

*I/V Mercer, Debra 10/09/09

Interview by Detective Ross Diskin:

On 10/09/09 I interviewed Debra Mercer at Angel Valley. The following is a transcript of that interview:

Det. Diskin: I'm Det. Diskin, I talked to your husband a little bit. Good to meet you. Uhm, what, I don't even know where to start but what happened?

D. Mercer: Uhm, it's James Ray sweat lodge, uhm, uhm, and his sweat lodges are extreme and different from any of the others and I'm certain Ted told you everything.

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: Uhm and uh what, what I wanted to be sure I guess that you knew was that James knew that there was people unconscious in there before the last round started

Det. Diskin: That's what your husband was saying

D. Mercer: And we were, I mean on the previous two rounds we had pulled out three, two other people unconscious. I mean where their lips are almost blue, no reaction in their eyes, stuff coming out of their nose

Det. Diskin: When you say rounds, was it the same night or did, did the, or the previous

D. Mercer: Yea, see how it works is uhm he does, and most sweat lodges are four rounds. He does eight. Uhm and each round the door opens, we put stones in, hot stones in and he puts water on it and then closes, and then he closed the door and then he puts water on it and then you do a meditation or whatever and uhm most sweat lodges have the most of 20, 25 rocks. By the second round he, the first round he called 12 stones, the second round he called 12 stones, the third round he called 10 stones, the fourth round he called 8 stones. I'm not sure how many is in there but I know in heating up the last round when he knew there's unconscious people in there, the last round he put 10 more stones in. So it's really hot in there.

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: And uhm I guess my point is that he encourages you to stay in. Uhm when people are saying you know I gotta get out, I gotta get out, he'll say you can handle it, you, you are not your body, you are above this and he encourages you to stay in and uhm, uhm there's a stigmatism you know if you leave. You know don't leave, don't leave. And then if you do leave he wants you to come back in. Whereas in most lodges that's not a part, I mean that's not how it's supposed to be at all. If you need to leave, leave you know and it's okay to be outside

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: and you hold the energy outside, there's nothing wrong with leaving and that's not the uhm intention impression that he gives to these people. They're supposed to conquer, they're supposed to be above that and he tries to create an altered state (Inaudible) that's his intention is to get (Inaudible) to an altered state (Inaudible) you know (Inaudible) where it used to be here and then I don't think most of them are vegetarians and that's all they've eaten for a week, when they were on their vision quest and then come back and do this, they're just not in adequate physical condition to go into a ceremony like that. I mean a normal sweat lodge, most people wouldn't put people through that and then do that, and uhm his whole thing is extreme and pushing beyond the warrior. You know you are the warrior and I mean

Det. Diskin: Just went too far with it?

D. Mercer: Yea

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: And like I say he knew there was people unconscious in there, he knew we were pulling out people out of it throughout the whole thing.

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: You know after the fourth round, people were coming, we were dragging them out you know, uhm face down

Det. Diskin: and there were eight rounds

D. Mercer: There were eight rounds

Det. Diskin: And this is after the fourth one you're dragging people out?

D. Mercer: Yea

Det. Diskin: And it's still going on

D. Mercer: Still going on. And you know we were dragging them right past him and everything and uhm he knows. And then cause you know cause we, we're supposed to just do the fire; we, we build the lodge, we do the fire and put the stones in and you know then we're not supposed to take care of the people you know

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: that's not our thing we're supposed to have the energy of the fire and, and do that but you know when there's people comatose around you and flipping back in their eyes and their heads you know you feel the urge to do something and uhm I, I, we didn't want to do this one. Because of the last two, we didn't feel comfortable with, because we felt, he, he, he puts people in a dangerous situation in my opinion

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: and I didn't really want to be a part of it but when you need money, you know we'd done it before so you know

Det. Diskin: Yea

D. Mercer: we thought it'd be okay but you know and

Det. Diskin: Yea, our, our job, what we're looking at, we're not trying to put the blame on anybody;

D. Mercer: Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: we're trying to figure out what happened

D. Mercer: Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: and most importantly how this could not happen in the future

D. Mercer: Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: Uhm, now tell me about, you were talking about how people were telling James that there were people unconscious, what was his reaction to that?

