

*I/V Snyder, Robin 2008-9 but not S.W. Transcript C22

On 11/05/2009 I interviewed Robin Snyder. She was at James Ray events in 2009 but not Spiritual Warrior. I later placed a digital audio recording into evidence with this incident. Refer to that for a complete record of our conversation. The below transcript was created by another person and the audio recording should be referred to for an accurate record.
Detective John Johnson #6863/C22

Robin Snyder: To request anybody who had attended previous events I didn't attend the Spiritual Warrior but I had attended several of James Ray's other events and so I was just responding to that. I am not having anything specific to tell you, I was just -

Det. Johnson: (Overlap) Spiritual Warrior or sweat lodge events

Robin Snyder: No.

Det. Johnson: In which year were you attending events, this year or?

Robin Snyder: Not in '09 I was in '08.

Det. Johnson: You attended in '08?

Robin Snyder: Yes.

Det. Johnson: Did you attend any of the events where people were injured?

Robin Snyder: Not any of the major injury at the event. I felt that there were some injuries but nothing -

Det. Johnson: Which event?

Robin Snyder: Practical Mysticism. Are you becoming familiar with all these words?

Det. Johnson: That's the one in Lake Tahoe, right?

Robin Snyder: Yeah.

Det. Johnson: In Lake Tahoe, was that the rebar, the era?

Robin Snyder: That's the rebar. It's the part of reason I was one of the few people that didn't participate in that and was given that I would call some flak from James Ray for not participating and so that's why I think I kind of felt comfortable these were like existed just to get, I had sort of been in that situation where I chose not to participate and really caught flak for it.

Det. Johnson: Yeah definitely. All right, so Robin what's your middle name?

Robin Snyder: Elizabeth.

Det. Johnson: And your date of birth?

Robin Snyder: [REDACTED]

Det. Johnson: And Snyder S N Y D E R.

Robin Snyder: Correct.

Det. Johnson: And what's your address?

Robin Snyder: [REDACTED]

Det. Johnson: Is there another number I can also reach at or this is it?

Robin Snyder: I am at work [REDACTED]

Det. Johnson: So you were at Practical Mysticism, what month was that in?

Robin Snyder: June or July. July actually I think.

Det. Johnson: So July of 2008?

Robin Snyder: Yes.

Det. Johnson: And that's a 5-day event?

Robin Snyder: Correct.

Det. Johnson: Tell me about this event with the rebar.

Robin Snyder: I believe it was the first night. How much information do you want? I mean you kind of the whole?

Det. Johnson: Yeah pretty much all your interactions.

Robin Snyder: Okay. It started with large camp fire James Ray doing some camping and some weird some species and he kind of was going up to different people who were sitting in very large ring around a fire and he had a piece of rebar and he was kind of talking about you know what would be like to put a piece of steel to the weakest part of your body. And he would go up to the complete them in audience and myself was one of them and he would just come up and put a piece of steel right against my neck and kind of push without really asking permission. He just sort of came up and did that so I, there maybe 6 or 7 of us around the ring and then he tried, that was kind of annoying, but then

he explained the event and if you have heard about how that whole event works. You put a dollar bill between you and the rebar and he explained how it works and he showed two people from his staff bending the rebar and he encouraged everybody to do it. He explained that if you stop part way and if you, once you start you have to keep going and it was a metaphor for life and you have to play some full out and once you start you have to keep going or if you stop you are going to cause severe pain to your partner and so therefore once you start you can't stop and I watched for maybe about 10 minutes.

Det. Johnson: Wait a sec, so one person has one end of the rebar against their throat, was it a dollar bill is it folded up?

Robin Snyder: Both people have the rebar and the dollar bill was folded I guess from the corners and the explanation is that apparently our US currency is extremely strong and unattributable and so they would have one of the Dream Team members positioned two people I guess maybe 5 feet apart from each other. And they would position the rebar against each participant's neck that really soft spot.

Det. Johnson: You are talking about the trachea below with the arms up would be in the middle?

Robin Snyder: Yeah. I am kind of feeling it I am like yeah, sort of above with the collar bone

Det. Johnson: So it's in the base of neck?

