

Tribal Justice

PRESS KIT



PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY ANNE MAKEPEACE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FOR VISION PARKER PEGEL
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER RUTH COWAN
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BARNEY BROOMFIELD
EDITOR RUSSELL GREENE
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY CHRISTIAN RUGGIERO
PRODUCTION CONSULTANT JENNIFER WALTER
CO-PRODUCERS DANIEL GOLDING AND LORI NESBITT



TRIBAL JUSTICE IS A CO-PRODUCTION OF MAKEPEACE PRODUCTIONS, INTERLUM POLYPHENY | POV, AND VISION PARKER PEGEL, AND IS PRESENTED BY VISION PARKER PEGEL

PRESS MATERIALS

for

TRIBAL JUSTICE

a film by

ANNE MAKEPEACE

Including

Press Release

Interview with Director Anne Makepeace

Crew Bios

Bios of our Featured Tribal Court Judges

Anne Makepeace Résumé

Synopses of Varying Lengths

Several articles about

Tribal Justice

A photo log of 55 photos
With thumb images to choose from
All are available in high
Resolution format for press use

Contact

Anne Makepeace

Anne@Makepeaceproductions.com

860-435-0542 work, 917-674-1933 cell

www.MakepeaceProductions.com

<http://www.tribaljusticefilm.com>

TRIBAL JUSTICE

PRESS RELEASE**Tribal Justice Shines a Light on Restorative Justice**

Four years in the making, Anne Makepeace's new film began its festival run with a world premiere at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in 2017, followed by Big Sky, the Martha's Vineyard Film Festival, the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, twenty-five more festivals in 2017 and more to come in 2018. **Tribal Justice** has won many awards, including Best Feature Documentary at the American Indian Film Festival, the Social Justice Award and Best Feature Documentary at the Charlotte Film Festival, the Directing Award at Cinetopia, and the Grand Prix Rigoberta Menchú at Présence Autochtone, Montreal's First People's Film Festival. **Tribal Justice** had its national PBS broadcast on the acclaimed documentary series, POV in August 2017 and continues to screen at law schools, symposia and conferences on restorative justice, native rights and sovereignty, and other related issues.

Tribal Justice shows two tribal court judges in California incorporating traditional ways in their courtroom procedures in order to forge systems of justice that focus on restoring rather than punishing offenders.

There's a winner and loser when you walk out of state court, straight up. That isn't okay here; it does not resolve the issue. Abby Abinanti, Yurok Tribal Judge

Tribal legal systems hold up an example to the nation about the possibilities of alternative dispute resolution. Their new methods have much to offer to the tribal communities, and much to teach the other court systems operating in the United States. The Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor.

[Tribal Justice](#) follows two extraordinary Native American women, both chief judges for their tribes' courts. Abby Abinanti, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe on the northwest coast of California, and Claudette White, Chief Judge of the Quechan Tribe in the southeastern desert near Yuma, California, are creating innovative systems that focus on restoring rather than punishing offenders in order to keep tribal members out of prison, prevent children from being taken from their communities, and stop the school-to-prison pipeline that plagues their young people.

Makepeace met the judges four years ago, in February 2013, when she attended a California Tribal Court-State Court Forum meeting with Executive Producer Ruth Cowan. They were both immediately awed and moved by the judges' dedication, passion, humor and determination to bring traditional forms of justice back to their people. A few months later, Makepeace and cinematographer Barney Broomfield were shooting in the judges' courtrooms and in their lives, a process that continued over the next three years. The film is now hot off the press, having just been finished a few weeks ago. It will air on the PBS series POV late in 2017.

Casting is half the battle with any film, and the filmmakers were fortunate to meet these two extraordinary women. Abby is a fierce, lean, white-haired elder who has dedicated her life to humane justice. In the 1970s, she became the first Native American lawyer in California, and practiced law in state courts, returning home in 2007 to become the Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe, the largest tribe in California. Claudette represents a new generation of Native American lawyers and judges who are revisioning justice. The documentary follows several cases both in and out of their courts. When we meet Taos Proctor in Abby's court, he is facing a third strike conviction at age 26 for drug related felonies. We follow Taos, a boisterous bear of a man, over two years as Abby and her staff help him complete court programs and rebuild his life. A thousand miles south, Claudette invokes the Indian Child Welfare Act to reunite a nine-year-old boy with his family. Meanwhile her teenage nephew, Isaac, faces two felony charges for breaking into cars.

Restorative Justice has become a buzzword in mainstream legal circles, with many in the field advocating a shift from our punitive justice system to one that addresses root problems. Native American tribes have been doing this since time immemorial, resolving disputes by finding ways for offenders to right wrongs and restore balance to the community. Abby and Claudette are reaching back to these methods to address the myriad problems on their reservations today – poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, the breakdown of families, loss of cultural connection - and to heal their communities from within, one case at a time. And they are having a high percentage of success, as exemplified in two of the cases profiled in [Tribal Justice](#). Mainstream courts are taking notice; collaborative courts from Brooklyn to Boulder are looking to Native American justice systems as models for transforming new restorative justice methods in their courts. As Abby remarks in the film, “There’s a winner and loser when you walk out of state court, straight up. That isn’t okay here. It does not resolve the issue.”

To most Americans, indigenous people in this country are invisible, an overlooked minority seen as having vanished into history or stereotyped as venal casino owners or drunken derelicts. Few people are aware of the complexities of contemporary Indian life, or of the innovative work being done in tribal courts. By showing two strong Native women judges creating new forms of justice based on their traditions, Makepeace hopes that her documentary will inspire indigenous communities here and around the world with renewed determination to provide culturally appropriate forms of justice to their people. She also hopes that mainstream courts, law schools, and other law related organizations will see the potential for their own practices to shift away from process and punishment oriented methods to more personal, humane, and effective ways of dealing with offenders.

Interview with Anne Makepeace about the Making of Tribal Justice

1. What inspired you to decide this was a film you had to make?

I have always been interested in Native American stories; in fact my last film, We Still Live Here, which is about the revival of a Native American language, also premiered at SBIFF. When Ruth Cowan, our executive producer, approached me in 2013 with the idea of doing a film about the innovative work of tribal judges in California, I was hesitant because I didn't know anything about tribal courts. I agreed to go on a research trip to meet two judges, and right away I was smitten. Abby, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe, which is the largest in California, awed me with her fierce intelligence and commitment to justice; Claudette White, Chief Judge of the Quechan Tribe near Yuma AZ, moved and impressed me. I realized that not only were there two amazing characters to follow, but there was a really important story that could have impact on mainstream justice systems by modeling more humane and personal forms of justice.

2. Everyone in the film seems so open with their lives. Were they this welcoming when you first approached them or was there resistance?

Ahh now there's a story. Claudette in fact opened her life to us early on with a generosity of spirit that was amazing, but it was extremely hard to find a case to follow in her court. She was willing, but those coming into her court were very reluctant to have their lives invaded and their stories told. It took two years to find a case to follow from beginning to end in her court. Luckily we were also able to follow the story of her nephew, Isaac, whose case was in state court rather than tribal court, with predictably negative results. With Abby it was almost the opposite; she was able to give us total access to her courtroom and cases, but she was very protective of her private life.

3. What were some of the challenges you and your crew faced in making this film, and how did you overcome them?

Let me count the ways.... Well, one big challenge is that I live on the East Coast so I couldn't get to our locations easily. It was always a huge challenge to know when to go out to one or both of

the tribes. Then once we had stories to follow, again figuring out when to be there was a huge challenge. One thing that really helped was that my cinematographer, Barney Broomfield, lives half the time in LA so there were a number of times when he went alone both up north to Yurok Country near Klamath, or out to Winterhaven. He's amazing as a one man band. Another issue that we all face as documentarians was funding. This film was very hard to raise money for and we were always operating on shoestring. I didn't have an associate producer, a sound person, production assistants – I had to wear many hats and that was challenging. Fortunately Vision Maker Media came in early and kept us going for a year; California Humanities came through just in time at the end of 2014; then MacArthur saved us at the end of 2015, and NEH funds in 2016 enabled us to finish the film.

