

\*I/V Bowen, Shawna Transcript Det. ParkisonC34

Interview from 10/13/2009

This transcript was reviewed by Det. Wendy Parkison and corrections made from the DSS recording. This interview was summarized in supplement #15. This interview can be heard in its entirety from the DSS recording that has been placed into evidence.

Interviewer: What is today's date?

Respondent: It's I don't know but ---

Interviewer: 10/13/2009.

Respondent: Okay thank you.

Interviewer: 12:26 PM.

Respondent: Alright.

Interviewer: October 13th, 2009, it is 12:26.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you. And it's S.H.A.W.N.A.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And I just typed your name but I am drawing a blank.

Respondent: Oh Shawna Bowen.

Interviewer: And I have got your address information and contact number and now you had called a couple of days ago and I am going to apologize I just got to my voicemail this morning so.

Respondent: That's okay.

Interviewer: Basically kind of stating that you had felt like there is more information you wanted to give and unfortunately the night I talked to you, I remember you did say something about you had attended other events of James Ray. At that point I didn't know who James Ray was or what kind of events he held so I really didn't delve into that. Now I kind of have an idea of what all that's about so, why don't you tell me what it is?

Respondent: I felt like we kind of, I said briefly how I got there and what I briefly about what I saw and then we kind of got into the young lady that was with me and I felt like I

was trying to get out of there and you were the first interview so basically I arrived there because the Mercer Family who were the ones that were helping with the rocks. Their associates of mine and I had said that I had gone to James Ray seminars. So he said that Shawna you know you have done sweat lodge for years if you want to come down and help just do the rocks, that would be awesome. I was like yeah I would love to do that, because I had done sweat lodge for years too. And I had a few clients that I needed to see that I needed to see it and I could not reschedule or cancel. And I said look would it be okay if I came late. And he said that's fine, that's fine.

Interviewer: If you came

Respondent: If I came late.

Interviewer: Oh came late okay.

Respondent: Because they were starting to I remember I called right around 2 o'clock and they had said well they are just getting ready to go in. And I said I got two more clients, can I be down there you know later on this afternoon

Interviewer: That was at 2.

Respondent: That was at 2 that I was talking with him and they said they are just getting ready to head in around 2.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Around 2.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And I said I would still love to come down there you know maybe I could help at the end or you know whatever and they said sure so I decided to arrive late, I left my office probably around 4:55, it was probably a 10-minute, 15-minute drive and I literally arrived to Debby Mercer who was there in a golf cart freaking out just very upset and said something went terribly wrong you need to go help those people, you need to go help those people. And I had no idea why she was saying that because I have done sweat lodge for a long time. There is no help those people, you come out your refreshed you have a drink of water you go to dinner, it's not that big, you know I didn't understand what had happened.

Interviewer: What time do you think that was?

Respondent: 5:15 between 5:15 maybe 5:20.

Interviewer: Okay. And where did Debby meet you?

Respondent: Debby was right at the gate because I was told that the gate would be shut and there was a number I was to dial, she was there with the gate open. She told me that she was waiting for the ambulances. And at that point I knew that whatever I had come for was not you know all of a sudden there was something way different going on here. She said you need to go help those people and she said follow me and she turned around in her cart and I followed her in my truck, she pointed where I should park and she said there is the sweat go. I was like okay.

Interviewer: She didn't tell you anything about?

Respondent: She just said it went terribly wrong and people are hurt, something like that. And she said I need to go back in and get the ambulances in the right way. So I go down there and what I arrived on was it appeared that everyone was out of the sweat at that point and there were basically people lying down on the ground, kind of in pods with other people around them kind of tending to them and basically the first person I came upon was the deceased woman and just as I was coming onto the scene the first ambulance kind of skidded in and they went straight to her and started with an IV and I said okay that's taken care of and then I realized okay what can I do to help. At that point I ended up helping these two women take a friend of theirs that was really, I can't even explain she obviously was very physically and mentally affected by what had happened with the sweat lodge. She was in a blanket, she was in a golf cart and she wanted to go to her cabin to go to sleep. And they asked if I could hold her. So I got in the golf cart too and I am holding this woman and she had this very blank look on her face and she started saying you know why did James Ray do this, why did James Ray do this, why did I look to James Ray why, why, why. And she started like getting on a word or a few words and she was saying that over and over again and there was no, her expression was obviously, I realized I was not talking to someone who was really like completely conscious or whatever. And she was kind of, the way she was shaking was almost like in fits and I said you guys we need to turn this cart around, there is no way this woman is going to bed, I think she needs medical attention, we need to go back right now. And so we went back down and we got her out of the golf cart and onto the ground. And she just again, she said oh and then she said, I died, I died, I died over and over again. And I was trying to like look at her and say sweetheart I am looking at you right now, you are alive and I need you to stay with me because I was afraid she was going to fall asleep, I didn't know what I was dealing with so I was trying to keep her awake.

