

23088

APPLICANT NAME: CRISTINA IBARRA & JOHN VALADEZ

ADDRESS:

JUN 02 2003

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

LATINO PUBLIC BROADCASTING APPLICATION FORM 2003

PHONE: (Day) (Evening) (Email)

PROJECT TITLE: THE LAST CONQUISTADOR

AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$93,480.00

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET: \$349,000.00

PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE: LENGTH: 26:40 56:40 86:40 Other

APPLICANT'S ROLE: PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

FORMAT PROJECT IS SHOT ON: DV CAM

COMPLETED FORMAT: DigiBeta

GENRE: Documentary Drama Experimental Animation Other

CATEGORY: Development Production Post-Production
(please select only one)

FISCAL SPONSOR (YES/NO): NO
(not mandatory)

ORGANIZATION:

CONTACT PERSON:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

PHONE (DAY):

FEDERAL ID NUMBER:

Application should include: 12 Copies each of the following: Application Form, Budget Summary Form, Six Questions, Project Description (not to exceed 6 pgs), Detailed Project Budget, Key Personnel Summary and Scripts (if applicable). PLEASE SUBMIT STAPLED COPIES TOGETHER.

CERTIFICATION:

I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS APPLICATION, INCLUDING ALL ATTACHMENTS, IS TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Give a brief project summary.

The Last Conquistador will be an hour-long documentary film about the construction and dedication of the largest bronze equestrian statue ever created, a controversial monument nearly five stories tall depicting the Spanish conquistador Juan de Oñate. It is also a film about Native and Mexican Americans who are opposed to the statue. To them it is an offensive and profane memorial to white supremacy and genocide.

Detail how LPB funds would be used.

A post-production grant will be used towards editing expenses. We will hire an editor to review footage and rent an off-line editing suite to cut the film.

Describe fund-raising strategies to acquire additional funding for the project's budget.

We are still raising more production funds from other sources listed below. Then, an LPB post-production grant would get us started in our edit. We would raise the additional post-production funds needed through other sources listed below. A proposal is pending with Independent Television Service (ITVS) for \$274,000. If awarded, this grant will pay for the entire film.

FUNDERS	AMOUNT TO BE REQUESTED
Funding Raised to Date:	
1. Public Broadcasting System	25,000
2. Latino Public Broadcasting	50,000
Application currently pending:	
1. Independent Television Service (Phase 3)	274,000
2. Latino Public Broadcasting	93,480
3. National Endowment for the Humanities	10,000
4. Sundance Documentary Fund	15,000
5. MacArthur Foundation	75,000

Have you chosen to target specific funding sources?

1. Independent Television Service is interested in funding programs that address the needs of underserved communities. While we do believe that this fulfills that mandate, we also feel that this project has a national appeal that extends well beyond the Latino and Native American communities. An audience interested in the study of art will be engaged with the physics of constructing this colossal monument. Historians will appreciate the additional scholarship about an obscure yet important figure of the sixteenth century. Oñate is also a fascinating way to examine how the process of hybridization and *mestizaje* contributes to the question of race in America. This film will

look at the intersection of Spanish and indigenous culture to explore the formation of a unique American Southwest identity.

2. Latino Public Broadcasting should find this project of interest for many of the same reasons listed above, but also because PBS is lacking documentaries which see the Latino experience as an American experience. The story of Oñate has been traditionally overlooked or ignored in America's discourse about colonial history. Viewers who appreciate historical documentaries can appreciate this largely untold story because it sheds new light on America's past and present ideas about a history that has not been recognized properly in our national history. The Oñate statue is intended to remind viewers of the introduction of the Hispanic settlements and culture into the Southwest. Viewers will gain a complex view of the cultural heritage that makes up Latino culture in the Southwest while raising questions about identity, history and art significant to the understanding of our national identity. All of these aspects ensure that this film is of interest not only to the Latino community, but also to a larger national audience.

