

THE MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION PRESENTS

**“A compelling
close-up critique.”**

DUSTIN TAHMAHKERA,
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
AT AUSTIN

**“Artistic, political,
culturally relevant.”**

JOSHUA NELSON,
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

A Film By John and Kenn Little

MORE THAN A WORD

A film about
Native American-based sports
mascots and the Washington R*dkins



SCREENING GUIDE

“Makes crystal clear that the fight against Indian mascots is a central part of the wider struggle of Indigenous people for political, educational, and socio-economic justice today.” KEVIN BRUYNEEL, BABSON COLLEGE

ABOUT THE FILM

More Than a Word offers a fascinating look inside the growing movement to change the name of the Washington Redskins football team. Directed by brothers John and Kenn Little, who are members of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, the film traces how the word “redskin” evolved from being a term of racist derision and slander to being embraced as the name of one of the NFL’s most beloved franchises. It also draws on the voices of Native American activists and scholars to place this controversy within the wider context of Native American history and racial stereotyping more generally. *More Than a Word* is an ideal resource for clarifying what’s truly at stake in contemporary debates about cultural appropriation and Native American-themed mascots.

HOSTING A SCREENING

The movement against Native American sports mascots has been gaining serious momentum over the past year, inspiring a long-overdue reckoning with one of the last socially acceptable forms of racial stereotyping. We believe that *More Than a Word*, which looks at this contentious issue through the eyes of Native Americans, can transform the conversation. Film screenings are an important space where people come together, simultaneously watch the same film, and then engage in important conversation afterward. *More Than a Word* is an ideal tool for opening up dialogue between students, faculty, staff, and the wider community about the personal and social costs of America’s long history of misappropriating indigenous identity and imagery for purposes of entertainment.

So what do you need to do to host a successful screening?

PLAN YOUR SCREENING

1. Identify your audience and goals.

The first step is to identify your audience. Who do you want to reach? College students? Activists in your community? Members of your church?

What is the goal of your screening? Are you raising awareness about a local campaign to change a mascot? Are you a part of an organization or a student club that raises awareness about social justice issues? Are you an educator who wants to make sure students are informed about the issues this film addresses?

Consider inviting an expert to come speak at your screening. The filmmakers are available to attend a limited number of events. To inquire about their availability and fees, contact Tanaya Winder at morethanawordfilm@gmail.com. Alternatively, there may be people available in your local community who could introduce the film, facilitate a post-screening conversation, or sit on a panel.

If you are at a college or university, contact the departments of Latino and/or Native American Studies, or reach out to local colleges. If there are tribal reservations near you, contact them to speak to an outreach team member. You can also reach out to morethanawordfilm@gmail.com for referrals.

Forward [discussion questions](#) to anyone who might be speaking at your event. If you are leading a post-screening discussion yourself, review the discussion questions and activities, and choose the ones you'd like to use. Note that, while the discussion guides are geared for use in a campus setting, they can be easily adapted for use in community discussions.

Also, consider partnering with others to widen the reach for your event. Reach out to groups and organizations on your campus or in your community that advocate for issues related to Native American culture, media representations, fairness in sports, or social justice. You can also partner with individuals in your community who are affected or share your interest in such issues.

Here are some ideas for potential partners:

On your campus:

- Native American Studies Department
- American Studies Department
- Office of Diversity
- Native American student groups
- History Department
- Center for Social Justice

In your community:

- Tribal leaders
- Native American and social justice organizations
- Experts on Native American and Indigenous studies at other educational institutions located in your city or state
- Local activists and artists in your area

Once you clarify your goals and the outcomes you're looking for, the rest of the planning will come together.

2. Schedule a date, time, and location for the screening.

Find a place to host the screening. Estimate the anticipated audience size for your screening, and keep this in mind while searching for a venue. If you are on a college campus, check with your department, the office of diversity and inclusion, or the student activities office to see if they would be willing to sign on as a co-sponsor of the event and/or to help you reserve a room. If you are organizing the screening in your community, see if there is a room in your public library, a community screening room you can rent, or a space in a local church.

You could also host an outdoor screening, if the weather allows, at an urban park, on a rooftop, in a backyard, or even at the beach, if there's one close by. Be creative.