Interviewer: That woman was she ever identified to you?

Respondent: Yeah I know her first name, last name would that be helpful.

Interviewer: Sure.

Respondent: Christine Bevins.

Interviewer: Christine, okay that's one you told me that you like to okay.

Respondent: I will never forget because we finally got the name out of her because no one would help us. It's like no one that was part of the retreat, I didn't really see anyone that was part of the retreat, eventually I think one woman that looked like she had not been in the sweat lodge because she looked she had makeup on and she had dry clothes on came over and Christine started to kind of convulse and she had like foam coming out of her mouth. And so I directed somebody I don't remember who I said get me a glass of water now. And they got a glass of water and I got Christine to drink 2 glasses of water, but she kept the way she was talking I thought is she psychologically damaged, is she having psychotic break, there was something very wrong here. And she kept like squirming and just her body was contorting. And so we were trying to keep a blanket on her because she was also, she would get in these bouts of I am cold, I am cold, I am cold. So and her skin you could see like really raised goose bumps like all over her skin. And so eventually there was myself and then two other women one was at her head one was kind at the top of her body holding her and I had her legs. And eventually a paramedic got to Christine and he had said I am sorry (inaudible) and I said we need help over here and she is like I got to get to the other people that are more critical. And I am thinking man if this is not critical I don't know what else is going on out there. So we just kept trying to get water in here and trying to keep her warm. I was like rubbing her legs and stuff.

Interviewer: Had she been hosed down?

Respondent: Given what she looked like it appeared that her cloths were kind of wet, I don't know if she was one of the ones that actually had cold water that was hosed on her or not, but she definitely was very cold but we did have a warm dry blanket that was on her.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: The part that bothered me and I don't know if this would be helpful to your investigation or not, I just want to report the truth because I want James Ray and whoever else to be accountable for what is real. At one point Christine started screeching James's name, screeching it and contorting her back and doing these weird things. And what bothered me is that I never saw James tend to anybody and I am not saying I was there the whole time, I think I was there just as everyone got out and was on the ground. He never came over to tend to anybody, he never got down on his hands and knees to offer water or blankets and he just kind of stood there with these two other people. I could tell he looked upset, but like I was down on the ground getting muddy trying to help this woman because then we were getting IV in her and then we had to make sure she didn't hurt herself. And I remember at one point when she was screeching his name I want James, James, he just kind of looked over and we are trying to keep her down and he just kind of looked and then looked away.

Interviewer: Could he have heard her calling his name?

Respondent: Oh yeah everyone heard her screeching his name.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And that's why he looked over and I happened to look at him, it was like you know I didn't motion for him because to be honest with you he was like this celebrity figure and I felt intimidated to tell him what to do, but I think if he would have come over, I don't know, it seemed strange to me that he never tended to anybody or helped in anyway. Granted maybe he, you know I have been trained at CPR so I felt like I could get in there and try and help. I don't know what was going on.

Interviewer: Where you were, where was he standing?

Respondent: I was over by the ambulances and so like if I was here, sweat lodge was here, the deceased woman was here, there was one other guy here and then there were a couple of more people and then he was over here near the water, there was like this little tent with oranges

Interviewer: Okay that was pretty close to the sweat lodge, wasn't it?

Respondent: Oh yeah I would say 15 feet, 15 to 20 feet.

Interviewer: Okay. So was he under that tent?

Respondent: He wasn't under, he was right to the side of it, but I mean we were in total ear shot and eye shot.

Interviewer: And he was with a couple of other people, do you know who those people were?

Respondent: I could describe one of them, I believe she was a female, her head was shaved.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Short, much shorter than James Ray, a bit overweight. And she seemed to I think I have seen her at other James Ray events I am sure she was kind of one that's been doing many of James Ray seminars and that was the thing that my understanding with this seminar is that you really had to do other seminars of James to get to this one. It was almost like a progression. So these were probably really strong followers of James Ray as much as my husband and I wanted to do that retreat we couldn't afford it, but we really hoped to one day do it.

Interviewer: Okay. Still planning on doing that?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Okay. How come?

Respondent: Because I have been trained by Native American elders regarding sweat lodge and it's a very important ceremony to me for myself as a counselor and a person of service. I think he completely disrespected the ceremony, I don't believe that he did it in a way that elders would have taught him. And I also know and if you ever want to talk with this person where I got the information from James Medicine Tree was told by elders who was a friend of mine that elders went to James Ray and said you have got to stop doing this. You are not doing it right, you are hurting people. And apparently James did not listen.

Interviewer: Okay you have to forgive me and the terms you have used I am not sure what the name,

Respondent: Sure go ahead.

Interviewer: James Medicine Tree.

Respondent: He is a friend of mine James.

Interviewer: Oh that's a name ---

Respondent: Jim Medicine Tree he is a person.

Interviewer: I am sorry.

