

Out In The Cold

Upcoming Screenings and Events

***On a night so cold it hurts to breathe,
three First Nations Men find themselves abandoned on the outskirts of town.***

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The World Premiere of ***Out In The Cold*** will be at the Vancouver International Film Festival October 5 & 6, 2008.

www.viff.org

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Out In The Cold will have its Saskatchewan premiere in Regina on October 25, 7:00 pm at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion on the subject of Aboriginal/police relations. The panelists include Regina Police Chief Troy Hagen, Vice President of Academic Affairs at First Nations University of Canada Dr. Shauneen Pete, and Dr. Nick Jones, Assistant Professor in Justice Studies at the University of Regina.

This event is sponsored by the Humanities Research Institute at the University of Regina and will be held during mispon: A Celebration of Indigenous Filmmaking, which runs October 23 to 26. The film festival is free and everyone is welcome to attend the screenings, master classes and social events.

www.uregina.ca/hri/out_in_the_cold.shtml

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Out In The Cold will screen in Saskatoon on October 27, 7:00 pm at the Roxy Theatre (320 - 20th St West). This screening will also be followed by a panel discussion on Aboriginal/police relations. The panelists include Saskatoon Police Chief Clive Weighill, Dr. Priscilla Settee, activist and Associate Professor in the Department of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan and Eagle Feather News editor John Lagimodiere.

A pay-what-you-can donation is requested to help offset the costs of holding this event.

http://www.rainbowcinemas.ca/specials.php?theatre=Roxy_Theatre

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Out in the Cold will have its premiere in the United States at the American Indian Film Festival on Monday, November 10, 2008, 7:00pm in San Francisco.

www.aifisf.com

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Out In The Cold has been selected for screening at the Winnipeg Aboriginal Film Festival that runs November 19 – 23, 2008.

www.aboriginalfilmfest.org

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A pipe ceremony will be held for ***Out In The Cold***, to honour the people and issues that the film touches, on Wednesday October 1, 2008, 10:00 am at First Nations University of Canada. All are welcome to attend. Women are requested to wear skirts and not be on moon their time.

Please feel free to contact Sarah Abbott if you have any questions about these events at info@sarahabbott.ca

Out In The Cold



29:40, B&W
Dolby E & Stereo sound
Super 16mm Production Format
HD Release Format
Canada 2008

www.sarahabbott.ca/outinthecold

On a night so cold it hurts to breathe, three First Nations men find themselves abandoned on the outskirts of town.

SYNOPSIS

On a night so cold it hurts to breathe, Soft as Snow and Cold as Ice meet Thomas, a young man in a drunken stupor who has been dumped on the outskirts of town. When Thomas suggests the two men should walk back to the city with him, Soft as Snow and Cold as Ice persuade him to stay the night. Each man has a different motive: Cold as Ice wants Thomas to die and join them; Soft as Snow wants Thomas to survive the night and return to the city to tell people their story.

This poignant and oftentimes humorous drama is rich in metaphor while exploring themes of loss, memory and disregard. The script was inspired by the freezing deaths of several First Nations men in Saskatoon, allegedly as a result of a "starlight tour," the non-sanctioned police practice of taking individuals to an isolated edge of town and abandoning them to the elements. In 2001, Amnesty International included the freezing deaths in their report of international human rights abuses.

The production springs from the creative synergy between Sarah Abbott, producer and film professor at the University of Regina; Colleen Murphy, director and the 2006-2007 University of Regina Playwright-in-Residence; and Cheryl Jack, emerging writer and established actor based in Saskatoon. Their efforts and the contributions of Saskatchewan actors Gordon Tootoosis, Erroll Kinistino and Mathew Strongeagle, a crew of film production students, First Nations youth and local film industry professionals have created a film that stimulates discussion about the state of oppression and disregard faced by Indigenous people across Canada and around the world.

