

*I/V Danielle Koprowski by Det. Willingham #C36

Koprowski, Danielle Interview C36

On 10/15/09, at approximately 0910 hours, I spoke with Danielle Koprowski by telephone after she left a message requesting contact as a past participant in James Ray's Spiritual Warrior Event. I audio recorded the conversation and the following is a summary.

Danielle Koprowski and her husband John were 2008 participants in Spiritual Warrior. She sent me notes from the event that had been kept by a woman who shared it with the 2008 participants.

Danielle told me that last year James Ray told them in preparing for the sweat lodge, you're not going to die in the lodge, you may feel like that, but you're more than that, you are more than your body. The message he gave was not to trust your body and know when to get out, but to push yourself.

Danielle said she has attended many sweat lodges before this event with James Ray and was totally surprised by what he did. She said that in all the others before his you are encouraged to trust yourself and know if you need to leave. She also said that it was much shorter.

Danielle said the structures making the sweat lodges, from the photos, were the same this year as was used in last years. Danielle also stated that the other sweat lodges she has been in the tarps were not plastic, but canvass.

Danielle said there was a woman who went unconscious last year who was drug out at the end the ceremony. The woman who was unconscious was Barb and she was there this year. Danielle cannot remember Barb's last name, but could find out what it is.

Danielle said there were still some people there this year who Danielle described as "still drinking the kool-aid". Danielle added that James Ray is a good teacher who can do a lot of good with what he has to say. Danielle said Barb and another dream team members were ones that pulled Danielle's friend, who attended this year, aside and told them not to talk with the cops. Her friend was told to tell the cops to talk to Megan or Josh.

Danielle described the 2008 ceremony in the following way. The lodge was already constructed by Angel Valley people and the stones were heated. Dream Team members went in first and took up their places in the east, north and west. James Ray did some chants in Hebrew and Hawaiian and James poured water onto the stones. Danielle left after the first round to go pee. She went back in at either the 2nd or 3rd round. Aaron Bennet poured two buckets of water over the rocks and following that round a lot of people got out. Danielle said James was saying don't go, stay in, you're more than that. Danielle said beside Barb being unconscious about 20 people were sick, over heated and throwing up. She said it was like a war zone. Danielle said in speaking with her friend, who was one that did CPR on Kirby, there was this whole social pressure to stay inside. Danielle said last year the Dream Team members did not say much. Danielle said that when a mass number left, after the two buckets of water were poured onto the rocks, it became okay for others to leave when they needed to. Danielle said it was still not okay

with James Ray and he continued to discourage people from leaving. Danielle said the people in the east in James Ray's structure never got cool air when the door opened. Danielle explained that when so many more people stayed inside, that did not allow for people to get down on the ground to get cooler air. A man, Irwin Bosma, was delirious and speaking in tongues. Another man, John, was like that, and Barb was unconscious. Irwin has no memory of it. Danielle said that it is standard to leave, you go out when the door is open. Danielle added that should someone say they need to leave a sweat lodge, the facilitator will immediately open the door to allow the person to leave. Danielle described the following differences being that they are always told this is not an endurance contest.

Danielle said the 2008 James Ray sweat lodge was much hotter and more rocks were used. A big difference Danielle saw was the door in most lodges are bigger, and when open, more air from outside would come in. Water is added in traditional sweat lodges with a ladle as opposed to buckets of water being dumped onto the rocks.

Danielle said Jennifer Haley will be an important person to speak with as she is Danielle's friend who performed CPR on Kirby. Danielle said her experience as a sweat lodge participant, is it is not normal to come out feeling sick.

Danielle felt that Dream Team members, who assisted in the past, have been led to believe that coming out of the lodge sick or passed out is normal. That is what has taken place in the last few years. Danielle said Barb said her experience was like someone who got way to drunk, not that it really changed the direction of her life or she gained something good out of this.

Danielle said last year's event was during the end of September. Danielle's biggest thing, she feels, resulted in the deaths and injuries this year was the not being encouraged to trust your bodies and leave when you need to instead of being encouraged to stay beyond what they can stand.

Danielle felt the problems people had last year were related to heat exhaustion. No safety instructions were given last year.

Danielle explained that people paid a lot of money and they trusted James Ray and that comes with great responsibility. He is the teacher and there is a great desire to please the teacher.

Danielle said James Ray had no reaction to those who left and were sick last year. When the ceremony ended he just got into his golf cart and left. He did not check on anyone or anything else. They did meet up about an hour following the event and they spoke about it for a while.

Danielle has been in about 25 other sweat lodges.

This concluded the interview.

Thu Nov 05 10:37:29 MST 2009
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