



Native Representation on Scripted Television

Heightened Visibility and Its Impact on Audiences

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ILLUMINATIVE



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About the Norman Lear Center



The Norman Lear Center is a nonpartisan research and public policy center that studies the social, political, economic and cultural impact of entertainment. The Lear Center helps bridge the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. Through its scholarship, research and partnerships; its events, publications and outreach to the creative community; and its role in formulating the field of entertainment studies, the Norman Lear Center works to be at the forefront of discussion and practice — and to illuminate and repair the world.

About IllumiNative



IllumiNative is a national, Native woman-led racial justice organization. Founded in 2018, IllumiNative's mission is to amplify contemporary Native voices, stories, and issues to build power for Native peoples to advance justice, equity, and self-determination. IllumiNative works to transform how Americans and key institutions think about and engage with Native peoples to fight systemic racism and achieve transformational change for Native communities and future generations. Building power for Native peoples through representation and systems change is the frame, lens, and goal of our work. Through the following interrelated departments, we amplify Native voices, stories, and issues across public platforms, activate support from diverse national audiences and strengthen the influence and capacity of Native peoples to drive systems change: Research + Action, Narrative Change + Impact, Pop Culture + Media, Advancement, and Operations. Each of these departments serves as foundational movement infrastructure to dismantle the systemic racism facing Native peoples and to build power and advance equity and justice for current and future generations.

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All images used in the report are the sole property of the networks that own the series. The still photos are used under educational fair use guidelines for the explicit purpose of supporting this research report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Native American communities have nearly doubled in size from 2010 to 2020, but continue to be underrepresented on scripted television. In the 2019-2020 TV season, Native Americans accounted for less than 1% of roles and 1.1% of staff writers. After years of erasure, the number of Indigenous lead recurring roles doubled between 2021 and 2022, leading some to speculate that representation has improved.

But representation is not just about the *number* of roles, it is also about the *quality* of depictions. Historically, Native characters have often been portrayed in stereotypical ways, such as the **bloodthirsty warrior**, the **helpless victim**, or the **needy indigent**. Representation in popular media is especially meaningful at a time when Native voices have elevated issues — such as opposition to appropriated imagery, traditions, songs, and chants in sports and the Land Back movement — into popular discourse. However, there is relatively little research on the extent to which Native representations in contemporary entertainment may reinforce long-standing stereotypes, or the impact of these representations on audience perceptions.

To address this gap, the USC Norman Lear Center's Media Impact Project (MIP) conducted a research project in collaboration with IllumiNative, consisting of:

- A **content analysis** examining portrayals of 104 Native characters in 51 scripted television series set in the U.S.
- A survey-based study measuring the **impact of three streaming series** featuring prominent Native characters on audiences' knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors.

How are Native characters represented on scripted TV?

- 39% of analyzed Native characters were women, none were identified as Two Spirit, and only 3% were LGBTQ+. All LGBTQ+ characters were women.
- We found some portrayals that were consistent with stereotypes, particularly those characterizing Native Americans as “indigent” or “violent”:
 - 55% of Native characters were poor or working class
 - 18% committed non-violent crimes
 - 18% committed an act of physical violence

For each series, we tracked the number of Native characters, whether it was helmed by Native talent, and measured critical and audience reception:

- Despite an average of 10 Native characters per series, two out of every three series had no Native writers, directors, or executive producers.
- Series with at least one Native writer, director, or executive producer had stronger audience reception than series with none.
- Series featuring more Native characters generated greater critical praise, and were better received by audiences.

How do portrayals of Native characters affect audiences?

We surveyed 1200 regular streaming viewers, including 300 viewers of each of three series that prominently featured Native characters: *Reservation Dogs* (Hulu), *Rutherford Falls* (Peacock), and *Yellowstone* (Paramount+).

Compared to streaming viewers who didn't watch any of the three series:

Reservation Dogs viewers were significantly **less** likely to agree with the following:

- Native peoples would be just as well off as others if they tried harder and stopped complaining;
- The U.S. has done enough for Native peoples;
- We must move on from the past treatment of Native peoples; and
- Native Americans must assimilate in order to advance in society.

They were more likely to support the Indian Child Welfare Act and participate in a variety of actions of support.

Rutherford Falls viewers were significantly **less** likely to agree that Native peoples would be just as well off as others if they tried harder and stopped complaining.

They were **more** likely to agree that:

- Sports teams should stop using Native American imagery;
- Cities should change the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day; and
- The U.S. should be required to uphold treaty obligations that enable Native Americans to control their own lands.

Yellowstone viewers were significantly **less** likely to agree that:

- Sports teams that use Native terms should be renamed;
- Sports teams should stop using Native American Native imagery and appropriated Native traditions, songs, and chants in sports;
- Cities should change the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day;
- The government should protect sacred Native American lands; and that
- The U.S. should be required to uphold treaty obligations that allow Native Americans to control their own lands.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Compared to previous research, our findings paint a more positive picture of the quality of on-screen Native representation. However, many of the series we examined are no longer on the air. **Further, there is significant room for improvement in representation of Native talent behind the scenes. Despite an average of 10 Native characters per series, only one in three had any Native writers, directors, or executive producers.**

To tell nuanced stories that more authentically represent the diversity and complexity of Native communities, we propose the following recommendations for content creators and decision makers:

- **Elevate characters from diverse Native communities.**
- **Prioritize productions with Native talent in key decision-making roles.**
- **Continue uplifting Native stories that take place in contemporary times.**
- **Shine a light on Native humor and joy.**
- **Aim for Tribal specificity.**
- **Consider a variety of Native perspectives.**
- **Invest in strong, multi-season Native series.**

Compared to previous research, our findings paint a more positive picture of the quality of on-screen Native representation. However, many of the series we examined are no longer on the air.

INTRODUCTION

Though Native American¹ communities have historically been disenfranchised in the United States, these communities remain vibrant, diverse, and continue to lead efforts to bring issues of equity and progress into the public discourse. Despite the common belief that Native peoples are a vanishing group,² data from the U.S. Census indicate that the Native American population nearly doubled between 2010 and 2020, from 5.2 million to 9.7 million.³ Estimates suggest Native peoples now account for 2.9% of the U.S. population. Population increases are just one indicator of the continued resilience of this multifaceted population.

Indigenous representation in government has also improved in recent years. In 2018, Deb Haaland, an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna, and Sharice Davids, an enrolled member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, became the first two Native women elected to the U.S. Congress.⁴ And for the first time in 230 years, Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiians achieved representation in Congress in 2020.⁵ In 2021, Haaland was confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, making her the first Native Cabinet secretary in U.S. history.⁶

U.S. Census indicate that the Native American population nearly doubled between 2010 and 2020.

Native peoples have also led efforts to rewrite narratives about their communities by raising awareness on a variety of issues — from historical injustices to present day concerns. Recent years have seen mainstream reporting on the dark history of a federal boarding school system that removed hundreds of thousands of Native children from their families and placed them into institutions operated by churches and the federal government.⁷ Public discourse has also increased around the use of Native imagery and appropriated Native traditions, songs, and chants in sports, with some teams finally responding to protests by changing

1 This includes the U.S. Census categories for “American Indian” and “Alaska Native” alone or in combination with other ethnicities. Throughout this report, we use the terms *Native*, *Native peoples*, *Indigenous*, and *Native Americans* interchangeably, rather than American Indian. See [Appendix A](#) for definitions of various terms used in this report.

2 Campisteguy, M. E., Heilbronner, J. M., & Nakamura-Rybak, C. (2018). *Research findings: Compilation of all research. Reclaiming Native Truth*. <https://www.firstnations.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/FullFindingsReport-screen.pdf>

3 Jones, N., Marks, R., Ramirez, R., & Ríos-Vargas, M. (2021, August 12). *2020 Census illuminates racial and ethnic composition of the country*. United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/improved-race-ethnicity-measures-reveal-united-states-population-much-more-multiracial.html>

4 Diaz, J. (2022, September 20). U.S. Congress reaches a milestone in Indigenous representation. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2022/09/20/1123295313/congress-indigenous-representation-mary-peltola>

5 Diaz, J. (2022, September 20). U.S. Congress reaches a milestone in Indigenous representation. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2022/09/20/1123295313/congress-indigenous-representation-mary-peltola>

6 Rott, N. (2021, March 15). Deb Haaland confirmed 1st Native American interior secretary. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/15/977558590/deb-haaland-confirmed-as-first-native-american-interior-secretary>

7 Dunbar-Ortiz, R. (2014). *An Indigenous peoples' history of the United States*. Beacon Press.

Waxman, O. B. (2022, May 17). The history of Native American boarding schools is even more complicated than a new report reveals. *TIME Magazine*. <https://time.com/6177069/american-indian-boarding-schools-history/>

their nicknames and mascots.⁸ The Land Back movement, which aims to reclaim Native lands by affirming Indigenous sovereignty through political and economic control of their ancestral lands,⁹ has gained traction¹⁰ through public campaigns, such as the fight to reclaim spaces like the Black Hills, a sacred site to the Lakota Nation where the Mount Rushmore monument is located.¹¹

In this moment of overlapping social movements, considerations around Native representation in entertainment are especially important. Scripted entertainment, including TV, can play a powerful role informing personal attitudes and, by extension, shifting popular opinion about a wide variety of social issues. Indeed, decades of research have demonstrated that entertainment media can impact audiences' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, policy support, and behavior, including prejudice towards marginalized communities.¹² However, popular media have historically reinforced harmful stereotypes¹³ about Indigenous peoples.¹⁴ These stereotypes have the potential to minimize awareness of Native struggles and successes, justify violent colonization, and inhibit meaningful social change.¹⁵

Native Representation in Entertainment

Prior to 2020, Native peoples were virtually absent in scripted entertainment, both on-screen and behind the scenes. Data from various studies indicate that Native peoples accounted for less than 0.4% (4 in 1,000) of characters in primetime television and popular films.¹⁶ In the 2019-2020 television season, Native Americans accounted for less than 1% of television roles across cable, broadcast, and streaming,¹⁷ 1.1% of TV staff writers, and 0.8% of employed screenwriters.¹⁸

8 Engle, J. (2020, January 31). Is it offensive for sports teams and their fans to use Native American names, imagery and gestures? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/learning/is-it-offensive-for-sports-teams-and-their-fans-to-use-native-american-names-imagery-and-gestures.html>

9 For additional information on the range of issues covered by the Land Back movement, see: <https://landback.org/manifesto/>

10 Kaur, H. (2020, November 26). Indigenous people across the US want their land back — And the movement is gaining momentum. *CNN*. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/25/us/indigenous-people-reclaiming-their-lands-trnd/index.html>

11 McGivney, A. (2021, July 3). The battle for Mount Rushmore: 'It should be turned into something like the Holocaust Museum.' *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jul/03/mount-rushmore-south-dakota-indigenous-americans>

12 Korobkova, K., Weinstein, D., Felt, L., Rosenthal, E. L., & Blakley, J. (2023). *Lights, camera, impact: 20 years of research on the power of entertainment to support narrative change*. USC Norman Lear Center Media Impact Project. <https://learcenter.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/NormanLearCenter-Narrative-Change-Research-Review.pdf>

13 In this report, we use the term “stereotype” in the traditional social psychological sense (e.g., “all Native people are [x]”) as well as recurring tropes and myths about Native Americans (e.g., the “stoic Indian” or the myth that Native cultures are part of a bygone era).

14 Ganje, L. A. (1996). Native American stereotypes. In P. M. Lester (Ed.), *Images that injure: Pictorial stereotypes in the media* (pp. 41–46). Praeger.

Lyubymova, S. (2019). Stereotyping Indigeneity: the Case of the Native American. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 11(2), 1-19. <https://dx.doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v11n2.05>

Ramasubramanian, S., Riewestahl, E., & Ramirez, A. (2023). Race and Ethnic Stereotypes in the Media. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*.

15 Buescher, D. T. , & Ono, K. A. (1996). Civilized colonialism: Pocahontas as neocolonial rhetoric. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 19(2), 127-153. [DOI:10.1080/07491409.1996.11089810](https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.1996.11089810)

16 Tukachinsky, R., Mastro, D., & Yarchi, M. (2015). Documenting portrayals of race/ethnicity on primetime television over a 20-year span and their association with national-level racial/ethnic attitudes. *Journal of Social Issues*, 71(1), 17-38. [DOI:10.1111/josi.12094](https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12094)
Fryberg, S. A. (2003). *Really? You don't look like an American Indian: Social representations and social group identities*. Stanford University.

