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Protectors Not Protesters

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PROTECTORS NOT PROTESTERS

By

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A capstone project submitted for  
Graduation with University Honors

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APPROVED

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## **Abstract**

Contemporary photography and other forms of media are reshaping how Native Americans are portrayed in the media. This past year the Dakota Access Pipeline became the largest Native American led movement in history. The Energy Transfer Partners Company constructed an oil pipeline that crosses several states, which included the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Treaty land. This oil pipeline crosses Standing Rock's water source and guaranteed treaty land as documented in the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie. Despite the danger of poisoning their water resources and ignoring treaty rights, the construction of the pipeline continued. Though the construction continued, so did the resistance against it. Native Americans, allies, and journalists took action to reveal the truth behind the United States government's historical and present treatment of Native American people. The following essay will examine the ways in which the water protectors were depicted in the opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to the water protectors that helped in the movement against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Thank you for your dedication to protecting the most precious resource, water. This work is to honor you and your efforts to protect the ancestral lands of the Lakota people. I will forever be thankful for your efforts. I also would like to thank Dr. Clifford Trafzer, Dr. Rebecca “Monte” Kugel, and Dr. Robert Perez for their support and guidance at the University of California, Riverside. Thank you to Joshua Gonzales and Beyaja Notah for their support at Native American Student Programs. Thank you to the University of California, Riverside University Honors Program for making my time in college memorable. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for always supporting me.

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**Photos from the movement**



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Photography has long played a significant role in documenting the relationship between Native American tribes and the United States of America. Some of the first photographs of Native people were taken before the effects of colonization radically altered their ways of life. Photographers such as Edward Curtis captured images of Native American people in an effort to document their lives. Academic historians have often written and taught history in a way that perpetuates colonization and silences Native epistemologies. European colonists and settlers chose not to immerse themselves in Native cultures, nor did they make an effort to understand the ways in which Native American people lived their lives. Historical curriculum and common knowledge is often told through the lens of the victors: Euro-Americans. Rises in education and the increasing availability of many outlets of media have allowed Native Americans and their allies to reshape popular perceptions of the relationship between the United States and indigenous people. Indigenous journalists and allies are now taking action to reveal the truth behind the United States government's historical and present treatment of Native American people. One of the largest Native American led movements to ever occur has centered around the opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline, an oil pipeline that is currently being built through Lakota territory. Many Native American people and allies are leading a movement in opposition of the pipeline because it runs through Indian land legally granted to Native Americans by treaty. A plethora of media sources on various platforms has led to a worldwide awareness of this movement. Social media is changing the ways in which Native people are represented and helps to reveal how the mainstream media often misrepresents political movements. Independent news sites and journalists are currently doing excellent work reporting on the opposition to the Dakota Access

Pipeline. The work of independent photographers and journalists is transforming discussions and representations of Native American people and issues in social media. In stark contrast to the mainstream media, independent media sources are now providing reliable and accurate coverage of the movement, a movement that above all else calls for the protection of water.

One of the most important aspects of the media's coverage is the language employed to denote those that are in opposition of the pipeline. Headlines or titles to videos serve to shape the perceptions of those that see and hear them. Many of these videos and photos rely on the term "protesters." This term, despite its popularity in the mainstream media, does not accurately characterize the movement. The proper word to describe the individuals that have led and been a part of this grassroots movement is "water protectors." It is imperative that all people use the term "water protectors" rather than "protesters," because it shows the world that those opposed to the pipeline are chiefly concerned with protecting the Earth. The Earth provides people with food, water, and shelter, and employing the word "protector" reveals action to protect a precious resource. While the word "protest" is in some ways relevant, as the movement is a protest against a pipeline, "protector" is a more accurate description of the role so many people have taken for the past several months. They are protecting. Mainstream media outlets often spoke of protests, and did not use the term protector. Independent and alternative news sources used the term protector more often, because it more accurately describes the intentions behind the movement.