Robin Snyder: And they would put the dollar bill, put the end of the rebar and have each person stand for the rebar was in tension between them and then instruct them to stare into each other's eyes and sort of their mind over body thing, push towards each other till the rebar would eventually bend and again if it hurts we are supposed to work through that and if we stop then that would cause injury to the other person and so to keep going no matter how much it hurts. And some people bent the rebar on the first time and other people would stop and I remember one girl you know was in tears and they got time she had to keep trying, she had to keep doing it. And I was with like all the people and we actually decided to leave. We were actually getting physically ill watching it. So myself and two other women decided to leave the event and so we just got up and left. And then the next day a lot of people had you know really severe red marks on their necks. And I was really, a lot of people, lot of the co-attendees gave me a lot of crap for not doing it. They were like what you are thinking and I was like I can't do it, and they were how could you not do it, how could you not participate for one having the way even here and my feeling was at that point I realized this was almost copious but that's just my opinion and then during the day at some point I do remember when James Ray was talking, he was talking about the event he did say I did notice the three of you did leave the last night and you know I know you think I didn't notice but I noticed everything and I have to ask you where else (inaudible 00:06:45) I don't remember the exact words but I do remember that part of it. And then he used the words scope him off and then I used

scope him off and I am not sure why you asked me you got to play for one and that whole thing.

Det. Johnson: And he said this is going to be entire

Robin Snyder: Yeah.

Det. Johnson: So he was addressing everybody there and how many people were there?

Robin Snyder: I don't know exactly. I must say 400 to 500 but it depends.

Det. Johnson: So out of 400 to 500 people he talked about the three of you?

Robin Snyder: Yes.

Det. Johnson: Okay. And how did that make you feel?

Robin Snyder: I am a little bit different I think. I actually resented that. And at that point I sort of realized that this was really, I mean the word culted it came into my mind because (inaudible 00"07:44) but they sort of grouped worshipping, doing whatever James Ray said, I wasn't prepared for that and I was strong enough that I was like I paid to come here and I have no need to put rebar to my neck to prove anything but it was very powerful to me that week or maybe talk to some people and then I did hear one guy who said to me you know James would never put us in danger and I said well I will put rebar to your neck and I will (inaudible) and then there was a couple of other activities that week that I chose to not participate in you know thinking other people in the group were sort of like well how could you come here and not participate and anything. And I did send out an additional limitation of liability waiver midweek. James was like oh I have another surprise for you, we are sending out another paper for you to sign and I didn't sign it. I said well what am I signing here, what are we doing, you know I didn't want to sign and we walked into the room not know what's going on. And people actually looked at me and then I went to the staff and I asked them I said what is this for, what am I signing. And they said well you know it's telling out well can I opt out and they said yeah but nobody would really tell me what it was for. And I fixed it and again putting the person, here is the 400 people who didn't sign it. So I guess the reason I want to tell you is there is that very powerful group pressure there in my opinion created by James.

Det. Johnson: Yeah, he is while talking to a group of 4 to 5 hundred and he is singling out people who don't participate. Did you find out later what that activity was for?

Robin Snyder: I did. It was for a series of I guess team building exercises and I did participate in some of them and I did not participate in others that I felt might cause me physical harm that I wasn't comfortable with.

Det. Johnson: What kind of?

Robin Snyder: They were and I think the resort does this kind of as a standard kind of corporate retreat thing outside of James Ray. You know where you would maybe people would line up on your side of each other and somebody would fall backwards and you have to trust everybody to catch you or one of them that I didn't do was with huge plywood wall and you sort of had the, had to figure out how to climb up over each other to get over the wall. So there was one event it was a different group where a girl broke her finger. I can't remember exactly what went wrong. There was an injury at one of the events but I think that the lodge offers those with a sort of standard corporate exercise

Det. Johnson: What were the events you didn't participate in? Were those the ones?

Robin Snyder: When I went into the rebar I did not climb over my teammates' back to climb over a plywood wall and apparently the last night there was walking on hot coals and I didn't even go to that so I mean I heard about that from Jacob the next morning and I think people were just shocked that I didn't go.

Det. Johnson: Were there any other statements by James Ray to you or to the group about you or other people who didn't participate?

Robin Snyder: There was nothing to me specifically but there were comments throughout the week I would say on you know not participating for one and to that effect. I can't remember you know exactly but they did come up several times and I had been to his Harmonic Wealth Weekend and that was the phrase that he used a lot of the time. And if I was able to think if I got up and went to the bathroom whenever I felt like it and he did make comments about you know we are doing the things I mean I don't if those were directed towards me or just in general because I was going to get up and go whenever I had to go but also there is a huge sort of group thing going on.

