

**NATIVE AMERICAN POLITICAL PRISONER
ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR STANDING ROCK
PROTESTS AND A NEW DOCUMENTARY *THE
SEVENTH FIRE***

NEW YORK – One of America's longest incarcerated Native American prisoners today announced his support for the protesters and growing movement to prevent the Dakota Access Pipeline from running through sacred lands and waters near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.

Leonard Peltier, (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) an activist and member of the American Indian Movement civil rights organization that rose to national prominence as a result of the Wounded Knee standoff on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, was sentenced to prison for involvement in events at South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in 1975 that led to a shootout that left two FBI agents and one Native American man dead.

Peltier also announced his support for a new documentary feature film **THE SEVENTH FIRE** - a powerful movie and possible Academy Awards contender that shines a light on the influence of gang culture on American Indian reservations and how our broken criminal justice system is failing Native Americans. Shot on the White Earth Indian Reservation and inside the Minnesota prison system, the film is a potent combination of humanism, social advocacy, and verite filmmaking. **THE SEVENTH FIRE** is directed by filmmaker Jack Pettibone Riccobono and is executive produced by director Terrence Malick, actor/director Natalie Portman and veteran Native American director Chris Eyre.

Peltier's case, and request for clemency, has been a cause celeb of Native American and progressive activists for four decades. His case has drawn the attention of actor Harry Belafonte, the late Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Coretta Scott King, filmmaker Michael Moore, director Oliver Stone, actor/writer Robert Redford, as well as human rights groups including Amnesty International.

Peltier released the following statement today via his representative Dorothy Ninham: "**THE SEVENTH FIRE shines a light on the disproportionate incarceration rates of Native Americans in places like #NoDAPL and**

other reservation areas across the country. The war does not end on the front line for Native people. It rages on behind the scenes in states with highly prejudicial judicial systems. I, Leonard Peltier, Stand With Standing Rock and THE SEVENTH FIRE."

In THE SEVENTH FIRE, gang leader Rob Brown is sent back to prison for a fifth time and must confront his role in bringing violent drug culture into his beloved American Indian community in northern Minnesota. As Rob reckons with his past, his seventeen-year-old protégé, Kevin, dreams of the future: becoming the most powerful and feared Native gangster on the reservation.

Director Jack Riccobono commented: "THE SEVENTH FIRE takes its title from an Ojibwe prophecy that foretells a time when the youngest generation will return to traditional ways and lead a rebirth of their nation. At Standing Rock, the spirit of The Seven Fires Prophecy is burning bright; this resistance and this teaching both have even greater urgency and resonance in our new post-election reality. These are not just Native American issues, they are American issues, and we hope this story will reach as wide an audience as possible."

THE SEVENTH FIRE premiered at the Berlin Film Festival and recently screened at **the White House** as part of President Obama's push for criminal justice reform.

"In light of our recent election and President-elect Trump's impending control of the federal government, we are more concerned than ever about the criminal justice issues that plague Indian Country and our country as a whole. We all deserve justice on equal terms," said Executive Producer Chris Eyre.

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