KEY CREATIVES

Cheryl Jack Writer
Colleen Murphy Director
Sarah Abbott Producer
Ivan Gekoff, CSC Cinematographer
Sarah Abbott Editor

PRINCIPLE CAST

Gordon Tootoosis Soft as Snow
Erroll Kinistino Cold as Ice
Mathew Strongeagle Thomas

Out In The Cold

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT Colleen Murphy

Writers often talk to the dead through their work, but sometimes it is better to let the dead talk. It was this notion that drew me to Cheryl Jack's script. What makes Cheryl's small drama so compelling is her absolute refusal to vilify, redeem, or judge. Instead, the author imagines how it might feel to be inside the situation of men who have been left to die on an icy field. Never sentimental, always emotionally truthful, Cheryl's script is wholly original.

While doing a one-year Playwriting Residency at the University of Regina, I was privileged to direct this film; to work with talented students and local professionals, to work on 16mm film, to work in minus 20 degree temperatures and to work on a story that was meaningful to the actual ground I was standing on. *Out In The Cold* is a metaphor for the blinding disregard Canadians continue to demonstrate towards the First Nations people in this country.

WRITER'S STATEMENT Cheryl Jack

Out In The Cold came to me through the characters of Soft as Snow and Cold as Ice; they spoke through me and I wrote what they had to say. These two souls are stuck in a place where they cannot look back but can only move forward. Their words made me laugh and cry and remind us that we cannot forget the atrocities humans are capable of inflicting on one another.

The seed for *Out In The Cold* emerged through the work I was doing with Saskatoon youth to write a collective theatre piece. Someone suggested we make a joke about a "starlight tour" – "Hey, don't worry you're Métis, the cops will only drive you halfway out to the power plant!" – this created a buzz of tension. As a group, we sat down to talk about what it would mean to put such a moment into our theatre piece, and decided it would not be appropriate. That passionate discussion stayed with me and a year later Soft as Snow started to tap at my soul. I began to write. I believe when we leave this life we move into another (whatever that may be), but I don't think that other place is necessarily an easy one. Soft as Snow and Cold as Ice are struggling on a frozen patch, stuck. They need to continue on their journey and this can only happen if we honour their passing. Thomas can help them by telling his community their story and his. I believe he succeeds in doing that, and Soft as Snow and Cold as Ice shift into something beyond anything we can imagine. By telling our stories, there is hope that our communities will shift, change and move forward.

MAKING THE FILM

Out in the Cold was a hybrid project of a professionally-run production crewed by third-year film production students and local emerging filmmakers, working alongside Saskatchewan film industry professionals. More than one third of the cast and crew combined were First Nations people. Shooting took place outside over four nights on the outskirts of Regina, Saskatchewan in February. All of the students rose to the intense challenges of learning their roles quickly, taking initiative, and working in collaboration with each other and the professional actors and crew. Gaffer Andrew Gordon, who has been working in the industry for over twenty years, said the winter shooting conditions made it the most intense shoot he had ever been on. On the last night, the students operated like a professional crew; some of them glowed with the new knowledge that they had found their calling.

People contacted within the Saskatchewan film industry for assistance with this unprecedented training project were consistently enthusiastic to support it through labour, mentorship, financial and in-kind contributions during all stages of production and post-production. To reduce the production's ecological footprint, cast and crew used reusable dishes stored on a shelf above the craft services table in the production tent. Instead of using individual water bottles, people filled cups with drinking water from a five-gallon bottle. Each night, one bag of garbage was produced for the 27 people working on set.

Out In The Cold

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY Colleen Murphy

Born in Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec Colleen Murphy is a playwright and filmmaker. Her distinct, award-winning films have played at festivals around the world and include *Putty Worm* ('93), *The Feeler* ('95), *Shoemaker* ('96), *Desire* ('00), *War Holes* ('02) and *Girl with Dog* ('06). Murphy's play *The December Man* (*L'homme de décembre*), about the Montreal Massacre, won the 2007 Governor General's Literary Award for English Language Drama and the 2008 Canadian Author's Association/Carol Bolt Award for Drama. She is working on a libretto for Tapestry New Opera Works in Toronto, and writing new plays for the National Arts Centre in Ottawa and for the Banff Centre in Banff, Alberta.