In June of 2016, the movement to resist the Dakota Access Pipeline first started to gain momentum. Over the summer, people began to gather at the site of the proposed

pipeline to demonstrate their resistance against its construction. Not long after this gathering had begun, the water protectors would face violence and terror. Private security companies were called to protect the Energy Transfers investments in the Dakota Access Pipeline construction so it could be completed in a timely manner. Independent photographers and journalists shared these photos of dogs attacking both people and horses, and injuring them. Amy Goodman, a reporter from Democracy Now, was on the ground with the protectors, interviewing them about this violent act.<sup>1</sup> Since major news networks were not present to capture every moment of the movement, independent news networks like “Democracy Now” provided the primary coverage of this atrocity. One image that captured this horrific incident soon came to form part of a political meme displayed in figure 1.<sup>2</sup> It incorporates one image from Selma in 1965 alongside another image from Standing Rock in 2016. The juxtaposition of these images with their corresponding years demonstrate that the same violent tactics are still being used against people of color fifty-one years later.

As time went on, more people came to be a part of the movement. Large influxes of people contributed to the increase in social media posts of the events that were occurring. One of the pages that has archived many of the events and daily life at the three camps (Sacred Stone Camp, Red Warrior Camp, and *Oceti Sakowin* camp) during the movement is the “Standing Rock Rising” Facebook page. This page is an archive of

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<sup>1</sup> Democracynow. YouTube. September 3, 2016. Accessed March 24, 2017.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuZcx2zEo4k>.

<sup>2</sup> Standing Rock and Selma. Digital image. IWW Environmental Unionism Caucus. Accessed March 24, 2017.  
[https://www.indybay.org/uploads/2016/10/17/north\\_dakota\\_dogs\\_and\\_selma\\_dogs.jpg](https://www.indybay.org/uploads/2016/10/17/north_dakota_dogs_and_selma_dogs.jpg).

daily life during the movement.<sup>3</sup> Figure 2 is much like many of the others that appear on the “Standing Rock Rising” Facebook page. It raises awareness of how the United States treats the indigenous people of the land they currently occupy. This single photo raises numerous questions about the relationship between the United States and Native people. There is one water protector in this photo facing a highly militarized police force. The individual is wearing jeans and t-shirt in front of an army of police officers, Humvees, Bearcat armed personnel vehicles, and snipers. This movement is a peaceful action, and there were never any reports of water protectors using firearms. This single photo displays to the world the absurdity of the United States government’s protection of corporate interests of the elite. Facebook has become one of the most effective platforms to reveal to the world this movement to ensure clean water for people. Over a billion people throughout the world have Facebook accounts and interact with each other on a daily basis. Social media sites such as Facebook can quickly circulate images around the world. Prior to social media there was a delay in seeing photographs around the world. Increased accessibility to media serves to help movements such as this one gain greater support and awareness.

The photo of the water protector on horseback in figure 2 was taken during a standoff between the water protectors, police, and National Guard in October 2016. The same day that this photo was taken, Unicorn Riot, which describes itself as an “alternative media” network, captured live footage of the chaos that unraveled. One journalist with Unicorn Riot did an excellent job recording a video on the day of the clash

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<sup>3</sup> Facebook. Standing Rock Rising. Accessed March 24, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/ryanvizzions/>.

between the protectors and armed forces.<sup>4</sup> Other media outlets typically do not send journalists to observe the violence that ensues in these kinds of clashes. When the journalist of Unicorn Riot stood in the midst of the standoff, they offered a first person point of view of the turmoil that occurs at the sites of the demonstrations. Their reporting illustrates the brutality the police force unleashes upon unarmed people. News media will usually report on such events from a certain distance, or draw on the reports of their news correspondents in the field, but now journalists armed with live camera feeds and audio recording devices can provide greater, more accurate, and immediate coverage. Before the rapid development of video technology, no news sources could disseminate information so quickly from hundreds if not thousands of miles away as Facebook live feeds do today. Now that this technology is widely available, people are using it to better represent indigenous voices in the media.