17 Hunt, D., Ramón, A.C. (2021). *Hollywood diversity report 2021 – Part 2: Television*. UCLA College of Social Sciences. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2021-Television-10-26-2021.pdf>

18 Writers Guild of America West. (2020). *Inclusion and equity report: 2020*. https://www.wga.org/uploadedfiles/the-guild/inclusion-and-equity/wgaw_inclusion_report_20.pdf

However, recent years have ushered in some notable shifts in Native visibility. The 2022 *UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report* indicated that Native peoples' share of top roles in the 2020-2021 season rose to higher levels across broadcast (2.0%), cable (0.4%), and streaming (0.8%) compared to the previous year.¹⁹ Furthermore, data from Nielsen indicates that the number of Indigenous lead recurring roles doubled between 2021 and 2022.²⁰

Because Native representation started at near invisibility, these increases, while positive, still reflect continued underrepresentation. It is important to note that because these shifts have been so recent, it is critical to continue monitoring Native representation closely rather than assume that this increased representation is a new norm. For example, data from the 2021-2022 television season indicates that Native people were entirely absent from top roles in broadcast and cable, but increased to 1.6% in streaming.²¹

Stereotypes of Native Peoples

Many stereotypes portray Native peoples as foreign “others” who are essentially different from a presumed American “self.” For example, in popular media, Native American men have frequently been portrayed as “**bloodthirsty warriors**” who may be intent on violent retribution for tragedy and injustice.²² At the same time, the stereotype of the “**stoic Native**” — the “strong and silent” type who doesn’t show emotion and endures pain without complaint — minimizes the suffering of Native peoples.²³ This erasure of Native injury and trauma is compounded by the popular myth that Native peoples and cultures are “**vanishing**,” or that they primarily belong to pre-modern times.²⁴ Stereotyping Native peoples as “other” has the potential to rationalize the continued violent colonization of Native lands and peoples, while minimizing its lingering consequences.²⁵

At the same time, Native peoples are commonly portrayed as lacking agency. Native women in particular have frequently been hypersexualized in media portrayals as provocatively-dressed **objects of sexual desire**, rather than agents in their own right.²⁶ Native individuals are commonly pigeonholed as **helpless victims**, as passive objects of violence who need to be saved by someone else (often a non-Native white

19 Ramón, A.C., Tran, M., & Hunt, D. (2022). *Hollywood diversity report 2022 – A new, post-pandemic normal? Part 2: Television*. UCLA College of Social Sciences. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2022-Television-10-27-2022.pdf>

20 The Nielsen Company. (2023, January). *Being seen on screen: The state of diverse representation on TV*. <https://www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/01/seen-on-screen-report-2023.pdf>

21 Ramón, A.C., Tran, M., & Hunt, D. (2022). *Hollywood diversity report 2022 – A new, post-pandemic normal? Part 2: Television*. UCLA College of Social Sciences. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2022-Television-10-27-2022.pdf>

22 Hilger, M. (1995). *From Savage to Nobleman: Images of Native Americans in film*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Wilson, C. C., & Gutierrez, F. (1985). *Minorities and Media: Diversity and the end of mass communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

23 Ganje, L. A. (1996). Native American stereotypes. In P. M. Lester (Ed.), *Images that injure: Pictorial stereotypes in the media* (pp. 41–46). Praeger.

24 Ganje, L. A. (1996). Native American stereotypes. In P. M. Lester (Ed.), *Images that Injure: Pictorial stereotypes in the media* (pp. 41–46). Westport, CT: Praeger.

25 See Omi and Winant (2014) for a seminal theory on the relationship between racial narratives and real-world social problems in the United States. Omi, M., and H. Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States*. Routledge, 2014.

See also Garrouette, E. M. (2001). The Racial Formation of American Indians: Negotiating legitimate identities within Tribal and federal law. *American Indian Quarterly*, 25(2), 224-239.

26 Merskin, D. (2010). The s-word: Discourse, stereotypes, and the American Indian woman. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 21(4), 345-366. [DOI:10.1080/10646175.2010.519616](https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2010.519616)

Bird, S. E. (1999). Gendered construction of the American Indian in popular media. *Journal of Communication*, 49(3), 61-83. [DOI:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02805.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02805.x)

character).²⁷ These narratives of passivity ignore Native peoples' long history of self-actualization and legacies of resistance to oppressive structures. So too do stereotypes of Natives as needy **"indigents"** who are either too lazy to support themselves or incapable of lifting themselves out of poverty, alcoholism, or addiction.²⁸ This narrative of deficiency complements a "white savior" narrative that can be seen as encouraging charity rather than solidarity.²⁹ It also aligns with the historic stereotype of the **"noble savage"** as kind and innocent, yet incompetent and incapable of self-improvement.³⁰

Study Overview

The stereotypes described above are a well-established feature of Native media representations throughout America's history.³¹ Research on contemporary media highlights many of the same stereotypes, but has predominantly been more descriptive in nature.³² At the same time, quantitative research shows that Native people are underrepresented on-screen, as well as in writers rooms and as directors.³³ However, little research has attempted to quantify how Native characters are represented in contemporary scripted TV, nor the impact of these portrayals on audiences.

To address this gap, the USC Norman Lear Center's Media Impact Project (MIP) embarked on a research project in collaboration with IllumiNative, a Native, women-led social justice organization promoting visibility of Native peoples and tackling harmful narratives, including in entertainment. This research included:

- A **content analysis** to systematically measure portrayals of 104 prominent Native characters in 51 scripted TV series that aired new episodes between 2020 and 2022 (calendar years). We cataloged whether these series were helmed by Native storytellers, their critical and audience reception, and the extent to which the features of Native characters were consistent with established stereotypes.
- A **survey-based study examining the impact** of three series with prominent Native characters and storylines — *Reservation Dogs* (Hulu), *Rutherford Falls* (Peacock), and *Yellowstone* (Paramount+) — on streaming TV viewers' knowledge, beliefs, and policy support related to social issues that affect Native American communities.

27 Sundquist, A. (1991). *Sacagawea & Co.: The twentieth century fictional American Indian woman and fellow characters, a study of gender and race*. Oslo, Norway: Solum Forlag A/S.

28 Weston, M. A. (1996). *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the twentieth century press*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

29 Spade, D. (2020). Solidarity not charity: Mutual aid for mobilization and survival. *Social Text*, 38(1), 131-151. DOI:10.1215/01642472-7971139

Reid, N. (2021, September 19). No more White saviours, thanks: How to be a true anti-racist ally. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/19/no-more-white-saviours-thanks-how-to-be-a-true-anti-racist-ally>

30 Stedman, R. W. (1982). *Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American culture*. University of Oklahoma Press.

31 Aleiss, A. (2005). *Making the White Man's Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood movies*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Bird, S. E. (2018). *Dressing in feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American popular culture*. Routledge.

32 See for instance Mohler, C. E. (2020). Playing (the Casino) Indian: Native American Roles in Peak TV. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 44(4), 79-100.

33 Hunt, D., & Ramón, A. C. (2021). *Hollywood diversity report 2020: A tale of two Hollywoods*. UCLA College of Social Sciences. <https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2020-Film-2-6-2020.pdf>

Directors Guild of America. (2022, May 5). *DGA inclusion report reveals continued incremental gains for directors in 2020-21 tv season, despite pandemic*. <https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2022/220505-Episodic-TV-Inclusion-Report.aspx>

HOW ARE NATIVE CHARACTERS REPRESENTED ON SCRIPTED TV?

What we did³⁴

We conducted a systematic content analysis of Native American characters on scripted TV series set in the U.S. that aired new episodes between 2020 and 2022 (calendar years). We began by identifying 104 Native characters from 51 scripted TV series.³⁵ These characters represent the most prominent Native characters across scripted TV series that feature Native characters. We examined the following research questions:

- To what extent are series that feature prominent Native characters helmed by Native talent (writers, directors, and executive producers)?
- What was the critical and audience reception of series featuring prominent Native characters and Native talent behind the camera?
- To what extent are prominent Native characters portrayed in a way that is consistent with established stereotypes of Native peoples?

SERIES-LEVEL ANALYSIS

We rigorously trained 10 USC student coders to capture information about each of the 51 series. Coders gathered data from IMDb.com on the number of self-identified Native writers, executive producers, directors, and characters with speaking roles. Critical reception was measured by the series' Metacritic score and audience reception was measured by both average audience ratings and number of audience rating entries on IMDb.

CHARACTER-LEVEL ANALYSIS

To examine representations of the 104 Native characters, we randomly selected one episode in which each character appeared, giving a total of 69 episodes. Coders were trained to capture character demographics (e.g., gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, Tribal affiliation, and whether they live on a reservation or not), as well as characteristics and behaviors consistent with seven common Native stereotypes:

- Violent or “bloodthirsty warrior”
- Stoic or “strong and silent”
- Vanishing or part of a bygone era

³² See [Appendix B](#) for detailed content analysis methodology.

³⁵ Characters were required to have appeared in episodes that aired between 2020 and 2022. For each character, we analyzed the first episode in which they appeared, which in some cases was prior to 2020. The actual year range for analyzed episodes was 2010-2022. However, 85% of characters first appeared in an episode that premiered between 2019 and 2022.

- Sexualized Native woman
- Helpless victim in need of a “white savior”
- Indigent or poor
- “Noble savage”

Finally, coders were trained to separate out the dialogue of 104 Native characters from episode transcripts, using the *Norman Lear Center Script Database*. From this data, we then calculated the number of words spoken (relevant to the “stoic” stereotype) and language complexity (relevant to the “noble savage” stereotype).

Two in three series we had no Native talent behind the camera, but those that did had better audience reception.

What we found: Series featuring Native characters

Two in three of the series we analyzed had no Native talent behind the camera, despite an average of 10 Native characters.

- 67% of series had no Native writers, directors, or executive producers.
- 25% of series had at least one Native writer (16% had more than one). 22% had at least one Native director (4% had more than one). 16% had at least one Native executive producer (4% had more than one).

Series helmed by Native talent had better audience reception.

- Series with at least one Native writer, director, and/or executive producer had higher average IMDb ratings than series with none.

Figure 1. Average IMDb Ratings for series with and without Native talent behind the camera.

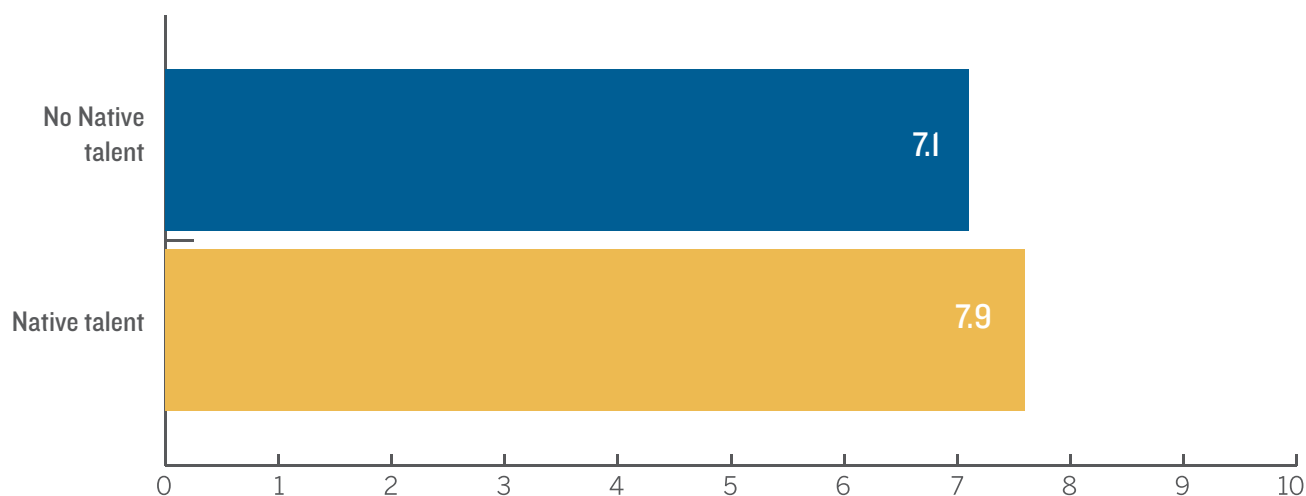
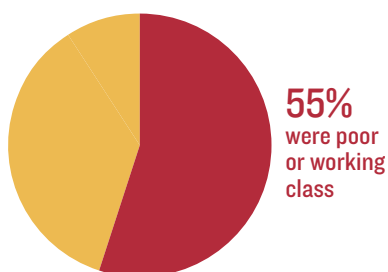
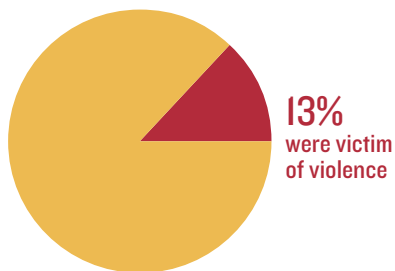
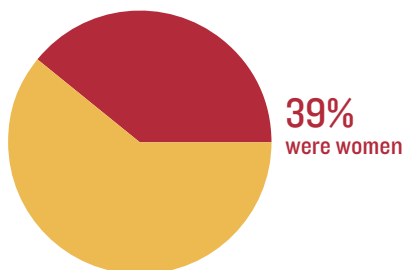
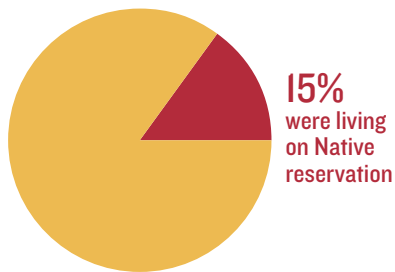
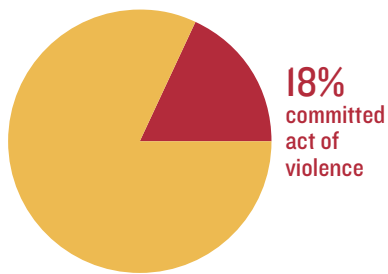
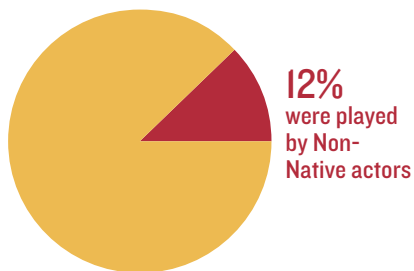


