



TRANSCRIPT:

## Against The Current

a BYkids film  
THEIR WORLD THEIR FILMS

**Daunnette:** If I asked you to tell me about yourself, about who you are, what would you tell me? Would you tell me the color of your hair? Your favorite song? Your hobbies? Who raised you? What town you grew up in, the schools you went to, or your profession?

Or would you tell me about the god you pray to? The language your grandparents spoke, the holidays you celebrate, your country of origin, the color of your skin

Would you tell me who you truly are?

Let me tell you who we truly are.

### AGAINST THE CURRENT

**Daunnette** [narrating]: My English name is Daunnette Moniz-Reyome. I am 17 years old and I live on the Omaha Indian Reservation. I wanted to make this film to show the beautiful side of us.

**Daunnette** (to a group): Wait, just do that, don't look over here.

**Daunnette** [narrating]: To show people that I'm extremely proud of where I come from. What I come from. I wanted to make this film because I wanted people to see and to hear and to know what we go through, what it's caused by, and how we overcome it.

### 5 DAYS EARLIER...

**Daunnette:** We're going to HaWaTay's gift shop to prepare for my feathering ceremony that takes place on Thursday, the first day of powwow.

And basically a feathering ceremony is kind of like your right of passage into the arena.

**Daunnette:** Alton's the one that's making my centerpiece that I'm getting feathered with

**Alton** [Hawatay's Store Owner]: Yeah, actually uh I know her mother, we went to school together. Everybody knows each other, there's always a connection.

**Alton** [to Daunnette] When are you getting feathered?

**Daunnette:** On Thursday at 1:00.

**Alton:** Thursday? Thursday at 1:00.

**Daunnette:** I can't wait. I can't wait.

**Alton:** Yeah?

**Daunnette:** Just talking about it, it makes me really excited.

**Alton:** You know feathers, people will, people just don't put 'em on. They can't just wear 'em or you know, just out of novelty or whatever. They gotta- they gotta earn the right or they're given the authority to wear an eagle feather. To a veteran, eagle feathers represent fallen soldiers.

You know, so if you were to drop- drop a feather, you know, a veteran is the one that has to come in and pick it up. And if he wants to give it back to you, he can, or if he wants to keep it he can.

**Daunnette:** Mh-hm. Thanks for sharing that.

**Alton:** Yup.

**Daunnette:** Life in Walthill is slow. We don't have all types of activities for the youth to participate in or we don't have a bunch of job opportunities that the adults can apply for.

If I'm being completely honest, we struggle here.

It is a beautiful place, when you're seeing the right parts, but when you live here and this is your day to day life, it drains you. It really does.

I see not only my family members, but people in this community, people in our tribe, not treating themselves as the powerful and strong people that we once were.

Our people didn't drink every day. Our people didn't do drugs. Our people didn't- they didn't live like that. It hurts.

My parents didn't grow up being taught our ways of life, but they've always supported my interest in it, and they encourage me to advocate for it in my modeling work.

**Launa** [Daunnette's Mom]: Two, three.

**Rodney** [Daunnette's dad]: She gets shaky after five.

**Launa:** Four. Five. (laughter) Shut up!

**Rodney:** Google, what's after six? Seven.

**Daunnette:** Shh!

**Launa:** Be quiet!

**Rodney:** This is how you get 'em going, see? They're up now.

**Launa:** She was always performing for us when she was little, with her little microphone and her wig.

**Rodney:** Yeah, she used to make her brothers and sisters sit there and watch while she would sing. They were her audience.

**Launa:** So this is like her very first professional, um, photoshoot. This one is.

**Daunnette:** This is the May issue of Teen Vogue back in 2016. This is the first time my face ever went public like this. And then my grandma and grandpa, his mom and dad, went and bought like 17 copies.

**Launa:** Um for this shoot, actually, we drove 16 hours and dropped off our boys, slept for an hour, and then drove into New York City. That's just where I'm willing to- what I'm willing to sacrifice to make sure that my kids are successful.

**Rodney:** And then, when she did Teen Vogue, we were getting comments from all the elders throughout the country.: We've been waiting for this. Where has this been? It's beautiful, I love this um.