D. Mercer: Said that's okay, cause it was, he, cause the, it was somebody at the back cause, after; okay, let me finish answering that question. Uhm, someone at the other end of the lodge where those people were, that died, said so and so are passed out and he goes really are they unconscious? And the guy goes yea and he goes they'll be okay, he said, I think he said good uhm and they'll be okay, it's, it's the last round and then we've got one more round and they're warriors. Uhm and then, and then they did the last round and then uhm everyone came out and then they dragged three other people out, face first, and uhm and everyone was out and I looked in and I saw three people still in there and I was calling for help. You know somebody to help me but everyone was busy helping

other people and uhm I said I wanna open, can, I wanna open the back you know because they were way at the other side

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: and you can't pull them straight out cause

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: the hole's there and you can't stand up. Uhm so I, I go I'm opening, I'm gonna open the back and James goes only if you absolutely have to it's sacrilegious to do open, do that and I looked in there again and I'm like there's no way I can do this so I tore open the back

Det. Diskin: How many people were in there still?

D. Mercer: Three

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: So I ripped open the back and I saw the uhm, the guy and the girl whose lips were both blue and I couldn't pull the thing up and pull them out at the same time so I'm calling for someone else to come help me. He held it up, I pulled uhm

Det. Diskin: James did

D. Mercer: No,

Det. Diskin: Oh

D. Mercer: not James, uh some guy. James sat there in the chair the whole time. I went over there and told ; because then I pulled the one lady out; put her on her side, grabbed the other guy, pulled him out, the other guy was too heavy for me to get on my own so I'm, I called for someone else, someone else helped me. Then the nurse had come over right then and she looks up at me and she goes this lady's not breathing and I go I know, she goes what do we do? That was the nurse. And uhm

Det. Diskin: The nurse. Explain that.

D. Mercer: The nurse from James Ray on the Dream Team, they

Det. Diskin: Oh he has a nurse that does this? That comes with him? Just in

D. Mercer: It was her first time

Det. Diskin: Oh, okay

D. Mercer: I knew that the nurse came but I was told that there wasn't

Det. Diskin: but it was a nurse and not a doctor?

D. Mercer: Uh huh

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: I think I heard there was a nurse and a doctor

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: but the doctor I think was a participant or something and, and the nurse was on the Dream Team

Det. Diskin: So she's, she's one of the, I mean she's helping James Ray with this and she's a nurse. Did you get the impression that she's a nurse to help in case something was wrong?

D. Mercer: Yea. And actually I was grateful that, you know, that this time that they had brought a nurse because the previous times you know there's nobody there

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: to uhm

Det. Diskin: and then she asks you what do we do? She's not breathing.

D. Mercer: She says yea, what do we do, she's not breathing? And my husband Ted said call an ambulance and then she goes well, she said uhm where's Megan? And I go I don't know and she goes come, ask Megan if, if we should call an ambulance and I couldn't find Megan so I went up to James Ray whose sitting in the chair and said there's, there's three people not breathing, we need to call an ambulance, he was like well I don't know, I don't know, and

Det. Diskin: He said I don't know?

D. Mercer: Yea, he just said I don't know what to do and then uhm he uh so then we told Amayra, the owner, to call an ambulance and then she just started walking around doing something else. So then I ended up leaving, going over to my house and calling you guys and then

Det. Diskin: So you're the one that called?

D. Mercer: Yes, I called three times I think because they said call if anything changes and uhm yea and cause so I ran and drove a cart over to my house, called and then was coming back and then I saw Amayra going, heading up to the office, uhm

Det. Diskin: And who is Amayra again?