2. Native American Public Telecommunication's Public Television Program Fund supports program ideas that bring new perspectives of Native American cultures to public television audiences. This documentary seeks to give voice to the Ácoma account of the pueblo's history and relationship with Oñate's legacy. NAPT should be interested in *The Last Conquistador* because this story will point out the complicated relationships that were formed between Native Americans and Spanish settlers as they struggled for the fate of the region. The narrative of Oñate's expedition also has broader appeal. It is a story of a little-known history that all of America can claim as its own history. (Post production application due July 7th, 2003.)

3. The National Endowment for the Humanities is interested in exploring American history and in trying to understand the events and personalities that have shaped this country. In addition, we think the NEH may be particularly interested in the fact that this film will show how different communities have each grafted onto Oñate's life different meanings. These opposing perceptions are fundamental in understanding how different communities see and memorialize history. The involvement and the participation of many scholars, academics and historians will help give texture and understanding to Oñate's life. And in learning more about Oñate's character, we also ask what quality of our national personality does the statue promote? *The Last Conquistador* questions the meaning of heritage, the role of public art, and not only how to memorialize historical figures, but whose history do we memorialize.

5. The Sundance Documentary Fund is dedicated to supporting documentaries focused on significant issues and movements in contemporary human rights, freedom of expression, social justice, and civil liberties. We think *The Last Conquistador* is consistent with the Sundance Institutes vision of bringing attention to human rights issues, helping improve the human condition through constructive dialogue across ethnic and cultural divides, finding new connections for positive change and understanding, and fostering a capacity to learn from differing historical experiences. The dilemma of diverse peoples inhabiting a common geography but having very little sense of a shared

community is a powerful theme that runs through this film and is one that is echoed in many places across the globe where the Institute seeks to promote peaceful and sustainable human societies.

Detail production status and timeline.

Indicate at what stage the LPB Funds would be used.

CURRENT STATUS

We have two production trips to plan. One is being planned around the unveiling of the monument in El Paso, TX this coming Spring. Another production trip is being planned to shoot interviews after we conduct more pre-interviews. The following is an estimated breakdown of our timeline. The schedule is likely to change according to funds raised.

(No exact dates can be given because we have grants pending with the Sundance Documentary Fund and NEH that would be applied towards pre-interviews.)

PRODUCTION

16 weeks

Weeks 1 to 4: We spent two weeks preparing for the shoot, one and a half week shooting, and half-a-week wrap.

2 week Prep: Production crew was finalized and confirmed. Production schedule refined. Releases and insurance were obtained. Professional Digital Video production equipment was reserved and rented. Travel arrangements were finalized. We secured locations, scheduling interviews, making hotel, car and airline arrangements, purchased raw video stock. Camera tests were performed. On-camera interviewees were identified and pre-interviews conducted.

1.5 week production: Actual shooting took place for 7 days. The filming and interviewing of select interviewees where they reside or at our filming destinations of El Paso Texas, Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Ácoma pueblo, and Mexico City.

3 days to wrap up: Tapes were transferred and digitized. Audio cassettes prepared for the transcriber. At this point we have 23 DV Cam tapes transferred.

Weeks 5 to 9: A second phase of production would follow broken down as follows: two weeks preparation and pre-interviews, one and a half-week production and a half-week wrap. This shoot will be planned for the unveiling of the monument in April. This is the climax of the story.

Weeks 10 to 15: A third phase of production would follow broken down as follows: two weeks preparation and pre-interviews, two weeks production and one-week wrap. This production trip includes shooting interviewees and any other

Week 16: A week is being allocated for to shoot any pick-ups needed as we cut the story together.

POST PRODUCTION: EDITING, FINE CUT, SOUND MIX, ON-LINE

The LPB post production funds would be used after the production stage is complete with the exception of pick-up shots.

32 weeks

(LPB post production funds would be used at this stage.)

Weeks 1 to 3: three weeks will be devoted to reviewing original photography and archival material, and preparing editing scripts. Selected archival materials will be ordered, then organized and catalogued in preparation for editing. Edit room will be reserved. Footage will be logged. Interviews will be transcribed on a continuous basis. A draft of treatment for editor will be finished.

