

A black silhouette of a snake, with its head raised and tongue flicking out, forming a large, irregular oval shape that frames the title text.

# FIRST DAUGHTER *and the* BLACK SNAKE

WILD RICE. PIPELINES. PROPHECY. FAMILY. FOOD.  
TREATIES. HISTORICAL TRAUMA. HORSES. WATER.

The prequel to Standing Rock.



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Produced and Directed by Keri Pickett

A PICKETT PICTURES FILM

## **LOG LINE:**

Winona LaDuke believes Big Oil is the black snake predicted in indigenous prophecy to bring the earth's destruction. When proposed new oil pipelines threaten sacred wild rice lakes, Winona dreams of organizing a spiritual ride, riding her horse against the current of oil "because a horse can kill a snake."

## **SYNOPSIS:**

The "Prophecy of the 7th Fire" says a "black snake" will bring destruction to the earth. We will have a choice of two paths. One is scorched and one is green. For Winona (Ojibwe for "first daughter"), the "black snake" is oil trains and pipelines. When she learns that Canadian-owned Enbridge plans to route a new pipeline through land granted to her tribe in an 1855 Treaty, she and her community spring into action to save the sacred wild rice lakes and preserve their traditional way of life.

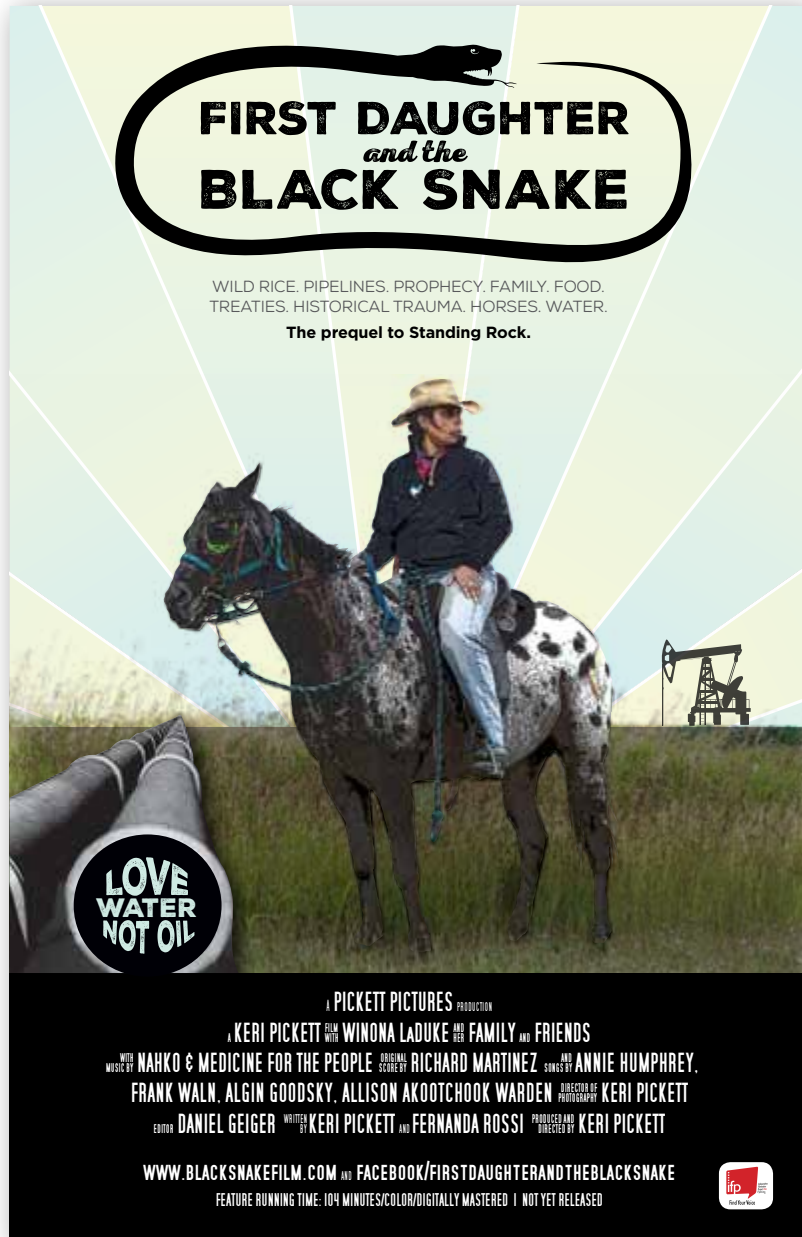
Following her decision to fight Enbridge, Winona dreams that she is riding her horse against the current of the oil. Launching an annual spiritual horse ride along the proposed pipeline route, speaking at community meetings and regulatory hearings, Winona testifies that the pipeline route follows one of historic and present-day trauma. The tribe uses the pipeline permitting process to assert their treaty rights and to protect their natural resources.

