



"ALL AND ALL THE FILM IS A GRAND SUCCESS"

—LIFE IN LA

"BRILLIANT"

—THE VILLAGE VOICE

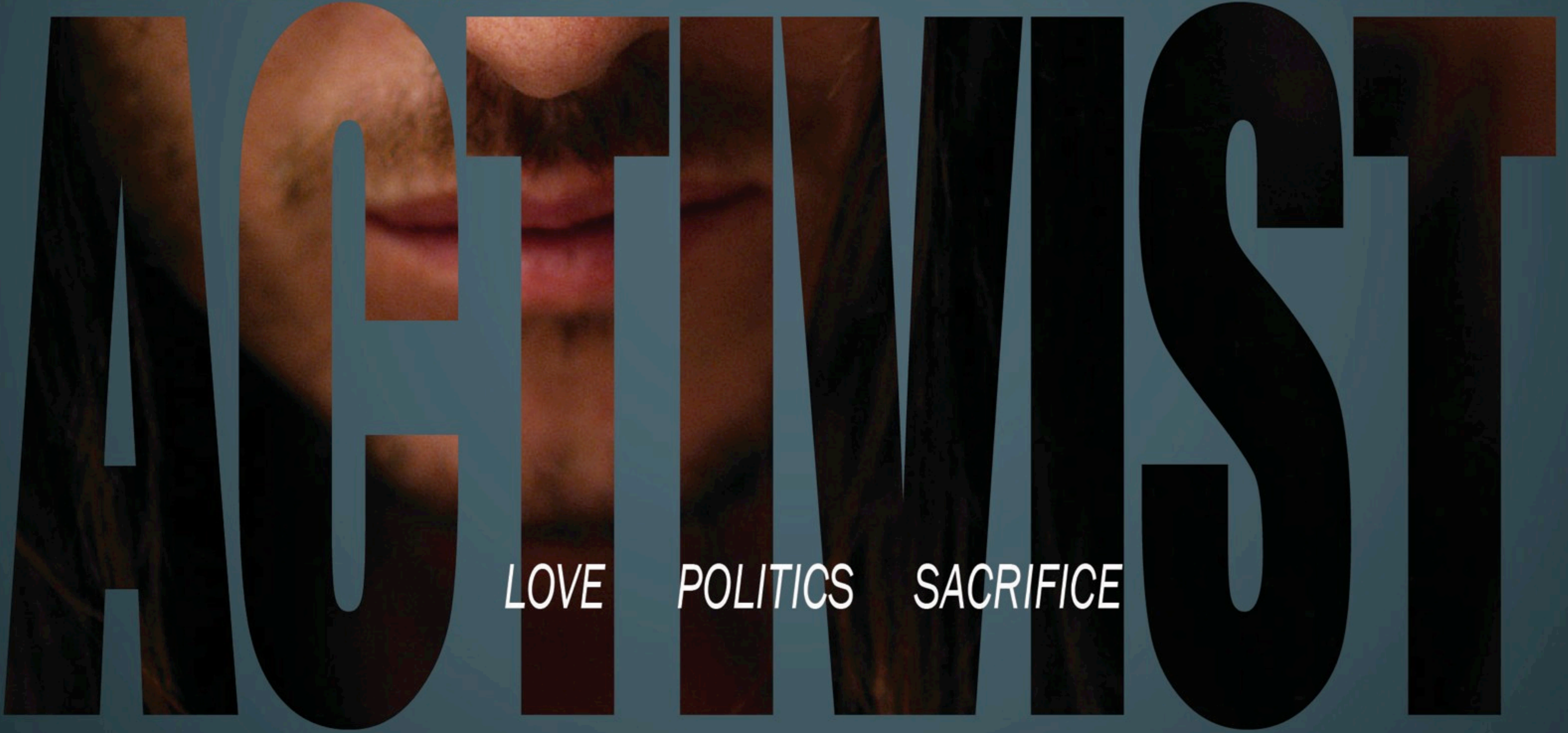
"INTRIGUING"