4. What did you learn after making this film that you didn't know before, either about the process of filming or the topic or subject being covered?

One thing I learn over and over again about the process of documentary filmmaking is that things never work out the way you plan, and you just have to go with it and trust that something good will happen or you'll figure out how to make the story work eventually. My motto is film everything, though you pay for that in post production when you have hundreds of hours of footage to turn into a 90 minute story.

I didn't know anything about tribal courts when I started, so it was a steep learning curve but so rewarding. The great thing about documentary filmmaking is that every time, you enter a whole new world, meet people you never would any other way, and learn so much about whatever the issue is.

5. Was there anything you left in the cutting room floor that, had there been more screen time, you would have loved to include in the film?

Oh yes, killing those darlings. One big regret is that there were entire families we followed at Yurok for two years that didn't make it into the film. One was a beautiful young mother and former meth addict whom Abby's court was able to reunify with her four children. But there were just too many characters for audiences to follow, and the film is the right length. I had originally envisioned it as a one hour doc, but the stories kept growing and fortunately my funders agreed to the length because the wonderful PBS series POV agreed to broadcast it as a 90 minute film.

6. What was your favorite moment in making this film?

My favorite moment in making this film was when I screened the fine cut for Abby in New York in early November. She was there for the opening of Anna Deveare Smith's "Notes from the Field," in which Anna impersonates both Abby and Taos Proctor in this wonderful performance about the school to prison pipeline. When the lights came up on [Tribal Justice](#), Abby was silent at first, which was scary, but then she thanked me so warmly I nearly wept.

7. There's so many life lessons one can take away from the film, but if there was one thing you really, truly wanted audience to leave the theater with after watching "Tribal Justice", what would that be?

Well, here's something that Abby wrote the day after the November election, and it has stayed with me ever since:

We, our people, have been here before...and as before we will stand for what is right and good...they will come for us and others and we will not turn our backs on those who need our protection...we may not win but we will not quit... we will never forget our sacred responsibility to all as we have been taught by our creator and as we have promised our ancestors... stay strong my family...

That kind of wisdom and resilience is so deeply moving to me. Another thing Abby once said is, "We never give up on anybody."

8. Have you been in contact with any of the individuals you highlighted in the film?

Yes! Both judges came to our world premiere in Santa Barbara last month. Our last shoot at Yurok was in September and at Quechan was in March 2016, so we've been in touch pretty much the whole time.

MEDIA TEAM

ANNE MAKEPEACE, WRITER, PRODUCER, DIRECTOR, has been making award-winning independent films for more three decades. Her new film, **Tribal Justice**, premiered at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in February 2017, screened at The Martha's Vineyard Film Festival, the Full Frame Film Festival and many festivals across the country, culminating in a national PBS broadcasts on the excellent series POV. Her previous documentary, **We Still Live Here**, about the return of the Wampanoag language, screened at The Moviehouse's FilmWorks Forum, had its broadcast premiere on the PBS series Independent Lens and is distributed by Bullfrog Films. **We Still Live Here** was funded by ITVS, the Sundance Documentary Fund, the National Science Foundation, et al, and won the Full Frame Inspiration Award and the Moving Mountains Award at Telluride Mountain Film for the film most likely to effect important social change. Makepeace was able to complete the film with fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Other recent films by Anne Makepeace include: **I. M. PEI: Building China Modern** (PBS broadcast on American Masters in 2010), and her Emmy nominated feature documentary **Rain in a Dry Land** (lead show on PBS' POV series in 2007), which chronicles the journey and resettlement of two Somali Bantu refugee families from Africa through their first two years in America. Makepeace won a National Prime Time Emmy for her American Masters/PBS documentary **Robert Capa in Love and War**, which premiered at Sundance in 2003. **Coming to Light**, her documentary about Edward S. Curtis, also premiered at Sundance, was short-listed for an Academy Award, broadcast on American Masters, and won many prizes, including the O'Connor Award for Best Film from the American Historical Association, an Award of Excellence from the American Anthropological Association, a Gold Hugo from Chicago, Best Documentary at Telluride, and many others. Her first documentary, **Baby It's You**, premiered at Sundance, was broadcast as the lead show on POV in 1998, and screened at the Whitney Biennial 2000. For additional information, please explore www.MakepeaceProductions.com.

BARNEY BROOMFIELD, CINEMATOGRAPHER, shot much of Anne Makepeace's film **Rain in a Dry Land**, and has filmed documentaries for HBO, CNN, BBC, National Geographic, Discovery Channel, Sundance, Channel Four (UK), ITV, SKY and PBS. Barney shot the award-winning documentary **We Come As Friends** about South Sudan, for which he won the Bravery in

Cinematography Award at Sundance in 2014. Other films Barney has shot include “Albino United,” a Channel Four and National Geographic co-production about an Albino football team confronting the prejudices and mythic beliefs that have led to many gruesome albino murders in that part of the world. As a Time Out Critics choice, the film aired on National Geographic across Europe and America and won awards on the film festival circuit. In 2013, Broomfield paired up with Oscar nominated director Hubert Sauper (of “Darwin’s Nightmare” fame) to co-direct, shoot and edit the chilling and dystopian theatrical feature doc about the world’s newest country, South Sudan. Broomfield and Sauper constructed a home-made ultralight aircraft (dubbed Sputnik) and piloted the vessel from the south of France to South Sudan. His most recent credit as cinematographer is on the documentary Tales of the Grim Sleeper, which has was short-listed for a documentary feature Academy Award.

RUSSELL GREENE, EDITOR, has edited both narrative features and documentaries that have appeared in top US and international festivals including Sundance, Venice, New York, SXSW, Tribeca, IDFA, Full Frame, Edinburgh and Los Angeles. His documentary credits include The Witness, now short listed for a 2017 Oscar; Famous Nathan, Harry Dean Stanton: Partly Fiction, Ordinary Miracles: The Photo League’s New York, Hungry is the Tiger and 2B.

Other editorial credits include Newtown, What’s on Your Plate?, and Best Worst Thing That Ever Could Have Happened. In addition to feature films, Russell has written, edited and directed numerous short films, commercials, web series and branded content films.

They include the award winning short film Easy Street and the acclaimed web series Made Here about NY performing artists.

COMPOSER CHRIS RUGGIERO is a film composer and music producer. Prior to creating the score to Tribal Justice Ruggiero scored such documentaries as What Was Ours (ITVS), Hooligan Sparrow (Sundance Film Festival 2016, currently on Netflix), Indian Point (Tribeca Film Festival 2015), and Kehinde Wiley: An Economy of Grace (PBS). His original compositions currently appear in over 100 television series including The Voice, Pawn Stars, and American Pickers. Commercial credits include music for brands such as Coke, HSN, Imodium, Dewars, and Liberty Mutual. He records and produces bands and artists from his Bridgeport Connecticut studio Gold Coast Recorders, lectures on film, sound, and semiotics at the University of Bridgeport, and runs the popular audio-history website Preservation Sound. "

RUTH B. COWAN, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, is a Senior Research Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies. She is a political scientist whose focus on the role of courts in advancing human rights led her to South Africa to produce the documentary, Courting Justice. This film profiles women judges who convey their deep commitment to the human rights promises of South Africa's post apartheid constitution, and the importance of the courts in realizing those promises. Courting Justice includes a traditional court in session, a reminder that these courts have constitutional standing. The film has been shown throughout the world to diverse audiences. Ruth is the Founding President of Pro Mujer, and has been working for over twenty years in Latin American countries to empower indigenous women through micro loans, business training, life skills, health education, and health services.

JENNIFER WALTER, PRODUCTION CONSULTANT, is supervising attorney of the Tribal/State Programs for the Center for Families, Children & the Courts at the Judicial Council of California in San Francisco. As lead counsel to the California Tribal Court- State Court Forum, a statewide coalition of tribal and state court judges appointed by the California Chief Justice and Tribal Leaders, she is providing crucial contacts and information about the history and ongoing challenges and accomplishments of the tribal courts. She directs all programs relating to Tribes and federal Indian law within the state judicial branch, including the local cross-cultural court exchanges.