Make sure to reserve your venue for enough time to allow adequate time for screening the film and discussion. *More Than a Word* is 70 minutes. We suggest reserving the venue for at least two to three hours to allow for set-up, the screening, discussion, and clean-up.

Choose a date and time at least 6 weeks in the future and start your planning.

3. Promote your screening.

Now that you have your goals, location, date, and time set, start getting the word out! We have put together some promotional materials to help you. <http://www.mediaed.org/more-than-a-word-screening-guide/>

- Download a customizable screening poster, fill in your information, and then print it out. Hang up posters around campus or around town. Coffee shops and book stores often have bulletin boards or allow you to hang posters in their windows.
- Create an event page on Facebook, invite your network, and ask others to share the event and invite their networks. Be sure to tag [Media Education Foundation](#) and [More Than a Word](#) so we can see your event!
- Post about the screening on social media networks. (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). We have some shareable graphics and pre-written posts prepared for you. <http://www.mediaed.org/more-than-a-word-screening-guide/>
- Write a press release and submit it to your local newspapers and radio station. Play up local angles, and be persistent in your outreach and follow-up.
- Submit an event listing to your weekly or daily paper calendar listings. (This is usually something available at no cost.) Find the department or individual who is in charge of event listings to get the guidelines and deadlines for submissions.
- Use e-mail lists – write to your own contacts and see if any organizations might be willing to partner with you to promote the screening to their lists.
- Word of mouth – make sure to talk up the screening as often as you can. Speak enthusiastically and get people excited about the screening.

4. What else would you like to include in your event?

Do you want to have refreshments at your event? Will you be selling merchandise? Will you be having a raffle? Make a list of the things you need to buy or coordinate ahead of time, and make sure to reserve tables (and have table cloths) for anything additional you'll have included.

5. Assemble a team.

If you haven't been planning the screening with others from the beginning, make sure to ask some people to volunteer to help you with promotion and the day of the event. Before the screening, you'll want people to help you hang up posters, post about the screening on social media, and gather materials. On the day of the screening, you'll want volunteers to welcome audience members and direct traffic, help with the a/v equipment (it can be helpful to appoint one tech-savvy person to do only that), take pictures of the audience and the screening, and staff any tables you have set up.

6. Make a checklist of all the things you need to do and get ahead of time and keep updating it as you get closer to the screening.

SCREENING DAY

You've worked hard to plan and promote the screening, and the day is finally here. What are some things to keep in mind during the screening itself?

1. Test the equipment ahead of time.

Test the projector, connections, and sound ahead of time to make sure that everything is working. Make sure that the DVD is playing correctly and that any microphones have been audio-tested. Get the wifi network name and password in advance. It is also helpful to have a table for handouts and email signup sheets.

2. Introduce the film

It adds a nice touch to introduce a film before you press "play." If you have invited an expert, you can ask the expert to introduce the film. If you are introducing the film yourself, you can thank the audience for coming and say a few things about why you chose to host the screening and why the film is important to you.

3. Enjoy the screening!

While the audience is watching the screening, it is helpful to sit in the back of the venue, so that audience members or any of your volunteers can find you to ask questions. Be ready to address technical issues if they arise.

4. Document the event

Make sure to take plenty of pictures of the screening, the venue, the audience, and any post-screening conversation. You can post these on social media afterward to continue to raise awareness about your event and the issue (remember to tag us and use the hashtag **#MTAWScreening**). You might also consider using the following hashtags: **#MoreThanAWord**; **#NotYourMascot**; **#ChangeTheName**. Please also share these with us. We might share them on our social media networks, too!

POST SCREENING

If possible, create a way to facilitate a discussion post-screening. This will offer your audience members the opportunity to reflect on the film and consider ways that they can be part of the solution. Here are a few different ways that you can go about engaging your audience.

1. Panel discussion

Convene 3-5 experts and/or local stakeholders sit on a panel. It works best for discussion if the experts come to the topic from different perspectives. i.e. You can invite an activist in the Indigenous community, a Native American Studies professor, and a football fan committed to eliminating Native American-based sports mascots. Have a series of pre-formed questions that a facilitator poses and then each panel member should answer each question.

