

T H E  
H U D S O N  
T R I B E S

A FILM BY JOHN MARCO LOPEZ



MOTION PICTURE OFFICIAL PRESS KIT 2016

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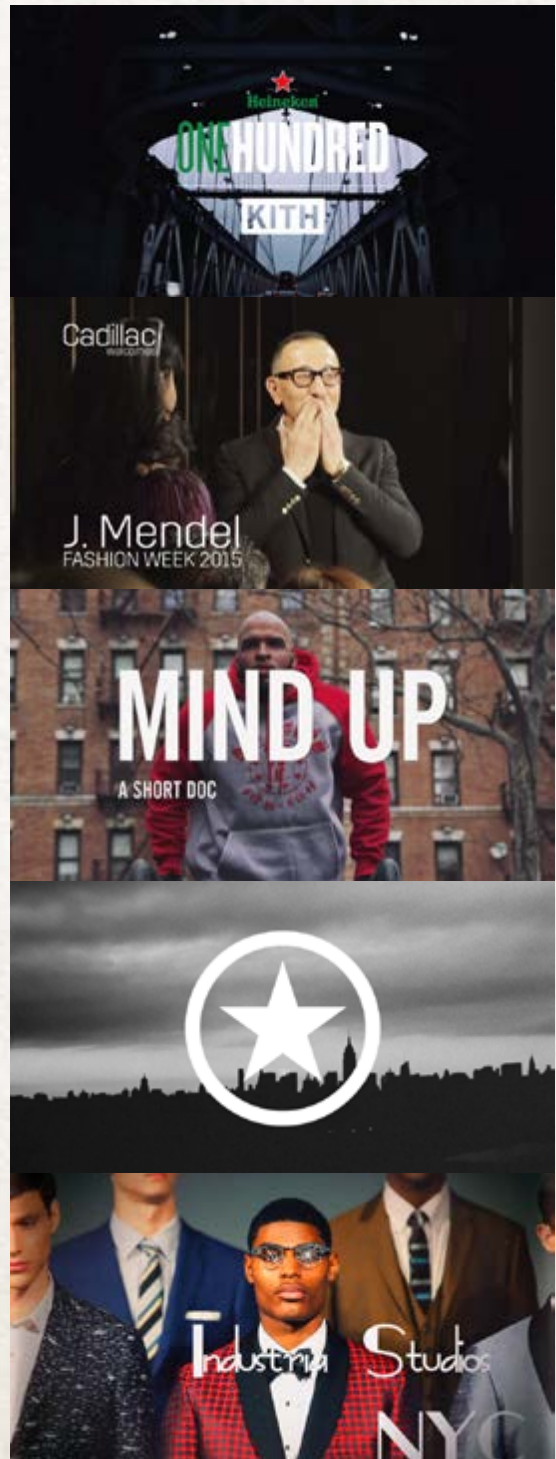
Our creative culture is built on a multidisciplinary foundation of passionate raconteurs dedicated to moving pictures and capturing time.

Founded in 2010 around a culture of burgeoning directors, editors and producers – who have collectively worked with the best creatives, on the best brands, and around the best people. We take pride in our talented network of artists and educators, who are dedicated not only to commercial storytelling – but to our own films, students, independent art projects, writings and music.

