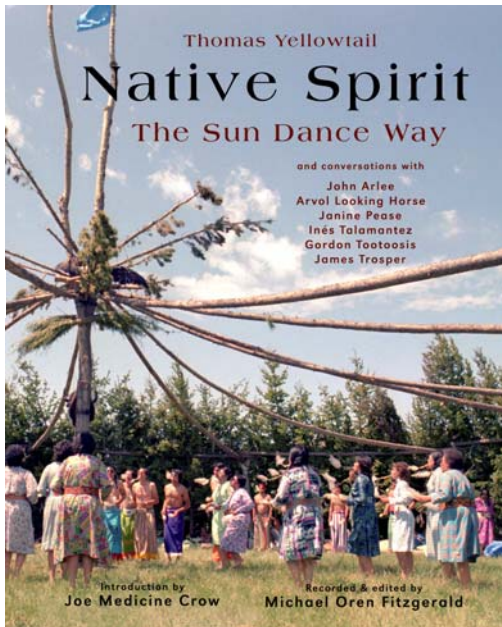


Native Spirit & The Sun Dance Way Book and Documentary Available March 2007

Book



Native Spirit & The Sun Dance Way is a unique documentary and companion book which introduces the Sun Dance, the spiritual center of the Native American religion. The words of Thomas Yellowtail, a revered Sun Dance chief of the Crow Indian tribe, are brought to life by the internationally known American Indian actor, Gordon Tootoosis.

Through *Native Spirit* you can experience:

- ❖ A deeper understanding of the complex Crow-Shoshone religion, including the power of the Sun Dance;
- ❖ Interviews with prominent Indian leaders including Janine Pease, Joe Medicine Crow, and James Trosper;

- ❖ A stunning feast of rare visual images from unique photographs and video footage of Crow and Shoshone Sun Dances from as early as 1903.

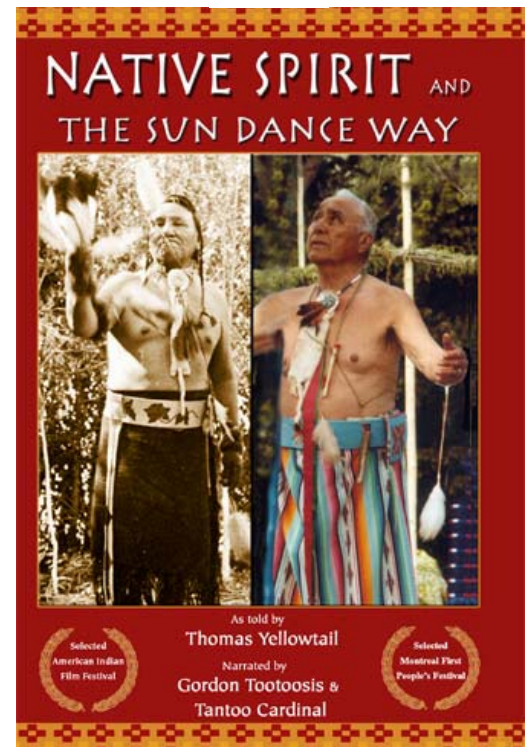
DVD

What special features are in *Native Spirit*?

Native Spirit & The Sun Dance Way contains two documentaries—*Native Spirit* (30 min.) which explores the cultural preservation of the American Indian way of life and *The Sun Dance Way* (60 min.) which explains the spiritual aspects of the Sun Dance religion. There is a second disc with 50 minutes of special features, including:

- ❖ The Sweat Lodge, Sacred Pipe, and Vision Quest;
- ❖ Interviews with Tribal Elders;
- ❖ Advice to Young People from the Elders;
- ❖ A Biography of Thomas Yellowtail;
- ❖ Preserving Sacred Wisdom; and
- ❖ Conversations and Songs with Thomas Yellowtail.

This documentary has been chosen to appear at Montreal's First People's Film Festival and the 31st Annual American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco.



World Wisdom



Additional information

- ❖ The *Native Spirit* two-disc documentary DVD (1-933316-32-2) is priced at \$32.95.
- ❖ The *Native Spirit* (1-933316-27-6, \$19.95, trim size 8x10) companion book will contain 120 pages of color and sepia photographs along with additional content from Thomas Yellowtail's narration of the documentary.
- ❖ The *Native Spirit* documentary and companion book will be sold separately.