Respondent: So Jim Medicine Tree was someone that found out about this and found out I was there and then we talked. He is very connected with I mean the National Native American people and he told me that elders told him that they had gone to James Ray and warned him.

Interviewer: Okay to Jim Medicine Tree the man, told you that elders had talked to James Ray before?

Respondent: In the past because I guess he has done this annually for the past 7 years. I don't know if all 7 happened in Angel Valley, I know that the last 3 did. And he had been warned, I don't know it was the people that taught him sweat lodge, I am hoping that he had been trained in sweat lodge by elders and had been taken ---

Interviewer: And that they were worried he was going to hurt someone?

Respondent: Yeah they were like the way you are doing it is not, we basically, I don't want to talk for them I was not there during the conversation, but I did hear that Native Americans approached James and said that he warned him the way he was doing it was not right and that he was hurting people, because normal sweat lodge you walk out refreshed and ready to eat a nice dinner. You do not walk out sick, you do not walk out and pass out, you do not die, I mean that is just not the outcome of a sweat lodge.

Interviewer: Okay. When did you talk to Jim Medicine Tree?

Respondent: It's been on and off since Friday.

Interviewer: And how can he be located?

Respondent: I have a phone number of his.

Interviewer: If you get cold in here let me know this is from the worst room. Is he a local guy?

Respondent: He does ceremony here but he actually is located in Montana.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Okay [REDACTED]

Interviewer: Is he in Montana now?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: But I am giving you his cell phone.

Interviewer: Okay thank you.

Respondent: But in regards to your question, would I go do something? No because I am a motivational speaker and a therapist myself. I feel like I am a leader in this community and I do not take that lightly and I feel like he led people in a way that was wrong. And I don't think that he is really in a position to be of service to other people right now. He has shown that what he is doing is being harmful. So no I will not be going to any more of his seminars, I will not be looking up to him or trusting him with my wellbeing.

Interviewer: The sweat lodges that you have attended before were they part of his thing?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Okay, something else.

Respondent: No these are done by Native Americans who have been trained and they are wonderful, wonderful experiences.

Interviewer: Where were those in Arizona or other places?

Respondent: Let's see where I have I done that, mostly in Arizona, a lot of the sweat lodge that I did for years I had a family that basically every Sunday we did sweat lodge with this family. And very slowly they taught me, it took about 3 years of being taught how to do sweat lodge and I tended to many aspects of the ceremony and it was really good for me as a therapist, it really could help me with avoiding burnout and being centered in all those kind of things I mean if you are into that kind of stuff, it worked for me. And the sweat lodges I attended were done with care and there was probably anywhere from 3 to maybe 14 at the very most that I have ever been into. And I have done different ones with different people but always when I attend a new sweat lodge I always come in there very skeptical to be like okay who is doing the sweat lodge, what are their credentials you know are they doing this correctly and is this a safe place for me and if I would bring a friend or somebody. So the three different ones that I attend have been safe and conducted appropriately.

Interviewer: Okay. The sweat lodges that you have attended how are they different from this one? And you didn't go inside this one?

Interviewer: I didn't go inside so all I did talk with some people afterwards that might be helpful to you. But you have already talked with people. Actually one thing I would like to say I talked with a man who had said that he left on round 5 and he said yeah I wimped out I didn't play full on, I left on round 5 and he looked really ashamed. And I was like wait a minute, I said you took care of yourself, you trusted your self care and you left. He is like yeah, I didn't play full and I said no you questioned an authority figure and you took care of yourself. I said you should be proud of yourself for that. And then after he took that in he said you know come to think of it I am glad I did that because I was strong enough and well enough to pull the other people out. I said yeah, yeah, good for you, for taking care of yourself and not just letting some other person decide for you.

Interviewer: Since you have been to other James Ray event, and I realize this is just your opinion but the people that were in there obviously had problems at some point why did they stay, do you know why?

Respondent: I will talk for myself, because when I told my husband that night what had happened and I was processing with him. And we were sitting there going, they were this close away from relief, all they had to do was get on the other side of the tarps and get a drink of water. All they had to do was say I have had enough and I am leaving. And so my husband and I were processing that and he said to me, well honey at least I know that you, you would have stood up to him, you would have left, you would have taken care of yourself and I had to stop and I started crying and I said would I have. I said you know how much I look up to James Ray and you know how much of a fan I am. Would I have stuck it out to impress him? Would my insecurities have come up and what I wanted to play full on and not look like the wimp. I said I am not sure, I said I am grateful that I don't ever have to know what my decision would have been, but I know that my ego can sometimes get in the way especially if I am trying to impress a celebrity, I may have pushed myself to the point where maybe I would have self harmed, or not self harmed but

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Interviewer: Is he considered a celebrity?