Winona is a daughter, mother, grandmother, and Executive Director of Honor the Earth, a native-led environmental justice organization. Winona's mother, Betty, explains about how she turned aside her Jewish heritage when she met Winona's father, Sun Bear, whose traditional life was filled with hunting, fishing, and gathering on Minnesota's White Earth Reservation. Tapping trees for syrup, harvesting the wild rice, sewing a jingle dress, defending the treaties, and tending her horses, planting corn—Winona is living by her father's values.

Winona and her son travel to Michigan on a tar sands resistance tour to an area "downwind" of Marathon's tar sands oil refinery. Emma Lockridge and other activists reveal the health impact of living next to Marathon Petroleum in an area known as the "Sacrifice Zone." Even as Winona suffers setbacks she supports James Botsford's opposition to Enbridge's claim of eminent domain on his family farmland. Winona finds many ways to share her concern over dangers of oil impacting sacred wild rice lakes. Winona joins with her tribe and others to demand that the pipelines' impact on tribal people's resources be considered in the permitting process. Hosted by Irene Bedard, Winona brings her climate change concerns to Marathon Petroleum headquarters in Ohio, demonstrating with spotlights, bullhorn, drums, and song.

Winona's colorful corn harvest provides food for the family's Thanksgiving dinner. As the family gathers they joke together. Winona's passion for sustainable food and energy sources show the ways she, her family, and her community work together for sustainable food and renewable energy in order to keep the black snake in the ground.

Following the competition of the 4th annual ride against the current of oil, Enbridge announces the cancellation of the Sandpiper pipeline, investing, along with Marathon Petroleum, in the Dakota Access pipeline instead. Enbridge still plans to put a new Line 3 through the same wild rice tribal territory.



## PRODUCTION NOTES:

### FIRST DAUGHTER AND THE BLACK SNAKE

Genre: Character-driven vérité style documentary

Topics: Native American - Social Justice - Environment, Biographical documentary.

Length: 104 Minutes

Format: 16x9

Sound: 5.1

Language: English & Anishinaabe (Ojibwe)

Produced & filmed in America

Directed, Produced and Director of Photography: Keri Pickett

Written by Keri Pickett & Fernanda Rossi

Edited by Daniel Geiger

Completed December 2016

Music by Nahko and Medicine for the People

Original Score Richard Martinez

Songs by Annie Humphrey, Frank Waln, Algin Garryt Goodsky, Allison Akootchook Warden

## FEATURING:

Winona LaDuke, Author, Economist and Anishinaabe Environmental Activist and her family and community.



Keri Pickett with Winona LaDuke at Standing Rock, North Dakota.

### **KERI PICKETT BIO:**

Producer, Director & Director of Photography Keri Pickett's work documents those who seek to right a wrong, sharing stories of how one person can make a difference. Her award-winning documentary feature film, *The Fabulous Ice Age* is available for streaming on Netflix, sub-titled into ten languages. Virgil Films & Entertainment distributes in all media DVD, Amazon, iTunes.

