

# INHERITANCE

A PICK-THE-PATH EXPERIENCE



by Daniel Arnold, Darrell Dennis, and Medina Hahn

A vast property is up for grabs.

You decide what happens.

# INHERITANCE

## A PICK-THE-PATH EXPERIENCE

Written and performed by Daniel Arnold, Darrell Dennis, and Medina Hahn

***INHERITANCE: a pick-the-path experience*** is an interactive audio-drama based on the award-winning and soon-to-be-published stage play, in which you choose what happens next ...

An Indigenous man and a non-Indigenous couple journey over dangerous terrain in a race against time in order for one, or all of them, to gain control of a vast parcel of land.

Who is the rightful owner of the land and to what lengths will they go to get it?

You decide - in this interactive adventure about belonging, privilege, and power.

[Watch clip on CBC Evening News](#)



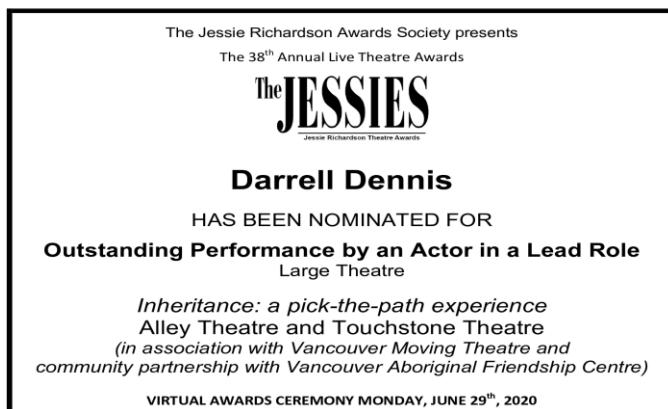
[Watch Trailer](#)



## SOURCE MATERIAL

The stage version of *Inheritance* premiered in Vancouver, March 2020, and was nominated for **Outstanding Production of the Year, Outstanding Lead Actor (Darrell Dennis)** and won the award for **Outstanding Innovative & Immersive Storytelling**.

It also received **standing ovations** and numerous audience members urged us to adapt it to other mediums. The play will soon be remounted and tour, has been optioned as an interactive feature film, is being published by Talon Books, and will be produced as an audio drama ...



## AUDIENCE RESPONSE

on social media using #INHexperience

*"A must see"*

*"Absolutely brilliant"*

*"Life-changing and mind-blowing"*

*"One of the best plays I have ever seen"*

*"Incredible"*

*"Groundbreaking and innovative ... humor, depth and believe it or not, fun."*

*"Playful and provoking! So awesome and necessary."*

*"I can honestly say that I've never been so excited to see a show a second time."*

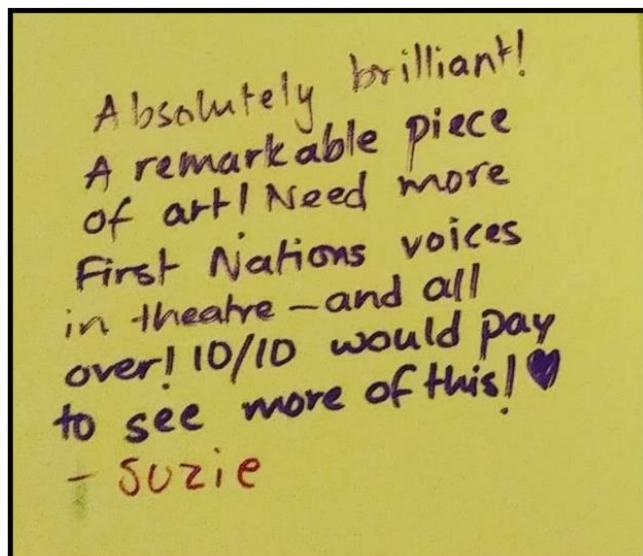
*"I loved it so much I'm going again."*

*"Extraordinary. Go see it!"*

## REVIEWS

"It is excellent. Inheritance is what theatre should be. It breaks boundaries, embraces new technology ... It should be required viewing. See it, ask questions, and enjoy the beauty of these incredible artists along the way." - [Vancouver Presents](#)

"The creative team is definitely onto something ... digs into land claims and entitlement in engaging new ways, using a lively mix of humour and interactive technology to work through heavy concepts. Viewers go out into the night with the knowledge that land issues will never be solved with an easy click of the button. And more importantly, with plenty to think about their own role in the matter." – [Georgia Straight](#)



## TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

### DARRELL DENNIS – Co-writer / Performer

Darrell is an award-winning First Nations (Native American) writer / actor / director / producer, from the Secwepemc Nation, currently living in Los Angeles.

