



Thank You For Showing Us The Sky:

An interview with Christian Carmago

By Sherry Greer

Christian Carmago is an accomplished actor, having started his career training at Juilliard, in classical theatre, and going on to perform leading roles on Broadway and the West End. Most people might know him from his current role on SEE for Apple, or his chilling portrayal as Dexter's serial killing brother Brian Moser, but now the people of the Morongo Basin might know him as "the man who set the story straight". Directing and starring in *The Last Manhunt* provided Joshua Tree resident Christian Carmago an opportunity to help shift the narrative on the local infamous story of Willie Boy.

The original – and untrue - story was created by fear mongering newspapers back in 1909 to sell more papers. They called Willie an evil Indian who murdered, raped, and was on the loose. ("White settlers grab your guns and guard your children!") But this was not the truth and the local people of the Chemehuevi of Joshua Tree (and other tribes) have carried the knowledge of what really happened with

Willie Boy and his star-crossed lover Carlota for over 100 years. The truth is far closer to a modern story of Romeo and Juliet. Actor Jason Momoa, also a resident here, had heard about the falseness of the story and set off to bring the true story to light. Jason cast Christian to play the Sheriff who leads the manhunt and then halfway through the pre-production planning, before the cameras start to roll, Jason had to step back from the project as director while remaining executive producer. Christian stepped up to take on the monumental role of director, as well as star.

The World Premier of *The Last Manhunt* was held at the Pioneertown International Film Festival on Friday May 27th, 2022. A private screening was shown two days prior for all the tribes that had contributed so much to the authenticity of the film.

Christian Carmago: I was really nervous (about the tribal screening) but they loved it and it was super powerful and super beautiful, actually. They felt heard



and they felt appreciated, and they were laughing at all the jokes. They were just joyous and excited that the story was finally being rewritten. The comments afterwards were mainly about connection to the land. So appreciative. Two different people made a statement about, "I was so happy to see the sky" "thank you for showing us the sky".

SG: Some of the cast and crew are from the Joshua Tree area also?

Christian Carmago: They all worked their tails off. This premier at the festival here in Pioneertown, I wanted them to see their work in the best way. Byron McCulloch is in Yucca Valley, Michel Cicero in Landers, Fox McBride, Kristen Gass, Christopher Boast, and I are all in JT. Dana Van Noort, Paul Cullum, Kyle Simon, Todd Blubaugh, Willy Pink, Mike Wilson, Manuel Azarte and Tony Soares – all these people are locals. These are my tribe that put this together. An impossible task, but we did it.