### **WEBSITE:**

[www.blacksnakefilm.com](http://www.blacksnakefilm.com)

### **TRAILER:**

<https://vimeo.com/140944501>



### **FACEBOOK:**

First Daughter and the Black Snake



### **TWITTER:**

<https://twitter.com/1stDghterBSnake>

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## DIRECTOR STATEMENT

I believe people reveal their values through their daily rituals of family life, work, faith or cultural practice. I seek out amazing people who are making the world a better place, but I am also focused on indigenous communities who inspire me with their values, beliefs and ongoing struggle. As a documentarian and story-teller, I seek those who are living with authenticity and passion. I believe that one person can make a difference in this world. I made the film because Winona LaDuke is one of those people.



Producing and directing “First Daughter and the Black Snake,” featuring Native American activist WinonaLaDuke’s inspirational pursuit of environmental justice, has challenged my story-telling skills. I am weaving together her personal story with the Ojibwe tribal history and its economic dependence on wild rice, now threatened by an oil pipeline. Filming the harvest explains the desire for sustainable food sources and shows her values in action. I’ve known Winona since 1984 and have always found her to be a passionate crusader for justice. She walks her talk. I can imagine following her for decades to come.

## RESUMES

### Keri Pickett

DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER,  
CO-WRITER, CINEMATOGRAPHER/DP

### IMDb PAGE

Keri Pickett studied filmmaking at Moorhead State University with Eric Larsen and screenwriting with Thomas McGrath, but for decades chose photography as her primary artistic language. Working as a professional photojournalist, she has had photos published in *Life*, *Time and People*, *Stern* and *Geo* magazines. She is the author of several award-winning photography books and has been awarded fellowships from the Bush Foundation, McKnight, Jerome and Target Foundations as well as the National Endowment for the Arts.

Pickett is the director and producer of the award-winning documentary feature film *The Fabulous Ice Age*, an official selection of Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival, the Napa Valley Film Festival, Lincoln Center’s Dance on Camera and opening the 2014 Jacob’s Pillow Festival. Winner of an audience award at the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival and best non-feature film and best non-feature director awards from the Women’s Indie Film Festival and the Gwinnett International Film Festival.

Her short film exploring movement artist Yves Musard with Richard Serra’s massive steel sculpture at the Gagosian Gallery in New York, NY. *Steel // Spirit* was an official selection of Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival, winning two awards of excellence for the director and film in the 3rd Indian Cine Festival in India.

*First Daughter and the Black Snake* premiere screening: the Native Women in Film Festival, in Los Angeles, California, February 23, 2017.



## Fernanda Rossi

CO-WRITER

### IMDb PAGE

Internationally renowned writer and speaker Fernanda Rossi has collaborated for 15 years in more than 500 fiction scripts and documentaries, including two documentaries nominated for the Academy Award.® The grant proposals and fundraising samples she contributed to received funding from ITVS in the United States and the National Film Board of Canada. She has given her lectures in more than 12 countries and at film festivals and markets, such as *Hot Docs* and *Sheffield Doc/Fest*. In addition, she is a trainer for special programs and a grant evaluator for foundations. Her book *Trailer Mechanics: How to Make Your Documentary Fundraising Demo*, 2nd Edition, is according to industry professionals, the bible on demo production. See more at: <http://www.documentarydoctor.com>

## Daniel Geiger

EDITOR

### IMDb PAGE

Daniel Geiger has worked in the film business for over 30 years on feature films such as *Fargo*, *North Country*, *Purple Rain*, *Wildrose*, *Far North*. Editing credits include *Herman-U.S.A.*, *Snow*, *The Jingle Dress* and *The Dinkytown Uprising*. Based in Minneapolis, but over the years he has worked in LA, New York, San Francisco, Chicago and New Orleans, in every facet of filmmaking. After studying art and photography and working as a graphic designer, Daniel entered filmmaking as a cinematographer, producer and writer/director on his own short films. He was a cinematographer on the Oscar-winning documentary, *American Dream* by Barbara Kopple. Others he has worked with include: Joel & Ethan Coen, Roger Deakins, Tricia Cooke, Steven Rivkin, Sandra Schulberg, Arthur Coburn, Sam Shepard, Bill Pohlad, Chris Menges, Niki Caro and David Coulson.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

When I first met activist Winona LaDuke on Minnesota's White Earth Reservation, we were both 25 years old, and I could never have predicted the ways she would eventually impact my life and path as a photographer and filmmaker. Because of my curiosity about Winona's life, I have experienced the indigenous view of environmental justice on this planet, which the Ojibway call "Turtle Island." Documenting Winona's quest for environmental justice and personal pursuits, from protecting wild rice to riding horses started with filming one ride and it has grown to cover the birth of a movement.

