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**From ‘Indian Princess’ to ‘Indigenous Chief’:  
The Transformation of Indigenous Women’s Leadership on the Screen**

Indigenous women have not had an easy time in the representation arena when it comes to profiles of leadership, let alone being portrayed as having agency and power. It is generally acknowledged that Indigenous film and television is experiencing a period of renewal and reclamation of Indigenous representations of Indigenous communities across North America. However, Indigenous women scholars are noticing the lack of strong female Indigenous characters in films, with a few exceptions. This paper will look briefly at earlier representations of Indigenous women in films that subscribe to the ‘Royalty factor.’ It will then turn to an analysis of the television pilot *Blackstone* which portrays a Cree First Nation in crisis, with the male leadership abusing its power and perpetuating misogyny towards the women in the community. Devon Mihesuah tells us that “the filtration processes of European consciousness has often projected European prejudices against their own women onto the relations of Indian men and women.” The chief and his male council members are clearly colluding with those prejudices in their comments and humor behind the closed door of the band office board room. *Blackstone* mirrors a growing trend where First Nations reject the male-led ‘colonial’ style of leadership for a womanist community style of leadership. They know, as Jeannette Armstrong tells us, that “it is the spirit of the female, holding in balance the spirit of the male, in a powerful co-operative force, that is at the core of family and community.” There is a Cree prophecy which speaks to the need for women to take their rightful place in the community, and that until this happens, nothing will change for the better. Thus the character of Leona Stoney, an addictions counsellor, is approached by the elders to run for the office of chief. She is represented as young, educated and focused on the needs of her family and community, and she is ultimately convinced to run in the upcoming election for Chief. Kim Anderson notes that “...many Aboriginal women hope to reach a stage where they can reconstruct our age-old supreme authorities back into the management of our communities and nations.” The paper will close by looking at what those ‘age-old’ authorities might consist of, by examining old stories of a balanced leadership in the communities, such as the Blackfoot story “The Smart Woman Chief.”