**Launa:** There were even people that were like, thanking Teen Vogue for finally- finally putting an indigenous person in a major, major magazine.

**Daunnette:** I went to speak to Shelby, who will give me my feather at the feathering ceremony and she is also making my dress for powwow.

**Shelby** [Daunnette's Family Friend]: You want the zipper in the front or the back?

**Daunnette:** That star is on the back, huh?

**Shelby:** Oh yeah, it will be in the front... never mind.

**Daunnette:** Yeah.

**Shelby:** So this will be her- the skirt. This is the vision here if you wanna.

**Daunnette:** You're a great artist.

**Shelby:** I tried.

**Shelby:** I was in Iraq in 2003, 2004, during the invasion. I was a truck driver in the army. When I joined the army, I was a single mom of those two children right there.

So I was diagnosed with PTSD in 2006, and um, I didn't know I had PTSD. Didn't realize that I was going through a lot of things that I didn't understand. You know, I didn't understand why I was so angry. I didn't understand why- why nobody understood me and I was angry.

And um, you know, I turned to, you know, alcohol. It was bad, and then eventually I realized, you know, I didn't want to be that kind of person. I needed help and it was hard for me to ask for help.

**Daunnette:** Do you want to talk about how you use making your regalia, or doing your beadwork or even just smudging like how it helps, helps you heal from your PTSD?

**Shelby:** I prayed and I smudged and I- I tried to do our- our, you know, our cultural ways and you know I- I would bead and that would keep my mind busy. Then I learned how to sew, so then that would keep my mind busy.

And then, you know, practicing, you know, our culture helped me. Being involved in the culture helped me.

It's hard. A lot of my family would say, "Oh you look so happy. You're so happy, you're... I never would have known you're going through that. You know, you wear this mask." You know, you wear this- this façade, because you don't want no one to know. I don't want no one to know.

The things that I go through, the deep dark things that I go through, and just being in this- those situations where you just don't know if you're gonna live And, you know, you're like, "Are you gonna get blown up?" And I'm just a rez girl, I didn't ask for that.

But, you know, I guess that's what I signed up for. So, today, you know, I just- I wanna do good things. I wanna help. When people ask me to do work and I do it for free, because I'm like, I'm good, you know?

I have- I don't have much but, you know, here, you know. It's got good feelings in it, it's got love.

You know, I love, I love my community. I love my- my tribe. I- I- I love everything about our people and what we are.

**Daunnette:** Thank you for those words though. Like, not even for the camera, like thank you for those words, 'cause just out of the good of your heart you wanted to help me, and I'm just glad I met you. 'Cause, I don't

**Shelby:** Gee, make me cry now. I know, I know how you feel. I want my legacy to be, "Shelby was a nice person and she could make Omaha mocs so..."

**Shelby** [watching her son Gunnar dance]: Oh my gosh, you. There you go.

**Daunnette:** You don't move your arms? You just do that?

**Gunnar:** Done.

**Shelby:** That's-

**Daunnette:** Is that Fortnight?

**Shelby:** Yeah.

**Daunnette:** Three years ago, I went to speak to students at a local high school and Shelby's daughter Sidnee was there too.

**Sidnee** [Shelby's Daughter]: I have it right here. I never see like Native American like role models and stuff, well my mom, but like, someone kind of near my age, and it inspired me to like to work harder in school and stuff and stay on track.

You inspire a lot of little girls and other kids to like, to be better and stuff.

**Daunnette:** I wanted to talk with some of my peers about what life was like for them on the reservation. My friend Juray has a unique perspective, because she is two-spirited, which means she identifies as having both masculine and a feminine spirit.

**Daunnette:** How do you carry on some of our like, traditions and stuff?

**Juray** [Daunnette's Friend]: I pray. I sage the whole house, I just don't sage my one room. For me it's more different, since I can do either or.

**Daunnette:** So because you're a two-spirit you're able to perform both the man and the woman's ways.

**Juray:** Mh-hm. Like if I wanted to touch the drum, I could.

**Daunnette:** Have people started treating you differently since you started identifying more as a female?

**Juray:** Yeah. A lot of people treated me differently. Some kindly, a lot with hate and negativity, but I had to grow a thick skin, long time ago. And I had to go through a lot of stuff on my own. In the end, people grew to be more accepting and open-minded to my choices and stuff.