Respondent: Oh yeah, I think US today a year ago called him the #1 motivational speaker in America.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I believe that was I mean so for me I had to question whether or not I would have said no James I am done, get out of my way, I am getting out of here. I also have an understanding that between round 5 and 6 one of the people running the fire had heard people inside asking for help. And that one of the people running fire and I can't confirm this you would have to do that or that they said hey I am hearing some people need to come out, let's get them out and James said no leave them in. I don't know if that's true. I really hope it's not for his sake but if it is that is very disturbing to me.

Interviewer: Well and who did you hear say that?

Respondent: I heard that the person that was part of the fire, I believe you have talked with him Ted and Debbie Mercer.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: That Ted had said hey I think some people need to come out, I can't confirm that but I did not hear that straight from him, but it is for me, it kind of burns in my brain that if people were asking for help and were denied. That would be something that would be of interest to me as to what happened that day, because I even if had the guts to say help me I need out and I was denied it again I don't know what I would have done then, now I know what I will do now, I will never allow an authority figure to tell me when enough is enough or to push me to play full on whatever that means.

Interviewer: This was the sweat lodge and that's little stand to have the water. Could you show me where the people you were talking about were and where James was?

Respondent: Okay actually the door was on this side. This is where that one woman was, there was another man right here and these were the two but are not living I am not sure about that. Ambulances were over here, and I was probably right here with the woman I was tending to and then paramedic eventually came over here. So that would pretty much be what --

Interviewer: No obstruction --

Respondent: No, no in fact I almost think it should be like here. I mean there was really no obstruction to what was going on and then there was another person here and a couple of more right here that were kind of like you know I remember there was a tarp and a hose and that kind of a thing and there were a couple of others over here that were okay.

Interviewer: Okay so I would just cross that out. And these are the ambulances?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: I will mark those ambulances. And this is this Christine Bevins and a couple of other paramedic?

Respondent: Paramedic eventually arrived and was over here.

Interviewer: Was paramedic there when she was calling out to James?

Respondent: Yes. And then there were 2 others that eventually one had long brown and 2 others that helped me with Christine did not look like they were part of the sweat lodge. They looked to have, their hair was dry, I think one of them even had makeup on and one had long brown hair with makeup on very pretty woman who seemed to know people almost have like a file on, at least with name and date of birth or something. And the other one I think may have been part of the "Dream Team" I think she had a blue t-shirt on. There was a woman here with an IV and there was a man kind of holding her I eventually went and attended them for a while after Christine was in the ambulance because the man was cold and thirsty and James is right there. And I said is there anything I could do for you and he said can you help me get my blanket back on, I am cold. And I said would you like a glass of water sir? And he said I would love a glass of water.

Interviewer: Do you think he was in shock just too much going on and overwhelmed?

Respondent: When I saw James standing here, looking at the deceased woman and I am sure no one knew at that time. I pretty much knew he looked down at her I think he looked, it looked like shock definitely and kind of like what did I do, what did I do? That kind of a look and then he just kind of walked back over here so I truly believe it's not that he didn't care, the weird thing was that he didn't really tend to anybody, he just kind of and maybe you know people are like hey if you don't know what to do get out of the way. I don't know if someone, if the paramedics even said backup, or I don't know what happened but they let me you know get down and help. And I feel bad for James Ray I mean I do think he has a lot of good qualities. The part that bothers me and if it can be confirmed that elders warned him that really bothers me.

Interviewer: And did Jim Medicine Tree, did he say why they thought that he might get people hurt?

Respondent: His understanding that is now my understanding based on what he said.

Interviewer: I understand.

Respondent: I just want to make sure I am getting my words right, I don't want to harm anybody with a gossip or something.

Interviewer: Sure.

Respondent: Is that he had had met people who had to have medical care or tended to after his sweat lodges before.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And I believe Ted and Debby also have probably said that yeah we helped before and it was pretty intense in there. You know his sweat lodges are way hotter than others or you know that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: Is that what they mean by when they say intense?

Respondent: I would say intense to me, if I was in a intense sweat lodge it would be one that was really hot and really long.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: But still I would walk out on my own two feet refreshed and conscious. And part of it has to do with the fact that you hydrate at least a day before.

Interviewer: Now I understand there was a Vision Quest prior to that, they had dinner Tuesday night and then Thursday morning had breakfast and then Thursday afternoon was the sweat lodge.

Respondent: So I would be curious when were they offered food again and water because I am assuming, just assuming it would be around 9:00 AM. They had some sort of a buffet breakfast and were encouraged to hydrate. They went into the sweat lodge at 2:00 so we are talking like 4 to 5 hours to try and I remember one of the women later on after this was all done, I walked back up with one of the Mercers and ended up tending to a few other people that were still dizzy and one woman was in her bed throwing up water and I kept saying sweetheart try again, try again. And I would say try again and she did it three times and she could not hold down water. And I think I told one of your sheriffs as I left after you interviewed me that someone needed to get an IV in her. So I was in this place with this woman throwing up water so I am thinking if she is still throwing up water oh and one of her friends said yeah she was throwing up the second day of the Vision Quest. I am like if people were so dehydrated because we live in the desert I know I have been dehydrated and it takes me about a day and a half to rehydrate and to not feel sick anymore. I just, I don't think 4 to 5 hours was ample time to hydrate people that had been without water for 2 days in the desert.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And again, you know, I'll let a health professional you know say what they say about hydration and water but it just seemed that seemed concerning to as well.

