Ekbeh

Abstract
This is a film review of *Ekbeh* (2023), directed by Mariah Hernadez-Fitch.

Keywords
Creole, Cooking, Indigenous, Houma

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This sundance film festival review is available in Journal of Religion & Film: https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol28/iss1/46
Ekbeh (2023), dir. Mariah Hernandez-Fitch

This short film blends the definitions “to build” and “to cook” together to tell the story of the Houma, a southern Indigenous people who were shrimpers in Louisiana. The director’s grandparents describe how to make gumbo while sharing memories of growing up in the segregated south. We hear mawmaw describe how she had to sit in the back of a classroom with other Houma children, and from pawpaw; how the teachers treated Houma students with disdain and cruelty. He left school to work with his father. They built a successful shrimping business over time.

As the gumbo ingredients come together, we can almost smell the “oignons (atufalaha)” and herbs cooking while listening to the stories of the past. We also hear how the process, like life, is not to be rushed. The grandparents tell us about the importance of going outside to listen to the bayou while the meal simmers. We hear a Creole language; a combination of French, some Houma, and a little English. Oral histories are the bedrock of many cultures and infuse the listener with ways to keep language, rituals, and spirituality alive for generations to come.