

“God’s Country”

Multi-Film Project Treatment

“They called her story girl because she listened to the voice of the wilderness and translated what she heard.”

— Nell Shipman, *Trail of the North Wind* short film, 1924

A century later, as our climate careens towards collapse while entire species, habitats and ecosystems disappear at a staggering rate, we need story girl more than ever to translate what the planet is telling us...and perhaps help shepherd the shift towards a sustainable future. *Now*. “God’s Country” gives us that story girl.

Logline: After getting kicked out of Hollywood in the 1920’s, Canadian-born Nell Shipman – silent screen star, pioneer filmmaker, early animal rights advocate and nature lover – moves to the Idaho wilderness to make her own movies but ends up losing her beloved animals. A century later, a group of renegade film students pick up where Nell left off and produce a series of controversial environmental films that threaten to disrupt big oil...and save a few animals along the way.

Theme: What are we doing to “God’s Country” – our planet and its inhabitants – and why?

Vision: This multi-film project is comprised of two features and several short films:

1. “God’s Country” feature film (drama)
2. “God’s Country” sequel feature film: “The Girl from God’s Country” (drama)
3. “The Trial Part I” short film (50 min) (satire)
4. “The Trial Part II” short film (50 min) (satire)
5. “Face the Future” short film (20 min) (satire)
6. 5 to 7 short shorts (3-5 min) that address specific issues pertaining to species and habitat loss (educational)

Background: In 1919, Nell Shipman starred in Canada’s most commercially successful silent film, “Back to God’s Country,” which was shot in Northern Alberta – very close to where the massive oil sands development is today. What would Nell say? Like the landscape, she’d be devastated. Then she’d make a movie...or two.

Screenwriter Maryanne Pope (an Albertan) first contacted the Shipman family in 2005 about her idea of sharing Nell’s story by connecting it with a contemporary environmental issue that shares the same geographical location. They loved it. Over the years, Maryanne has worked closely with the family to develop the project on spec. In 2020, Maryanne secured the option to Nell’s autobiography, “The Silent Screen & My Talking Heart.”

Stage of Script Development: The “God’s Country” feature screenplay is completed and ready to pitch to producers. The other scripts are in various stages of completion and can be completed quite quickly. A detailed treatment for the “God’s Country” multi-film project is available upon request, as is the completed screenplay for the “God’s Country” feature as well as the first draft of “The Trial” short film.

Trailers: [Here is the link](#) to view the “God’s Country” trailer/promo video (2 min, 20 sec). The password is: GCTrailerGen. And [here is the link](#) (password: UnderPressureEA) to view the short film, “Under Pressure,” which was “created” by the fictional film students at the end of the “God’s Country” screenplay.



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