



MEDIA CONTACT

Joey Clift
Writer / Director
joeyclift@gmail.com

GENRE

Animation, Kids,
Comedy, Indigenous,
Native American

TECH SPECS

TRT: 08:16
Aspect Ratio: 1.78,
Color, 1920 x 1080

LINKS

[Poster](#) [Film Stills](#) [Trailer](#) [IMDB](#) [Cultural Inspirations Guide](#)
[Making-of Featurette](#)

SYNOPSIS

A Native American kid scrambles to charge his dying video game console at a bustling intertribal powwow.

FILMMAKER STATEMENT

Pow! is a love letter to my time spent as a bored Native kid, often dragged by my mom to Indigenous cultural celebration events called powwows in tribal centers on the Tulalip Indian Reservation, where instead of powwow dancing, I mostly searched for places to charge my Game Boy. Through that process I learned that loving video games and loving your culture don't have to be mutually exclusive.

In my career in the animation industry, I often have to separate my Native identity from my work. This is an industry where, for nearly a century, the only Native representation was either Disney's Pocahontas, or animated shorts about cowboys shooting at Native "savage" stereotypes.

I've written a lot of cartoons, from series featuring Shrek, to Cocomelon Lane, and Bugs Bunny. I love helping to make silly animated shorts with an emphasis on physical comedy, but I've had few opportunities to bring my authentic culture into that space.

I'm excited to have a largely Indigenous Emmy and Annie Award winning dream team helping make Pow! We are so proud of this animated comedy short with a big Native heart, and we can't thank you enough for watching and considering it!

CULTURAL INSPIRATIONS

Pow! draws inspiration from a lot of different places, from traditional Native American art forms like Coastal Salish shape language and Plains Native American ledger art, to contemporary art styles like anime, 16-bit Super Nintendo pixel art and classic American slapstick cartoons. We use a mix of three different animation styles to tell our story in a way that is as nuanced and different as the perspectives our characters have on powwow culture.

The film's first scene is animated as 16-bit pixel art; to represent the video game-centered lens our protagonist uses to view the world. As we enter the powwow, we switch to a mix of hand drawn and computer animation with watercolor backgrounds to show the vibrancy and joy our protagonist's parents see in powwow culture. In a later flashback sequence, we switch to a "ledger art" inspired animation style.

Ledger Art originated in the 1800s by Midwest North American Indigenous tribes. When those tribes were forced onto reservations by the United States Army, the only paper they had were left behind military ledgers and notebooks, so they drew on top of the old military notes, literally replacing their trauma with art. Our film is one of the first times ledger art has ever been seen in animation.

We chose that style to honor history while also showing the complicated and layered perspective our elder character has on her culture. We even sourced archival audio from the 2016 Standing Rock protests, scans of actual broken treaties between Tribes and the United States government, and partnered with a team of powwow and Coastal Salish consultants to bring authenticity to the short.

Every frame, sound effect and music cue in this film was crafted with thoughtfulness, care, and a beating Native heart at the center. Our largely Indigenous team had one goal in making this film, to create the sort of positive, contemporary and joy filled Native representation that we wish we had as kids.

There are many aspects of Native culture and history represented in Pow! that your average person may not be educated about. We've created a short, informative slideshow presentation, as well as a behind the scenes making of featurette to take you through the work that went into making Pow! authentically, with Native creatives at the forefront.

[Cultural Inspirations Guide](#)

[Making-of Featurette](#)

NOTABLE FESTIVAL PLACEMENTS

2025 Palm Springs International Shortsfest

2025 Bentonville Film Festival

2025 Hamptons International Film Festival

2025 Sidewalk Film Festival – Winner – Best Animated Film

2025 Seattle International Film Festival

2025 San Diego Comic Con International Film Festival
2025 Chicago International Film Festival
2025 Vancouver International Film Festival
2025 Montclair Film Festival
2025 Cordillera International Film Festival – Winner – Best Indigenous Film
2025 Hawai'i International Film Festival
2025 Calgary International Film Festival
2025 MaoriLand Film Festival
2025 Indy Shorts International Film Festival
2025 Tallgrass Film Festival
2025 Nevada City Film Festival – Winner – Best Animated Film
2025 Newport Beach Film Festival
2025 Santa Fe International Film Festival
2025 RiverRun Film Festival
2025 Cleveland International Film Festival
2025 deadCenter Film Festival
2025 AmDocs Film Festival
2025 Athens International Film And Video Festival

A complete list of *Pow!*'s awards and film festival placements can be found [here](#).

