

*I/V Pfankuch, D. Transcript Sup #65 Det. R. Diskin C23.

On 10/31/09 I interviewed Daniel Pfankuch. The following is a 3rd party transcript of that interview:

See also Supplement #065

Daniel Pfankuch: It's Daniel.

Det. Diskin: Hi Daniel. This is Detective Diskin with the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office. How are you doing?

Daniel Pfankuch: With what?

Det. Diskin: I am Detective Diskin with the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office. I am investigating the sweat lodge deaths that happened in Sedona.

Daniel Pfankuch: Okay.

Det. Diskin: I talked to couple of your friends who were there with you. I talked with Mickey Reynolds and David Duhaime and they suggested that I give you a call and ask you about your experiences in 2005.

Daniel Pfankuch: Okay.

Det. Diskin: Do you have time to talk about it right now?

Daniel Pfankuch: I do.

Det. Diskin: Okay great. I also talked to the Hamiltons and they gave me a little bit information but I just kind of wanted to hear from your perspective what happened.

Daniel Pfankuch: Well I guess my take on it after studying more about the whole thing is that the sweat lodge was not conducted in a traditional Native American nature because a person cannot oversee that many people. My experience was it went very long and some of the people, I think like Mickey and staff, left and came back in but I stayed the whole, almost four hours, and ended up. I guess it's kind of difficult to explain because some people just don't understand, I feel like I left this world and went somewhere else. And I was later revived and after I was brought back here to this place, I was taken to hospital in an ambulance where they did a lot of tests. I think they thought I was on something but I wasn't. So they rehydrated me through the night and then I was released the next morning. But they did all kinds of extensive blood tests and all kinds of things because they were convinced that I was taking something, I don't know.

Det. Diskin: What do you remember about that entire week as far as what you did before that?

Daniel Pfankuch: Well, we did a lot of other exercises, I guess you call them, as far as like doing a medicine wheel and doing I think they call it the Samurai game or something like that, a lot of them were extensive, meditation, group meditation.

Det. Diskin: Okay. Did you guys go on the Vision Quest in 2005?

Daniel Pfankuch: Yes. That's what it was when I mentioned the medicine wheel, yeah.

Det. Diskin: Do you remember was that before or after the sweat lodge?

Daniel Pfankuch: That was before.

Det. Diskin: Okay. And how long was that?

Daniel Pfankuch: To the best of my recollection, it was we went out there, it was at least 24 hours.

Det. Diskin: Okay, and during that 24 hours, did you eat or drink anything?

Daniel Pfankuch: No.

Det. Diskin: Okay. How did you first learn about James Ray?

Daniel Pfankuch: I think my wife at the time I think found something on the internet and we started kind of looking from there. Then he had local event here, a free event here in Boise. And then after that, I paid \$40,000 in one year for both of us to go through all of these courses.

Det. Diskin: Okay. So did you go, I am assuming, all of these courses in 2005?

Daniel Pfankuch: No, some of them were in 2006.

Det. Diskin: Okay. Before this, had you ever been in either a sauna or sweat lodge?

Daniel Pfankuch: I have been in saunas before. That was my first sweat lodge experience.

Det. Diskin: Okay, and how was the sauna different than the sweat lodge?

Daniel Pfankuch: Well, then saunas that I have been in were, now it wasn't somebody, it wasn't a spiritual ceremony or wasn't anything like that where people were in there chanting and maybe other things like that, you just go in for 20-30 minutes and you get out.

Det. Diskin: At Spiritual Warrior in 2005, did you hear anyone make any kind of assurances that the people that were conducting the sweat lodge knew what they were doing?

Daniel Pfankuch: Not to my recollection.

Det. Diskin: Okay.

Daniel Pfankuch: Other than in previous years, they had done it before.

Det. Diskin: But James Ray didn't say you know this is how I was trained and how to do a sweat lodge or anything like that?

Daniel Pfankuch: No.

Det. Diskin: Okay. Did you feel prior to going into the sweat lodge that it was going to be safe?

Daniel Pfankuch: Yes. I felt that it would be, I think they mentioned you know that there might be some discomfort to work through that things like that, but they never mentioned anything about you could really die.

Det. Diskin: Okay. And do you remember in 2005 where your position was inside the sweat lodge, in other words were you near the door, were you away from the door?

Daniel Pfankuch: I was in the way back against the wall.

Det. Diskin: Okay. You mentioned that you had gone on for four hour, did you stay inside of it until the end?

Daniel Pfankuch: I stayed until the very end, yes (Inaudible 7:28).

Det. Diskin: Towards the end there, do you remember anything?

Daniel Pfankuch: No I had passed out and I was (Inaudible) and dreaming and whatever. I was dreaming and then I went into where I was actually hitting and ticking people and stuff like that.

Det. Diskin: Okay.

