

LAUNCHER

A DOCUMENTARY FEATURE





Each year, students gather from all over North America to compete in the First Nations Launch, a rocket competition in rural Wisconsin developed by NASA and the Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium and sponsored by industry heavy hitters like Blue Origin, Sierra Space, GE Aerospace and US Space Force with the mission to nurture underserved Native American talent in the aerospace industry.

LAUNCH follows the students in the months leading up to and at the challenge as they build their teams, troubleshoot their designs and overcome obstacles. One team will get a trip to NASA, but every participant is a winner as they depart the competition having launched much more than just a rocket, but friendships, life lessons, community and sometimes even careers.



FIRST NATIONS LAUNCH



For 15 years, Wisconsin has been host to the First Nations Launch (FNL), which began after a group of students from The College of Menominee Nation (CMN), with no prior knowledge of rockets, successfully competed in rocket contests sponsored by NASA and the Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium (WSGC). Referred to in the press as "The Little Rocket That Could," they asked "if we can do it, why can't other tribal colleges do the same thing?"

Now, fifteen years later and having served over 104 tribes, NASA considers FNL one of Kennedy Space Center's Diamond programs. American Indian student groups from tribal colleges and universities, as well as state and private universities from all over North America come together to compete in several challenge categories, network with their peers from other tribes and communities and meet with Native American mentors and leaders in aerospace.

Every year, much more than just rockets are launched; barriers are broken, opportunities unfold and careers begin- thanks to FNL.





SYNOPSIS



LAUNCH is a feature documentary that will follow several teams from various tribes on their six month journey from forming a team, through the mentored planning and design process that follows, to the culmination of the experience in Kenosha, Wisconsin where they will launch their rockets nearly a mile high on a weekend in April, 2025 when the weather is notoriously unpredictable.

First time rocketeers will compete alongside experienced teams in challenges that range from introductory to advanced engineering. For some students, this is their first time away from their homes, family and tribe. It's a chance to dip a toe into a career path they may not have had any exposure to. While others are already on a rigorous academic track, determined to be a part of humanity's expansion into space.

The teams come from all over and represent a diversity of indigenous tribes and cultures from Hawaii, Canada, Washington, California, Kansas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Arizona, Colorado and more. Some of the students attend two-year tribal colleges that have little to no STEM programming or technical support. While others are at four-year state universities or private universities like MIT.

The students are not just engineers - some are focusing on biology, environmental science, business, or communications. One young woman's focus is on studying the cultural burning practices of her people and how to apply those native traditions to modern land management. These students share a common passion for their American Indian cultures. But finding someone on campus who looks like them can be difficult.

Other minority students encompass 29% of students in higher education. Native American students count for about 1% of those. And to get to that 1%, these students sometimes face tremendous barriers. The profundity and exhilaration of being surrounded by other native students at FNL cannot be overestimated.

As we follow our teams along the process, we will get to know the students, their families, their community and their stories. They tackle building a rocket that will launch a payload, sometimes from scratch, while still keeping up with their classes. They manage the various egos and personalities on their teams, learning project management and presentation skills. They plan their futures and share their hopes and dreams while navigating the realities of their home life and overcoming personal challenges.



SYNOPSIS

We are with the students as they burn the midnight oil on the nights before the launch. We see them fail and reiterate. Learn and grow. And in the end, what emerges is truly remarkable: teams helping each other at the last minute, sharing resources.

This is a competition like no other. There is no cut throat elimination. These teams see each successful launch as a win for all.

Yes, there will be awards. Some will win, others will not. There will be frustration and disappointment and elation and giddiness. They will launch their rockets nearly a mile high. Some of the rockets will completely fail, maybe even the favorite to win. An underdog team might pull off a hail mary and outperform them all.

But as the competition wraps up, we will see the experience through the eyes of these young American Indian men and women. And perhaps the audience will come to understand a different way of approaching problem solving, science, collaboration and space exploration.

LAUNCH provides the perfect lens through which to examine how western culture has traditionally dismissed native knowledge and how important this perspective is in our present moment. It is a celebration of Native American talent. It is an often hilarious portrait of young people taking on a dream. And it is a sensitive exploration of the circumstances that have molded this incredible class of young Native Americans.



CASTING



CASTING - THE STUDENTS

The students are the heroes of this film. With the help of our partners at First Nations Launch along with the FNL mentors, we will identify 6-8 teams to follow through the season. We will look to cast a diversity of experience within teams, following first timers as well as seasoned competitors.

We will also keep an eye to diversity in the type of learning institutions, tribes, geographical locations, both urban and remote areas, on, near and far from reservations, as well as in gender and personality type. The American Indian community is a rich tapestry of diversity that the film will represent and celebrate.

During launch weekend, we will also keep an eye to any standout teams that weren't identified early that may warrant further filming.



POSSIBLE CHARACTERS



THE NOVICES



THE ROCKSTARS



THE UNDERDOGS



THE PRANKSTERS



THE PHILOSOPHERS



THE MACGYVERS

POSSIBLE CHARACTERS



THE NOVICES

They may be new to rocketry and engineering, but their vision and commitment is unmatched. As is their droll delivery.



THE PRANKSTERS

Wiseguys who love the camera, always ready with a joke. They don't take anything too seriously, except their rocket-and their swag.



THE PHILOSOPHERS

Wise beyond their years, unflappable, poised and dropping knowledge under pressure. There may be a future president here.

POSSIBLE CHARACTERS



THE UNDERDOGS

Will they get it together??



