

SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2010

June 26, 2010: Peltier's confused history...

Peltier's June 26, 2010 statement asks what remains of his dwindling supporters (for those very few who even have American Indian roots) that they should never forget. "So don't forget. Not ever," he proclaims in yet another scamming metaphor as he continues to confuse and blur the correlation between a proud Native American history and his own criminal acts.

And, he uses the dreaded G-word yet again.

It's not difficult to separate truth from falsehood. It is totally irresponsible to state that the United States pursued a policy of genocide toward the Indians, to cite the Washita as an example. The United States did not follow a policy of genocide; it did try to find a just solution to the Indian problem. The consistent idea was to civilize the Indians, incorporate them into the community, make them part of the melting pot. That it did not work, that it was foolish, conceited, even criminal, may be true, but that doesn't turn a well-meant program into genocide (Stephen Ambrose).

Peltier prophetically and thankfully mentions two very important people in this saga, Anna Mae Aquash and Joe

Stuntz.

Anna Mae is intoned by Peltier for one reason, and one reason only, to deflect guilt. Do we have to remind Peltier that her kidnapping and brutal rape and murder sits on the doorstep of the American Indian Movement? Anna Mae was suspected of being one of the “scouts” that Peltier erroneously compares to “an informant,” which has been proven not to be true. But AIM’s suspicions prevailed and without any benefit of a presumption of innocence she was sentenced to a horrible and demeaning death, and Peltier’s involvement will hopefully still come to light. That inquiry is still ongoing and her family anxiously awaits her final justice. AIM, on the other hand, was an abject failure, it accomplished nothing and only worsened the plight of those they allegedly claimed to help; the history of AIM is replete with examples.

Joe Stuntz, wearing a dead FBI agent’s jacket, was killed that June day while shooting at responding law enforcement.

Arguably one of the most important quotes of the entire Peltier matter comes from Peltier himself, and it is critical to place it in its factual context:

“I seen Joe when he pulled it out of the trunk and I looked at him when he put it on, and he gave me a smile (ITOSH p.552).”

For those with some common sense, picture this: There are two government sedans, Peltier, Stuntz, and others are gathered around stealing whatever they can from the vehicles. Stuntz grabs agent Jack Coler’s jacket from the trunk and puts it on, smiling. Laying in the dirt next to them are two dead FBI agents. Both had been first shot and wounded and then had their faces brutally blasted away at point-blank range, while one even begged for his life. Since they were both shot in the face, someone there had to actually touch them and roll them over to face the ground. (We won’t dignify that act by even suggesting counting coup.)

These are the actions of brave warriors? In 1975? Hardly.

No, these were the actions of cowards led by Leonard Peltier.

Peltier’s confusion about the facts of his own case and how it does not tie into the history of Native America, reinforces the notion of how Peltier thinks others perceive him. It is clear that his life at Lewisburg has taken its toll and allows much

time to reflect about his actions that day. Perhaps in fleeting moments of honesty—if he is even capable of that, it's certain he would have acted differently. But that's an immense stretch, as he looks at the bloated figure in the metal mirror on the wall of his concrete cell.

We can thank Leonard Peltier for the reminder, and no, we won't forget the cowards of Jumping Bull. Peltier can rehearse his confused rhetoric and practice his scamming technique for those who blindly follow. Followers who don't have the stamina or insight to seek out and understand the facts surrounding his guilt while he shamefully continues to denigrate what is otherwise a proud culture and heritage.

Real Native America understands that. Leonard Peltier never will.

“In the Spirit of Coler and Williams”

Ed Woods

(Next Parole Reconsideration Hearing: July 2024)

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