

## AUDITION SIDES - Tallahassee:

Here is a small fact: we all are going to be alone at some point in our life. I learnt as a young man that being successful is being able to stand up to anything ... especially when you're alone... what does that mean? Alone? Good question. I was 15 years old when my Dad brought me to an island on Deer Lake to pick blueberries. Our old Lund boat landed on the sandy shore. My Dad never said a lot but when he did it usually meant something. He asked me, "Do you know why you're here?." I said, "yea, to pick berries, or do you mean metaphysically? I actually didn't know what that meant (laughs), he said "you get where you wanna be one step at a time, there's no short cuts, no magic elevator." We then walked up this hill and started picking berries... I tried to figure out what he meant as I filled my empty ice cream pail with berries, then Dad told me he needed to go to the boat and I heard the motor start up... I ran to shore and sure enough there he was disappearing into the horizon at full speed. I just freaked out, "Dad! Dad! Where are you going!? Where are you going!? Come back!... Come Back! Don't leave me here! I turned around and noticed an open duffle bag on the shore, it had a tarp, a big knife, packs of matches, two thin ropes, fishing stuff... and a Mars Bar (picks up the bar). I starred at it for a long time and wondered what it meant?... not the mars bar, I mean my situation. I waited for hours and started yelling, "Dad, what the hell! I'm getting mad now! Really mad! I was so angry, I started crying, I didn't even know you can be mad and cry at the same time? I desperately wanted my mom, I wanted her fingers to pass through my hair and tell me everything was going to be ok. I picked up this big stone and threw it into the lake and watched the ripples expand towards me... It was quiet, too quiet, no phone,

no tv, no radio blaring, just the sound of the current lapping against the shore and a few mosquitoes. I fell asleep later on, I was emotionally exhausted. I wrapped that tarp around me like I was a big NDN taco, now, thats what you call metaphysical. First thing, I did the next morning was, cry. I must've cried three-times that morning, theres nothing like being so pathetic when no one else is around. Theres so many ways to cry, like gears in a car, first gear, ahhhh, I'm sad, then second gear, ahhhh look at me, I'm sad, but third gear, ahhhhhh, don't look at me I'm really sad, I'm being emotionally invested. The best is fourth gear, that can be embarrassing, ahhhhhhh, ahhhhh, ahhhhhh, my auntie would say let's see go stand outside and cry I'm watching Days of Our Lives. I remembered my KoKom's used to say, "A person is like a tea bag: You can't tell how strong they are until you put em in hot water. I climbed up this massive rock by the shore and started yelling, "Help! my dad's an asshole!, my dad's a real asshole! (laughs), it felt so good to laugh. I was hungry so I began to eat that Mars Bar (eats the mars bar, and throws the wrapper away). I was hungry and I went fishing, I caught two pikes, made a fire, ate, had berries for dessert. I felt good about myself. I gathered tree poles and brush and made a lean-to. I began to trust the land, the water, the sun rising, the sun setting - it was medicine. I awake early the third morning before dawn and noticed the trees were not even awake and a mist was over the water, I breathed it all in, it was... beautiful. What would you call all that? Survival? Freedom? well, to be free means to take on some kind of responsibility for yourself, to survive in your vulnerability. it's a place where excuses are pretty useless. I accepted my place in the world that morning as an Aniahanabe man, on the land. I swore I heard an ancestors voice say, "you're gonna rise but don't forget where your voice comes from." A

while later, I heard a boat approaching, it was my Dad and my Mom waving a bag of food, they pulled up and she gave me a hug, my Dad asked if I caught anything? I said yes, more than fish, but don't get mad. I called you an asshole a few times." He laughed. On the ride back I was thankful, I learned that I'm part of something that's so much bigger than myself.