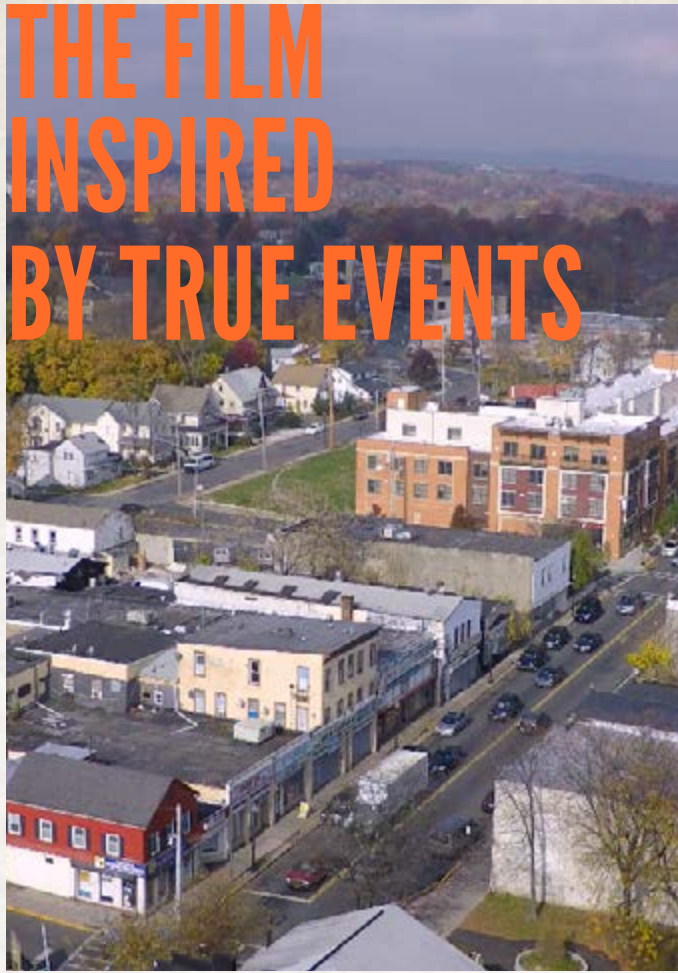
From featurettes to music videos, our team is dedicated to creating professional story-driven content. Take a look at our social media presence for the latest updates and don't forget to check out our portfolio for countless examples of the range of our work: [www.lpzmedia.com](http://www.lpzmedia.com)

We've nurtured a network of independent multimedia artists throughout the world – all of whom eager to collaborate on the next challenging project. Through the New Media spectrum, we offer professional development for clients, educators, vendors, and curious people alike. Our consultancy is rooted with an emphasis on media literacy – for organizations interested in developing digital communication practices.

# WHO WE ARE THE HUDSON TRIBE FILM



# THE FILM INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS



## THE HUDSON TRIBES

**Log:** Amidst racial tensions, a Hasidic young man falls in love with a Hispanic woman, who teaches at the local public school that his leaders are shutting down.

**Synopsis:** “The Hudson Tribes” is a Socio-Political Crime Thriller, inspired by true events. Amidst racial tensions, a Hasidic young man falls in love with a Hispanic woman who teaches at the school his leaders are shutting down. During a contentious school board vote led by an Orthodox Jewish majority, a prominent leader in the Hasidic community is ruthlessly kidnapped by a local right-wing extremist, and witnessed by the curious eye of this teenager. The young man decides to withhold information from the police in order to uncover the crime himself - only to realize that the woman he’s infatuated with - is dating the main culprit. Based on true events in an up-state New York town, where a public school district is being torn apart by corrupt politicians, racial divides, and escalating violence - can a romantic connection between two people from distinct ethnic groups bring this town together?



## EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

The great American director Sam Fuller was once quoted in saying that “film is a battleground”. Since the dawn of cinema, many successful groundbreaking films have explored provocative themes and stories that mirror that of real life. Some directors decide to push further boundaries by opting to produce their films amidst the political chaos and social conflicts that have inspired the story being told. Director John Marco Lopez of LPZ Media aims to capture the harsh socio-political divide that exists at the center of the controversial public school district in a small Hudson Valley town just north of Manhattan. The Hudson Tribes is a live-action fiction film that aims to capture the true essence of the human struggles of a contemporary multi-ethnic society in cinematic and dramatic style. This film, which is inspired by actual events, was shot entirely in the very same neighborhoods and political venues where many of these societal issues are taking place today. Our goal, through the feature motion picture medium, is to entertain our audience with powerful performances and groundbreaking mise en scène, while also shedding light on societal issues that arise once a public school system is compromised.