Det. Johnson: So tell me more about that he is not letting, people are not supposed to leave till he gets the information to go to the bathroom?

Robin Snyder: Generally he does give you that impression of you need to be there and yeah you sort of need to stay there and I mean he doesn't come right out and say you, I don't recall him coming out saying you may not ever leave the room but there is the other tutor who is staying there, again he needs a lot of metaphors you know okay you are leaving here or whatever so you are leaving in life, you know where else are you not giving 100% and so he really does, he does something where he has people hug each other and give each other massages and grab each other, pats and do other things and I chose not to participate in those events and his Dream Team members would sort of you know try to get me to participate.

Det. Johnson: Okay, what kind of, when you say massages, what exactly is that?

Robin Snyder: He doesn't think you know you just stand up and stretch and turn to your neighbor on the left and rub their shoulders now, now rub their butts, and then turn to the person on your right now rub their shoulders and ask them if they like it soft or hard, rub

their butts and then turn around and give 10 people hugs and you know after the first time you know I spent a lot of time rubbing strangers butts so I was kind of just step aside and lot of the dream team members will come up and try to you know why aren't you in there why aren't you.

Det. Johnson: Did you have anyone touch you like that or bothered you during these things?

Robin Snyder: I wouldn't I mean people did massage me and then when he say rub their butts and they would and that was when I decided that particular exercise wasn't for me.

Det. Johnson: It was making you uncomfortable?

Robin Snyder: Yes.

Det. Johnson: Okay. Did you try to not have these other group members rub your butt and then dream team members --

Robin Snyder: I wouldn't say upset but they did question and try to know not I wouldn't say in a forceful way of maybe James Ray would have been in other situations but they definitely not let people sort of get out if they wanted to.

Det. Johnson: Anything else you know any other weird things that stick out in on your mind especially pertaining to group psychology like you are talking about?

Robin Snyder: You know I don't know if you have heard about the holotropic breathing exercises?

Det. Johnson: Yes with that practice?

Robin Snyder: Yeah that was.

Det. Johnson: All right. Can you say something about that?

Robin Snyder: I did participate in that because I felt like that was something that if I wanted to stop I could so that was an interesting experience, I don't know, I mean I don't know what, I would try to tell you about it.

Det. Johnson: How did that get introduced and how did he explain holotropic breathing?

Robin Snyder: He, the way I got introduced I can remember there were two teams and I can remember out team won some contest or something so he said okay you guys are going to get special treatment and he explained it as mind altering experience. He also did say that it was something that should never be attempted alone. He gave the impression that he was educated and somehow certified to lead it which I found out since he may not be.

Det. Johnson: Did he say I am certified in this? Do you remember his exact phrase when you are saying he gave the impression that he was certified?

Robin Snyder: I can't and so I don't want to go on the record saying anything and I am not a 100% sure of.

Det. Johnson: You know even if you don't remember the exact words can you just kind of remember the substance of what he said?

Robin Snyder: I do remember him saying it was potentially dangerous and it should never be tried alone. I wanted to say he said he was trained in it, trained in how to lead it, would be my best recollection but I don't remember any exact sort of words like I do remember that I think we had an impression that he was, he was certified and very well trained in how to lead this. I did have that trust that he knew what he was doing although I don't know he has done it. And he did stress that his dream team members have knew how to patch over us and take care of us. And then he did talk the next day. I think I was going on for 2 nights because we are still into two groups but he did talk afterwards about somebody he knew who would try to pull that into her own body and she had tried it on her own and you know called them and so we stressed again that this should only be done under the leadership of somebody who knows how to lead it. So he definitely emphasized-

Det. Johnson: Do you think he was the one did this and had a bad experience and then called them while -- putting to their own body?

Robin Snyder: Yes. She did it on her own just after the event and couldn't get back into her body somehow and so she called him and insisted on talking to him personally and how he told her that you shouldn't try it and I don't remember the end of that story. He ended up meeting with her or but he didn't tell us this until after we had all done it.

Det. Johnson: Can you describe how the exercises went? What his instructions were and what exactly happened?