D. Mercer: Amayra is the owner of the property

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: Uhm so

Det. Diskin: All right, let's go back to when you heard somebody tell James and you said that this was, this would be round seven when the people were unconscious

D. Mercer: The last round, Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: okay so around eight then?

D. Mercer: I can't, I think, like when we put the stones in, that's what we call round seven but I think it's round eight

Det. Diskin: Oh okay

D. Mercer: (Inaudible) you know what I mean?

Det. Diskin: yea, that makes sense

D. Mercer: so it was I believe the seventh time we had put the stones in

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: that was before the last time and uhm yea,

Det. Diskin: do, do you remember who it was that

D. Mercer: I couldn't see cause they were on the other side of the tent

Det. Diskin: Do you think that James heard them?

D. Mercer: I know he did, he answered because he said are they really? Are they unconscious? And the guy said yea. I mean they, they conversed, other people had to have heard it

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: but they were so, I mean

Det. Diskin: These people that were unconscious, uhm, could you see them?

D. Mercer: Not during the lodge

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: Not til after everyone was out cause I can't, I can only peek in there

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: you know I can't go in but after it was over that's when I could you know go in and look in and that's when I saw the three were still in there

Det. Diskin: Okay. When, when whoever it was told him that you know there was people unconscious, was it the area where you found those people?

D. Mercer: I couldn't tell

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: Honestly and then I had no idea

Det. Diskin: So you didn't know, okay

D. Mercer: Yea, no I had; I couldn't tell who had said what. Uhm I just knew James responded back and uh

Det. Diskin: Okay and see if you can remember exactly what, what he said when, when, when you'd said there's people in there, their unconscious, we need to get them out, you need to open up the back, what exactly did he say?

D. Mercer: He said only if it's absolutely necessary, it's sacrilegious

Det. Diskin: Did he go check on the people?

D. Mercer: No?

Det. Diskin: or say how's their condition or

D. Mercer: No

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: He sat in the chair and then he still sat there when I uhm said that we needed to call an ambulance and they said to find Megan

Det. Diskin: So when you said we need to call 911 they said find Megan

D. Mercer: The other people told me they, I went over to them and said the nurse said we need to call an ambulance uhm for those people and, and uhm told me to find Megan and I can't find Megan and he's like well I don't know, I don't know and then that's when we told Amayra and he still sat in the chair, he didn't get up and go assist at all; with anybody cause, and I can show you pictures of previous lodges where there's 40 peoples you know all across those just laying there you know convulsing, throwing up, crying uhm, eyes rolling back in their head and there's nobody there to care for them. You know so that's why I was happy that this time there, they had the, several members of the Dream Team, more than usual. Usually there's like three that stay out and this time there was five and uhm one of them was a nurse. So I'm thinking

Det. Diskin: What's the rest of them, are they just partners, or,

D. Mercer: what do you mean?

Det. Diskin: I mean, the Dream Team, what, what's their roll?

D. Mercer: To get people to sign up for their courses

Det. Diskin: Oh

D. Mercer: My interpretation but it's, each group, each member I think is responsible for you know certain people

Det. Diskin: Oh, okay

D. Mercer: be kinda their support and you know, their (Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: like a counselor or chaperone, type thing? Okay

D. Mercer: Yea. Uhm but I, I don't know, that's just my; cause I know people were saying well my people are this and my people; and there's, cause we used to work in, clean out rooms and stuff and I'd seen where you know they got everyone's name written down and what courses they've signed up for, which courses they want them to sign up for and whose responsible for talking to them about that. And that's why, it's just like a marketing machine.

Det. Diskin: Yea, so they pay more money for each course that they go to?

D. Mercer: This, and this is the third one. This is, they can't come to this one until they've been to two other ones.

Det. Diskin: Oh, okay

D. Mercer: and this, this is the spiritual warrior, the you know, the epitome,
(Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: Yea, well it's definitely a tragedy

D. Mercer: (Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: Especially for the family of these, these people

D. Mercer: And then I was thinking their not even gonna, cause they all shave their heads and they're not even gonna look like you know the people that loved them at all

Det. Diskin: Hmmm. Yea, uhm, the first, the first time, now how many of these have you been involved with total?

D. Mercer: Three

Det. Diskin: I mean with any sweat lodge?

D. Mercer: Probably like ten; ten or twelve

Det. Diskin: Have you seen anybody get sick or get ill or in any of the other ones besides?

