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The Art Of Misdirection

I figure that with all the grandstanding going on in the nation, absurdity becoming the norm, it was time we discussed one of the ways that people in power stay in power. They re-direct our attention to trivia and absurdities as if that is the real "issues" of the day.

Just like a magician will dazzle the eye with a curvy assistant while he is really doing something behind his back, or a Sleight of Hand Artist will misdirect our attention with banter and meaningless movements while he palms a card, we are being forever misdirected by those who want us not to learn about and understand the real issues. By those who want us to stay divided in every way, by race, religion and in the case of Indian Country, Indian against non-Indian and Indian against Indian in the blood quantum aspects. As if one is better than the other, one more dangerous than the other, one more important than the other...

Make no mistake about it. We are misled and misdirected and the Truth, which could easily be found if we were to look for it, remains hidden in the secret pockets of politicians and leaders from the tribal councils to the Commander-In-Chief, our own president, like him or not.

Republican and Democrats blame one another. Both are at fault. Playing politics with the security of our country, misdirecting our attention to Right Wing Agendas, left us open and vulnerable to the real threat to our democracy and our nation. Terrorism grew in the distraction of misdirection as politicians vied for power, money, connections.

Indian Country has become the fermenting grounds for most of the political and moral corruption in the US today. Why? Simple, no one looks there. Indian Country is synonymous with "Off Limits" and layered in stereo-types of the best and most noble to the worst and most reprehensible with the middle-ground remaining unseen by the public at large.

These problems have grown and festered and the people have suffered, both on and off the rez, for the corruptions concealed within.

I tell you that we do not live in a democracy if we deliberately segregate one group of people, by blood, and deny them access to recourse and assistance in seeking that recourse, when they have been egregiously wronged by the power players that our Tax Dollars continue to support, without audit.

There are the Civil Rights that Every American is entitled to and we are somewhat familiar with those, although Freedom of Speech is under assault by those who seek to better control the information we are allowed to choose from. If our Civil Rights are "abridged" as they say, we have the right to redress and to make right and to hold
accountable, those who abused us. Freedom of speech is also how we reign in those who would mislead us.

However, if you are an Indian, your Rights are very different. You essentially have none. The US Government has created a separate and unequal Civil Rights for Indian People. Most people are not aware of this separate class of rights.

**One Hand Washes The Other**

Essentially, it says that all your grievances, regardless of how seriously you have been mistreated by those in power in your Tribe, must be addressed through the tribe and the tribe only. Regardless of how skewed the rulings in Tribal Court are, you must abide by those, even if the judge, who needs not to have any legal qualifications, mind you, is the one who offended you by theft, rape, theft or assault. Tribal Judges are appointed by those in power and their lack of legal credentials is more of a plus than a minus.

Tribal Judges do the bidding of those in power or they themselves, are abruptly terminated and replaced.

There is nowhere in Indian Country where either a plaintiff or a defendant is guaranteed a fair trial or has the right to an unbiased judge. It does not exist, is not protected and the consequences for anyone that attempts recourse or redress for any wrong, be it minor or major, is at best, they are ignored, but most often, they are penalized.

The Senators and Congressmen that are supposed to have the interests of the people as forefront of their obligations, blithely ignore the pleas of those seeking their assistance in getting any kind of fair treatment from the people in power. The people in power make it a point to be seen shaking the hands of the people who keep them in power.

Indians would have a much better chance at education, health, housing and better be able to deal with and keep to a minimum, the criminal activity in their community, if they had access to the most basic of rights that the rest of the nation takes for granted (to the point that we are losing them, mind you!).

Since most of the drug dealers on the rez are from the families in power, they are never pursued by law enforcement. However, their competition, regardless of how minor, are taken down in a show of farce that would have us all laughing if we knew how absurd it was.

Those who attempt to rid the community of drugs or alcohol, and protest the blatant, outright protection of the dealers, manufacturers and purveyors of so much misery on the rez are themselves, penalized harshly.

