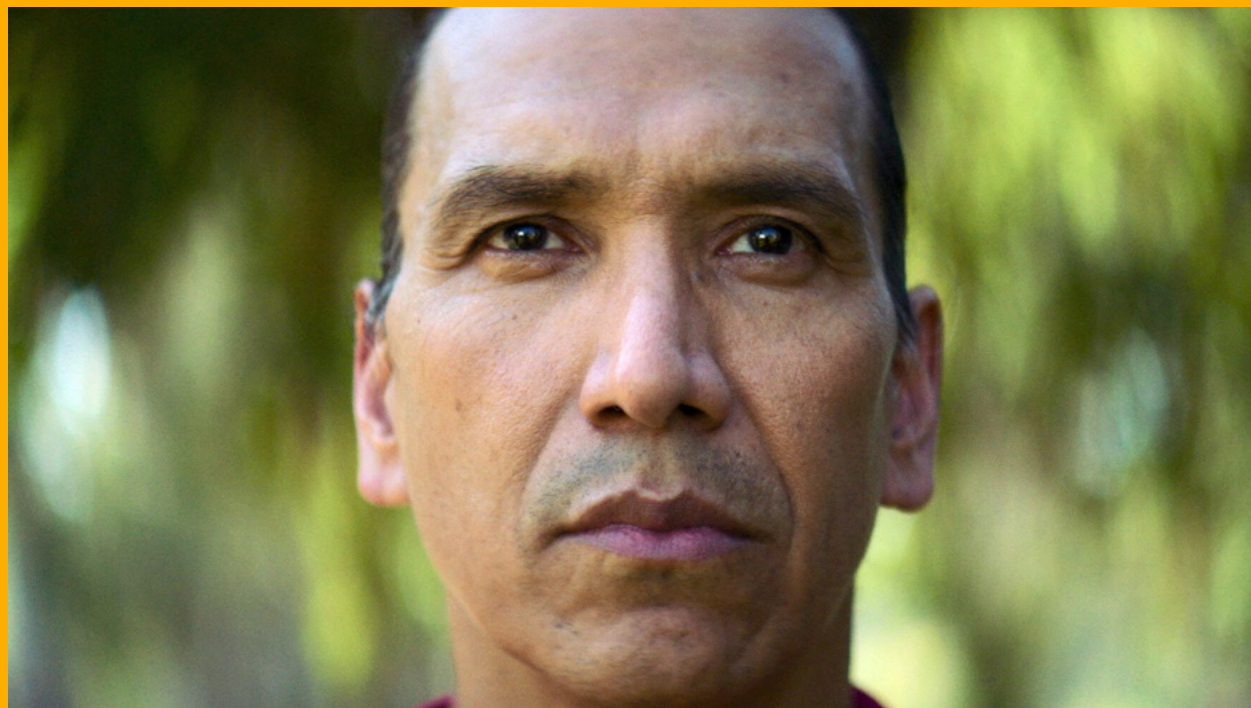
The New World (2005)

Not well-received upon its release but heavily reassessed in high favor in recent years, this modern epic sees auteur Terrence Malick depicting the creation of the settlement at Jamestown, Virginia. It's a sprawling and wondrous period piece but at its core it's a love story between John Smith and Pocahontas. There's much to discover upon revisitation (depending which cut you're watching) but nevertheless one can't help but be swept up in the excitement of a new uncharted land and all it has to offer.



Wild Indian (2021)

Bad River native Lyle Mitchell Corbine Jr.'s directorial debut hits close to home with its themes of isolation, violence and acceptance. Makwa is an Anishinaabe boy who hangs out with his friend Ted-O. One day they go for a walk in the woods with a fellow classmate and mistakenly murder him. After covering up the unfortunate death, guilt and terror haunt the now-grown men until one of them cracks. Michael Greyeyes gives a lead-heavy performance; in each twinkle of his eye, in each wrinkle on his face hides a deep sense of longing just beneath the surface. Check this one out at your local library and support your local filmmakers!



Wind River (2017)

This bleak yet hopeful film follows a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service tracker (Jeremy Renner) and an FBI agent (Elizabeth Olsen) working together to solve a murder on the Wind River reservation in Wyoming. Director Taylor Sheridan (of *Yellowstone* fame) felt compelled to tell this story to raise awareness about the high number of indigenous women who are raped and murdered on and off reservations. The chilly locales, salt-of-the-earth residents and a scene-stealing Jon Bernthal will make sure this dark tale will shake you to your core.

