

# Kyle Irving, Lisa Meeches, Rebecca Gibson

Production company(ies)

Eagle Vision

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

## **Lisa Meeches:**

Member of the Order of Canada and Order of Manitoba, Lisa Meeches is one of the most dynamic and respected producers in the film industry and is Anishinaabe from Long Plain First Nation, Sandy Bay First Nation, and Ebb and Flow First Nation. After studying broadcasting in North Dakota, Lisa began her career in 1986 with the Native Media Network. She later began news reporting for Craig Broadcasting Systems in Manitoba and Alberta, where she established a liaison team that connected the newsroom with surrounding First Nations communities. Her journalism career recently came full circle with a Beyond Borders Media Award for her work on Taken as co-creator, executive producer, and host. Lisa also directs episodes of the series and has been nominated for two Canadian Screen Awards for Taken (Best Factual Series, Best Cross-Platform Project).

Lisa has produced numerous projects to critical acclaim including The Sharing Circle, Canada's longest-running Indigenous television series; Ice Road Truckers; Tipi Tales, a Parent's Choice award-winning children's series; and Elijah, a Gemini Award-winning MOW; and the 3-times nominated 2-time winner of CSA's Jack. She Executive Produced the 4-time CSA nominee and 2-time winner We Were Children, is widely praised by residential school survivors for its power to heal, while general audiences have been moved by its accurate and truthful portrayal of the impacts of Canada's colonial past. Prior to this project, Lisa travelled the country with her team interviewing residential school survivors about their experiences for the Legacy of Hope project. Lisa was also the Director, Events Planning and Artistic Programming for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Most recently Lisa served as Creative Director/Executive Producer for the National MMIWG Inquiry. Her work was honoured with two gold medals at the international Shorty Awards for excellence in social media. Lisa is Co- Executive Producer on the CBC/eOne/CW series Burden of Truth (four seasons), and was executive producer of Night Raiders written and directed by Danis Goulet She recently executive produced the feature films Diaspora, and Finality of Dusk, and Deaner '89 set to release in 2024.

Lisa has been critical to the success of the Manito Ahbee Festival since its inception more than 15 years ago where she has acted in the capacity of board chair on a volunteer basis until stepping down to assume the role of Executive Director. True to her

heritage, Lisa is a renowned champion fancy shawl dancer. Lisa is Executive Producer of Orange Daisy Project, a social action campaign in support of mental health for teen girls. Among her numerous awards and nominations are: the 2007 National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Media & Communication, the 2009 YMCA-YWCA Woman of Distinction Award in the area of Creative Communications, the University of Manitoba's Excellence in Aboriginal Business Leadership Award, the Women in Film and Television 2009 Crystal Award for Mentorship, and Ms. Chatelaine. Lisa was honoured as a 2020 Trailblazer at the Reelworld Film Festival.

### **Kyle Irving:**

Kyle Irving, an Emmy-winning producer, co-owner, partner, and head of production for Eagle Vision, has produced over 300 hours of film and television content in the past 24 years. His recent feature film credits include *Bones of Crows* (2022), *Orphan: First Kill* (2022), and *Night Raiders* (2021).

Other notable projects produced by Kyle include Deco Dawson's feature *Diaspora* and Madison Thomas's *Finality of Dusk*. His credits also include the Oscar-winning and Best Picture-nominated *Capote*, the seminal *We Were Children*, *Blue State*, *Walk All Over Me*, *Reasonable Doubt*, and *Lovesick*. Kyle's executive producer credits in television include *True Story* (Parts One and Two) for The History Channel, *SkyMed* for Paramount+, CBC, and CBS Studios, Snapchat's first original Canadian series *Reclaim(ed)*, four seasons of *Burden of Truth* for CBC, CW, Hulu, and Universal UK, the iconic international hit factual series *Ice Road Truckers* for The History Channel and AETN, the comedy series *DJ Burnt Bannock* for APTN Lumi, the docuseries *7TH GEN* for APTN, and four seasons of the hugely impactful cold case crime series *TAKEN* for APTN and CBC.

Kyle has been a dedicated ally to the Indigenous community, working with his business partner Lisa Meeches for nearly 25 years, and focuses on championing underrepresented talent. He served as the creative director and executive producer of the #sacredMMIWG campaign and the National Closing Event for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls from 2018-2019, reaching one-third of all Canadians. In recognition of his contributions, he was named to the Order of Manitoba in 2021, the province's highest honor.

### **Rebecca Gibson:**

As a writer, director, producer, series creator, story editor and actor, Rebecca's work in documentary, drama, and comedy has played in festivals, in theatres, and on TV screens around the world. Following graduation from the New York Film Academy, a CFTPA International Internship took Rebecca to Los Angeles at the start of her film career. Credits include her ACTRA Award-winning role in *The Pinkertons* (Netflix); her Blizzard Award-winning role in the film that launched the series *The Murdoch Mysteries*; co-writing and producing the award-winning feature *H&G*; serving as co-creator, executive

producer, showrunner, a writer, and director for four seasons of the series *Taken*, for which she won a Beyond Borders Media Award and was nominated for three CSAs, including Best Factual Series, the Barbara Sears Award for Best Editorial Research, and Best Cross- Platform Project as the Digital Media Director, Writer, Producer, and Project Lead on the groundbreaking *Taken Knowledge Keeper* App and web series. Rebecca's episodes of *Taken* have also been an Official Selection of Cinema New York City, and nominated for a Golden Sheaf Award. As well as writing, directing, and producing the multi-award-winning shorts *Hard Way Girl* and *don't loiter on the way*, which played festivals around the world. She also wrote on the preschool series *Tipi Tales*, winner of two Parents Choice Gold Medal Awards, and a Blizzard Award (Best Children or Youth Series).