THE MACGYVERS

Scrappy. Resourceful. They might not have the most resources, but they always have a solution.



THE ROCKSTARS

The biggest team in the competition, they've won most categories most years. They are confident, buttoned up, first in line at the recruitment table and prepared for anything... except failure.

CASTING - THE PROFESSIONALS

It takes a legion of passionate adults to pull off the FNL, most of them volunteers. Some of them work on the launch year-round to plan the challenges, awards, events and recruiting - all of that in addition to maintaining full time jobs in the industry. FNL has worked tirelessly to recruit Native American talent in the aerospace sector; they want the students to see themselves in these mentors as much as possible. Engineers from NASA, JPL, Boeing, Blue Origin, Space Force, Tripoli and more come back year after year, inspired by the students and invested in their success.

And these mentors have great stories and big personalities. They are there to troubleshoot the snafus with the teams, inspect the safety of the rockets, hype the students up when they are discouraged and produce a drill or any other myriad of tools in the middle of a nature preserve from thin air when things fall apart. Which they do.



POSSIBLE CHARACTERS

Along with the students, heroes on the ground would include people who come together year after year to put on the event, judge the rockets and share their expertise, providing guidance and insight as the students navigate the complexities of rocketry. Some of these men and women were once student participants themselves.

THE ALUM



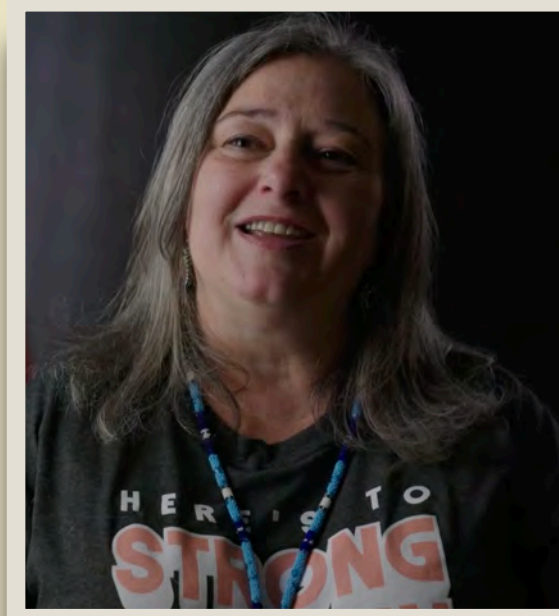
THE HERO



THE SAGE



THE OG



THE CHAMPION



THE AMBASSADOR



THE FIX IT GUY



MARK ABOTOSSAWAY
Ojibwe

FNL Project Assistant
Structures Engineer

Blue Origin

JOHN HERRINGTON
Chickasaw

Astronaut

First enrolled member of a Native American tribe to fly in space

AARON YAZZIE
Diné

Engineer

NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)