Interviewer: Okay. So you have never done a sweat lodge with him but with others?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And they were different because they were shorter?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: You didn't come out feeling ill or anything like that? What about the structure of it, not knowing what they are supposed to look like?

Respondent: Jim Tree would also be really good about this and the structure of the sweat lodge is not traditional. And two ways about that the construction of the sweat lodge for starters it was very big and short with this little tiny door and so just as someone who has done a lot of sweat lodges the first thing that I think of is people that were sitting here when that little door opened to get more rocks into the middle I talked with one of the women that was back here and she said Shawna when that door opened I did not feel any relief and that's one of the things about the sweat lodge when you do doors you open a door to a much smaller like, a normal sweat lodge would probably be like this. So when you open that door all of us in the sweat lodge feel fresh air and relief. The woman I was talking to said she never felt any fresh air or relief. And she was thinking and she actually passed out and was pulled out of the sweat lodge and woke up with people trying to dump water down her throat.

Interviewer: Who was that do you know?

Respondent: No she also had a shaved head she was like that's helping. Half of the people there apparently had a shaved head but the construction was way bigger and flatter that was the other only thing I was thinking of is a lot of times it's like a dome shaped so there is a lot of top space where the hottest air rises whereas this one seemed really long and flat with this little door.

Interviewer: Did anybody inspect the lodge prior to people going in do you know?

Respondent: If any and here is something that I have not confirmed myself, I saw plastic tarps at the site. I can't remember that the tarp I saw was right here, it was a brown tarp, I remember that one because there was bunch of water and mud all over and I was like what's going on there and then I realized they were hosing people off. If there were plastic tarps on the sweat lodge any Native American elder who understood this ceremony would say that is absolutely incorrect. The wood-frame was incorrect and any kind of plastic, non breathable materials on top of the sweat lodge would be incorrect. So if anyone inspected this lodge they did not know and I don't know if the plastic tarps were just down here or if they had been pulled off the sweat lodge, because when I got there some of the sweat lodge had been torn apart.

Interviewer: In any of the events that you have attended or read or heard his lectures does he talk about sweat lodges and what their purpose was?

Respondent: Not at the events I attended specifically. I would hope that you know other people that attended the retreat would probably be way better to answer that question.

Interviewer: Okay, I didn't know if this something you had heard him talk about before of what his purpose of this was?

Respondent: When he was pitching this retreat and one of the other retreats that I did, well actually it was a retreat. It was just like a, well I guess it was a like a weekend seminar. When he was pitching this particular retreat it was, he had kind of advertised it as like a spiritual experience. And that's when my husband and I were interested because he is very much into the Quantum Physics as well as kind of taking action, motivational type thing and spirituality that is why I considered him one of my favorite authors is because of those three things and my husband and I were very into those three things. And we lived in the Verde Valley. We thought man this would be great to do this one day. I am not sure if he is Native American or has part Native American or whatever but if you were going to do a Native American Ceremonies you better have been trained properly. I kind of wondered who was he answering to.

Interviewer: Okay so you don't know anything about his background as far as these sweat lodges go, training or how often he does them or anything like that?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: All I knew was he would do one at this annual Sedona Retreat that that was part of whatever it is he was doing.

Interviewer: Okay, so it wasn't just a go in there sweat, get rid of toxins it had a spiritual connotation to it and-

Respondent: Given what I know about him, I would think that this retreat and again you would have to ask people that were there, that it would have had a definite spiritual connotation but again if you are a spiritual advisor you better know what you are doing and how to care for people and you better have been properly trained or what are you doing you know, that would be my question.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you know why the people had shaved heads is that something you had seen before or heard about in any of the past events?

Respondent: After the sweat lodge part and I had gone back up to the lodges and I was helping this one woman I was trying to help her get into a shower, she was still very dizzy and the other woman who was in the room throwing up water, there were a couple

of other women who came in and one man and we started to process a little bit, well I just kind of started asking questions and they were processing and I am just listening kind of, and I didn't put it together. I just thought there was a lot of women there that maybe shaved their heads, I did not put it together and then this woman said you know well, I wanted to play full on so you know I shaved my head and I said wait a minute, you didn't come with your buddies and like shave your heads before you got here is kind of like a sister thing to do. She is like no, no, no this was part of playing full on. I was like you mean you were encouraged to shave your head as part of the spiritual retreat. She is like yeah, yeah I have got my bag of hair in my suitcase. And I am thinking knowing how long my hair is I thought if I would have gone to this retreat and right up the door I was encouraged to shave my head to play full on, I wouldn't have done that. That is crazy, I know I wouldn't have shaved my head but I am not sure I would have got on the sweat lodge in time. I got the impression from the people that they felt judged if they didn't or something it was like I wanted to play full on so I shaved my head.