D. Mercer: Only James

Det. Diskin: Only James Ray

D. Mercer: yep

Det. Diskin: Okay, the, the first time; what happened the first one that you were at?

D. Mercer: The first one was the first one we had ever experienced so we kinda freaked out cause you know, you don't usually see people in this condition and

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: uhm so yea we kinda freaked out and, and uhm didn't know what to do but then, then we experienced other ones and we're like ah, you know this is not, this is way better, this is loving and supportive and you know nobody falls down or gets sick cause the first one; when the very first round a girl came up, she tried to stand up before she got out and she fell flat on her face into this stuff; broke her tooth, her mouth was bleeding, her eye was

Det. Diskin: That was the first one?

D. Mercer: The very first one. And

Det. Diskin: So she, she knocked a tooth out, was bleeding

D. Mercer: uh huh

Det. Diskin: was there any kind of medical care given?

D. Mercer: No. Well Amayra went up and got some you know stuff to put on her face and an ice bag but you know that's it and but her eyes were you know back in her head. I'll never forget that cause they were the prettiest blue eyes and they were just like, and but I'd say four people were unconscious at that one too. You know and barfing and just you know in not the condition you'd think people would put themselves in

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm, was any, did anybody else get hurt or was severely ill? Did you think that

D. Mercer: Then the next one uhm, but I think if you know there was a medical team here checking out the people from the first one and the second one that people would have been taken away for dehydration and heat exposure and you know rapid heart beat and all, like I said it's not a condition

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: you'd think you'd want to put yourself into and that's why I wondered why do people do sweat lodges until I experienced other ones that weren't like that and it was like okay this is what it's about and James Ray's are just you know a different, different experience

Det. Diskin: Different thing

D. Mercer: his is about you know conquering and that's not what most sweat lodges and tents are. But yea every time I, I believe there are people who should have been gotten medical treatment.

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm. So the second time, what, what happened with that?

D. Mercer: Well the most extreme one that I remember was a girl went into convulsions where she was, you know, she couldn't control her body, she was spasming

one minute and then stiff the next and spasming one minute and uhm there was a doctor here at that time, a participant, and I was ready to call an ambulance but they put her in a cart and carted her off and put her in a bathtub and uhm took her in and out of the bathtub and I guess basically treated her but uhm, you know we talk to people who, who don't even remember that night. You know, the rest of the day

Det. Diskin: Really?

D. Mercer: and they're not coherent at all, I mean, yea. It, they

Det. Diskin: Are you talking about the next day?

D. Mercer: Uh huh

Det. Diskin: They don't remember what happened the night before?

D. Mercer: Yea, yea. They didn't remember what happened that night and the next day cause we would you know take them to their cars or whatever, they're leaving cause this was the last thing; most of them leave after that. And uh you know you're talking to them and you know they don't remember. And last year one guy, a guy and a girlfriend were here, and uh he came out and freaked out and he was, his girlfriend was still in there and he's like this is nuts, this is nuts, you gotta get her out of there, you're killing her, you're killing her and he tried to get back in there and get his girlfriend out and uhm you know we held him down and you know but it was a big thing, he was running around and then that night at the closing ceremony we had done something and he saw us and he's like so I hear I created quite a scene. He didn't remember any of it.

Det. Diskin: Really?

D. Mercer: No

Det. Diskin: Hmmm

D. Mercer: Uhm, there's been at least five you know that we can tell you stories where they don't remember anything that happened that night. You know either later that night they (Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: You're, you're talking about the, the first two years?

D. Mercer: Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: There's been at least five that the next day had no memory

D. Mercer: Yea and that I've went to bed worried about.

Det. Diskin: When

D. Mercer: Wondering are these people okay because they don't look okay and you know get them to their rooms and all their supposed to do after the sweat lodge is go take a shower and then there's a, uhm thing, a closing ceremony or something after that.

Det. Diskin: The, the other two that, that you've gone to. Were they last year and the year before, so this, this would be the third consecutive year?