Figure 2. Characteristics of Native characters.



Series featuring more Native characters received greater critical praise and audience reception.

- The more Native characters the series had, the better the critical response as measured by Metacritic scores.
- The more Native characters the series had, the stronger the audience reception, as measured by the *number* of IMDb votes and overall IMDb rating.

What we found: Prominent Native characters

12% of Native characters were played by actors who do not identify as Native American.

The Bloodthirsty Warrior: Nearly one in five Native characters was shown committing a violent act.

- 18% of characters were shown committing an act of physical violence. Fifteen of these characters were men and four were women.
- 5% of characters sought violent retribution for injustice that was committed against themselves or a loved one.

The Stoic: Native characters were no more or less stoic than the average character.

- Stoicism (or lack of expressiveness) was measured by the number of words spoken.
- Native characters spoke an average of 202 words per analyzed episode (6% of all dialogue). This was not significantly different from the average character, who spoke 155 words per analyzed episode (5% of all dialogue).

The Vanishing Peoples: Native cultures were shown as somewhat vibrant, with only one in eight Native characters living in a pre-modern era (before 1900).

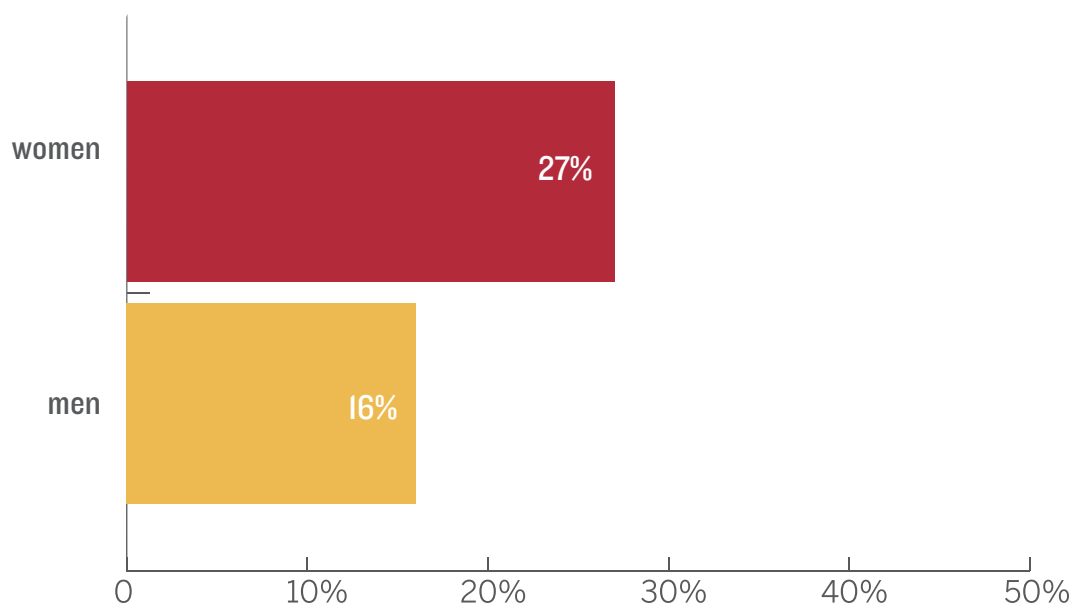
- 34% of Native characters identified with a particular Tribe, though 23% of mentioned Tribes were fictional. 22% of Native characters spoke at least some of their Native language.
- 16% of Native characters were shown participating in a spiritual practice. The majority (62%) of these were on series with at least one Native writer.

- 15% of Native characters lived on a reservation, consistent with the real-world statistic of 13%.³⁶

The Sexualized Woman: Native Women were under-represented, but were not highly sexualized.

- Only 39% of the 104 Native characters in our sample were women.
- Only 3% were members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community — and they were all women. None of these characters were Two Spirit, trans, or non-binary.³⁷
- 27% of Native women were in a close romantic relationship, compared to 16% of men. 4% of Native women were another character’s love interest, compared to 11% of men.
- We did not find any examples of sexualized Native women in the sample.

Figure 3.
Percentage of women and men who were in close romantic relationships



One in eight Native characters were portrayed as victims of violence, but the “white savior” was rare.

The Helpless Victim: One in eight Native characters were portrayed as victims of violence, but the “white savior” was rare.

- 13% of Native characters were victims of violence, including 14% of men and 11% of women.
- Very few were “saved” by a non-Native character³⁸

36 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. (2023, February 24). Profile: American Indian/Alaska Native. <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=62>

37 For variables that appear infrequently, measures of reliability are not appropriate. Therefore, we were unable to calculate reliability on these items.

38 For variables that appear infrequently, measures of reliability are not appropriate. Therefore, we were unable to calculate reliability on this item.



The Indigent: The majority of Native characters were poor or working class, but non-ceremonial drug use was infrequent.

- 55% of Native characters were coded as poor or working class, 36% were middle class, and 9% were wealthy.
- The most common professions were police officer (15%), student (13%), casino employee (9%), medical professional (5%), and U.S. military (4%). A plurality of characters had middle class occupations.
- 12% were associated with non-ceremonial drug use,³⁹ but none were depicted as addicts.⁴⁰
- 18% of Native characters committed non-violent crimes.

The Noble Savage: The stereotype of Native Americans as peaceful but unintelligent was partially challenged.

- The vast majority of Native characters (87%) were depicted as “good guys” — sympathetic or positive in valence.
- As measured by language complexity, Native characters were portrayed as no more or less intelligent than the average character, speaking at a fifth-grade reading level.

39 Because reliability was marginal for this item, this finding should be interpreted with caution.

40 For variables that appear infrequently, measures of reliability are not appropriate. Therefore, we were unable to calculate reliability on this item.

HOW DO PORTRAYALS OF NATIVE CHARACTERS AFFECT AUDIENCES?

Our content analysis of prominent Native characters found stereotypical portrayals were relatively infrequent, with the exception of indigence, which was primarily evident via socioeconomic status. At the same time, Native women were underrepresented and 2SLGBTQ+ characters were rare. Finally, only one in three of the series we analyzed had even a single Native writer, director, or executive producer.

Reservation Dogs (Hulu) and *Rutherford Falls* (Peacock) are two series that have been lauded for their nuanced portrayals of Native communities.⁴¹ Both series are helmed by Native showrunners and powered by Native talent. *Yellowstone* (Paramount+), on the other hand, has been criticized for commercializing sacred Native practices, casting non-Native actors in Native roles, and not hiring any Native writers (though the series does employ Native cultural consultants).

Building upon our content analysis, we sought to understand the impact of these three series on streaming TV viewers' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.



- **Reservation Dogs (Season 2; September 2022):** This series centers on the lives of four working class teenagers who live on a reservation in Oklahoma. The show follows their journeys through adolescence as they deal with personal tragedies and systemic barriers to economic mobility. It is the first series ever to feature all Indigenous writers and directors, along with a predominantly Native American cast and production team.⁴²



- **Rutherford Falls (Season 2; June 2022):** This series centers on Reagan Wells, a proud Native American woman who struggles to find her place in a community marked by a history of colonialism. With this show, co-creator Sierra Teller Ornelas became the first Native American showrunner of a television comedy.⁴³ This series also had Native directors and a writer's room that was 50% Indigenous.⁴⁴

41 Yamato, J. (2021, December 14). How a new wave of Native stories took a 'sledgehammer' to Hollywood's closed doors. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/tv/story/2021-12-14/michael-greyeyes-devery-jacobs-rutherford-falls-peacock-reservation-dogs-fx-hulu>

42 Starr, M. (2021, August 3). Oklahoma teens California dreaming in 'Reservation Dogs.' *New York Post*. <https://nypost.com/2021/08/03/taika-waititis-reservation-dogs-a-slice-of-life-comedy/>

43 Scott, B. (2021, October 11). Native Americans take over the writers' room and tell their own stories. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2021/10/07/1044061754/native-americans-take-over-the-writers-room-and-tell-their-own-stories>

44 Whitten, S. (2021, May 13). Peacock's 'Rutherford Falls' proves there's a place for Native-led content in Hollywood. *CNBC*. <https://www.cNBC.com/2021/05/13/rutherford-falls-proves-theres-a-place-for-native-led-content.html>



- **Yellowstone (Season 5, Part 1; November 2022 - January 2023):** This show takes place on a sprawling ranch in Montana. While it centers on a family of white ranchers, many storylines involve supporting characters who are Native American. The series, which has no Native writers, producers, or directors, has received mixed reactions⁴⁵ regarding its portrayal of Native communities.

What we did⁴⁶

We identified 1,200 adults who regularly view streaming television. Participants were recruited through Lucid, a market research recruitment platform, to participate in an online survey in May 2023.⁴⁷ Regular streaming viewers were defined as those who watch television shows using a streaming service at least once a week and who have access to Peacock, Hulu, and Paramount+. We recruited:

- 300 viewers of each of the three target series (defined as having watched at least one episode from the 2022-2023 season); and
- A comparison group of 300 regular streaming viewers who did not see any of the three target series (hereafter, non-viewers).

In addition to the three target series, we asked survey respondents about their exposure to six series with prominent Native characters. This list was used to generate a measure of cumulative exposure:

- *Molly of Denali* (PBS)
- *Spirit Rangers* (Netflix)
- *1883* (Paramount+)
- *Dark Winds* (AMC+)
- *Alaska Daily* (ABC)
- *Mayans MC* (FX)

All survey respondents, regardless of exposure to the three target series, answered questions about their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors relating to Native American topics — such as the use of Native mascots in sports teams, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day.