Weeks 4 to 30: A total of twenty-six weeks to edit the entire program broken up as follows:

One week for editor to organize edit suite and load media selects

Twenty-two weeks of editing.

One week to prepare and complete sound editing and mix.

One week to prepare and complete online.

One week to wrap up.

Weeks 30 to 32: A total of two weeks are needed to for post production coordinating, including rights, rental equipment, and music soundtrack negotiating. This time will be used for any correspondence or communication that might be needed with funders and to make a distribution strategy.

This roughly estimated timeline is likely to change according to the kind of funding we are granted.

Who is your target audience? Detail any distribution plans.

The Last Conquistador is ideal for public television with the film's larger than life characters and themes. In Oñate's story we experience the obsession, faith and vengeance of his character clashing against the cultures, religion and ideologies of indigenous communities. Oñate is seen as either founding father or brutal colonizer, but the truth is much more complicated than Oñate simply being a hero or villain. He was a man driven by a sense of duty and faith, but these are the same qualities that made him such a brutal warrior. These extreme associations make for a dramatic story in themselves, but there are other reasons that would appeal to the general public. Historians argue about the details of his battles and wars against Native Americans, but there is no disputing the fact that the Pueblo Indians had less cultural disruptions by European colonizers than other nations. Today, the consequences of the Spanish and Pueblo exchanges are seen the style of irrigation, the design of houses, and even in popular food items popular in the Southwest and throughout the nation. This film will find a diverse audience that extends well beyond ethnic divisions because it is a compelling, challenging, captivating story that is largely unknown to most people.

The Last Conquistador will be an hour-long documentary film about the construction and dedication of the largest bronze equestrian statue ever created, a controversial monument nearly five stories tall depicting the Spanish conquistador Juan de Oñate. It is also a film about Native and Mexican Americans who are opposed to the statue. To them it is an offensive and profane memorial to white supremacy and genocide.

The film will inter-cut the completion of the Oñate statue with images from the Ácoma reservation, where we will film meetings, protests, and organizing campaigns as opposition to the monument grows. These two parallel stories—that of the artist driven by a monumental vision who is working with and supported by a coalition of Hispanic organizations, and that of Native American, Mexican-American, and other activists joining forces to publicly challenge that vision—will create the arch of the story. Inter-cut throughout will be Oñate's biography. Using diaries and letters written by Oñate and his colonists, and utilizing interviews with leading historians, viewers will learn about the man who was the first governor of New Mexico.

It's early morning and the streets of Mexico City are already coming to life. Seventy year old John Houser opens a series of padlocks and rolls back a large steel gate to enter his studio. The workspace is immense, cluttered, and resembles a small aircraft hanger. Inside we see a huge sculpture that is about three-quarters complete. The monument depicts Juan de Oñate astride a rearing horse as he claims the land north of the Rio Grande for Spain. Today however, Oñate's body parts lay strewn about the studio. His half-finished head is in one corner, a section of his torso is near the bathroom, a huge hand rests on an oversized workbench. When complete, Oñate's likeness will stand in El Paso, Texas towering over the US-Mexico border and John Houser will have made art history by constructing the world's largest bronze equestrian statue. We see Houser supervising his small army of craftsmen, apprentices, and assistants. Some are doing intricate detail work while others are busy taking various measurements, working out mathematical equations, bringing in additional materials and supplies, and constructing molds.

Houser explains that 15 years ago he thought he was dying. Kidney failure. As he sat in a dialysis chair he began to work out the vexing physics of erecting a 10-ton statue of a man astride a rearing steed. It is a pose that has confounded the world's great monumental sculptors and one which artists and critics had long thought impossible. According to Houser, "Even da Vinci had a hard time doing a horse like this and he never achieved a work of this magnitude." As he speaks, it is clear that he is a man obsessed with his work and consumed with his craft. "Size is an aesthetic quality to me," he explains. "When you see a monument like Mount Rushmore, the first thing that comes to your mind is a sense of wonder." Within two years of becoming ill, Houser made an astonishing recovery. He tells us matter-of-factly that he defied the doctors and the statistics by an act of will.