D. Mercer: Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: Okay and it's usually around the same time of year?

D. Mercer: Uhm, I think the first two were at the end of September; this is the first one that was in October

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: But usually they're at the end of September

Det. Diskin: Okay, uhm I might have more questions for you later. Is it all right if I give you a call?

D. Mercer: Yea, no problem.

Det. Diskin: Okay, your husband gave me you guys' home phone

D. Mercer: Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: Uhm and I'll give you my card in case

D. Mercer: I got one, I got it in the car

Det. Diskin: Okay in case you think of anything else or you forgot to tell me that you think is important. We just want to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

D. Mercer: I don't think he should have sweat lodges. I mean my personal opinion

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: It's just, just

Det. Diskin: If they invited you back next year would you do it?

D. Mercer: Absolutely not, we're probably moving actually cause we live on the property but uhm you know uhm no, I would not and my husband Ted said he's not gonna do any sweat lodge but it's not any for me, it's just

Det. Diskin: just this one

D. Mercer: James Ray, and he's just extreme, that's his whole thing. He's extreme and conquer; you're not your body. I mean he, he discourage you from the, he, yes you can leave, it's your free will but to leave you have to get goodbye James and you know James is who you paid \$10,000 to come and learn from

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: and so you know

Det. Diskin: so people are reluctant to

D. Mercer: Yea

Det. Diskin: do, what is he saying while this is going on, is he saying anything like you're gonna be okay or anything like that?

D. Mercer: yea

Det. Diskin: What does he say?

D. Mercer: You're above this, uhm breath slow, you're not your body, uhm, you know hold the course, stand tough, you're a warrior. All this kind of

Det. Diskin: Have you heard him say anything like you're not gonna die, everything's gonna be okay?

D. Mercer: Actually I heard him say it's a good day to die; three times.

Det. Diskin: You, you heard him say

D. Mercer: Yea

Det. Diskin: it's a good, good day to die?

D. Mercer: Yea, it's like

Det. Diskin: during, during that ceremony?

D. Mercer: during the lodge, yea. Uhm,

Det. Diskin: What was the context of that?

D. Mercer: I was trying to remember that and I really can't. I just

remember hearing it's a good day to die and I responded no it's a good day to live. Uhm, I, I can't remember what

Det. Diskin: Uh huh

D. Mercer: I think someone had said something to him and he said something like it's a, it's a good day to die. And uh, and I was just like (Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: Was he talking about like a spiritual death or something as part of the ceremony or was he talking about a physical death?

D. Mercer: It was when the, it was when the door was open. Uhm, uhm and so people were just talking amongst themselves. It wasn't, cause when the door is closed, is when he's, he calls in angels, he calls in uhm warriors, you know to, and they, they make uhm medicine pouches when they're on their vision quest and then each pouch is based on your chakras uhm and they're supposed to uhm release those, you know, for each round. That's what the rounds are for and so each round is dedicated to whatever you know that one was. So like one is your heart, one is your head and you know all through the uhm chakras and, and talking about those things. So like he'll do a chant, you know, or the first one you know just does a calling on the angels and this is who they are and where they're from and what their doing and calls on them to give you what you want. And then like the next one he'll do singing. You know where everyone sings. Uhm and then at each round they're supposed to; there's a time where everyone shouts out you know, I want this, you know, I want to be free from this and I don't wanna be afraid of this and you know so there's a time when everyone shouts uhm during each one too, but

Det. Diskin: Did the shouting continue all the way through all eight rounds?

D. Mercer: Yea but it got less and lower, you know, fewer and what I did notice on this one is that more people stayed in there. I mean cause usually by the third round, ten, six people are coming out each time. Uhm and some of them go back in. But this time more people seemed to have stayed in, not knowing three of them, a couple of them were dead, but uhm yea, more, I was surprised that how many had stayed in. But like I was saying I could send you pictures of previous years, uhm, where there's people laying around all over the place and we're just you know hosing them, trying to hose them down, cool them off and

Det. Diskin: Do you still have those pictures?

D. Mercer: yea

Det. Diskin: Do you have them like on a computer that you could email them?