**The Hudson Tribes Video Pitch**

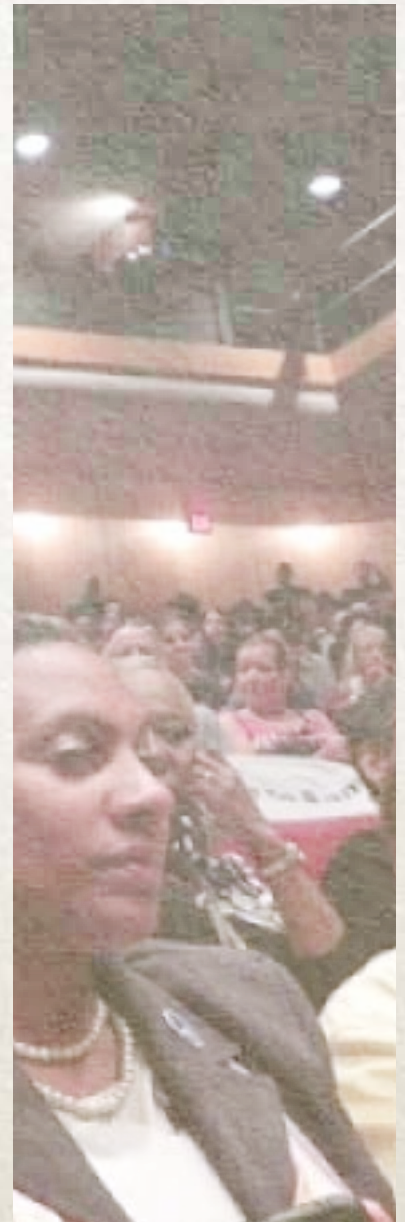
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjcRsh8a3lA>

**The Tales of Two Districts - Hudson Valley News 12**

<http://hudsonvalley.news12.com/news/tales-of-two-districts-state-considers-intervention-in-school-dispute-110395629>

**This American Life - NPR**

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/534/a-not-so-simple-majority>



OWEN CAMPBELL

VANESSA RUBIO

GODFREY



# THE HUDSON TRIBES

A FILM BY JOHN MARCO LOPEZ | INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS

# PRINCIPAL ACTORS



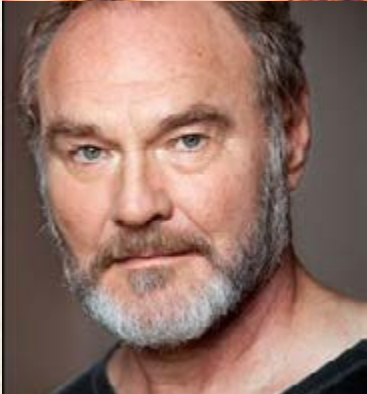
**Godfrey** was born on July 21, 1969 in Lincoln, Nebraska, USA as Godfrey C. Danchimah Jr. He is an actor and writer, known for *Chain Reaction* (1996), *Soul Plane* (2004) and *30 by 30: Kid Flicks* (2001).

**M**ayor Lafitte runs a small upstate NY town as Mayor. He was one of the few African American men that made it out of this neighborhood, and became a success story. Now he's come back to his hometown with the hopes of making a difference, only to realize that power and influence belong to those with money and voting power.



**Vanessa Rubio** is an actress and writer, known for *But We're Okay* (2015), *Cred* (2009) and *Liv & Josh* (2010).

**B**ella is a hard working middle school teacher - with fears that her school will be shut down by the Hasidic majority-led school board. She begins attending local townhall events, and inadvertently becomes the voice of the Black & Hispanic students.



**Sherman Howard** was born on June 11, 1949 in Chicago, Illinois, USA as Howard Lee Sherman. He is an actor and writer, known for *General Hospital* (1963), *Day of the Dead* (1985) and *Lethal Weapon 2* (1989).

**A**braham is the head of the majority led Hasidic School Board, being tasked with converting the local public school into a Yeshiva. He is clearly aware that his actions will bring acrimony from the secular community, but his greater responsibility comes with advancing the education and well being of the Hasidic youth.



**Jeannine Kaspar** got her breakout role in *Freeheld* (2015) opposite an A-list cast including Julianne Moore, Steve Carell and Ellen Page.

**R**ose escaped her community years ago to assimilate into secular life. She's highly intelligent, a bit eccentric, and outspoken. Rough around edges, yet still sexy, she yearns for justice above all else - and has a vendetta against the bad apples in her old community.

# The New York Times

## WHEN A SCHOOL BOARD VICTIMIZES KIDS

By MERRYL H. TISCH and DAVID G. SCIARRA, JUNE 3, 2015

NEW YORK STATE has a proud tradition of local decision making in public education. However, students in the public schools in East Ramapo, about 30 miles north of Manhattan, in Rockland County, are being denied their state constitutional right to a sound basic education by a board that has grossly mismanaged the district's finances and educational programs.