45 Douthat, R. (2023, February 24). Right wing or woke? The complicated politics of 'Yellowstone.' *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/24/opinion/yellowstone-woke.html>

Hilleary, C. (2022, January 23). Blockbuster television series 'Yellowstone' stokes debate on Native American casting, spirituality. *VOA News*. <https://www.voanews.com/a/blockbuster-television-series-yellowstone-stokes-debate-on-native-american-casting-spirituality-/6408160.html>

46 See [Appendix C](#) for detailed survey methodology and data analysis.

47 Four percent of respondents identified as Native American.

In addition, viewers of the three target series were asked about their emotional responses, their transportation or immersion into the story world, the perceived realism of the series, and their parasocial interaction (feelings of friendship) with prominent Native characters.⁴⁸

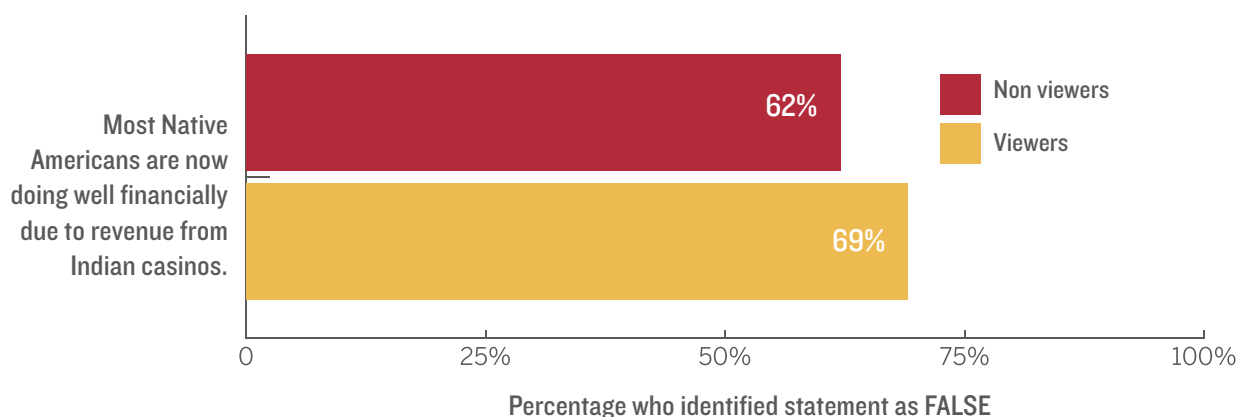
What we found: Reservation Dogs

Due to the show's focus on working-class Native Americans living on a reservation, we expected that viewing *Reservation Dogs* would be associated with greater knowledge of issues that affect Native American communities and more positive attitudes towards these groups. We also expected viewers to show greater support for the Indian Child Welfare Act because season two of this series includes a storyline in which Cheese, a Native teenager, is removed from his home and placed in a non-Native youth home. In order to examine the role of viewers' feelings of friendship with characters on-screen, we asked survey respondents to answer questions about two prominent Native characters, Willie Jack and Elora.

KNOWLEDGE

Indeed, those who viewed *Reservation Dogs* rated themselves more knowledgeable about contemporary Native American issues and Native American culture compared to non-viewers. Additionally, viewers of *Reservation Dogs* were more likely to correctly identify "most Native Americans are now doing well financially due to revenue from Indian casinos" as a **false** statement.

Figure 4. Percentage who correctly identified the statement as FALSE (Reservation Dogs)



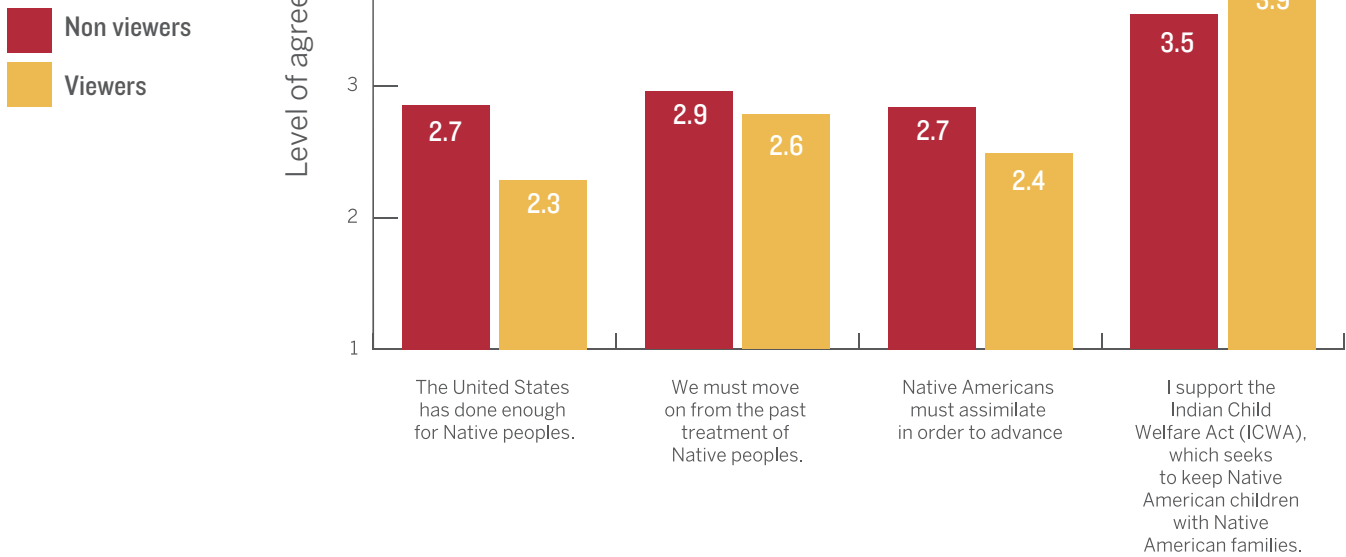
ATTITUDES AND POLICY SUPPORT

Viewers of *Reservation Dogs* were less likely to endorse the idea that Native peoples would be just as well off as others if they tried harder and stopped complaining. Compared to non-viewers, those who watched *Reservation Dogs* were also less likely to agree that:

- The United States has done enough for Native peoples;
- We must move on from the past treatment of Native peoples; and
- Native Americans must assimilate in order to advance.

⁴⁸ We analyzed differences in outcomes between viewers of each series and the comparison group of regular scripted TV viewers using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), controlling for gender, education, political ideology, and exposure to Native issues. We used correlational analysis to examine the relationships between mechanisms of interest (e.g., transportation, parasocial interaction) and outcomes.

Figure 5. Level of agreement with various statements (Reservation Dogs)



The more realistic viewers perceived the storyline to be, the less likely they were to agree with these statements. On the other hand, the more psychological reactance they experienced, the more likely they were to agree.

Viewers of *Reservation Dogs* were more likely than non-viewers to support the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), a policy that aims to keep Native American children with Native American families.

We also found that viewers of *Reservation Dogs* were more likely than non-viewers to support the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), a policy that aims to keep Native American children with Native American families. Support for this policy was associated with greater transportation into the storyline and feelings of perceived realism. Feelings of reactance were associated with decreased support.

ACTIONS

Finally, *Reservation Dogs* viewers engaged in significantly more actions relating to the Native community than non-viewers in the six months prior to taking our survey:

- 10% sought more information about Native American issues;
- 9% sought more information about Native American cultures;

- 9% sought more information about Native American history; and
- 9% spoke with a friend, co-worker, or family member about Native American issues;
- 6% followed Native influencers, organizations, or actors on social media;
- 4% made a donation in support of a Native organization;
- 3% wrote or shared a social media post about Native American topics.

Viewers who were more transported and experienced greater feelings of friendship with the characters Elora and Willie Jack took more actions, on average.

Figure 6. Percentage of Reservation Dogs viewers who took various actions related to Native communities



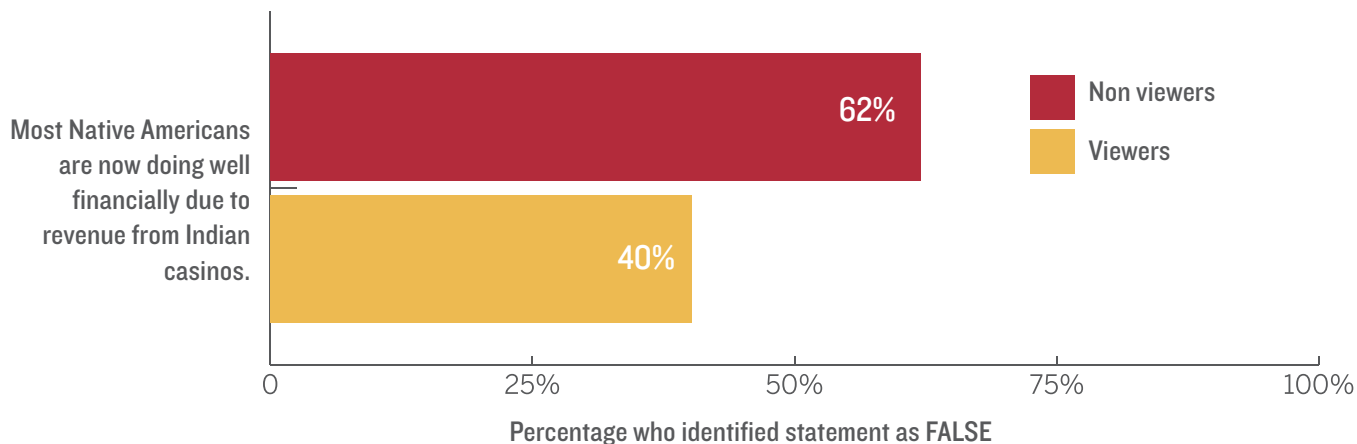
What we found: Rutherford Falls

Like *Reservation Dogs*, we expected that viewing *Rutherford Falls* would be associated with increased awareness of the problems and issues that are important to Native American communities, as well as more positive attitudes towards these communities. This situation comedy covers a wide range of contemporary Native issues, such as preserving Native language and culture, the importance of Native stories being told by Native peoples, cultural appropriation, Tribal IDs, and land allotments. Thus, we expected viewers to show stronger support for policies that seek to center Native perspectives. *Rutherford Falls* also features a prominent white character who is working on listening to the perspectives of Native peoples without centering his experiences and wrestling with his family’s legacy of colonialism. To assess the viewers’ feelings of friendship with characters on-screen, we asked survey respondents to answer questions about Reagan, a leading Native character.

KNOWLEDGE

Compared to non-viewers, *Rutherford Falls* viewers rated themselves more knowledgeable about contemporary Native issues, history, and cultures. However, *Rutherford Falls* viewers were less likely to identify “most Native Americans are now doing well financially due to revenue from Indian casinos” as a false statement. The perceived realism of the show, which includes an Indigenous casino owner, was associated with incorrectly identifying the statement as true, though this association was small.

Figure 7. Percentage who correctly identified the statement as FALSE (Rutherford Falls)



ATTITUDES AND POLICY SUPPORT

Rutherford Falls viewers were less likely to endorse the idea that Native peoples would be just as well off as others if they tried harder and stopped complaining. The greater their feelings of friendship with the main character Reagan, the less likely they were to agree with this statement.

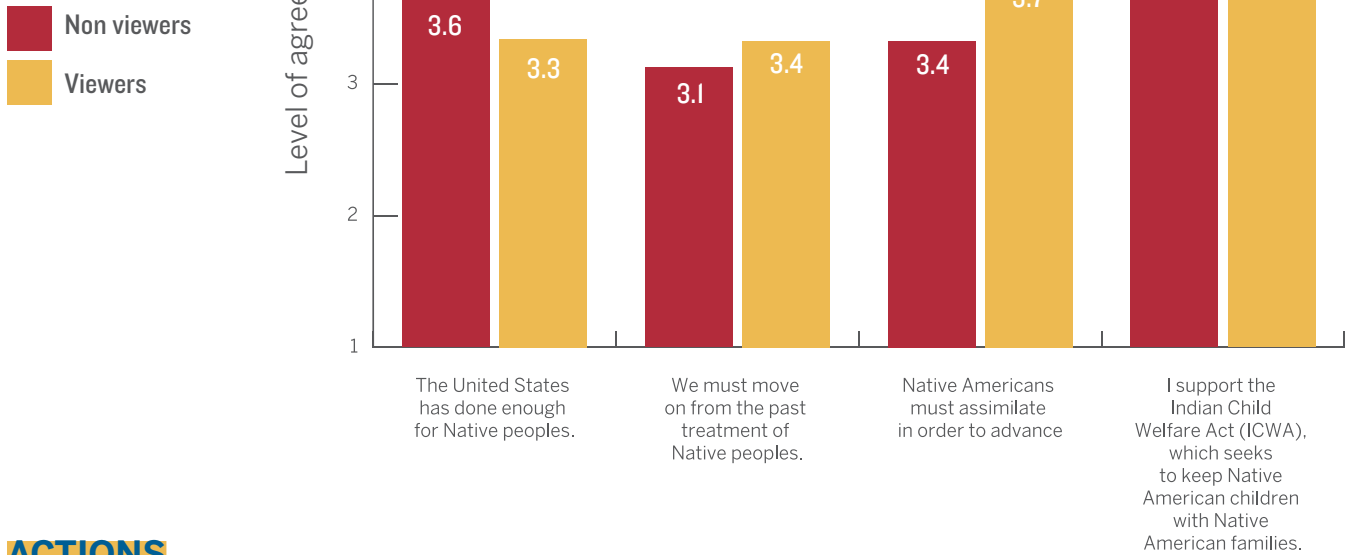
Viewers were significantly more likely to say that sports teams should stop using Native American mascots, which was also associated with feelings of friendship toward Reagan.