D. Mercer: Uh huh

Det. Diskin: My email address is on my cards

D. Mercer: Okay

Det. Diskin: So if you could email me those and just tell me which year that was

D. Mercer: And yea cause that would show you exactly what, what it looks like after this and it's not a situation that you want

Det. Diskin: I would imagine that nobody took pictures last night

D. Mercer: Actually and I'm not sure why but we saw the police escorting somebody and holding him by the elbow and had two cameras. Uhm and then they put him in one of the back of the cars so I think he was a reporter who was on the property without permission

Det. Diskin: Mmm

D. Mercer: and they put him in the back of the car and they took, they said his cameras were evidence

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: Uhm, so, but I don't know anything about; I just, like I said I just saw them escorting him and then later I saw that they had forgotten about him in the back of the police car and uhm we were waiting to be interviewed and the guy came over and said you're not under arrest but you know we do, we are gonna keep your uh cameras uh for evidence and uhm so I don't know what happened.

Det. Diskin: Yea, uhm, just one thing to clarify there, the people that after round four that were passed out; what happened to them?

D. Mercer: They were brought out and people tried to you know resuscitate them and care for them and throughout the whole things there's you know people laying around wanting to die or feeling like they're gonna die and I'd say at round four I took out three people that should have been taken to the hospital but it's not

Det. Diskin: Did they, did those people go back in or did they stay out?

D. Mercer: No, the only person that went back in was the guy who got burnt.

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: And I think he tried to leave at one point and fell into the fire and then, then he came out uhm but then he sat out for two rounds and he went back in for the last round uhm, because he felt he, you know,

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm. Did you hear James Ray say anything like uhm you're gonna feel like you're gonna die but you're not gonna die?

D. Mercer: Yes

Det. Diskin: I don't want to put words in your mouth

D. Mercer: No

Det. Diskin: but

D. Mercer: Well if it wasn't those words it was that in, innuendo or that you know, but yea, yea (Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: so he was saying something to the effect of you know you're gonna feel like you're gonna die but you're not gonna die

D. Mercer: He passed it yea; he passed it, you're the warrior, it's you know, you're gonna be okay

Det. Diskin: Well (Inaudible) feel free to get in touch with me if you think of anything else, uhm, I'll be working on this all next week probably just doing the research and

D. Mercer: Well my bottom line is that shouldn't have happened but uhm it's, it's extreme

Det. Diskin: Yea

D. Mercer: and

Det. Diskin: Well it makes a difference if there were previous incidents where people were you know in poor physical health after coming out of there. I don't know what the line is between spiritual enlightenment and you know your physical health but

D. Mercer: Well I mean you think about it I mean if somebody comes from Chicago, is all excited to pay that much money to spend time with him and

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: they're not acclimated to Arizona and then they're out on a vision quest for two nights before that, they come back the next day not having enough to drink and eat and then go in there

Det. Diskin: Yea

D. Mercer: It's not right. It's, it's not healthy.

Det. Diskin: All right. Uhm anything else you can think of that would be important to this?

D. Mercer: Uhm, not right now, maybe when I pull up the pictures you know from like the last year I might remember other things from the other ones but

Det. Diskin: Okay. Yea I would like to see those. Uhm and also any strange smells uhm; did you smell anything strange like

D. Mercer: No and like in a lot of the Native American ones they'll put uhm herbs in

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: in each round, this is (Inaudible) and this is to dah, dah, dah, dah but he doesn't

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: uhm that I know of

Det. Diskin: Were you going in with your husband with the rocks?

D. Mercer: Uhm we don't go in, we uhm stand right at the door and slide it in in a pitchfork and someone inside takes the pitchfork and then puts it into the hole

Det. Diskin: Oh okay

D. Mercer: so we never enter although I spend the majority of the time you know right there at the door

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: and even when I'm not putting rocks in when their you know just open

Det. Diskin: Yea

D. Mercer: uhm I am right there cause that's what I'm supposed to do in case he says I want water, I want this, uhm so and that's why I went to the hospital when they were talking carbon monoxide cause I you know was right there but uhm

Det. Diskin: Yea did, did you ever see any smoke inside of there?

