

SHADOW TRAP



A NEW SHORT FILM & CONCEPT FOR A SERIES
BASED ON THE LEGEND OF SIMON GUNANOOT

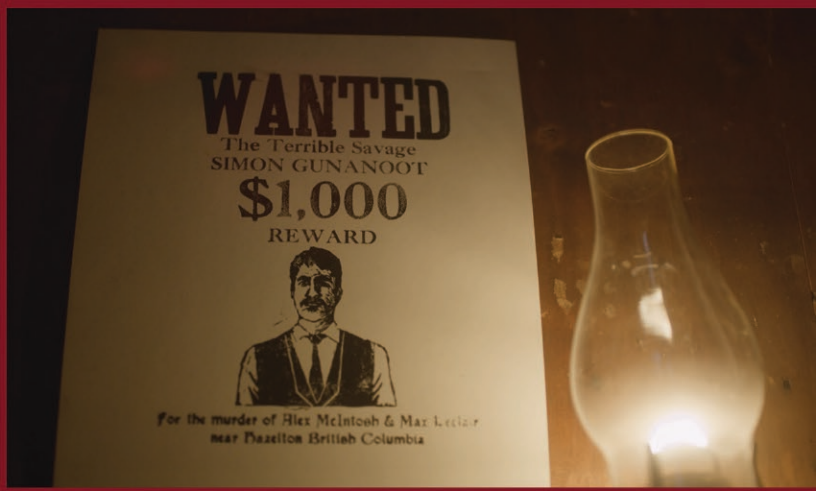


@ShadowTrapMovie

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Northern British Columbia, 1908...

Gitksan indigenous businessman-turned-outlaw **Simon Gunanoot** – labelled a “terrible savage” for allegedly killing two white men – is hiding out during a brutally cold winter. Meanwhile, in Hazelton, grubstaker Seamus Campbell and his shotgun-toting thug come to the Two Mile Saloon to collect a debt from failed prospector Danny Kelly. Out of desperation, Kelly impulsively decides to venture deep into the frozen wilds of the Skeena Mountains in pursuit of Gunanoot and the \$1,000 bounty on his head. Kelly soon realizes the hunter has become the hunted.



Simon Gunanoot is a legend who became the focus of the longest manhunt in Canadian history, from 1906-1919. A Gitksan First Nation man from the Kispiox Valley, near Hazelton, BC, Simon was trained by his master bushman father, Nagun. At residential school in Port Simpson, he developed other skills, returning home to prosper in business, trapping and trading furs, and owning a supply store amid a resource boom in the region.



Courtesy of the Royal BC Museum and Archives

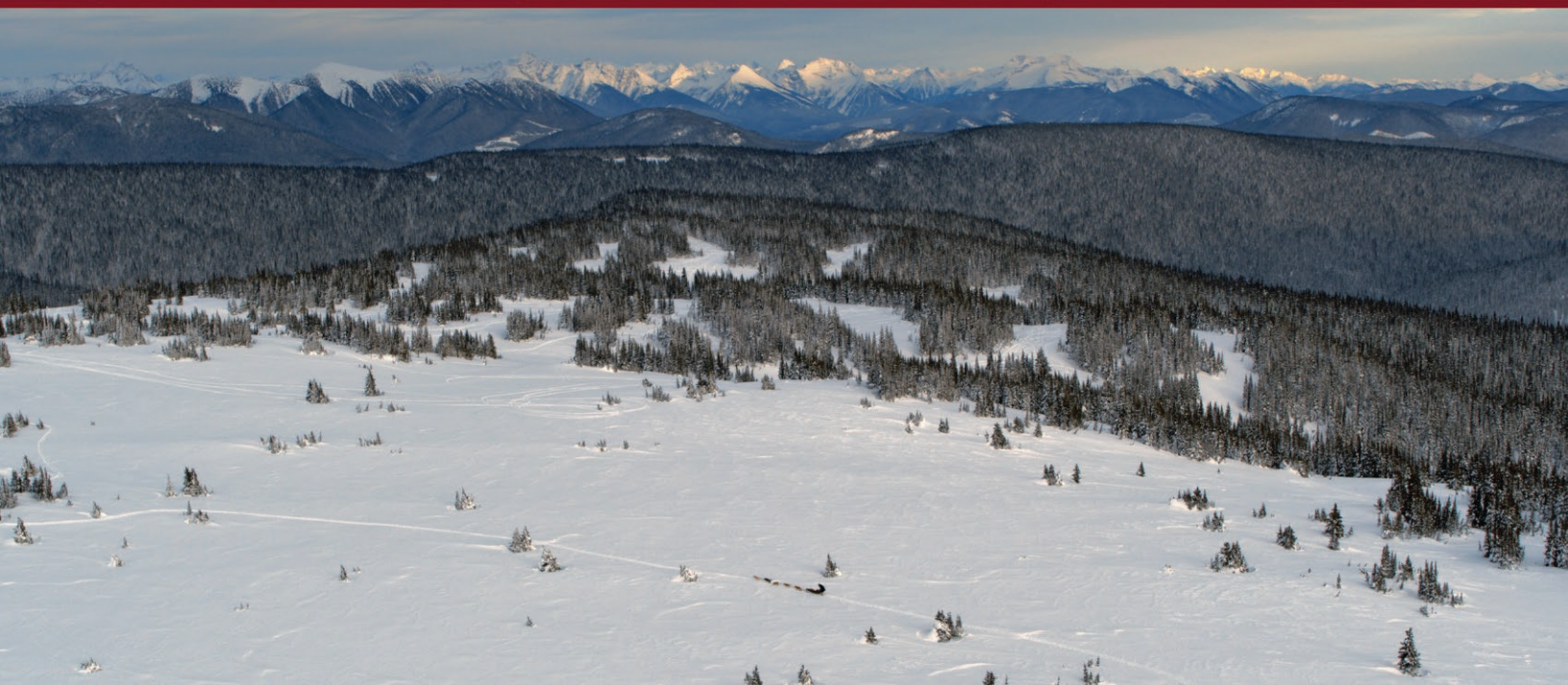
Simon's life changed one fateful night in 1906. Accused of killing two white men, he and his family were thrust into an epic journey across one of the world's most rugged, spectacular landscapes. His exploits include evading police and bounty hunters – even the famous American mercenaries, the Pinkertons – and winning a high-profile trial in 1919.



