

*I/V Laura Souter by VIP Gordon-Lorentze #C913

Case # 09-040205

Interview of Spiritual Warrior Participant, Laura Souter

Date of interview: Oct 26 2009

Questions were from a set of 30 from detectives.

1. How did you learn about James Ray?

Souter advised that he went to a business seminar for the salon industry in [REDACTED] in the Summer/2007 during which RAY was one of the speakers. She thinks his talk was centered around the book that came out "The Secret" in which he was quoted. Souter is a salon owner.

2. How many James Ray events or seminars have you attended?

Souter attended Harmonic Wealth in Atlanta in Oct 2007 (2 day event) and, most recently, the Spiritual Warrior in Sedona, AZ.

3. Have you ever been in a sauna or sweat lodge before and if so, how was it different?

Souter has been in a sauna a couple of different occasions over the years, but never in a sweat lodge.

4. Did you hear anyone talk or make assurances that personnel conducting or building the sweat lodge were specifically trained or experts?

All Souter knew was that the sweat lodge was built by a contractor, hired by James Ray Enterprises. That's what she remembers being told. RAY said at the event that he had used this same contractor in the past many times. Souter said that RAY introduced the contractor,(a man, his wife and a couple of others) to the participants before the sweat lodge session, but Souter doesn't remember the contractor's name. She did not speak herself to the contractor. RAY described to the group of attendees how the sweat lodge was being built with stripped saplings or branches to create the foundation then blankets and tarps draped over that. Souter could see, during the Spiritual Warrior event, the progression of the sweat lodge being built since her cabin was near the area of the sweat lodge construction. RAY had told them it would be very hot and very dark and the door would be shut. She doesn't remember the name of the contractor.

5.) Did you feel prior to going inside the sweat lodge that it was safe? Why?

Souter was a little nervous, but she was not afraid. They were confident so she was confident. She had a case of the nerves because it was something she had never done before. She wanted to do it.

6.) What was your position in the sweat lodge? Who was on your right, left, behind and in front of you? Did you move to different areas of the tent while inside?

Souter said that she was just of the west post of the sweat lodge and closer to the door. She said that Christine Mattern was to her south. There was only one circle of people. On Souter's left side was Linnette (with a Spanish surname-Veguilla?). Linnette was very young. There was a man on the other side of Christine. She thinks his name was Mike (LNU). In the other direction was Laura, closer to the western spot. Liz (of the Dream Team) was sitting in the western spot. Souter knows they did 8 rounds. Souter works with a clock in her head since she's doing hair all day long. Her estimate is very close to one hour 45 minutes to 2 hours. She began the first round by sitting up, facing into the middle of the sweat lodge, but then laid down with her knees bent, since RAY had told them to get nearer the ground it would be cooler there. She also saw the people around her lying down. Also, since she was closer to the edge of the lodge she could feel the air coming in through the bottom of the sweat lodge.

7.) How long did you stay inside?

Souter remained in the sweat lodge for the whole time. She said, as a hair dresser, she is good at approximating time, since she does it all day with her customers. She said each round was about 10-15 min. long. The beginning rounds were longer; then the rounds got shorter and shorter. She thinks the whole session lasted about 2 hours.

8.) What did you eat in the days prior to the sweat lodge? What quantity of liquids did you drink?

Prior to the Vision Quest in the desert, Souter did eat dinner Tues. night. The dinner that was offered was very vegetarian with eggs and cheese, salad and fruit. She drank water and perhaps some ice tea at dinner. She did not eat or drink from midnight Tues night until Thurs. when she was gotten by someone about 6:30 a.m. on Thurs. She ate breakfast on Thursday morning about 8:a.m. They had scrambled eggs, oatmeal and fruit. Since they (the Staff) kept telling them to drink a lot of water, she did drink a lot of water. Before going into the sweat lodge, she did hydrate herself quite a bit, drinking water.

9.) Did you know what to expect for the vision quest?

Yes. Souter said she had read the booklet provided to them several times. She knew she would be by herself and fasting, no food or water. The Vision Quest was also explained by RAY at the event and she had also taken notes about what he told them the Vision Quest would entail. Souter said their (the participants) task in the desert was to continue writing in their journals. They were given a list of questions to use as a guide to spark their memories. The purpose of the journal was to get it all out on paper and set new intentions for themselves. Souter explained that her family is Cherokee (on her father's side); from that connection she knew that in the Native American culture she was out there to shed the old life and create a new life in her mind and from her reading this is something that is done.

10.) Did you know what to expect from the sweat lodge?