JENNIFER MORRIS

Social Science Instructor

College of Menominee Nation

JAMES WOOD

Osage, Loyal Shawnee

Chief Engineer

NASA Launch Services Program

MELANIE HOWARD
Kanehsatake Mohawk

Director

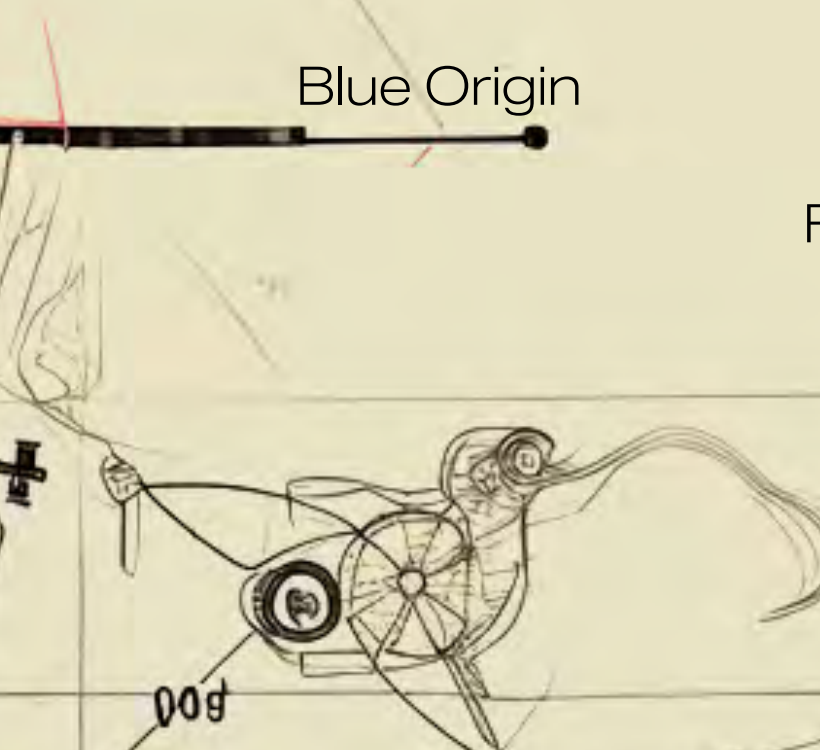
Indigenous Futures in Engineering

Queen's University Canada

FRANK NOBILE

Safety Launch Coordinator

Tripoli Rocketry Association



AUDIENCE + ACCESS

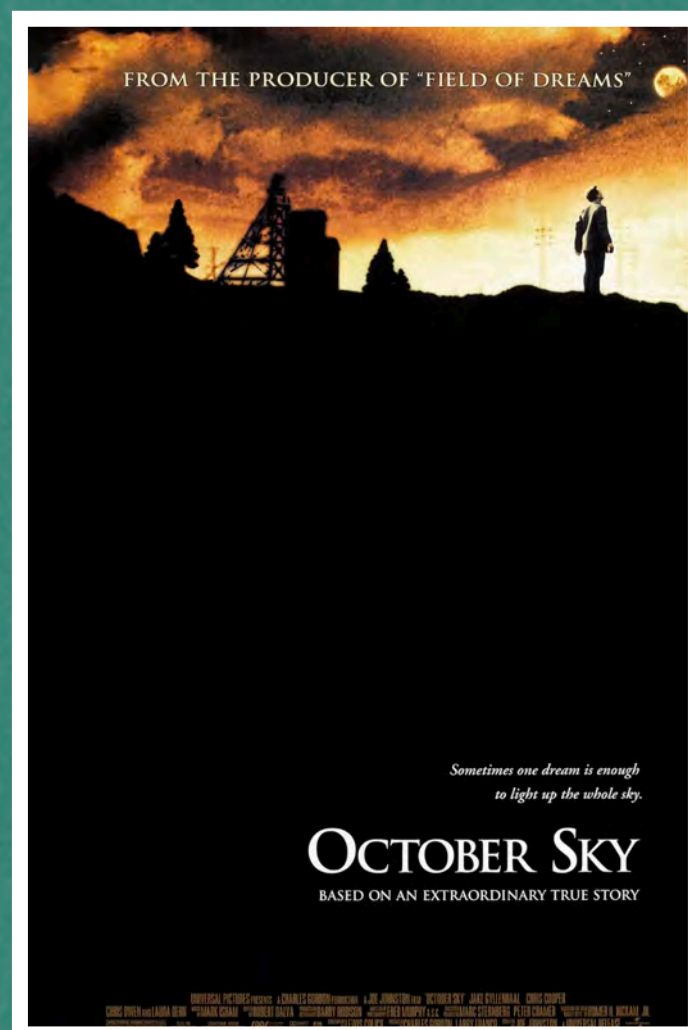
LAUNCH is a feel-good, crowd-pleasing, inspirational story about young people pushing themselves outside of their comfort zones to pull off innovative, complicated engineering challenges, sometimes against all odds. Dedicated, driven, smart and charming, they are heroes to root for and admire. The film appeals to all ages and is family friendly along the lines of Science Fair, Boys State and Keepers of the Game.

Beneath the competition story, runs a social one that celebrates American Indian heritage, culture, language, knowledge, philosophy and problem solving. Organic to our pre-interviews were stories of the mandatory Indian Schools whose goal was “to kill the Indian, save the man.” Access to education for the American Indian community is not just bogged down in politics and resistance, but also stained by this generational trauma, along with lack of opportunity and support. We expect to touch on this in the film, as well as touch on the under-developed pipeline to higher education opportunities for Native American youth and the pressing need for programs like FNL that illuminate career paths that were previously unknown or unavailable.

LAUNCH is a story that inspires and illustrates that if we nurture it now, our future is in good hands.

September Club has exclusive access to create a long form documentary film (or series) in collaboration with First Nations Launch and the Wisconsin Space Grant Consortium. Both are enthusiastic about the opportunity and will assist in casting as well as navigating NASA and other key relationships.

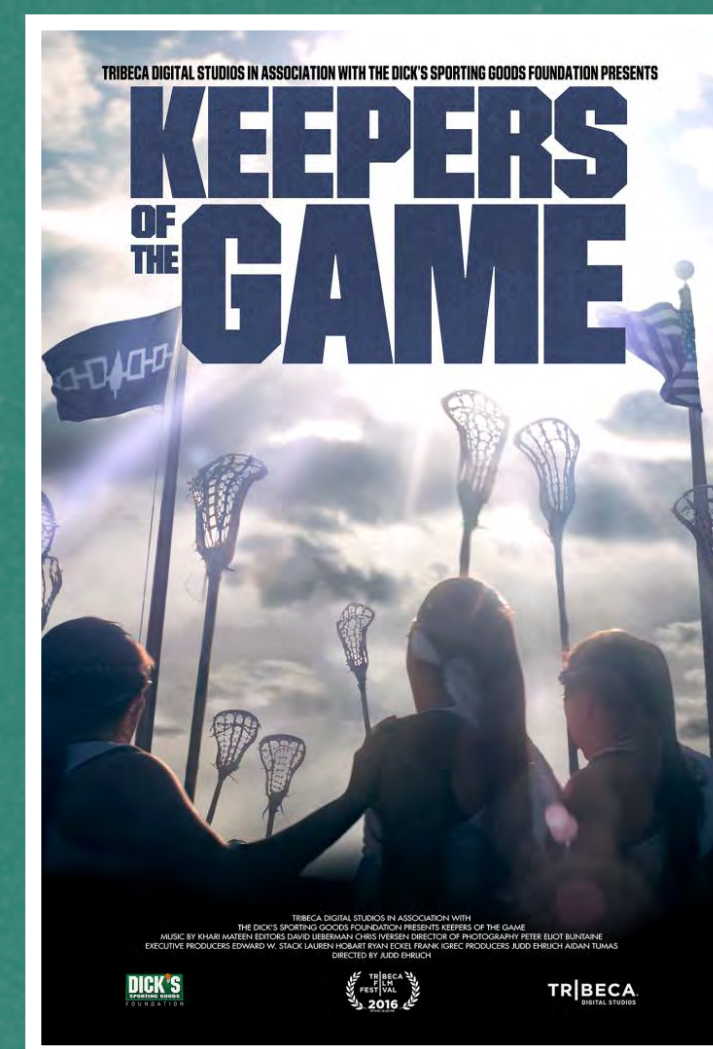




The true story of Homer Hickam, a coal miner's son who was inspired by the first Sputnik launch to take up rocketry against his father's wishes.



