

June 3, 2019

Gimme Shelter

The Rez. If you only know what you read here, or what you read in the papers — which only happens if there's an arrest, you'll think that violence, abuse, addiction and corruption are all that abides in that place down at the end of that long, dusty road.

It isn't. There are people fighting that corruption from the inside, at personal risk few on the outside can even begin to fathom. There are people fighting the assault on the Spirit of the people who suffer from abuse, addiction and grief. They carry the medicines of their culture along with the stories, legends, songs, dances, craftworks that allow the spirit to find joy and peace, even for a brief time. It's enough to make people see there can be a better life, and to strive for it.

One thing I have found that runs through all the people I have met and talked with is a common love of their people. The young want to go to school, to learn the trades and skills they can bring back to their community, to help make it better. Sadly, they are pretty much run off by the corrupt who can only thrive through oppression.

The Federal, State, and County governments are of no real help. They only listen to the 'leaders' and not to those who file complaints of rape, abuse, theft, corruption by those leaders. If you want to make a complaint, you must make it to the predator and if they decide to report on themselves, they'll take it to a government official. Yeah, that's one reason why it doesn't get better out there.

It's the most convenient "out" for government to say "You have to go through channels" or we don't have to listen. It's worked for over a hundred years, just like that, so that's why it doesn't get better.

Up until recently, when Meth and worse have poisoned the community, created more thefts and violence, it was not uncommon for people in that community to leave their doors unlocked when they were home or gone so that if someone got stuck for any reason on those way-out-there roads, they could come in and rest, get warm if it was snowing, use the phone to call for help.

The thought of leaving one of their own out there, alone, especially at night or in the cold, with no shelter, was unthinkable. It's only been the last few years that some of those to whom I have kept in touch with, have started locking their doors... even when they are at home.

That's the level of violence that damages a community. The kind where they have to protect themselves from everyone, the criminal and non-criminal alike, instead of being the shelter for

someone who made a wrong turn, who had a flat in the middle of the night, or whose vehicle had a breakdown of some sort. There is no shelter.

That saddens me. People go missing in the storms, and their friends and family search everywhere for them, only to have to wait until the thaw...

Mistakes, even minor ones, on the Rez, have steeper consequences than any place else.

Kids doing what kids everywhere do, are less apt to survive.

Drug abuse creates criminals. Big Pharma creates Drugs and so far, no consequences or even serious investigations. The Sackler Family, Purdue Pharma, all make drugs they know are addictive, misrepresent them to Doctors and the public, and pay no consequences. They're wealth is enormous. Drug addiction kills communities, not just addicts.

No Respect

Before European Contact, the waters ran clean in Turtle Island. The lands were fertile. There were enough resources to feed, clothe everyone. The air was clean. At the same time, for over a hundred years prior, the waters in Europe were filled with diseases & sewage, the air was filled with ash from coal fires, and the lands were poorly farmed, leaving the soil barren.

Nothing was learned from the mistakes that were literally killing the environment in Europe. Nothing was learned from the practices that led to diseases, plagues and wars. That ignorance was brought to Turtle Island. Colonists saw pristine rivers & lakes and again, used them for sewers. The fertile soils were eroded, and abundant fish & wild life were decimated by greed and waste.

And here we are today. Water unfit to drink or bathe in is being sold to families in Flint, Michigan and to cities all across the land. The government is literally poisoning people through the water, and then billing them excessively for not only that water, but for the daily allotment of bottled water which citizens themselves must hand carry to their homes, and now, the city is foreclosing on families that have outstanding water bills, some as little as \$200, and taking away their homes. All this because of greed.

Employee wages have stagnated at unlivable levels for decades while profits have risen, bonuses for managers and administrators have skyrocketed, the wealthy have seen their taxes drop to a fraction of what is paid by the middle class and even less than what the poor pay in taxes; a trend that started with Ronald Reagan and which has come to this day where

underpaid teachers are buying basic supplies for students, many of whom cannot even afford to buy their lunches and are poverty shamed at the lunch counters in schools across America. Students with outstanding lunch tabs are refused their diplomas until those hundreds or thousands of dollars are paid. With no diploma, no job. No way to pay. Greed creates spirals of poverty and crime. Survival becomes a daily battle. Self-respect and dignity are unaffordable to most.

And while fighting for the basics: Food, education, potable water.... The Resource Extraction Moguls move in and demand that the resources, which belong to all of us (so we are told), be given to them so they can sell back to us at unaffordable prices. Timber companies strip the lands, erosions follow. Species of animals and plants go extinct.

Oil companies take our burial grounds and bulldoze them against court orders that mean nothing to them. They abuse, cripple and kill protesters that dare to speak up, stand up or get in their way. Remember: They say the pipelines are safe. They are not. They all leak. Every single one of them. "Leak" itself is a euphemism. Many gusher out and spoil the lands and the waters for generations. They are never cleaned up because there is no way to clean up oil spills. The poisons remain. The waters and the lands become dead zones.

And remember: The Oil and Pipeline Corporations decided to move the pipelines to Indian Lands because they didn't want to upset the White People's Cities they had originally planned to go through.

Also; the people in those big cities didn't have to march, protest, get hit with projectiles, water cannons or tear gassed like the Water Protectors trying to protect their own lands (by Treaty) did. No. They just grumbled a little that if and when the spill comes, it would hurt *them*. So, the decision was made, without consultation, to just take from Indians again because that's how it's always been done.

There is no respect for the lands, the waters, nor the people. Only for profits and for those who raid our resources, there's plenty of profits.

Oddly enough, it is only those who do the damage that get the respect of government, media and the wealthy.

What's happening now, the entire Nation being taken over by authoritarian tactitions and their accomplices in the Republican Party, is a sign that we are, all of us, regardless of color, of no value to those in power. They want, they take. We allowed it to happen for generations in Indian Country, and now it's been perfected to us against all of us.

And for those who maintain that a man who shits into a golden toilet is a “Man of the People”, all I can tell you is, if you are not made of GOLD, he has no use for you. If you were made of gold, he’d shit on you anyway. He is being enabled by the weakest, most corrupt political party that ever existed.

They have perfected manipulating you into thinking they are the ones saving you. They never have. They never will.

Take a closer look at what they have done and what they are doing. Look at who is benefiting and who is suffering. If you can’t do that, you are of no value in this battle. Get out of the way.

Aftermath

And when this battle is done, we will have to look at where it all began. It was not this year. It was not the last election. It all began in Indian Country where the tactics of abuse and apathy were perfected upon the American People.

There will be a lot of damage to clean up. It will cost us more than we know. The damages have been ongoing for generations. We must fix that which has been broken and exploited.

We must also engage in the learning and teaching of True History. No more “White Man as Hero” bullshit. We have to look at where fictional history warped our sense of who we are and what we can do. We have to become Human Beings and treat everyone as our Brothers and Sisters.

There must be consequences to wealth and power gained by theft and deception. If we can’t find ways to make it right again, there is no point in fighting for anything.

You know where to find me.

~Cat