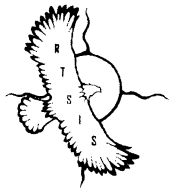


Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services Inc.

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November 16, 2022

Dear Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television,

Efran Films demonstrated great respect for the Indigenous community from the moment they approached me about the idea of dedicating episodes of their documentary series, *Never Seen Again*, to the disappearance of Tamra Keepness. It was obvious to me that the team at Efran Films wasn't coming to Regina to tell an Indigenous story. Rather, they were coming to Regina to *listen* to our story and to allow others to hear us tell our own story. That distinction is rare, and made all the difference.

It was clear that Efran Films did not want to move forward without the blessing of the Indigenous leaders, families, and institutions at the heart of the story. They put in the time, and did the work, to achieve a meeting of the minds and pursue a genuine collaboration in the service of a common goal. At no point were we rushed or pressured, nor did we feel that our experiences and perspectives were being repurposed for the sake of a compelling production. On the contrary, they were determined to be of service to us.

Efran Films handled sensitive issues with great sensitivity, aided by constant dialogue. They respected that there was a right way to do things, even if it took more time and effort to approach the right people in the right manner. Efran Films deferred to us about what aspects of our culture to incorporate into their series, as well as about how to contextualize them properly for a wide audience. For example, when I noted that the story of Tamra Keepness really began decades and centuries before Tamra's disappearance and extends to the present day, the producers immediately offered to make the story into a double episode. This allowed a meditation on the residential schools experience, the reserve system, urban life for First Nations people, and generational trauma, all without ever losing sight of one family's experience of an unimaginable tragedy.

Most importantly, Efran Films kept their promises. When the Keepness family mentioned that media portrayals over the years had trafficked in racist stereotypes and caused great harm, the producers at Efran went above and beyond to include the family and community leaders in a conversation about the content of the episodes so that there was transparency and no

surprises. When one of the Indigenous family members at the heart of the story felt that she had left important information out of her interview, the producers took extra steps to ensure the additional material was recorded and included it in the documentary.

As a result, the experience of participating in *Never Seen Again* was a healing one for the family. The series also contributes to the larger process of truth, justice and reconciliation. I only wish that more people hear about and have an opportunity to see these episodes of *Never Seen Again*. It's a profoundly important piece of documentary storytelling for all of us in Canada who are trying to grapple with the past in order to forge a better society in the present and for those not yet born.

I would like to personally thank Efran for all their hard work and unrelenting willingness to capture and portray our story in media that is a true reflection of our ourselves.

Thank you,



for Erica Beaudin,
Executive Director
Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services