Formerly a Partner and Head of Development for Eagle Vision during the most productive period in its 20+ year history, and current co-owner, Rebecca continues to work with Eagle Vision to develop several feature and series projects around the world, including her own. With her partners, she shared in the 2022 Banff World Media Festival's Innovative Producer Award. Rebecca was part of the Eagle Vision team who were honoured as finalists for five international Shorty Awards (the best of the world's social media), winning gold distinction for two. Formerly one of Western Canada's top casting directors, Rebecca also oversees casting for many of Eagle Vision's projects. Recently, Rebecca wrote and directed on and shared show running duties with Dinae Robinson for Snapchat's hit first Canadian original series, *Reclaim(ed)*. She is also producing the soon-to-be-released feature *Finality of Dusk* (in post-production), produced the recently released feature *Diaspora* (world premiere - Festival du Nouveau Cinema in October, 2022) and executive produced the award-winning feature doc, *Carry It On* (Opening Night of TIFF 2022), and the feature doc *True Story for History Channel and Global* (world premiere Truth and Reconciliation Day, 2022). Other recent projects released in 2023 include the factual series *7TH GEN* (co-creator, executive producer, showrunner, writer, director – and she executive produced and story edited season II which was released in 2023), and the hit comedy web series *DJ Burnt Bannock* (executive producer, showrunner, director). Recently, Rebecca worked on *True Story Part Two* (executive producer and co- writer) released on History Channel on Truth and Reconciliation Day 2023. Currently, Rebecca is executive producing the third season of *7TH GEN* (in post production) and executive produced the scripted feature *Deaner '89*, which is set to release in 2024.

Rebecca is devoted to mentorship, working with the Women in Film and Television Toronto and Vancouver, the CMPA, ACTRA, WIFT, WIDC, among several other local and national organizations to support equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion. She is a frequent moderator and guest speaker at industry panels around the country. She has been an acting coach for over two decades, on film and television sets, and a teacher to thousands of performers. In 2015, Rebecca founded Orange Daisy Project, a social

action campaign in support of mental health for teen girls. She was honoured nationally as a CAMH Difference Maker and was ACTRA Manitoba's 2018 Woman of the Year.

Filmography of applicant(s) - include title and year and/or a link to your IMDb page(s)

2023 FINALITY OF DUSK, Eagle Vision Inc (Producer)

2022 BONES OF CROWS, Ayasew Ooskana Pictures/Eagle Vision Inc. / Grana Productions / Marie Clements Media / Screen Siren Pictures (Co-Executive Producer)

2022 DIASPORA, Eagle Vision Inc. (Producer)

2022 ORPHAN: FIRST KILL, Eagle Vision Inc./eOne/Dark Castle (Executive Producer)

2021 NIGHT RAIDERS, Eagle Vision Inc./Alcina/Uno Bravo, XYZ (Executive Producer)

2016 LOVESICK Eagle Vision Inc./eOne (Producer)

2014 REASONABLE DOUBT Eagle Vision Inc./South Creek Pictures Inc./Lionsgate (Executive Producer)

2012 WE WERE CHILDREN Eagle Vision Inc./eOne/NFB (Producer/Executive Producer)

2007 WALK ALL OVER ME Eagle Vision Inc./Chaos/The Weinstein Company/Mongrel (Executive Producer)

2007 BLUE STATE Eagle Vision Inc./Paquin Films/MGM/TVA Films (Producer)

2005 CAPOTE Eagle Vision Inc./A-Line/Infinity/Sony Pictures Classics/MGM/UA (Associate Producer)

Lisa Meeches: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1583205/>

Kyle Irving: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1564564/>

Rebecca Gibson: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0317151/>

Name of qualifying feature film

Deaner '89

Expected release date in 2024:

September 5, 2024

Through which distribution model is your qualifying film expected to be released:

Theatrical

Name of theatrical distributor, film festival or streaming service releasing or exhibiting qualifying film:

Mongrel Media

#### Film synopsis

Hard-luck metalhead Dean Murdoch (Paul Spence) has finally made it, and now everyone wants to know the story behind his unlikely rise to fame. With Dean as narrator, we're taken back to the 80s; when being a hockey jock was a badge of honour, Jazzercise was a national movement, seatbelts were optional, and teachers were as drunk as their students.

Teenage Dean is a small-town hockey star whose life takes a turn for the weird when a satanic steamer trunk full of his estranged father's personal effects shows up. As the call to heed the dark forces of heavy metal gets louder, Dean angers a biker gang, steals a bus, and discovers that drugs and slapshots are a dangerous mix.