In the world of audio, Darrell has narrated dozens of audiobooks for companies such as Audible, Penguin, Random House and Deyan Audio, and for four seasons he hosted and produced the CBC (Canada's national broadcaster) Radio doc series *ReVision Quest*, winner of the **New York Festival Award**.

Darrell is currently a writer on the TV series *Little Bird*, which has just partnered with Netflix. He is also the showrunner and writer of the Super Channel funded series *Hilary For Hire*. He was recently the director, head writer, and cast member of the APTN series *The Guilt Free Zone* which was nominated for two Canadian Comedy Awards. He was also the co-winner of the 2019 *Just for Laughs: Stand up and Pitch Competition* for his TV pilot series *Big Game*. And Darrell's book *Peace Pipe Dreams: The Truth about Lies about Indians*, which won the **Periodical Marketers of Canada Aboriginal Literature Award**, is now available in bookstores and online.

Previously, he wrote the TV pilot *Moccasin Flats* which was an official selection at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival and was picked up by Showcase Television and APTN for three seasons. Darrell was a key writer on that series. His one-person play *Tales of an Urban Indian* was nominated for two Dora Awards (**Best Original Play** and **Best Performance by an Actor**) and had multiple tours across North America including the Public Theater in New York City and the Autry Theatre in Los Angeles. Darrell's feature film adaptation of "Tales" was one of 13 international screenplays accepted to the Sundance Screenwriters Lab, and a TV pilot based on "Tales", which Darrell also executive produced, was broadcast on the Aboriginal People's Television Network.

As an actor, Darrell has enjoyed a successful and varied career in theatre, film, television and voiceover, and was the first ever Native cast member in any of the "Second City" companies.

### DANIEL ARNOLD & MEDINA HAHN – Co-writers / Performers

**Daniel** is 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Ukrainian, Scottish and Irish. He co-wrote, produced and starred in the feature film *Lawrence & Holloman* which was theatrically released in North America, won 13 awards including **Best Feature Film** at the Canadian Comedy Awards, and aired on Super Channel and CBC. He was also hired to write the feature *The Movie They Made in the Mansion of Murder* for Autumn Films (*Elvis & Nixon, Paranormal Activity VR*) and co-wrote/directed the short film *The Janitors*, which won the **National Screen Institute Drama Prize**. He is a frequent collaborator with Medina Hahn...

**Medina** is an award-winning Canadian actress and writer of Lebanese and Irish descent. For the past two decades, she has written and performed for the screen and stage, while also raising two kids. A graduate of the University of Victoria Theatre program and the University of Alberta Acting Conservatory program, her work has been seen across Canada, the USA and Europe. She is a frequent collaborator with Daniel Arnold ...

**Daniel and Medina** together co-wrote and performed the multi-award winning, published and internationally acclaimed play **Tuesdays & Sundays**, which they also adapted into a radio drama for CBC (starring Daniel and Medina) and BBC (starring David Tennant).

They also co-wrote the screenplay **Any Night**, which won the Canada-wide \$50,000 **CFF Super Channel Screenplay Award** and is currently optioned by Ed Gass-Donnelly (*Lavender*, *The Last Exorcism II*). They adapted *Any Night* from their multi-award winning and published stage play, which they also toured and performed for a month Off-Broadway.

Their productions of both *Tuesdays & Sundays* and *Any Night* were listed among the **Best Shows of the Year** in Toronto, Vancouver, Los Angeles and New York.

They also have a wealth of credits as actors on the stage and screen, and they are protégé recipients of Canada's most prestigious writing award, the \$100,000 **Siminovitch Prize**.