Nine high school students from disparate corners of the globe navigate rivalries, setbacks, and hormones on their quest to win the international science fair. Only one can be named "Best in Fair."



Members of an all-Native Girls Lacrosse Team try to prove the game is their rightful inheritance, putting more than just a championship on the line.



One thousand 17-year-old boys from Texas join together to build a representative government from the ground up.

Initial Filming

Principal Filming

SEPT 2024

OCT 2024

NOV 2024

DEC 2024

JAN 2025

FEB 2025

MAR 2025

APR 2025

JUNE 2025

SUMMER 2025

Announcement of Opportunity

Student & Judge Recruitment @ AISES Annual Conference San Antonio

Launch 2 Learn Level I Rocket Certification Workshop WI

Proposals and Notice of Intent to Compete Due

Teams Develop Required Documents, Designs, Prototypes, Attend Webinars

Rocket Launch Competition WI (2 Days)

Competition Winners Announced

Grand Prize Trip to Kennedy Space Center (3 Days TBD)

Follow Up Backstory Interviews

"SINGLE" CONFIGURATION
TAIL VIEW

FRONT VIEW, HALF SIZE

REAR VIEW
Half size

NOTE: Details of paint patterns varied slightly from model to model at White Goods. Some did not have ready-to-use lines.

FOR NON COMMERCIAL USE ONLY

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ROCKET PLAN PROGRAM

PROTOTYPE DETAILS, SHEET NO. 1
GERMAN V-3 IA

MODEL SCALE: 1 to 10	GRAPHIC SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"
SCALE SOURCE: See Fact Sheet	
DESIGNED BY: [Signature]	DRAWN BY: [Signature]

LAUNCH



San Antonio, TX

AISES (American Indian Science & Engineering Society) Annual Conference (October 2024)

Kenosha, WI

Rocket Launch Competition (April 2025)

Cape Canaveral, FL

Winners Grand Prize Trip to Kennedy Space Center or alternate NASA Center (Summer 2025)

Additional Locations TBD

Selected Teams @ their schools, reservations, homes, etc. (January - April 2025)

Locations may include: Hawaii, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Kansas, California (Northern and Southern), Colorado, Arizona, Canada