Souter said no- other than it would be really hot. Again, she said that she had been in saunas before; she's done steam rooms in the past. She knew it would be hot; they would

bring stones in and pour water on them. The description of the sweat lodge by RAY to the participants was that it would be very hot.

11.) What was discussed for safety procedures if there was a problem inside the sweat lodge?

Souter said that the only thing she remembers that was discussed is that RAY told the participants (he harped her words) that they should all stay as far from the pit as possible; - if you had to leave, get out - you had to go clockwise to be careful and orderly so that nobody would end up in the pit when they left the sweat lodge. Souter said the pit was very deep (it would have come up to her chest if she had stood in it, she described herself as not very tall). The pit was deep enough so that 12 stones the first time; then another 12 stones and then another 8 stones were in the pit. She said the stones in the pit were about the size of a fat loaf of Italian bread. The stones did not stick up above the edge of the pit.

12.) Did anyone tell you what to expect inside the sweat lodge and how to respond to any reactions you might have? How long did you stay inside? How did you feel?

Souter believes that somebody said - if you feel yourself going to be sick, let yourself be sick, it's better to let it come out than to stay in. And lie down, if you feel if you're going to faint, get down on the ground down.

Souter said she felt pushed to the absolute limit that her body could take. Souter says she's only speaking for herself- Souter continues - it was a good thing. She felt totally drained of everything she was trying to get rid of. When she came out, she was able to get on her knees, crawl out and go clockwise around and then get out. When she got out, they were hosing every one down. They were all just lying down in the gravel in a puddle of water. It didn't take her very long before she was able to get up. Then she started to realize that there were people around her that were not in very good shape.

She was able to get up and walk around. So she started to go get blankets and towels. Christine, who was next to Souter, was trying to help somebody who wasn't doing very well and so Souter was bringing them electrolyte water. Souter said it was really, really intense. She doesn't know how to say that. She got rid of everything she went there to get rid of. The physical experience drained her of everything emotionally.

Souter says the only people she saw immediately was Tess who stayed with Souter and Christine in their cabin. Tess's eyes were rolled back, not all the way, Souter could still see her pupils; Tess had white foam out of her mouth. Tess had mucous coming from her nose. When Christine and Souter got out of the sweat lodge, there were a couple of people helping Tess, massaging her, making sure she was breathing. Souter says she has no medical training at all. So for her to know anything about what was happening from that perspective about what was really going on, Souter had no clue. Souter could tell there were some people who were not ok. These people were outside. Souter didn't recall anybody since she was lying on her back and it was loud in the sweat lodge

with all the chanting and she was talking to herself out loud. She was very aware of Linnette on one side of her saying things to herself, and Christine and what Christine was saying. Souter was not aware, other than James' (RAY) voice projecting over. Souter was not really aware of anything else going on (in the sweat lodge) until it was over with, until they were coming out. There were some people coming out; there were some who were moving and some who were not. And so, other people were coming in and moving them out. Souter was not personally aware while she was in the sweat lodge of anyone being in serious distress until she got outside. Souter thinks somebody said something about Liz who was the staff person, the Dream Team person who was in the West, Souter thinks she fainted. And that was inside towards the end, before Souter got out. They had to carry her out. Souter was in the sweat lodge the entire time session.

13.) Did anyone speak during the ceremony? What did they say?

Souter said it was very loud in the sweat lodge, everyone chanting, some from the Book of Proverbs. Also RAY and those around her, Linnette and Christine, were also chanting.

14.) Who, what were they saying?

Souter said she was not aware specifically of what was being said, or who else was speaking (other than what she said above).

15.) Did anyone leave the lodge other than through the door?

Souter said from her own knowledge, no. But Souter thinks someone said some man (she doesn't know who or his name) crawled out of the sweat lodge under the edge of the tent. Like he pulled up the side of the tent and just went out where he was. It seemed like there was a flashlight in there. Then afterwards someone told her that there was this guy who was disoriented, crawled out under the tent at the NE point.

16.) Did you hear anyone say they were having problems? If so, what was said?

How was it reacted to?

Souter says she knows there were several people who went out and the people at the door would say their names, like acknowledge them and then they would come back in. The only person Souter could hear that said she could not deal with it was Linnette, who left. She went out, she stayed almost until maybe the 6th round and then she (Linnette) said: she couldn't do this any more, she didn't want to die. But she did crawl out on her hands and knees. Linnette did not have to be helped out.

17.) Did you fill out any medical forms or were you asked about any health issues?

Souter says she thinks the waiver, nothing specific.

18.) What, if any, symptoms did you have while in the sweat lodge or afterwards?

