

**From:** blackmesais@riseup.net  
**Subject:** **ACT NOW! Indian Country reporter censored & terminated**  
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**September 28,2006**

**Indian Country reporter censored & terminated.  
TAKE ACTION NOW!**

Journalist Brenda Norrell has been fired by the newspaper Indian Country Today after years of undergoing their censorship of what she writes in support of indigenous peoples. Brenda is a long-time friend & ally to people especially throughout American Indian nations, giving voice to the Dineh people of Big Mountain, AZ who are resisting forced relocation, and destruction of their homeland through strip-mining by Peabody Coal.

*"These true stories being written about community based issues are a threat to the federal government as well as the tribal governments, who are only interested in upholding non-traditional tribal codes that accommodate and facilitate the exploitations and occupations of our homelands. There are less and less stories of real struggle and real warriors reported, and instead we have the implanted ideas and agendas of the corporate media. The real stories of injustice and resistance need to be heard." -Bahe Katenay, Big Mountain, AZ.*

It is important to not allow this kind of discrimination to continue, especially at a paper that purports to support indigenous rights. Brenda states that "The censoring of vital issues reflects what news reporters are enduring all over America." Brenda has always been there for the people; it's time that we show our support for her!!

Please send letters to Indian Country Today expressing your outrage at the censorship of crucial facts and issues, and of an outstanding journalist! **(CONTACT INFORMATION SUPPLIED BELOW.)**

Perhaps we should consider organizing a boycott of the paper the paper if there is no accountability and an end to the censorship!

Thankyou,

~BMIS

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From Brenda:

### **Censorship, the other genocide, killing of the spirit**

Hello,

I was just terminated by Indian Country Today. Since I began this effort as a news reporter in Indian country 23 years ago in pursuit of justice and truth, I feel I owe the readers an apology for allowing ICT to censor the truth in articles I have written. I did protest the censorship, but no retractions were published.

Officially, my position is being eliminated on Friday. This comes after I repeatedly complained of censorship at the newspaper. During the past month these issues were censored:

--Censored: After all reporters were told to write about the bird flu, I wrote about how Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is profiteering by millions from the sale of the drug Tamiflu, receiving profits from a company where he holds shares. The article included information on the earlier attempts of companies to profiteer from the sale of ribavirin during the Navajo hantavirus outbreak. My article was censored in ICT

and turned into an advertisement for the medication Tamiflu.

--Raytheon Missiles on Navajo farm (NAPI) in the recent NAPI/Cuban contract story; I was told not to include in the article the fact that Raytheon is located on the Navajo farm and is responsible for spills leading to cancer in South Tucson, where Chicanos and Indians live. Raytheon produces missiles for the Department of Defense.

--Tohono O'odham teen ran over by Border Patrol, recent visit to the site of Bennett Patricio Jr.'s death with Amnesty International; we

were followed by undercover agents on tribal land  
Also, these are some of the articles censored since 2004:

--The fact that Ben "Nighthorse" Campbell is Portuguese and grew up in California. His mother is full-blooded Portuguese and his story changed about his father through the years. One Northern Cheyenne medicine man asked ICT who Campbell is. Campbell first claimed to have some Apache blood and later changed it Northern Cheyenne. The Denver Post reported that Campbell is at least 7/8th non-Indian. Campbell did not respond for a request to comment.

--Louise Benally of Big Mountain, comments comparing the Long Walk and imprisonment in Bosque Redondo to the atrocities in Iraq (this deleted from a published article)

--Denial of prison rights to Leonard Peltier in an article on Indian prison rights

--The Montana governor's criticisms of the war in Iraq during his formal address at NCAI's annual convention in 2005

--The handcuffing of Tohono O'odham Ofelia Rivas and attempts to silence her by a non-Indian police officer of the Tohono O'odham Nation

--Comments by Bahe Katenay of Big Mountain on how the Navajo sacred place of Creation in Dinetah, near Bloomfield, NM, in the Four Corners area, is inundated with oil and gas wells and pollution from the power plants on tribal land.

The ongoing censorship is a violation of the public trust.

This is the second time I've been terminated at ICT since the newspaper was purchased by the Oneida Nation. I was already in bankruptcy because of the first time they terminated me in 2001 (for refusing to relocate, even though no male reporters were required to relocate.)

To my knowledge, all female reporters who have not resigned have been terminated. To my knowledge, none of the male reporters have ever been terminated since the Oneida Nation purchased the newspaper.

However, the bigger issue is censorship. The censoring of vital issues reflects what news reporters are enduring all over America.

They are forced into silence because of the necessity of work. However, since ICT/Oneida Nation has already forced me into bankruptcy, I can share a little of the truth. One of those truths is that Indian gaming, at times, offers the illusion of wealth.

There are two Indian editors that deserve a great deal of praise for what they have done over the past decades, Navajo Times managing editor Duane Beyal and Indian Country Today founder, Lakota Tim Giago. During the many years I worked for these two editors, I was never censored.

When other publications refused to publish voices of Indian people opposing the war in Iraq, the Navajo Times published those. When other publications censored an article on Indians targeted by police in South Dakota, Lakota Journal published it.

Those are just two examples. Both Beyal and Giago have championed the pursuit of truth and never attempted to censor Indian peoples' voices. I hope all Indian people will put pressure on Indian Country Today concerning the censorship. There is a select agenda being published in the name of "Indian Country," which does more to advance the interests of the Oneida Nation and Indian gaming.

At ICT, I was repeatedly told to halt writing articles about "grassroots people and the genocide of American Indians," by one of the non-Indian managing editors.

Also, I hope people will question ICT hiring non-Indian managing editors with no prior experience in Indian issues or Indian country,

and little experience in journalism. The managing editors are the ones actually in the New York ICT office, choosing content and putting the paper out. For years there has been a series of non-Indian managing editors with no prior experience in Indian country. The censorship and errors have increased.

It is easy to look at ICT and see what the agenda is and what is being censored. There's certainly no articles on Leonard Peltier or how Arizona Indian tribal members are living in poverty while the casino gaming management makes a fortune. (One Tohono O'odham casino manager made \$800,000, according to a recent mainstream news article.)

Of course, I will continue to write for other Indian media, provide information to radio stations and write for the UN Observer and International Report at the Hague.

It is sad that at such a crucial time, while so many reporters are being censored by corporations and the Bush administration, that Indian Country Today has taken all of these extreme acts of censorship. This censorship of Indian voices constitutes another form of genocide, a killing of the spirit of the people.

Best, Brenda Norrell

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About ICT, in their own words:

"Since 1981, Indian Country Today has been a persuasive voice in American Indian journalism, leading the way with accurate and timely reporting, incisive analysis and pointed commentary. Indian Country Today publishes more original journalistic content on American Indian issues than any other news source.

Our success is due to the professionalism and dedication of our staff journalists based in key regional locations across North America. Whether sounding an alarm from the corridors of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., or conveying the pounding energy of a Southern plains pow wow, Indian Country Today's gifted news team finds the essence of what's happening in Indian country and carries it faithfully to our readers. In 1998, Four Directions Media, Inc., owned and operated by the Oneida Nation of New York, purchased Indian Country Today and established corporate headquarters in New York State. As we enter our third decade of reporting, we have added the viewpoints of correspondents, guest columnists and photographers to our established journalistic core.

Our subscribers in North America and abroad, including most Tribal leaders, U.S. senators and representatives, officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, lawyers, educators, students, business professionals, and local and state politicians, rely on Indian Country Today for a American Indian perspective of unparalleled clarity, consistency, credibility, and focus."

<http://www.blackmesais.org>