Robin Snyder: Yeah. You lay down all in a room and the way he explained is you do these very short deep breaths while very loud and very specific music type is blasting in the room.

Det. Johnson: Do you remember of any music?

Robin Snyder: No. I wanted to say some kind of a tribal, native, one thing he mentioned aboriginal in there, just sort of a tribal feel and it was extremely loud and then my number one concern was I was kind of almost left to go because I was concerned about damage to my hearing.

Det. Johnson: Right.

Robin Snyder: And told us to take very short deep breaths and you just keep going and eventually your mind will sort of alter state, he compared it to like an LSD you know hallucinogenic effect and we just keep doing them until he tells you to stop and that if you do need to get up and go to the bathroom or do anything like that then you should raise your hand and one of the dream team members will come and escort you out which I actually had to do at one point. And that was really all he explained about it other than he didn't again encourage not to try it on your own but it should only be done by somebody who knew what they are doing which again gave the impression that at some level he knew what he was doing.

Det. Johnson: What were the --

Robin Snyder: It was dark. It was very dark, yeah.

Det. Johnson: So dark that you couldn't see people 4 to 5 feet away from you or?

Robin Snyder: I am trying to think if there were any candles or anything. I would say not pitch dark but it was a fully enclosed room with no exterior light except maybe undercuts from doors you know above the living room space with no windows. So it's relatively dark and I think my eyes adjusted to it after a while so wasn't pitch-pitch black but still dark.

Det. Johnson: And how long did that last?

Robin Snyder: Two hours.

Det. Johnson: So he did this exercise for 2 hours?

Robin Snyder: Correct.

Det. Johnson: Anything else?

Robin Snyder: I am trying to think if there was anything, no, other than and you know he was talking anybody who has been at the Harmonic Wealth where you know break the boards and I mean there is a lot of, a lot of pressure to participate and I guess part of when you hear people say well why didn't they just leave and I am like well I am not sure they are and you know that group thing that's going on there and that pressure it was really intense.

Det. Johnson: Breaking the boards did you see any injuries there?

Robin Snyder: I didn't see any no, I hurt my wrist but not anything serious but nothing to require medical attention.

Det. Johnson: Did you see anyone fail to break the boards and then continue going or being told to continue or when the instruction was given to break the board?

Robin Snyder: Breaking the board did not really, or not breaking it but not think of being an option.

Det. Johnson: Not breaking it is not an option?

Robin Snyder: Correct. Most people actually broke it on the first try. He did give detailed instructions on how to stand and how to hit it. That was something I had seen before and I actually kind of wanted to try, and then a few people weren't able to do it and they had to try over and over and over and you know there is a fine line I guess between encouraging people not to quit and pressuring them into doing something that they really don't feel like they want to do. And so I can't say where everybody else was at but you know there were people who tried over and over and one woman was injured and I was almost in tears. And I was kind of at the point where I didn't want to do it and then I switched I had this Dream Team member helping that was knowing me I guess and so I of switched to a different Dream Team member and then I was actually able to do it right away. But I did feel like quitting really wasn't an option that I would get so much sort of flak and at that event there was a fine line between sort of support, you know the rest of people were trying to be really supportive and the Practical Mysticism was not quite as supportive. There was more of group thing. Does that make sense? I think as you go up in the events the type of person kind of hones in on aesthetically different mentality with Harmonic Wealth seem to be a little bit more average jell.

Det. Johnson: So did you hear anyone say that they had broken their hand or cut their hand or anything and then be told, they were told to continue?

Robin Snyder: Not at that event. No.

Det. Johnson: Okay. Any other injuries or anything you observed?

Robin Snyder: No.

Det. Johnson: Okay, and no other by group activities or?

Robin Snyder: No.

Det. Johnson: Okay. Fine, well I have gotten all your information. That will be in our report and we maybe contacting you if we choose well. If you think of anything else please contact me again, okay.

Robin Snyder: Okay. What is the status of your investigation right now?

Det. Johnson: We are still, we are well into it. We are conducting numerous interviews with many of the people who were there and then people who were at prior events so.

Robin Snyder: Okay, all right.

Det. Johnson: Just trying to working on it.

Robin Snyder: Alright. Well thank you so much

Det. Johnson: Well welcome. Have a good day.

Robin Snyder: Okay. You too. Bye-bye.

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