—LOS ANGELES TIMES

"THE ACTIVIST IS MOST NOTABLE AND WORTH SEEING"

—HOLLYWOOD PROGRESSIVE

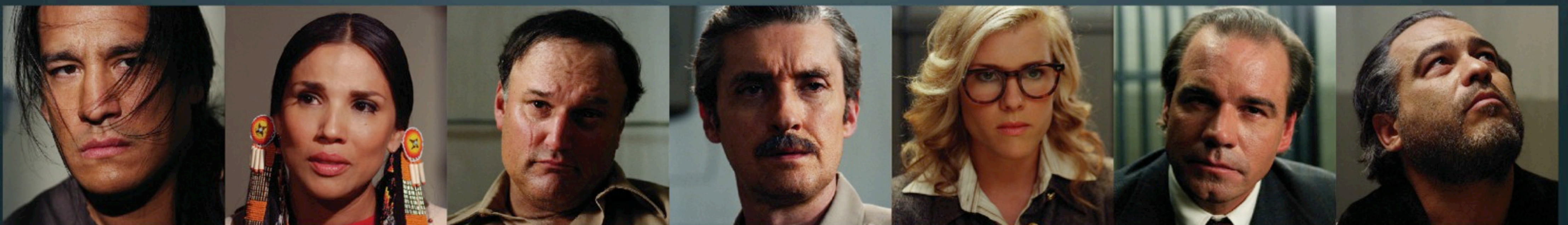
A FILM BY CYRIL MORIN



LOVE

POLITICS

SACRIFICE



MEDIA IN SYNC PRODUCTION CHADWICK E. BROWN TONANZIN CARMELO MICHAEL SPEARS RON ROGGE CIRCUS SZALEWSKI ALENA VON STROHEIM

AND ANTONY PALERMO KING ORBA HENRY LEBLANC MARIE BOLLINGER A CYRIL MORIN FILM

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY TABBERT FILLER

COLOR BY PITOF

PRODUCTION DESIGNER TYLER JENSEN

EDITED BY GIZI WYBEL

COSTUME DESIGNER ROSALIDA MEDINA

SOUND BY EMMETT CASEY

MUSIC BY CYRIL MORIN

PRODUCED BY CYRIL MORIN

KARINA PYUDIK

AURELIA ABATE

ARNAUD GAUTHIER

AMELIA GUYADER

DIRECTED BY CYRIL MORIN

MEDIA IN SYNC



MEDIA IN SYNC presents

THE ACTIVIST

A film by Cyril Morin

LENGTH 90 min

MEDIA IN SYNC
15, Rue d'Estrées 75007 Paris, France
23975 Park Sorrento, Suite 365, Calabasas, CA 91302 USA



February 1973 : the revival of the Indian cause.

More than eighty years after the Wounded Knee massacre; on February 27, 1973 the place again became the theater of a confrontation between the federal authorities and the activists of the American Indian Movement. On this day about 300 Oglala Sioux as well as sympathizers of the Indian cause gathered and occupied the village of Wounded Knee for their rights and land to be recognized. The conflict lasted for 72 days and many were killed or wounded.





