

Brando Refuses Oscar Citing Treatment of Indian in Movies

There may seem to be little connection between the scene of a Hollywood extravaganza and a small Sioux reservation in South Dakota, but stranger things yet have happened in America and the contrast may not be without meaning.

On March 27, at the same time that a handful of militant Indian people were focusing attention on Wounded Knee, site of a confrontation with yesterday's history and today's federal marshalls, a Hollywood actor, Marlon Brando, failed to appear at the annual Academy Awards ceremonies to accept a gleaming golden statue for his portrayal as best actor in the lead role of the movie "The Godfather."

In his place, Brando sent a young Indian woman, Sasheen Littlefeather. The star rejected

the Oscar "because of the treatment of American Indians in the motion picture industry, on TV, in the movie reruns, and the recent happenings at Wounded Knee."

Brando himself was enroute to Wounded Knee, S.D. "I would have been here myself tonight but I thought I could do more good at Wounded Knee," he said.

"I hope you will not consider this a rude interruption, because it's an honest effort to focus attention on a cause."

Although time limitations prevented Miss Littlefeather from reading the complete statement, it said in part, "The motion picture community has been as responsible as any for demeaning and degrading the Indian, depicting them as savage, hostile, evil,

and making a mockery of their character.

"It's hard for Indian children to grow up today when they see a film and see how they are portrayed in films."

Miss Littlefeather is an Apache and represents the National Native Affirmation Committee.