In 2013, when I read that an oil pipeline carrying fracked oil was coming through her reservation, I knew that I had to be there to document the response. Following her has been a crash course in governmental regulatory processes, historical trauma and treaties, and adverse impact of extreme energy extraction on Native Americans. Her support for building tribal sovereignty and honoring treaty rights have been an inspiration to my artist's goals to create socially relevant, meaningful work. I value people who change the world by their presence, therefore I'm interested in Winona's multi-layered opposition to Big Oil, her political participation and direct actions, as well as her traditional spiritual practices.

Because of our long history, Winona grants me close access. I feel destined to share her unique story. For the most part, I work solo producing, directing, and operating the camera and audio. Juggling many roles is a challenge. Winona moves fast and I don't know which story threads are the most important or how they will play out, so I film in a cinema verite style—testing my skills and stamina as a filmmaker. I value authenticity, and I want the viewer to feel as though they are present in the scene. I choose to not insert a huge crew into the dynamics of the story and keep myself out of the script. This is what happened in the life of an activist and a community and here is how they responded. I hope to impact, engage, and entertain.

## TIES TO STANDING ROCK

“First Daughter and the Black Snake” follows what happened in the years leading up to the historic Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) opposition and the birth of the “Water Is Life” movement.

In Minnesota, in late August of 2016, after years of regulatory hearings and statements about Enbridge Energy’s urgent need for a new Bakken oil pipeline, they announce the cancellation of the Sandpiper pipeline. The pipeline cancellation notice came the day after Winona’s 4th annual spiritual horse ride ‘against the current of oil.’

The Minnesota and North Dakota pipeline struggles are connected because when Enbridge scraps the Sandpiper pipeline, investing in the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) instead, which enables Energy Transfer Partners’ to complete the pipeline project.

Seeking environmental justice, Winona joins the Standing Rock opposition to DAPL, and soon after, thousands of people were camped at the Standing Rock Reservation to protect the water.

Winona’s efforts to stop the Enbridge Sandpiper and Line 3 pipelines is a prequel to the Standing Rock NoDAPL resistance.

## NEWS & REVIEWS

“Strong Women and New Paradigms Highlight the Native Women in Film Festival”, *The Progressive* by Ed Rampell, February 28, 2017

“First Daughter and the Black Snake” Lights the Path, *LA Progressive* by Dick Price, Feb 25, 2017

Urgent Cinema: Winona LaDuke and the Enbridge Pipeline  
*Walker Art Center Magazine* - Sep 16, 2016

Local Voices - part of Cinema of Urgency  
*Walker Art Center Magazine* - Sep 15, 2016

North Dakota Landowner Wins Easement Battle Against Oil Company  
*Huffington Post* - Sep 13, 2016

North Dakota Landowner Continues Fight Against Big Oil  
*Huffington Post* - Feb 22, 2016

“Enbridge Sued Us, We Didn’t Want to Be Here”  
*Huffington Post* - Aug 12, 2015



FDBS\_Pickett\_5.jpg



FDBS\_Pickett\_1.jpg



FDBS\_Pickett\_7.jpg





FDBS\_Pickett\_3.jpg



FDBS\_Pickett\_6.jpg



FDBS\_Pickett\_12.jpg





Top row, l to r:  
FDBS\_Pickett\_2.jpg  
FDBS\_Pickett\_8.jpg  
FDBS\_Pickett\_4.jpg



FDBS\_Pickett\_11.jpg



FDBS\_Pickettt\_9.jpg



FDBS\_Pickettt\_10.jpg



FDBS\_Pickettt\_13.jpg