SYNOPSIS

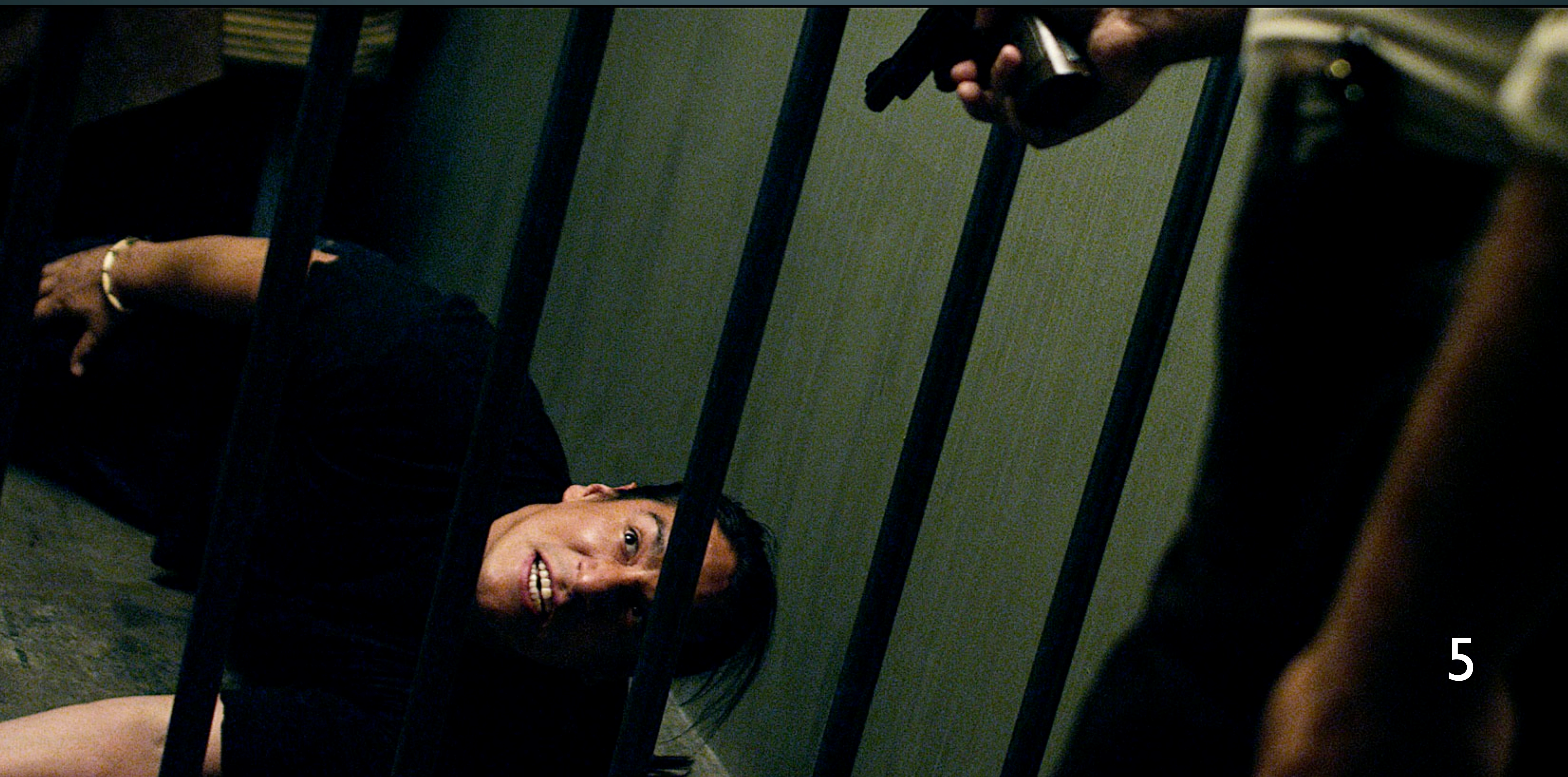
In 1973, during the insurrection, Marvin and Bud, two Native American activists, are arrested and thrown in jail.

Anna, Marvin's wife, died in an accident several months before.

Marvin is devastated and Bud consoles his friend during this perilous time. In jail, they must face two officers monitoring their every move and join forces with a young lawyer assigned to their case.

Why does a Nixon representative visit them in jail? And a Senator? And a Hollywood star? What is Nixon's role? What secret was Anna hiding before she died?

During the seventies, the world keeps spinning and tension arises in this simple jail in the middle of nowhere...



INTERVIEW WITH CYRIL MORIN

Writer - Director - Composer



Why this interest in the 1973 Wounded Knee uprising, the subject having never been depicted in a movie ?

CM: For a long time, I've been fascinated by the Indian culture and by their struggles. Wounded Knee, I believe, is the last Indian "war". The "war" that gives social and cultural revival to the Native Americans. Through this event, I also wanted to speak about the activism of the 70s. I find this insurrection illustrates well the change that took place in our society during that time.

I made a political thriller where the subplots in the background are historical, but where the actions and the characters are inspired by true events and famous characters.