While independent photographers and journalists have provided excellent coverage of these events, some in the media have openly criticized and denounced the movement and what it seeks to accomplish. One particular video has recently gained millions of views online features political pundit Tomi Lahren. She works for “The Blaze,” a conservative multiplatform news and entertainment network available on several media sites. One of Lahren’s political commentary segments, “Final Thoughts,” is regularly posted on Facebook. Her videos receive millions of views and speak to conservative voices across the nation. In one of her segments on the Dakota Access Pipeline, she fails to acknowledge the importance of one critical issue with the pipeline

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<sup>4</sup> Unicorn Riot. “Police & Military Attach Oceti Sakowin Treaty Camp.” Filmed [October 2016]. 7.06 Posted [October 2016]. <https://vimeo.com/189264404>.

project.<sup>5</sup> The Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1851 states that the land in question is legally reserved for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.<sup>6</sup> In this segment, Tomi Lahren states the protestors at the site need to “follow the law.” According to the Supremacy Clause in the United States Constitution, a treaty is the Supreme Law of the land.<sup>7</sup> All citizens in the United States need to recognize that it is illegal to trespass on treaty land. A treaty was signed between the indigenous people of the area and the United States. It is a legally binding document that should be upheld by both parties. Lahren also specifically claims that the pipeline does not travel through Native land. While all of the United States is Native land historically speaking, the stipulations of the Treaty of Fort Laramie clearly state the territory the pipeline passes through is legally Native land. Lahren’s claim that the pipeline does not travel through Lakota territory is unequivocally false. While she has described herself as a strong supporter of the Constitution, her many discussions on video segments reveal her total disregard for the United States Constitution. She openly contradicts herself on various media segments providing no factual information and only her uninformed opinions on the matter.

The millions of views Lahren receives on her videos do an injustice to the water protectors at the Dakota Access Pipeline. Fake news and opinion-based statements often make up the mainstream “news,” but do not constitute the truth. As is often heard today,

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<sup>5</sup> “Tomi Lahren’s Thoughts About Dapl #NoDapl Archives.” Youtube. December 02, 2016.

Accessed March 22, 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewc3\\_SzJkOU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewc3_SzJkOU).

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism From Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 36-39.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Constitution, Article 6, Clause 2.

they are examples of “alternative facts.” Lahren’s ability to reach so many people with her social media outlet is negatively affecting the movement of the water protectors. Media outlets such as The Blaze prove that the new sources of media that often help water protectors discuss their movement with the world can also be used against them. She takes the information that best fits her own political narrative, and uses her media platform to reinforce the idea that these activists are not water protectors, but an inconvenience to the United States. In this way, social media employs much of the same rhetoric used against Indian people in the past. Under this narrative, Native people are described as a problem, a population that must be forced into a different lifestyle, because the Native American way of life is not the “right” one. This is what some of Lahren’s viewers begin to theorize in their mind. Media holds a powerful influence on people if no one questions what they are told or shown. Whether Lahren sees it or not, she is highly influential to many people and is misrepresenting the movement at Standing Rock. From the perspective of an American that has an interest in oil and a disregard for the law, she is telling her truth. The protectors that post live videos and pictures of what happens on the site are telling the truth of the chaos that ensues at this movement and the law that is written in the Constitution, and in treaties. Networks such as “The Blaze” work to misrepresent the movement and are successful in doing so when viewers choose to ignore other voices in the movement.

Another important component of the media coverage that has played a significant role in shaping popular perceptions can be seen in the celebrities that have shown their support for the movement. Many have used social media to express their solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and water protectors. One such celebrity that went to the

site and even got arrested there was actress Shailene Woodley.<sup>8</sup> Woodley has had starring roles in movies such “Divergent” and “The Fault in Our Stars.” Millions of fans follow her Instagram or Facebook, learning what she does every day and what she believes in. Woodley’s open expression of support to her masses of followers helps provide a whole new audience for the movement. In the 1970s, during the occupation of Wounded Knee, Marlon Brando, a famous Hollywood actor, chose not to attend the Academy Awards for his award. He instead received the help of Sacheen Littlefeather, a Native American woman that read a statement outlining Brando’s disapproval of the depiction of Native Americans in the American film industry.<sup>9</sup> Shailene Woodley used her popularity as a celebrity much like Marlon Brando did. Due to the profound influence celebrities exert in the world, their support can be extremely beneficial for the movement. Other celebrities that have used their notoriety to express their concern for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe include Rosario Dawson, Mark Ruffalo, Jason Momoa, Ezra Miller, Ray Fisher, and Leonardo Dicaprio.<sup>10</sup> The overwhelming support of these celebrities brings an unprecedented level of notoriety and awareness to the movement. Actors such as

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<sup>8</sup> Rosario Dawson, “ ‘Divergent’ Star Shailene Woodley Join Standing Rock Sioux Protest Against Dakota Access Pipeline.” Indian Country Media Network. August 13, 2016. Accessed March 24, 2017. <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/environment/rosario-dawson-divergent-star-shailene-woodley-join-standing-rock-sioux-protest-against-dakota-access-pipeline/>.