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

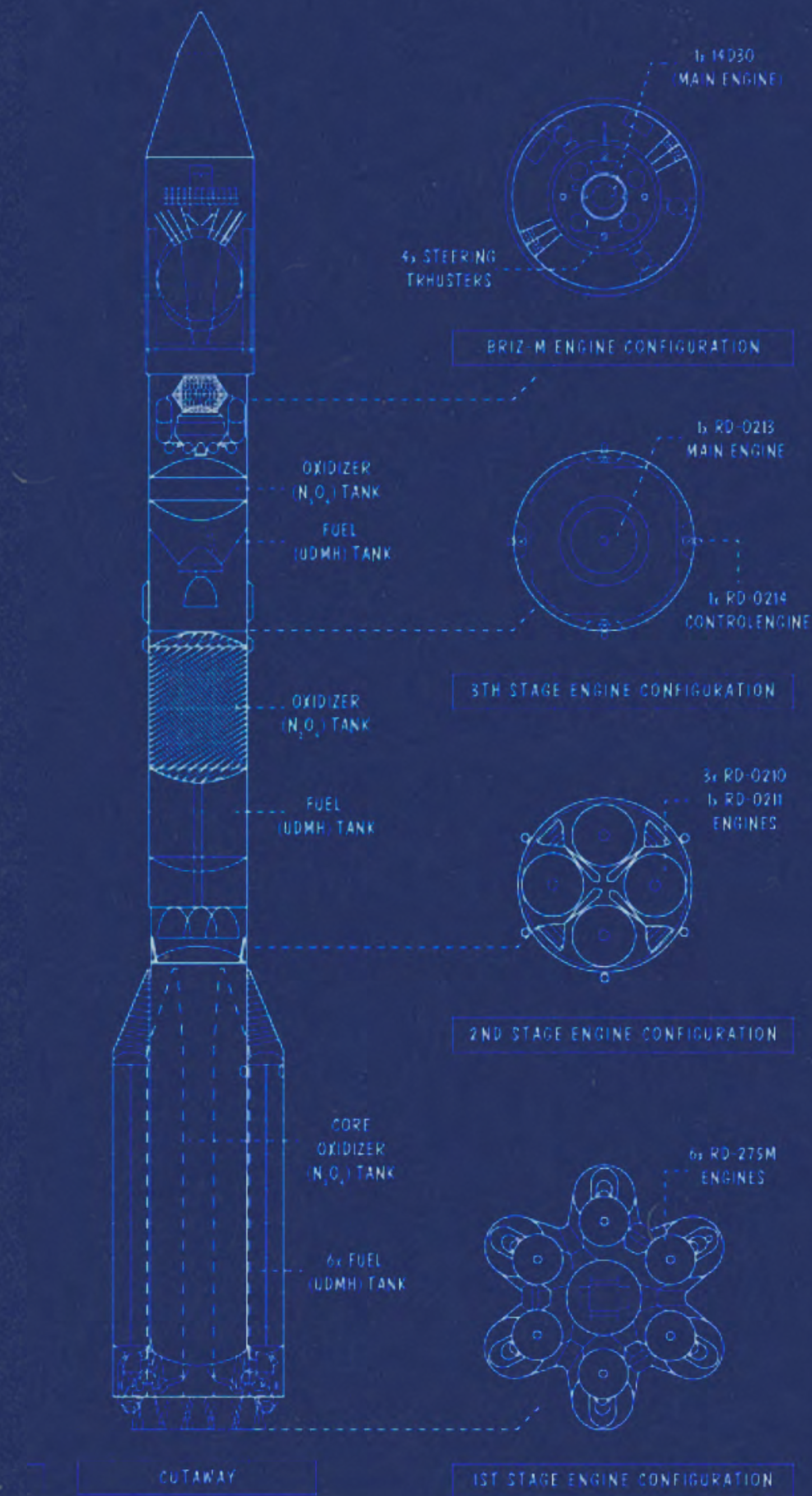
CDR John B. Herrington

CDR John B. Herrington is a retired Naval Aviator, test pilot, aquanaut and astronaut. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Mathematics from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, a Master of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School and a PhD in Education from the University of Idaho.

As an aviator, he has flown over 5000 hours in more than 30 different types of aircraft. As an aquanaut, he commanded the sixth NASA Extreme Environment Mission Operations (NEEMO) mission, spending nearly 264 hours underwater.

As an enrolled citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, NASA considers CDR Herrington to be the first citizen of a Federally recognized tribe to fly in space. As an astronaut, CDR Herrington flew aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour on the 16th assembly mission to the International Space Station. During his mission he traveled over 5.6 million miles, accumulating over 330 hours in space, including performing three spacewalks totaling nearly 20 hours.

Following his retirement from the Navy and NASA, CDR Herrington worked in the commercial space sector before embarking on a 4,300 mile bicycle ride across the United States, from Cape Flattery, WA to Cape Canaveral FL, stopping at Indian reservations and NASA Explorer Schools to share his story of motivation and mentorship with Native American youth. At age 52, he entered the University of Idaho and earned a Doctorate in Education, investigating the factors that motivate and engage Native American students to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

