

## Document Citation

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# The Dark Wind

USA 1991

Director: Errol Morris

**Certificate**  
15  
**Distributor**  
Guild  
**Production Company**  
Carolco International  
In association with  
North Face Motion  
Picture Company  
**Executive Producers**  
Robert Redford  
Bonni Lee  
**Production Executive**  
Theresa Curtin  
**Producer**  
Patrick Markey  
**Co-producer**  
Richard Erdman  
**Associate Producers**  
Allen Alsobrook  
Steve Foley  
**Production Supervisor**  
Karen A. Hughes  
**Production Controller**  
Marsha Mann-Koff  
**Production Co-ordinators**  
Nancy J. King  
2nd Unit:  
Anne Merrem  
**Unit Production Manager**  
Patrick Markey  
**Location Manager**  
Michael Dellheim  
**2nd Unit Director**  
Steve Perry  
**Casting**  
Ellen Chenoweth  
Extras/Local:  
"Ka-Mook" Nichols  
Rene Haynes  
**Assistant Directors**  
Peter S. Gries  
Richard R. Feld  
Kaaren F. Ochoa  
**Screenplay**  
Neal Jimenez  
Eric Bergren  
Mark Horowitz  
Based on the novel  
by Tony Hillerman  
**Director of Photography**  
Stefan Czapsky  
**Colour**  
Technicolor  
**2nd Unit Photography**  
Peter R. Norman  
Phil Carr-Forster  
**Camera Operators**  
Phil Carr-Forster  
B: Paul Edwards  
**Editors**  
Susan Crutcher  
Freeman Davies  
Location:  
Susan Crutcher  
**Production Designer**  
Ted Bafaloukos  
**Art Director**  
John Krenz Reinhart  
Jnr  
**Art Department**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Michael Mercado  
**Set Decorator**  
Corey Kaplan  
**On-set Dresser**  
Rick Gillis  
**Storyboard Artist**  
Eric Ramsey  
**Special Effects**  
**Co-ordinator**  
Richard Stutsman  
**Music**  
Michel Colombier  
**Music Editor**  
Tom Kramer  
**Songs**  
"Love Letters" by Doug  
Livingston, Harry  
Shannon; "I Should  
Have Known All Along"  
by Wendy Kramer,  
Harry Shannon; "Killin'  
Time", "Louisiana Hush  
Puppy" by Harry  
Shannon

**Costume Design**  
Eugenie Bafaloukos  
**Wardrobe Supervisor**  
Leonard Dallas  
**Additional Wardrobe**  
Leslie Neuman  
Sherrie Brody  
**Make-up**  
Key:  
Kenny Myers  
Additional:  
Karen Asano-Myers  
Margaux Lancaster  
Kelly L. Mann  
**Special Make-up**  
Cine-Makeup Inc  
**Title Design**  
Mimi Archie  
**Titles/Opticals**  
Howard Anderson  
**Supervising Sound Editor**  
John A. Larsen  
**Sound Editor**  
Fred Wasser  
**ADR Editor**  
George H. Anderson  
**Foley Editor**  
Douglas Kent  
**Sound Recordists**  
David Brownlow  
Mark "Frito" Long  
**ADR Recordists**  
Charleen Richards  
Randy Piotroski  
**ADR Performers**  
Kee Curley  
Judith M. Durand  
Greg Finley  
Barbara Iley  
Geraldine Keams  
David R. Koehler  
Bob Neill  
Gary Schwartz  
Lewis Watchman  
**Foley Recordist**  
Gary Hecker  
Dolby stereo  
Consultant:  
Steve F.B. Smith  
**Sound Re-recordists**  
Michael Minkler  
Robert Beemer  
**Special Sound Effects**  
Randy Thom  
**Foley Artists**  
Jeff Wilhoit  
Catherine Rowe  
**Advisers**  
Navajo:  
Miller Nez  
Hopi:  
Eric Polinyouma  
**Production Assistants**  
Set:  
Walter W. Parry Jnr  
Fidel Moreno  
Lisa Giammanco  
Lynn Toledo  
Office:  
Wilbur Myron  
Sherri Fries  
Carlotta Piestewa  
LA:  
Corey Powell  
Darren Franks  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Dan Bradley  
**Stunts**  
Jeff Cadiente  
Ray Lykins  
Hank Calia  
**Lou Diamond Phillips'**  
**Stand-in**  
Ivan Long  
  
**Cast**  
**Lou Diamond Phillips**  
Officer Jim Chee  
**Gary Farmer**  
Cowboy Albert Dashee  
**Fred Ward**  
Lieutenant Joe .  
Leaphorn  
**Guy Boyd**  
Agent Johnson  
**John Karlen**  
Jake West

Jane Loranger  
Gail Pauling  
Gary Basaraba  
Larry  
Blake Clark  
Ben Gaines  
Faye B. Tso  
Fannie Musket  
Michelle Thrush  
Shirley Topaha  
Eugene Sekaquaptewa  
Elderly Hopi Man  
Ivory Ocean  
Curtiss  
James Koots  
Taylor  
Arlene Bowman  
Edna Nezzie  
Neil Kayquoptewa  
Lomatewa  
Loren Nahsonhoya  
Danny  
Irvin Tso  
Wolf Dancer