<sup>9</sup> Melia Robinson, “The unbelievable story of why Marlon Brando rejected his 1973 Oscar for ‘The Godfather.’ ” Business Insider. February 24, 2017. Accessed May 05, 2017. <http://www.businessinsider.com/marlon-brando-rejected-godfather-oscar-2017-2>.

<sup>10</sup> Rosario Dawson, “ ‘Divergent’ Star Shailene Woodley Join Standing Rock Sioux Protest Against Dakota Access Pipeline.” Indian Country Media Network. August 13, 2016. Accessed March 24, 2017. <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/environment/rosario-dawson-divergent-star-shailene-woodley-join-standing-rock-sioux-protest-against-dakota-access-pipeline/>.



Woodley, Momoa, Miller, and Fisher portray fictional movie characters that fight for justice. In fictional roles they fight for justice, and in real life they stand in solidarity with this movement to oppose the Dakota Access Pipeline. Celebrities do have a larger voice in society compared to the average person, so they drew on their popularity to gather support for water protectors.

Figure 3 reveals another important aspect of the No Dakota Access Pipeline movement. Hashtags, like those in the photo above, have played a significant role in shaping popular perceptions of Native American people over the duration of this movement.<sup>11</sup> Tracing the usage of the hashtags “#mniwiconi” or “#waterislife” on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter provide an archive of millions of photos available throughout the world. When one clicks on a hashtag, they are provided a massive online archive, and are able to view every other photo that is posted with that particular hashtag. Being able to see the long list of photos under these hashtags makes it easier to see the support of numerous and various people for the movement. One could search the hashtag “#waterislife,” and every photo that is posted with that hashtag will appear.

The movement has also gained solidarity amongst other indigenous groups of people. Hawaiian people, for example, came to express their solidarity with the Standing Rock movement, and with indigenous struggles generally. Some of the people pictured in figure 4 are holding up a triangular symbol with their hands, which indicates a different movement that indigenous Hawaiian people are currently involved in, concerning the

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<sup>11</sup> Jason, Momoa. “Standing Rock Solidarity.” Digital image. Instagram. Accessed March 24, 2017. <http://reappropriate.co/2016/09/asian-americans-we-cannot-be-silent-on-the-dakota-access-pipeline-nodapl/>.

mountain of Mauna Kea.<sup>12</sup> A telescope is proposed to be built on this mountain on the big island of Hawai'i. By expressing their solidarity with the Dakota Access Pipeline opposition, the Hawaiians also receive support for their movement. The pipeline construction on Standing Rock has disturbed and dug up sacred burial sites. Similarly, the proposed construction of the telescope in Hawai'i would disturb the sacred site of the Mountain of Mauna Kea.<sup>13</sup>

The eviction of the remaining protest camps in 2017 was also heavily reported. As the police and national guard were evicting the last remaining members of the Oceti Sakowin camp, an image began to circulate that displays the perspective of indigenous people on their relations with the United States government in contemporary times. It contains two photos of a Native American elder by the name of Regina Brave, one taken in the 1970s during the Wounded Knee occupation, and the other in February 2017 during the eviction of the Oceti Sakowin camp.<sup>14</sup>

During the early 1970s, a major political event took place in Lakota territory, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. During the Wounded Knee standoff, the Lakota people and allies from other tribes protested the Oglala Sioux tribal chairman,

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<sup>12</sup> "Hawaiians at Standing Rock." Digital image. [Http://www.democraticunderground.com/1017400410](http://www.democraticunderground.com/1017400410). Accessed March 22, 2017. <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/CsBbc0DUMAAHdC5.jpg>.

<sup>13</sup> "Indigenous Hawaiians Fight Proposed Telescope on Sacred Mauna Kea." Indian Country Media Network. June 24, 2014. Accessed May 05, 2017. <https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/history/sacred-places/indigenous-hawaiians-fight-proposed-telescope-on-sacred-mauna-kea/>.

