

Smoke Signals Radio Archive Episode 1992-05-09

Segment 2

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Dan Smoke and Mary Lou Smoke discuss the film "Incident at Oglala," produced by Robert Redford and directed by Michael Apted. This film is a documentary on the life of Leonard Peltier and his life prior to the incident at Pine Ridge Reservation.

Host(s): Dan Smoke, Mary Lou Smoke

DAN SMOKE: Aanii, shekóli! Yes, **Mary Lou** and I were just talking off the air and we forgot to mention to our listeners that we went to see *Thunderheart* again. This time we were in the company of a couple non-native people who thoroughly enjoyed it from the bottom of their hearts. And they both want to go back and see it again. But how did you like the movie Mary Lou?

MARY LOU: I thought it was really good—I really enjoyed the scenery—it was quite impressive.

DS: Yeah, that was quite the scenic...kinda takes your breath away, it's so beautiful—they call that the badlands of **South Dakota**. What I'd like to mention it this time is that...**Michael Apted**, who is the director of *Thunderheart*, has also done another documentary of sorts, is entitled *Incident at Oglala*. It's a documentary that was directed again by Michael Apted and it should be released in various cities in May. The **Leonard Peltier Defense Committee** will be receiving a list of locations and dates, but in the meantime they are asking that people work in their communities to contact theatre managers requesting that they have a showing for the public and to organize as many people as you can to attend the showing of this documentary. They say that we must fill the theatres. It is extremely important that the theatres be packed in hopes that once the media sees the throngs of people, it will start writing articles about this documentary, and in turn, will encourage the general public to attend. So Leonard is sending out an appeal for help in making this a success.

Incident at Oglala is a documentary on the life of **Leonard Peltier**. It talks about his life prior to the incident on the **Pine Ridge Reservation** where he was involved in a shootout with **BIA—Bureau of Indian Affairs**—and the **FBI** who were contacted and contracted by the **tribal chairman Dick Wilson** who maintained a goon squad with a climate of terror throughout the reserve during his reign as tribal chairman. And it was at...and it was at the request of the traditional people that the **American Indian Movement** were invited into Pine Ridge and they made a stand at **Wounded Knee**. And following the stand at Wounded Knee, this incident happened on Pine Ridge where two FBI...or two Bureau of Indian Affairs agents were fatally shot and Leonard Peltier was the scapegoat. He was tried and he was sent to two life terms and he is currently at **Leavenworth Prison**. He has, according to the newsletter that I received from the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee in **Kansas**, *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*, a book by **Peter Matthiessen**, is also about...wounded...all about Leonard Peltier in this incident. And this film, *Incident at Oglala*, was produced by **Robert Redford** and a number of people are starting

to work with the release of this film to...to sensitize the public about what really happened and how this is so necessary that Leonard Peltier be retried. There are several prominent media connections that have been made—**Geraldo Rivera** has expressed interest in focus...in having...focusing on Leonard on both of his shows—that's **Now** and **Geraldo Discussion** show. **Sally Jessy Raphael** and **Phil Donahue** are also showing concern for Leonard's situation. Robert Redford has agreed to do everything that he can to promote the cause, including, if possible, appearances on major talk shows.

So this documentary, Redford-Apted documentary *Incident at Oglala*, will be distributed by **Miramax**. And the **LPDC** wants every theatre packed. And they feel that the film is emotionally stirring and presents certain aspects of the case in a compelling and disturbing way where no conscientious person could leave the theatre without the need to do their part in demanding justice in this case. We, as educated supporters, should make a real effort to channel the energy of these newly found supporters toward local support groups and the national office of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee. So I have been following that and if you would like more information regarding this, you can contact myself at our number here at the university [redacted] and I'd be pleased to talk to you about this. Right now we're gonna hear our conversation that we had with **Howard Elijah**, secretary of the **Chief's Council of the Onyota'a:ka Nation**.