

BEWARE OF “FALSE PROPHETS”

The whole situation that is now happening in Deaf Read sickens and saddens me. Our community is becoming increasingly more divided and the level of discourse increasingly more mean-spirited. When I started vlogging, I got more responses from people who shared the cultural (Deaf) perspective than from those who still subscribed to the medical perspective. But those who did not share the Deaf perspective responded with their disagreement in a respectful interchange of ideas. This was fine with me, because one of my goals with my website was to try to help others in our Deaf community to understand the meaning of Deafhood and see how it could apply to themselves. Now, after the DBC Conference, everything has changed. I have seen fewer and fewer commenters who share my perspectives, and more and more who say they are against it. This does not necessarily mean that I am wrong, wrong, wrong, but more likely that the opposition is becoming increasingly effective in quashing dissent with their views, causing people to either not check DeafRead anymore, or just to remain silent about what they think, out of fear that they too, will get flamed to a crisp.

The DBC was started with a worthwhile goal, and like many of us, I supported their aims. I was not a core member of the DBC, nor did I attend the conference, because I could not afford the travel costs (I did make a donation to help them with their expenses for the conference). When the whole controversy started, I stayed out of the discussion because I was not a member of the planning committee, and I had not been there. However, I know many of the people involved, and it upset me greatly to see the characterizations being hurled at them. I do not know whether or not they made mistakes or employed the correct procedures in organizing the DBC conference. But I do know that at heart, they are good people who truly CARE about OUR Deaf community, and the future of OUR Deaf children. If they made mistakes, that is because they are HUMAN. Human people make mistakes, but that does not diminish in any way what they may be trying to do.

Now, I would not make a good politician. I tend to take people at face value, until they show me they are not what they seem to be. I am not someone who is interested in assassinating anyone's character. But, when I see someone who is causing damage across broad sectors of OUR community, I feel compelled to speak out. To remain silent would be only serving to perpetuate an evil against ourselves. And in this case, the evil has caused us to doubt ourselves and each other. Since I started vlogging, I was introduced to many people who stated they shared my perspectives and ideals. And yet, now, while looking at the comments on other sites, I see these people making comments against the DBC leaders and DBC itself. And this causes me to question, “Who are these people, really? Are they truly working with me, or are they playing both sides?”. And this, I think is the saddest tragedy of all. Our emergent unity in a cause was shattered by the actions of ONE person. One person who planted the seeds of doubt and dissension, and then sat back to watch them grow and reap the fruits of his labors.

When Barry Sewell, AKA “Dr. Hococan” first appeared on the DeafRead scene, with his blog, “Hococan, the Center”, I felt something was wrong. He seemed to be espousing some Native American Indian philosophy about using circular pens to break horses, because linear thinking just causes more problems or some such. I’m not asking for an explanation of it here – I’ve gotten it now. My initial thought was, “Dr. Hococan, are you saying that the American Indians were wrong for resisting the White Man’s incursions into their lands and way of life? When now your people (I thought he was Indian, from what he seemed to be saying) have been shunted off to reservations that are not even on their original lands, or parts of their lands that are not the most desirable for living? When now, your people suffer the ills of alcoholism, and the loss of their languages and way of life?” But I did not ask that, because he was seeming to say that all of us Deaf need to meet together and unify, an idea I had expressed from the beginning. I gave him the benefit of the doubt, and waited for more blogs from him to see if I could understand his ideas better. Those blogs never came.

Instead, his next blogs attacked DBC and its leaders and Deafhood. He did not seem to be providing any evidence, but stating his opinions. He did not state that he had been a core member of the DBC. Following that, he published a series of internal documents relating to DBC which provided “evidence”. The “evidence” showed some DBC leaders making jokes amongst each other, amongst supposedly like-minded individuals. Anyone who knows David Eberwein even a little bit knows he has a great sense of humor and will make jokes, especially the sarcastic kind. But, the evidence was pointed only to others, never to himself and his own participation in the conversation. If he truly did not like the jokes, he should have said something to the effect of, “hey folks, we have to respect people with Cochlear Implants and their choices” or “hey, that’s not really appropriate here”. But he did not.

Then he stepped aside when other people started sharing their perspective of what had happened in the DBC, except to make a comment here or there. But he had done enough. People started jumping on the bandwagon, without truly critically examining what had been happening or what had actually been said, and by who.

Somewhere in the Bible (Old Testament or New, I don’t know which) it says to “beware of False Prophets”. As I said, I am not interested in character assassination, but I am going to stand up for our community, and when one person can be said to have caused damage to our community, I am going to call him out on it. And I am calling out Barry Sewell, AKA “Dr. Hococan”.