Viewers were more likely to support city-wide efforts to change the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day. This support was associated with feelings of friendship toward Reagan, transportation into the story, and perceived realism.

Finally, *Rutherford Falls* viewers were more sensitive to the struggles of Native communities to maintain land sovereignty. **Compared to non-viewers, they were significantly more likely to agree that the U.S. should be required to uphold treaty obligations that enable Native Americans to control their own lands.** This support was associated with greater feelings of friendship with Reagan, greater transportation, and greater perceived realism.

Viewers were significantly more likely to say that sports teams should stop using Native American mascots, which was also associated with feelings of friendship toward Reagan.

Figure 8. Level of agreement with various statements (Rutherford Falls)



ACTIONS

Viewers of *Rutherford Falls* engaged in significantly more actions relating to the Native community than non-viewers:

- 12% sought more information about Native American issues;
- 9% sought more information about Native American history; and
- 8% sought more information about Native American cultures.

Greater transportation into the storyline, perceived realism, and feelings of friendship with Reagan were associated with more actions taken.

Figure 9. Percentage of Rutherford Falls viewers who took various actions related to Native communities



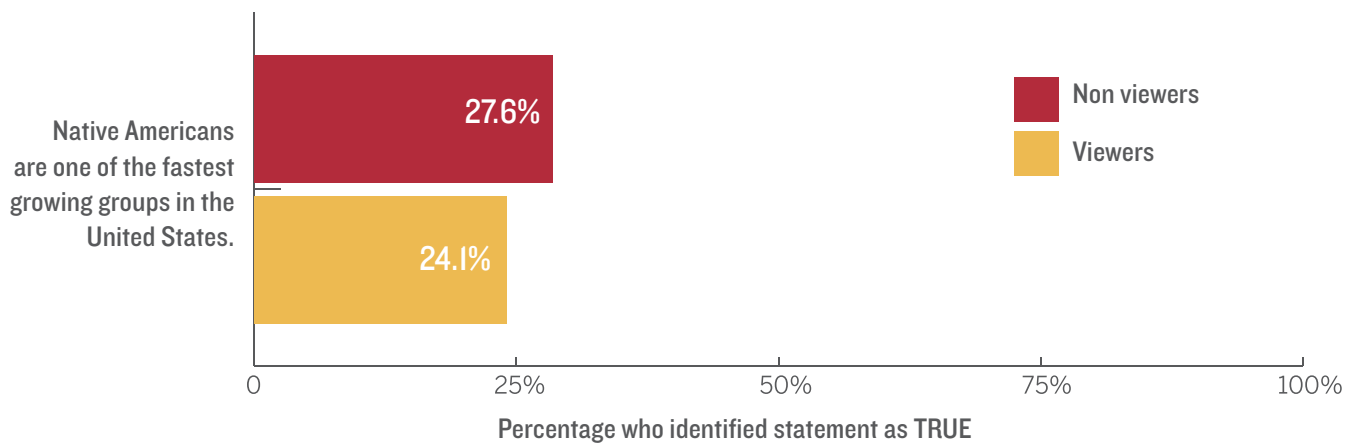
What we found: Yellowstone

Unlike *Reservation Dogs* and *Rutherford Falls*, *Yellowstone* viewers were not expected to show increased knowledge or support of Native communities. While *Yellowstone* does feature Native characters in prominent roles, its cast is mostly white. Furthermore, **it does not focus on Native issues to the extent that the other target series do.** This series also emphasizes the power of individualistic pursuit of the American dream, and generally does not address systemic barriers to success. To assess the viewers' feelings of friendship with characters on-screen, we asked survey respondents to answer questions about Monica, a supporting Native character.

KNOWLEDGE

Viewers of *Yellowstone* were less likely than non-viewers to correctly identify "Native Americans are one of the fastest growing groups in the U.S." as a true statement.

Figure 10. Percentage who correctly identified the statement as TRUE (Yellowstone)



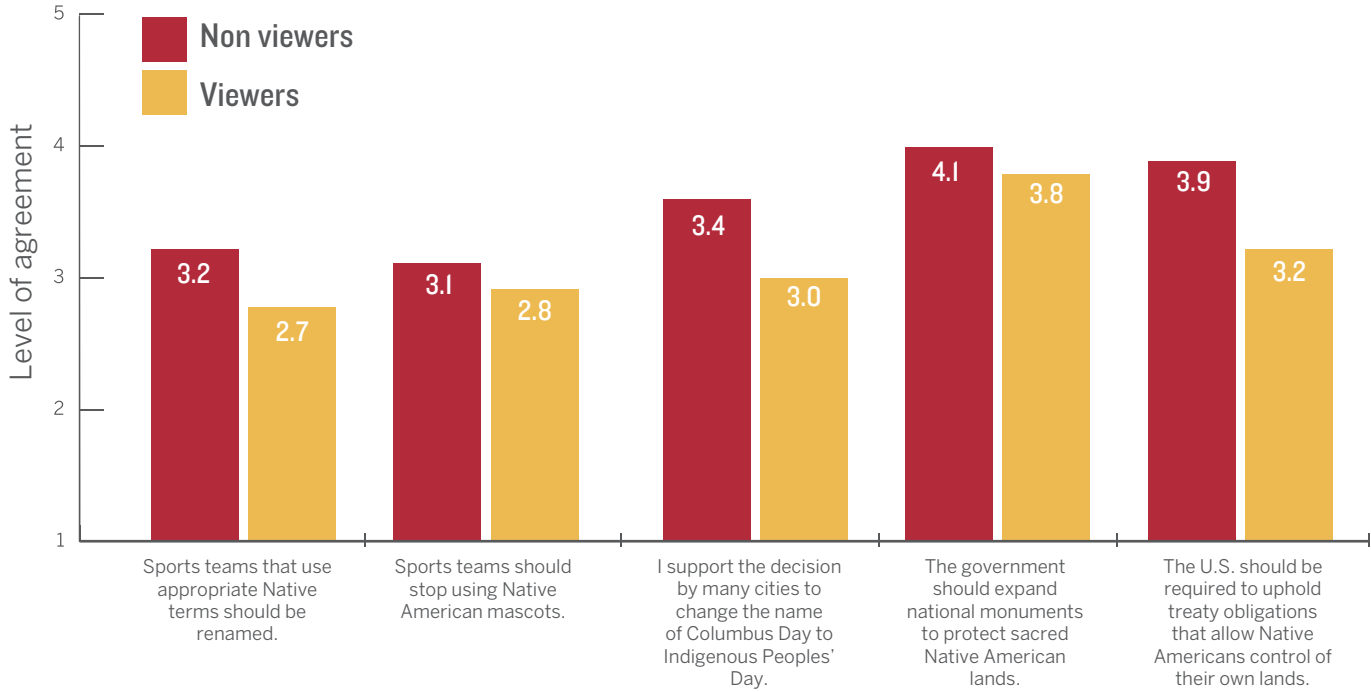
ATTITUDES AND POLICY SUPPORT

They were also less likely to agree that:

- Sports teams that use appropriated Native terms should be renamed;
- Sports teams should stop using Native American mascots.

Yellowstone viewers were more likely to report discomfort with the idea that some practices — such as sacred ceremonies — are not intended to include everyone.

Figure II. Level of agreement with various statements (Yellowstone)



Furthermore, *Yellowstone* viewers were more likely to report discomfort with the idea that some practices — such as sacred ceremonies — are not intended to include everyone. Viewers who were more transported into the storyline and had greater feelings of friendship with the character Monica were more likely to experience this discomfort. *Yellowstone* viewers were also less likely than non-viewers to support:

- The renaming of holidays (e.g., changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day);
- Government expansion of national monuments to protect traditional homelands of Tribal Nations;
- Requiring the U.S. to uphold treaty obligations that enable Native Americans to control their own lands and the right to hunt, fish, and gather resources.

Compared to non-viewers, *Yellowstone* viewers were more likely to hold individualistic mindsets.⁴⁹

Figure 12. Percentage of respondents who had a systemic mindset and an individualistic mindset



⁴⁹ See [Appendix A](#) for additional information on these mindset orientations.



What we found: Cumulative exposure to Native characters

We examined the relationships between the number of series viewers had seen featuring Native characters and outcomes of interest. Greater cumulative exposure to series with Native characters was associated with:

- Greater self-reported knowledge of contemporary Native American issues, history, and culture;
- Greater support for sports teams ending the use of Native terms and Native mascots;
- Greater support for renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day;
- Greater comfort with seeking information about someone else's culture, participating in a culture when invited, consuming media from another culture, and sitting out ceremonies or practices that are meant for Tribal members;
- Holding a systemic mindset, which focuses on the ways in which broader structures and systems affect our lives.

Michael Greyeyes as
Terry Thomas in
Rutherford Falls
(Peacock)

CONCLUSION

Recent research has quantified the frequency of Native talent on-screen and behind the camera, but research into how Native characters are portrayed has predominantly been more descriptive in nature. This study was an attempt to quantify the extent to which Indigenous characters are represented in ways that challenge long-established stereotypes, and the impact of more nuanced representations on audiences.

Native Representation

We found that some stereotypes, such as the **bloodthirsty warrior** and **the indigent** were more evident than others. For example, nearly one in five Native characters were shown committing an act of physical violence, and 55% were poor or working class. However, only 13% of Native characters were shown in a pre-modern era and only 5% were saved by a non-Native character. While there was no evidence of sexualization of Native women, they were underrepresented and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community were nearly nonexistent.

In terms of talent, 12% of Native characters were played by actors who do not identify as Native American. Notably, despite an average of 10 Native characters, two in three of the series we examined did not have a single Native writer, director, or executive producer. However, those shows that did include Native talent behind the scenes had higher IMDb ratings, and shows with more Native actors had a greater number of overall IMDb votes and a better critical response. These findings illustrate the power of Native talent in the entertainment industry.

Impact of Nuanced Representations

We measured the audience impact of two series — *Reservation Dogs* and *Rutherford Falls* — that feature predominantly Native talent and have been lauded for their nuanced portrayals of Native communities. Compared to streaming viewers who did not see the shows, *Reservation Dogs* viewers were **more** likely to support the Indian Child Welfare Act and **less** likely to agree that the U.S. has done enough for Native peoples, that we must move on from the past treatment of Native peoples, or that Native Americans must assimilate in order to advance. *Rutherford Falls* viewers were more likely to support ending the use of Native imagery in sports, changing the name of Columbus Day, and requiring the U.S. to uphold treaty obligations. We also looked at the impact of *Yellowstone*, which does not feature Native talent behind the camera and has received mixed reviews. Viewers of this show were **less** likely to support ending the use of Native imagery in sports, changing the name of Columbus Day, protecting Native lands, or requiring the U.S. to uphold treaty obligations compared to regular streaming viewers. They were also more likely to report discomfort with the idea of closed, or protected practices. This finding is particularly interesting, given

that *Yellowstone* has received some criticism⁵⁰ from Native communities for depicting closed practices on-screen.⁵¹

Entertainment Industry Trends

While our findings regarding the relative absence of stereotypes paint a more positive picture of Native representation than previous research, it is important to note the context in which this research took place. The shows we analyzed aired at a time when Native representation was on the rise. Content airing in the summer of 2022 alone received notable praise for its heightened visibility of Native talent and themes.⁵²

Many of these shows, however, have since ended or are ending soon, including all three series for which we measured audience impact. *Rutherford Falls* was canceled in 2022 after two seasons,⁵³ *Reservation Dogs* concluded in 2023 after 3 seasons, and *Yellowstone* is set to conclude with Part 2 to Season 5, which premieres in November 2024.

- Of the 51 series we analyzed, two in three (34) have since ended, including six miniseries.
- One in five (11) of the series have been confirmed as renewed. Of these, *only four include Native talent behind the scenes.*
- Three series have announced a final season, and renewal for another three series remains unconfirmed.

When non-Native people are in charge of Native stories, we risk telling stories that undermine the agency of Native peoples. Even well-intentioned stories can often result in themes of white saviorism if they center white characters.⁵⁴ Thus, these cancellation and renewal numbers call attention to the precarity of progress when it comes to representation of historically marginalized communities, including Native peoples. As such, it is critical to continue monitoring representation and its impact over time to develop a more accurate and nuanced picture of the state of Native representation.

