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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE
The purpose of the guide is to provide an opportunity for deeper engagement with the film as well as the experiences of the people in the film.

The guide provides further background regarding colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism, in particular experiences that the filmmaker and family have shared with audiences after screenings. Given that the filmmaker and family cannot attend every screening, our hope is that the guide will help organizers create a supportive viewing environment.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:
The guide draws from many sources of community and scholarly work.

Jade Tootoosis (B.A.) is a nehiyaw iskwew from the Red Pheasant Cree Nation in Treaty 6 territory and the Rocky Boy Chippewa Cree Nation in Montana. She is the sister/cousin of the late Colten Boushie and has been one of the spokespersons for her family in their international pursuit of justice for their relative. #JusticeForColten became a movement and call to action for change to Canada’s legal systems. Her family’s stance is that no other Indigenous family should suffer a loss and endure the injustices and systemic racism that they did. Jade has committed her words and actions to this movement, as she continues to advocate for justice for Indigenous people in Canada.

Sheelah McLean (Ph.D.) is a third-generation white settler from Treaty 6 territory. She is an anti-racism teacher, researcher and scholar whose work has focused on addressing white supremacy within a settler colonial context. Sheelah is also an organizer in the Idle No More network, a movement that calls for the protection of Indigenous self-determination and land. Sheelah works in curriculum development for San’yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training.
POST-SCREENING

We encourage you to discuss what you have learned from the film with others, and to explore your own upbringing and experiences and how they shape the way you think and respond.

The material in the film can be triggering and heavy, so an emphasis on the need for self-care and support is crucial.

SYNOPSIS OF THE FILM

On a summer day in 2016, a young Indigenous man named Colten Boushie was shot point-blank in the head after driving onto a farmer’s property with his friends. The emotionally charged trial, and ultimate acquittal of shooter Gerald Stanley, exposed the intense anti-Indigenous racism that defines life on the canadian prairies and goes to the heart of the nation’s judicial system.

Colten Boushie and his friends were unarmed when Stanley fired the fatal shot, which he would later claim was accidental. After attending the scene, the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) left Colten’s body in the rain overnight, washing away crucial evidence, while they questioned Boushie’s family members, who were nowhere near the scene. These early steps in the investigation set the stage for a devastating process that sent shockwaves through Indigenous communities across canada, and gained international attention.

Award-winning filmmaker Tasha Hubbard follows the case and its aftermath from her perspective as a Cree mother fuelled by the need to protect future generations of Indigenous boys, including her young son and nephew. Hubbard, whose previous films with the National Film Board have delved into Indigenous family separations during the ‘60s Scoop (Birth of a Family) and the infamous freezing deaths of Saskatoon men dumped by police officers (Two Worlds Colliding), steps in front of the camera for the first time with the desire to highlight the personal toll the case has taken on the lives of Indigenous people.

nipawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up weaves a complex narrative encompassing the filmmaker’s own adoption, the long history of violence against Indigenous people in the region, and a mother’s fears in a dangerous climate of anti-Indigenous attitudes.

As Hubbard uncovers the systemic racism that marks the investigation, the trial and the public response, she also shines a light on the powerful voices of Indigenous women that emerge from the process. Finding strength in the memory of their beloved son and brother, Colten’s mother Debbie Baptiste and sister/cousin Jade Tootoosis take their search for justice to the highest echelons of power, and vow to stand up to the colonial judicial and policing systems that have been the instruments of Indigenous oppression for centuries.
AWARDS & RECOGNITION
As of January 21, 2020

Best Canadian Documentary, Vancouver Film Critics Circle, Vancouver, BC

Magnus-Isacsson Award, Student’s Award and Women Inmate’s Award, Montreal International Documentary Festival, Montreal (RIDM)

Hot Docs Best Canadian Feature – Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, Toronto, ON

Colin Low Award for Canadian Documentary – DOXA Documentary Film Festival, Vancouver, BC

Best Documentary, Best Director – Weengushk International Film Festival, M’Chigeeng First Nation, ON