### **HERBIE BARNES – Co-Director**

Herbie is Anishinaabe from Aundeck Omni Kaning on Manitoulin Island, and he directed the premiere stage production of **Inheritance: a pick-the-path experience**, which starred the authors and was nominated for three Jessie Awards, winning one. Also for the stage, he directed **Tales of an Urban Indian**, written/performed by Darrell Dennis, which toured extensively including to The Autry in LA and The Public in New York. His other theatre directing credits include **The Remember** (MTYP), **Dinky** and Drew Hayden Taylor's **Someday** (Native Earth), **Music Man** (Talk is Free Theatre), **Oliver the Musical**, **Alice in Wonderland**, and **Cotton Patch Gospel** (Bluff City Theatre, USA). Herbie has taught in inner city high schools, private schools, universities, and many theatre companies and his workshop "**Dropping the Mask**" has been used in treatment centres for work with survivors of abuse. Also a prolific actor, his credits include Marie Clements' **Copper Thunderbird** (National Arts Centre) and the national tour of the award-winning musical **Children of God**.

### **ERIN MOON – Producer / Co-director**

Erin is a settler with English, Irish, and French descent. She has been in the Audiobooks industry for over 15 years. She started as a director, engineer, and editor of audiobooks for Recorded Books where she directed over 200 books in her 5 years with them. She is also an award-winning narrator of over 285 books and has been an educator, coach, webinar / conference panelist (and more) of audiobook narration for 10 years. And she is a formally trained actor who lived and worked in New York for 13 years before moving to Vancouver. As a champion of this project having seen it on stage, she would be putting all her skills into play to support Herbie as director, the performers, the engineers and the production house.

### **MAYUK MANUEL – creative advisor**

Mayuk is a Secwepemc First Nation woman who lives on unceded Secwepemc territory in Neskonlith Reserve. She is the granddaughter of George Manuel who among other achievements co-founded the “World Council of Indigenous Peoples”. She is the daughter of Arthur Manuel who continued his father’s legacy, fighting for Aboriginal rights at home, at the United Nations, and internationally, and wrote the books *Unsettling Canada* and *The Reconciliation Manifesto*. Mayuk is the twin sister of Kanahus, and together they continue their ancestors’ struggle. This includes starting the “Tiny House Warriors”, a movement of solar-panelled, tiny houses on wheels that are currently on the front lines to stop the Transmountain Pipeline Expansion in what is now called Canada.

### **PERCY CASPER – creative advisor**

Percy is a Secwepemc native living in Bonaparte Indian Reserve. Percy fought on the front lines of the American Indian Movement, including at Wounded Knee in 1973. He has worked for Canada’s Correctional Services and is also a traditional beader.

## **SYNOPSIS**

ACT ONE: An Indigenous man, Frank, is cooking his dinner in a grand log-house on a vast, remote estate. He's bouncing to the music of YOUR choice: rock, new age, or rap.

Suddenly, a non-Indigenous couple Abbey and Noah arrive for a week-long getaway – because this house belongs to Abbey's Dad. But he is mysteriously gone and instead they find this stranger, Frank.

Frank claims to be working for her Dad and has permission to stay there because his own house on the nearby Reservation is infested with mold. But the landline is missing and they're way out of cell range, so they can't verify Frank's claim. Nervous, they ask him to leave, even offering him money for a hotel room. As they dispute who should stay and who should leave, Noah sees a stain on the floor which alarmingly looks like blood ...

### **PICK YOUR PATH**

- **Noah confronts Frank about the stain, privately**
- **Abbey sees the stain and grabs the rifle**
- **Frank decides to take their money and leave**

Whatever path you choose ... it is revealed that Abbey's Dad has left a map to the Land Deed. Whoever obtains the deed and brings it to his lawyer by this Friday at noon gets all the rights to this vast property. Otherwise, it's going to the government and "they can fuckin deal with it."

Abbey is stunned. They'd been planning to turn the land into an eco-resort. Why would her Dad do this?? With the clock ticking, Frank reveals he's already searched for the deed to no avail. As they examine the map more closely, they discover it is coded - for Abbey.