NOTABLE QUOTES

"*Pow!* is so much fun! I loved it!"

Mark Ruffalo, Academy Award Nominated Actor

"Joey Clift's *Pow!* is loving, clever, and gorgeously animated, this is a short that invites viewers into a big Indian world with an even bigger heart."

Julian Brave NoiseCat, Director - SugarCane

"*Pow!* is entertaining, moving and everything a good short should be!"

Mike Rianda, Writer / Director - The Mitchells vs. the Machines

"*Pow!* is funny, heartfelt, full of Native joy. and it celebrates what it means to be a modern Native American kid!"

Karissa Valencia, Creator - Spirit Rangers

SELECT PRESS

Cartoon Brew

“Pow! is a visually dynamic, emotionally layered portrait of contemporary Native identity”

ICT News

“Pow!” honors heritage with humor and heart”

Cartoon Contender

“If Native American representation is at a turning point in animation, then Pow! might be the first level.”

Inquirer & Mirror

“Hilarious and powerful.”

TEAM

DIRECTOR: JOEY CLIFT

Joey Clift is a Los Angeles-based comedian, Emmy and Peabody Award-nominated writer, director, and an enrolled member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Growing up, Joey aspired to become a local TV weatherperson because he didn't see Native American comedians on screen and thought a career in comedy was off-limits. He has since proven otherwise, carving a niche in animation by writing for acclaimed series like Spirit Rangers (Netflix), Molly of Denali and Alma's Way (PBS), New Looney Tunes and Lego Ninjago: Decoded (Cartoon Network), and Paw Patrol (Nickelodeon).

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: MIK MOORE

Mik Moore is one of the leading cultural and narrative campaign strategists in the United States, combining a deep understanding of public policy and electoral politics with years of experience as a writer, editor, producer, and public speaker. He is known for developing and implementing innovative efforts to harness the power of digital media to create social change.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: HAROLD MOSS

Harold Moss is the founder of FlickerLab, an Emmy Award winning twenty-year-old New York based animation, production, design, and educational content studio, producing a huge volume of award-winning content for film, broadcast, digital platforms, and learning systems, for global media brands and agencies including Comedy Central, Bleacher Report, HBO, Cartoon Network, Showtime, Nickelodeon, Barnes & Noble, Michael Moore, Saatchi & Saatchi, and Porter Novelli.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: DONICK CARY

Emmy-winning writer and producer Donick Cary got his start writing for "Late Night with David Letterman." He continued working with the show through its move to CBS, serving as both head writer and the "guy in the bear suit." After five years in Late Night, Cary moved to "The Simpsons," where he served as a co-executive producer for four seasons (Seasons 7-11). He then served in the same capacity on NBC's "Just Shoot Me", HBO's "Bored to Death", Fox's "New Girl" and NBC's "Parks and Recreation." Cary has produced pilots for and developed with: Brillstein Grey, Sony Television, Happy Madison, Conaco, ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, FX, HBO, the WB and Nickelodeon.

CHARACTER & BACKGROUND DESIGNER: MORGAN THOMPSON

Morgan Thompson is an Annie Award winning animation artist and member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Her work focuses on uplifting Indigenous representation and telling engaging stories with credits including, Storybots, Strawberry Shortcake and her Annie Award winning short film The Fox & The Pigeon.

SOUND DESIGNER: JEFF CARPENTER

Jeff Carpenter is a proud member of the Chickasaw Nation and a self-proclaimed "sound ninja" with a specialty in creative sound design for visual mediums. He loves sound because it has the ability to invisibly shape a narrative and influence the viewer often times without their conscious awareness. He's had the great fortune of working with some of the top names in storytelling, including most recently full-time contracts with Activision/Blizzard and Netflix.