When there is overwhelming evidence that a local school board has persistently failed to act in the best interests of its public school students, the state must act. The Legislature will adjourn on June 17, so time is running out.

East Ramapo is a divided community. Of the roughly 32,000 school-age children enrolled in schools in the district, about 24,000 attend private schools, nearly all of them Orthodox Jewish yeshivas. Of the more than 8,000 children in the public schools, 43 percent are African-American and 46 percent are Latino; 83 percent are poor and 27 percent are English-language learners.

The East Ramapo school board, dominated by private-school parents since 2005, has utterly failed them. Faced with a fiscal and educational crisis, the State Education Department last June appointed a former federal prosecutor, Henry M. Greenberg, to investigate the district's finances.

Mr. Greenberg's report, released in November, documented the impact of the board's gross mismanagement and neglect. Since 2009, the board has eliminated hundreds of staff members, including over 100 teachers, dozens of teaching assistants, guidance counselors and social workers, and many key administrators. Full-day kindergarten, and high-school electives have been eliminated or scaled back. Music, athletics, professional development and extracurricular activities were cut.

The Greenberg report also detailed dismal outcomes for East Ramapo students. In 2013-14, only 14 percent of students in grades 3 through 8 were proficient in English Language Arts, and only 15 percent were proficient in math, according to the most recent statistics from the State Education Department. The graduation rate, 64 percent, is far below the state average of 76 percent.

While slashing resources in its public schools, the school board vastly increased public spending on private schools. The cost of transporting children, including gender-segregated busing, rose to \$27.3 million in 2013-14 from \$22 million in 2009-10, a 24 percent increase. Public spending on private school placement for special education students grew by 33 percent between 2010-11 and 2013-14, and the district placed students in private schools when appropriate spaces were available in public ones.

The report also exposed disturbing practices by board members. The board conducts 60 to 70 percent of its meetings in closed-door executive session. It does not tolerate, and is overtly hostile to, the complaints of public school parents, students and community members. Public protests against the board are now commonplace.



The report proposed the appointment of a state fiscal monitor, who would oversee all of the board's financial and educational decisions and have the authority to override the board, when necessary, to protect the interests of the public-school community and improve education outcomes for public-school students. The report also recommended additional state funding to restore essential staff and services, but only if a monitor was in place to make certain the money was used effectively and efficiently to benefit all of the students.

A bill in Albany — introduced in the Assembly by Ellen C. Jaffee and Kenneth P. Zebrowski and in the Senate by David Carlucci, who all represent parts of the school district — would implement a fiscal monitor for at least five years. It is a crucial step toward reversing the district's disastrous decline and repairing the deep rifts in the community. The New York State School Boards Association has found that the measure “respects the democratic electoral process by leaving the elected board of education in place.”

The bill would not go as far as the Legislature went in 2002, when the school district in Roosevelt, on Long Island, was put under state control because of poor management. It is similar to what occurred in Lakewood, N.J., a district with circumstances similar to East Ramapo's.

In recent weeks, in response to a lobbying campaign by the school board, momentum for the bill appears to have slowed. Advocates for the local school board and some leaders in the Orthodox community have accused supporters of state oversight of having anti-Semitic motives.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The legislation is not about punishing one group because of its religious beliefs; it is about acting to make sure that the civil rights of a community of overwhelmingly low-income minority children are not denied and that their constitutional right to a sound basic education is enforced.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo has endorsed the need for action in East Ramapo. Lawmakers should join him, reject the false attacks and act in the interests of the students, who have been failed terribly and must not be made to wait any longer.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/03/opinion/when-a-school-board-victimizes-kids.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/03/opinion/when-a-school-board-victimizes-kids.html?_r=1)

# THE HUDSON TRIBES IS NOT A DOCUMENTARY

BY AARON MOELLER, NOVEMBER 23, 2016

During a contentious school board vote led by an Orthodox Jewish majority, a prominent leader in the Hasidic community is ruthlessly kidnapped by a local right-wing extremist and witnessed by the curious eye of this teenager.' –what if this was a headline in the Rockland County Times? While not an actual headline, the new independent film “The Hudson Tribes” hits close to home.