So, yeah. You ready for powwow?

**Daunnette:** Don't say it like that.

**Juray:** Are you ready to dance?

**Daunnette:** I'm real ready to dance. I've haven't finished beading my contemporary mocs for my jingle dress. I have to finish beading those but my Omaha mocs are done.

**Daunnette:** My relative, Marisa, knows so much about our people and our history. We talked about the forced eradication of our culture that happened when the U.S. government put

children into special boarding schools and how that has contributed to the historical trauma that's passed down in our families for generations.

**Daunnette:** What does it mean to you to be an Umonhon woman?

**Marisa** [Daunnette's Mentor/Relative]: So for me, being a maha, an Umonhon Wau, it means, um, that I have a beautiful relationship with food, with seeds. It means that I've delivered my sister's babies. It means that I take care of other women. It means that I have unconditional love for creation itself.

It also means being a warrior, and being a warrior for our language, for our culture, to fight for, for our people. And we have to bring back that we have thinking, less individualized.

I remember as a little girl, I did something, and I was like, "Dad! I did this, I did..." You know, I was really excited. "I, I, I," and my dad scolded me, and he said, "No, you don't talk like that. You always say "we." Because in some ways we're always doing things collectively."

**Daunnette:** Your grandmother went to boarding schools. How has that affected you personally, like do you believe that historical trauma was passed down to you?

**Marisa:** I think historical trauma does get passed down. I also think resiliency gets passed down. My grandmother, um, all she knew was our language and her family. And then all of the sudden she didn't have any of that, and she was told how to pray, how to think.

She had my father, um, then she had two other children, a girl and a boy, and adopted them out to a white family, and in her mind she thought she was doing something good.

She dealt with a lot, my grandmother suffered from alcoholism. There was definitely trauma that was passed down to my dad, and he was never mean, never cruel, never abusive, but he had that inner pain that he couldn't get rid of.

He also struggled with drinking. But I had a really hard childhood, too, and I had a lot of privilege too, so it's, it's a balance, but there was a point where I was suicidal. And so there was a lot of trauma, historical trauma in my family line. But what I do know is that it stopped with me.

**Daunnette:** How have our practices helped you heal?

**Marisa:** When I go through really hard times I sit with my tobacco and pray, and I feel, and I sing songs and those songs connect me to creation and then help me heal, help me, um, be able to

keep moving forward with love and kindness because that's the- that's what's hard. It's easy to be bitter...

**Daunnette:** Yeah.

**Marisa:** and cruel to people. If someone puts all their pain and hurt, 'cause they're hurting, they're not well, and they put that pain and hurt on me, now I carry it and then I put it on you, right? It moves, it has a life, it moves among people and that's- that's a sickness.

But if I take what you threw at me, sit with it, pray with it, and let it go, out of love, then it's gone.

**Daunnette:** Yeah.

**Marisa:** It doesn't keep moving anymore and that's a form of medicine.

## DAY OF FEATHERING CEREMONY

**Daunnette:** I kind of woke up with a heavy heart today, just 'cause I wish all my relatives could be there to witness that for me. Especially my loved ones that's passed on, but, that's not- that's not the way, um, Creator made for things to go and that's fine, because regardless of if I see them there or not, I know that, uh, they're still gonna be there with me.

## POW WOW GROUNDS

**Launa** [helping Daunnette prepare]: :Yup, you look beautiful.

**Launa** [to Sam]: You ready to do your hair?

**Daunnette:** Just before my feathering ceremony took place, my grandpa Sam, Marisa, and I got into a conversation about a speech that I'd given at the United Nations in 2017.

**Marisa:** What'd you talk about?

**Daunnette:** Oh at the United Nations?

**Marisa:** At the United Nations mh-hm.

**Daunnette:** Like I spoke about the statistics on like, suicide in Indian country and like the missing and murdered indigenous women and alcohol.

**Marisa:** Why do you think that that's a struggle for us in Indian country and for the youth?

**Daunnette:** I kind of feel like a lot of us just lost touch with, you know, our home base, like, who we were as a people, lost touch with our ways of life.