D. Mercer: No

Det. Diskin: Did you ever see any flame, anything burning?

D. Mercer: Other than like one time when I put a rock in, they're river rocks and they have holes in them, you know, a little flame came up just cause their red hot rocks but

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: you know as soon as you move it, it went out but

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: it was like a little candle, you know it doesn't (Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: but no there's never any smoke or fire (Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: the door, show me which door is the one that you guys

D. Mercer: This is the door

Det. Diskin: That's the main door that you guys access?

D. Mercer: This other part, the back is where I opened it up to get the three people out

Det. Diskin: Okay. And I see where the campfire is. Is, was there any smoke from the campfire blowing in there?

D. Mercer: No it was blowing that way

Det. Diskin: It was blowing that way? Are you pretty sure about that?

D. Mercer: Absolutely positive cause

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: we have to get the rocks out and it's pretty hot and hard to do you know and there's, cause, cause you can't have any of the stones exposed during the lodge so even after you take rocks out and it's still hot, you have to put more wood on to cover those other rocks

Det. Diskin: Oh

D. Mercer: So every time we have to go move the wood and get under the rocks so you can't be where the winds blowing

Det. Diskin: Right

D. Mercer: so yea, we know which way the wind's blowing

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: uhm it was either blowing that way or this way, it never went that way. Cause sometimes it does but no,

Det. Diskin: What do you

D. Mercer: even if it does, the time that door is open for James, like some of them keep the door open fifteen, twenty minutes during the lodge but James doesn't. He just does it long enough to keep, get more rocks and let people get out and let people go in.

Det. Diskin: Okay. What's your opinion on, on what happened to these people? Why do you think that they died?

D. Mercer: Just too, too hot

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: it was too hot and they weren't prepared and they weren't, were, didn't want to leave because they would feel like they had failed. You know

Det. Diskin: That makes sense. I mean it does.

D. Mercer: Especially if you've spent so much money to come here, you know?

Det. Diskin: Mmm Hmm

D. Mercer: You don't want to

Det. Diskin: You want to get fully enlightened

D. Mercer: miss out on the graduating. I mean this is like the graduation ceremony. Uhm, you know this is it. We almost made it. Yea, and he, he, coaches you, or encourages you (Inaudible) you're more than welcome to go outside, it's, there's no stigma attached and you know you're just holding the energy outside and that's perfectly fine; it's not about (Inaudible)

Det. Diskin: What's the cool, inside of there what's the coolest place? Is it by the door?

D. Mercer: Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: Is that where James sits?

D. Mercer: Mmm. Yea cause we have some people in the back if, you know, they got any relief from when the door's open and they, they didn't feel anything which makes sense if there's no cross but

Det. Diskin: Yea

D. Mercer: yea he, he's right there on the right side and in fact when the door's open he kinda would almost be in the door with his head you know right there so

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: And then he's got a bucket of water right there with him that he uses to uhm put on the stones but you know he'd put his hands in it and he'd rub himself and everything. And,

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: but and, but the back is where I opened it up after asking James and

Det. Diskin: Was James still sitting by the door (Inaudible)

D. Mercer: No when uhm he was sitting in those chairs facing this, he was like sitting under, in the shade

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: in one of those chairs both times when I told him uhm

Det. Diskin: Did that

D. Mercer: I asked him if I could open the back and uhm the other time when, when I told him we needed to call an ambulance and he said I don't know

Det. Diskin: The picture that I get from you describing this is that you're confronted with this is life and death; there's people, you know, that are you know really sick and it sounds like nobody was helping you or there's no, I mean there was no plan for that,

D. Mercer: Mmm Hmm

Det. Diskin: there was no what do we do if

D. Mercer: Yea, no

Det. Diskin: Okay

D. Mercer: Yea like I said the first time we experience we are like what the fuck are these people doing you know?

Det. Diskin: right

D. Mercer: and is it, but, and you'll be able to tell from the pictures it looks like a, a, a disaster scene, you know. People laying around and in the condition you wouldn't think you'd want to see yourself in.

Interview concluded

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