I am calling him out not only because he has damaged us, he has damaged others. There is a definite pattern of behavior that I have seen developing in his actions. Recently, one of my confidential sources shared with me this link: <http://www.haloscan.com/comments/kokonutguy/1761990024918530733>. Around the middle of it, this text can be seen:

Greetings brothers and sisters. The name is **Berry Tadodaho.** I discovered your blog and thought I should advise everybody about Mark Azure and James Woodenlegs. They both claimed to be Spiritual Leaders and practiced sacred Spiritual Ceremonies for numerous years. In essence they both fooled a lot of people into believing that they were true Spiritual Leaders and practiced bad medicine. Earlier this year I contacted and spoke to their respective tribal leaders in North Cheyenne and Rose Bud Reservation. Respective Leaders and Elders from both reservations responded by saying they did not recognize Mark Azure and James Woodenlegs as Spritual Leaders and stated that they both have never practiced among their people and did not earn the respective positions as Spiritual Leaders among their people. In their words, both James and Mark are self appointed Spiritual Leaders, thus creating bad medicine. Bad medicine happens when and if one practice spiritual ceremonies without merits and authority. Intertribal Deaf Council became aware of this problem but yet they choose to ignore it because they were raking in fund raising money as an organization, in which they humilated and sold Native America's religion. The same is true for IDC's sole woman spiritual leader, Teresa Norris, who's Mark Azure's sweetheart. She is not recognized as Spiritual Leader by her respective tribe back at home but yet she claims to be Spiritual Leader. IDC continues to support and fuel bad medicine by recognizing her as Spiritual Leader, defying the leaders of her respective Tribe. Worse yet, there is currently active and robust petition and boycott among pure breed deaf native americans, led by Native Circle who have agreed to boycott IDC's conference and gatherings in the future. The majority of deaf native americans do not feel that IDC represent them any longer. Currently they are distributing mesages to everybody with hope to botcott against Eagle VRS and IDC for as long as they choose to use false Spiritual Leaders and Medicine Men and humilate their native culture and religion. IDC leaders have pushed full breek natives away and shifted itself toward mixed breed organization representing blacks and whites. Visit www.DeafNative.com and take a look at their galleries and pictures. You will see nothing but abundance of whites and blacks wannabes and very few full blooded native amiercnans. They have robbed and stole the organization away from Native Americans just as they did it for so many years. I spend majority of my time visiting reservations in different States whereas I'd meet with deaf native americans. They are equally as upset with IDC because they feel that IDC are ignoring them. They hold annual conference and gatherings at fancy hotels and convention centers, making it financially impossible for them to participate. It has become an elite club for wealthy few. The organization raises funds in the name of deaf native americans but yet does Berry, Tadodaho Messenger | **Homepage** | 11.24.07 - 6:08 am | #

The style of the language and the themes expressed seemed very similar to Barry Sewell, AKA “Dr. Hococan”, and now AKA “Berry Tadodaho”? What struck my interest was that this was within the Intertribal Deaf Council. So I went to some of my trusted sources within the Deaf Indian community, and they shared with me that Barry engaged in similar actions toward their community, causing them to experience a rapid drop in involvement. These sources were reluctant to provide me with documentation, since it is apparently the Indian way to walk away and not associate with someone with whom one has a conflict rather than engage them in confrontation. My sources tell me that Barry is not an American Indian by any means, nor does he truly practice what he preaches of American Indian ways. His “DBCfacts” webpage (which apparently has now been taken out of service) had a link to the “IDC”, which could stand for the Intertribal Deaf Council.

But is Berry Tadodaho and Barry Sewell the same person? (Do a search for “Tadodaho” in your favorite search engine and you will find that Tadodaho was an evil chieftain who converted to the ways of good – however, as I will show later, this evil person did not seem to have converted to the ways of the light). I went to Berry Tadodaho’s Homepage, and it can be found at this link: <http://www.firekeepers.com/>. When one clicks the “contacts” at the Firekeeper’s Association website, this leads us to see:

Firekeepers Association

PO Box 103

Benson, Arizona 65602

520-826-0090 VP / Voice / Fax

Ok, this doesn’t tell us much. However, also on the homepage are two sponsors of the Firekeepers Association: “Air Institution, Inc.” and the “Kuuyi Foundation”. When you go to the Air Institution, Inc. webpage, you will see within the contacts:

Air Institution, Inc.