The high-tempo comedy packs in the laughs, while using comedy to spark conversations about identity and the impact of the Canadian government's decades-old Indigenous adoption policies that continue to impact us all today.

#### The inspiration: why was this an important film to make?

Eagle Vision's slogan is "We create content that creates change." This philosophy underpins all our work, and its execution is tailored to each project. Every subject matter requires a specific tone, structure, and finesse to effectively raise awareness, educate the audience, and ideally effect change. Sometimes, the format allows for a straightforward and clear presentation (for example, with a documentary about the residential school experience the viewers are seeking out the content). Other times, the format needs a more nuanced approach, such as using humor to engage the audience (as seen in "Deaner '89," which wraps a significant story about the scooping of children and the importance of identity in an irreverent comedy about a headbanger discovering a passion for heavy metal music).

The story of removing children from families impacts hundreds of thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, yet it remains largely untold. Paul Spence, who stars in the film and also wrote it, incorporated his own experiences of lost and rediscovered identity into the script. This narrative comes from a genuine place and is told from the perspective of an Indigenous man with lived experience. Spence's comedy skills are not only a coping mechanism for his and his family's past traumas but also his most effective way to express himself. This approach allows him to reach audiences who love the character of The Deaner and might not otherwise engage with this subject matter.

Ultimately, if we can tell an Indigenous creator's story, share truths about our collective past, and reach an audience who might otherwise never hear these truths, then we've accomplished something important that can seed informed change.

The making-of: how did this film come together? What were the highlights/challenges of producing this film?

We tell so many serious and intense stories at Eagle Vision, sometimes we need to ensure we are balancing the content creation slate with some fun. What's more fun than spending time telling an important story of identity with one of the zaniest characters in Canadian cinema history as the protagonist. All three of the Eagle Vision partners came up watching the feral antics of Dean Murdoch in the Fubar films and series. We enjoyed the uniqueness of the format and freedom of just being true to yourself that Dean always exhibited.

We had the privilege of working with Paul Spence as part of the team with we assembled for the #sacredMMIWG campaign and the National Closing Event for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls from 2018-2019. The campaign reached one-third of all Canadians and was essential in shifting the perception of the issue in the eyes of Canadians. Having had that experience with Paul, we knew we wanted to work with him again.

Paul came to us with the idea and we immediately supported the commissioning of a script and quickly moved the project from concept to reality. Sam McGlynn was already attached to the project when Paul brought the idea to us and once we got to know Sam, we were thrilled by his involvement. Unlike many projects which suffer through development and struggle to find a market, Deaner '89 was quickly embraced by the market and funding agencies and we had a period of less than 2.5 years from concept to camera.

The challenges came with production and post.

National pride: describe what uniquely defines you as a Canadian producer.

We are not service producers; we are original Canadian content developers and creators. We work independently and in partnership with other Canadian producers to develop the stories that Canadian storytellers want to tell, catering to an audience eager to see themselves, their communities, history, and culture reflected in the content they consume.

What makes us unique is our commitment to telling untold stories—those that have struggled to break through market barriers. We focus on narratives that matter both now and in the future, and we tell stories others might be afraid to tell, often because of the truths and past traumas they reveal. We approach these stories with a mindful intent

to heal any wounds they may uncover, offering hope and a vision for a path forward that fosters positive change.

What defines your body of work?

First and foremost, our company philosophy is encapsulated in the phrase: "We create content that creates change."

At the heart of everything we produce is a commitment to social activism. While we prioritize stories from the Indigenous community, our creative scope extends beyond this underrepresented group. We collaborate with members of the Deaf community, as exemplified in projects like *Finality of Dusk*, co-written by a Deaf writer and featuring a Deaf character in a groundbreaking portrayal. Our team includes individuals from the neurodiverse community and those in recovery from addiction. We actively prioritize Queer characters in our narratives and have prominently featured members of the Black, Asian, and Indigenous communities as leads in our films and shows.

Whether our themes are Indigenous in nature or not, all our content is imbued with traditional ceremonial practices, including the use of medicine, pipes, and prayers. Guided by elders and driven by a commitment to amplify untold stories and marginalized voices, inclusivity remains at the core of our creative endeavours.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

Our leadership in Canadian independent production is defined by our unwavering commitment to our guiding philosophy, "We create content, that creates change," drives us to tell untold stories and address significant social issues with the intent to heal and inspire positive change, while serving an audience with informed entertainment.

We prioritize narratives from the Indigenous community and embrace stories from other underrepresented groups. Our projects highlight our dedication to inclusivity, featuring diverse voices including the Deaf, neurodiverse, people with disabilities, and Queer communities, as well as BIPOC individuals.

Traditional ceremonial practices are integral to our work, ensuring authenticity and respect. Guided by elders and driven by social activism, we create content that resonates deeply with audiences, reflecting their communities, histories, and cultures.

By consistently developing original Canadian content that tackles difficult truths and promotes healing, we lead the way in independent production, championing diverse and marginalized voices through entertaining and compelling content.