DANIEL GOLDING (QUECHAN), FIELD PRODUCER AND CULTURAL LIAISON, is our on-the-ground man at Quechan. Dan has helped us produce shoots in his community, and keeps us up to date on what is happening in Claudette's court and on the ground. Dan graduated Cum Laude from San Francisco State University with a BA in Film Production and a minor in American Indian Studies in 2000. He started *Hokan Media Productions* in 1997, and since then has produced many social issue documentary and narrative films. Dan is a traditional singer and is personally involved in revitalizing his tribal language.

FEATURED TRIBAL JUDGES

ABBY Abinanti has served as the **CHIEF JUDGE OF THE YUOK TRIBAL COURT** since 2007. She has been working in the field of Indian law since 1974, when she became the first Native American woman to practice law in California. When she "joined the bench" she

brought with her extensive legal experience as Commissioner for the San Francisco Superior Court, Legal Director and Director of Lesbians of Color Project for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Directing Attorney for the California Indian Legal Service Field Office in Eureka, staff member for California Indian legal Services, and more than six years in private law practice. The Yurok Tribe has the largest Native American population in California. Abby has also served as Appellate Judge for the Colorado River Indian Tribe; a Judge for the Hopi Tribal Court and Shoeshone-Bonnock Tribal Court; Chief Magistrate on the Court of Indian Offenses for the Hoopa Valley Tribal Court; General Counsel, Lead Counsel, Supervising Attorney for additional tribes; and Tribal Courts Evaluator for the Indian Justice Center and the American Indian Justice Center. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Humboldt State University and Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of New Mexico School of Law. She is a member of the California State Bar, the United States Northern District of California Bar and the United States Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit Bar.

Claudette C. White has served as the **Chief Judge for the Quechan Tribal Court** since 2005. She is an enrolled member of the Quechan Indian Tribe and descends also from the Cocopan and Digueno Mission Indian Tribes in California and Arizona. She also serves as a judge at the Fort McDowell Indian Community, Ak-Chin Indian Community, Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community and Tonto Apache Tribal Courts. She is President of the Arizona Indian Judges Association, is an appointed member of the Arizona Tribal, State and Federal Court Forum and was appointed to the newly formed California Tribal Court/State Court Forum. She served as faculty for the South West Indigenous Women's Coalition Sexual Response Assault Team training program and faculty for the Arizona Bar Association's Leadership Series. Judge White, was the youngest member ever elected to the Quechan Tribal Council where she served from 1995-1998. Following her Tribal Council tenure, she practiced as a legal advocate in the Quechan Tribal Court. Judge White, the first in her family to graduate from college, received her Bachelor of Science degree from Arizona Western College and Northern Arizona University, and her Juris Doctorate and a Special Certificate in Indian Law from Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law. She completed the Limited Jurisdiction Judges Orientation for Arizona judges facilitated by the Arizona Judicial College. She continues to live on the Quechan Indian Reservation, which she had left only to pursue her education.

ANNE MAKEPEACE
RÉSUMÉ/ FILMOGRAPHY

- Writer/Director
Producer
2017 [TRIBAL JUSTICE**](#), competed January 2017. Funded by the MacArthur Foundation, NEH, CPB, Vision Maker Media, California Humanities et al. National PBS broadcast on POV, 2017. **Winner**, Best Feature Documentary at the American Indian Film Festivalm Directing Award at Cinetopia, and Grand Prix Rigoberta Menchú at Présence Autochtone
- Writer/Director
Producer
2011 [WE STILL LIVE HERE**](#) - *Âs Nutayuneân* released January 2011. Funded by Sundance, ITVS et al. PBS/Independent Lens broadcast November 2011, distributed to the educational market by Bullfrog Films. Many festival awards, including the Full Frame Inspiration Award and Telluride MountainFilm's Moving Mountains award.
- Writer/Director
2010 **I. M. PEI, Building China Modern**, feature documentary about a the premier architect of the 20th Century, broadcast on PBS/American Masters 2010
- Writer/Director
Producer
2007 [RAIN IN A DRY LAND**](#) feature documentary about Somali Bantu refugees. Emmy nomination, lead show on PBS/POV 2007. Funded by the Ford Foundation, the National Science Foundation, Sundance, ITVS. Winner: CINE Golden Eagle and many festival awards, including the Full Frame Working Films Award for the film most likely to effect social change.
- Writer/Director
2005 **ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, CLOSE TO HOME**, for the National Park Service at Hyde Park. Plays three times an hour at Val Kill.
- Writer/Director
Producer
2003 **ROBERT CAPA IN LOVE AND WAR**, American Masters feature documentary about the legendary war photographer. Sundance premiere, PBS May 2003. National Prime Time Emmy Award and Voice for Humanity Award, Telluride MountainFilm, 2003.
- Writer/Director
Producer
2000 [COMING TO LIGHT**](#) **Edward S. Curtis and The North American Indians**, Sundance 2000 premiere. Theatrical release through 7th Art Releasing. Academy Award shortlist for best feature documentary 2001. Numerous awards (see next page). **Funded by the NEH**, the NEA, WNET/ American Masters, and CPB. PBS broadcast April 2001.
- Writer/Director
Producer
1998 [BABY, IT'S YOU**](#) personal documentary about the filmmaker's quest for a child. Screened at the 2000 Whitney Biennial. National PBS broadcast 1998 as the lead show on POV. Sundance Documentary Competition premiere; broadcast on Channel 4, U.K.
- Screenwriter
1995 **ISHI THE LAST YAHI**, American Experience, narrated by Linda Hunt. Best American Independent Film, Munich. Emmy nomination, PBS 1995-6.
- Screenwriter
1991 **THOUSAND PIECES OF GOLD**, American Playhouse Theatrical Feature, released 1991, PBS 1992-97, highest American Playhouse's ratings. Many awards.
- Writer/Director
Producer
1984 [MOONCHILD**](#) docudrama about the Moonies. Aired on HBO, Bravo, PBS, Channel 4 London, ZDF, et al. Paramount, Best Feature, National Educational Film Festival. Many awards and festival screenings.
- Writer/Director
1983 [WHISTLE IN THE WIND**](#) 16 minute dramatic short about a Bolivian boy and his llama, in Spanish and English. Thames Television, NHK, Australian TV

**indicates available for streaming at <https://makepeace.vhx.tv/products>

EDUCATION

Stanford University: BA with Honors in English

Stanford University: MA Education

Stanford University: MA Film Production

AFI Directing Workshop for Women 1991

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship 2008-9 (*We Still Live Here*)

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship, 2008-9 (*We Still Live Here*)

National Prime Time Emmy Award (*Robert Capa in Love and War*)

7 CINE Golden Eagles (*Coming to Light, Baby It's You, Ishi, Night Driving, Moonchild, Capa, Pei*)

2000 Whitney Biennial (*Baby It's You*)

Full Frame Inspiration Award 2011 (*We Still Live Here*)

Telluride MountainFilm Moving Mountains Award (*We Still Live Here*)

Jury Award, Wild and Scenic Film Festival (*We Still Live Here*)

Finalist, 2001 Academy Awards (*Coming to Light*) (one of 12 on short list)

Full Frame Film Festival's Working Films Award (*Rain in a Dry Land*)

American Historical Association O'Connor Film Prize (*Coming to Light*)

Sundance Feature Documentary Competition (*Baby It's You, Coming to Light, Capa*)

Two Gold Awards, Houston Film Festival (*Coming to Light, Night Driving*)

Two Gold Hugos, Chicago International Film Festival (*Moonchild, Ishi*)

Gold Hugo, Chicago International Television Festival (*Coming to Light*)

Gold Plaque, Chicago International Television Festival (*Baby It's You*)