Interviewer: Now the term full on is that a term you use or is that the term they used?

Respondent: James, that is one of James Ray's biggest things. At the seminar I went to it was about playing full on.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And the seminar I went to it is called Harmonic Wealth, it's the first one that you go to if you want to get into James Ray's stuff. And pretty much that seminar was crazy because we would get there in the morning and it was probably maybe 8 or 9 in the morning and we go until midnight or 1 o'clock in the morning have a couple of hours sleep and do it all over again. And he was all about playing full on. You know if you are playing full on you are going to stay till the end. And you are going to be here on time, you know and if you didn't it was like you are not playing full on that kind of a thing and it was like got to play full on oh.

Interviewer: What were the consequences if you didn't play full on?

Respondent: It was more just like I think a personal judgment of you know I remember on the second night, like at midnight we were given another chapter or another segment of information and the next morning he referenced it. And then he said and for those of you who don't know what we are talking about you didn't stay, you didn't play full on. And it's just kind of like, kind of like a dig kind of and again I mean we were there to say hey James help us be more successful. We are paying money so you can help us be more successful. So in a way I mean it's kind of like he is a teacher and you are supposed to attend and be responsible and attend the seminar fully I think was his thing. I definitely felt a bit of judgment if I did not do it his way, I guess you could say.

Interviewer: So that's self imposed?

Respondent: Self imposed.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It's hard not to he has such charisma and leadership I mean if would you have ever seen him speak, I mean.

Interviewer: Okay, the full on.

Respondent: Play full on.

Interviewer: Okay and that just means give it your all and then some.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: At least that's what I got from the women who had shaved their head.

Interviewer: Now the things that you have attended I think I heard somebody else that it was intense and you didn't get up and go to the bathroom or get anything to drink or eat while he was doing this because you were to pay attention. Is that accurate?

Respondent: I would say that that would probably be a way that he may do it, I would want to confirm it with others who were there. The other thing that Jim Tree had mentioned is like Shawna you know I know these two sweat lodges are 4 rounds not 6. And he said the only time I have seen a sweat lodge go that long and with 6 rounds was at Sundance and you were hydrating the whole time you were in there. Not no water or no food for 2 days and then a couple of hours to hydrate and then you go in there with no water like during the sweat lodge you would be passed water.

Interviewer: Who told you there were 6 rounds?

Respondent: I learned that. I believe I learned it from two sources, one would have been the man doing the rocks which would have been Ted Mercer and the people I was talking to in the cabin after the people had gone away that were in the ambulances and I had gone to the one cabin to help with the people is that it was 6 rounds. And it was in between the 5th and 6th round that I believe Ted if it is true had said hey let's get some of those people out of here, and he had said no.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So when Jim Tree heard that he was like that is not, if you are going to do 6 rounds that is Sundance and that is with hydration.

Interviewer: Did you call him about this or did he call you?

Respondent: Basically he was definitely one of the people I called because of our connection with Native American Ceremony and he was one of my supports that I went to after all was said and done and I was left alone in my home with this experience I was confused in so many different ways because I was a fan of James Ray because I do sweat lodge, because I arrived when I did and seeing what I saw. And so I went to my own supports to basically to receive support given what I had seen. He was one of the people that I called on to kind of process what had happened.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you tell him that you are going to be talking to the sheriff's office?

Respondent: No I haven't talked to him today since we talked. If you were interested in talking with him about sweat lodge construction and those kinds of things I am sure he will be happy to talk to you.

Interviewer: Okay. I would certainly like to know who the elders were that --

Respondent: That would be, to confirm that at least from my own heart, you know because if it's a rumor then it's a rumor and maybe James just didn't know what he was doing, but if he was warned and he kept doing what he was doing that really upsets me, that just makes me sad because this could have been prevented.

Interviewer: Did Ted tell you anything about last year's sweat lodge?

Respondent: The Mercer Family had mentioned slightly just I mean, just in passing, that the sweat lodges in the past, they had noticed that people came out sick, hurting, you know hours to recuperate kind of a thing. And that he really felt that James' sweats were very intense. So he had mentioned I guess it was Ted or I can't remember who it was, I think it was Ted had said that his sweats are very intense. And that people have actually come out sick, never dying but definitely and I think a couple of years ago ambulances or some sort of medical care had to be administered to people in one of his sweats I don't know which year that was, I don't know what happened.

Interviewer: Was that there at Angel Valley?

Respondent: I am assuming. I believe he did, my understanding is that he has done this for the past 7 years and I know the past 3 it was in the Angel Valley only because I know that the Mercer Family was helping him with the fire.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And I got the impression from the Mercer Family is they kind of fell on the fence with helping him because of what he had seen in past years.