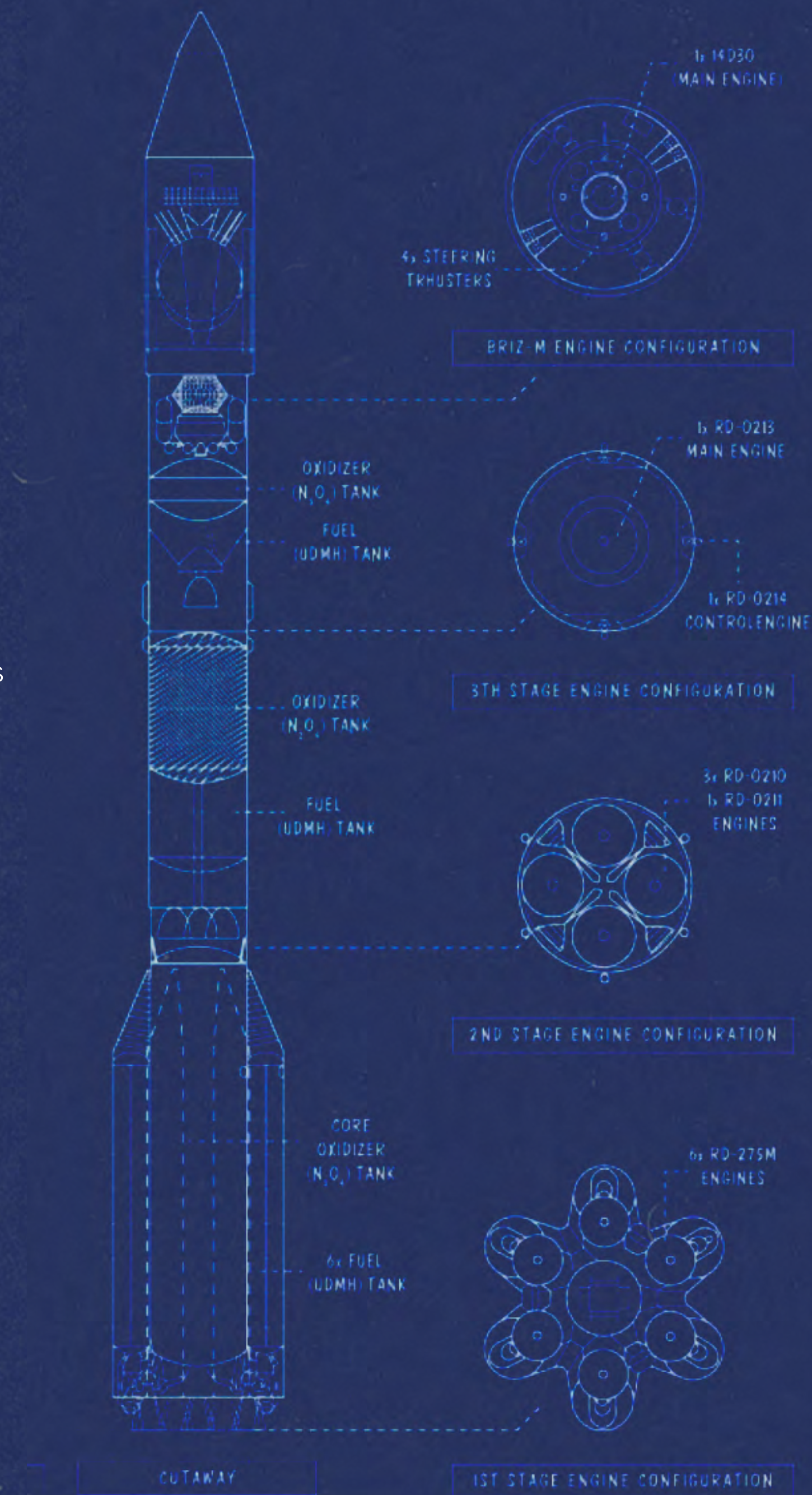
Jeremy Coon

Jeremy Coon produced and edited *NAPOLEON DYNAMITE* (Sundance Film Festival, 2004) which has become one of the most profitable and culturally impactful indie films in history. Jeremy also produced, edited and directed *A DISTURBANCE IN THE FORCE*, which premiered at the 2023 SXSW Film Festival and was one of the best reviewed documentaries of 2023.

Additionally he produced and edited *THE SASQUATCH GANG*, and directed and produced the acclaimed feature-length documentary *RAIDERS! THE STORY OF THE GREATEST FAN FILM EVER MADE* which premiered at the 2015 SXSW Film Festival and was released theatrically by Drafthouse Films.

Barry Poltermann

Barry is a producer, director and editor, primarily working in documentary whose most recent project is editing the narrative feature *WILDCAT* for director Ethan Hawke, which premiered at The 2023 Telluride Film Festival and starred Maya Hawke and Laura Linney. Prior to that, he edited the 6-part docu-series *THE LAST MOVIE STARS* for director Hawke and Executive Producer Martin Scorsese (Cannes, 2022). He has edited numerous acclaimed feature films, including *AMERICAN MOVIE* (Sundance Grand Prize Winner, 1999), *THE POOL* (Sundance Jury Prize Winner, 2007), *RAIDERS! THE STORY OF THE GREATEST FAN FILM EVER MADE* (SXSW, 2015), *JIM & ANDY – THE GREAT BEYOND* (Venice Biennale, 2017) and *I AM NOT ALONE* (Toronto, 2019 Audience Award for documentary at TIFF, DocNYC & AFI Fest).



