

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

In 2011, legendary guitarist, songwriter, composer and producer Robbie Robertson finally decided to put pen to paper and tell the story of his remarkable life. Written over the course of five years without the aid of a ghostwriter, his 2016 memoir Testimony chronicled the period from his upbringing on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario to his wild years touring with music giants Ronnie Hawkins and Bob Dylan to his role in the formation of one of the most revered and influential groups of the 20th century: The Band.

“A lot of stories had mounted up over the years, and it reached a point where they were too heavy for me to carry around,” Robertson says. “The only way I could get some relief was to set some of them free. Several authors had contacted me about writing my story over the years, but each time we’d hit a certain point where things just didn’t ring true to me. It sounded like somebody else was trying to impersonate my voice, so I ended up writing every word of it myself.”

A *New York Times* bestseller, Testimony quickly attracted the attention of filmmakers. “After it was published, a couple of people approached me and said they were interested in making a documentary based on the book, but I wanted to wait until I found someone who just sounded real to me,” Robertson explains.

After careful consideration, Robertson chose to option film rights to his book to the experienced Toronto-based film and television production company White Pine Pictures. Co-founded and run by president and CEO Peter Raymont, White Pine has a 40-year track-record of producing Emmy Award-winning documentary feature films and TV dramas, including *Genius Within: The Inner Life of Glenn Gould* and the Sundance Award-winning *Shake Hands with the Devil*. “We were honored that Robbie put his trust in us”, says Raymont. It was the beginning of a wonderful adventure.”

Raymont and his documentary development executive, Andrew Munger, set about raising funds to produce the film, securing a partnership with Polygram Entertainment and Bell Media Studios.

Raymont and Munger also sought the best director for the film. Among others, they were approached by 24-year-old Daniel Roher, a passionate young Canadian filmmaker who had directed three short documentaries. Raymont and Munger were impressed with Roher’s passion for the subject and his depth of knowledge of Robertson’s music. “We were impressed with Daniel’s passion, determination and extraordinary chutzpah” says Raymont, “Nothing was going to stop him”. They introduced Roher to Robertson’s manager, Jared Levine, who, in turn, introduced Roher to Robertson