Interviewer: Okay. Now looking at it from where I am and again this is just kind of wondering the people that I spoke to and the things that I saw, it was almost a little cult like, almost took like what would these people have done to, where would it end.

Respondent: I am asking the same question, if someone chooses to shave their head to kind of rid themselves of negative energy or to maybe bring a new to themselves or whatever okay whatever, if someone goes into, I hear what you are saying, when I saw a lot of people's head shaved and the other thing was and I am pretty sure, I am like 98% sure that James's head was not shaved which also kind of bothered me but there was all these beautiful women with their long hair being shaved off but his wasn't that kind of, I had a question with that. And the devotion that these people have towards James that they would stay, well I guess some were asking for help but were not given it if that is true that for those to basically stay and die over this or pass out over this and that is some serious devotion towards a man who I believe something went terribly wrong with his leadership in that sweat lodge. And maybe with the whole retreat I don't know.

Interviewer: Okay. I have also heard that there have been some type of talk prior to going in the sweat lodge of things to expect and there are things to expect might be that you might vomit or you might pass out, did you hear anything minor about that or is there anything that you have heard before?

Respondent: The people that I talked to did not say, they didn't speak about that experience, I think they were talking about other things, I have never in all my sweat lodges been warned that I would vomit or what did you say the other thing was?

Interviewer: Pass out.

Respondent: No, never in any of the sweat lodges ---

Interviewer: Just because of the toxins release the emotional release and all that, okay.

Respondent: No that is something I have been doing this for 9 years.

Interviewer: Could this be like a combination sweat lodge of different philosophies as apposed to what you are talking about the Native American or do you know?

Respondent: It could be, I know that you know steam rooms and those kinds of things and just kind of the symbolic philosophy of kind of sweating out toxins and also kind of enduring a type of moist heat to kind of release mentally and emotionally I know that definitely when I am in sweat lodge I access that and kind of do that kind of ceremony or ritual for just myself as someone who is in service all day to people. Maybe he was combining different, I know Native Americans though I don't know what else ---

Interviewer: So what people described to as you know you might vomit or pass out, no water while in sweat lodge, went on for a long time, they enter they had to go clockwise -

Respondent: Yeah you would go in here, and you would go around like this and James was sitting --

Interviewer: That's the spiritual part of it.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Well and that's part of Native American is that you know you honor the circles. And that you don't go counter clock wise that the energy would be clockwise. And so it's very important that you walk in and that you also come out this way. Now I am sure once people started screaming and everything started happening I don't think they cared about which direction they went in the sweat lodge and but yeah that would be a Native American way.

Interviewer: Okay. I am just curious because I heard some people talk about protocol for lack of better word, how they were supposed to do it.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So I guess the, what you are saying that the biggest concern you have if I understand right was James not really participating in rendering aid and he was just talking to these other people?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: But you don't know who those people were?

Respondent: I just remember what the one looked like that I described, there was I think a man who also looked like, I can't remember I couldn't remember if he looked kind of wet like he had been in the sweat lodge or if he had not, but those were the two and I am just assuming that they were possibly followers of James who have done a lot of the stuff and became maybe friends. James looked concerned, he looked guilty or kind of not even guilty it was like what did I do kind of a look or maybe even embarrassment that he had pushed people to the point where they had become so sick. But he really at least when I got there I don't know if he helped pull people out I wasn't there for that part once I got there all the people were out ---

Interviewer: So just the time that you were there, till the time you left you never saw that part, you didn't see him doing anything?

Respondent: And I wondered when I was over here and she was screeching and he looked at us I wanted to say can you please come over and maybe help console her

until the ambulance can take and I just felt too intimidated because he is this celebrity person which I am embarrassed to say now, but in that moment I still kind of looked up to him and did want to tell him to do something.

Interviewer: You used the word followers, what does that mean?

Respondent: People who probably have done, I don't mean like, I don't believe that he ever would call himself some sort of a, I don't know maybe followers would be the wrong term I would say fans, but when I mean followers I don't necessarily mean like in a cult but more people that read his stuff maybe did his suggestions, got success and wanted to keep going on to the bigger and better seminars with him to continue the journey of success. Whereas I only did, I did 3 of the free seminars and I took teenagers to go watch and speak at the free seminar and then the next one that you do that you pay for would be Harmonic Wealth. And then from there it kind of sprouts out into these other very like long exotic expensive retreats.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So people who have gone to these other things are probably pretty big fans, know his work well. And I am sure they really like look up to him and I know I would.

Interviewer: I am curious, what is the cost of these types of things?

Respondent: My understanding for this one was \$9000 a head and that did not include lodging so you still had to pay I think it was \$270 something a night at Angel Valley.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: And so people were saying yeah I had to pay for that and then I had to bring my own sleeping bag and then I had to pay for you know travel so you can almost estimate to about \$10,000. The other thing that Jim Tree was very clear is that you do not ask for money for sweat lodge, you do not ask for payment like you must pay this amount of money to have this experience. Native Americans do not charge for sweat lodge.

