

## **Film Makes History by Telling the Truth**

Parks, hospitals, schools, and streets all bear the name “Sutter” in honor of early California settler Johann Sutter, a hero in American History books. But there’s another side to the story. It’s the story of those Sutter exploited, enslaved and raped to build his empire. The Native American Rock Opera, “Something Inside Is Broken” tells the true story of the Natives whose entire way of life was destroyed in the name of progress.

“Something Inside is Broken” is an award-winning Native American Rock Opera based on the untold stories of California Natives who experienced genocide and slavery during the Gold Rush—those who were silenced for generations because the people who exploited them are lauded as heroes.

The play is written, composed and directed by Jack Kohler, created by Alan Wallace, musically directed and arranged by Simon Wilson, choreographed by Elle Beyer, with extra music by Goodshield Aguilar. In 2016, the stage production went on a West Coast Tour, making its way onto ten major stages in California, Nevada, and Arizona. The filmed performances were turned into a Stage Production movie, which has been taking film festivals by storm, reaching broad audiences, and winning national and international awards. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022 it will be featured at the French Film Festival in Richmond, Virginia with more festival dates scheduled in the near future. Recognition in artistic communities is gaining momentum in both Europe and the U.S., as well as gaining traction among Indigenous communities across the globe.

At the heart of “Something Inside is Broken” is the story of two young lovers from the Nisenan Tribe. The heartbreak and bloodshed in the tale are interspersed with satirical comic relief by short segments of a reality show, 'Frontier Idol'—hosted by the first 'Governator' of California, Peter Burnett—pitting 1846 slave hunters against the Native enslaved girls. The story follows actual and created figures who were affected by Johann Sutter's methods of exploitation to build his fortune-making empire at Sutter’s Fort. Through story, song and dance, the world-altering clash is brought to life.

"Something Inside is Broken" has been a catalyst for many other Indigenous stories. On the horizon, shooting in the spring of 2022, "Gift of Fear," a full-length film created by Dr. April Lea Go Forth, Jack Kohler and Carly Kohler, has been green-lit and some principal photography has commenced. “Gift of Fear” is a fictional narrative feature, based on true stories and interviews made while On Native Ground was filming a documentary about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous people’s crisis in California. The genesis of this project was a collaborative short film with RISE featuring Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and songwriter Tamara Podemski. The film was produced by On Native Ground and acted out with RISE students. It recently won a Human Rights Award and screened at film festivals around the world.

"Gift of Fear" brings awareness to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women human rights crisis by illuminating the story of 17 year old Mili who saw her mother murdered 11 years ago. Mili now has a family with the Jiu Jitsu team, but the gang she once ran with demands her

loyalty by kidnapping her new girlfriend. Ultimately, Mili must risk everything to save her friend from a life of sex trafficking.

Sadly, the issue that began for Northern California Tribes in the days of Sutter still exists at disproportionate rates among Indigenous Women in the U.S. and Canada. The film intends to create a sea of change against the systematic targeting of Native women for sex trafficking, which is exacerbated by legislative loopholes that make prosecuting sex crimes against Indigenous Women a bureaucratic nightmare.

Motivated by their belief that domestic and sexual violence is a critical issue, Executive Producer Dr. April Lea Go Forth, Writer/Director Jack Kohler, Producer/Director Katy Dore, Writer Carly Kohler, Producers Elle Beyer and Lon Beyer and the production company On Native Ground will bring this film to a broader audience to underscore the urgency of ending the abuse and crimes on Indigenous Women.

To find more information on "Something Inside is Broken" and "Gift of Fear" visit [onnativeground.org](http://onnativeground.org).