

Open your mind to Indigenous Peoples' Day

By Liz Brunton, Racial Justice Team

While many around us continue to celebrate Christopher Columbus on the second Monday in October, the movement to recognize that day as Indigenous Peoples' Day has been growing since 1977. For indigenous Americans, Columbus Day has always been hurtful in its glorification of a character who participated in the violent colonization of communities who had prior existed in successful, self-sufficient communities.

In an effort to broaden our understanding of indigenous populations, we thought it would cool to highlight recent native-led entertainment options that you may have missed. Native American representation in both storyline and talent have been severely underrepresented in media, and virtually nonexistent in creative roles behind the camera. This is changing and this list proves it. One or more will surely scratch your entertainment itch!

Prey (Action Adventure film/Hulu): The film is a prequel to "Predator," and it stars Amber Midthunder as Naru, a young Comanche woman who is determined to protect her family, including her dog. Midthunder is Hunkpapa Lakota, Sahiya Nakoda and Sisseton Dakota. And behind the scenes, producer Jane Myers ensured that the language, regalia and every last cradle board were authentic to the Comanche Nation in time. She is a member of the Comanche and Blackfeet Nations.

Dark Winds (Crime Drama series/AMC+): Follows Leaphorn and Chee, two Navajo police officers in the 1970s Southwest that are forced to challenge their own spiritual beliefs when they search for clues in a double murder case. Based on Tony Hillerman's novel series, Dark Winds makes history for its predominant Native cast and crew with a promised second season on the way. Among others in this production, Native representation is seen in the following: Director Chris Eyre is Cheyenne/Arapaho. Staff writer Maya Ross Dittloff is Mandan, Hidatsa, and Blackfoot. Actor Eugene Brave Rock is Blackfoot from the Blood Tribe in Alberta Canada.

Rutherford Falls (Comedy series/Peacock): Rutherford Falls centers on lifelong best friends Caucasian Nathan Rutherford and indigenous Reagan Wells clash over changes to their hometown. In Season 2, the two help each other tackle work, romance and major changes to their small town and the Native American reservation it borders, initiated by Tribal Casino CEO.

The series had one of the largest Indigenous writer's rooms on television with five Native writers staffed on the series including Teller Ornelas (Navajo), Bobby Wilson (Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota), Tai Leclair (Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk Nation]/Mi'kmaq), Schmieding (Cheyenne River Lakota Sioux) and Tazbah Chavez (Bishop Paiute/Diné/San Carlos Apache) as well as Greyeyes ([Nêhiyaw (Plains Cree) from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation – Treaty Six Territory in Saskatchewan]) on screen.

And my favorite:

Reservation Dogs (Comedy/dramedy series/Hulu): Reservation Dogs is an Indigenous American teen comedy drama television series created by Sterlin Harjo and Taika Waititi for FX Productions. It is a notable first in that it features all Indigenous writers and directors, along with an almost entirely Indigenous North American cast and production team. Set in Oklahoma's Native American territory (and

filmed there!), it blends humor, satire, pathos, social and magical realism, and tribal lore and history into a fresh, funny, and heartfelt series appealing to teens and adults alike.