

# Dances With Wolves star had to learn new dialect

(CP) . Toronto Star ; Toronto, Ont. [Toronto, Ont]19 Nov 1990: B4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

---

## ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

[Graham Greene] plays Kicking Bird, a medicine man who befriends [Kevin Costner], a Union army soldier who is assimilated into a Sioux tribe in South Dakota in the 1860s.

Much of the dialogue is in the Lakota Indian language, which Greene had to learn. Greene, an Oneida Indian from the Six Nations reserve near Brantford, Ont., found mastering Lakota as much of a challenge as dealing with the heat and cold on the set.

Greene, who lives in Toronto with his wife and their cat, is currently touring with the Canadian play *Dry Lips Oughta Move To Kapuskasing*.

## FULL TEXT

WINNIPEG (CP) - He didn't think so at the time, but native actor Graham Greene was dealt a winner when he lost a cut of the cards.

It all began when Greene was operating a recording studio in Ancaster, Ont., in the early 1970s and a friend kept pestering him to take part in a play.

"Finally I just said 'Look, I'm not interested. We'll cut cards. If I win leave me alone - if you win I'll do the damn thing'," Greene said with a laugh during an interview.

"I pulled up the two of clubs. Say no more."

The play bombed, but once Greene hit the stage he never turned back.

The 38-year-old actor now co-stars with Kevin Costner in the movie *Dances With Wolves*. The picture, which opened to rave reviews in Toronto recently and arrives in other major Canadian cities on Friday, is his biggest role to date.

Greene plays Kicking Bird, a medicine man who befriends Costner, a Union army soldier who is assimilated into a Sioux tribe in South Dakota in the 1860s.

Much of the dialogue is in the Lakota Indian language, which Greene had to learn. Greene, an Oneida Indian from the Six Nations reserve near Brantford, Ont., found mastering Lakota as much of a challenge as dealing with the heat and cold on the set.

"We couldn't slack off or take any time off the script," said Greene. "Every spare moment was spent going over the

script and trying to get the pronunciations better and better."

Dances With Wolves is billed by Orion Pictures as "one of the few honest cinematic portrayals of native Americans losing their culture and identity to the white man."

Greene, who lives in Toronto with his wife and their cat, is currently touring with the Canadian play Dry Lips Oughta Move To Kapuskasing.

The play earned him a best actor award - the Dora Mavor Moore - from the Toronto theatre community last year.

Dressed in blue jeans, white basketball shoes and a black toque, Greene more or less shrugged off his success in a rehearsal break during the play's run in Winnipeg.

Asked why he went into acting, he jokes that it was because he could sleep in and stay up late.

He doesn't feel the need to restrict himself to native roles.

"Once I played the ghost of a black transvestite. I had to end up jumping out the window in underwear and high heels at the end of the show. It was very exciting."

Greene also refuses to see himself as a role model.

"Anybody can do what they want in this country," he maintains.

"The only person stopping you is you. Sure you might get a couple of lousy breaks, but so what. I've had lots of lousy breaks in my life."

Though he now has a long string of credits to his name, it was a struggle when Greene first started out.

"I worked as a landscape technician during that period. I did a little welding and a lot of audio engineering, carpentry work, anything to stay afloat.

"It really (changed) two or three years ago when I could get steady (acting) work."

Greene has appeared on television in such productions as Street Legal, Murder Sees The Light and The Great Detective. He was also a series regular on CBC's Spirit Bay and 9B.

His movie credits include Revolution, which starred Al Pacino, Pow Wow Highway and Running Brave. He will be seen in the coming film A Dream Like Mine, directed by Polish director Richard Bugajski.

While things appear to be going well in his career, Greene doesn't take anything for granted, adopting an attitude of what happens, happens.

He does want to move out of Toronto and get a place in the country.

"Preferably build a log cabin if we can. I've seen so much of the country. I'm in love with tall stands of pine in the north country."

## Illustration

Caption: CP photo: actor Graham Greene

## DETAILS

<b>People:</b>	Greene, Graham
<b>Publication title:</b>	Toronto Star; Toronto, Ont.
<b>Pages:</b>	B4
<b>Number of pages:</b>	0
<b>Publication year:</b>	1990
<b>Publication date:</b>	Nov 19, 1990
<b>Dateline:</b>	WINNIPEG
<b>Section:</b>	ENTERTAINMENT
<b>Publisher:</b>	Torstar Syndication Services, a Division of Toronto Star Newspapers Limited
<b>Place of publication:</b>	Toronto, Ont.
<b>Country of publication:</b>	Canada, Toronto, Ont.
<b>Publication subject:</b>	General Interest Periodicals--Canada
<b>ISSN:</b>	03190781
<b>Source type:</b>	Newspapers
<b>Language of publication:</b>	English
<b>Document type:</b>	NEWSPAPER
<b>ProQuest document ID:</b>	436297051
<b>Document URL:</b>	<a href="http://ezproxy.middlebury.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/436297051?accountid=12447">http://ezproxy.middlebury.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/436297051?accountid=12447</a>
<b>Copyright:</b>	Copyright 1990 Toronto Star, All Rights Reserved.
<b>Last updated:</b>	2017-11-15
<b>Database:</b>	Canadian Newsstream

---

Database copyright © 2018 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)