Houser's references to Mount Rushmore are not coincidental. John's father worked closely with Gutzon Borglum, the legendary artist who created the Mount Rushmore monument. Ivan Houser was the project's principal sculptor and foreman, and Borglum's trusted friend. John Houser has always been inspired by Borglum, his grand vision and his innovative and unconventional ideas about monumental art. Opponents of the Oñate project are quick to point out, however, that Borglum was an avowed white supremacist and a high-ranking member of the Ku Klux Klan. They suspect that Houser's Oñate is essentially a monument to European racial superiority. One story line of the film will be to follow the statues progress as Houser completes the project that will be the culmination of his life's work.

Most Americans are unfamiliar with the name, Juan de Oñate. Yet his work as the earliest European pioneer in North America set the stage for the development of a vast section of what is now the southwestern United States. In 1598, at great personal cost, he led a formidable party of over 500 settlers with wagons and livestock on an epic march northward from Mexico to the upper reaches of the Rio Grand Valley, and there he established the first European settlements in North America.

Oñate's career will remind viewers that in the growth of the United States there were not one but two frontiers. There was the well-known westward movement but also the less publicized northward advance by Hispanic pioneers. The story of Juan de Oñate is an integral part of our national story.

He brought Christianity, the horse, cattle, European medicines, agricultural techniques, crops and Spanish style civil government to North America. He explored vast stretches of the continent, charting the geography and searching for mineral wealth from the sea of Cortez through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and deep into the plains of Kansas- all this long before the Pilgrims had landed at Plymouth Rock.

Juan de Oñate believed he was an instrument of Gods will. While he was born into great wealth, he had a disregard for comforts and disdain for those who sought them. He was a powerful and eloquent orator with a remarkable ability to connect with and inspire those he led. But Oñate was also aloof giving him a distinctive arrogance that often devolved into a malignant narcissism. His story is one hardship but also one of paranoia and caprice, of a man who acted out his fantasies of omnipotence using the Pueblo Nations as his theater and its people as his props.

He introduced the horror of genocide to North America and in 1614, under orders from King Philip of Spain, Juan de Oñate was tried and found guilty of abusing the pueblo Indians and of murdering his own colonists. It was an important case. Never before had such a high ranking Spanish political and military leader been convicted of what we would today call "crimes against humanity". Oñate was humiliated, stripped of his titles and exiled.

But Oñate's most enduring influence was completely unintended. When he set out for New Mexico with his colonists, he had a detailed accounting made of everything he was bringing to build his new civilization. He did not count, however, the army of slaves and peons who went in support of his expedition- the herders, drivers, packers, personal servants and concubines whose ranks were made up of assorted mestizos, mulattos, and Indians. These people were not enumerated. While we know that they numbered in the hundreds, their stories and names are lost to history. To the Spanish hierarchy of the time, including Oñate, they literally did not count.

The irony is that it was the uncounted who would eventually emerge to be the source of Oñate's most lasting legacy: the introduction and diffusion of mestizaje into North America. What Oñate could not have imagined is that 400 years after his march into the unexplored lands of the north, it would be the uncounted that would count the most. The mongralization, mix and hybridization of identities, ideas, of cultures, languages and genetic material that began when Oñate and his band migrated into the New Mexico territories during the closing days of the 16th century would eventually emerge as a dominate theme of American life in the 21st century. What began as a conquest of peoples ended as a merging of cultures. This process of fusing identities, unknowingly initiated by Don Juan, is one that has not ended, but rather has intensified and plays an increasingly important role in our national dialogue on race and identity.