Three Gold Awards, Cindy Competition (*Coming to Light, Baby It's You, Moonchild*)

Two Wrangler Awards, National Cowboy Hall of Fame (*Thousand Pieces of Gold, Ishi*)

Winner, SXSW Documentary Competition, 1998 (*Baby It's You*)

Best Documentary, Telluride MountainFilm Festival (*Coming to Light*)

Best American Independent Film, Munich Film Festival (*Ishi*)

Paramount Award for Best Feature, National Educational Film Festival (*Moonchild*)

Best Documentary, American Indian Film Festival (*Ishi*)

Anne Makepeace's films have been screened at festivals from Sundance to Munich, and have been broadcast on PBS, Showtime, Bravo, HBO, USA Network, Channel 4 (UK), ABC Australia, ZDF Germany, and Thames Television (UK) and screened at the Whitney Biennial, the Smithsonian, the Musée de l'Homme, the Museum of the American Indian, and many other museums, schools, colleges, and theaters around the country. Her work has been funded by the Ford Foundation, the Pulitzer Foundation, the Sundance Documentary Fund, the NEA, the NEH, the NSF et al. She has twice been a fellow at the Sundance Institute, premiered three films at the Sundance Film Festival, and served on the Sundance documentary jury. She has been a resident of the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio center, the MacDowell Colony, and Blue Mountain Center, and has received fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute and the Guggenheim Foundation.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Producer, **OurMotherTongues.org**, an interactive website about language endangerment and revitalization funded by ITVS and the NEA, launched in conjunction with the national PBS broadcast of **WE STILL LIVE HERE** on Independent Lens in November 2011.

Author, Edward Curtis, Coming to Light, published by National Geographic 2001.

Writer/Director, Chanticleer Films' Discovery Program (NIGHT DRIVING) 1992-1993

MEMBERSHIPS: DGA, WGA, IDA, IFP, FAF, AFI

Tribal Justice Synopses

Logline

Two tribal court judges, both compelling Native American women in California dedicated to humane justice for their people, strive to reduce incarceration rates and heal tribal members by restoring rather than punishing offenders, modeling restorative justice in action.

Shortest Synopsis

Two Native American tribal court judges in California strive to reduce incarceration rates and heal their people by restoring rather than punishing offenders. Abby is a fierce, lean elder who has dedicated her life to humane justice. Claudette represents a new generation of Native American lawyers who are revisioning justice. The film follows cases in and out of their courts. Taos Proctor is facing life in prison when we meet him in Abby's court. We follow his story over two years as Abby and her staff help him rebuild his life. A thousand miles south, Claudette reunites a nine-year-old boy with his family. Meanwhile her teenage nephew is at risk of entering the school to prison pipeline.

Short Synopsis

Abby Abinanti, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe in Northern California, and Claudette White, Chief Judge of the Quechan Tribe in the southern desert near Yuma, strive to reduce incarceration rates and heal their people by restoring rather than punishing offenders. Abby is a fierce, lean elder who has dedicated her life to humane justice. Claudette represents a new generation of Native American lawyers who are revisioning justice. The film follows several cases both in and out of their courts. Taos Proctor, a boisterous bear of a man, is facing a third strike conviction when we meet him in Abby's court. We follow his story over two years as Abby and her staff help him rebuild his life. A thousand miles south, Claudette invokes the Indian Child Welfare Act to reunite a nine-year-old boy with his family. Meanwhile her teenage nephew, Isaac, faces two felony charges for breaking into cars.

Medium Length Synopsis

Two strong Native American women, both Chief Judges in their tribe's courts, are creating innovative justice systems that focus on restoring rather than punishing offenders in order to keep tribal members out of prison, prevent children from being taken from their communities, and stop the school-to-prison pipeline that plagues their young people.

Abby is a fierce, lean, white-haired elder who has dedicated her life to humane justice. Claudette represents a new generation of tribal lawyers who are revisioning justice. The documentary follows several cases both in and out of their courts. Taos Proctor is facing a third strike conviction when we meet him in Abby's court. We follow Taos, a boisterous bear of a man, over two years as Abby and her staff help him complete court programs and rebuild his life. A thousand miles south, Claudette invokes the Indian Child Welfare Act to reunite a nine-year-old boy with his family. Meanwhile her teenage nephew, Isaac, faces two felony charges for breaking into cars, at risk of being funneled into the school-to-prison pipeline.

[Tribal Justice](#) shows our featured judges asserting tribal sovereignty and invoking their own traditions to heal their people and raise them out of poverty and inequality.

Longer Synopsis

[Tribal Justice](#) is a documentary feature about a little known, underreported but effective criminal justice reform movement in America: the efforts of tribal courts to create alternative systems of justice. There are more than 300 tribal courts across the country. In California, two formidable women lead the way. Abby Abinanti, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe on the north coast, and Claudette White, Chief Judge of the Quechan Tribe in the southern desert, are creating innovative systems that focus on restoring rather than punishing offenders in order to keep tribal

members out of prison, prevent children from being taken from their communities, and stop the school-to-prison pipeline that plagues their young people.

Abby is a fierce, lean, white-haired elder who has dedicated her life to humane justice. Claudette represents a new generation of Native American lawyers who are revisioning justice. The film introduces Abby and Claudette, then follows several cases both in and out of their courts. Taos Proctor is facing a third strike conviction when we meet him in Abby's court in 2013. While on parole from San Quentin, he was arrested with methamphetamine, a third felony. We follow Taos, a boisterous bear of a man, over two years as Abby and her staff help him complete court programs and rebuild his life.

A thousand miles south, Claudette invokes the Indian Child Welfare Act to reunite a nine-year-old boy with his family. Meanwhile her teenage nephew, Isaac, faces two felony charges for breaking into cars. Because his case is in state court rather than tribal court, he becomes a classic case of the school-to-prison pipeline.

[Tribal Justice](#) challenges the entrenched cultural narrative of Native Americans as hopeless dependents unable to better their own circumstances. Our stories show our featured judges asserting tribal sovereignty and invoking their own traditions to heal their people and raise them out of poverty and inequality.

A longer synopsis is available upon request

Press Articles about

[Tribal Justice](#)

Note: [Tribal Justice](#) had its first festival premiere a month ago so press there isn't much press yet.

These articles follow below:

Wall Street Journal review, front page of the Arts section, August 2017

Connecticut Magazine Article about Anne Makepeace and Tribal Justice

Front page Los Angeles Times article about Judge Abby Abinanti

Local Lakeville Journal Article about Anne Makepeace and Tribal Justice

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

ARTS TELEVISION REVIEW

‘Tribal Justice’ Review: The People’s Court

Anne Makepeace’s documentary looks at the courts of two different American Indian groups in California that place community at the center of justice.



Abby Abinanti, chief judge for the Yurok of northwestern California
PHOTO: ANNE MAKEPEACE/POV

By John Anderson

Aug. 17, 2017 1:09 p.m. ET

A lovely, bittersweet film about an intensely delicate subject, the “POV” presentation “Tribal Justice” looks at the community courts of two different American Indian communities in California and the women in charge of those courts: Abby Abinanti, chief judge for the Yurok of

northwestern California, and Claudette C. White, Ms. Abinanti’s counterpart among the Quechan who live in the southeastern part of the state. How their system negotiates with California’s state courts is an essential part of the story, but so is the community-centric basis of each woman’s approach to justice—as the film says, “healing and resolution, not punishment and incarceration.”

Tribal Justice

Monday, 10 p.m., PBS

“There’s a winner and a loser when you walk out of state court,” says Ms. Abinanti, who was the first Native woman lawyer in California. “That isn’t OK here.” State court, she says, “is essentially justice by strangers. But in a village, that’s not true.” No Yurok, she said, would have thought of going outside the tribe for justice a couple of hundred years ago. And while Ms. Abinanti agrees that the people she serves have to live “in this world, how it is now,” the tribal court is still the model. “If we had not been invaded,” she says, “how would that have evolved?”