When non-Native people are in charge of Native stories, we risk telling stories that undermine the agency of Native peoples.

50 Caufield, C. (2022, January 27). Lakota express concerns over misuse of ceremonies in *Yellowstone* tv series. *Native Sun News Today*. <https://www.nativesunnews.today/articles/lakota-express-concerns-over-misuse-of-ceremonies-in-yellowstone-tv-series-2/>

51 A closed practice, or protected practice, is one in which only community members or those directly invited are intended to participate.

52 Horton, A. (2022, September 3). 'It's a completely new day': The rise of Indigenous films and tv shows. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2022/sep/02/its-a-completely-new-day-the-rise-of-indigenous-films-and-tv-shows>

Weil, R., & Su, A. (2022, November 3). Native American creators pave the way for more Indigenous stories, representation in Hollywood. *Good Morning America*. <https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/culture/story/native-american-creators-pave-indigenous-stories-representation-hollywood-92603148>

53 Otterson, J. (2022, September 2). 'Rutherford Falls' canceled after two seasons at Peacock. *Variety*. <https://variety.com/2022/tv/news/rutherford-falls-canceled-peacock-1235358653/>

54 Braxton, G. (2023, August 25). It's not just 'The Blind Side.' In Hollywood, the 'white savior' won't go quietly. *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2023-08-25/the-blind-side-the-help-killers-of-the-flower-moon-white-savior>

Recommendations

Based on our findings, we propose the following recommendations for content creators and entertainment industry decision makers:

- **Elevate Native characters from diverse Native communities**, including women and those from the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- When green-lighting series that feature prominent Native themes, **prioritize productions with Native talent in key decision-making roles** (such as writers, executive producers, and directors) over those created by predominantly non-Native people.
- **Continue uplifting Native stories that take place in contemporary times**, and even in the future!
- **Shine a light on Native humor and joy**. Avoid focusing exclusively on Native trauma and do not limit Native stories to those of poverty and addiction. Instead, tell all kinds of stories that illustrate the diversity of the Native experience. When you do tell stories about poverty or addiction, make sure that characters are not defined by these experiences alone.
- **Aim for Tribal specificity** by not lumping Native communities into a singular identity.
- **Consider a variety of Native perspectives** to ensure that depictions are not insensitive even when accurate, such as the portrayals of sacred ceremonies or traditions. Remember that representation is more complicated than checking a box.
- **Invest in strong, multi-season Native series and Native talent**. Debunking long-standing myths and stereotypes through powerful storytelling takes time.

APPENDIX A: A GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

The following definitions were developed by IllumiNative and published in their *Guide for Industry Professionals*.⁵⁵

- **Tribe:** A term used to describe the Native nations that entered into agreement with the United States government.
- **Native American:** A more formal term used to represent the original inhabitants and caretakers of the land that is now referred to as the United States. Often, this term is used within the community and is appropriate to use when talking about two or more peoples with a different tribal affiliation. Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian peoples do not feel included in this term, and it would be most appropriate to use Native American and Alaska Native or Native American and Native Hawaiian to be inclusive. Whenever possible, it is most appropriate to identify people by their preferred tribal affiliation when describing individuals or individual tribes.
- **American Indian:** A general term that has been used in federal law and U.S. government departments, and therefore appears in federal, state, or local legislation and within judicial proceedings. While this term is used by the federal government, the term has fallen out of usage and acceptability by Native peoples today. This term should not be used to refer to Native peoples unless in the context described above.
- **Native:** A less formal term to describe the original inhabitants of the United States and can be a shorthand to include Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.
- **Indigenous:** a term used to represent the original inhabitants of a certain geographic location, or a term used when referring to all the original inhabitants of the world.
- **Tribal Sovereignty:** Describes the inherent right of tribes to govern themselves and the existence of a government-to-government relationship with the United States. Tribes are distinct and sovereign nations with complex histories of government and diplomatic relations that pre-date the existence of the United States. Federally recognized tribes have a government-to-government relationship with the federal government, meaning tribes have a special trust relation with the United States. Citizens of federally recognized tribes are dual citizens of both their tribe and the United States. State recognized tribes have a government-to-government relationship with the state where they reside.
- **Colonization:** A term used to describe the violent and destructive actions of colonizing Native lands. When discussing the impacts of colonization, we are referring to the forced removal of Native peoples from their lands, government-funded and run assimilationist boarding schools, among other destructive acts of genocide.

⁵⁵ To access the *Guide for Industry Professionals* and keep up with updated versions, visit <https://illuminative.org>.

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- **Two Spirit:** A pan-Indigenous umbrella term to describe Native American, First Nations and Indigenous peoples that have unique roles in their community as gender-diverse people. The term Two Spirit originated in 1990 by Myra Laramée (Cree) at the Third Annual Intertribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference in Winnipeg. It is a translation of “niizh manidoowag” or “two spirits” in the Ojibwe language. While some Indigenous people might use the terms queer, gay, lesbian, or transgender, Two Spirit is a term created by Indigenous people for Indigenous people. It is important to remember that most Indigenous communities have specific terms in their own languages for the gender-variant members of their communities and the social and spiritual roles these individuals fulfill. Only Indigenous people that use the term “Two spirit” for themselves should be referred to this way.

The following definition is informed by the FrameWorks Institute:⁵⁶

- **Individualistic and Systemic Orientations:** Individualistic and Systemic orientations are forms of cultural mindsets. Cultural mindsets are deeply set patterns of thinking that inform how we understand the world and how we make decisions. Individualistic mindsets tend to focus on the role of personal decisions in achieving outcomes, while systemic mindsets tend to focus on the ways in which broader structures and systems affect our lives.

56 FrameWorks Institute. (2022). *How is culture changing in this time of social upheaval?*
<https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Culture-Change-Report.pdf>

APPENDIX B: DETAILED CONTENT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Sample Selection

A preliminary sample was developed by compiling known Native actors and characters from previous IllumiNative reports and publications. This sample was then enlarged through a variation of “snowball sampling.” Scripted TV series⁵⁷ that featured these known Native actors were identified on each actor’s IMDb page. The cast of each series identified through this process was then examined to locate additional Native actors. This process was repeated until no new Native actors were identified in series that aired new episodes between 2019 and 2022. Through this method, we identified over 300 Native characters. A set of additional Native characters known to be played by non-Native actors were then added to the sample by IllumiNative.

We narrowed this list to a final sample of 104 characters by requiring that they meet the following criteria:

- Appeared in series that take place in the United States.
- Appeared in at least one episode that aired between 2020 and 2022 (*i.e.*, characters were excluded if they only appeared in episodes prior to 2020).
- Were among the four top-billed Native characters in the series, as identified by IMDb (*i.e.*, a maximum of four Native characters from each series).
- Appeared in at least three episodes of the series, which must account for at least 13% of all series episodes. The 13% threshold was applied in order to produce a number of Native characters as close to 100 as possible.

The resulting sample of 104 characters represents the most prominent characters in 51 series that feature at least one Native character in a speaking role.

For each character, we selected the first episode in which they appeared, resulting in a sample of 69 episodes for analysis. This decision was based on the assumption that TV writers give the audience proportionally more information about each character in their introductory scenes.

As a result, analyzed episodes did not necessarily air during the 2020-2022 calendar years that formed the basis of character selection. For example, if a character was included in the sample based on appearing in a 2020 episode, but their *first* appearance was in 2019, the 2019 episode would be selected for analysis. The actual year range for analyzed episodes was 2010-2022. However, 85% of characters in our sample first appeared in an episode that premiered between 2019 and 2022. See Table 1 for a list of all analyzed shows, episodes, and characters.

⁵⁷ Unscripted, news, and sports shows were excluded from our sampling process.

CODER TRAINING AND INTERRATER RELIABILITY

We trained 10 undergraduate and graduate student coders from University of Southern California to watch the 69 identified episodes and analyze them for relevant content. Coding followed a two-month training period that included several rounds of testing and refining the codebook and the training procedures. After an introductory training session where the codebook was reviewed, all coders analyzed the same episode, randomly selected from our sample of Native characters. Inconsistencies in responses were identified and discussed, resulting in minor revisions to the codebook.

Next, we assigned 10% of the sample (11 characters) to be coded by two coders to establish interrater reliability. Items that achieved adequate reliability were retained in the codebook unchanged. Once the codebook was finalized, the remaining 93 characters were divided among coders. Eleven additional characters were randomly selected for double-coding. The total of 22 double-coded characters were used for final reliability calculations. Unless otherwise noted, items that achieved inadequate reliability are not included in this report. See Table 2 for the final codebook and reliability.

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Coders obtained closed captioning transcripts for the selected episodes from the *Norman Lear Center Script Database*, which includes more than 168,000 TV episodes and films. They separated the dialogue of Native characters from the episode transcript and analyzed for word count, syllables per word, and words per sentence.

- The Flesch Reading Ease Score for each character was calculated using syllables per word and words per sentence as independent variables.
- The word count of each coded character was divided by the total word count of the episode to calculate the percentage of the episode's dialogue spoken by the character.
- The number of speaking characters was estimated by counting the total number of characters on the IMDb page for the episode (not including characters listed under the "Rest of cast listed alphabetically" heading, which were classified as extras or characters without speaking roles.)

The **Flesch Reading Ease Score** and **percentage of episode dialogue** for each analyzed Native character were then compared to the average character, calculated by dividing the total words by the number of speaking characters.

NATIVE TALENT BEHIND THE SCENES

Coders determined how many series writers, executive producers, and directors identified as Native through secondary research. These creators were coded as Native American if they listed a Tribe or Nation on their IMDb profile or personal website, or explicitly referred to themselves as Native or Indigenous.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

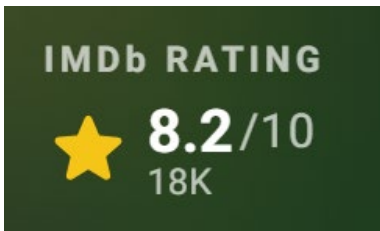
To measure critical reception, coders identified the “METAScore” for each series on Metacritic.com. The score of each series (between 0 and 100) indicates the average of the ratings assigned to each critical review by Metacritic.com, with higher numbers indicating greater critical approval.⁵⁸

AUDIENCE RECEPTION

Audience reception was measured by the average audience rating and number of rating entries on IMDb for each series:

- *Number of rating entries* indicates the number of IMDb accounts that rated the series.
- *Average audience score* indicates how much audiences *liked* the show, on a scale from 1 to 10.

For example, *Reservation Dogs* currently has an average audience rating of 8.2/10, with over 18,000 rating entries.



Reservation Dogs: Average audience rating and number of ratings on IMDb.com: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13623580>

58 For more on Metacritic methodology, see <https://www.metacritic.com/about-metascores>

Table I: Analyzed Series, Episodes, and Characters⁵⁹

Series Title	Status	Character	S#	E#	Year	Series Title	Status	Character	S#	E#	Year
1883	Ended	Sam	1	7	2022	Dark Winds	Renewed	Emma Leaphorn	1	1	2022
Alaska Daily	Ended	Gloria Nanmac	1	1	2022	Dark Winds	Renewed	Jim Chee	1	1	2022
Alaska Daily	Ended	Miles	1	2	2022	Dark Winds	Renewed	Joe Leaphorn	1	1	2022
Alaska Daily	Ended	Rosalind Friendly	1	1	2022	Dexter: New Blood	Ended	Audrey Bishop	1	1	2021
Alaska Daily	Ended	Sylvie Nanmac	1	1	2022	Dexter: New Blood	Ended	Chief Angela Bishop	1	1	2021
All American	Renewed	Asher Adams	1	1	2018	Dexter: New Blood	Ended	Miriam	1	3	2021
Another Life	Ended	August Catawnee	1	1	2019	Doogie Kamealoha, M.D.	Ended	Brian Patrick Kamealoha	1	1	2021
Barkskins	Ended	Hawahstha'	1	2	2020	Doogie Kamealoha, M.D.	Ended	Kai Kamealoha	1	1	2021
Barkskins	Ended	Sachem	1	2	2020	Doogie Kamealoha, M.D.	Ended	Lahela Kamealoha	1	1	2021
Barkskins	Ended	Yvon	1	1	2020	Doogie Kamealoha, M.D.	Ended	Noelani Nakayama	1	1	2021
Barkskins	Ended	Mari	1	1	2020	FBI: Most Wanted	Renewed	Marilou Skye	1	4	2020
Chambers	Ended	Big Frank Yazzie	1	1	2019	FBI: Most Wanted	Renewed	Natalia 'Tali' Skye LaCroix	1	1	2020
Chambers	Ended	Harrison Yazzie	1	4	2019	FBI: Most Wanted	Renewed	Nelson Skye	1	1	2020
Chambers	Ended	Sasha Yazzie	1	1	2019	Ghosts	Renewed	Sasappis	1	1	2021
Chambers	Ended	TJ Locklear	1	1	2019	Hawaii Five-0	Ended	Flippa Tupuola	3	9	2012
Crazy Ex Girlfr.	Ended	Darryl Whitefeather	1	1	2016	Hawaii Five-0	Ended	Junior Reigns	8	2	2017
Dark Winds	Renewed	Bernadette Manuelito	1	1	2022	Hawaii Five-0	Ended	Kamekona	1	1	2010

⁵⁹ "Ended" refers to series that have ceased to produce new episodes as of September 2023—including canceled series, miniseries, and series that have ended for undetermined reasons. "Ending" refers to series that have been renewed for only one final season as of September 2023. "Renewed" refers to series that have been renewed for an indeterminate number of additional seasons as of September 2023. "Unknown" refers to series with indeterminate renewal or cancellation status as of September 2023.