Mr. BC Sewell, CEO/President

PO Box 103

Benson, Arizona 85602

This seems familiar (the email contact for Mr. BC Sewell reads as “mailto: Barry@nosmog.com”). This sounds very similar, but it is possible that it could be a different Barry Sewell. So, let’s go over and check the Kuuyi Foundation’s website. Doing so yields this:

Kuuyi Foundation
3700 N. Golden Rule
Cochise, Arizona 85606
Contact By Email

Founder Berry & Crystal
PO Box 103
Benson, Arizona 85606
520-826-0090 VP / Fax
Contact By Email

My sources inform me that Barry's wife's name is Crystal. But here it says "Berry". And no last names are given. Hmmm.... So are we talking about the same guy? Not giving up in our quest for the Truth, we looked at the Sponsor page of the Kuuyi Foundation. And this is what comes up:

Honorable Mention Sponsors

Special thanks to **CaZona, Inc.** for providing the Foundation with license rights to bottle and distribute drinking water products and license rights to use multiple real estate properties for Foundation's youth programs.

Air Institution, Inc. provides the Foundation with generous royalty arrangement generated from Exhaust Gas Filter & Filtration System.

Montana Rio, Inc. provides custom hats contributions. Custom hats are being sold and revenues are donated toward Kuyyi Foundation. Custom hats are also built for our youth participants, at no cost. It's a badge of honor method we use in our youth therapeutic programs.

Firekeepers Association provides generous resources support.

Firekeepers

Association plays an important role in our therapeutic and recreational programs. The Association provides guidance service and assist us with the role of firekeeping as well as motivational speakers.

I think we're closing in on whether "Barry" and "Berry" are the same guy. We all know that Barry Sewell, the man in question from DeafRead, owns "CaZona, Inc." And CaZona makes hats (which he mentioned in his last blog). Going over to www.CaZona.com, and clicking on the "contacts" yields:

Headquarter

CaZona, Inc.

1775 W. El Coyote

Cochise, Arizona 85606

520-826-0090 Voice/Video Phone/Fax

Maybe, but it's not a definite here. The other sponsor is Montana Rio, Inc. (www.buckaroo.us). On the home page is a picture of a guy and a dog, who one might presume are the owners of the company, since the welcome letter is "signed" by "Denio (reg. ABCA) & Berry". Still Berry, but the Contacts gives us this information:

Montana Rio, Inc., Headquarter

1775 W. El Coyote

Cochise, Arizona 85606

520-826-0090 Fax

Look familiar? Ah, but we're not done yet. Let's try the "About Us" page. What do we see? A page about the "Sewell Family", including pictures.

Sure looks like the same guy. But Barry's story and pattern is not over. He gets into conflicts with individuals as well. It seems that in 2007, Barry got into a land dispute with another person (see

<http://www.elkodaily.com/articles/2007/08/22/opinion/letters/letter1.txt>) which led him to organize a recall of the local sheriff (who had been called in during the dispute. This led to an online discussion (sound familiar?) of the readers of this newspaper (http://www.elkodaily.com/articles/2007/09/18/news/breaking_news/breaking10.txt). It is interesting to read the comments following the article. One thing that jumps out at me: He berates other people for seeming to hide behind screen names, yet he has no problems with using aliases of his own.

The story doesn't end here. On his website, www.ritro.com, he has an article titled "The tool of empowerment comes from within". In the last paragraph, he says:

The author directs www.imdeaf.com. Investment Monetary for the Deaf, also known as IMDeaf and IMDeaf.com, is a venture capitalist company that specializes in servicing deaf entrepreneurs. We are always striving to empower deaf individuals and communities and help them acquire the skill of empowering self so that they can empower themselves financially and become a part of our larger financial empowerment force

In a recent edition of Deaf Digest, there was a question about imdeaf.com. The editor of Deaf Digest did some checking and reported his conclusion that imdeaf was likely to be a scam. How are Deaf people likely to be empowered when the organizer of this "empowerment service" is in all probability, bilking them of their money?

Is this a trustworthy person? Is his word reliable enough that we can risk a division in our community, based on his accusations? He has done it before, to other people, and no doubt, he will do it again. Some people have commented to me that the problems of division in the Deaf community were there long before Mr. Sewell ever came around. This is true enough. However, we have seen a pattern where he starts "pushing people's buttons" and creating chaos behind him whenever he feels he is not getting his way. Whether or not the processes of DBC (or their human leaders) were flawed, the current problems can be traced to one man, a man who has proved to be toxic to everything he touches: Mr. Barry Sewell, AKA "Dr. Hococan" AKA "Berry Tadodado" AKA... Dr. Evil?