East Ramapo School District has been the single most divisive issue among locals. Everyone has a chosen side. “The Hudson Tribes” is not a documentary, but a dramatic, inspired by true events- screen play about this local clash of cultures and interests. The film frames the racial and socio-economic rift that has ensued in this scandal-ridden Hudson Valley county, while building compelling subplots around everything from love to the strange alienation Rockland can drive souls to experience.

The debate over kinks in the democratic process shouldn't come as a surprise in an election season, but most folks are unaware of the little known all-American process of electing a school board. If this sounds boring, and I have lost you already, read on. I promise not to spoil the plot.

I should add, even if you have been following the East Ramapo story, the script John Marco Lopez has written stands on its own.

I have been covering the area since 2010 and the scoop in local politics usually hinges on dollar signs and backdoor bribes. This movie, however, is anything but a board room drama snore. Written and directed by John and produced by his brother Kevin, from the first flickering of brilliant cinematography, the thriller kept me on the edge of my seat until the moment the closing credits began to roll.

Precisely what makes “The Hudson Tribes” a triumph is the direction Lopez takes to portray the interconnectedness of power in politics and the subtle ramifications of the law. In the newspapers this story can be a bit subtler, i.e. who pays the bulk of property taxes, questionable school text books, maybe a stolen bike, and yes, hate crimes, those are all real issues. In the film we not only get a look into back door politics, we get a glimpse into the homes and lives of just about every represented demographic in Rockland County.

“The Hudson Tribes,” as the name implies, is set in Monsey, a hamle whose namesake is drawn from the Monsey (Munsee) Native American tribe an is an adjunct to the Spring Valley quasi-urban area. This demographics of this part of Rockland County have shifted from mostly working class African-American to Hatian American, as well as increasing numbers of Latino as well an explosion in the Ultra-Orthodox population.

You get a real image of the melting pot that is Rockland in this movie. But has the census-busting growth of the insular Ultra-Orthodox caused that pot to be overcooked?

Curious attempts at understanding the process of Albany public school funding, and the accountants needed to run numbers makes for bad cinema, so Mr. Lopez skipped most of the binary code, and went straight for the heart. After all, the devil is in the details.

The palpable feeling of otherness, fairness, and the struggle with leadership are at the heart of the film. How does a community who self-ghettos, take public funds? And how, without stellar education, can a community of immigrants, many of them speaking English as a second language, thrive- in an out-dated school system?

There is of course a scramble for resources, and money doesn't just trickle down stream from Albany without some gravity.

A polished, articulate Mayor Joubert Lafitte is the sitting mayor, but he's more consumed with his own power. Sound familiar? The storyline of "The Hudson Tribes" often does.

Lafitte struggles with allocating resources for his own people when confronted with the favors he owes to the Orthodox bloc vote. Early in the film, we see the mayor entangled romantically with a woman who is not his wife, played by Jeannine Kaspar, who is a composite of the lapsed Orthodox genre. The Haitian American mayor is played by Godfrey, who told the Rockland County Times that he's never met the real mayor of Spring Valley. The real mayor is entertaining in his own right and Godfrey plays a great lead that is somewhat reminiscent of Mayor Delhomme.

Aloof to the politics in his own community, Avi, a Hasidic teenager played by, Owen Campbell, peers outside the invisible ghetto wall, curiously in love with a public school teacher. His admiration for her, might as well stand for everything he is taught in yeshiva to avoid. The outside world is dangerous, and the ground beneath him begins to open. The outside world is, for him only imagined, but is willing to risk it all for a dance in a Chestnut Ridge kitchen.

He tells Bella, played by Vanessa Rubio, he is not the person he looks like, that he isn't like those others. Those people. He is not one of them, but he is also does not belong in her kitchen.

In his search for identity, Avi is the protagonist as he fights for justice amidst racial differences and escalating street violence. Later in the film when he discovers his love interest is, unbeknownst to her, living with the kidnapper, we see his youthful naivety.

Avi is just a boy, but he could be the hero. Any child from the East Ramapo public schools or Yeshiva could be the hero, but will the tribes put their differences aside?