Best of Fest, Audience Choice Award – Gimli Film Festival, Gimli, MB

Audience Choice Award – Feature Film – imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, Toronto, ON

Sun Jury Award – imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, Toronto, ON

Discovery Award – Director, Tasha Hubbard – Directors Guild of Canada

Special Jury Prize for Social Justice – Calgary International Film Festival, Calgary, AB

To find synopses, downloadable images, clips, trailers and bios from nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up, please visit: mediaspace.nfb.ca/epk/we-will-stand-up
INTENTIONS OF THE GUIDE

“We don’t just speak for my brother Colten. We represent all those who have also went through the process and received no justice and faced all the systemic discrimination that we’ve endured. We stand here for them. That’s what Justice for Colten is about”.

– Jade Tootoosis, Colten’s sister/cousin

It is the wish of Colten Boushie’s mother, Debbie Baptiste, and Colten’s family that communities engage in anti-racism education and action, with the hope that other families do not have to face the same heartbreak. The film *nipawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up* examines the details of the trial and the family’s tireless work to advocate for justice, and situates these events within the larger colonial context in Canada. This accompanying film guide invites the audience to:

- make connections between our history of colonization and ongoing colonial practices in our institutions, with the goal of transforming these harmful practices;
- recognize Indigenous sovereignty and inherent rights to jurisdiction over land, resources and governance systems (education, justice, child welfare, etc.);
- build awareness regarding anti-Indigenous racism and the injustices Indigenous people face in the Canadian legal system, as well as other institutions;
- examine the common myths, stereotypes and misinformation about Indigenous people that produce harmful attitudes and actions in a colonial context;
- engage in discussion regarding the responsibility of allies moving forward;
- draw from the preparation and guided checklists for hosting the film in your community.
“Do you ever want to go back to how it was? Like before the settlers came?”

– Tasha Hubbard’s son

Indigenous people have lived on the prairies since time immemorial. Each Nation has complex and unique language systems, governance systems, economies, education systems, family systems and spiritual beliefs. Few Canadians are aware that our society draws from Indigenous knowledge systems and practices that continue to influence and shape our contemporary world. This includes ideas on democracy, farming practices, medicine and health, views on astronomy and protecting the natural world, etc. For over 50,000 years, Indigenous people developed societies that worked in relation to the lands and other non-human nations. While Indigenous social and political systems were impacted by colonialism, Indigenous people continue to draw strength from their families, communities and knowledge systems that have been protected and passed down through generations.

INDIGENOUS STRENGTH & RESILIENCE

“One of the things that Mooshum always said was that we’re here because the people who came before us loved us so much. That’s how come we’re still here.”

– Tasha Hubbard, Director

An underlying message that emerges from the film is the strength and resilience of Indigenous people. From historical examples of resistance such as those of Chief Big Bear and Chief Poundmaker, to the perseverance of Colten’s family in seeking justice, the audience witnesses how the love Indigenous people have for their children and families, their culture and their lands provides a foundation to maintain sovereignty and self-determination.

EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF THE FILM

We want to acknowledge that the content of the film and Community Engagement Guide will have a different level of impact on Indigenous people than it will on non-Indigenous people, given our context of colonialism and differential treatment. While the topics of racism and racialized violence can be discomforting for everyone, some may respond to them more intensely than others. Indigenous people may feel discomforted or triggered by the film because of their daily reality and experiences of racism and discrimination in Canada. The content of the film can be especially traumatic for those who have lost a loved one to violence and/or experienced the harsh process of the Canadian legal systems. We encourage Indigenous people to seek out support after viewing the film.
At the same time that Indigenous people experience the negative impacts of anti-Indigenous racism, settlers continue to accrue many benefits from colonialism. The discomfort that non-Indigenous people might feel at learning more about racism and colonialism can be an important place for deepening their learning and commitment to action.

This guide was created with the knowledge that audience members will have different levels of education and means of analysis regarding colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism. The research and scholarship on anti-racism education indicates that the deepest learning moments can come from discomfort. The feelings of discomfort are common, and we encourage non-Indigenous people to process their feelings by engaging in ongoing education, journaling and talking to someone they trust.