**Marisa:** Mh-hm. It's all tied in, because they dismantled our belief system and our way of life and those original teachings that you're talking about that have been lost. They outlawed our ceremonies, they outlawed this way of life.

The only time that we could practice our ceremonies was here and we had to do it in front of white people. So the people tried to put all these ceremonies into this one time a year, um, and then mask it, so that white people didn't know what they were doing.

**Sam** [Daunnette's Grandpa]: There were all these things that changed and it, and it wasn't no gradual change like some things. It was quick, like that. And we had to forget who we are as maha people, you know, and being able to find a little bit, a piece of yourself is a huge accomplishment and you're doing that and I'm proud of you for that. Just keep going. You're gonna stumble, you're gonna fall. You're young, it's gonna happen.

And you're- you're human. You know if it wasn't- if we didn't have these troubles in our lives, then we wouldn't have, you know, ceremonies to help us heal. We wouldn't need those ceremonies, but we do.

You know, growing up on a rez, you know, I've seen those things and I'm a- a product of a lot of abuse. You know and for me one of those things was being sexually abused as a kid and being burned by my own father at eight months old. You know, uh, you look at all those things I should be a- a serial killer or something like that you know?

But for some reason Creator, you know, said no, I don't want you to be that way, you know, but I'm gonna give you some- some things that you have to look at, you have to go through to be who you are today.

But it's good what you're doing, proud of you.

**Daunnette:** We did not film my feathering ceremony, because of how sacred it is.

**Sam** [to the crowd]: My granddaughter here has some gifts that she wants to give out.

**Daunnette:** I was so excited and overwhelmed and happy when Shelby gave me my feather. It was such a beautiful moment that I will never forget.

## SECOND DAY OF POW WOW

**Daunnette:** Right now we're at powwow and we're about to have the first grand entry of the weekend. That's where all the dancers are shown into the arena for the first time. It's exciting for me, 'cause I finally get to dance with my feather.

Our powwow, our annual Hedewachi, is our harvest celebration, but a lot of us see it as a homecoming. That's when everyone comes home to celebrate together.

You know, seeing all of our- our tiny babies dancing or seeing our golden age dancers still dancing, it's a beautiful sight. The feeling that you get in your heart, it's kind of indescribable.

**Daunnette** [to Quentin]: You spend a lot of time on the drum, so explain what the drum is, so the people who are watching know what it is to us.

**Quentin** [Drum Circle Member]: The drum, what it means is it's like, the heartbeat of our people and our nation and Creator, Wakonda, he gave it to us to use for him. He made us his dancers and his singers. Then through that drum, the drumbeat, we have our- our melodies, our footsteps, our footwork, our- our rhythms.

Like my spirit just feels uplifted once I hear the music and when I have everything on I feel it's a shield to me. Like nothing can harm me in any type of way. And I'm not the best dancer, but I

try my best and I- every time I get out there I give it all my hardest and like it's my last time dancing.

## LAST DAY OF POW WOW

**Daunnette:** On the last day of powwow, we always have a feast. We place our food on the ground to make a connection with mother Earth and to thank her for what she's given us. We begin serving people sitting to the East, and then everyone eats together.

Wakonda, our Creator, he blessed me with the connection to our people, to our ancestors, to our homelands. It was hard to find at first, but when I found it, it was a feeling that no photoshoot, no runway, no crowd could ever give me.

I won't be held back by what they call historic trauma. It won't hold me back, because I will have properly healed myself from it. I'm trying. Like, I'm trying to learn how to heal myself from not only things that I've been through, but things that everybody in my family has been through.

You know, I can only heal what's in my heart, but I can also pray for everyone else's trauma, everyone else's pain, to be lifted from them.

To be a Native American is to be challenged, is to be strong.

It is to be intelligent. It is to be resilient.

Being Native American is not to be silenced, but to be heard.

To be a Native American is to be powerful.

To have a powerful voice for those who have lost their ability to speak.

We need more fearless people, who are willing to make a change.

When you don't hold your words in, when you speak your mind, amazing things can happen.

**Daunnette:** Wiragųšge Šibre Wjga. They call me Shooting Star, and I am a Native American.

[24:32] CREDITS ROLL