



LAST OF OUR KIND

THE DOCUMENTARY

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Directed By Nicole Gormley



SYNOPSIS

Between a murder in Kenya, an Arctic hunt on ancestral grounds, and living above gulf waters during hurricane season, ***Last of Our Kind*** interweaves the coming-of-age stories of three kids whose lives have been transformed by climate change. Separated by thousands of miles yet all hailing from indigenous communities with strong connections to the land and sea, each young teenager is embarking on an adventurous rite of passage where ancient traditions collide with the modern condition. Empowered with tools to tell their own stories, they explore the past, present, and uncertain futures of their communities. They reveal the consequences of climate change that are already upon us. Will the changing landscape eliminate their access to food? Wash away their homes? Insight violence, as scarcity replaces abundance? As the film's young heroes face their own distinct challenges, certain universal ideals emerge: love of family, strength in community, and resiliency in the face of adversity. With one foot in tradition and the other firmly planted in the modern world of homework assignments, Tik Tok videos, and teenage angst, they see the pitfalls and impossibilities of choosing either path as the landscape literally morphs beneath their feet. Our young subjects mine their complex histories, seeking a third option, a new way forward, before their ways of life become portraits of the past.

THIS IS NOT A CLIMATE CHANGE FLIM.

THIS IS A CHARACTER-DRIVEN, COMING-OF-AGE STORY
SET TO THE BACKDROP OF CLIMATE CHANGE.



A photograph of a child in a red jacket running and a person in a blue jacket walking away on a gravel road. The scene is set in a rural, overcast environment with utility poles and a small purple building in the background. The text "MEET THE KIDS" is overlaid in the center.

MEET THE KIDS

A young man, Simon Ali, is shown in a dimly lit room, focused on writing in a notebook. He is wearing a bright green t-shirt and holding a black smartphone in his left hand. The notebook is open on a table in front of him, and he is using a red pencil. The background is dark, with some faint light reflecting off the pages of the notebook.

SIMON ALI

KENYA | 13 YEARS OLD

13-year-old Simon Ali is an aspiring investigative journalist living in Laikipia County, Kenya - an area hit hard by intense drought, erratic torrential rains, and floods. He and his family were doing their best to navigate the changing climate, until their world was turned upside down after their father was murdered by armed pastoralists on October 15, 2019. Simon's father, Stephen, was the lead guide at the region's largest wildlife conservancy. The Conservancy, originally cordoned-off by colonizers, is an abundant oasis that sits in the middle of one of the most barren, dry, overgrazed landscapes in Kenya. Simon's father was leading a tour there when he died.

While on a mission to uncover the circumstances surrounding his father's death, Simon discovers Stephen's murder was a direct consequence of desperate measures local communities are forced to take to survive the drought. Simon grew up idolizing his dad and believing in the promise of a western education and the mission of the Conservancy. But now he is realizing it's all a lot more complicated than he thought. The efforts of the Conservancy to protect the land and wildlife are in direct conflict with the pastoral communities living along its border, struggling to get by with almost no access to natural resources or political power in their own homeland. Simon has always felt an allegiance to the Conservancy, but he is also aware that his parents once belonged to the pastoral communities suffering the drought.

SIMON ALI

CONTINUED

From re-discovering his father's tribal roots to facing the tribe believed to be responsible for Stephen's murder, exploring the life and death of his father catalyzes a conversation about the changing environment, conservation, and community equity in a time of crisis. In discovering where he and his father come from, Simon realizes the need for a new solution. It is not enough to conserve this one plot of land while the surrounding community continues to starve in the wake of climate change.





MYA AISHANNA

ARCTIC ALASKA | 11 YEARS OLD

Like many 11-year-olds, Mya loves to dance, play video games, and do gymnastics. She also loves jumping off melting permafrost cliffs, going down to the bone pile to watch the polar bears scavenge, and shooting her .22 rifle. She is adventurous, wild, and she's growing up in the rapidly changing Inupiaq village of Kaktovik, a town of 250 people on the northern coast of Alaska.

Her mom, Stephanie Aishanna, is the village's first female whaling captain. Mya's grandfather is a warm-souled polar bear guide. They are a proud hunting family, according to Stephanie. "It's in our DNA. Our ancestry." The youngest to two older brothers, Mya is approaching her first caribou hunt. In the arctic, this equates to independence, the first step to adulthood, and food security. Or it used to, when indigenous communities could count on a predictable hunting season.