Conchita Lucero is middle-aged, portly and organized. She is the president of the Hispanic Preservation League of Albuquerque and she, like her hero Juan de Oñate runs an efficient organization that is quickly becoming an influential player in New Mexico politics. She pushed for and got built a statue of Oñate in the northern New Mexico town of Española, another is on the drawing board for Albuquerque and Houser's monument which will soon rise over the city of El Paso is her fantasy come true. Conchita has spent much of her adult life researching her family history, which she traces back to Geronimo Marquez, one of Oñate's captains and his trusted friend. She pulls out a sword which dates from the Oñate expedition and reads an inscription ornately carved on its blade, "It says on one side, 'Don't take me out without a reason', and on the other side it says, 'Don't put me back without honor'. I think that this inscription captures the sense of a higher calling that our Spanish ancestors were always striving for. They were people of dignity."

Conchita tells us that Geronimo and Don Juan both grew up in the northern Mexican city of Zacatecas. As she speaks we see their ancestral home. It is an urban landscape on the move. New factories juxtaposed with ornate colonial architecture consumed by a dense haze of smog and fumes. Juan de Oñate and his friend Geronimo Marques were both born here at the height of a silver rush that was rapidly transforming the region. Don Juan's father, Cristobal de Oñate, was one of four Spaniards who founded this city after they had discovered silver in 1546.

We see that the hills around Zacatecas are covered with a patchwork of upper class communities where the city's elite seek refuge from the congestion below. During Oñate's time these hills were controlled by the Chichimecas, a fierce, nomadic people who were cunning and skilled fighters. They hated the Spanish invaders and fought them at every turn. They were known to torture and scalp victims alive, behead them, and parade the grisly trophies on wooden spikes. These they would place along El Camino Real, the road leading from Zacatecas to Mexico City.

This ongoing warfare had a powerful influence on the youthful Juan de Oñate as well as many of the men and women who would eventually join him on his journey north. Stories of massacres and gruesome tales of torture were common topics of conversation in Zacatecas and they made a lasting impression. Juan knew many of the maimed and dead, and when he traveled to and from Mexico City with his family in one of his father's heavily guarded caravans, his attention was often called to spots where others had suffered terrible deaths in Chichimeca ambushes.

In his early twenties, Juan took command of the ongoing campaigns against the Indians. For twenty years he fought the Chichimecas. During that time he forged lasting bonds with many skilled fighters, including Geronimo Marquez, who would later prove to be his enforcers. With an uncompromising loyalty, they would follow his every command even if it meant their own deaths.

On March 10, 1598, Juan de Oñate headed north with three hundred families intent on establishing a settlement somewhere in New Mexico. They were called Primeras Familias, First Families, and Oñate promised them gold and silver, slaves and land, and for every man who stayed five years the title of Hidalgo or Nobleman. It had taken him fifteen years to organize his venture and he had a grand vision of building a new province with himself as governor in the same way his father had founded Zacatecas. Despite his intense preparations, Oñate was woefully ignorant of what lay ahead. He had hoped, for example, that his colony would be established near the sea and was planning to get future supplies by ship. He had no idea the Pacific was a thousand miles to the West.

Conchita tells us that today El Camino Real, the road Oñate extended all the way to northern New Mexico, is a sleek two-lane highway and the trip from Zacatecas to

Albuquerque takes about a day and a half. Back then it was a grueling venture across an unexplored arid plain.

Oñate's caravan spread out over five miles across the desert. Its length was studded with fluttering pennants—the standards of King Philip of Spain, the Oñate family crest, and the likeness of Santiago, patron saint of Spain—and spiked with pole arms, lances, halberds, and half-moon blades. There were more than eighty wagons and ox carts rumbling on their heavy wheels, the loads covered with stout white canvas, and seven thousand head of cattle. The men were honed, eager, and fit. To the Indians who hid themselves in the foothills watching the procession from a distance, the spectacle of a city inching its way northward must have seemed terrifying and foreboding.

After ten days the caravan rested at a small stream that they named Rio Sacramento because it was Holy Thursday, the feast of the Blessed Sacrament. Today, the stream is a filthy slough. The waste from a sheet metal fabrication plant dumps unknown toxins into this once pristine brook. Back in the winter of 1598 Oñate and his entire party assembled here as the sun set over the western hills. They prayed on their knees, wept for their sins, and begged forgiveness of the Almighty. As the evening wore on Juan de Oñate left the chanting crowd and went to a secluded spot where he cried alone and lashed his back unmercifully throughout the night opening many wounds. The Next morning they continued there journey northward.