Daniel Pfankuch: Because I thought I was somebody else and somewhere else.

Det. Diskin: Okay. And after this happened, after you returned after going to the hospital, did you talk to James Ray about the incident?

Daniel Pfankuch: Very, very briefly. I did go to his room and spoke to him for just a few minutes just to kind of tell him what my experience was and share with him. I mean I didn't go there angry or anything, I just went to kind of what I really wanted was some help and some explanation on what you know he's been doing this for years, I just kind of wanted and I never got, I mean they did never offer to help pay for my hospital bills. I had to pay for all that. There is never any offer to, now studying more on what a shaman's responsibility is in these kind of situations, their responsibility is to retrieve every soul and be with every person that's within their care and I don't feel that was ever done.

Det. Diskin: When you were transported to the hospital, do you remember of any of James Ray's staff going to the hospital?

Daniel Pfankuch: No.

Det. Diskin: So nobody was (Inaudible).

Daniel Pfankuch: No, I don't think that there was. I do recall that they were another couple just hanging from Boise that drove their own vehicle I think and came in and visited but --

Det. Diskin: Okay. Then, that's how you got back to the retreat?

Daniel Pfankuch: Yes, because my wife and then those two people that came to hospital stayed with me in the hospital for several hours.

Det. Diskin: Okay. And when you came back, some people that we talked to said that and also they have said that that you had mentioned that you felt that you had an out-of-body experience and you either didn't want to come back or didn't think that you fully came back. Do you remember anything about that?

Daniel Pfankuch: Yes I did say that and I still feel that way.

Det. Diskin: Can you explain that a little bit?

Daniel Pfankuch: I just sometimes feel that I don't belong here and it's hard to explain but such a peaceful place and so where I went (Inaudible) it's hard to come back to this world where you know people are killing each other, people are hurting each other, people are not loving each other, like what the place that was?

Det. Diskin: Do you remember like what you saw or what experience you had when you were at that other place?

Daniel Pfankuch: I do and I have actually been trying to find my notes because I wrote it all down, I've moved a couple of times and I cannot find my notes but the best as I remember is that it was a place where we are, I guess the best way I can describe it in the

way that's it's already been described by others is kind of a place as a collective consciousness we're all connected.

Det. Diskin: Okay. Did you ever go to any kind of follow-up visits with your doctor after you got home?

Daniel Pfankuch: No.

Det. Diskin: Okay. Do you know if there was any kind of permanent damage that was, I mean physiological damage that was caused by this?

Daniel Pfankuch: I have no idea, I mean I am very active person I mean athletically and whatnot so I don't know that (Inaudible) permanent and --

Det. Diskin: Have you researched at all the effects of hyperthermia to see if maybe that could have been the cause of your symptoms?

Daniel Pfankuch: No I haven't really.

Det. Diskin: Do you remember what the hospital said was wrong with you?

Daniel Pfankuch: Heat stroke I believe and severe dehydration.

Det. Diskin: Okay.

Daniel Pfankuch: So they hooked me up to IV and filled me full of fluids for many hours.

Det. Diskin: Okay. And it appears or we conclude that there may have been something criminal what happened in 2005, some criminal negligence involved, would you be willing to be a victim?

Daniel Pfankuch: Yeah, I would say there is a good possibility --

Det. Diskin: Okay. You know the reason is I have talked to other people and I have heard some other things that went on while you were unconscious that kind of causes some concern and some things that were similar to what happened this year. I don't know how many people you've talked to, I would assume everybody that was around, but it seemed like there was some reluctance to get you any kind of help.

Daniel Pfankuch: I do recall hearing some other people that when I came out or when I came out of the sweat lodge they were looking for James because I did come out of the sweat lodge when I was finally coaxed out and I actually walked out on my hands cross the sweat lodge and came out and these people were, now I realize, trying to help me when I was picking up three or four guys way bigger than me picking up right off the ground and trying to hold me up or hold me down to get me water. But they went to find

James couldn't find him. He went back to his room. And then from what I have heard since then, he kind of got into a heated debate with the owner saying leave my people alone and she is going to call 911, not him.

Det. Diskin: Yeah, and that kind of caused us some concern especially looking at it after the fact, after this happened in 2009. And so we are kind of looking at everything. This investigation went from just what happened this year to you know the history of all James Ray events. At any of the events that you went to, did you ever see any medical personnel that were on standby in case something went wrong?

Daniel Pfankuch: No.

Det. Diskin: Okay. All right, did you go to any of the events where you had to break bricks or break boards?

Daniel Pfankuch: Break what?

Det. Diskin: Did you go to any of the events where you had to break either a brick or a board?

Daniel Pfankuch: Yeah, boards.

Det. Diskin: Okay. And did anybody get injured during that?

Daniel Pfankuch: Not that I recall other than --

Det. Diskin: Okay.

