

BROKEN PROMISES

By Jill M. Williams

The feature length film, *Broken Promises*, has a story line filled with oil scandals, third world conditions in America, governmental mismanagement, one woman who is taking on the world's most powerful nation and it's all true! The

upcoming documentary by filmmaker Melinda Janko is an entrancing story with interviews not only from members of the tribes, but also prominent government officials like Senator Tom Daschle. There is little to be said in defense of a government that spends more money on the health care of federal prisoners than on Native Americans.

The story centers on one woman, Elouise Cobell, who not only grew up on the Blackfoot reservation in Montana, but also was the tribe's treasurer for 13 years. She heard the stories of injustice and saw the poverty growing up. She witnessed first hand the lack of funds which kept her people living in a third world lifestyle even though the land the American Indians were given was rich with at least one resource, oil. For years now wealthy oil companies have been coming onto reservation land, taking oil while being held to an honor system of self-reporting their usage. Janko states, "It makes Enron look like shoplifting."



But for a group of people who have never had an accounts receivable established, the amount of funds owed to these Native Americans is estimated to be in the billions of dollars. "This is not a case of reparation. This is their money that the government has used," explains Janko.

After having seen enough suffering, Elouise, the great granddaughter of Chief Mountain and a warrior in her own right, filed a lawsuit against the United States government. Her lawsuit has turned into the single largest class action suit in history involving between 300,000 and half a million plaintiffs. Both parties involved admit that \$13 billion has passed through the trust in 118 yrs. When you add interest and inflation the numbers increase exponentially. It's estimated that

between \$40 and \$176 billion is owed Indian beneficiaries of the Indian Trust Fund.

Broken Promises: Indian Trust is a captivating documentary which is currently in production. "We're moving forward with the project, but still seeking funding to complete the film," concludes Melinda. "This is an important story which affects all of us."

For more information:

www.brokenpromisesthemovie.com

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