ACT TWO: Before Abbey and Noah can grab the rifle and go searching, Frank stops them - with his own rifle in hand. This is unceded land, he says, meaning never formally surrendered by his people. Settlers like Abbey's family just moved right in while Frank's people were forcibly removed to Reservations. The deal now? Frank insists that he come help them find the deed, and in exchange he wants 50% of this property returned to his nation.

### **PICK YOUR PATH**

- **Frank obtains the deal**
- **Abbey refuses the deal**
- **Noah and Abbey go check whether the map is legit**

## **SYNOPSIS continued**

**If Frank obtains the deal ...** they all search together and actually find a bit of camaraderie. Frank and Abbey even recall that they played together as kids. But when Abbey spies a permanent encampment Frank's people have set up on her Dad's land, the ensuing argument explodes into a standoff with guns raised ...

**If Abbey refuses the deal ...** she ties Frank up because she's afraid of him. But before she and Noah can go searching, Frank threatens that if they don't release him and take him to the deed, Abbey will never see her Dad again ...

**If Noah and Abbey go check whether the map is legit ...** they waste valuable time heading back to cell range, only to find out that indeed her Dad's wishes are legal. So they rush back to start searching, but in their haste Noah is badly injured ...

As the story progresses, and no matter what path you take, there are increasingly dilemma-inducing choice points as our characters navigate compromise, concession, or violent confrontation.

**ACT THREE:** By the end of the journey, at least one of them arrives at the spot on the map: an old mining tunnel on the side of a mountain.

Inside ... is Abbey's Dad. Dead. An empty bottle of sleeping pills. And a suicide note.

The note reveals there is no hidden deed. The land transfers to Abbey, as his only blood relative. His plan all along was for Abbey to meet Frank, for them to journey together, and for her to reconsider their plans. To consider returning the land to Frank's people.

And your final choice ... is what happens with it:

### **ENDING 1: FRANK GETS ALL THE LAND**

If you choose this, both Abbey and Noah come to believe that returning the land to Frank's people is a step toward justice. However, that means a year later they're struggling in the city to make ends meet. Meanwhile the ownership of the property has brought benefits but also complications to Frank's people. They're quarrelling about what to do with it, and even though Frank is now Chief, he is also the businessman he never wanted to become.

### **ENDING 2: ABBEY SHARES HALF THE LAND**

If you choose this, again Abbey and Noah come to believe in restorative justice, but giving up the entire property is too big of a personal loss. So a year later, they and Frank's people are still working out how to get along as neighbors, especially since their deal has increased clashes between the Rez and the local ranchers.

## **SYNOPSIS Continued**

### **ENDING 3: ABBEY SHARES A PORTION OF THE LAND**

If you choose this, it's because Frank's people are currently camped on a section of the land that they believe was their former village site – and Abbey believes it's right to return that land to them. But a year later, Frank's people have now proven this was their village site, which helps them in their official claim to *all* of Abbey's property, *plus* the surrounding territory ... putting Abbey at risk of losing everything and causing upheaval in the local community.

### **ENDING 4: NOAH CONVINCES ABBEY TO KEEP ALL THE LAND**

If you choose this, Noah convinces Abbey that this entire journey could have been set up by Frank. Frank could have forged the map and suicide note, and forced those pills down her Dad's throat. This could all be a ploy for Abbey to give over the land. At this realization, and with her father's death fresh in mind, Abbey lifts the rifle and shoots Frank, dead -- in what she'll later call self-defense.

#### **A note:**

Our story design has no “failed endings” and you’re never circled back to a previous choice. No matter what path you take, you always end up at one of the above endings after about 90 minutes. But it may have a much different connotation, depending on how you arrive there ...

## **STORY BACKGROUND**

### **The lay of the land**

All over the world there are colonized lands which are still being occupied illegally.

This is also true of what is now called North America.

In the United States, numerous land treaties have never been ratified (signed by both parties) or fulfilled by the government. And the history of how America was colonized is an ugly story of bloodshed, forced removal, relocation, and assimilation.

In Canada, this process of genocide may have been less bloody but was more insidious in its hypocrisy and unfulfilled promises. To this day large portions of Canada are still unceded land (or non-treated), meaning the original peoples have never consented to this ongoing occupation of their lands, through agreement, war, or otherwise.