THE TERM “SETTLER”

The term “settler” is widely used to acknowledge that non-Indigenous people arrived here from other continents, and centres settler colonialism in shaping our identity and experiences. The term helps to describe non-Indigenous people’s relationship to Indigenous people and the lands. While all settlers do not benefit equally from colonialism, the term is used as a form of recognition of historical and ongoing colonial practices, with the goal of effecting change.

Lower-case “c” in canada/canadian

The family of Colten Boushie has requested that “canada” be spelled in lower case. This is in assertion of, and in respect to, Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination in Indigenous traditional territories (lands). What happened to Colten, and all thereafter, is an effect of colonization and the colonial perspective of who can benefit from the land.

Any feelings of discomfort that people may have due to the use of lower-case “c” can be an important place for deepening their learning and commitment to action.
COLONIAL CONTEXT COVERED IN THE FILM

“The prairies have a complicated history, and Indigenous people are often at the receiving end of racism.”

– Tasha Hubbard, Director

The film provides the audience with examples from a long history of oppressive policies Indigenous people face on the prairies and across Canada. An examination of some of these practices sets the stage for understanding our colonial context and the themes that are addressed in the film.

The film shows how Indigenous people negotiated a future through Treaties: nation-to-nation agreements with the Crown. On the prairies, Indigenous people were told that the newly arrived North West Mounted Police were there to protect them. Livelihood, education, health care, hunting rights and more were all promised in exchange for sharing the land to the depth of a plough. Indigenous people were told they would have their freedom. Because the Treaties were done through traditional ceremonies, most Indigenous people believed the promises made by the government. They were not aware that the government of Canada was preparing the Indian Act at the same time, which gave Canada the false authority to dictate the lives of Indigenous people.

Examples of Canadian government policies that target Indigenous people:

- Confiscation of Indigenous land and resources.
- Creation of the Reserve System and enforced dislocation.
- Thousands of children were forced to attend Residential Schools.
- The rights outlined in the Treaties were ignored and overshadowed through the Canadian government’s policies and laws.
- The Indian Act took away traditional governance structures and imposed a Chief and Council system.
- The Indian Act criminalized Indigenous ceremonies, which was a way of criminalizing Indigenous people.
- Because of the 1885 Resistance, the government introduced a policy called the Pass System. This meant that Indigenous people were confined to their reserves unless they had permission from the Indian Agent.

Indigenous people have always resisted these policies in a multitude of ways, and continue to thrive in spite of them.
TREATIES & SETTLER BENEFITS

“This is our territory. We belong here. Even if people try to make us think we don’t.”

– Tasha Hubbard, Director

The film explores the many ways that settlers benefited from Treaties and colonial policies when they arrived in Canada. As noted above, Indigenous lands were confiscated and given to settlers for free or for a small fee. In order to keep their land on the prairies, settlers had to “prove up” or provide proof to government officials that they were breaking the land for farming. Immigration policies on the prairies, along with other community practices, showed preferential treatment to white Europeans, and as stated in the display at the RCMP Heritage Centre, the North West Mounted Police was transformed to serve and protect settler communities.

The Canadian government enticed European families into settling in Canada on the false narrative of “empty land” for the taking. At the same time, stereotypes and myths that Indigenous people were dangerous circulated widely among settlers and newcomers, and were spread through government documents, newspapers, films and other forms of media. There is a vast body of research, such as the book *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*, which provides examples of these racist depictions throughout the decades.
While some settlers, like Tasha’s grandfather, had a sense that the land belonged to Indigenous people, they continued to break the land for farming and settlement on the prairies.

“Back when I broke that prairie down south, I could see where there was tipi rings. Stones for tipi rings in two or three places down there. That’s when I kinda thought, maybe I shouldn’t be breaking this up. But I went ahead and done it; grew wheat.”

– Tasha Hubbard’s grandfather

Indigenous Nations continue to reclaim land that has been stolen, and there are currently over 800 outstanding land claims across Canada.