WRITER'S BIOGRAPHY Cheryl Jack

Cheryl Jack is an emerging writer with early success. Her play *Out In The Cold* was first broadcast on CBC radio in January 2007, coinciding with its invitation to be produced as a film. Her new play *The Last Shall Be First* was selected for reading at the Saskatchewan Playwrights' Centre's 2006 Spring Festival and was mounted as a full production at the Persephone Theatre in Saskatoon in the spring of 2008. Jack has been an actor for many years. Recent acting credits include Mrs. Lynde in *Anne of Green Gables*, Rita in *At The End of Her Rope*, Marny in *Quarry* Mrs. Darimont in *The Exquisite Hour*, Mrs. Linde in *A Doll's House*, Missy in *Macgregor's Hard Ice Cream and Gas*, Mrs. Van Dann in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and Li'l Bit in *How I Learned to Drive*. Recent film and television credits include *45 RPM*, *Finn On The Fly*, *renegade**press.com*** and *Corner Gas*. Jack is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada.

PRODUCER'S BIOGRAPHY Sarah Abbott

Sarah Abbott is a Canadian filmmaker and artist whose film and video work has received numerous grants, awards and international festival selections. She holds a BA, Hon. in Film Studies and Drama from Queen's University and earned her MFA in Art Video from Syracuse University on a three-year fellowship. She has been an artist-in-residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Santa Fe Art Institute and the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture in Dawson City, Yukon. In 2002, she interned at The Human Rights Media Centre in Cape Town, South Africa, where she made her first feature length documentary, *Tide Marks* on post-apartheid issues. Abbott is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Media Production and Studies at the University of Regina. She is a founding member of *mispon: A Celebration of Indigenous Filmmaking*, Regina's new Indigenous film festival and advocacy organization.

ACTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Gordon Tootoosis – Soft as Snow

Gordon Tootoosis has been acting for over thirty years. A few of his screen credits include *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee* (2007), *Wapos Bay: The Series* (2005 – 2007), *Hank Williams First Nation* (2005, 2006), *Moccasin Flats* (2003), *Pocahontas: The Legend* (1995) and *Legends of the Fall* (1994). Gordon was twice nominated for a Gemini award for his performance in *North of 60* (1992-1997). He played Soft as Snow in the 2006 CBC radio production of *Out In the Cold*. In 2004, Gordon received the Order of Canada for his services to performing arts in Canada. He is the third person in his family to receive the Order of Canada.

Erroll Kinistino – Cold as Ice

Erroll Kinistino is well-known for his role as Leon Deela on *North of 60* (1992-1997). Other screen credits include *Corner Gas* (2006-2008), *Renegade Press.com* (2005), *Moccasin Flats* (2003) and *Revenge of the Land* (1998). He has been active in Saskatchewan's theatre and music scenes for many years as an actor, director, singer and acoustic guitarist. Erroll recently played Sitting Bull in Ken Mitchell's play *The Medicine Line*. He read the part of Cold as Ice in the first public reading of *Out In the Cold* (2005).

Mathew Strongeagle – Thomas

Mathew Strongeagle received the Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association (SMPIA) Showcase Achievement Award in 2007 and 2005 for Lead Male Performance in *Moccasin Flats* (2005, 2003). Other screen credits include *renegadePress.com* (2005-2007), *Into the West* (2005), *The Long Way Home* (2004), and *This is Wonderland* (2004). Mathew has been playing lead guitar and lead rhythm with his family since he was thirteen; he is currently producing and recording his first CD.

OUT IN THE COLD WEBSITE www.sarahabbott.ca/outinthecold

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