Series Title	Status	Character	S#	E#	Year	Series Title	Status	Character	S#	E#	Year
<i>Hawaii Five-O</i>	Ended	Sgt. Duke Lukela	1	12	2010	<i>Outer Range</i>	Renewed	Deputy Sheriff Joy	1	1	2022
<i>Hawkeye</i>	Ended	Maya Lopez	1	2	2021	<i>Outer Range</i>	Renewed	Martha Hawk	1	2	2022
<i>Home Before Dark</i>	Ended	Hank Gillis	2	8	2021	<i>Panhandle</i>	Unknown	Checotah	1	1	2022
<i>Home Before Dark</i>	Ended	Penny Gillis	1	1	2020	<i>Pieces of Her</i>	Unknown	Charlie Bass	1	2	2022
<i>Home Before Dark</i>	Ended	Sam Gillis	1	3	2020	<i>Reservation Dogs</i>	Ending	Bear Smallhill	1	1	2021
<i>I Know This Much is True</i>	Ended	Ralph Drinkwater	1	3	2020	<i>Reservation Dogs</i>	Ending	Cheese	1	1	2021
<i>La Brea</i>	Ending	Paara	1	5	2021	<i>Reservation Dogs</i>	Ending	Elora Danan Postoak	1	1	2021
<i>La Brea</i>	Ending	Taamet	2	2	2022	<i>Reservation Dogs</i>	Ending	Willie Jack	1	1	2021
<i>Legion</i>	Ended	Kerry Loudermilk	1	1	2017	<i>Resident Alien</i>	Renewed	Asta Twelvetrees	1	1	2021
<i>Lincoln Rhyme: Hunt for the...</i>	Ended	Naia	1	1	2020	<i>Resident Alien</i>	Renewed	Dan Twelvetrees	1	2	2021
<i>Mayans M.C.</i>	Ended	Che 'Taza' Romero	1	1	2018	<i>Resident Alien</i>	Renewed	Jay	1	1	2021
<i>Molly of Denali</i>	Ended	Grandpa	1	1	2019	<i>Resident Alien</i>	Renewed	Kayla	1	2	2021
<i>Molly of Denali</i>	Ended	Layla	1	2	2019	<i>Roswell, New Mexico</i>	Ended	Flint Manes	1	12	2019
<i>Molly of Denali</i>	Ended	Molly	1	2	2019	<i>Roswell, New Mexico</i>	Ended	Rosa Ortecho	1	1	2019
<i>Molly of Denali</i>	Ended	Tooey	1	2	2019	<i>Rutherford Falls</i>	Ended	Reagan Wells	1	1	2021
<i>NCIS: Hawai'i</i>	Renewed	Kai Holman	1	1	2021	<i>Rutherford Falls</i>	Ended	Sally	1	1	2021
<i>NCIS: Hawai'i</i>	Renewed	Wally Holman	1	1	2021	<i>Rutherford Falls</i>	Ended	Terry Thomas	1	1	2021

Series Title	Status	Character	S#	E#	Year	Series Title	Status	Character	S#	E#	Year
<i>Rutherford Falls</i>	Ended	Wayne	1	1	2021	<i>The Liberator</i>	Ended	Private Cloudfeather	1	2	2020
<i>The Stand</i>	Ended	Ray Brentner	1	2	2020	<i>The Liberator</i>	Ended	Sergeant Samuel Coldfoot	1	1	2020
<i>Saved By The Bell</i>	Ended	Gil Vatooley	2	2	2021	<i>The Order</i>	Ended	Lilith Bathory	1	3	2019
See	Ended	The Dreamer	1	1	2019	<i>The Republic of Sarah</i>	Ended	Tyler Easterbrook	1	1	2021
See	Ended	Baba Voss	1	1	2019	<i>The Son</i>	Ended	Charges the Enemy	1	3	2017
See	Ended	Lu (Belu)	1	1	2019	<i>The Son</i>	Ended	Toshaway	1	1	2017
<i>Siren</i>	Ended	Sheriff Dale Bishop	1	1	2018	<i>The White Lotus</i>	Renewed	Kai	1	4	2021
<i>Spirit Rangers</i>	Renewed	Eddie (Eddy)	1	1	2022	<i>The Wilds</i>	Ended	Martha Blackburn	1	1	2020
<i>Spirit Rangers</i>	Renewed	Kodi Skycedar	1	1	2022	<i>True Detective</i>	Renewed	Brett Woodard	3	1	2019
<i>Spirit Rangers</i>	Renewed	Lizard	1	1	2022	<i>Under the Banner of Heaven</i>	Ended	Bill Taba	1	2	2022
<i>Spirit Rangers</i>	Renewed	Moon	1	1	2022	<i>V-Wars</i>	Ended	Jimmy Saint	1	3	2019
<i>Stumptown</i>	Ended	Hollis Green	1	1	2019	<i>Walker: Independence</i>	Ended	Calian	1	1	2022
<i>Stumptown</i>	Ended	Sue Lynn Blackbird	1	1	2019	<i>Walker: Independence</i>	Ended	Chief Taza	1	1	2022
<i>Superstore</i>	Ended	Sandra	1	2	2018	<i>Yellowjackets</i>	Renewed	Taissa	1	1	2021
<i>That Dirty Black Bag</i>	Unknown	The Stranger	1	3	2022	<i>Yellowstone</i>	Ending	Ben Waters	1	1	2018
<i>The English</i>	Ended	Eli Whipp	1	1	2022	<i>Yellowstone</i>	Ending	Mo Brings Plenty	1	1	2018
<i>The English</i>	Ended	Kills on Water	1	3	2022	<i>Yellowstone</i>	Ending	Monica Dutton	1	1	2018
<i>The Good Lord Bird</i>	Ended	Ottawa Jones	1	1	2020	<i>Yellowstone</i>	Ending	Thomas Rainwater	1	1	2018

Table 2: Content Analysis Codebook and Reliability⁶⁰

Series Title	Alpha
How many Native writers worked on this series?	0.87
How many Native executive producers worked on this series?	0.97
How many Native directors worked on this series?	0.86
How many Native characters are in this series?	0.87
What is the Metacritic score for this series?	0.99
How many people rated this series on IMDB.com?	0.99
What is the average audience rating on IMDB.com?	0.98
When does this series primarily take place?	1.00

Character Item	Alpha
What is this character's socio-economic status?	0.76
What is the apparent gender identity of the character?	0.94
Is there clear evidence that this character is lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or queer?	1.00
Is there clear evidence that suggests to the audience that this is a trans character? (M to F, or F to M)	N/A
Is there clear evidence that suggests to the audience that this is a Two Spirit character?	N/A
Is the character's religion explicitly indicated?	1.00
Is the character's spirituality explicitly indicated?	0.70
Do we learn that this character is currently enrolled in at least one course at a school?	0.77
Does this episode provide any indicators of the character's occupation (previous or current)?	0.76
Based on information gathered from this episode, does this character live on a reservation?	0.62
Based on this episode, do we know anything about this character's Tribal affiliation?	0.73
Is this character shown to be a victim of violence?	1.00
Do we see this character commit any crime in this episode?	0.67
Is a drug somehow referenced in relation to this character?	0.45
Is this character referred to as having an addiction to a controlled substance?	N/A
What is the valence of this character?	0.84
Is there evidence in this episode communicating that this character is in a romantic relationship?	1.00
Is this character shown to be the romantic interest of someone?	0.84
Does this character get "saved" by a non-Native character in a meaningful way?	N/A
Does this character speak in a Native language at any point?	1.00
How many words does this character speak in the episode?	0.98
What is the Flesch Reading Ease Score for this character's dialogue?	0.98

⁶⁰ Krippendorff's Alpha values of 1.00 indicate "perfect" reliability for the item. Alpha values greater than .60 indicate adequate reliability. Alpha values between .40 and .60 indicate marginal reliability. "N/A" indicates that we were unable to calculate reliability because there were no positive cases identified in our reliability sample (20% of the total sample).

APPENDIX C: DETAILED SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Sample

Survey recruitment and data collection was administered online by Lucid, a market research recruitment platform, and responses were collected online via the Qualtrics survey platform. Respondents were required to be 18 or older and living in the U.S. We recruited a non-probability sample of 1,200 American adults who were regular streaming viewers, defined as watching television shows on streaming platforms at least once a week and having access to Peacock, Hulu, and Paramount+.

- Four percent of respondents (N=47) identified as Indigenous or Native American, with 19 different Tribal affiliations listed (Table 3). Only three respondents reported living on a Native Reservation.
- The majority of respondents were white (81%), followed by Black (11%), Latine (8%), Asian (2%), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (1%).
- Two thirds of respondents (67%) were women, and fewer than 2% identified as nonbinary, gender-queer, or transgender. Among those who identified as Native American (4%), 9% identified as Two Spirit.
- Respondents were roughly equally split between moderate (36%), liberal (35%), and conservative (29%) ideologies.
- Nearly half (43%) reported living in a suburban area, followed by 35% in a large city or urban area, and 23% in a rural area.

Table 3: Tribal Affiliation

Tribal Affiliation	Number of Respondents
Aleut	1
Apache	1
Blackfoot	2
Cherokee	14
Shawnee	1
Muskogee Creek	1
Choctaw	1
Hopi	1
Mohawk	1
Navajo	1
Creek	1
Paiute	1
Potawatomi	1
Seminole	2
Sioux	1
Stockbridge Munsee	1
Menominee	1
Turtle Mountain Chippewa	1
White Earth	1
Don't know	12

Within the sample of 1,200 streaming viewers, we recruited 300 viewers of each of the three target series, defined as having watched at least one episode from the 2022-2023 season.⁶¹ Respondents could have seen more than one of the target series, but if so, were assigned to answer questions about just one series. Table 4 shows the actual viewership of each series within the sample. In addition to the 900 series viewers, we recruited a comparison group of 300 streaming viewers (non-viewers) who had never watched any of the target series. The demographic breakdown of viewers of each series is shown in Table 5.

⁶¹ In order to reduce the time between viewing the target series and taking the survey, we limited our impact analysis to the most recent season of each show.