Lance Baker  
Mr Archer  
Charlie Carpenter  
Pilot  
Julia Collins  
Betty C. Barlow  
Alice Y. Nez  
Old Navajo Women  
Billy Beck  
Motel Clerk  
Kee Collins  
Emmett Tso  
Old Navajo Men  
Patrick Jensen  
Albino Boy  
Lonnie Mace  
Timothy Glenn Riley  
Men  
Fidel Moreno  
Bernie Toledo  
Workmen  
  
10,006 feet  
111 minutes

In the Arizona desert, Jim Chee, a young Navajo tribal policeman, is staking out a windmill which has been regularly vandalised at night. When he hears a light airplane crash nearby, Chee finds that the landing lights of a makeshift runway lead smack into the rocks. The pilot and another man are dead, but someone else has driven off in a van, and Chee hears a fourth man scramble away as he approaches. FBI agent Johnson takes over the case, which is drugs-related, and is clearly suspicious of Chee. His superior at the reservation station, Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn, tells Chee to concentrate on the windmill and his other assignments: a 'John Doe' discovered rotting in the hills, and the theft of jewellery from Jake West's trading post. A white man with a gift for magic tricks, West accuses Joseph Musket, an ex-con he employed as a favour to his son and whom he fired shortly before the burglary. Johnson and another FBI man break into Chee's trailer home and beat him up, but the young Navajo insists he knows nothing about the drugs missing from the plane or the van he heard drive away. Leaphorn advises him to take a few days' holiday and stay well away, but Chee decides to investigate on his own. After painstaking tracking, he discovers the abandoned van and the corpse of a drug runner inside, but no drugs. He persuades his friend and Hopi colleague Cowboy Dashee to take him to the Hopi shaman who tends a shrine by the windmill. He accuses the shaman of being the vandal, but having proved his own good faith, gets an eye-witness report to the drugs murder that leads him to uncover the merchandise - buried on the site of the wreck. On checking Musket's records at the penitentiary, Chee learns that West's son was his partner, and that the latter was set up to be killed as an informer by Johnson only a few months previously. Later Chee hears that the killer is to meet the drugs traffickers on a remote mountain top, a place the Hopis know as the Centre of Evil. On a stormy night, Chee fails to prevent the murder of another trafficker, but he unmasks the killer: Jake West. Obsessed with avenging his dead son, West has used the drugs as bait. Johnson and his

partner hold Chee and West at gun-point. But West slips out of his handcuffs and takes revenge on the agents, though he is fatally wounded in the process. The next morning, Leaphorn commends his junior cop, and Chee performs a blessing ceremony for the 'John Doe', Joseph Musket. Produced under Robert Redford's aegis, *The Dark Wind* is the first in a proposed series of films based on Tony Hillerman's contemporary Navajo crime novels. As a laconic framing sequence suggests - a car chase that never quite gets on the road - Hillerman doesn't write thrillers, he writes mysteries. He presents a puzzle to be solved, and puts the emphasis firmly on legwork and deductive reasoning. It is a classical, rather old-fashioned formula, with the focus very much on the cop. The difference is the way Hillerman works out of Navajo culture. Constitutional law is secondary to traditional lore; Jim Chee is a cop who's a singer, a shaman. "They don't know if you're gonna catch the bad guys or heal 'em!" remarks Joe Leaphorn, Hillerman's agnostic protagonist in an earlier series of novels, drafted in here in a supporting role. Having attracted some initial criticism for the casting of Lou Diamond Phillips (after spending a year auditioning Native American actors), the film-makers scrupulously subtitle Navajo and Hopi dialogue. The result is remarkably faithful to the spirit of the novel; all but unimpeachable in respect of Native American culture. It is appropriate that Errol Morris, a documentarist fascinated by common-or-garden eccentricity, should take up this relatively anthropological Hollywood movie. Appropriate, too, that the film-maker/detective whose *Thin Blue Line* freed a convicted murderer should make his first feature about a shaman/cop. Poetic justice is as near as Morris can get. For Chee, the Navajo concept of the "dark wind" precludes a justice system: when a man is doing wrong, a dark wind is blowing through him. It will blow over; the only possible resolution is a return to *hozro*, equanimity. Morris' transition from a cutting-room director to a storyboard *metteur en scene* is a thoughtful, engrossing, but rather self-conscious work. Set against the rich accomplishment of his documentaries, *The Dark Wind* is disappointingly modest, as if Morris were taking cover. Fluent in the semantics of crime, and adept at marshalling evidence, he is still stretched to accommodate the logic of four complex plot strands - it might have been better not to try. Fatally, in a mystery, he tips us the wink too early. No fan of the genre will miss the culprit on his first screen appearance. Poetically, the killer feels himself validated in his own death; the real villains of the piece are the FBI. There's not much conviction in this dénouement, however, for all that it is scored by thunder and photographed by lightning.

**Tom Charity**