Taos Proctor at his wedding
PHOTO: ANNE MAKEPEACE/POV

Veteran documentarian Anne Makepeace, who has made several films with American Indian themes, gets wonderful access to her principal subjects as well as those she uses as case studies: a young boy with neurological problems who has spent time in state care; Taos Proctor, a hardworking father who’s had skirmishes with methamphetamine, and 17-year-old Isaac Palone, who is Ms. White’s nephew and whose legal problems are traced to his time in state custody and group homes. The issues raised, like meth use and the removal of children from their parents, are sensitive for the people we meet in “Tribal Justice,” and for all American Indian people, but Ms. Makepeace manages to get them addressed openly and honestly. There is, as a result, a somewhat melancholic tone to much of the movie. But also a reassuring wisdom to be found in the women Ms. Makepeace has made that movie about.

CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE, FEBRUARY 2015

This was written in the middle of filming Tribal Justice two years ago:

Filmmaker Anne Makepeace Turns Lens on Native American 'Tribal Justice'

By Alice Tessier



Photos by Barney Broomfield
Judges Abby Abinanti and
Claudette White.

Award-winning filmmaker Anne Makepeace is turning a lens on a “different kind of justice” in her latest project. The documentary in progress, whose working title is “**Tribal Justice**,” explores collaboration involving state courts and Native American tradition in pursuit of a more positive outcome.

Makepeace, who lives in the Northwest Corner of Connecticut, has been following the approach taken by two Native American judges in California who share the same goal – restorative justice – for almost two years.

Restorative justice holds offenders accountable for their criminal actions but aims to reduce incarceration and recidivism and to enable the perpetrators, their victims, and the



community to “heal.”

(Makepeace, right, in a photo by Jill Orschell.)

“They are working for the survival of their tribes, trying to save their children,”

Makepeace said in of the two judges – the Honorable Abby Abinanti, chief judge of the Yurok tribe on the north coast, who was the first Native American lawyer in the state in 1974, and the Honorable Claudette White, chief judge of the Quechan Tribal Court in the southern Mojave, who is the first tribal member to be a judge on her reservation.

“Although they have strong contrasts, they have the same goal,” she said of the judges. “They work with offenders diverted from state courts to bring them back to health, enforce meaningful reparations, provide them with life skills and get them jobs.”

The tribal justice system is complicated, Makepeace said, adding that she thinks sovereign nations are interesting in that they have their own justice systems. “Most federally recognized tribes have their own court system, which in most states is under the federal system, and they address the crimes that happen by tribal members on their own reservation. Public Act 280 [officially 83-280] puts jurisdiction with the state courts, and California is one of several states where they have concurrent jurisdiction. The way it's working in California, my focus, is that when a tribal member gets in trouble or a child is involved, it can be requested from a state court that the case be transferred to a tribal court. The [reauthorized] Violence Against Women law in California in 2013 also grants tribal courts the authority to address crimes by non-tribal members on the reservation against women who are tribal members.”

Makepeace has been following several cases in the Yurok chief judge's wellness court and the Quechan Tribal Court, being allowed full access to the proceedings. A film clip on her Web page about the project (www.MakepeaceProductions.com) introduces the judges and their courts.

Judge Abinanti, who became the first Native American lawyer in the state in 1974, said of the Yurok Wellness Court, “We are trying to establish a justice system that fits our people and works for them. It's not easy to be a Yurok. There's a lot of responsibilities that go with it. You can't just let them go.” She continued, “One of our goals as a court system is to create and recreate village life, because 200 years ago we did not have meth, we did not have heroin and now we do.”

The proceedings in her court are different in a lot of ways than other courtrooms, the judge said. “We don't have someone on a bench, someone who is removed from the people we're working with. You're supposed to interact with the people you're working with, know these people, care about them and be part of them.”



(Above, Yurok Chief Judge Abby Abinanti with Taos Proctor, an offender she is trying to save from life in prison. Photo by Barney Broomfield.)

For a year and a half, Makepeace has been following the case of a young Yurok man named Taos who first entered the justice system at 16 and was facing potential lifetime imprisonment on a felony charge in a third drug-related event. “Abby was successful in having the case diverted to her wellness court,” she said.

Sitting opposite her in court there, Taos told Judge Abinanti he was off drugs for the first time in his life and it was the first time he pointed to himself as the problem, not others. By way of making amends and reconnecting with the community, he was secretary of the rehab group and had initiated a program to help elders in the community. An update on the Web page indicates that he has been clean and sober more than a year, working three jobs and learning how to be a parent to his 3-year-old son. The judge considers Taos is “a work in progress.” She said that “a big part is effort, and he has a lot of willingness. He made mistakes and was willing to admit them and work on them.”

In a conversation with an official at the Humboldt County Probation Office about collaboration, Judge Abinanti said, “I don't want 18-year-olds getting involved in criminal behavior and then going into the adult system. ... Basically what we're interested in is your referrals and transitioning some of our older kids into a life that's not just right into jail.”

Judge White noted that on the Quechan reservation the wellness court is not a separate court but rather that “everything we do is for the wellness of the family.

“The cases that are most dear to me and most challenging are the cases dealing with families and children because children are the ones that need to be protected. These are the cases we invest the most time on. We focus on wellness, we focus on restoration, we focus on trying to put families back together and give them what they need to help make them whole,” she said.



(Above, cameraman Barney Broomfield (left) and director Anne Makepeace on the Yurok Reservation. Photo by Lori Nesbitt.)

Makepeace has been following several cases involving children in both courts, including a case in the Quechan court concerning two teen-aged boys under the guardianship of their aunt and uncle. The teens, aged 14 and 16, had become involved again in juvenile issues and the elder was facing more serious consequences.

The filmmaker said that, generally speaking, the stories she is interested in for her

documentaries “are about characters overcoming obstacles and doing amazing things.” In this instance, both judges are providing valuable models of restorative justice, she said, “and mainstream courts across the country are noticing.”

Makepeace has been involved in independent filmmaking for more than 30 years as writer, director and producer, garnering many awards, including a National Prime Time Emmy for “Robert Capa in Love and War,” an American Masters/PBS documentary that was first shown at the Sundance Festival in 2003.

She was named a finalist in the 2001 Academy Awards for the first documentary film focusing on native tribes that she produced, **“Coming to Light: Edward Curtis and the North American Indians.”** Curtis was dedicated to record Native American culture for posterity through his photographs and documented research.

Makepeace shared that it's been awhile since she felt the passion for a project she experienced with the second film she produced about Native Americans, the award- winning documentary **“We Still Live Here: Âs Nutayuneân.”** about the reclamation of the Wampanoag language, which was recognized as most likely to effect important social change, was first broadcast on the PBS series Independent Lens in 2011.

Not until now, that is. Makepeace said of “Tribal Justice” that the stories she has been witnessing “have all the elements of a great documentary: compelling characters engaged in important social justice issues unfolding dramatically over time.”

“I knew that such a documentary would educate a broad audience,” she said, reflecting that it would be important for indigenous people around the world and valuable “in modeling a different kind of justice for all Americans,” as she has stated in a written release.

Makepeace, who was raised in Middlebury, Connecticut, did not aspire to become a filmmaker when she first sought a career. She earned a bachelor of arts degree in English and a master's in education at Stanford University. In her first year as a teacher in California, she recounted, “I used a lot of Native American materials when teaching eighth-graders, and I also taught filmmaking as an elective, which led her to obtaining a master's in film production at Stanford.

Her first real film was her thesis film, “**Moonchild**,” a docudramatization about the Moonies, a California cult. “It was aired on HBO in 1983 and sold all over the world, it really struck a chord.” She said the first film she got obsessed with, however, was “Ishi, The Last Yahi,” a project she was hired to write about a man said to be “the last wild Indian” during his time a century ago.

Makepeace draws support from foundations and other grant-giving bodies, which helps her bring her projects to fruition, and she cites the benefits of having an editor to go through hundreds of hours of filming. “I can edit, but I feel it needs a whole different story hand though,” she said.

