

*I/V Naves, Susan 2004 C23 Diskin:

On 10/30/09 I interviewed Susan Naves. The following is a transcript of that interview:

Interviewer: Can I talk to Susan?

Respondent: This is she.

Interviewer: Hi Susan, this is Detective Diskin with the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office. I am returning your call.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: I got a message that you had called that you were a 2004 participant at Angel Valley.

Respondent: Yes, I was. I didn't know you guys were really looking for anybody. I am really interested in this because when I did it, I actually left the sweat lodge. I felt like I was going to die in that sweat lodge and we were strongly encouraged not to leave over and over and over again and I said you know what I don't care if I am supposed to leave or not, I don't want to die so I left. And I mean I wasn't criticized for it verbally but he was doing things that I thought were very dangerous and I just felt I needed to call you and say that even in 2004 he was doing things that I thought were dangerous and leaving us out in the desert after that sweat lodge telling us we shouldn't be drinking water because this was a spiritual thing and never checking on us for three nights and two days not once did anybody come and by and see if we were okay.

Interviewer: And was that during the Vision Quest?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: So you guys did the Vision Quest after the sweat lodge?

Respondent: We did it throughout. He had us do the sweat lodge first and I thought that was bad enough but upon reflection I think that doing it the other way around was probably deadly.

Interviewer: Right okay. And you said he was doing things that are dangerous; is there anything else that you saw that he did that was dangerous besides the sweat lodge and the Vision Quest?

Respondent: Well, he does this extreme hyperventilating exercise that I am a breathing expert okay and I understand what extreme hyperventilating does to body especially for people with heart conditions and respiratory conditions and epilepsy and I even said this is extremely dangerous, you guys aren't taking medical histories and you are having

people do this breathing and safe, I was assured that it was spiritual breathing and that it was okay, and it wasn't okay with me I couldn't do it I just quit doing. I couldn't do exercise because I thought there was not enough care he was taking to make sure no harm was done.

Interviewer: Do you remember who you told that to that this was extremely dangerous?

Respondent: Actually I told Liz Neuman and she said she would talk to him; Liz is one of the people who died.

Interviewer: Right. And Liz Neuman, at the time, was she working for James Ray?

Respondent: Yes, she was. She said she would tell him but she assured me it was no problem. The other thing he did that I thought was ridiculous was he got us up at 4 in the morning and some ungodly hour 3 or 4 I don't remember which one it was, took up us into the red rocks someplace and let us canter in the pitch dark on a mountain walk through this trail. It was ridiculous, we couldn't see a thing. I ran into a rock, I hurt my knee I eventually had to have surgery on it.

Interviewer: So, you hurt your knee during that walk?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And you had to have surgery based on the injury that you received?

Respondent: That was the original injury that eventually caused the surgery. Then it was, I apparently ripped partly in that knee and every time I hurt the knee after that it made it worse and eventually I had to have surgery couple of years later.

Interviewer: Have you been in any other James Ray events?

Respondent: I went to all of them not to Hawaii; I even paid for Hawaii but I didn't go. After the sweat lodge, I refused to go to anymore. And I have to say I got lot of benefit in many ways from the things I did, I just did not think he took enough care with what he was doing I felt unsafe.

Interviewer: Do you still keep in contact with a lot of the other participants?

Respondent: A couple of them not very many. After I dropped out, I only kept in contact with two of them.

Interviewer: And did they receive any kind of injury or have any kind of experiences like you did?

Respondent: Well, they also thought the things he was doing were strange but they didn't have the experiences I did. I know one of them. I didn't even know these people had

died until one of them called me and said you were so smart to leave that sweat lodge, and I thought this is strange, what is it you are talking about, I said well thanks, she said I just want you to know I really admire your strength and I thought it was the strangest call I had ever received until two days later I found on the Internet that these people had died in the sweat lodge.

Interviewer: And at some of the other events that you went to did you see anything that caused you some concern?

Respondent: Well he had us do things that I didn't think people were necessarily physically qualified for. In California, we did that breathing thing. We put climbing gear on and we went up, we did all kinds of things and theoretically we were safe but it just bothered me that he wasn't taking any medical histories and he wasn't making sure that people weren't going to have a heart attack or some other thing. I mean he did leave it up to us but there was a lot of pressure to do the best he wanted us to do.

Interviewer: And did you participate in any of the events where you would place an object on your throat and then try and break it or bend it?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Tell me about that, which one did you participate in?

Respondent: All of them and I have to tell you that one was not hard it was not hard. I mean I have been to rebar, it was not hard it just bent and much to my astonishment it just bent. So I don't know what that was about but it just bent and it was okay.

Interviewer: Did you participate in either breaking blocks or breaking bricks?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Both of that?

Respondent: Yes I did.

Interviewer: Tell me about the block or what block went first? Was there any kind of training or instruction on how to go about doing that?

Respondent: There was instruction. I do know that some people actually hurt themselves doing it, I did not.

Interviewer: And what year was it that you did that? Do you remember what year and event that was?

Respondent: I think it was 2003. I mean I am in really good shape and in 2003 I was 59 years old but there were people who were as old as I am and not in good shape and he was asking them to do all the same stuff he was asking me to do.

Interviewer: And breaking the bricks where did that take place?

Respondent: I don't remember.

Interviewer: Do you remember what year that was?

Respondent: No. It had to be 2003 or 2004 because that's when I was doing it.

Interviewer: Did you see anyone become injured after breaking the bricks?

Respondent: No, I thought someone hurt their hands breaking the board but I didn't see anybody.

Interviewer: And is there anything else you can think of that might be helpful to our investigation?

Respondent: No I think that that's it. I just want you to know that there was at least one person. I know there were other people who dropped out because they thought he was over the deep end.

Interviewer: Your information is extremely important to us, we are going to document it. Everybody that calls in, we document their experience and what they saw. And anybody else that you still have contact with that either still participates or had participated in his events if you can have them give me a call, I would appreciate it.

Respondent: Okay. I know that they are still very much pro-James Ray but my feeling is if that's the behavior that spiritual enlightenment brings, just leave me out of it. That's my view. So I can asked them how they feel about it and in fact I will, I will do that. I am at a conference right now so it may be a couple of days before I even get to them, okay.

Interviewer: Is that something to write with where I can give you my information?

Respondent: Yeah. The question do I have anything to write on, wait a minute. Okay. Go ahead.

Interviewer: My name is Ross and my last name is Diskin and my direct office line is area code [REDACTED].

Respondent: Okay [REDACTED]

Interviewer: That's it.

Respondent: Okay great. I will call and I will talk and see what they have to say.

Interviewer: And even if they are pro-James Ray that's fine, we still would like to talk to them to see what their perspective is.

Respondent: Okay. All right I will do that.

Interviewer: All right, thanks I appreciate it.

Respondent: Okay, thanks for calling me back Ross.

Interviewer: Alright no problem. Take care. Bye.

Respondent: Okay bye-bye.

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