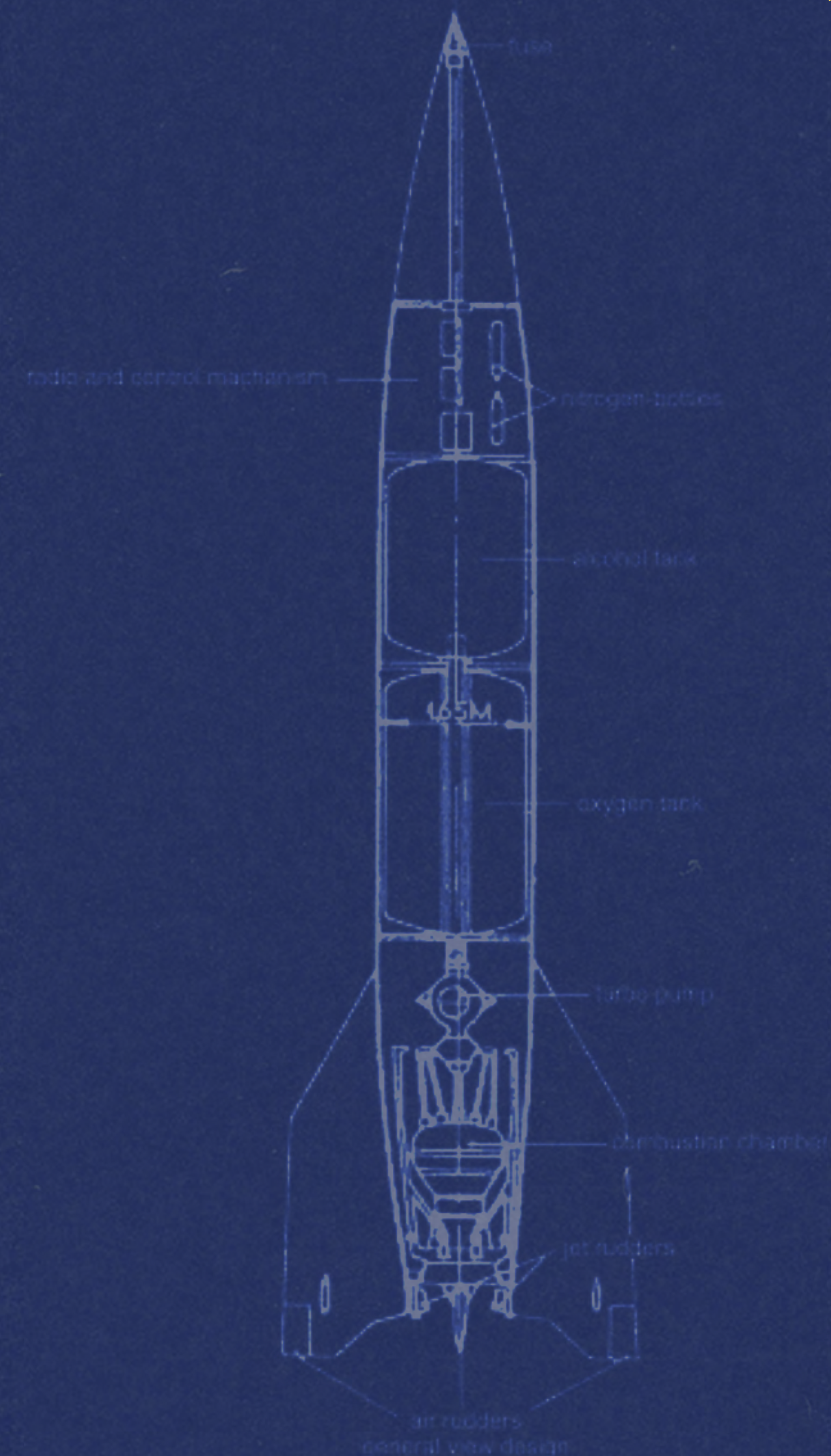
DIRECTORS

Manny Marquez

Manny is a member of the Choctaw Tribe of Oklahoma whose most recent documentary feature is MAKE PEACE OR DIE, which follows a Marine Corps veteran's return from Afghanistan where his unit lost 17 fellow soldiers. The film was produced for PBS Independent Lens and will be released later this year. His first feature documentary, PSYCHOPATH, is currently being developed into a scripted feature by Academy Award winning director Marshall Curry. Manny's short documentary, OPERATION ALLIE, premiered at the prestigious Big Sky Film Festival and played festivals across America. He has done an extensive amount of branded documentary work and is also known for his documentary inspired music videos.

Casey Suchan

Casey began her career producing documentaries on the history of Hip Hop for Quincy D. Jones' III's QD3 Entertainment, including the seminal documentary on the history of break dancing, THE FRESHEST KIDS (2002); the platinum selling Tupac Shakur documentary, THUG ANGEL (2002); and the critically acclaimed BEEF (2003) and BEEF II (2004), exploring the evolution of MC battles from verbal one-upmanship to street warfare. In 2006 Casey directed and produced the documentary ROCK THE BELLS, a behind-the-scenes look at how a young concert promoter beat the odds to reunite the Wu-Tang Clan for their final performance with O.D.B. The film premiered at The Tribeca Film Festival and was picked up for distribution by Warner Brothers. Recently Casey directed THE ANIMAL PEOPLE — a feature documentary for Executive Producer Joaquin Phoenix about a precedent-setting case brought against the activist organization "Stop Huntington Animal Cruelty USA" and in 2020 finished work as lead director on MAKE/SHIFT — a CLIO and Webby award-winning documentary sponsored by WP (WordPress) Engine about marketing in the digital age.



PRODUCERS

Denise Roberts McKee

Denise is a founding member of September Club, heading up Operations and overseeing its development initiatives. She has acted as a post-production supervisor for September Club on numerous editorial projects for clients such as Netflix, HBO and BBC Films. She has also produced documentary projects for marketing clients, such as the CLIO award winning documentary Make/SHIFT. Previously, Denise served as COO for About Face Media managing development and production of documentary content initiatives for brands including Disney, Abbott Labs, JP Morgan, Verizon and 3M. Prior to joining About Face, Denise co-founded the San Francisco based companies LimeLife, Inc., a publisher of mobile media for women, and Stunt Puppy Entertainment, an independent game developer focused on the children's market. Denise oversaw all production, financials and acquisition of new business development, focusing on licensor driven content for such entities as Time-Warner, NBC Universal, Bravo TV New Media, Rachael Ray, Disney/Buena Vista Games and Atari/Infogrames.

Christine Bolz

Christine is the Program Director for First Nations Launch, an Artemis Student Challenge. Through her leadership, First Nations Launch grew into an international program, gaining support from NASA, the Canadian Space Agency, Boeing, Blue Origin, Arcadis, GE Aerospace, Raytheon, Sierra Space, and the U.S. Space Force. Previously, Christine was a freelance journalist for Ruth Ratny's REEL Chicago, a Chicago-based online industry trade publication, Pioneer Press, WLS-TV and WKRS Radio. She worked with Emmy-award winning author and producer, Lars Ullberg, and Applied Creative Training, LLC creating bio-terror attack and pandemic training videos for California and Alameda County Public Health Departments. Christine contributed to "VAX," a PBS documentary exploring vaccine efficacy. She served on the Winthrop Harbor, IL, School District Board of Education for 16 years. Christine's faith and commitment to people is her inspiration for bringing stories to life.

EDITOR

Matt Prekop

Matt recently completed works as a lead editor on the Netflix productions of MELTDOWN: THREE MILE ISLAND, and MURDER AMONG THE MORMONS. He also worked as a supporting editor on Ethan Hawke's acclaimed docs-series THE LAST MOVIE STARS. Previously to that, he was a lead editor on the 8-part Netflix series THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MADELINE MCCANN which premiered in 2019 and in 2020 edited the branded documentary Make/SHIFT, produced for WP Engine.

With the help of FNL, the filmmakers plan to enlist the support of several indigenous elders and professionals from different tribes to act as an advisory resource. FNL has served over 104 tribes during its history with a sensitivity to unique cultures and experiences, and the film will share this thoughtful approach.

We hope to lean on the resources and knowledge this team provides both in terms of topics to cover in the film as well as how best to explore and share these stories with a sensitivity to the nuances of tribal history, perceptions and concerns. This will include feedback and advice throughout the life of the project, from pre-production through post.