This summer, Mya's mom and brothers will take her hunting. Mya seems both eager and nervous. She wants to join in the family tradition, but she also spends a lot of time away from the natural world, tucked in her bedroom making Tik Tok videos and playing Guitar Hero. She is straddling worlds and genuinely asking, "What does it mean to be Inupiaq in 2020?"

MYA AISHANNA

CONTINUED

The family plans to camp at the special site where her grandmother, or Aka, loved to fish and hunt as a nomadic kid before the family took up residence in Kaktovik. When the family leaves behind the economic, environmental, and political tensions of the village, there is a palpable energy shift. A weight is lifted. In the village, pressure of every sort is mounting. Stephanie must now hold down multiple jobs to support the family, Mya grapples with the middle school growing pains magnified by social media, and the town is split over how to carve out a future for themselves in a climate crisis that no longer supports traditional ways of life.

Stephanie is adamant about striking out across the tundra to show Mya how to catch her first Caribou. A mother's love manifests as the need to pass on her tools for survival, to impart the gifts of the land. All the while, it's unclear how much Mya has bought into this plan. Mya's hunt is the entry point to a much larger conversation about what her community stands to lose as climate change and the oil industry push the once-vibrant ecosystem to the brink.



GRAND BAYOU, LA

CURRENTLY CASTING

Our team has been working with an amazing partner, Rosina Philippe, an elder of the Atakapa-Ishak tribe in Grand Bayou, Louisiana. With her guidance, we are in the process of casting our third and final protagonist to round out our network narrative. Rosina is introducing us to kids and families in the region, all of whom face a very real and imminent threat of displacement.

For the community, displacement is about more than finding a new house to furnish and call home. She eloquently speaks of what it means to be indigenous to a place. There is no real separation between the Atakapa-Ishak and their watery homeland. Relocating would be like taking the flour out of a cake after you baked it. "We don't think of the land — the environment — the way you do," Philippe says. "It is part of us, essential to our way of life. We can't live without it. So when it is unhealthy or sick, so are we. And when you destroy it, you are destroying our way of life." Still, the folks living in Grand Bayou, Louisiana, know something must be done. Their ancestral land is disappearing under water, most of it already submerged.

GRAND BAYOU, LA

CONTINUED

With warming air and sea comes increasingly powerful hurricanes, sea-level rise, not to mention inept levee systems. The lush wetlands and high ground that sustained them for centuries is now a ragged patchwork of crumbling salt marshes and flooding lagoons. Time is undeniably running out for this region, and the state of Louisiana knows it. To add insult to injury, the Louisiana state government recently passed a \$50 billion master plan to restore and protect the region, but it does not include the Grand Bayou or its native residents. “The only thing they offer us is to move — but we can’t move. That would kill our culture and our future entirely. For us, home is more than the building you live in. It’s everything in the environment that surrounds you. If you leave, you become someone else. You are no longer the same person. No longer the same people.” Here, the kids already need to take a boat to get from their stilt-lifted dwellings to school. Although their future is uncertain, the Grand Bayou community is fiercely determined to fight for their ancestral land and for a voice in future decision-making about the gulf waters and their management.





LOCATIONS

Weaving stories from the Arctic, the Bayou, and the Grasslands together allows us to reveal the truly global nature of the climate crisis. We've selected these regions given the relative urgency of the existential threats to folks who call them home. Taken together, we see a system out of whack. Some places melt, so others flood, and still others linger parched, without a drop of moisture for months. The starkly contrasting-yet-complementary visuals of the three landscapes are cinematic gold: visual proof of the range of dire circumstances that are becoming more commonplace as climate change goes unchecked.

A photograph of a vast body of water under a cloudy sky. The water is dark blue, and there are numerous ice floes of various sizes scattered across the surface, indicating a significant loss of sea ice.

ARCTIC

LOSS OF SEA ICE

A photograph of a dry, arid landscape in Kenya. A tall, metal windmill stands in the center, surrounded by a few small, thatched-roof huts. The ground is parched and brown, and the sky is clear and blue.

KENYA

DROUGHT

An aerial photograph of a flooded wetland area. The water is a deep blue-green color, and several small, rectangular structures are built on stilts in the water. The surrounding land is mostly submerged, with only a few trees and small islands visible.