Interviewer: The sweat lodge was part of the whole --?

Respondent: Right, package sure. Now it's a lot of money, my husband and I definitely couldn't afford it and that's why we didn't go.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Or the other ones I mean there is one in like Hawaii and there is one in Las Vegas many thousands of dollars.

Interviewer: Okay. I know other people have looked on his website, I haven't had a chance to look at it and see.

Respondent: And he has got a lot of books and I mean I have DVDs and CDs of his that I listen to, because that's something I can afford, just to learn from him, just not be able to go -

Interviewer: Well he is obviously very energetic.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And this full on thing that he has got going how does he keep what's his secret to being so energetic and what does he say he does?

Respondent: I think he is a very healthy, fit man. I mean he definitely role models a way of eating that's very nutritious, a way of he is really into like drinking water and chlorophyll. I drink chlorophyll because of his suggestions and Anthony Robbins is also into you know suggesting chlorophyll. And just being really fit and he does this whole big Harmonic Wealth is all about being fit in every area of your life mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally, financially that kind of a thing. So he says he doesn't drink coffee then I just think he is got some sort of and I think he would say or maybe people would say that a big part of being a part of the Quantum Physics Law of Attraction following, is that you can create your own how energetic you are based on how you are feeling and thinking. And at least what I could see is I felt like he was a role model on that. If he was taking any kind of stimulants or anything like that I would have no idea, I always felt looking at him that he was role modeling a healthy lifestyle.

Interviewer: You would assume that?

Respondent: Yes, because he was I mean to go from 9:00 AM to 1:00 AM and to keep like 1500 people entertained it was amazing to watch him. I mean to me of course I looked up to him as a speaker myself how to keep people engaged and you know the way he speaks and stuff, he is very good and that's unfortunate now because he had really good stuff to offer and I think he took it way too far and now a lot of people are probably going to not look to the things that we was suggesting to be successful and that's unfortunate.

Interviewer: Okay. Anything else that you think is important for us to know?

Respondent: No I feel like I really said what I wanted to say which I didn't get a chance to say the other night. I feel really bad for the families. I hope the one day that maybe I have contact with Christine and I just want to know if she had permanent brain damage or not if she is okay, I hope to one day cross past with her.

Interviewer: Apparently she was discharged.

Respondent: Okay, I went to try and visit her in the hospital and she was already gone and due to confidentiality stuff I couldn't offer her any Interviewer: Yeah it is an

assumption on my part is that she was okay but I don't know. We will be contacting Jim and talking to him about that so.

Respondent: Yeah I am hoping he maybe able to put you in touch with maybe the people that have talked with James. That would be very interesting for me to confirm with Jim.

Interviewer: Okay, I appreciate you wanting to comeback and go over that stuff with me because we really didn't get the chance to do too much. And that your insights, and I really didn't get into it with other people as to what his thing was all that. I had the same problem with the short hair I didn't know I think I thought maybe they were chemo patients and I didn't want to question it.

Respondent: They were --

Interviewer: And then I found out.

Respondent: Yeah, I saw how long some of their hair was and it was like wow I would never do that, there is just now way. For me there are other ways to play full on.

Interviewer: Again and it just looks like it's I don't now just very odd to see that many people going with it regardless of --

Respondent: And like I said I, before this happened I could have questioned my own how far would I have wanted to impress him or follow him and kind of denied my own self-understanding or self care and put my life in the hands of him.

Interviewer: Is there talk about that of letting go of yourself and trusting him to get you through things?

Respondent: I think for me if I could put myself in that place, that when you put someone on a pedestal or you see them as like an expert in like life success that for me personally I was doubting my own way and looking to him almost as if I want what you have so I am going to deny who I am so I can understand how you did it because I want what you have. And I mean, I am a therapist and a person in this community that helps a lot of people and even someone as I think is stable and ground as I am when it came to James Ray or maybe some other authors of mine because I call myself a motivational speaker junkie that I myself could be guilty of dismissing my own self care or self understanding and kind of almost being entranced to have him tell me what's best because he has success and I don't. And that's just me being just totally outing myself. So if other people felt like I do it, it could be very possible that they I mean good for those people if they were crying out for help and were denied it at least they were crying for help.

Interviewer: Interesting, I appreciate your candor.

Respondent: Yeah it's kind of shaming to admit that but at least now I understand and I have kind of completely taken my power back from people of authority or not people of authority necessarily but like people that I looked up to that I will never allow somebody to tell me what's best for me.

Interviewer: At least you got something out of it, something positive. Well you have got my number, call me, I won't always get right back with you because I don't know where I am going to be, but certainly will get back with you. And if you have any questions or anything or you think of somebody that you think would be helpful.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: I appreciate it.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Alright.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for letting me take up your lunch time.

Respondent: Oh it's okay. I just still have time to get back into

(Informal Talk)

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