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES



BUDGET

\$750,000 - Target Budget

INVESTMENT

Thirty (30) \$25,000 Increments Available for investment

Investors will recoup their investment + 15% premium (\$750,000 budget + \$112,500 premium = \$862,500 breakeven) before there are any profits on the film. Any profits after recoupment will be split 50/50 between filmmakers and investors. Each \$25,000 investment is worth 3.33% of the investors' share of profits.

DONATION

September Club has a dedicated **501(c)3 Fiscal Receivership** in place to accept funds. Investors have the option of allocating monies as tax-deductible charitable donations in lieu of investment return in the project.

CREDITS

\$12,500 (donation) or \$25,000 (Investment) provides an **Associate Producer Credit** on film

\$37,500 (donation) or \$75,000 (investment) provides an **Executive Producer Credit** on film

\$75,000 (donation) or \$150,000 (investment) provides a **Company Production Credit & Executive Producer credit** on film



SEPTEMBER CLUB

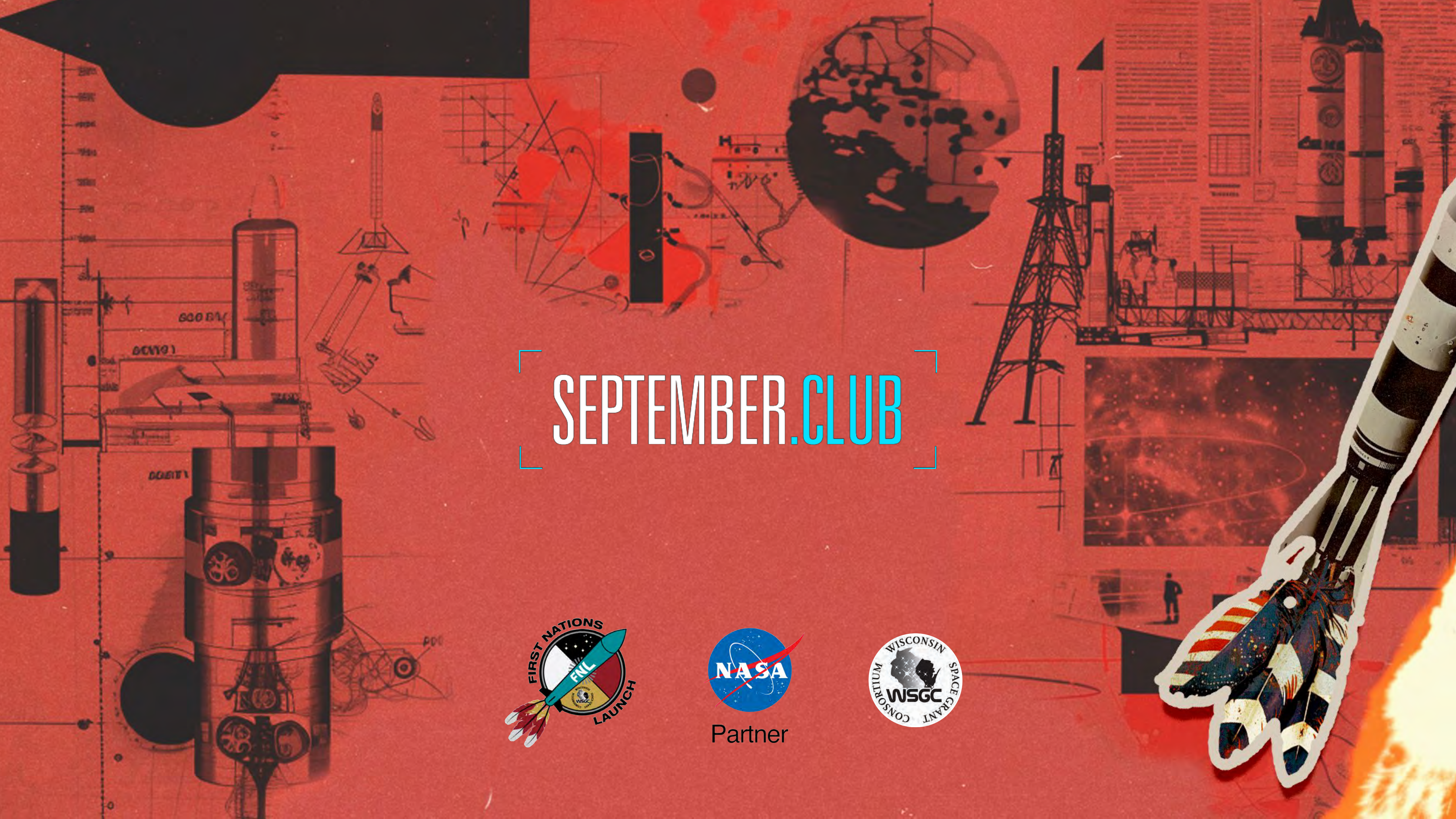
SEPTEMBER CLUB IS AN EDITORIAL DRIVEN PRODUCTION COMPANY THAT SPECIALIZES IN DOCUMENTARIES — FROM FEATURE FILMS TO DIGITAL SHORTS & DOCU-SERIES.

FOUNDED BY PRODUCER/EDITORS JEREMY COON ([NAPOLEON DYNAMITE](#)) AND BARRY POLTERMANN ([AMERICAN MOVIE](#)), OUR WORK INCLUDES ACCLAIMED DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS SUCH AS [THE LAST MOVIE STARS](#), [MURDER AMONG THE MORMONS](#), [WHIRLYBIRD](#), [BOYS STATE](#) AND [JIM & ANDY](#).

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Partner



LAUNCHER

A DOCUMENTARY SERIES