WETLANDS

HURRICANES
& FLOODING

A young child is shown in profile, wearing a vibrant purple quilted jacket with a large, shaggy grey fur hood. The child's eyes are closed, and they appear to be in a state of calm or meditation. They are sitting in a field of tall grass, with a clear blue sky in the background. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

THE APPROACH

My storytelling vision, achieved by braiding similar narratives from different corners of the earth, is only possible because of the real and profound parallels between each geography, community, and individual character. The thematic intersections between life in east Africa, the northern shores of Alaska, and a deluged Gulf community reveal just how widespread consequences of climate change will be.

Each geography is impacted by a direct climate threat: drought, loss of sea-ice, and increasing storms. Each community has millenia-long traditions of living in balance with the land, and centuries-long histories of surviving oppression and colonial rule. Each kid is coming-of-age in an unprecedented transition, living through rapid losses of wilderness and rapid gains in technology and globalization. At the same time, each place and character is completely unique. This will be showcased in sweeping shots of epic landscapes, along with our characters' looks, personalities, and the way they celebrate their traditions. Simon is shy, sharp, and measured. Mya is goofy, impulsive, and anxious. I have no doubt our casting efforts in the Gulf will reveal another one-of-a-kind youngster to bring us deep into the landscape's beauty and terror.



THE KID'S PERSPECTIVE



Through film diaries, our subjects will document their daily lives, conversations with elders, friends, family, teachers, anyone that they think might have an interesting perspective. This allows us to weave intimate, high and low moments from the kids' day-to-day lives with the high-production value verite scenes our agile film team captures while we are on the ground.

Yes, our young subjects will play and be kids, but they are also wrestling with generational trauma and uncertain futures. None of them wants to fully revert to traditional ways, and none of them wants to abandon the beauty and wisdom of their culture. All of them are in search of a third way, a new path forward that takes the best of both of their worlds and forges a brighter and healthier future for us all.

Centering kids in our narrative allows us to tell a story no adult could. These 'tweenagers' are unmasked, profound, funny, and genuine in their curiosity. They ask simple questions which spark meaningful discourse without undertones of judgment or politics. Rather than asking if one believes in climate change, which can be a polarizing question, they ask, "What has changed since you were my age?" Featuring a youthful perspective, it's possible to offer up fun, charismatic faces of the future to counter the typical doom-and-gloom climate narrative, throwing the door wide open for audiences of all political persuasions to join the conversation.

THE LOOK

Stunning, visceral visuals will highlight each character and location. We aim to evoke a multi-sensory experience that will draw the audience into each community by treating the earth elements as characters themselves. Think visual poetry from a child's perspective.

In addition, we will be using multimedia filming formats from cinematic documentary footage shot on anamorphics to self-shot diary cams, to Tik Tok videos, to archival footage. We are shooting our primary footage on anamorphic lenses to capture the intensity of the teenage experience, magnified by scope of the problems their communities face.



IMPACT

We believe that our world is beautiful because of its diversity of landscapes, of practices and ultimately of people. However, we know that the diversity of beauty and wisdom, plants and animals, languages and ways of problem-solving, all of it is at risk of being lost if immediate, widespread action is not taken.

We will partner with local community-based and global climate action organizations to facilitate:

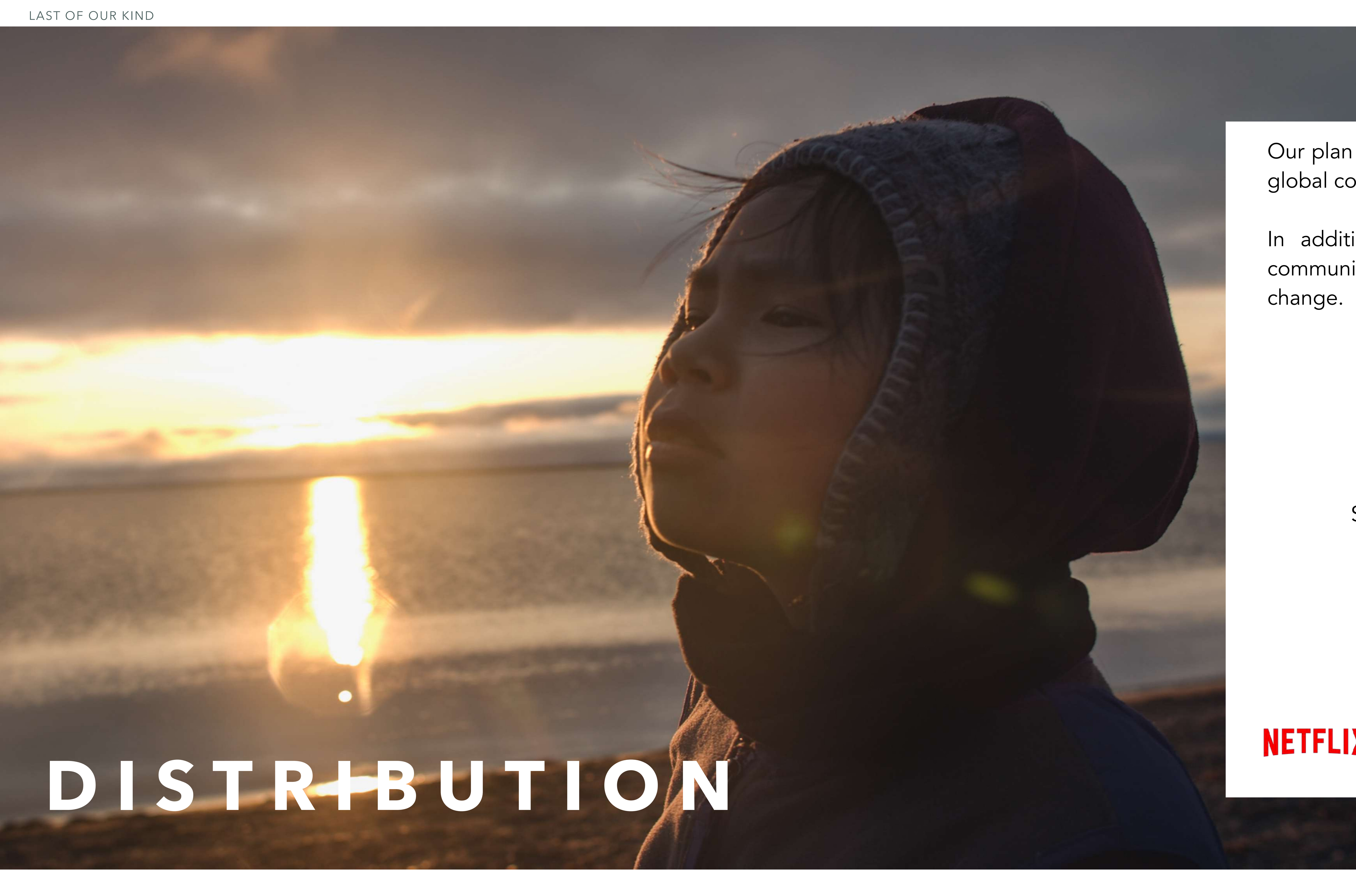
- 1) Global policy makers exposure to the current conditions and challenges facing the LOOK communities as told from the eyes of local youth.
- 2) Curriculum development that features young girls and BIPOC as the question-askers, stakeholders and forces for change. The curriculum will allow students, educators, parents, and community leaders to facilitate dialogue and set measurable goals.
- 3) Minimize the environmental impact of our film by measuring, revealing and offsetting it. For example, purchasing carbon credits for all required production travel.





EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S STORYTELLERS

In addition to finishing the film, we aim to create a complimentary curriculum that encourages and teaches effective storytelling for middle school students. The education campaign will highlight the importance of media as a tool for conservation and change-making, and allow students to embark on their own media projects highlighting issues relevant to their home communities. Kicked-off with a two-day workshop in every community we visit, this work will empower kids to tell their own stories. We'll train students to use handycams or smartphones in order to be as accessible as possible. Our hope is that after the film is complete, our youth audience will multiply its message by making and distributing their own work with a hashtag that allows us to create a collection by and for the next generation of concerned, activated stewards of the earth and her people.



DISTRIBUTION

Our plan is to enter the festival circuit in hopes of landing a global contract with a streaming platform or network.

In addition, we would like to hold free screenings in communities currently being directly impacted by climate change.