About the narrator Gordon Tootoosis

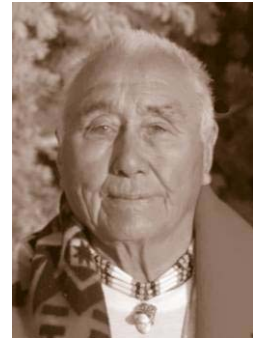


Born on Saskatchewan's Poundmaker Reserve, Gordon Tootoosis was raised with a strong Cree belief system and knowledge of the Cree language, art, and worldview. As an adult, Tootoosis became a champion of native rights and even acted as a band chief. He also pursued his talent as an artist—learning painting, sculpture, and drama. In 1972, he got his first big break when he landed the role of Almighty Voice in the movie *Alien Thunder* which co-starred Donald Sutherland.

A veteran of over 40 films, Tootoosis has appeared with such stars as Ben Affleck and Charlize Theron in *Reindeer Games* (2000) and joined an all-star cast in *Legends of the Fall* (1994) with such actors as Brad Pitt and Anthony Hopkins. Tootoosis has also performed in the television series *Due South*, *Lonesome Dove*, and *Hawkeye* as well as spending five seasons on the hit show *North of 60* as a series regular. He is also the winner of the Eagle Spirit award at the American Indian Motion Picture awards in 2001. Currently, Tootoosis lives with his wife of over 40 years, Irene Sesequasis, on the Poundmaker Reserve.

About the inspiration: Thomas Yellowtail

Born in 1903, medicine man and Sun Dance Chief Thomas Yellowtail was the principal figure in the Crow-Shoshone Sun Dance religion during the last half of the 20th century. As a youth he lived in the presence of old warriors, hunters, and medicine men who knew the freedom and sacred ways of pre-preservation life. In 1993, Yellowtail received the Montana Governor's Award for the Arts in recognition of his work in preserving the traditional culture of the Crow tribe.



Yellowtail died at age 90. He was one of the most admired American Indian spiritual leaders of the last century. The story of his life and his descriptions of the Sun Dance religion are revealed in the book *Yellowtail: Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance Chief*, edited by Michael Fitzgerald, and published by the University of Oklahoma Press (1991).

About the voices in *Native Spirit*

Gordon Tootoosis, a veteran of over 40 films, has appeared in such movies as *Reindeer Games* (2000) and *Legends of the Fall* (1994). He is a member of the Cree tribe.

James Trosper is a Sun Dance chief of the Shoshone Tribe in Fort Washakie, WY. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Grand Teton National Park Foundation and a Trustee of the University of Wyoming.

Dr. Joe Medicine Crow is the Crow Tribal Historian and the oldest living man of the Crow tribe. He is the author of several books on the Crow tribe. Medicine Crow is the last traditional Crow chief, having achieved the war deeds necessary to be declared a “chief” during World War II.

Dr. Janine Pease is the founding president of the Little Big Horn College, a director of the American Indian College Fund, and was appointed by President Clinton to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

Tantoo Cardinal is a member of the Cree tribe and is a veteran of over 60 films including *Legends of the Fall* (1994).

About the director Jennifer Casey



Jennifer Casey knew Thomas Yellowtail, the Crow Sun Dance chief, through Yellowtail's adopted son, Michael Fitzgerald. She made her first visit to the Crow reservation at the age of seventeen. For over 35 years she traveled to many Plains Indian reservations and met with numerous tribal leaders and Sun Dance chiefs. She lives with her husband and two teenage children in Bloomington, Indiana.

About the producer Michael Fitzgerald

When Thomas Yellowtail received a message from his Medicine Fathers that he should record and preserve his sacred wisdom, he entrusted the task to his adopted son, Michael Fitzgerald. He spent the following summer living in Yellowtail's home in Wyola, Montana. Each year thereafter the Fitzgerald family visited Yellowtail during the summer, always attending the annual Sun Dance and often camping with the Yellowtails.



The Crow have always restricted photographing or filming of their Sun Dances. However, Yellowtail gave Fitzgerald permission to photograph the annual Sun Dances. In addition, he gave Fitzgerald exclusive permission to film the 1989 Crow Sun Dance. This authorization by Yellowtail created a unique visual record that helped to accomplish Yellowtail's desire to preserve and explain the Sun Dance religion for future generations. Yellowtail's permission to produce and sell the film and books that he helped to prepare was on the condition that all profits from those projects be donated to various American Indian charities.

Michael Fitzgerald is also author of numerous books on American Indian spirituality including *Yellowtail: Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance Chief* (1991), *Light on the Indian World: The Essential Writings of Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa)* (2002), *Indian Spirit* (2004), *The Spirit of Indian Women* (2005), and *Indian Spirit: Revised & Enlarged* (2006).

