

## 'Saints and Strangers' follows Natives and the arrival of pilgrims

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
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### **Chinle's Tatanka Means headlines new Feb. 16 documentary**

CHINLE – As an actor, entertainer and clothing entrepreneur, Tatanka Means has performed everything from comedy, to dramas, to documentaries. But he insists that he doesn't go out looking for film or stage roles.

"I have several manager and agents who look for roles for me," Means told the Gallup Sun Feb. 10. "We are all on the same page about what type of roles I want to play and how I want to portray my people. "We pass on a lot of things that would put Native people in a negative light."

Means, son of the late acclaimed Native American actor Russell Means, plays the leading role in a new movie, "Saints and Strangers," put out by the National Geographic Channel. Filmed for a little more than two months in Cape Town, South Africa, it's National Geographic's fourth scripted film.

Means said the film is about the Mayflower voyage from Europe to North America and the lives of the people aboard the ship. The story follows them across the ocean into the development of the Plymouth settlement and gets into their relationships with the surrounding Indigenous tribes who were already established and inhabiting the lands for thousands of years prior to the arrival of the Pilgrims.

It tells the story of the first Thanksgiving and how the Native people saved the lives of the immigrant Pilgrims and taught them how to survive through the treacherous winters and trade among the neighboring tribes.

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Means character in the film, Hobbamock, is based on a real life person among the Pokanoket people, he said. Hobbamock was a military liaison between the English and the surrounding tribes, Means noted.

"We spoke all of the Native dialogue in the actual sister language to the original people of that time called Abenaki," he said. "It was a great experience personally and professionally to have had the opportunity to do this."

The film comes out on DVD on Feb. 16. The film's director is Paul Edwards. The film premiered nationwide on the National Geographic Channel on Nov. 22, 2015.

The Chinle-born Means rose to fame years ago performing around the Indian Capital with 49 Laughs, a traveling comedy show. Means said he's in the process of writing a feature-length comedy spoof that he'll independently producing.

"I'm hoping filming will begin this fall," Means said of the project.