# THE HUDSON TRIBES PRESS

## VERIZON FIOS INTERVIEW WITH MIKE GILLIAM



<http://www.fios1news.com/lowerhudsonvalley/new-film-east-ramapo-school-district#.Vp-gQFKA0n8>

## NEWS12 INTERVIEW



<http://westchester.news12.com/film-to-document-east-ramapo-schools-troubles-1.11387640>

# THE FILMMAKERS



**Chris** is a New York City based cinematographer and still photographer. His work includes the feature length films - "The Inquisition of Camilo Sanz", "The Blackout", and "Wallabout". His experience as a Camera Operator has garnered recognition from working on projects such as "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", "Deliver Us From Evil", and "Captain Phillips". He is currently the camera operator for the new "Ghostbusters" film starring Melissa McCarthy, Chris Hemsworth, and Kristen Wiig. Christopher's documentary work includes "Eyes of Haiti", "Brazil Capoeira", and "World Journey of Smiles" - all of which have successfully premiered at various International film festivals. He learned his craft working as a camera-assistant for twelve years under the guidance of DP's such as Ellen Kuras, Eigel Bryld, Declan Quinn, and Dion Beebe. All of whom are members in the American Society of Cinematographers.

Visit Christopher's imdb page: [http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0713228/?ref=fn\\_al\\_nm\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0713228/?ref=fn_al_nm_1)



**Kevin** is an independent filmmaker and educator, who has attained not only an award winning portfolio, but has also worked as a leading advocate for film arts education throughout the City of New York and beyond. He attended graduate school at the University at Buffalo's Media Studies department, where he produced his first documentary film titled *Entre Luz y Sol*, funded by the Miramax Films Minority Scholarship Fund. Since then, Kevin has produced countless music videos, short documentaries, and commercial pieces for such clients as Cadillac, Heineken, and Emirates, under the auspices of LPZ Media, which he founded with his brother, Director John Marco Lopez. In 2014, Kevin executive produced the independent feature film, *The Inquisition of Camilo Sanz*, which premiered at the Colombian International Film Festival. That same year, Kevin's short documentary *Mind Up*, about a group of reformed ex-convicts bringing health and wellness through exercise back to their community, was selected as winner of the "American Experience" category at the Smithsonian Museum In Motion Video Series.



**John** is an independent filmmaker with over ten years of experience working in various motion picture mediums and formats. From the outset, he began producing and directing music videos for popular recording artists, which subsequently garnered enthusiastic attention from various multimedia platforms. This recognition paved the way for the #1 Advertising Agency in the World - Grey New York - to acquire his services in the Broadcast Production team. Instantly, John began working with national brands, seven figure budgets, and large-scale union production crews. Ultimately, he produced & directed commercials for companies such as Canon, DirectTV, Radio Shack, and Febreze.

John's passion for the motion picture medium has lead to co-founding a production company - LPZ Media - with his brother and Executive Producer Kevin A. Lopez. His first order of business was to write & direct "The Inquisition of Camilo Sanz", a full length feature film - which earned a World Premiere at the Colombian International Film Festival. The film starred the legendary Alvaro Rodriguez - a Latin American Icon in the Spanish Language Film & Television industry. Most recently, John has received acclaim for directing several online documentaries for Cadillac & Heineken - culminating in commissioned work for NIKE's ever-expanding digital presence of online viewers.



## DIRECTOR STATEMENT

**t**his story means a great deal to me. My mother lives in the town of Ramapo, New York - and I have close friends who went to public school there. What is happening now, is incredibly fascinating. The public schools are being shut down or stripped of their resources - in order to adequately support the growing youth population of the Hasidic Jewish community. You might ask yourself - how is this happening? It's very simple - DEMOCRACY. Our fundamental American principles are at the heart of this story, and creates the basis for my underlying theme - "Do you still believe in Democracy, when it's not working for you?". I feel my thesis is important because the Hasidic Jewish voters are legally following the laws of our land, by appointing their preferred representative in an open and free election process. As a result, the Ramapo School District board members are now almost entirely Hasidic - and they make decisions on how/where to allocate resources. This has led to outrage, vitriolic protests, and unfortunate antisemitism from the African American and Hispanic population. The Hasidics say they should have voted, and the Minorities say they should have more empathy and demonstrate fairness. In my view, both parties have valid points - but now what?