2. Have a facilitator (you or someone you designate) ask a series of questions and have audience members answer.

Discussion question ideas:

- What did you learn from watching the film? Did anything surprise you?
- Why do the filmmakers think it's important to remove Native American-based sports mascots and to change slanderous team names?
- One of the arguments against changing the names of sports teams is that 'it's taking political correctness too far.' Why is it important that we are respectful of the terminology we use and how it affects others?
- Are there any **#ChangeTheName** campaigns happening locally? On your college campus, in your community, or at a local high school? How does watching the film inform your understanding of these campaigns?

- The film shows how representation affects real-life policies related to Native Americans. Susan Shown Harjo asks about the Dakota Access Pipeline, “How is it that they’re able to proceed in the way that they have? Well, the first way is that they believe in their own racist stereotypes about Native people.” How do mascots and team names contribute to racist stereotypes about Native people? How do these stereotypes contribute to the way that society responds to Native issues and legislation and policy that predominantly affects Native and Indigenous people? To what legislation is passed?
- One of the fans in the film says, “I think what they did was, like everything else, they’re mixing a lot of things with politics. And this is supposed to be entertainment.”

In the MEF film *Wrestling With Manhood*, Sut Jhally responds to the idea that professional wrestling is ‘just entertainment’ by telling this historical anecdote: “It’s a standard technique for keeping people passive. For instance, the Berlin nightclubs in the 1930’s were full of comedians making anti-Semitic jokes, and the people laughing at them were not loading Jews onto death trains, but they were the German citizens who stood by and did nothing, that took no action as their neighbors were being herded away.”

What are the consequences of dismissing harmful racist stereotypes as ‘just entertainment’? What does it mean when we’re entertained by something that hurts other people?

- Mascots are meant to be symbols. What is symbolized by Native American-based mascots? What are the nuances and complications that are missed by these symbols?
- In the film, Jared Ball says, “Something has to be said...about the power of propaganda, the power of environment.” What does he mean by this? What is the power of propaganda? And the power of environment? How do propaganda and our environments shape our ideas of ourselves and each other?
- What ideas do you have for how you can get involved in resisting racist stereotypes of Native Americans?

3. Traditional Q&A format

This works best when filmmakers and/or experts are in attendance at your screening. Set up microphones in the audience and allow audience members to pose questions for the experts. Be prepared for how you will cut off a question or comment that goes on and on and perhaps goes off-topic.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Tell us how your screening went! We've created a [Screening Feedback Form](#) that you can fill out and upload photos from the event. Share your experience with others, too. Chat about it with friends, post about it on your social media channels (be sure to tag us), write about the screening on your blog, and/or send an e-mail. Use the hashtags **#MTAW**, **#MTAWScreening**, **#NotYourMascot**, and **#ChangeTheName**.

We may post about your event on the More Than a Word website, the Media Education Foundation website, or our social media networks!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Organizations

ChangeTheMascot.org is a national campaign to end the use of the racial slur “r*dskins” as the mascot and name of the NFL team in Washington, D.C. Launched by the Oneida Indian Nation, the campaign calls upon the NFL and Commissioner Roger Goodell to bring an end to the use of the racial epithet. They offer an extensive list of supports of change on their website:

<http://www.changethemascot.org/supporters-of-change/>

And suggestions for taking action: <http://www.changethemascot.org/take-action/>

Not Your Mascots is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to educating about the harm native mascots have on native children. https://www.facebook.com/pg/notyourmascots/about/?ref=page_internal

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has a longstanding campaign (launched in 1968) to address stereotypes of Native people in popular culture and media, as well as in sports.

<http://www.ncai.org/proudtobe>

Video

Native Peoples Speak Out About Native Mascot is a video by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). Watch on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRribtqdXGw>

Proud to Be | Change the Mascot

Produced by Taly Oehler. Watch on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/143507536>

Research

Studies that examine the social impact and consequences of Native American-based sports mascots on Native American communities:

Do American Indian Mascot = American Indian People? Examining Implicit Bias Towards American Indian People and American Indian Mascots (Chaney, Burke and Burkley, 2011) [Read](#)

Effect of Exposure to an American Indian Mascot on the Tendency to Stereotype a Different Minority Group (Kim-Prieto, Okazaki, Goldstein and Kirschner, 2009) [Read](#)

Indian sports nicknames/logos: affective difference between American Indian and non-Indian college students (LaRocque, McDonald, Weatherly and Ferraro) [Read](#)

A question of honor: Chief Wahoo and American Indian stereotype activation among a university based sample (Freng and Willis-Esqueda) [Read](#)