We see an immense arid valley, stunningly beautiful beneath an amber sky. In the distance loom the high cliffs of a picturesque mesa rising 700 feet above a tumbleweed desert floor. Perched upon this mesa are multi-story adobe buildings that form the maze-like pueblo of Ácoma, also known as Sky City.

Maurus Chino is heavy set, with long black hair and a contemplative disposition. He is a well-known artist who was born here and is a member of the Ácoma nation. Maurus has a reputation in northern New Mexico for creating rich, impressionistic landscapes of Ácoma pueblo and the foreboding cliffs that give it its distinctive and dramatic solomnatude. He is also known for his activism.

Maurus guides us through the winding and narrow streets of the old Ácoma village. He tells us that Oñate's men showed up here in the late fall of 1599. They were running low on food and faced starvation. They demanded that the Ácoma hand over the grain they had stored up for the winter. "For my people, this was a matter of life and death. Families depended on this food. And the Spanish came to our land unprepared and unable to provide for themselves. Pretty soon a fight broke out and by the time it was over several people were dead on both sides. One of the Spaniards who died was Juan de Zaldivar, Oñate's nephew."

The people of Ácoma found themselves in a terrible situation. While Ácoma was well-situated high atop a mesa, they were for the most part peaceful, agrarian, and unaccustomed to warfare.

For Don Juan this was a devastating development. He feared rebellion would spread to the other pueblos and that his entire colony could be wiped out. He was also shaken personally and consumed with grief by the loss of his nephew. An agonized Juan de Oñate decided that if they did not act quickly all their lives would be in peril. He feared that Ácoma situated high atop the mesa would be nearly impossible to defeat, but he felt he had no choice but to either destroy them or die trying. He gave the order to attack Ácoma at once. They would seek no mercy and none would be given.

Maurus tells us that the battle stretched on for three days and by the end Ácoma lay in ruins, its small dusty alleyways littered with bodies. We do not know how many died.

Maurus claims over fifteen hundred, some scholars say half that. We do know there were a few survivors.

We see Maurus in his back yard. The cool winter sun warms his cluttered patio as he works on his newest piece. It is a large sculpture of a human foot, which he plans to bring to a series of protest demonstrations against the El Paso statue. He will eventually give his sculpture to the city of Albuquerque as a gift in the hope that the city will make a formal denunciation of the El Paso monument, will cease plans for an Oñate in Albuquerque, and recognize the painful history it symbolizes.

Maurus tells us that the Ácoma men who survived Oñate's attack were later paraded naked and in shackles to nearby pueblos where they each had a foot publicly severed and were sentenced to twenty years of servitude - if they survived. The few women and boys who survived were given as slaves and concubines to some of the Spaniards who had fought with distinction, and sixty small girls who somehow lived through the carnage were sent with a group of priests to Mexico City. They were never heard from again.

Maurus shows us an ancient graveyard atop the Ácoma mesa. Neatly tended and commanding an extraordinary vista of the pale valley below, it is enclosed by an earthen wall. The faces of Katchina spirits are placed along its rim like sentinels guarding the dead. Maurus points to a round hole about the size of a large window in the wall. We hear the wind as it rushes through creating a low and eerie moan. He tells us that the hole is for the sixty little girls Oñate's priests took away. "It's so their spirits will be able to someday find their way home."