MEDIA REPRESENTATION & ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM

“Stanley made a choice. He decided to run after a gun instead of running after a phone.”

– Jade Tootoosis, Colten’s sister/cousin

Before Stanley’s trial, the lens of mainstream media was focused on Colten Boushie’s life and character, as though he was the perpetrator of a crime, rather than the victim. Questions and assumptions about addictions, police records, and other falsehoods flooded public discussions. Yet anyone who knew Colten described him as a kind young man who was good at school, loved horses, cut firewood for Elders and helped out at ceremonies.

In contrast, Gerald Stanley’s life went unexamined in public discussions, apart from his being positioned as a family man and farmer. Relevant questions regarding his life and character were not raised, such as: Had he ever been violent or abusive previously? Was he asked about his alcohol consumption? Did he have a police record? Did he have a record of racist incidents? Was he affiliated with white supremacist groups? Did he have a history of illegal use of firearms? These questions were absent from mainstream media, yet many of them are questions that would typically be asked about someone on trial for murder.

One of the ways we can understand this dichotomy is by examining the impact colonization has had on our perceptions of race. As a white male, a farmer and a straight husband/father, Stanley is presumed to be a “good person” and a “hard worker.” These narratives and assumptions position him as innocent, because he embodies depictions of the “average Canadian.” In contrast, Colten’s close relationship with his family, his academics and his community work are overshadowed by stereotypes and harmful narratives of Indigenous youth as “delinquent” and “a problem” for Canadian society. The myth of race continues to shape the way Canadians come to understand and explain Colten’s death.

Many of the myths and stereotypes about Indigenous people perpetuated during the arrival of Europeans continue to circulate as common beliefs and narratives across Canada today. Although Indigenous Nations were vast, with complex societies, Europeans relied on simplistic generalizations that categorized Indigenous people and their governance systems as inferior. These narratives work to justify an unequal power dynamic between Indigenous people and settler society. The myth that Indigenous people were “uncivilized,” “violent” and “dangerous,” for example, has been employed to justify and maintain colonial policies of control such as the confiscation of Indigenous lands and resources for settlement. Although some colonial policies such as Residential Schools have ended, many injustices continue to permeate our institutions.
The film displays screenshots of racist statements that were made on social media about Colten Boushie, capturing how stereotypes and myths regarding Indigenous people continue to impact how people view his death. Before and after Gerald Stanley’s trial, racist assumptions and beliefs about the intentions of Colten and the Indigenous youth circulated across social media, demonstrating the following points:

- The stereotype that Indigenous people are criminals has become a common narrative across Canada.
- These online comments illustrate how within a colonial context, negative perceptions of Indigenous people become normalized and taken up as “truth.”
- Settlers are surrounded by stereotypical images of Indigenous people in films and TV, news articles and other mass media, as well as history textbooks, school curriculums and other publications.
- These deeply embedded beliefs lead to harmful patterns of prejudice, discrimination, violence and even death, as we see in the case of Colten and many others.
- The inequities Indigenous people experience in the justice system and other institutions such as health care, education and child welfare are effects of these ongoing colonial practices.

It is our hope that the film and Community Engagement Guide will be used for public education in order to dispel the negative myths and stereotypes surrounding Indigenous people, and break these colonial patterns of harm. Understanding this context can be helpful for examining the discriminatory acts that occurred before and after the trial.

**ACTS OF DISCRIMINATION: PRE- AND POST-TRIAL**

“I always thought I could teach the boys how to protect themselves as they grow into men. Colten’s death made me realize I was wrong.”