As you can tell - the lines are blurred and the issue is very controversial. So much so, that the topic is reaching a national audience - with the New York Times & NY Magazine reporting on it, NPR is following the latest developments, and a leading podcast program titled "This American Life" dedicated an hour long special to the story. Clearly what is happening in this community should be explored - and I want to tackle it from an honest, loving, and compassion-

ate perspective. My goal is to stay objective - not incriminate one side or the other - just present the facts & circumstances - then delve deep into the personal journey's of my characters - and hopefully create a positive dialogue with audiences.

Our backdrop will be the Hudson Valley, located in New York State and only thirty minutes outside of Manhattan. It is a classically enchanting and majestic place. From the sweeping rivers to its sprawling mountain ranges - this region has inspired centuries of poets, authors, and artists with its beauty and charm. Originally home to various Native American tribes with rich customs and traditions, then explored by European settlers, and ultimately developed into a vast suburban landscape during the great "white flight" of the 1950's & 60's.

Today much has changed in some areas of the Hudson Valley. Large scale migration of middle & upper middle class Caucasians back into the urban areas has left a void of investment and infrastructure - leaving cheap real estate for immigrant families, African American communities, and Hasidic Jewish enclaves. This has created a fascinating yet volatile dynamic in the Hudson Valley - ripe with racial turmoil, poverty, crime, and corrupt politicians. Our film "The Hudson Tribes" will explore the harsh realities of this socioeconomic phenomena - also the love that can exist between them, and the individuals in each "tribe" who strive for something better.

- John Lopez

# PREVIOUS WORK



The Inquisition of Camilo Sanz, directed by John Marco Lopez and executive produced by Kevin Lopez, was introduced to the world at the Colombian International Film Festival in New York City in March 2015 to a sold out crowd of eager independent film connoisseurs. Immediately, audiences raved about its visceral style of story telling as well as its dynamic ensemble of talented actors who exploded out of the screen. Since then, ICS has been officially selected by a number of renowned film festivals around the world including the The Orlando Film Festival, The Boston Film Festival, and the Madrid International Film Festival among many others. Additionally, **New Films International**, **Lions Gate Latino**, and **HBO** have secured exclusive rights to distribute The Inquisition of Camilo Sanz both domestically and abroad for upcoming Digital, Cable, Online, and Theatrical releases. The Inquisition of Camilo Sanz is set for an official 2016 global release across multiple cable networks and platforms, as well as a 2017 official release on HBO; with projections that will prove to make this film a huge success.

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Film Press

# THE HUDSON TRIBES PRODUCTION DETAILS

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Filming Locations – Rockland County, NY (Lower Hudson Valley)

Production Timeline – July 2015 – December 2016

Principal photography took place from October 19th, 2015 to November 9th, 2015.

## **Month 1 - Month 3**

Pre-Production

Pre-production includes set up and development expenses, legal, contract preparation, casting expenses, first-stage equipment purchases, location scouting expenses, production office, crew salaries and travel expenses.

## **Month 4 -5**

Principal Photography

Principal Photography is the process of filming a motion picture and is the most costly stage of production. This includes second- stage equipment purchases and rentals, crew and cast salaries and expenses, location costs and travel and accommodation expenses.

## **Month 6 - 12**

Post-Production

Post-production includes film editing, score production and sound mixing, final crew salaries and expenses, screening, marketing and advertising expenses.

## **Month 12-18**

Film To Market

Together with our partners the Company aims to premiere the film at festivals and have a strong presence at the overseas film markets such as AFM, Cannes and Berlin, as well as renowned US festivals such as Tribeca and Sundance; in order to continue to exploit the film in unsold territories and ancillary markets. The lead cast will have been pre- contracted to appear and be apart of the press launch and marketing effort.

**The Hudson Tribes on IMDB**

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt5203986/>



# PRODUCTION STILLS



# BEHIND THE SCENES



# BEHIND THE SCENES



# BEHIND THE SCENES



# BEHIND THE SCENES



# THE HUDSON TRIBES

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COMING SOON



**THT Official Film Website**  
<http://www.thehudsontribes.com>



**LPZ Media**  
[lpzmedia.com](http://lpzmedia.com)



**THT Official Facebook Page**  
<https://www.facebook.com/TheHudsonTribes/?ref=hl>



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THE  
HUDSON  
TRIBES

A FILM BY JOHN MARCO LOPEZ