We will also meet Larry Medina, young, assertive and charismatic, a power broker who works the phones in his office with savvy and political acumen. He is one of the members of the El Paso City Council who voted to give public funds and expensive real estate located directly in front of city hall to the multi-million dollar Oñate monument. The idea, Medina tells us, is that the monument will help revitalize downtown El Paso. It will give the city, which is 90% Mexican-American, a sense of pride in its Latino past - a history that has often been dismissed by Anglo historians. It will also draw tourists who will want to see a magnificent and grand work of public art by a world famous sculptor. Excited by the monument's progress and its approaching dedication, Medina began reading about Don Juan de Oñate, his colony, his explorations and his encounters with Pueblo Indians to the north. He soon began to think that perhaps he and the El Paso City Council had made a serious mistake.

Medina, like most Mexican-Americans, is descendant of both Spanish and Indian blood. In his soft brown features one can easily discern his mestizo ancestry. He tells us he has stumbled into a crisis of identity to which there is no easy solution, and one that is complicated by the cities fiscal commitments to the Oñate monument. Medina wonders, "How do we honor one part of our past without denying or dishonoring the other?" His question cuts to the dual and contradictory nature of Mexican-America's mestizo identity. It is a recognition that they are the sons and daughters of both the conquerors and the conquered, the master and the slave, the rapist and the raped. The question of how we choose to remember a past that is as profane as it is heroic is an important theme of this film and one Medina must grapple with. He tells us that, he plans to go to Ácoma. He doesn't know what to say or do, but he feels there must be a way to find reconciliation. Otherwise he tells us, "When dedication day comes I may be out there protesting the very statue I voted to erect."

We will see Maurus and other Native leaders of the Southwest Indigenous Alliance (who are organizing against the monument) as they explain why they will never accept the statue. They tell Medina that the Spanish who came to New Mexico and the Americans who followed did not build their empires from the wilderness. The Spanish came because Native people had already explored, developed, and nurtured the land. When Oñate found mineral deposits it was because he had threatened, or manipulated Native people into showing him where these minerals lay. He found it much easier to rely upon Native knowledge than to spend a lifetime trying to generate his own. We learn that Oñate forced the inhabitants of whole pueblos to leave their homes so his colonists could have shelter, making Native people refugees in their own land.

They tell Medina that while Oñate brought the horse to North America these were not gifts. Native people got horses because the Spanish accidentally lost many, others were stolen by Indians who recognized their value. Maurus points out that Don Juan did not extend El Camino Real from Zacatecas to Santa Fe as is widely believed. It had already existed as an ancient Native trading route, which Oñate had merely followed. In fact, many roads and highways throughout the Americas were originally Indian trails.

The truth of history they tell him, is that civilizations build upon one another. We all stand on the shoulders of those who came before us and the Spanish in New Mexico were no different. They stood on Indian shoulders.

There were Native political systems, agricultural systems, religions, networks of communication and trade, and a regional economy all long before Oñate. The very survival of the Spanish was built upon a pre-existing fabric of Native civilization. Without Native communities like Ácoma there would never have been a Spanish presence in New Mexico. And while Juan de Oñate was himself keenly aware of this fact, today, some four hundred years after his demise, supporters of the monument have yet to find a way to reconcile or even acknowledge this simple truth. Councilman Larry Medina goes back to El Paso with a lot to think about.

We will follow and then inter-cut these different story lines until they ultimately converge at the statue's dramatic unveiling in front of city hall in early 2004. We anticipate that the dedication will be tense and surreal. Native and Chicano activists plan on constructing huge paper matché feet to symbolize Oñate's brutality. The Hispanic Preservation League of Albuquerque has committed to bringing several bus loads of supporters. Among these are about two dozen re-enactors dressed as conquistadors with swords, halberds, helmets, armor, horses and standards bearing the Oñate family crest.

Finally there is the artist John Houser who is dismayed but undaunted. To him, "Talk of Indian butchers and atrocity sounds like a lot of new age babble. If monuments were built only to honor saints there would be no Mt. Rushmore, no Vietnam Memorial, and no way to honor Thomas Jefferson, a man who owned slaves, fathered children with them and then kept his own offspring in bondage. What most people don't realize is that in the end the bronze will continue to endure over thousands of years. And all the political squabbles will perish and be lost in the vastness of time."