– Tasha Hubbard, Director

The film includes many instances of discrimination that Colten’s family faced during and after the trial. These actions are examples of our context of anti-Indigenous racism, and illustrate the colonial policies and practices that are pervasive in the justice system. These examples include the following:

- The RCMP treated Debbie Baptiste and her children as suspects in the case, rather than as a family that had lost a loved one.
- The RCMP left the vehicle outside in the rain where evidence was washed away.
- The defence lawyers chose an all-white jury, and used peremptory challenges to remove jurors who appeared to be Indigenous from jury selection.
- The family’s request for a new lawyer was denied.
- Both pre-trial and during the trial, the youth witnesses to Colten’s murder were treated as though they were suspects.
- Non-expert evidence regarding the “hang fire” defence was allowed in court even though the event it pertained to had occurred 40 years earlier. This testimony was given equal weight to the testimony of the RCMP weapons expert.
• The misuse of a firearm causing death frequently leads to a charge of manslaughter.
• Rather than a verdict of second-degree murder or manslaughter, Gerald Stanley was acquitted for the murder of Colten Boushie.
• The province of Saskatchewan asserts racist and colonial practices by strengthening trespass laws after the verdict.

The defence lawyer, Scott Spencer, created a narrative by relying on common stereotypes of Indigenous people and tropes that validate settler fears. He used words such as “terror,” “home invasion,” “wreaking havoc,” “self-defence factor” and “Stanley is hardworking” that played on long-standing settler stereotypes and views of Indigenous people.

The Treaty terms and promises that land would be shared have been broken and replaced with colonial narratives that the land belongs to settlers. As the family’s lawyer, Eleanore Sunchild, states in the film: “People are talking about using vigilante justice to protect their property, and that all comes from the stereotypes that we see in this case. This case was treated more like a theft than it was a murder.”

**RALLIES IN SUPPORT OF COLTEN AND HIS FAMILY ACROSS CANADA**

Thousands of people gathered in cities across Canada in support of Colten’s mother and family, and to protest the injustice of Gerald Stanley’s acquittal. Some of those cities include Saskatoon, Regina, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Toronto and Vancouver. These actions were significant in challenging the anti-Indigenous racism that became evident during the trial and providing hope that justice might be served for Colten, and all Indigenous youth and families.
Letters of support for Colten’s mother, Debbie, and the family came in from across the country. There were many people who were shocked and saddened to learn of the events, and for some it has been a wake-up call about the anti-Indigenous racism that is in our communities.

PRE-SCREENING CONSIDERATIONS & AUDIENCE SUPPORT

As noted previously, the film may be disturbing for audience viewers and can be triggering for those who have experienced racism, violence and trauma. It is imperative to make sure there is health support available during and following the screenings.

Recommendations:

- Situate your event within the Nation(s) of the lands that you occupy, through a territorial acknowledgement.
- Invite a local Indigenous Elder or knowledge keeper to do an opening prayer. Proper protocol needs to be observed and an honorarium provided.
- Affirm that the film topics and discussion will have a different level of impact on Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people.
- Provide counsellors and/or suggestions for places where people can seek support. The counsellors should identify themselves to the audience and be placed at the back of the space for those who may step out during the screening.
- Provide a copy of this guide and/or other handouts that can support audience learning.
POST-DISCUSSION

It is our recommendation that community groups hosting the film engage the audience in a deepened discussion by planning for a guest speaker or curated panel that is knowledgeable on the topics of the film, with scripted questions and answers for discussion rather than a Q&A. This request is predicated on research that shows how the topics of colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism have been mostly absent from our public education systems in Canada. This lack of knowledge within a colonial context can lead to public discussions that are unsafe and harmful for audience members, in particular for Indigenous people.

CLOSING THE EVENT

When wrapping up the event, remind audience members of the resource list and (if in attendance) the presence of Elders and counsellors.

Close the event by encouraging audience members to continue thinking and talking about possibilities for intervention, healing and justice with their loved ones, colleagues and community members. *nipawistikamâsowin: We Will Stand Up* focuses on deeply rooted dynamics caused by settler colonialism that can only be addressed through action.

“We will not stop our pursuit for justice. We will stand here and honour my late brother, my family member, my friend Colten Boushie.”

– Jade Tootoosis, Colten’s sister/cousin

ALLYSHIP & TAKING ACTION

“This is a human issue. It’s really an issue for all Canadians.”

