

Local actor Grace Dove stars in new psychological drama

Citizen staff

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Grace Dove, who grew up in Prince George, stars in the psychological drama Bones of Crows that is under production now and will be aired next year. | Farah Nosh photo

Grace Dove, an actor who grew up in Prince George and starred opposite Leonardo DiCaprio in the Revenant, is now taking on Bones of Crows a new original five-part psychological drama and feature film commissioned by CBC/Radio-Canada in association with APTN.

Dove will star as Cree Matriarch Aline Spears, who the story is told through. Dove's character survives a childhood in Canada's residential school system and continues her family's generational fight in the face of systemic starvation, racism and sexual abuse.

The Ayasew Ooskana Pictures production is already underway and shows how Spears uses her uncanny ability to understand and translate codes into working for a special division of the Canadian Air Force as a Cree code talker in World War II.

The story, created by Marie Clements, spans more than a century.

Along with Dove, the character-driven series features an ensemble cast of talent including Philip Lewitski (Wildhood), Glen Gould (Cold Pursuit), Michelle Thrush (Pathfinder), Gail Maurice (Night Raiders), Cara Gee (The Expanse), Karine Vanasse (Cardinal), Angus Macfadyen (Robert The Bruce), Rémy Girard (District 31), Graham Greene (Molly's Game) and Lorne Cardinal (Corner Gas).

"Both myself and my producing partners are committed to bringing together the brightest minds and strongest hearts - leading Indigenous artists and actors, with leading non-Indigenous artists and actors, to tell a shared story that is uniquely Canadian, undeniably Indigenous and universally human," Clements said. "The intent is to execute an unapologetic vision and cinematic experience that gives voice to the residential school experience which is still being recovered, while also celebrating the resilience and hope that has always been us."

Executive producers Trish Dolman, Christine Haebler and Sam Grana said they are honoured to work with Clements to showcase her undaunted and unflinching portrayal of the history and legacy of Canada's residential schools.

The project will be shot originally in English, with Cree and Ayajuthem spoken in key scenes and there will be both Cree and French-language versions for broadcast. Filming locations include the Thompson-Nicola Region (Kamloops, Vernon, Quilchena), Greater Victoria Area, and Greater Vancouver Area in British Columbia, and Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Winnipeg portion of production will be produced by Eagle Vision.

"It is vital to share Indigenous history, perspectives and storytelling with authenticity of voice, and we are honoured to partner with Marie Clements and this outstanding cast and creative team to bring Bones of Crows to audiences across the land," Sally Catto, general manager, Entertainment, Factual & Sports, CBC said.

Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) has been providing a platform for Indigenous peoples for more than 21 years.

"Bones of Crows shows us the beauty of our stories, even as it tells of our struggles," Monika Ille, APTN CEO, said. "Our hope is that this production will give audiences the opportunity to reflect on the way that our histories of trauma have made us who we are today, and advance meaningful conversations about reconciliation."

Bones of Crows is a CBC/Radio-Canada original production, produced with the financial participation of Telefilm Canada, Canada Media Fund, APTN, Independent Production Fund, Shaw Rocket Fund, Bell Fund, ISO (Indigenous Screen Office), FIBC, CAVCO, and First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Cultural Council and Indigenous Arts Program.

Bones of Crows is produced, written and directed by Marie Clements (Red Snow, The Road Forward), executive produced by Trish Dolman & Christine Haebler (French Exit, Indian Horse) and Sam Grana (The Boys of St. Vincent) with executive producers Lisa Meeches and Kyle Irving from Eagle Vision and the DOP is Vince Arvidson (The Magnitude of All Things).