Almost all of the province of British Columbia is unceded land.

This includes Secwepemc territory in the interior of BC, where *Inheritance* is set.

## **CHARACTERS**

### **FRANK**

A Secwepemc Native man who grew up on the Rez and has never lived anywhere else. He knows this land like the back of his hand. He subsists on hunting, fishing, and trapping and working odd jobs, like helping Abbey's Dad clean up this property for the eco-resort. Home-schooled by his parents in all things Indigenous, Frank knows the history here, from before contact and the genocide thereafter. It's in his blood, and he's here to stay. He has two teenage daughters from a previous relationship, and they are his everything. One is pregnant and staying on the Rez, while the other is soon going off to college. Everything he does is for his daughters and the generations that follow.

Depending on how you choose ... Frank can be charming, charismatic, sarcastic, pompous or downright vengeful and threatening. And he knows his way around a loaded firearm.

### **ABBEY**

An immigration lawyer with Lebanese and Irish ancestry. Her Lebanese Mother moved here as a child, a refugee with Abbey's grandparents. So her choice of work is directly related to her need to help newcomers find a home. Whereas her father's side of the family were original homesteaders here, and she knows how hard they struggled too, in farming and mining, to amass this vast amount of land. She's a strong, reasonable woman with integrity, who knows that her father can no longer handle his affairs, and she needs to step up and do what's best for her family. In this case, that means turning their land into a low-footprint, high-end eco-resort so it can continue to bring the family revenue.

Depending on how you choose ... Abbey can be kind, compassionate, reasonable, cunning, or manipulative and biting when she senses danger. Having grown up out here, she too knows how to handle a hunting rifle.