You're talking about Marlon Brando, George McGovern and Nixon.

CM: All those characters were connected with what took place at Wounded Knee. The senator of South Dakota, George McGovern, big time loser against Nixon in the elections of 72, returned to the front of the political scene by periodically negotiating beside the insurgents.

Marlon Brando went to Wounded Knee and also fought for Indian rights all his life. In the film, I have recreated the famous scene in which he refused to accept the Academy Awards for his role in «The Godfather» because of the insurrection (March, 27 1973).

Nixon was ultimately the big loser during this time, because he went against the current and locked himself away prematurely with the wiretaps that resulted in the Watergate scandal. It is what concludes the movie. But the secret plan he signed shows a large amount of cynicism. Rules in Indian reservations are indeed not the same than in the rest of the country and certain people broke those rules -- and still abuse of them. It is one subject of the movie. Moreover, we can think that the siege went beyond what the uprising should have represented.



The movie happens almost in only one place. How did you approach the prison and the confinement?

CM: Generally, the activists are fairly familiar with prison and my characters undoubtedly were present during the Native American siege in Alcatraz, Washington, or even Custer. Here, it is about temporary jail cells, but the siege lasts longer than planned. The confinement creates tension and pushes the characters physically and psychologically.

To film it, I preferred to recreate a set in a studio to have more freedom, and especially to avoid a certain claustrophobia. But I liked the confinement aspect of it. The film I used as a reference was Sydney Lumet's "12 Angry Men". It's a perfect example of a "one location" movie.

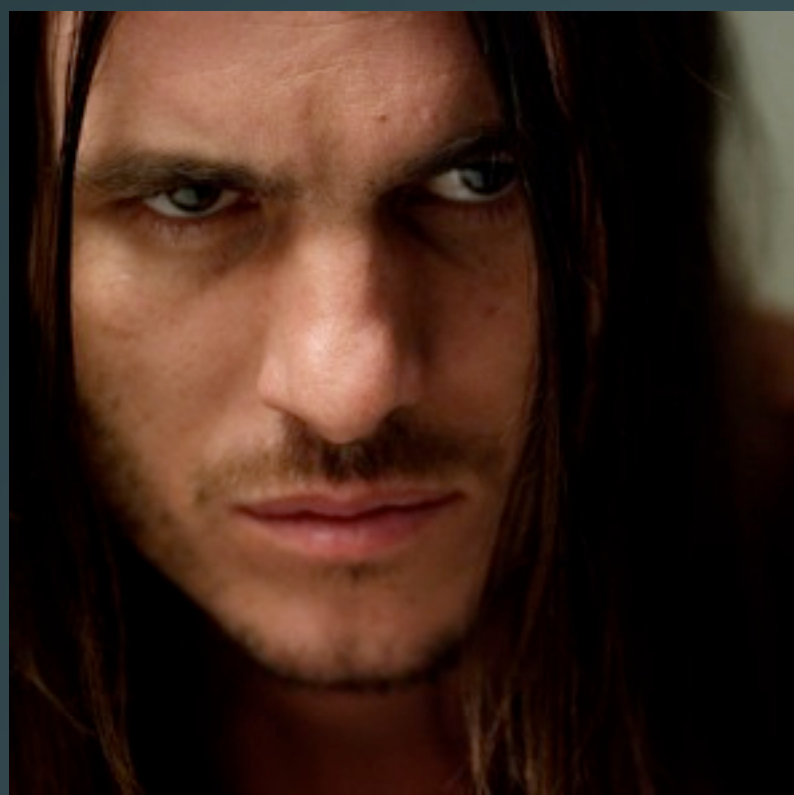
What about working with the set, the lighting and the technicians?

CM: The team was very cosmopolitan as only a team in Los Angeles can be. With Tabbert Fiiler, our director of photography, we wanted a contemporary image whereas the set (Tyler Jensen), the costumes (Rosalida Medina) and the make-up (Laci Hill) had to have a taste of the seventies. Each sequence was prepared on paper, with specific camera angles and lighting for each time of day. Everyone had a way of being filmed. The stable characters (Marvin, Henry) were on camera foot and the unstable characters (Frank, Bud) from the shoulder up. The violent scenes were filmed also from the shoulder up with lower angles and the calmer scenes were sometimes filmed from above or from a lateral point of view.