Daniel Pfankuch: No, just slight pain from hitting the boards I guess I don't know. To me, I mean I am a trained martial art so (Inaudible 16:11) anything for me but yeah for others, I didn't see anybody like in excruciating pain or anything like that.

Det. Diskin: Okay. And have you been to doctor at all since this happened?

Daniel Pfankuch: I am sure, yeah, I live a very active lifestyle and I have been injured playing soccer and other things like that.

Det. Diskin: The reason I bring this up is because there may have been some permanent damage that was caused by the sweat lodge in 2005 and I am wondering if you thought about going to look into that and see if there could have been anything you know be permanent or if there was any kind of you know minor brain damage or anything like that. I don't know if they can tell that on a CAT scan or what. But from what it sounds like, from your friends, is that there is something different about you now that it's just not quite the same and nobody can really understand why.

Daniel Pfankuch: Yeah, I mean I (Inaudible 17:32) from a six-figure income down to being employed and unmarried and homeless, there's been some big changes in my life.

Det. Diskin: Do you think that maybe there was any kind of permanent brain damage that was caused or anything like that?

Daniel Pfankuch: I don't know so much it's brain damage, maybe some subconscious or unconscious things that I can't explain or can't get a grasp on maybe. And that's where I felt that I should have got some help from (Inaudible) shamanistic tradition I mean it's their responsibility.

Det. Diskin: Right. Have you at any time filed any kind of lawsuit against James Ray International?

Daniel Pfankuch: No.

Det. Diskin: Is that something that you thought about?

Daniel Pfankuch: Not really until recently I guess. I guess it popped into my head from time to time (Inaudible) they really should have helped to pay at least for my medical expenses or something like that. They never offered.

Det. Diskin: Well, what I am going to do is take your information down and we are going to see if James Ray should have known better prior to 2005 that the sweat lodge could you know cause serious injury and serious dehydration and hypothermia, and basically (Inaudible) whether he will be charged with the crime with you as a victim as if he clearly knew better, if he clearly knew that this was dangerous and did it anyway.

Daniel Pfankuch: Yeah, he certainly knew afterwards I mean he told me (Inaudible) and he just needed to sit down learn from this.

Det. Diskin: Later?

Daniel Pfankuch: Hearing the recent reports I guess he didn't learn maybe what's needed to learn.

Det. Diskin: So afterwards James Ray told you that his ego got in the way?

Daniel Pfankuch: Yes.

Det. Diskin: Why do you think he meant by that?

Daniel Pfankuch: I guess he pushed people for his own gain somewhat because he thought he could do it --

Det. Diskin: Okay. And he said that he was going to learn from this?

Daniel Pfankuch: Yes.

Det. Diskin: Okay. What I would recommend is you know just talk to your doctor and just explain to him where you went to in 2005 and what your symptoms were and just see if that could have caused any kind of permanent damage to you. This year we are seeing, it's strange, it seems like people either fully recovered or they died. And it's unclear yet if the people that were transported to the hospital who were in bad shape who recovered from it if they are going to fully recover or if they are going to have issues whether it's (Inaudible) damage or anything like that. So I would definitely recommend that you talk to your doctor about it and just see if there could be any kind of permanent damage that was caused by that. Also I --

Daniel Pfankuch: Yeah I know. At this point, I don't have any insurance, I don't have any doctor and I don't have means to really do that.

Det. Diskin: Okay, all right. Well, can I give you my phone number and my contact information so if you have any questions or you think of anything else that is important, maybe you could give me a call.

Daniel Pfankuch: Sure.

Det. Diskin: My first name is Ross and my last name is Diskin, any my direct line is

[REDACTED]

Daniel Pfankuch: Okay

Det. Diskin: What do you think, I mean I am trying to understand how this transpired as far as you losing everything, what happened?

Daniel Pfankuch: I don't know, I mean it's taken a course of four years to do it, long time. I wasn't happy with the job, I didn't want to be with my wife in Montana and ended moving up there (Inaudible) everything ahead and moved up there and that didn't work out (Inaudible).

Det. Diskin: Okay. Well, if you can think of anything else, give me a call, or if you have any questions, give me a call.

Daniel Pfankuch: And you are detective at, what is it called?

Det. Diskin: It's the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office.

Daniel Pfankuch: How do you spell that.

Det. Diskin: It's a Y A V A P A I in Sedona where the Spiritual Warrior Retreat was as in inside Yavapai County

Daniel Pfankuch: Okay.

Det. Diskin: All right.

Daniel Pfankuch: All right, well I hope I have given you information that's useful.

Det. Diskin: Yeah and I appreciate you talking and have a good day.

Daniel Pfankuch: All right, thank you.

Det. Diskin: All right, we'll see you, bye.

Daniel Pfankuch: Bye.

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