

**January 21, 2014**  
**Millions Stolen, Poor Must Pay**

A man wrote to me in desperation the other day. He's one of the few full-bloods out there on the rez. He had been working to support himself and several members of his family, all his life, and recently, because of the weather, was out of a job and out of money.

He's an Elder on the rez, and thought he would qualify for the LIHEP fund to help him get fuel to warm his house. He was turned down. Mardell Lewis told him, point blank, "There is no money in the fuel program".

So, he was heating his house with his oven and with a space heater and some sort of "ice house heater" which is a propane tank with a heater on top of it.

He ran out of fuel on those items and has no way to heat his house.

He writes:

*Hello*

*I just wanted to tell that this evening I invited our chairman Dr. Leander Russ MacDonald over to my place to have a talk with him about why some people could go up to the tribal office and get a loan as they call it when you know they won't pay it back*

*well anyway I have been out of heating fuel for the last week and a half now I use a little space heater and my oven with my ice house heater to heat my house and he told me because the past chairman Rodger Yankton and the past vice chairman Duane Jackson spent 3 million dollars on their own authority without the rest of the council approval and the audit that was done showed that most of that money was federal money and was spent wrongfully and the current council now has to pay that back so he is saying that there is no money now till the first of the fiscal year now*

*last week I went to see my district rep Mardell Lewis to see if she if can help me to buy some fuel till I can get paid and she said yes I can help you with that come back later today and I will have it ready for you so I left for a couple of hours and went back up there to see if my assistance was ready well to my surprise it was a whole \$50.00 purchase order made out to the marina and the marina don't deliver propane*

*and that's not all Russ told me earlier that there is no money to help people with assistance and then he tells me yeah I will be going to Washington next week for the whole week so do you think he is paying for his trip out of his own pocket since the tribe has no money to help the ones in need of assistance.*

So, there it is. Elders and people who have never before asked for any assistance, but who happen to not be related to Tribal Council or their friends, find themselves literally, 'frozen out' of any assistance.

That Russ can so casually acknowledge that Roger and Duane stole over \$3M from the tribe without even the slightest hint that either Roger or Duane should be held accountable or made to pay it back, is typical of how it works in Indian Country. Those who steal millions can keep the profits of their corruption. The government will not pursue them at any level.

The Tribal Council can continue to gallivant all over the country, with no hesitation to bill the taxpayers and the tribe for their trips, but find enough money for fuel assistance in this record breaking cold? Hahahaha! Surely you jest!

Yes, \$3Million has been stolen from the tribe and yes the Tribal Council still spends tens of thousands of dollars on each trip, sometimes 10 times that, depending on whether there is a casino at the venue, and that \$3Million that is missing must be paid back, but not by those who stole it, but by those who need it and are cut off for the lack of it.

This is the kind of corruption that is encouraged by the BIA, HHS, DOJ, USAG, IHS, FBI and the lot of them.

If anyone in any community outside of the rez had to live under this much corruption and then were told that those who steal can keep it, but those who had nothing to do with it must suffer until it is paid back out of the funds that were intended to help them, what would your life be like?

When the laws are not enforced, they become meaningless. They become a joke. Here is one place where crime not only pays, it is supported at every level of Tribal, State and Federal Government.

I am sure there are some really good business deals that go down wherein those who steal are backslapping with some very big players who also do not want to pay a fair price for the lands, water and air they damage, nor for the resources they extract. This is where big money plays and the rest of us pay, now and later.

People in North Dakota can now light their drinking water on fire, just like the other places in the documentary, "Gas Land". Those who stole the clean drinking water, turned it into chemical soup, will never have to pay you back for what they have damaged. You will have to fight in court and for decades, but not against the corporations, against your own government. If you get anything out of it, it won't be enough to make you whole again, nor the water drinkable, and it won't come from the pockets of those who did the damage... it will come from taxpayers and it will come at the cost of programs that were intended to help people.

The rez is a microcosm of a larger problem. What we allow to continue to happen on the rez, will and is now, spreading throughout the land. The big boys, the powerful, the politicians all profit from this. You and I all pay for this.

What is happening to the man in Spirit Lake is happening to many of the Elders and the poor out there. The Tribal Council has money to spend on themselves, but not a penny for those in desperate need.

When this situation becomes your situation, and it will, remember: We are all related. If we don't push to rectify this now, and hold those accountable that do the damage, steal the millions, then we are saying that it is okay for our government to participate in the dismantling of our lives and shattering of our communities by corruption.

Literally: Steal from the people and then make the people you stole from, pay.

You know where to find me.

~Cat