The images would not be complete without the contribution in post production of Pitof (Vidocq, Alien 4, The City Of Lost Children), who literally redesigned the lights and colors in postproduction. We added, for certain scenes at the end, visual effects done by Olivier Dumont (Tree of Life, The Prestige). For sound editing and mixing, I worked with a team at Wildfire (Gus Van Sant's mixer, among others) and finally, postproduction was supervised by Pascal Vaguely (The Fighter, Dear John) in Los Angeles.

How was working with the actors?

CM: It was important to have native American actors for the movie like Michael Spears (Dances with Wolves, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee) and Tonanzin Carmelo (Into the West, Imprint). I would not have been able to make the movie without them. It turns out that Michael's family was actively involved during the uprising and that his older brother was the only child born in Wounded Knee during the protests. Tonanzin is also a famous native American actress. It is also my second collaboration with Chad Brown (Marvin) and Alena Von Stroheim (Eric Von Stroheim's granddaughter) who plays the lawyer.



Chadwick E. Brown



Circus-Szalewski



Michael Spears



Henry Leblanc



Tonanzin Carmelo



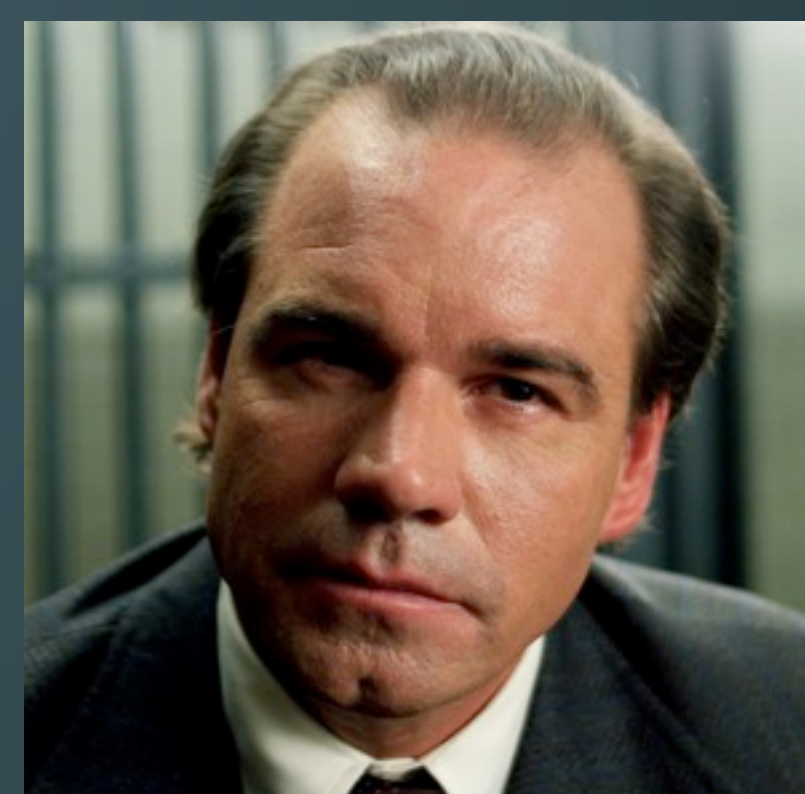
Alena Von Stroheim



King Orba



Ron Roggé



Anthony Palermo

CM: We rehearsed a lot before starting shooting to find the alchemy between the characters. Ron Roggé (Treme, Modern Family) and Circus-Szalewski (Conan) plays two Sheriffs who'd been working together for 20 years. King Orba (3:10 to Yuma) plays Marlon Brando. Anthony Palermo (Rollerball) plays Nixon's representative and Henry Leblanc (The Bold and the Beautiful), plays Senator George McGovern. I have to say that working with them was a wonderful professional experience both on a personal level and creatively.