Festival Circuit:

Sundance

Doc NYC

SXSW

Hot Docs

Big Sky Documentary Film Festival

Santa Barbara International Film Festival

SF Film Festival

Theatrical release

Potential Streaming Platforms

NETFLIX



hulu

amazon

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I grew up in a perfectly manicured suburban community in Southern California. While this address is certainly a stamp of privilege, I felt a sense of emptiness along the coiffed hedges and endless gated communities. I could walk past nature, but not *into* it. Yet in my twenties, I found an irreplaceable sense of belonging to the natural world when I began learning how to hunt and spear fish. Over the past decade, those passions led to connections with people all over the world who live closely to the land and hold a wealth of knowledge about the interconnected ecosystems they call home.

In my travels, I was also introduced to the daily struggles these folks face, as their traditional means for providing for themselves and their families become less and less feasible as sea level rises, permafrost melts, and productive grasslands are made barren by drought. I see a global pattern, and I think the path to global solutions starts with hearing from the indigenous peoples on the front lines of the climate crisis.

I believe the conversation about climate change needs to shift to encompass intersectionality and nuance. I want the stories I tell to serve as a reminder that humans are not separate from the environment, and the changing climate is no longer a vague, future threat. A cycle of evacuations, refugee crises, and the cultural erosion climate refugees experience has already begun. Climate change is one of many challenges the film's subjects face as unchecked industrial capitalism and colonial practices continue to invade and degrade the ecosystems and communities they inhabit. I hope to not only highlight the pressing urgency of climate change but also invite our audience into the real-world messiness of these interwoven issues.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

CONTINUED



In a time when most of us get our news in scrolling headlines or 140 characters or less, this film offers nuance and complexity by taking time to get to know three distinct communities facing different catastrophes caused by the same basic mechanism. We deepen the climate conversation and inspire a multifaceted approach to addressing this crisis, as our young subjects and other front lines community members offer perspectives integral to the emergence of real solutions.

While we have the technical filmmaking skills to bring this story to the world, we know our subjects are best equipped to tell their own stories. In this sense, we are working to elevate their voices rather than pushing our own agenda. Our access to these three communities, including the kids at the center of our network narrative, is only possible through building trusting relationships over time. Our team has put in the hours to develop meaningful partnerships with community and indigenous leaders, and we collectively thank you for your interest in the project. We hope you fall in love with our characters, like we have, and become invested in protecting the people and places that make their homes feel like home.

- Nicole Gormley



MEET THE TEAM



NICOLE GORMLEY
DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

Nicole is a documentary filmmaker and photographer with the central aim to tell stories that inspire people to rethink our relationship to nature and protect the environment. Using her natural ability to connect with people, she approaches projects from the lens of a shared human experience, ultimately creating empathy and understanding through her work. After graduating from UCLA with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology, she went on to produce projects for several of the world's leading media outlets including Netflix's Emmy-Nominated series *Ugly Delicious* and dozens of international expeditions for National Geographic & Discovery Channel. Nicole's directorial debut, a short film titled, *Lessons From Jeju*, produced and distributed in partnership with Patagonia Films recently won the Woods Hole Film Festival Jury and Director's Award for Best Documentary Short and Best Cinematography.



PETER GOETZ
PRODUCER

Peter is a film and television director, producer, and EP with two decades of international experience. He is committed to developing and producing compelling content with a purpose. Peter believes that with such a polarized news cycle, documentary films are the best medium to implement concrete, positive change. His mission is to tell stories that challenge audiences to question their perception of reality, create empathy, and empower the viewer to take action. Last year he produced HBO's *Torn Apart: Separated at the Border* with Oscar-winning director, Ellen Goosenberg. This year, Peter joined forces with Oscar-winner Fisher Stevens, Mark Monroe, Sebastian Junger, and Nick Quested for a National Geographic feature documentary, *Blood on the Wall*, airing September 2020. He is currently spearheading a project with the Biden- Harris Presidential Campaign to share American Climate Profiles leading up to the US presidential election.



CARYN CAPOTOSTO
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Caryn produced *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* - the critically acclaimed and top-grossing documentary film of 2018 released by Focus Features. She received a 2016 News and Documentary Emmy Award for her role as Co-Producer on *Best of Enemies* and she was Associate Producer on the Academy Award and Grammy Award-winning documentary, *20 Feet from Stardom* (2013). Her feature docs include *Feels Good Man* (2020), *Afghan Cycles* (Executive Producer, 2018) *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and The Silk Road Ensemble* (Associate Producer, 2015), *Filmage: The Story of Descendents / ALL* (Co-Producer, 2014), and *Crossfire Hurricane* (HBO, 2012). Other recent projects include the documentary series *Ugly Delicious* (Executive Producer, 2018), *Abstract: The Art of Design* and *Chelsea Does* (Supervising Producer for *Tremolo*, 2016) all for Netflix.