But this is not just a film about oppositional forces, it is also about the nature of history, how we remember, what we remember, and why. It is about people from different communities struggling to come to terms with a common past, one that is divisive, painful and emblematic of long-standing inequities. The construction and approaching dedication of this monument is a unique opportunity for candid dialogue about the continued impoverishment of Native communities and the purpose and role of public art to express the values and aspirations of a community. How does one community publicly honor,

recognize and take pride in a historical legacy without dishonoring those they came in conflict with, conquered, enslaved, and killed? And how do we reconcile the brutalities of the past without having to choose or weight the relative value of one legacy over another? Especially if your own identity is the heritage of both.

Cristina Ibarra
Producer

Cristina Ibarra is a New York based filmmaker with roots along the US/Mexico border. Her directorial debut, *Dirty Laundry: A Homemade Telenovela* is part of the national PBS series ColorVision premiering in June of 2003. It is currently airing on various regional PBS stations throughout the country including WNET, WYBE, and KTEH. This short was awarded Best Short Fiction at CineFestival, 2001 in San Antonio, won the Jury Award at ImageNation, 2001 in New York City, and won the Audience Award at this year's African American Women In Cinema festival held in NYC's Directors Guild of America. She is part of Latino Public Broadcasting's Emerging Makers initiative which commissioned her to make a humorous interstitial, *Grandma Cooks* for PBS. Cristina is also a CPB/PBS Producer's Academy Fellow, and a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow.

John Valadez
Producer

Born and raised in Seattle, Washington, John Valadez has been producing documentaries for Public Television for nine years. His first film, *Passin' It On*, was started while he was a student at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. It aired on the PBS series POV. John has produced for three PBS series, *Making Peace* (1997), *Matters of Race* (will air in fall of 2003), and *Visiones: Latino Arts and Culture* (will air in 2003). John is currently directing a historical documentary entitled *The Head of Joaquin Murrieta*. He is a Rockefeller Fellow, has twice been a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow and currently sits on The Artists Advisory Board for The New York Foundation for the Arts. He is a founding member of the New York Chapter of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers and has worked on productions for FRONTLINE, HBO, The CBC, Carlton UK Television and The Learning Channel. John currently lives in Dix Hills, New York and works in New York City.

Elia Lyssy
Director of Photography

Elia has been shooting feature films, commercials and documentaries for the past fifteen years. Features include: *THE ESCAPE ARTIST*, Dir: Michael Laurence; *ASTORIA*, Dir: Nick Eferiades Prod: Marevan Pictures; *THE MONEY SHOT*, Dir: Matt Mailer Prod: Bigel/Mailer Films; *NOT EVEN THE TREES*, Dir: Nacho Arenas Prod: Seagal/Nasso; *THE LAMASTAS*, Dir: Paul Griffin; *THE DEFINITE MAYBE*, Dir: Sam Sokolow, Rob Lobl Prod: Bob Balaban; *PUZZLES OF BLUE*, Dir: Christian Giornelli Prod: John Traynor; *VOICES FROM NEW YORK*, Dir: Andreas Vetsch

Documentaries include: *WEISCH NO*, Dir: Mirjam Von Arx Prod: Ican Films; *RISING LOW* Dir: Mike Gordon Prod: Cactus Unlimited; *7th STREET* Dir: Josh Pais; *WRITING AGAINST DEATH* Dir: Rolf Lyssy Prod: DocProductions; *PHISH - BITTERSWEET MOTEL* Dir: Todd Phillips Prod: STF Films; *EYES OF THE STORM*, Dir: Tobin Rothlein; *SHOOTING STARS* Dir: Mirjam Von Arx; *24 / 7* Dir: Joe Gantz Prod: View Films/MTV; *FAST PITCH* Dir: Jeremy Spear Prod: ShortStop Films; *SILK DREAMS* (also Director / Editor); *MYTH FOR MILLIONS* Dir: Gandulf Hennig Prod: Neue Pathos Film; *A LOVE FOR CHEMISTRY* Dir: Rolf Lyssy Prod: A.Baenninger