What about the music ?

CM: Regarding the music, I have to say it is difficult to be both the director and the composer, since each discipline uses very different parts of the brain. I found myself going around in circles, sometimes finding it uneasy to concentrate on the music only. When you make a film you end up being quite busy and agitated. On the other hand, when you compose you have to remain calm and zen. It's difficult to combine the two.

I searched for inspiration from North American folk music like Neil Young or Nick Cave. I added different layers to add tension and violence. Moreover, to suggest the Vietnam War, I used references from Asia.

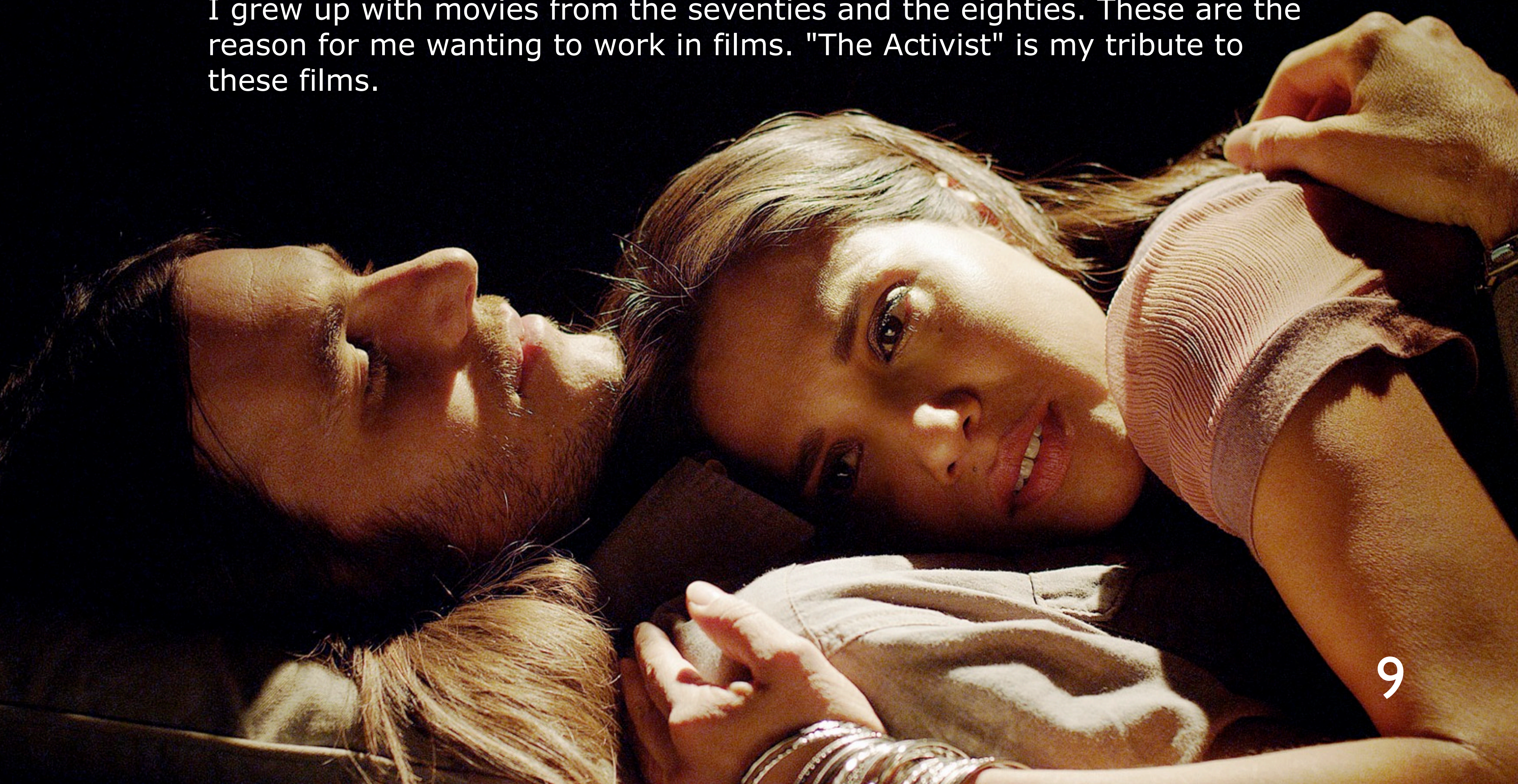
But I had a great team in Paris, Los Angeles and Budapest (for strings). I recorded all the guitars myself. I called upon the beautiful voices of Kate Yvorra and Michael Spears and piano by Matt Rolling (Lyle Lovett, Mark Knopfler). The music was mixed by Bruno Mercere from Sledge and produced by Arnaud Gauthier. We have a long collaboration together.