<sup>14</sup> "Hero Grandma From Wounded Knee Standoff in 1973 Just Arrested at Standing Rock." February 24, 2017. Accessed March 01, 2017. <http://alternativemediasyndicate.com/2017/02/24/hero-grandma-wounded-knee-standoff-1973-just-arrested-standing-rock>.

Dick Wilson, and his corruption.<sup>15</sup> The Wounded Knee occupation also protested the federal government and its disregard for the rights of Indian people. This photo reveals the presence of Oglala Lakota elder Regina Brave during the occupation on Pine Ridge in the 1970s, and now in the current year of 2017 at the site of the Oceti Sakowin territory. The day that the Morton County Police Department emptied the camp, they removed elder Regina Brave. Indian people continue to resist despite all the continuous efforts of the United States government to remove Indian people. Resistance is what this political meme reveals. Memes now form an important part of visual culture providing humor, political commentary, relationship advice and many other social topics. This image reveals that this elder has not given up and will not conform to America and leave her traditional lands. Over the course of 45 years, Regina Brave has actively participated in indigenous-led movements, as told through the combination of these two photos. Including the dates on the photos also emphasizes multiple points. One point this photo makes is that contemporary Native American people have not given up their resistance against the United States in the years since the Wounded Knee Occupation. This photo also reveals that the United States has not changed its treatment of Native American people. Police will remove an elder from her ancestral lands she is legally entitled to. Taken together, these photos have much the same effect as the image of the dogs attacking African Americans in the 1960s alongside water protectors in 2016. These photographs clearly demonstrate that despite the decades that have passed, Native people still endure the same violence and atrocities.

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 198-205.

The force employed by the state to remove all water protectors from the Oceti Sakowin camp was completely unnecessary--an overuse of power. Fox News television site in North Dakota reported on the eviction of the camps in February 2017.<sup>16</sup> Their reporting, however, did not include live coverage of the forced removals. During that day, several Facebook accounts provided live news streams that captured footage of the arrests of the remaining individuals left at the camp. The Fox News anchors reported a news story, but edited their presentation in a biased manner. The water protectors used smartphones to offer an accurate newsfeed through the lens of those involved in the movement. While some people may claim that it is “standard procedure” to deploy that much force to evict the protestors one must remember that what is “legal” or generally accepted is not always “right.” It is important to question authority and remind this country that just because one has the power to do something does not mean it should be done. The images and videos that the water protectors have released remind people that maintaining the status quo and accepting things for what they are cannot be the right course.

CNN also provided some coverage of the eviction from the camps. Unlike Unicorn Riot, the CNN reporter Sarah Sidner did not go into the camp itself to report on the interactions between the water protectors and police. This severely limits the way in which a spectator of the news can view the situation. Independent media sources have proven capable of providing first-hand reports of the events that unfold at the protest site.

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<sup>16</sup> Cliff, Naylor. Kfyr-tv. Filmed [February 2017]. 3:02. Posted [February 2017]. Accessed March 01, 2017. “Law enforcement moves in to remove remaining demonstrators from main DAPL protest camp.” <http://www.kfyrtv.com/content/news/Law-enforcement-moves-in-to-remove-remaining-demonstrators-from-main-DAPL-protest-camp-414657663.html>.

One specific CNN segment discussed the burning of structures in the camp. During the evictions, CNN analyst Jake Tapper initially stated that the reason many people were burning the structures was because they were stuck to the ground or did not have enough time to break them down.<sup>17</sup> This analysis suggests that the remaining water protectors were lazy or were simply leaving a mess behind because they were unable to clean it up. A minute or two later in this same segment, Tapper reported that the burning of the lodging structures was actually for ceremonial purposes. In Native American spirituality, ceremonial burning often marks the end of an important event and a return of the materials back to mother earth. The problem that arises with this kind of news coverage is that audiences may only watch part of the segment, and ultimately do not hear the full story. While it is beneficial that Jake Tapper eventually corrected his error and stated the structures like these were being burned for ceremonial reasons, his initial statement will still have influenced his audience's perceptions. Statements like these are extremely powerful and problematic. CNN's coverage did include an interview with an elder from the camp, but overall their reporting was of a very limited scope. Seeing the arrests, removals, and the movement itself from the point of view of someone within the camp can drastically alter one's perspective, something that news reporters on major networks are often unable to do. The live footage captured by independent journalists and activists on social media make the experience feel so much more real. The coming of social media allows us to view the movement live from the confines of a personal screen on a tablet, computer, or phone. The mainstream media can pick and choose what to report on

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<sup>17</sup> "Dakota Access Pipeline protest site is cleared." CNN. Accessed March 02, 2017. Filmed [February 2017]. <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/22/us/dakota-access-pipeline-evacuation-order/>.

specifically, but a livestream of an incident and its aftermath can be viewed, raw and uncurated, with one's own eyes.