“The documentaries I make do not lend themselves to much theatrical distribution but do get good festival releases, air on TV (particularly PBS) and are acquired by libraries. They do get audiences – and the audiences I do really care about.”

Makepeace presented a program about the “Tribal Justice” project-- showing clips and talking about her creative process – at the Scoville Memorial Library in Salisbury, a community that, she said, was very friendly to her right away when she returned to Connecticut in 2013.

“I said you never make the film you set out to make, and this is particularly true about documentaries. Writing a novel, you can control it. With reality, you can't control it – it really continues to surprise you; in scary ways at times, also in ways that are great. Once you have all your footage, you look for a beginning, middle and a resolution. You have to create a creative arc, a structure. [Making a] documentary is very challenging that way. I said at the library that where I am ready to throw up my hands, I blindly keep going, and that this happens with every documentary I make. You go where it leads you.”

For more information about Makepeace, her production company and her films, as well as progress on “Tribal Justice,” visit www.MakepeaceProductions.com.

Front page article about Judge Abby Abinanti in the LA Times
 Trouble reading the article below?
 Please click on this link or paste into your browser:

http://www.makepeaceproductions.com/tribaljustice/docs/20140305_lat_tribal_court_chief_judge_abinanti.pdf

Los Angeles Times

\$1.50 DESIGNATED AREAS HIGHER 52 PAGES © 2014 WST

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2014

latimes.com

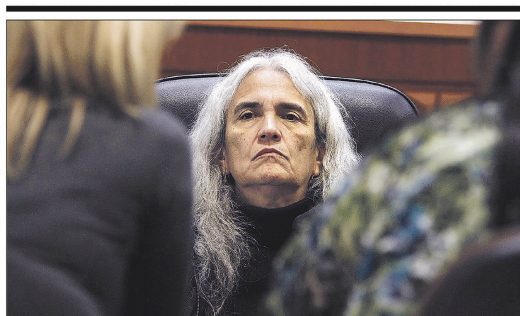
WASHINGTON — As international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions stall, schemes to slow global warming using fantastical technologies once dismissed as a sideshow are getting serious consideration in Washington.

Ships that spew salt into the air to block sunlight. Mirrored satellites designed to bounce solar rays back into space. Massive "reverse" power plants that would suck carbon from the atmosphere. These are among the ideas the National Academy of Sciences has charged a panel of some of the nation's top climate thinkers to investigate. Several agencies requested the inquiry, including the CIA.

At the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Cañada Flintridge, scientists are modeling what such technologies might do to weather patterns. At the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash., a fund created by Microsoft founder Bill Gates — an enthusiast of research into climate engineering — helps bankroll another such effort.

"There is a level of seriousness about these strategies that didn't exist a decade ago, when it was considered just a game," said Ken Caldeira, a scientist with the Carnegie Institution at Stanford University, who sits on the National Academy of Sciences panel. "Attitudes have changed dramatically."

Even as the research moves forward, many scientists and government officials worry about the risks of [See Climate, A13]



FRANCINE ORR/Los Angeles Times

YUOK TRIBAL COURT Chief Judge Abby Abinanti knows many of the people who come before her — and in this court, relationships help foster good outcomes.

COLUMN ONE

Home-court advantage

Tribal court judge metes out a village style of justice, often starting by asking, 'Who's your mom?'

By LEE ROMNEY
 REPORTING FROM
 KLAMATH, CALIF.

Abby Abinanti squints at her docket. "The court is going to put on its glasses," she says dryly, reaching to grab her readers

and snatch some candy from a staff member.

As chief judge of the Yurok Tribal Court, Abinanti wears no robe. On this day, she's in jeans and cowboy boots, her silver hair spilling down the back of a black down vest. In contrast to her longtime role as a San Francisco Superior Court commissioner, she doesn't perch above those who come before her; she shares a table with them.

"Hi, big guy. How are you doing?" she softly prods a 29-year-old participant in her wellness court, which offers a healing path for nonviolent offenders strug-

gling with substance abuse.

Abinanti has watched Troy Fletcher Jr. battle bipolar disorder and methamphetamine addiction, land in jail and embrace recovery under the tribe's guidance. She's known his grandmother since before he was born.

Though that would be cause for recusal in the state system, here it's pretty much the point. Her most common question for court newcomers: "Who's your mom?"

"Here we have a village society," Abinanti says of California's largest tribe. [See Tribal judge, A10]

Garcetti passes the Spanish test

L.A. mayor puts his skills to use during a Mexico trade mission, drawing praise despite 'lacking a few words.'

By RICHARD FAUSSET

MEXICO CITY — When historians write about 21st century Los Angeles, they'll probably observe that Eric Garcetti was the second Spanish-speaking L.A. mayor in a row to make an official visit to the Mexican capital. They may also note how trips such as his trade mission this week reflected the increasingly intimate cultural and economic ties between Los Angeles and its sister megalopolis to the south.

But some of the subtleties of the experience may be lost to posterity if it is not also noted that Garcetti, like his predecessor, Antonio

Villaraigosa, speaks a version of the language that, for lack of a more scientific term, might be called Funky American Business Spanish.

Villaraigosa and Garcetti have Latino roots, but both had to learn much of their Spanish in school, on the stump or on the job. As a result, they speak a serviceable but far from perfect Spanish, a shortcoming each has acknowledged with humility and admirable good humor. During a 2009 visit to Mexico City, Villaraigosa referred to himself, self-deprecatingly, as "el pochito" — "pochito" being slang for an Americanized Mexican who may not speak Spanish well.

On Tuesday, Garcetti, whose paternal grandfather was born in Mexico, referred to his language skills as "good community meeting Spanish," much of which, he said, was refined while he was representing L.A.'s [See Mexico, A7]

Weather
 Morning clouds.
 L.A. Basin: 72/57. **AA6**
World **A3**
Nation **A8**
Complete Index **AA2**

Printed with soy inks on partially recycled paper.



A more intimate style of justice

[Tribal judge, from A1]

"and the people who help you to resolve your problems are the people you know."

Native American jurisprudence has evolved since tribes began to regain their sovereignty, returning to traditional values of respect, community support and responsibility, and collective healing — for victims, perpetrators and the circle of lives they touch.

Abinanti, who in 1974 became the first Native American woman admitted to the State Bar of California, has been at the forefront.

"When you're looking to heal, you look wherever you can to find medicine, and one of those places is in the culture and practices of the community," says retired Utah appellate court Judge William A. Thorne Jr., a Pomo-Coast Miwok who teamed with Abinanti in the 1980s to train tribal court personnel nationwide.

Now, at 66, Abinanti has returned to her home on sacred Requa Hill above the fog-wisped mouth of the Klamath River.

(Though she tried to retire from the San Francisco bench in 2011, she was recently asked to return every other week, so she commutes.)

"What happened is we lost touch with our responsibilities," Abinanti says. "You take responsibility for what you did.... And if you can ask for help, I'm willing to give you a hand. I won't ever say you've used up your chances."



Photographs by FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

ABINANTI VISITS her mother's grave before heading to work. Her own family's harrowing history lends empathy to her mission.

Abinanti speaks often of "historical trauma" — wounds passed wordlessly through generations with an accumulating grief and the urge to salve it with alcohol and drugs. It is what Yurok tribal Chairman Thomas O'Rourke calls "the sickness of this land."

Her family had its share. Her maternal grandfather, Marion Rube, was described in press accounts as among "the notorious criminals of early California." Captured after a 1922 bank heist, he escaped six years later from a San Quentin prison road camp and was shot to death in southern Oregon.

Ostracized, his wife and three daughters fled their village. The girls were shipped off to government-run boarding school. Sorrow shadowed them; harsh deaths claimed them. One, intoxicated, froze in a snow bank; another, newly sober, caught on fire after backing into a heater. Abinanti's mother, who struggled with alcohol, depression and forced electroshock treatments, died while detoxing.

Her history, rarely shared, informs Abinanti's compassion. "It's painful to be a drunk, to not meet your promises, to not look your kids in the eye," she says. "To disrespect them on top of that doesn't do any good."