How do you feel after this first feature film experience?

CM: I must say that the filmmaking process left me in a state of permanent shock, a spinning wheel that doesn't stop for months and despite that you still have to go the distance. I found the human adventure intense, and everyone's generosity during filming and during the post left me extremely touched.

For this film, I applied the same technique I use for music or writing scripts. You have to be prepared and work as much as possible, so that little is left to chance. Creation is always based on the same energy, whether it's music, writing, graphic arts or directing. I found that energy with artists that I admire like David Lynch, Dennis Hopper or even Miles Davis, who were also painters.

I grew up with movies from the seventies and the eighties. These are the reason for me wanting to work in films. "The Activist" is my tribute to these films.



BIOGRAPHY

Cyril Morin makes his directorial debut after an international career as a composer (around 80 movies, among them, Samsara, The Syrian Bride or more recently, Zaytoun by Eran Riklis, as well as the series Borgia, and Mafosia). His music was rewarded by numerous festivals: Cannes, Vallaloid, Israël, Aubagne, Auxerre, etc... , and he was also nominated by the European Film Awards and the World Soundtrack Awards. He has achieved renown in the international press for his enduring "multiple talents ".

It is only natural that producing and directing has sparked his interests:

He first produced several music videos and directed his first short film "Homere", using archive images in 1995. Then, he co-wrote and produced a documentary for the Surfrider Foundation titled: "The Spirit of Water."

He then continued his creative trajectory by writing several short films, followed by a feature film script in 2009 titled: "The Traffickers." In 2011, he directed "The Application Café", a short film shot in the California desert, inspired by European directors with an approach to the American myth.

In 2012, he wrote and directed his first feature, "The Activist", a political thriller with the 1973 Wounded Knee incident in South Dakota as the film's backdrop. The film includes actors Michael Spears (Dances With Wolves) and Alena Von Stroheim.



ARTISTIC LIST

Chadwick E.Brown
Tonanzin Carmelo
Michael Spears
Ron Roggé
Circus-Szalewski
Alena Von Stroheim
Anthony Palermo
King Orba
Henry Leblanc
Marie Bollinger
Gichi Gamba
Christine Barger
Sue Gisser
Mariah Bonner
Callie Garisson
Fernando Paiz

Marvin Brown
Anna Ward
Bud «One Bull» Ward
Frank McCarthy
Henry Frasier
Claire Chapman
James Carson
Marlon
The Senator
Terry Miles
Sherman
Sue
Christine
Secretary Victoria
Secretary Daphné
The Spy

TECHNICAL LIST

Cyril Morin
Cyril Morin
Karina Pyudik
Aurelia Abate
Arnaud Gauthier
Amelia Guyader
Tabbert Fiiller
Pitof
Tyler Jensen
Marie Hélène Riverain
Leny Iniguez
Rosalida Medina
Gizi Weibel
François Maurin
Emett Casey
Cyril Morin
Arnaud Gauthier / Music Package
Bruno Mercere
Mandell Winter
Martyn Zub
Olivier Dumont
Pascal Vaguelsy

Author, Director
Producers, Coproducers

Director of Photography
Color
Production Designer
First Assistant Director
Script
Costumes
Editor
Titles, Masters
Sound
Composer
Music Production
Music Mixer
Sound Editor
Mixing
Special Effects
Post Production

