

THEY WENT NORTH TO FIND MEANING.

THEY
FOUND
VIOLENCE
INSTEAD.

MANHUNT

A FILM BY,
Wayne Wapeemukwa

**INSPIRED BY
TRUE EVENTS**

Inspired by the real 2019 Northern British Columbia manhunt when two teenage boys from Vancouver Island murdered three strangers and fled north through ghost towns and endless forest. Their flight, live-tracked across social media and news feeds, unfolded like a fever dream of the digital age: an open-world simulation of fear and fascination. Weeks later, their bodies were found by a river, the chase ending as abruptly as it began.

Two boys vanish into the north, their lives dissolving between simulation and reality, between a desire to belong and a hunger to disappear.

Manhunt reframes those events not as true crime, but as a parable of modern masculinity — a generation raised by computers, haunted by loneliness, and searching for meaning in the ruins of the frontier.



LOGLINE & TOPSHEET INFO

CHASING SALVATION IN THE VAST NORTHERN FRONTIER, TWO BOYS DISCOVER THEY CAN'T OUTRUN WHAT THEY'VE BECOME.



Runtime

100 minutes

Format

Digital, 16mm

Genre / Tone

Psychological thriller / Drama

Language

English

Country of Origin

Canada





J O E Y



K I T



Joey A GAMER WHO MISTAKES
CONTROL FOR CONNECTION.

Joey grew up in the silence between screens — a boy raised by his grandmother after his father disappeared and his mother succumbed to the slow drift of pharmaceutical addiction. The opioid crisis that hollowed out North America runs like a quiet undertow through his life: bottles in the cupboard, a phone that never rings, a childhood punctuated by withdrawal and neglect. In the absence of love, he turned to simulation — building worlds he could control, alliances he could command, enemies he could erase. Now nineteen, unemployed, and adrift, Joey channels his isolation into fantasy and ideology, mistaking the power of violence for the intimacy he has never known.



Kit A FOLLOWER WHO CONFUSES
LOYALTY WITH LOVE.

Where Joey comes from scarcity, Kit comes from comfort — the son of a well-off family whose polished home conceals an emotional void. His life has been stable, even privileged, yet he drifts through it with quiet bewilderment, drawn to Joey's intensity like a moth to flame. Kit's motives are harder to read: pity, fascination, or an unspoken wish to dissolve into something real. Together, they form an asymmetrical bond — predator and witness, leader and echo — two boys caught between envy and devotion. Their journey north binds them in a tragic mirror: one fleeing the emptiness of poverty, the other the emptiness of privilege, both seeking a way out of themselves.

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T H E M E S

Manhunt is a film about **masculinity, loneliness, and the haunting afterlife of colonial desire**. Two young men drift north through the husks of industrial towns, chasing a fantasy of escape. The vast, empty landscapes of northern Canada become mirrors for their own interior desolation — the dream of freedom collapsing into a geography of ruin.

Rooted in my **Indigenous (Michif) heritage**, the film confronts how the settler impulse to “begin anew” in the wilderness is inseparable from the **dispossession of Indigenous lands**. The protagonists’ search for transcendence through violence becomes a critique of whiteness itself — of how colonial masculinity, when severed from kinship and land, turns its alienation inward. The film is also a meditation on **what is not seen**: Indigenous people appear only in the

prologue and epilogue, their spectral presence exposing the absences that colonial vision produces. Drawing on the masculinity and insanity of *Taxi Driver*, the restrained intimacy of Gus Van Sant’s *Elephant*, and psychological tension of *Funny Games*, *Manhunt* explores how alienation metastasizes into violence. Although it is a film about misogyny, **no women are harmed on screen. Misogyny here is revealed not only as destructive to women, but as the slow self-annihilation of men** — a portrait of despair in a world that has forgotten how to see itself.

Manhunt is, above all, a lament for a generation of men stranded in the wreckage of a colonial dream — and a gesture toward the possibility of healing through accountability, land, and relation.

TARGET AUDIENCE & MARKET POSITIONING

Manhunt is aimed at the **arthouse and crossover audience aged 18–35**, particularly men grappling with loneliness, identity, and disillusionment in an age of online extremism. This is a self-selecting audience — young men raised in digital spaces shaped by figures like Andrew Tate, Jordan Peterson, and Adin Ross — who are now turning toward art and cinema to understand the void they’ve inherited.

The film aligns tonally with *Funny Games*, *Nitram*, *Our Hero Balthazar*, and the documentary *TFWNOGF*: works that anatomize modern masculinity and the emotional infrastructures of violence without resorting to sensationalism. Like these films, *Manhunt* seeks not to condemn but to understand, tracing how alienation becomes ideology, and how ideology becomes despair.

Premiering in **Locarno’s Concorso Internazionale**, *Manhunt* enters one of the world’s most rigorous showcases for bold, auteur-driven cinema. Following in the lineage of distributor-backed films that merge social urgency with poetic form, it is built for audiences ready to look directly at the crisis of contemporary masculinity and the colonial dream that sustains it.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I grew up on a small farm in rural Canada, in a family where violence and silence were often the same thing. My father was a man who taught obedience, not tenderness — and my earliest education in masculinity came through fear.

I made *Manhunt* because I wanted to understand how men become what they fear — how shame, loneliness, and a hunger for belonging can turn into rage. When I was a teenager, my best friend drifted into white nationalism. Watching that transformation broke something in me. I recognized the same despair that had haunted my father — and, if I'm honest, the same despair that once haunted me.

This film is not a condemnation but a reckoning: an attempt to see how good intentions curdle into cruelty when love is absent and history is denied.

Manhunt is my way of returning to that landscape — to confront the ghosts of my childhood and the colonial ghosts beneath it. I wanted to make a film that listens rather than lectures, that looks directly at what we would rather not see: the aching need for connection buried inside violence, the grief that hides beneath hatred. For me, cinema is not just an art form but an act of witnessing — a way of finding kinship where it has been broken.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Wayne Wapeemukwa is an Indigenous (Michif) filmmaker and philosopher whose work moves between documentary and poetic fiction. His debut feature, *Luk'Luk'l* (2017), premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, **where it won Best First Feature. The film went on to be named to TIFF's Canada's Top Ten, earned the Directors Guild of Canada Discovery Prize**, and won Best BC Film at the Vancouver International Film Festival. *Luk'Luk'l* was distributed by Amazon and received an international theatrical release.

Wayne's films explore the emotional and political lives of those pushed to society's margins, collapsing the boundaries between realism and speculation. Rooted in his Michif heritage and long-term collaborations with non-professional participants, his cinema foregrounds kinship, care, and the poetics of survival.

Holding a PhD in Philosophy, Wayne brings philosophical precision and decolonial insight to his visual practice. His sophomore feature film, *Manhunt*, extends his signature blend of realism and surrealism—interrogating how memory, power, and belonging intertwine across contemporary and historical landscapes.

MANHUNT

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