COMPOSER: JORDAN KAMALU

Jordan Kamalu is a collaborative composer with an easy-going personality and a passion for the creative process. Current and past projects of note include scoring the Emmy-nominated series Spirit Rangers, music and lyrics for Airborne (Top 20 selection at NAMT- currently in development), Papa (student Emmy winner for Best Original Composition), and music and lyrics for Single Wide (Best Collegiate Musical Winner at KCACTF and a NYMF finalist). He brings his Indigenous Hawaiian heritage, love of dramatic storytelling and gift for melody to every project he works on.

CAST: RAINY FIELDS (voice of "Jake")

Rainy Fields was born in Claremore, Oklahoma, is an enrolled member of the Muskogee Creek Nation and is of Cherokee descent. Fields is a constant presence in the Los Angeles live theater scene, most notably as part of the "Native Voices" all Indigenous theater ensemble.

CAST: ANGELA STARTZ (voice of "Grandmother")

Angela Startz is a Screen Actor Guild-eligible actor and member of the Inupiaq, Northern Slope tribe with more than ten years of experience in front and behind the camera. From her appearances in independent films like Maureen Bharoocha's Golden Arm and her dedication to Native issues through her Indigenous film discussion podcast Reel Indigenous, Startz is a force to be reckoned with in the Oklahoma film scene.

CAST: JIM RUEL (voice of “Dad”)

Jim Ruel is a comedian, writer, actor and member of the Ojibwe tribe. He was a finalist in NBC's Diversity Talent Search which led to his first television appearance on 'The World Stands Up' which was taped in London, England. He was also featured on 'Goin Native: the American Indian Comedy Slam' on Showtime.

STORYBOARD ARTIST: NORA MEEK

Nora Meek is a Los Angeles based board artist, writer, and 80's hair metal revivalist. She's worked for Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, Warner Brothers, Titmouse, Rough Draft Studios, Wild Brain, Stoopid Buddy Studios, 6 Point Harness, and others on movies, pilots, TV series, and streaming series for clients like Amazon and Netflix. Her animated shorts have been selected for awards by Women in Animation and Outfest, and screened in festivals from LA to Hong Kong.

POW! CREDITS

Written and Directed by Joey Clift

Jake - Rainy Fields

Executive Producers:

Mik Moore

Grandmother - Angela Startz

Harold Moss

Dad - Jim Ruel

Donick Cary

Frybread Cook - Joey Clift

Joey Clift

Animation by FlickerLab

Animation Producer - Tom Chorlton

Senior Animator - Hyo Bin Kang

Co-Producer - Goldie Chan

Animator - Aaron Gosch

Consulting Producers:

Animator - Phillip Andrade

Vera Starbard

Animator - Neil Tenczar

Jake Goldman

Animator - Leonardo Silva

Jaydeep Hasrajani

Animator - Morgan Thompson

Matt Mazany

Storyboards:

Morgan Thompson

Nora Meek

Cast:

Morgan Thompson

Fernando "eL HiNO" Hinojosa

Design & Backgrounds - Morgan Thompson

Music by Jordan Kamalu
Guitars and Additional MIDI Programming - Michael McClellan
Sound Design & Mix by Jeff Carpenter
Foley - Benjamin Burnett

Consultants:
Coastal Salish Regalia - Suzanne Donaldson
Women's Fancy Shawl - Autumn Rose
Men's Fancy Dance - Baac Garcia

Special Thanks:

Lucas Brown Eyes, Kelly R. Moses Sr. Sduuxw-qideb, Kelly Lynne D'Angelo, Marcelis Moses, Azie Dungey, Christine Coggins, John Timothy, Maverick Ryan, JohnTom Knight, Susan Jackson

Haskell Ledger Image courtesy of the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum, Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence, Kansas

Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 image courtesy of holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

Alcatraz Indian Occupation Document, Golden Gate NRA, Park Archives, Alcatraz Field Collection II, GOGA 18324

Standing Rock Water Protectors Audio courtesy of Sara Lafleur-Vetter and Jonathan Klett

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