

NATIVES VOTE! COMEDY CAMPAIGN

REPORT

MAY 1, 2025



OVERVIEW & APPROACH



Every election in the United States is consequential for Native peoples, and creative strategies to encourage voter participation are valuable—including comedy.

Humor can foster feelings of catharsis and connection, build resilience, attract attention, and spark feelings of hope and optimism. Thus, the nonpartisan Natives Vote comedy campaign was born as part of IllumiNative's larger voter engagement initiative.

In 2024, under the strategy and research direction of IllumiNative, the Center for Media & Social Impact's GoodLaugh initiative team led a rapid-production creative agency model that brought all artistic and production talent together in one space, for one week—comedians, artists, and filmmakers. With this collaborative team, the Natives Vote comedy initiative rapidly created a package of targeted, non-partisan comedic content to disseminate on social media channels from early October through Election Day 2024.

COLLABORATORS



Azie Dungey

Instagram: [@aziedee](#), Twitter: [@aziedee](#), TikTok: [@Aziedee](#)

Azie is a television writer, producer, and playwright, who has worked on *Girls5Eva*, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, *Harlem*, and *Rutherford Falls*. She is also known for writing and starring in the YouTube series *Ask A Slave*, a satirical comedy about American history with over 2 million views. She is the book writer of the new musical *The Preacher's Wife* (music and lyrics by Tituss Burgess), which recently premiered at the Alliance Theatre.



Kelly Lynne D'Angelo

Twitter: [@kellylynnedang](#), Insta: [@kellylynnedang](#), TikTok: [@kellylynnedang](#)

Kelly is a Two-Spirit Tuscarora (Haudenosaunee) writer, performer, and activist who has done her fair share of storytelling in different mediums, including television, books, and stage musicals. Recent television credits include TBS' *Miracle Workers*, Netflix's *Spirit Rangers*, and Adult Swim's *Final Space*.



Zebadiah Nofire

Instagram: [@zebadiah_nofire](#), Facebook: [@Zebadiah Nofire](#), TikTok: [@zebadiah_nofire](#)

Zebadiah is a Cherokee comedian from Tahlequah, OK. He works with the Cherokee language in a variety of projects including music, teaching, and skits.



Joshua Emerson

Instagram: [@dangeremerson](#), Twitter: [@danger_emerson](#), TikTok: [@dangeremerson](#)

Joshua is a Dine' (Navajo) comedian, actor and writer based in Denver Colorado. He is a regular contributor for CityCast Denver and produces the Native American comedy showcase, "Bad Indian," which was selected for Netflix is a Joke Fest and SF Sketchfest. Joshua was awarded the Mayor's Award for Excellence in Arts & Culture in 2023 by Denver Mayor, Mike Johnston. He lives at home with partner, Rachel, and their pets, Lola, Joanna, and Nibbler.



Joseph Clift

Twitter: [@joeytainment](#), TikTok: [@joeytainment](#), Instagram: [@joeycliiiiift](#), Threads: [@joeycliiiiift](#)

Joseph is a Los Angeles-based comedian, TV writer, Emmy-nominated producer, and enrolled member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Joey's work has been featured by *The Washington Post*, Pitchfork, NPR and *Vulture*. His comedy digital series, *Gone Native*, about weird microaggressions Native people often experience was distributed by Comedy Central, won a Webby Award and received millions of views across social media.

PRODUCING PARTNERS



IllumiNative is an unapologetically ambitious and innovative Native women-led organization, grounded in core Native values and community, and guided by research. Our mission is to build power for Native peoples by amplifying contemporary Native voices, stories, and issues to advance justice, equity, and self-determination. We utilize research, narrative and culture change strategies, movement-building, and organizing to disrupt the invisibility of Native peoples, re-educate Americans, and mobilize public support for key Native issues.