Souter felt very nauseous and very, very light-headed. She never sweat so much in her entire life. She felt like all of her body's fluids were pouring out of her body. She continued to feel a little nauseous for about another 6 hours after it was over. But, she

also hadn't eaten a whole lot. She also had a headache, but she's not sure if that was because she hadn't eaten very much. Souter feels very lucky.

19.) Do you remember anyone saying something about a flashlight? If so, what? When the man crawled out, RAY said, whoever has the flashlight, turn it off.

20.) Was there anyone inside when you left? If so, what did you see? Did you notice anyone in distress? If so, who did you tell? What did they do?

Yes. She doesn't know what their condition was. When she got to the NE corner as she was crawling out, there was someone who was lying down and there was somebody talking to that person and Souter went around them. Souter doesn't know who it was. She was focused on getting out. Souter said it was self-preservation, she had to get out. Souter said it's over; we're supposed to be out. Souter did here some people, she thinks it was James and some people from the Dream Team saying ok, guys, - you have to come out. Come out. It's time to come out.

21.) Did you hear anyone say they were having a heart attack and thought they were going to die?

No. Souter did not hear anyone say anything like that, except for Linnette saying she did not want to die.

22.) Did you hear anyone say something like it is a good day to die?

No.

23.) How did James Ray react or respond to the people who were in distress?

Do you feel he should have responded any differently?

Souter only saw RAY when she first got out. And then she was helping people get blankets and that kind of thing. After a few minutes Souter started to get cold. The fire outside was still going; so she would go and stand near it once she finished getting blankets for people. And then get something to drink. She saw James with people who were doing CPR. RAY wasn't doing CPR. She saw him with whoever it was and she doesn't know who they were doing it on. It was on the side of the tent, almost kind of behind where she was. It would have been in that NE corner, but it was outside of the tent.

Souter says from hindsight, they should have had an EMS unit that was there waiting.

24.) How did you feel about leaving the sweat lodge during the ceremony?

Souter says after the first couple of rounds she said to herself that she would leave as soon as the door opens. After the 3rd round, then, she talked to herself and said; you're not your body, you're not your body. She repeated it over and over again. Souter told herself she could withstand, she was going to do it, and she stayed in. Souter says she does not feel that anyone pressured her into that. She kept breathing to the side over her shoulder. She could feel cooler air coming from under the tent.

25.) Is there a reason you didn't leave sooner?

No. She stayed because she wanted to.

26.) Was anyone discouraged from helping anyone in distress and if so how?

No. She did not see nor was she told to not help. It seemed very chaotic. And she feels that they (Ray and Staff) did not expect this to happen either and they were not prepared.

27.) When did you first realize something was wrong, that there was a problem?

When Souter saw them doing CPR on somebody; it was a man. Then, she realized, that doesn't look good. The EMS was there very quickly. It didn't seem like it took them very long to get there. She didn't realize how widespread and how many people were sick until much later. When she first came out, she only saw maybe 4 or 5 people who seemed to be unconscious or in some way not fully aware of their surroundings. There were people who were conscious; who said they felt bad, who were nauseous, who said they felt bad, but not unconscious. There were only 4 or 5 people whom she could see that were unconscious. Souter did not vomit.

28.) What do you think happened? What was your response?

Once she saw the CPR, she knew something had gone wrong. One of her roommates, Tess was in obvious distress. Souter did not know what was wrong with Tess, since she's not trained (in EMT). Tess was not conscious. Souter and others were massaging parts of Tess' body and trying to get water into her mouth.

29.) Has anyone talked to you about what to say if questioned by law enforcement? If yes, who was it? Who were they associated with?

No. Christine is the only one Souter has stayed in touch with since the event.

30.) Did James Ray or anyone else tell you what his qualifications for running a sweat lodge were? If so, what did they say?

No. What was said, was that they had done this same exact event 7 times previously and that RAY, on the first day, introduced all of his team members. Ray said that everyone of them had gone through this event and one of them, Liz who was in the West of the sweat lodge, she had done it 3 times previously.

Ray has discussed where he has studied during the Harmonic Wealth weekend in New Orleans. And at the beginning of this event, RAY said he spent a couple of years with a shaman in the Andes. In the Harmonic Wealth Weekend, he had photos of the when he spent time with the Indians in the mountains. Ray said he studied with another Shaman culture in Hawaii. RAY seemed to be very knowledgeable of the rituals and the way that they are done. Souter herself studied religion at LSU in college and took a number of religious studies, classes and has always been interested in this. A lot of what RAY said lined up with what she had learned in school. So it made sense to her. But to be specific about running a sweat lodge there wasn't anything. Souter presumed that since they had done it before, they knew what they were doing. That was her assumption.

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/s/ Anne Gordon-Lorentzen

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