DAVID & LINDA CORNFIELD
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Linda has a background in technology and management with an M.S. from the MIT Sloan School of Management. David has a degree in Systems Design Engineering from the University of Waterloo in Canada. After successful careers in the tech industry and venture capital, David and Linda are now philanthropists and environmentalists who believe in the power of film to spark curiosity and foster insight and understanding. They view documentaries as a way to connect with a broad audience and create a visceral, emotional and intellectual understanding of the challenges facing our world. Their Executive Producer credits include award winning films such as *Chasing Ice* (2012), *Chasing Coral* (2017), *Inventing Tomorrow* (2018), *The Love Bugs* (2019), *The Social Dilemma* (2020).



VICKIE CURTIS
WRITER & STORY CONSULTANT

Vickie Curtis is a filmmaker, writer, and education impact producer. In addition to writing the documentary and narrative elements of *The Social Dilemma* (Sundance, Netflix), her screen credits include writing the Emmy-winning Netflix Original film, *Chasing Coral* (Sundance), *The Weight of Water* (Banff), *Adventure Not War* (Tribeca), *Classic* (DFF) and story architecture for *Island Soldier* (PBS, HotDocs), *Anbessa* (Berlinale), and *Frame by Frame* (SXSW, Cinema Eye nominee). Vickie was accepted to IDFAcademy Doc Summer School in Amsterdam to develop *Anbessa* with director Mo Scarpelli, and also served as writer/director of the photojournalist collective @EverydayAfrica's mixed-media gallery performances in New York City and Nairobi. As a former educator within the Progressive Education movement, Vickie helped the *Chasing Coral* team galvanize student-driven, local climate action projects in schools around the country.



CAMPBELL BREWER
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Campbell is a film director & cinematographer based in Venice, California. He is fantastic with kids and an excellent teacher. His love of the outdoors and adventure have paired perfectly with his camera. This mix has taken him on shoots in over 30 different countries. He focuses most of his time on creating documentaries and commercial content for brands. While not shooting for clients he writes and develops documentaries. He has worked on Hollywood features such as *The Help* and *Get On Up*. He co-founded and currently runs Little Village Films with his lovely wife & Last of Our Kind associate producer, Kathryn Francis.



PELENISE ALOFA
CONSULTING PRODUCER

Pelenise Alofa is National Coordinator for the **Kiribati Climate Action Network**, an umbrella NGO in Kiribati. She hails from the beautiful Pacific isles: Kiribati, Fiji and Tuvalu. Pelenise is an active advocate for stopping climate change internationally and in the Pacific region. Her strengths lies in project development, program facilitation, capacity building and strategic management. She has strong work relationship with the government on climate change programs on in Kiribati. She has also successfully established the Banaban Network in Fiji for the Banabans, an indigenous people who were resettled in Fiji, and is working diligently to create the Pacific node for CAN.



DR. PAULA KAHUMBU
CONSULTING PRODUCER - KENYA

Paula Kahumbu received her Ph.D. in ecology at Princeton University, where she studied elephants in coastal Kenya. She is the CEO of **WildlifeDirect** and the brainchild of the HANDS OFF OUR ELEPHANTS campaign. She received a special commendation from the United Nations for her critical role in mobilizing action around the crisis facing elephants in Kenya. She is recognized as a Kenyan conservation ambassador by Brand Kenya and in 2015 received the presidential award and title of Order of the Grand Warrior. She is offering invaluable cultural and environmental consulting to our team throughout the development of our Kenya story. She will consult in the editing process, reviewing cuts and offering notes.



KELLY ENINGOWUK - ICC
CONSULTING PRODUCER - ARCTIC

Kelly Eningowuk currently serves as Executive Director for ICC Alaska and has been in that position since 2009. Kelly is Inupiaq and was raised in Shishmaref, Alaska by her grandparents.

Inuit Circumpolar Council: Founded in 1977 by the late Eben Hopson of Barrow, Alaska, the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) has flourished and grown into a major international non-government organization representing approximately 160,000 Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia). The organization holds Consultative Status II at the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is a Permanent Participant at the Arctic Council.



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