Center for Media & Social Impact (CMSI) based at American University's School of Communication, CMSI is an award-winning creative innovation lab and research center that focuses on media for equity and social justice. Our work bridges boundaries between scholars, media producers, social justice organizations, and communication practitioners. GoodLaugh, a CMSI initiative, is a comedy production engine and knowledge lab that brings together the most talented minds in humor, social justice, entertainment, and philanthropy to collaborate and create comedic content and insightful research to help repair the world and build a more just, equitable future.



PRODUCTION CREW

Tai Leclaire (Instagram: [@tai_leclaire](#)) is a Director, Writer, and Actor from the Mohawk Nation of Kahnawà:ke. His previous short film, *Headdress*, premiered at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival, and his new short film, *The Prince & The Pauper*, was created with Warner Bros. Studios and is available on Max. He wrote on the Peacock/NBC series *Rutherford Falls* by Sierra Teller-Ornelas, Mike Schur, and Ed Helms and on the upcoming animated series *Super Team Canada* by Will Arnett.

Todd Bieber (Instagram: [@toddbieber](#)) is an Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker who has produced over 200 episodes of late-night television for TBS and Comedy Central, specializing in field and documentary work. Known for thriving in unique environments, Todd has embedded with the Georgia militia for *Jordan Klepper Solves Guns*, interviewed top comedians for his SXSW documentary *Thank You Del*, and submerged in the Furry scene for *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*.

Nona Catusanu - Popp has mounted productions both large and small across three continents, including long and short form narratives, documentaries, commercials and music videos for such diverse clients as ASICS, *Vogue*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times*, History, Food Network and Vice among many others. Her projects have been showcased at festivals around the world.

Andy Zou (Instagram: [@yoandyzou](#), Twitter: [@yoandyzou](#)) is a Brooklyn based director and weirdo from NYU's experimental theater wing. He enjoys silly VFX and would love to help bring your next idea to life.

Megan Stein (Instagram: [@meganastein](#), Website: www.meganstein.com) is a filmmaker, writer, and video editor based in New York and Nashville. As an editor, she has cut projects for Netflix, Food Network, Disney XD, Discovery Channel, and GoodLaugh. With roots in the New York comedy community, Megan was a content creator for Upright Citizens Brigade and collaborated with screenwriting partner Laura Grey on several award-winning projects, including their 2019 Screencraft winning horror movie, *Getaway* (which is basically what would happen if Predator crashed a Goop retreat).

GRAPHIC ARTISTS

Victor Escobedo (Instagram: [@victor_j_escobedo](#)) has developed a compelling style expressed in various forms through the use of ceramic masks, marionettes, murals, paintings, and performances rooted in reimagined ancient iconography with dynamically textured installations. Heavily influenced by Hip Hop, graffiti, and culture Escobedo explores mythology, intuition and Shamanistic practices as inspiration for contemporary transformation. His artwork is a reinterpretation of ancient, indigenous art and mysticism for a contemporary audience, that integrates seemingly unrelated disciplines in search of something universal.

Kehiw Frazier (Instagram: [@KehiwEagletail](#), TikTok: [@kehiw_eagletail](#), Instagram: [@kehiw](#), Threads: [@kehiw](#)) is an LA-based graphic designer, creative director, artist & DJ from the Tsuut'ina Nation in Treaty 7 Territory. Kehiw's work consists of amplifying indigenous voices and empowering the collective to raise their vibrational frequency.

CREATIVE PROCESS

For one week, a carefully assembled team of comedians, camera crew, and artists came together in Boulder, Colorado, to create a plethora of original, shareable, comedic content through a GoodLaugh-led creative workshop process called a Comedy ThinkTank. On site, Bethany Hall (GoodLaugh co-creator/EP) and Rachael Mason (producer) directed the writers' room and creative process (CMSI's executive director Caty Borum acted as remote EP).