Abinanti was studying journalism at Humboldt State University when she saw a flier for a program for Native American students at the University of New Mexico School of Law.

Thorne met her in 1975 when he was interning at the Ukiah office of California Indian Legal Assistance. Just two years out of law school, she was the group's board president.

"In walked this powerful Indian woman," Thorne recalls. "She was this image of what I could seek to become, an Indian person who was a force to be reckoned with and yet just very kind."

Appointed to the San Francisco bench two decades ago, she has specialized in family court and juvenile dependency. She has also served as a judge or magistrate for four other Western tribes.

She first came home to Yurok country in 1978 to set up the tribe's



ABINANTI LOOKS out over the mouth of the Klamath River, ancestral land, from her balcony. In 1974 she became the first Native American woman admitted to the State Bar of California.

fishing court, then again in 1993 when the tribe earned federal recognition. The Yurok Tribal Court was launched three years later, and in 2007 she became its chief judge.

Among her innovations: the first tribal-run program in the nation to help members expunge their criminal records; and California's first tribal child support program, which allows for non-cash alternatives to support payments — such as donations of fish or manual labor.

Yet her greatest impact has arguably come through wellness court. Some participants seek out the program on their own in the course of recovery; others, like Fletcher, come through a rare partnership with the state criminal justice system: Abinanti's decades on the bench have earned her crucial credibility with judges, prosecutors and probation officials, allowing her staff to pull tribal members out of criminal court and bring them home.

Fletcher was facing an arson charge for burning brush when a tribal court attorney secured his release from a Eureka jail cell in a pre-trial diversion agreement and brought him into Abinanti's program. He is now stable on psychiatric medication, off meth and in a sober-living home.

"I used to be afraid to go into court, afraid that they were going to take something from me," Fletcher says outside tribal headquarters, his large hands working a rope into a monkey's fist. "Here, they're trying to give something back.

"I've got the whole tribe behind me," he adds. "When I have to answer to my people, it makes me want to do better."

Abinanti never swears in witnesses, explaining: "If you're Yurok and you lie, that's on you."

On this day, her general court is in session, arranging restitution for various infractions. Participants can demand a trial, but most tend to tell Abinanti what they did. Then they talk about how to best "settle up."

So it goes with Taos Proctor, 32. Towering and broad-chested, with full-sleeve tattoos, he sits across from Abinanti, looking unhappy. His violation: fishing after the season had closed.

Of 73 fish seized, she orders that 53 be donated to a program for elders. The rest, which belonged to a relative of Proctor's, will be returned to him to give back to the rightful owner.

Proctor is also a wellness court client. Though Abinanti pokes him

harshly with a long finger during a court break and quips to a visitor that he has "the manners of a stump," she is fiercely proud of him.

Pulled into the meth life, he was committed to a county boys' ranch at 16. Next came the California Youth Authority and prison. Released at 25, he bounced in and out of jail before he found himself facing a third strike.

The charge turned out to be unsubstantiated, and with help from the tribal court's criminal attorney, he pleaded to a lesser count. It marked the first time Del Norte County Superior Court Judge William H. Follett agreed to hand a felony case to wellness court as a condition of probation.

"I know I can trust her," Follett says of Abinanti. "If people are continuing to not do their program or to do drugs, she'll know to send them back... She's taught me that there's another way of doing things."

Proctor became a fish buyer, took a job felling trees and, at Abinanti's insistence that he give back, hosts a weekly Narcotics Anonymous meeting. He has been off meth for 15 months.

"Judge Abby knows me. She works with me," he says. "I've still got a lot of issues that I'm working on, but I don't have to hide them

anymore."

Court staff members are pulling for him. "I don't want to let them down," Proctor says. "I want to help my community because for so long, I didn't."

Abinanti also presses participants to remember — or discover — what it means to be Yurok. It's a journey the tribe is taking collectively, as the language and ancient dances are revived.

On a recent day, she asks one man who has been drumming and stoking the fire at sweat lodge ceremonies if he'd listened to the CDs of Yurok songs she had compiled for him.

"I'd like you to hear 'em," she tells him. "I think that would help."

Abinanti could use a rest. Next to her armchair is a stack of books she longs to devour. But important work remains.

Of more than 5,000 Yurok tribal members, only a handful are bar-certified attorneys; and of the attorneys working for the tribal court, Abinanti is the only Yurok.

The tribal council recently approved a pilot project that Abinanti brokered with online Concord Law School—Kaplan University. Under the agreement, 10 tribal members will enroll by September, receiving tailored supervision to help them pass the bar exam. Four began last month. In return for tuition, which Abinanti must now raise from donors, participants agree to continue working for the tribe for five years once they pass the bar.

"I don't want to be diverted," she says. "I want to do what needs to be done at home that right now only I can do. If I do a good job, then that won't be true anymore... I'm here. I need people behind me."

She knows, after all, that she won't be around forever.

Last summer, Abinanti established a family burial ground on her Requa Hill property, and after more than four painful decades brought her mother's remains home.

One day Abinanti will be buried next to her, and she hopes the resting place — filled with the music of the Pacific — ends the suffering of her maternal family line.

"She deserves some peace."

lee.romney@latimes.com

TriCorner News

from *The Lakeville Journal*,
The Millerton News and *The Winsted Journal*

NEH grant for documentarian Makepeace 'Tribal Justice' on film

Wed, 09/07/2016 - 4:39pm

By Gabe Lefferts



Anne Makepeace, in her home office on Monday, Aug. 29, talked about her latest film, "Tribal Justice," to be finished this year. Photo By Gabe Lefferts

"The American criminal justice system is broken," she said.

LAKEVILLE — According to Anne Makepeace's estimate, there are about 100 official tribal courts for indigenous communities in the United States. In the Yurok Tribe of northern California and the Quechan Tribe of southern California and Arizona, two women are redefining their tribal court systems' function.

These women, Chief Judges Abby Abinanti (Yurok) and Claudette White (Quechan), are the focus of Makepeace's upcoming film, "Tribal Justice."

Makepeace, a Lakeville resident since 2003 (and wife of Lakeville Journal columnist Charles Church), is a documentary filmmaker known for work that includes the films, "We Still Live Here," "Coming to Light" and "Rain in a Dry Land."

In an interview with The Lakeville Journal last week, Makepeace described her motivation for making “Tribal Justice.”

She pointed to high incarceration rates and a lack of adequate restorative measures as problems that contribute to the need to explore new court models.

Tribal courts function in small communities and are “much more hands-on” than state courts, providing counseling, transportation for treatments and more.

This isn’t the first time that Makepeace has explored indigenous traditions and their potential contributions to mainstream American society through her films.

“We Still Live Here” documents the efforts made by the Wampanoag Tribe in Cape Cod, Mass., to reclaim their language. “Coming to Light” tells the story of the life and work of Edward S. Curtis, a photographer whose images captured the faces of thousands of native peoples at the height of the United States’ westward expansion.

Makepeace described her role as that of a storyteller— one who returns to the theme time and time again of “one culture coming up against another.”

Her films, she made clear, are not meant to advocate for a particular outcome. “I make them because I fall in love with the characters and a story.”

Abby Abinanti of the Yurok Tribe, she said, “is a fierce, passionate, quite sophisticated native lawyer.” Abinanti was the first Native American woman to pass the California bar exam.

White, on the other hand, was described as a younger judge who is exploring the complex relationship between the state and tribal courts.

“A big part of it is that the judges are part of the community,” Makepeace said. “They’re like village elders. They probably know the grandparents and the parents and the cousins, uncles and aunts of whoever is coming in.”

Makepeace spoke about the difficulty for state courts to imitate tribal courts, but she cited state court movements (known as “collaborative courts”) that have already begun exploring restorative justice systems.

She hopes that the film might inspire dialogues among tribal and state courts. She added that the film might “shift peoples’ thinking from, ‘Let’s get these people off the streets and clean up America’ to ‘Let’s get these people healed so they can become productive members of society.’”

