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## Talking At The Roadblock

Dialogue is key in drama featuring local lead nathaniel Arcand.  
Published September 23, 2010 by Jen Hoyer in Screen Preview

“If today were your last day on earth, what would you do?”

“Finish *Pride and Prejudice*.”

That might not be the conversation you’d expect from two Native guys killing time before setting up a roadblock. But then again, chances are good you haven’t watched a lot of First Nations comedy.

Making its world premier at the Edmonton International Film Festival, *Two Indians Talking* sets the bar high for this under-developed genre by being simultaneously witty and profound, irreverent and thought-provoking.

The film follows Nathan and Adam as they prepare for a roadblock and wait for their neighbouring tribes to arrive as backup. Adam, played by Justin Rain, is the book-learned smart ass who has come home to lend his cautious support. He’s more than happy to share his knowledge on the proper geographic location for a sweat lodge, and he believes that the potlatch tradition boils down to entertainment and good food: in his words, “dinner theatre.”

Nathan, the Rez cousin who’s given up his dreams of becoming a rock star, is acted by screen veteran Nathaniel Arcand (of *North of 60* and *Heartland*). Nathan is more attuned to the harsh reality of living on the reservation.

His strong community values and his belief in sharing his paycheque with family and neighbours illustrate a 21st century understanding of what potlatch really is.

As Nathan and Adam, Arcand and Rain have great conversational chemistry.

They toss their beliefs back and forth, battling each other both verbally and across the foosball table.

They struggle with their own identities, examine their responsibility for defending their land and their people, and question whether it’s possible to do the wrong thing for the right reasons. They don’t arrive at answers as much as they learn to talk about the things they’ve left unsaid.

Director Sara McIntyre describes the value of this: “what I really appreciate about this story is that it doesn’t take sides and that it doesn’t give any answers or opinions. It’s really important to just feel safe talking about these things ... I want it to be okay to have people ask those questions that lead to more understanding.”

Nathaniel Arcand explains that, as an actor, films like this make him think about what’s going on in the world. *Two Indians Talking* deals with tough issues related to race and the environment that we should all be thinking about. “I would hope that people would open their eyes and just care a little more,” he says. “This is our country. Wherever it’s touched, wherever it’s destroyed, this is ours.

We’ve got to take care of it.” When these issues really boil down, Arcand is quick to point out that “skin colour doesn’t mean anything.”

While *Two Indians Talking* might not serve up any answers on what’s right and what’s wrong, it shows us how to work things out together. And that’s the most beautiful part of the film: realizing the power of a community that talks, laughs, and stands together through thick and thin.

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