The focus of this comedy-first nonpartisan initiative was geared toward motivating Native folks to vote (from registration, early voting, and through showing up at the polls), and assist in demystifying the election process. To generate this material based on IllumiNative's research, we created four "Creative Key Prompts" as source materials, which were derived from IllumiNative provided GOTV research that 1.) addresses the barriers that get in the way from voting, 2.) inspires voting and 3.) lend themselves most optimally for "comedy interpretation" and powerful CTA messages.



CREATIVE KEY PROMPTS

1

PLAN YOUR voting day
like your best day.

2

VOTE or your self-interest
(vote to get what you want).

3

VOTING AS A DISPLAY of
cultural pride and connection
to family/community.

4

VOTER REGISTRATION isn't
hard (and doesn't take long).

FINAL CAMPAIGN CONTENT

**Get in losers,
we're going to vote.**



**The Natives Vote Initiative
produced more than 100 unique
pieces of comedic content in three
weeks.**

Some content featured overt calls to action, and some were much more obscure. Some pieces direct audiences to NativesVote.com and others only hint at the importance of voting. The variety of content and format was deliberate, with the understanding that different content succeeds in different ways across social media platforms. Below is a brief summary of what was created. **Watch the campaign highlight reel [here](#).**

Comedic Campaign Series

5 unique campaigns, a total of 30+ videos

These videos fall under umbrella themes (dating videos, pet peeves, etc.) and direct viewers to NativesVote.com.

Sketch Videos

9 videos

This variety of stand-alone sketch comedy videos run the gamut on tone, style, humor, and themes.

Self Made, Vertical Videos

15+ videos

These low-fi, iPhone videos were designed for comedians to post to their own TikTok/Insta channels.

Memes

25+

A wide variety of niche comedic memes.

Audio Campaigns

12, professionally mixed recordings

These were used as radio ads and other marketing purposes.

Working 855 Number

1-855- SETLERZ

This number is embedded in several of our videos. If dialed, it leads to both comedic and actually helpful GOTV information.

METRICS

In the weeks leading up to the election the IllumiNative team worked with social media experts from Unfiltered Media to carefully devise and execute a robust content rollout plan which succeeded in generating more than 22 million impressions.

CONTENT CREATED

62 VIDEOS + 42 MEMES = 104 PIECES OF CONTENT

CAMPAIGN: 5 SERIES - 36 VIDEOS

STAND ALONE SKETCHES - 9 VIDEOS

SELF RECORDED VERTICAL VIDEOS - 17

MEMES - 42 GRAPHICS

Glossary

- **Impressions** = # of times content was displayed
- **Reach** = number of unique individuals who have seen it
- **Engagement** = measurement of interactions
- **Organic content** = content that is shared on a platform without paying for promotion, relying on natural reach and engagement from users

ORGANIC CONTENT

SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS (FROM COMEDIANS & ILLUMINATIVE)

\$212 CPM ACROSS PLATFORMS (COST PER THOUSAND IMPRESSIONS)

INSTAGRAM - 473,424 IMPRESSIONS

FACEBOOK - 100 IMPRESSIONS

TIKTOK - 127,855 IMPRESSIONS

TWITTER/X - 11,386 IMPRESSIONS

NON-ORGANIC CONTENT

PAID ADVERTISING METRICS

META FINAL IMPRESSIONS TOTAL: 837,379

YOUTUBE FINAL IMPRESSIONS: 20,354,267

ROKU FINAL IMPRESSIONS: 429,354

DISNEY/HULU FINAL IMPRESSIONS: 974,579

TEXT BANKING: TEXTED TO +85,000 PEOPLE

TOTAL FINAL IMPRESSIONS ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS: 22,595,579

KEY DISTRIBUTION TAKEAWAYS

- Overall highest performing piece: First Continental Congress
- Memes were overall the highest performing form of content
- Fear and Gratitude are the most compelling emotions for producing engagement/clicks
- The three key emotions (anger, awe, anxiety) are still fundamental

TAKEAWAYS AND LESSONS LEARNED

IN-PERSON ASSEMBLY

We attribute much of the success of this project to the immeasurable – and in the Zoom era, often underestimated – value of convening in person. Sharing physical space is not only optimal from a tactical, logistical and production standpoint, but this condition allows for uninterrupted, unfiltered brainstorming, creative fluidity, play, experimentation and a level of trust and comfort that is difficult when working remotely. Additionally, having our cast of comedians in the same space opened up countless opportunities to work with one another, have on-location, high production shoots and create genuine comedic, on-screen chemistry.