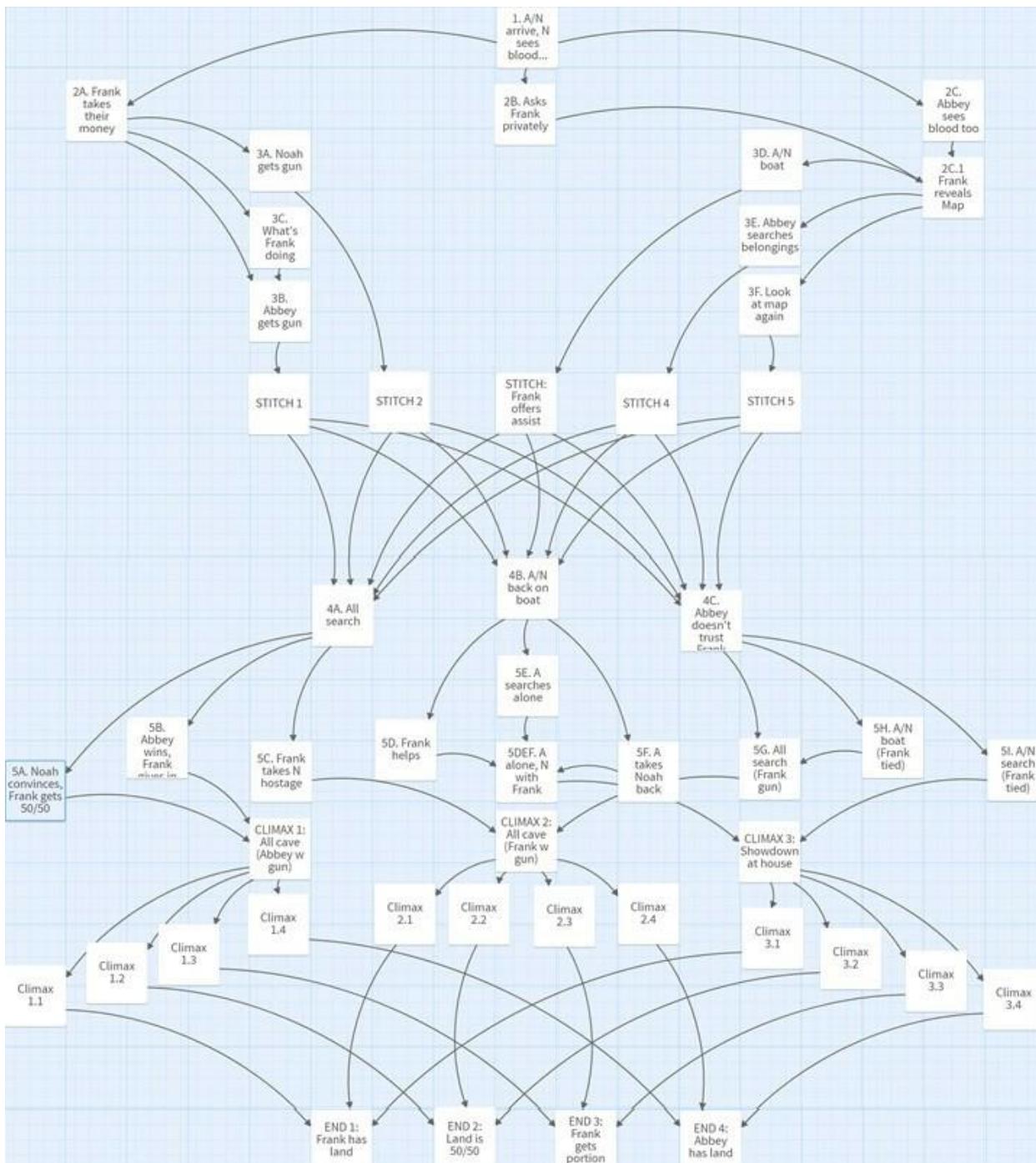
### **NOAH**

A hipster musician whose ancestry includes Ukrainian and Scottish but he's never needed to know more about his roots than that. He's a city-boy who plays drums in a band that had a couple decent hits when they started, but that was a long time ago. He also manages the band, and a few others, so he's kept his left-wing / artist / idealist head above water by knowing his way around business. He's polite and kind, but pretty naive. He and Abbey's relationship has been rocky at times, mostly because he's noncommittal. Coming out to the land is a chance for him to redeem himself and the relationship. He's got the ring in his pocket to ask Abbey's hand in marriage this week, and he's ready to have a child, even if that means adopting. But a child will take money, and the music scene has changed along with the city's affordability, so Abbey's eco-resort plans are the next best step for his future.

Depending on how you choose ... Noah can be genuine, funny, idealistic, diplomatic or a downright weasel who'll do anything to ensure his own comfort. He has never held a weapon in his life.

# STORY MAP

## For the branching narrative *Inheritance: a pick-the-path experience*



## **PRODUCTION DETAILS**

### **Development**

The audio-version of *Inheritance* has received a micro-grant from the Canada Council’s “Digital Originals” fund. This money is being used to pay for the audio-adaptation of the script.

This audio project has been chosen for promotion by CBC Arts’ Curated Showcase. Details on this offer are [here](#). If artists are “not comfortable embedding/housing their project on CBC’s site, CBC is happy to push to it or reference it.” This is an offer of promotion only.

***We are now seeking funds for production and distribution of this audio-play.***

### **Production**

Cast: The play would be performed by the original cast of the stage play. These are the three authors, and one narrator ([Michelle Bardach](#)).

Direction: The audio-play would be directed by Herbie Barnes (the director of the stage play) alongside Erin Moon (an experienced audio director and narrator).

Studio needs:

Vancouver sound engineer and studio to house a maximum of two performers at the same time, COVID-safely.

Los Angeles sound engineer and studio to house performer Darrell Dennis, source-connected to the Vancouver studio.

Recording time: estimated 24 - 30 hours

Finished Product: estimated 6 - 8 hours of content

### **Post-Production**

Sound Design: We would seek to hire an Indigenous sound designer, such as [Peter Robinson](#).

Music: We could potentially license some of the original score and music from the stage play.

### **Distribution**

There are two ways this title can be distributed interactively.

Smart Speakers: When prompted to make a story choice, listeners reply with a voice command.

Traditional Podcast: When prompted to make a story choice, listeners click on their screen to hear the next episode of their choice.

One avenue for distribution is libraries and schools. A study guide is being created by our print publisher [Talon Books](#) in collaboration with young adult / education company [Axis Theatre](#).