Table 4. Show Viewership Within the Sample

Storyline	Number of respondents assigned to answer questions about the show	Number of respondents who indicated having watched the show
<i>Rutherford Falls</i>	300	411 (45.6%)
<i>Reservation Dogs</i>	300	548 (60.9%)
<i>Yellowstone</i>	300	713 (79.2%)
Total Viewers	900	900
Non-Viewers (Comparison Group)	300	—

Table 5. Demographics by Show

	Non-Viewers (N = 300)	Reservation Dogs (N = 300)	Rutherford Falls (N = 300)	Yellowstone (N = 300)
Gender	0.7% Trans (Woman) 88.4% Women 0.7% Trans (Man) 9.6% Men 0.7% Genderqueer or nonbinary	0.0% Trans (Woman) 57.4% Women 0.3% Trans (Man) 39.9% Men 2.3% Genderqueer or nonbinary	0.3% Trans (Woman) 45.9% Women 0.3% Trans (Man) 53.4% Men 0.0% Genderqueer or nonbinary	0.3% Trans (Woman) 76.3% Women 0.0% Trans (Man) 23.1% Men 0.3% Genderqueer or nonbinary
Two Spirit	Among non-viewers who identified as Native American (N=15), 1 identified as Two Spirit.	Among <i>Reservation Dogs</i> viewers who identified as Native American (N=18), 1 identified as Two Spirit.	Among <i>Rutherford Falls</i> viewers who identified as Native American (N=5), 1 identified as Two Spirit.	Among <i>Yellowstone</i> viewers who identified as Native American (N=9), 2 identified as Two Spirit.
Race/ Ethnicity	4.9% Native 2.3% Asian 9.8% Black 5.2% Hispanic or Latino 0.0% Middle Eastern or North African 1.3% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 81.6% White <i>*note: select all that apply; percentages do not total 100</i>	5.9% Native 3.0% Asian 12.2% Black 11.2% Hispanic or Latino 0.0% Middle Eastern or North African 1.6% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 75.0% White <i>*note: select all that apply; percentages do not total 100</i>	1.7% Native 1.4% Asian 16.8% Black 9.2% Hispanic or Latino 0.3% Middle Eastern or North African 0.7% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 76.7% White <i>*note: select all that apply; percentages do not total 100</i>	3.0% Native 0.7% Asian 6.0% Black 4.3% Hispanic or Latino 0.0% Middle Eastern or North African 0.0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 89.3% White <i>*note: select all that apply; percentages do not total 100</i>
Education	4.6% < High school 26.4% High school 31.4% Some college 14.2% Associate degree 13.2% Bachelor degree 7.6% Masters degree 2.6% Professional degree	1.3% < High school 18.9% High school 29.2% Some college 9.0% Associate degree 19.3% Bachelor degree 16.9% Masters degree 5.3% Professional degree	0.7% < High school 16.8% High school 15.1% Some college 7.5% Associate degree 20.5% Bachelor degree 32.2% Masters degree 7.2% Professional degree	2.3% < High school 24.5% High school 21.8% Some college 13.4% Associate degree 25.5% Bachelor degree 11.1% Masters degree 1.3% Professional degree
Political Ideology	36.3% Liberal 40.1% Moderate 23.6% Conservative	38.9% Liberal 36.8% Moderate 24.3% Conservative	41.0% Liberal 27.2% Moderate 31.8% Conservative	22.3% Liberal 40.4% Moderate 37.3% Conservative

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Survey data were downloaded from Qualtrics into SPSS v28 for data cleaning and analysis (the survey instrument is shown in Table 6). We analyzed differences in outcomes between viewers of each series and the comparison group of regular scripted TV viewers using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Due to demographic differences between our viewership groups, we controlled for gender, education, political ideology, and exposure to Native issues.

We examined the role of mechanisms like transportation into the story, perceived realism, and parasocial interaction with key Native characters through correlational analyses.

Table 6: Survey Instrument

SCREENING ITEMS
<p>Please confirm your age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> I am 18 or older <input type="radio"/> I am under 18 years old
<p>What U.S. state or territory do you live in? <i>If you live on a Native American reservation, please select the U.S. state that the reservation is located in.</i> [drop down menu with 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico]</p>
<p>How often do you watch television shows using a streaming service (e.g., Hulu, Netflix, HBOMax, Paramount, Peacock)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Never <input type="radio"/> Less than once a month <input type="radio"/> At least once a month <input checked="" type="radio"/> At least once a week <input type="radio"/> Daily
<p>How often did you watch each of the following shows in the 2022-2023 season? 1= Never, 2= Occasionally (At least one episode), 3= Regularly (More than half of the episodes), 4= Most episodes, 5= All episodes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yellowstone (Paramount) <input type="radio"/> The Cleaning Lady (FOX) <input type="radio"/> Reservation Dogs (Hulu) <input type="radio"/> The Rookie (ABC) <input type="radio"/> Rutherford Falls (Peacock) <input type="radio"/> Yellowjackets (Showtime)
KNOWLEDGE
<p>How would you rate your knowledge of 1= Not at all knowledgeable, 3= Moderately knowledgeable, 5= Extremely knowledgeable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Contemporary Native American issues <input type="radio"/> Native American history <input type="radio"/> Native American culture

Items from Campisteguy, M. E., Heilbronner, J. M., & Nakamura-Rybak, C. (2018). Research findings: Compilation of all research. *Reclaiming Native Truth*.

Please indicate if you believe the following statements are almost certainly true, probably true, probably untrue, or almost certainly untrue.

- Most Native Americans are now doing well financially due to revenue from Indian casinos (F).
- Native Americans are one of the fastest growing groups in the United States. (T)

ATTITUDES

Items from Campisteguy, M. E., Heilbronner, J. M., & Nakamura-Rybak, C. (2018). Research findings: Compilation of all research. *Reclaiming Native Truth*.

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1= *Strongly disagree*, 3= *Neither agree nor disagree*, 5= *Strongly agree*

- The United States has done enough already for Native American peoples and Tribes, including providing free health care, welfare, and education.
- What happened to Native Americans in this country is tragic but we can't keep paying for something that happened centuries ago.
- It's unfair to give preference to Native Americans over other ethnic groups who have experienced injustices in our country's history.
- Native Americans will not enjoy all the benefits of this country until they leave their reservations and assimilate into the broader American culture, like other groups have done.

Measure of New Racism from Lashta, E., Berdahl, L., & Walker, R. (2016). Interpersonal contact and attitudes towards indigenous peoples in Canada's prairie cities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(7), 1242-1260.

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1= *Strongly disagree*, 3= *Neither agree nor disagree*, 5= *Strongly agree*

- Native American people should stop complaining about the past and simply get on with their lives.
- If Native American people would only try harder they could be just as well off as white Americans.
- Generations of discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Native American people to work their way out of the lower class.

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1= *Strongly disagree*, 3= *Neither agree nor disagree*, 5= *Strongly agree*

- Sports teams that use Native American terms (e.g., tomahawk, chief) should be renamed.
- Sports teams should stop using Native American mascots.
- The government should expand national monuments to protect sacred Native American lands.
- The U.S. should be required to uphold treaty obligations that allow Native American control of their own lands and the right to hunt, fish, and gather resources including access to education and healthcare.
- I support the decision by many cities to change the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day.
- I do not support the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which seeks to keep Native American children with Native American families.
- Native American children in foster care should be placed in Native American homes.

How comfortable would you feel in each of the following situations?
 1= Extremely uncomfortable; 3= Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable; 5= Extremely comfortable

- Seeking information about someone else’s culture
- Participating in a culture other than mine, when invited
- Consuming media (music, TV, film) from a culture other than mine
- Sitting out of events, ceremonies, or practices that are meant for Tribal members.

ACTIONS

Have you taken any of the following actions in the last 6 months? *Select all that apply*

- I sought more information about Native American issues
- I sought more information about Native American cultures
- I sought more information about Native American history
- I spoke with a friend, co-worker, or family member about Native American issues
- I made a donation in support of a Native American organization, charity, or Tribal entity
- I wrote or shared a social media post about Native American topics
- I followed Native American influencers, organizations, educators, or actors on social media (ex. TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, etc).
- I have not taken any actions

MINDSETS

Mindset orientation items from FrameWorks Institute. (2022). *How is culture changing in this time of social upheaval?* <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Culture-Change-Report.pdf>

Please indicate which of the following statements comes closest to your own view for each of the following pairs, though neither may be exactly what you believe:

	1= Strongly agree with A	2= Somewhat agree with A	3= Somewhat agree with B	4= Strongly agree with B	
A2: Racial discrimination is the result of individuals' bias and prejudice.					B2: Racial discrimination is the result of how our laws, policies, and institutions work.
A3: What happens to an individual in their life is primarily the result of choices they make.					B3: What happens to an individual in their life is primarily the result of how our society and economy are organized.
A4: The neighborhood people live in determines how healthy they are.					B4: Individuals' lifestyle choices, including diet and exercise, determine how healthy they are.
A5: It's natural that some people are going to be much wealthier than others.					B5: Economic inequality exists because of choices our society has made about how our economy will work.

CUMULATIVE EXPOSURE

How often did you watch each of the following shows in the 2022-2023 season?

1= *Never*, 2= *Occasionally (At least one episode)*, 3= *Regularly (more than half of the episodes)*, 4= *Most episodes*, 5= *All episodes*

- Molly of Denali* (PBS)
- Spirit Rangers* (Netflix)
- 1883* (Paramount+)
- The English* (Prime Video)
- Dark Winds* (AMC+)
- Alaska Daily* (ABC)
- Mayans MC* (FX)

RESPONSES TO STORYLINES (SERIES VIEWERS ONLY)

Emotional Responses

Which of the following emotions did you experience while watching this show? *Select all that apply.*

- Angry
- Hopeful
- Afraid
- Disgusted
- Empathetic
- Sad
- Surprised
- Happy
- None of these

Measure of Transportation from Green, M. C., Brock, T. C., & Kaufman, G. F. (2004). Understanding media enjoyment: The role of transportation into narrative worlds. *Communication theory*, 14(4), 311-327.

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1= *Strongly disagree*, 5= *Strongly agree*

- While I was watching the storyline, I could easily picture the events in it taking place.
- While I was watching the storyline, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind.
- I could picture myself in the scene of the events shown in the storyline.
- I was mentally involved in the storyline while watching it.
- After finishing the storyline, I found it easy to put it out of my mind.
- I wanted to learn how the storyline ended.
- The storyline affected me emotionally.
- I found myself thinking of ways the storyline could have turned out differently.
- I found my mind wandering while watching the storyline.
- The events in the storyline are relevant to my everyday life.
- The events in the storyline have changed my life.

Measure of Perceived Realism from Green, M. C. (2004). Transportation into narrative worlds: The role of prior knowledge and perceived realism. *Discourse processes*, 38(2), 247-266.

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the show:

1= *Strongly disagree*, 5= *Strongly agree*

- The dialogue in the narrative is realistic and believable.
- The setting for the narrative just doesn't seem real.
- People in this narrative are like people you or I might actually know.
- The way people really live in everyday lives is not portrayed very accurately in this narrative.
- Events that actually have happened or could happen are discussed in this narrative.
- This narrative shows that people have both good and bad sides.
- I have a hard time believing the people in this narrative are real because the basic situation is so far-fetched.
- This narrative deals with the kind of very difficult choices people in real life have to make.

Measure of Parasocial Interaction from Rubin, A. M., Perse, E. M., & Powell, R. A. (1985). Loneliness, parasocial interaction, and local television news viewing. *Human Communication Research*, 12, 155–180.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1985.tb00071.x>

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1= *Strongly disagree*, 3= *Neither agree nor disagree*, 5= *Strongly agree*

- [character] made me feel comfortable, as if I was with a friend.
- I see [character] as a natural, down-to-earth person.
- I look forward to watching [character] in another episode.
- If [character] would appear in another show, I would watch that show.
- If there were a news story about [character], I would read it.
- I would miss [character] if she did not appear in an episode.
- I would like to meet [character] in person.
- I find [character] to be attractive.

EXPOSURE TO NATIVE ISSUES

How much have you heard about the following topics in the last six months?

1= *Nothing at all* to 5= *A great deal*

- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Tribal Sovereignty
- Missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW)
- Land Back movement
- American Indian residential schools or boarding schools

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please select your gender identity:

- Trans Woman
- Woman
- Trans Man
- Man
- Genderqueer, Non-binary
- Other (please specify) [text box]
- Decline to answer

Which of the following best represents your race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)

- Indigenous or Native American *Please list your Tribal affiliation. Write NA if not applicable.* [text box]
- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other
- Decline to answer

Do you identify as Two Spirit ?

- Yes
- No
- Decline to answer

Which is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school degree
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate's degree in college (2-year)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree/Professional degree (JD, MD, PhD)
- Other (please specify) [text box]
- Decline to answer

What is your household income? Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income in 2022, before taxes.

- \$0 to 9,999
- \$10,000 to 14,999
- \$15,000 to 19,999
- \$20,000 to 34,999
- \$35,000 to 49,999
- \$50,000 to 74,999
- \$75,000 to 99,999
- \$100,000 to 199,999
- \$200,000 or more
- Decline to answer



Which party, if any, do you most identify with?

- Republican
- Democratic
- Independent
- Libertarian
- No party preference
- Other (please specify) [text box]
- Decline to answer

Overall, which description best represents your political ideology?

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative
- Very conservative
- Decline to answer

Which of the following best represents where you live? *Select all that apply.*

- Large city/Urban area
- Suburban area
- Rural area
- Native Reservation
- Decline to answer

K. Devery Jacobs as Elora Danan in *Reservation Dogs* (Hulu)

USC
Annenberg
Norman Lear Center
Media Impact Project



Native Representation on Scripted Television

www.mediaimpactproject.org



www.illuminative.org