– Eleanore Sunchild, family lawyer

The film exposes many of the historical and present-day policies that maintain colonialism as an unequal power dynamic between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. While many of these practices are institutional, they are also reproduced and upheld by individual people through patterns of harmful thinking, language and actions. It is our hope that audience members will accept this invitation to reflect on their own practices, and address anti-Indigenous racism when it appears in our homes, communities and workplaces. Racism is unacceptable, and unlearning colonial practices begins with each of us.

What are our roles and responsibilities as non-Indigenous people living in a settler colonial context?

- Non-Indigenous people working towards allyship with Indigenous people can begin by acknowledging that they live and work on Indigenous lands and benefit from settler colonialism.
- An examination of our own prejudices and beliefs, and a willingness to unlearn them.
- Settlers can use their positions of power and privilege to challenge anti-Indigenous racism, discrimination and injustices.
- Allies must commit to ongoing anti-racism education and learning how to work across social differences created by colonial practices.
- Acknowledging that this is lifelong work for non-Indigenous people.
• Recognizing and intervening in anti-Indigenous racism, and learning more about the interconnections to sexism, homophobia, ableism, etc.
• Understanding how Black people and People of Colour experience racism in a colonial context while also being invited into settler colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism.

We encourage audience members to create an action plan for intervening in practices that maintain colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism through education and strategic practices.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

If there are groups in your area that are following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and/or working to build anti-racism education in your community, please consider reaching out to them as partners in hosting the film. Community partners might include city/town councils, educational centres (e.g., post-secondary institutions, elementary and high schools, museums, libraries and bookstores) and other community organizations that are working toward justice for Indigenous people.
EVENT PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Three Months Before
• Confirm venue
• Outreach to potential community partners

Two Months Before
• Confirm key community partners
• Decide on format for enrichment programming (e.g., panel, workshop)
• Outreach to potential speakers/facilitators/performers
• Begin creating promotional materials

One Month Before
• Confirm speakers/facilitators/performers
• Outreach to potential counsellors/Elders
• Finalize promotional materials
• Share promotional materials with partners and speakers

Two Weeks Before
• Test screening of media at venue
• Finalize discussion ground rules and topics, circulate to all parties
• Add local services to resource list template
• Confirm details with the venue (e.g., ideal spaces, times of access)

One Week Before
• Brief emcee on protocol for introducing film
• Print copies of resource list
RESOURCE LIST

Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1-855-242-3310
This help line gives free national telephone crisis intervention and counselling support for First Nations and Inuit.

Indigenous Canada: Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), offered by the Faculty of Native Studies
coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada

Idle No More Website
idlenomore.ca

Idle No More Discussion Guide: Justice for Colten Boushie
idlenomore.ca/discussion_guide_justice_for_colten_boushie

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or text 686868
Kids Help Phone is Canada’s only national helpline for young people between the ages of 5 and 20.

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC)
nafc.ca/en

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner
otc.ca

Project Fact(a): What can we learn from the Stanley trial?
policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/september-2018/what-can-we-learn-from-the-stanley-trial

San’yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training
Provincial Health Services Authority in BC
sanyas.ca

TRC Calls to Action
trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

UNDRIP Link
THE NFB’S AABIZIINGWASHI (WIDE AWAKE) COLLECTION

The NFB’s ever-growing Aabiziingwashi (Wide Awake) collection of 250+ Indigenous-made works will now be permanently available for community screenings. These films are the stories of our land, told by First Nations, Métis and Inuit filmmakers from every region of the country. Powerful, political and profound, the films initiate and inspire conversations on identity, family, community and nationhood.

To watch selected films online for free, visit: nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema

**For educators** – visit the Indigenous Voices and Reconciliation channel on NFB/Education: [nfb.ca/indigenous-voices](http://nfb.ca/indigenous-voices)

**For more information or to book your own community screening:** [nfb.ca/wideawake](http://nfb.ca/wideawake) or e-mail wideawake@nfb.ca

DEDICATION

This resource is dedicated to and in memory of the late Colten “Coco” Boushie…