Another photo similar to the one of the water protector on horseback captured in October, was taken on the day the last camp was evicted in February 2017. Rob Wilson, an independent photographer, set up a Facebook page to report on the eviction of the Oceti Sakowin camp. In this photo, a water protector rides a bicycle in front of several armed police in full riot gear.<sup>18</sup> A man riding a bicycle in street clothes facing heavily armed and guarded police officers captures a profound moment on this day. The pictured individual means no harm, but the Morton County Police Officers have essentially prepared for war with all the resources that were given to them for this evacuation. To strengthen their forces, the Morton County Police deployed two hundred law enforcement vehicles, Bearcat armored personnel vehicles, sixteen Humvees, and two hundred police and National Guard soldiers. Police relied on a similar level of force back in October of 2016. During both incidents, this type of force was entirely unnecessary. Despite this, the police still unleashed the same powerful forces to evict about a hundred people that were remaining at the campsites.

The struggle against the Dakota Access continues into 2017, and many tribes and allies are doing everything possible to block the complete construction of this oil pipeline. Soon after Donald Trump ascended to the presidency, he signed an executive order to complete the Dakota Access Pipeline and to resume construction on another oil

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<sup>18</sup> Rob, Wilson. February 23, 2017. Accessed March 01, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/RobWilsonFoto/photos/a.273845393036939.1073741860.188518594902953/273845489703596/?type=3&theater>.

pipeline, the Keystone XL Pipeline.<sup>19</sup> Both pipelines will carry oil and pass through lands near water aquifers that are vital to the life of indigenous people in the northern plains of the United States. Despite this executive order and the evictions from the camp, water protectors will never give up. By organizing demonstrations in various cities, divesting from companies such as Wells Fargo that financially support the pipeline, and exploring legal options within the judicial system of the United States courts, protectors will continue to oppose these pipelines. Independent media and journalists have successfully televised this movement and documented many of the demonstrations and actions that have taken place throughout the world. Independent media and journalists have worked to cover the full story and record live footage of what occurs at the demonstrations and within the camps (Sacred Stone, Red Warrior, and Oceti Sakowin). Drones have also detailed the fight that was going on over the course of the movement. The mainstream media has covered this movement, but does not always frame it in an accurate manner. All media sources, despite their narrative differences, share a common theme, and that theme is resistance. Whether voicing support or criticism of the movement, more and more people continue to talk about this movement, and that is what is most important. It is also worth noting that this movement is not only an indigenous issue, but a human issue. All people need water to live. All citizens of the United States that live along the proposed route for the Dakota Access Pipeline are potentially affected. Historically speaking the United States is entirely Native land, so the pipeline is automatically a Native issue in that sense. From twenty-first century American perspective, there are

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<sup>19</sup> “Trump advances controversial oil pipelines with executive action.” CNN. Accessed March 23, 2017. <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/24/politics/trump-keystone-xl-dakota-access-pipelines-executive-actions/>.

many non-Native people that live along the proposed pipeline that fear that it could contaminate the water and land it runs under. The overwhelming support from Native and non-Native people around the world reveals that water is precious. Independent journalists and photographers have done an excellent job providing information, images, and videos of this movement. Media networks have brought both accurate and false narratives, depending on the particular news source. Researching this movement reveals that the use of independent photography and journalism is rapidly changing the ways that Native-led movements are depicted in American and world media. Many non-Native people have expressed their support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and are not afraid to openly criticize the government's actions. The increasing availability of a wide variety of media has brought overwhelming support to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. It is truly remarkable how photography and video are shaping the future of political movements such as this one. *Mni Wiconi*. (Water is life).



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