WORK ENVIRONMENT AND LOGISTICS

A major factor in creative productivity was the welcoming workspace and seamless logistical coordination. From being well-organized and attentive to the creatives' needs to food, transportation, and lodging arrangements, people were well supported, which allowed artists to focus on their creative work.

CREATIVE KEY PROMPTS

The straightforward and easy-to-understand creative key prompts were paramount to the room. Identifying four points of focus helped keep talent within the lanes of valuable ideation, and also unlocked a surprising amount of freedom to play from within the confines.

ARTIST VOICES

When comedians and artists are offered freedom to be creative, they step up to the challenge. Allowing artists to use their unique voices is a liberating (and unusual) “work for hire” experience for many creatives, and we believe strongly in it.

FILM SHOOT SETTINGS

We highly recommend setting the first shoot in a controlled, studio space, and keeping production as simple and straightforward as possible. This strategy helps ensure that deliverables are met within the production time restraints. After deliverables were met, comedians were given more creative agency to think out of the box and play with less controlled and predictable concepts and humor.

SELECT SAMPLES



MEME CAROUSEL



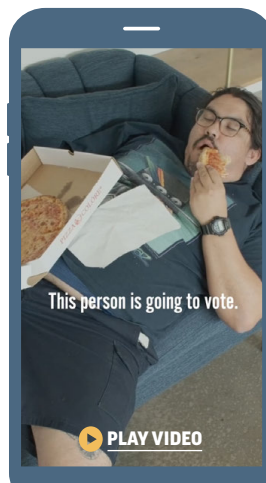
MEME WILLIE JACK



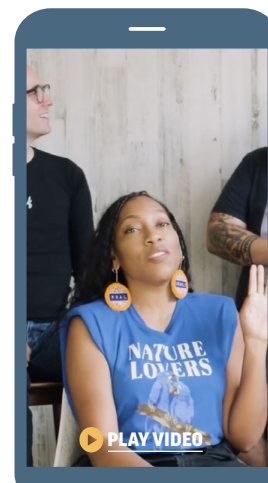
**VOTE LIKE YOUR PER CAP
IS ON THE LINE CAMPAIGN**
Joey Clift



80'S DATING VIDEO CAMPAIGN
Zebediah Nofire



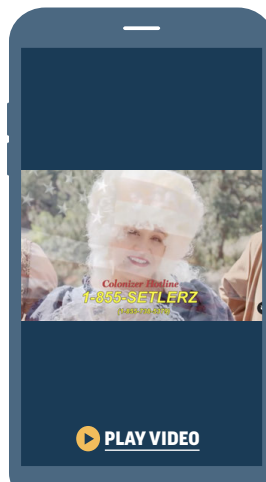
AMERICAN HERO CAMPAIGN
Joshua Emerson



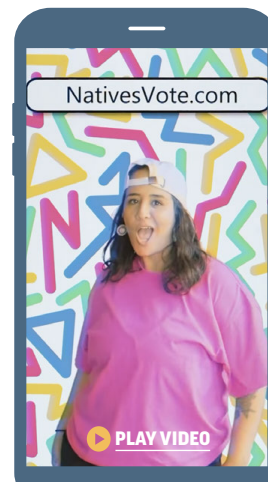
**TRIBAL ROAST
AND BOOST CAMPAIGN**
All Cast



**FIRST CONTINENTAL
CONGRESS VIDEO**
Azie Dungey & Kelly Lynne



COLONIZER HOTLINE VIDEO
All Cast



VOTING SONG VIDEO
All Cast

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