Shadow Trap introduces audiences to Simon's story to help catalyze a narrative series. His coming of age, 13 years on the run, and courtroom climax, have the scope of an epic multi-part drama.

Shot on location in the historically preserved gold rush town of Barkerville, BC – *in minus 35 celsius temperatures* – Shadow Trap, employs authentic storytelling, from a Klondike-style dogsled we built from scratch, to ensuring every prop and costume reflected the essence and reality of the period.

We have assembled an impressive team of Indigenous and settler filmmakers committed bringing Simon's story to life. We are working with Simon's closest living descendants, including grandson Harvey Gunanoot and great grandson Gilbert Johnson, who spent eight winters trapping with Simon's son David Gunanoot. The family is excited to share Simon's story with the world.





Damien Gillis (Producer, Co-Director, Co-Writer, Co-Editor) is a BC-based doc filmmaker and journalist. He co-directed and produced *Fractured Land*, which was a top-ten audience choice at Hotdocs Film Festival in Toronto and won Best BC Film and the VIFF Impact Canadian Audience Award at the Vancouver International Film Festival (2015). His short docs have played at festivals around the world. *Shadow Trap*, his first narrative film, premiered at VIFF 2019.



Michael Bourquin (Co-Director, Co-Editor) is Tahltan, Bear Laker Gitksan, French, Scottish and is passionate about Indigenous storytelling – with an interest in identity, language and cultural revitalization. He has been a Director and Director of Photography on several Television series for Aboriginal People's Television Network, including *Moosemeat* and *Marmalade*. He is Co-DoP for Knowledge Network's epic historical documentary series, *1871* (in production).



Jerome Turner (Lead Actor, Writer/Researcher for series) is a Gitksan man from Hazelton – Simon's hometown. He works in the film industry as a location manager. *Shadow Trap* is his first time in front of the camera, but he came to the role well prepared, with a background in journalism and lifelong interest in Simon's story. Jerome brings these all these elements to the team as he works with us to craft a dramatic series based on Simon's story.



Daniel Conrad (Co-Writer, Executive Producer) has produced 8 dance films and 2 documentaries which have screened at Locarno, Montréal World, Seattle (Best of Fest Shorts), New York Dance on Camera (2 Silver prizes), Golden Prague (Dagmar & Vaclav Havel prize), UBC's Museum of Anthropology, PBS, CBC, ARTV, ZDF, TVE, Bravo, and some 50 others. He was Co-cinematographer on *The Corporation* and E.P./Co-writer on *Fractured Land*.



Vince Arvidson (Director of Photography) is a cinematographer for both doc and narrative films. From the Canadian Arctic to Kurdish Iraq, Chiapas, Mexico, and Acholi, Uganda, Vince is drawn to stories that illuminate the human condition. His work has shown at festivals around the world and won multiple awards, including Audience Favourite and best Cinematography. It has aired on Discovery Channel, Super Channel, MTV, TSN, CityTV, and others.



Michelle Liefertz (Costume Designer) is trained as an actor, having completed her theatre undergrad in Canada and MFA in the UK, where she worked for 7 years. In recent years, she's broadened her work to include costume design. For the past five years, she's been working in historical interpretation in Barkerville, BC. This proved invaluable for designing the period costumes of *Shadow Trap* – many of whose actors Michelle works every season in Barkerville.



Jonathan Frantz (Executive Producer) is a producer and cinematographer working with the Isuma artists' collective. He spent four years living in Nunavut, working Isuma's award-winning Inuit director Zacharias Kunuk. As lead producer and cinematographer, he has completed three feature films, including *Malighlutit* (Searchers), *Sgaawaay K'uuna* (Edge of the Knife), and *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugauttuk* – each appearing at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Shadow Trap premiered at the **2019 Vancouver International Film Festival**. It has also screened at the 2020 Available Light Film Festival in the Yukon, and will play at more festivals internationally. Meanwhile, we're researching and writing a limited series – working closely with Simon's descendants – that will expand on Simon's story.

Shadow Trap was one of four projects selected out of close to a hundred for the 2018 BC Shorts program, sponsored by **The Harold Greenberg Fund** and **Creative BC**. The film will be premiering on **Crave** this year, sharing Simon's story with a broad Canadian audience.

For media inquiries, please contact producer Damien Gillis at:
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