A successful grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities gave Makepeace Productions the necessary funding to finish “Tribal Justice” late in 2016.

Tribal Justice Photos

Cleared and available in high resolution format for press use

Image #	Release Form Provided?	Image Thumb	Image Caption & Credit (If applicable, include tribal affiliation of the person.)
1.	have		Barney Broomfield and Anne Makepeace at Yurok Photo by Lori Nesbitt
2.	have		Barney films Judge Claudette White, her son Zion White, and her nephew Isaac Palone (all Quechan) at Washington Redskin protest march Photo by Anne Makepeace
3.	have		Barney Films Taos Proctor (Yurok) fishing on the Klamath River Photo by Anne Makepeace
4.	Have		Isaac Palone (Quechan) Photo by Barney Broomfield
5.	Have		Isaac Palone (Quechan) shoots a basket Photo by Anne Makepeace
6.	Don't have release from girl yet		Judge Claudette White (Quechan) MCs the Quechan Beauty Pageant Photo by Anne Makepeace
7.	have		Lori Nesbitt (Yurok) and Anne Makepeace in Yurok Police Boat Photo by Barney Broomfield
8.	have		Pergeesh Carlson and Lori Nesbitt (both Yurok) on the Klamath River Photo by Anne Makepeace

Image #	Release Form Provided?	Image Thumb	Image Caption & Credit (If applicable, include tribal affiliation of the person.)
9.	have		Judge Abby Abinanti and Taos Proctor (both Yurok) at the Yurok wellness celebration Photo by Anne Makepeace
10.	have		Cultural Adviser Preston Arrow-Weed (Quechan) at his home near the Quechan reservation. Photo by Anne Makepeace
11.	have		Judge Claudette White (Quechan) at a Tribal Court-State Court Forum meeting in 2013 Photo by Anne Makepeace
12.	have		Claudette's nephew Isaac Palone and her son Zion White (both Quechan) at Quechan Indian Days 2014 Photo by Anne Makepeace
13.	have		Judge Claudette White (Quechan) and Director Anne Makepeace at Quechan Indian Days Photo by Barney Broomfield
14.	have		Executive Producer Ruth Cowan, Judge Claudette White (Quechan) and Director Anne Makepeace at Quechan Indian Days Photo by Barney Broomfield
15.	have		Judge Claudette White with her nephew Isaac Palone (both Quechan) Photo by Barney Broomfield
16.	have		Dan Golding (Quechan) shooting Isaac's release from jail in December 2015 Photo by Barney Broomfield
17.	have		Anne Makepeace interviewing Judge Claudette White (Quechan) in her office with December 2015 Photo by Dan Golding

Image #	Release Form Provided?	Image Thumb	Image Caption & Credit (If applicable, include tribal affiliation of the person.)
18.	have		Daesza and Dru Denard (both Quechan) during filming at their house, November 2015 Photo by Dan Golding
19.	have		Daesza and Dru Denard (both Quechan) during filming at their house Photo by Dan Golding
20.	have		Elaine Ocegueda (Mohawk) with her children Daesza and Dru Denard and her mother Photo by Dan Golding
21.	have		Elaine Ocegueda (Mohawk) with her children Daesza and Dru Denard (both Quechan), her mother and Anne Makepeace Photo by Dan Golding
22.	have		Cinematographer Barney Broomfield puts a mic on Judge Abby Abinanti (Yurok) Photo by Anne Makepeace
23.	have		Director Anne Makepeace with Cinematographer Barney Broomfield on the Klamath River Photo by Anne Makepeace
24.	have		Director Anne Makepeace with Cinematographer Barney Broomfield on the Klamath River Photo by Jennifer Walter
25.	have		Production Consultant Jennifer Walter on the Klamath River Photo by Anne Makepeace
26.	have		Cinematographer Barney Broomfield filming Yurok tribal member Willard Carlson (Yurok) at his home on the Klamath River Photo by Anne Makepeace

Image #	Release Form Provided?	Image Thumb	Image Caption & Credit (If applicable, include tribal affiliation of the person.)
27.	have		Cinematographer Barney Broomfield filming an interview with Yurok probation officer Ron Bates, with Executive Producer Ruth Cowan standing by. Photo by Anne Makepeace
28.	have		Cinematographer Barney Broomfield filming sunset at the mouth of the Klamath River. Photo by Anne Makepeace
29.	have		Director Anne Makepeace overlooking the mouth of the Klamath River. Photo by Barney Broomfield
30.	have		Barney Broomfield filming Abby Abinanti (Yurok) at her house, Ruth Cowan holding microphone Photo by Anne Makepeace
31.	have		Judge Abby Abinanti, probation officer/ co-producer Lori Nesbitt, (both Yurok) Barney Broomfield and Ruth Cowan after filming an interview with Abby Photo by Anne Makepeace
32.	have		Barney Broomfield filming Taos Proctor (Yurok) fishing on the Klamath River. Photo by Anne Makepeace
33.	have		Barney Broomfield filming Taos Proctor (Yurok) fishing on the Klamath River. Photo by Anne Makepeace
34.	have		Barney Broomfield filming Taos Proctor (Yurok) fishing on the Klamath River. Photo by Anne Makepeace
35.	have		Barney Broomfield filming Taos Proctor (Yurok) fishing on the Klamath River. Photo by Anne Makepeace

Image #	Release Form Provided?	Image Thumb	Image Caption & Credit (If applicable, include tribal affiliation of the person.)
36.	have		Barney Broomfield filming Taos Proctor (Yurok) fishing on the Klamath River. Photo by Anne Makepeace
37.	have		Barney Broomfield filming scenics at the mouth of the Klamath River. Photo by Anne Makepeace
38.	have		Kelly Gibson, Taos Proctor, and their son Cheygoon (all Yurok) at a restaurant in Crescent City, CA. Photo by Anne Makepeace
39.	have		Barney Broomfield filming scenics on the Klamath River. Photo by Anne Makepeace
40.	have		Judge Abby Abinanti presides of the wedding of Taos Proctor and Kelly Gibson, (all Yurok) September 2016. Photo by Anne Makepeace
41.	have		Kelly Gibson (Yurok) at her wedding. Photo by Anne Makepeace
42.	have		Cheygoon Proctor and his cousin (both Yurok) at his parents' wedding. Photo by Anne Makepeace
43.	have		Cheygoon Proctor and his cousin (both Yurok) at his parents' wedding. Photo by Anne Makepeace
44.	have		Cheygoon Proctor and his cousin (both Yurok) at his parents' wedding. Photo by Anne Makepeace
45.	have		Taos Proctor (Yurok) at his wedding Photo by Anne Makepeace

Image #	Release Form Provided?	Image Thumb	Image Caption & Credit (If applicable, include tribal affiliation of the person.)
46.	have		Taos Proctor (Yurok) at his wedding Photo by Anne Makepeace
47.	have		Cheygoon Proctor with his grandmother (both Yurok) at the Yurok Wellness graduation Photo by Anne Makepeace
48.	have		Cheygoon Proctor with his grandmother (both Yurok) at the Yurok Wellness graduation Photo by Anne Makepeace
49.	have		Cheygoon Proctor with his grandmother (both Yurok) at the Yurok Wellness graduation Photo by Anne Makepeace
50.	have		Kelly Gibson (Yurok) at the Yurok Wellness graduation Photo by Anne Makepeace
51.	have		Outside Santa Barbara's Lobero Theater just before the premiere: Front row: Claudette, Anne, Abby Back row: Claudette's sister Dorena, Claudette's son Zion, Claudette's sister Mary
52.	have		Zion sings, Claudette and her sister dances, as a prayer before the premiere screening
53.	have		Zion sings, Claudette and her sisters dance, as a prayer before the premiere screening
54.	have		Q+A serious after premiere screening. Anne, Claudette, Abby
55.	have		Q+A happy after premiere screening. Anne, Claudette, Abby

BEST FEATURE DOCUMENTARY

