[crunching sound of walking on snow]

[humming]

- Wade: People practice music and learn how to play music, but a lot of times they’re filling all the spaces with so much and, and they’re not letting it breathe, and in nature, there’s a lotta silence too. Even when you hear a bird song, there’s a sound and there’s a lot of silence in between.

[playing guitar]

Posoh netaenewemakanak mesek mawaw niw wiyaq.
(Hello, all my relatives and all present.)

Maecetawok aeswihsiyan Wiciwen Apis-Mahwaew.
(My Menominee name is Walks With The Black Wolf.)

Wade Fernandez mokoman eneq aeswihsiyan.
(My American name is Wade Fernandez.)

Netotaem awesaeh awew.
(I am of the Bear Clan.)

Most of my inspiration, I think, comes from my homeland where I grew up. Even on the reservation, I grew up away from the villages, it was eight miles from the nearest village, and my neighbors were basically the trees and the animals, and that's what I could see from my parents' yard. And I'd walk into the forest and I'd sit down by the streams or the rivers or the lakes and when I started to bring the instruments out there and that was a huge inspiration.

[singing in Menominee, playing drum]

[playing guitar]

When I was a, when I was a very young child, I remember watching a movie with my parents and I don't know, maybe I was four years old or something, and...

[strums guitar]
you know, you hear just something like that maybe and it's like, "Ah... what is that?" You know, and then...

[playing guitar]

And that's enough, that was enough to start to say, "I want to do that." You know?

[playing guitar]

[cords hit the ground]

As a musician, like, if you try to define yourself as a musician, you compare yourself to other people. Any musician that stood out, I felt like I wasn't good enough unless I could play as good as those people, in any style of music. And I finally grew out of that by accepting who I was, and I remember even when I went to, I went to school for music for a little while for a performance degree, and I remember my teacher got very angry one day. He said, "After two and a half years with you, you still sound like Wade Fernandez." And then, I was like, "Maybe I'm supposed to... "That maybe that's who I'm supposed to sound like, Wade Fernandez."

[playing guitar]

And I think that's the key is that we don't need to sound like anybody else, we just have to find a way to deliver what we have.

[playing Native American flute]

Coming from the Menominee Reservation, I have roots here that, that come into the music and I guess it gives it some uniqueness, but at the same time there's also, there's a mixture of blues, rock, jazz, country, folk, flamenco, whatever, whatever I'm feeling.

[playing guitar and flute]

My own cultural identity is something I guess that's hard to define. It's easy for people to say, "You're this and you're that..." and it's easy for us to say, "We are Menominee" or "We are Mexican" or "We are whatever," but if you go far back enough it's difficult to define. Okay, you're Menominee since this point, before that, you were of the Copper Culture, your ancestors. Before that, what were you?

To really truly define myself, I'm, I'm part of life, I'm part of... I'm part of what everybody else is. I have the same substance in me that the trees have. I have the same substance that the animals have. We are all influenced by what's around us. For me, that was the forest. And I think that that inspired my music to... have a little more space, have a little more peace in it, as well.

Nicianosaeh,
(My child,)

Whapi-Mahwaewsah Maecewatok somekoh
(Little White Wolf)
Maecewatok somekoh
(Creator smiles on you)