

February 13, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I have worked for Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council (RMTLC) for 8 years and that is where I first met Rain. He was considered a valuable advisor to the RMTLC and for all of the hours he worked, Rain never took a dollar and even paid his own expenses.

I don't know anybody who has done more for MMIW than Rain on a grassroots reservation level, state level, and federal level. I am on Montana's MMIP Task Force and I learned a lot from Rain which helped me to secure that appointment. I am also appointed to MMIPMT and I am working with RMTLC Tribal Leaders to establish a MMIP subcommittee. So as you can see, I am very involved with MMIW/MMIP.

I was a producer on the documentary *Somebody's Daughter* and because it was a low budget film, we worked from first light well into the night while filming it, and we drove hundreds of miles in the process. I can't even estimate how many weeks and months went into the post-production and editing process.

It is both an insult and completely false to insinuate that anybody involved with *Somebody's Daughter* did it to make money. It cost us money on several occasions. If anybody wanted to make money, we wouldn't be making films about MMIW. No major studios or streaming services are banging down our doors to make MMIW documentaries. Rain never talked about making an MMIW documentary, it was suggested to him in a Blackfeet Tribal Council meeting. Chairman Tim Davis of the Blackfeet referred to this fact publicly during the MMIW Tribunal held on the Blackfeet Nation in October 2019. I was there every step of the way and witnessed everything that happened in the making of the film. I'm even in it.

We made *Somebody's Daughter* to bring a national spotlight to MMIW and get federal legislation in Washington, DC moving. That is exactly what we achieved with the film. This film, like all of Rain's films on MMIW, has provided hope and lifelines to the victims' families. You can't know what it's like to have the victims' family members shed their tears or sob inconsolably on you – but Rain and I do because that happened with every mother and aunty we interviewed who had lost a loved one. Rain never refers to these MMIW documentaries as "his." He always says they belong to the community. He also refers to legislation he has drafted as "yours" when speaking to people.

In all of the years I have known Rain, I have never heard him say that he was enrolled in any federally recognized tribe. I have however heard him say many times that he has no intention of ever seeking enrollment and that he completely opposes the federal enrollment system that was imposed upon tribes in 1935. He is vehemently opposed to blood quantum and considers it a racist, colonial relic. He is right. That is not our way. We never decided who was a tribal member that way.

I have never heard Rain misrepresent his heritage. He is a member of the Strange Owl/Shoulderblade family and nobody can take that away. I have met members of this family from Northern Cheyenne. They are a respected family. As I recall, they embraced Rain as a family member in the early 2000s. It is the family's right and decision to decide who is a family member.

This is a family with strong matriarchs. They have oral history; traditional history that isn't in documents or on some hokey genealogy website. You only learn this history from traditional families if you come to their communities and homes. They took Rain as a relative based upon their oral history. His late sister (cousin) Barbara talked about this. This is how we do things in the traditional way on reservations here in Montana. The family decides who is a family member, not outsiders, not some colonial practice, not a website, and not a divisive "list." A traditional family's oral history or some settler papers and clicks? There is only one authentic practice here and it isn't the settler papers and clicks.

I have traveled with Rain extensively, and we have had many conversations about his early years in Europe. He is extremely knowledgeable about his late mother's Romani Gypsy people. He identifies by his mother's people, not as a Native American. How can he be accused of being a pretend Native American when he doesn't even identify as Indian? I see many similarities in the ways of our respective peoples. To attempt to erase his Romani Gypsy heritage is disgusting and not even worth dignifying with a response.

Northern Cheyenne Sun Dance Priest and Spiritual Leader, the late Don Shoulderblade, gave Rain the name "Bear Stands Last." He was a highly respected man. He gave Rain permission to use that name in public as well as traditionally, and he has every right to do so. The idea that there is something strange about carrying different names is ridiculous. Many of us in the traditional community have a regular name, nicknames, and traditional names we go by. We also change our names. Rain once had very good reason to change his name "legally." There is nothing strange about this.

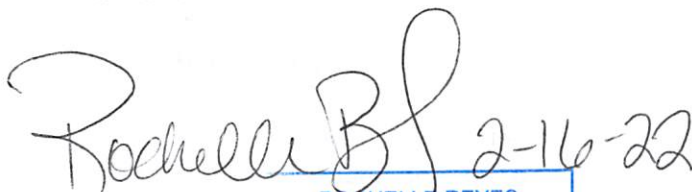
What Rain has done to better the lives of our people and future generations is well known. It is a selfless body of work over many years. He is a respected man. This attempt to discredit him is both pathetic and sad. When there is so much work to be done on MMIW and other life and death issues, we're having to respond to lateral violence and pure vindictiveness just so some journalist can make a name for themselves. What a waste. In the time it has taken me to write this, another one of our sisters has probably been taken.

Thank you for your time and if you would like to call me to confirm this information, please feel free to call @ 406-399-4184 or email me at [thaseagle@gmail.com](mailto:thaseagle@gmail.com).

Sincerely,



Tina Bierle



ROCHELLE REYES  
NOTARY PUBLIC for the  
State of Montana  
Residing at Harlem, Montana  
My Commission Expires  
November 29, 2022