Two sisters who were protesting that their brother, addicted to meth, was a concern, were banned from the rez on the spot, and their lands forfeited, even though those lands were bought and paid for and the sisters continue to be obligated to pay the taxes on them!
There was no hearing, no petition, just the Tribal Chairwoman and one other Tribal Council Member, on a whim, stealing from them without them having a chance to defend themselves.

They are told that if they feel they have a claim against the Tribal Council and this unfair treatment, they 'are free to hire an attorney to pursue the matter (first in tribal court for a few years) ...even though this might present a financial 'difficulty' for them..."

A man who was away attending University, but who had lived on the rez all his life, found out that his home had been taken from him and given to friends of the Tribal Council, without notice, hearing or reason! His belongings are essentially theirs now. He, of course, is "free to hire an attorney at his own expense..."

Never has the language of minimalization been so well-spent! "Free to hire an attorney"??? As if it should cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars to be able to "buy back" their rights? And the term "financial difficulty" is real special. By creating a financial barrier that makes it impossible for any Indian that is wronged by their government to access their rights, the US Government continues to wash its hands and never have to look.

Never Have To Be Accountable.

Our Government can continue to have that backwater pond in which they can pour billions of tax dollars, and in turn, receive most of it back in backroom deals, all of it off the books.

More grant money and "loans" flow into the rez by the week, and no accountability is ever even remotely looked for. There is never any follow up. The problems and areas of concern that the money was supposed to be targeted for, merely the cover story in order for the money to go into the rez and then flow back into the hands of the powerful and elite. The problems continue to grow worse. Big surprise! But also, an excuse to keep "funding" those grants!

I look at the meth conference that is being staged at the Spirit Lake Casino in the next few days. Oh yeah, lots of show, lots of talk and hopefully lots of money to address the serious meth concerns.

Nobody look at who is dealing, out in the open on the rez. Nobody look at the Badgers who look the other way as the dealers poison the community and the families suffer. The dealers, especially ones like Kalum Yankton, are immune from any legal problems or even being curtailed in his dealings because he is related to the power brokers on that rez!

But, since he is one of the most responsible for creating the meth misery on the rez, the Tribal Council is most grateful to him because his handiwork will now garner them
millions more in dollars to 'deal with the problem' and of course, that money will go directly into the pockets and bank accounts of the Tribal Council!

There will never be any follow up. There will never be any accounting. There will never be any audit. There will be photo ops and terrific write ups about the issue and the money and the great job that the Naked Lawn Ornament and her cronies are doing!

**Propaganda Artists**

Gutless journalistic morons will praise to the skies, her efforts to help her community. Even though it is her family, and her son, that are the greatest evil in that community.

This is how you are allowed to portray Indian Country. You are only allowed to spew their propaganda and you are not allowed to look at the truth of what is going on. Not allowed to know that an entire class of Americans, the ones who were here before anyone else, are being denied the most basic of Civil Rights.

You are not allowed to pursue the causes of the poverty or even mention the jarring poverty that exists and the corruption that keeps it that way, lest you be labeled as a "racist" by the masters of misdirection.

It is in Human Nature, or at least it used to be in us, that if we saw a crisis, we would address that crisis. Poverty is a crisis. To demand that equal time be given to portray the community overall as successful and well-to-do, is the highest absurdity!

Again, I use the car accident metaphor: If you come upon a car wreck and people are suffering, you stop to help and call for help, to that issue. You don't stop and take in the scenery, look at all the un wrecked cars that are passing by and try to relay a "balanced" version of the matter.

What 911 Operator would say: "Well, have you even considered all the cars that are NOT wrecked? Have you even looked to see who is NOT hurt in that community?" And no 'reporter' would try to racist up your image by saying that you overlooked other 'important features' of the community.

Treat the sudden insight into poverty on the rez as the crisis that it is. Perhaps if it had not been so hidden from view, never discussed, it would not have been such a nasty, abhorrent surprise to the man who stumbled upon it. To treat him as a racist because he addressed what he saw as a pressing, urgent issue is classic misdirection.

Any Human Being with any degree of compassion, would come to the same horrifying conclusion: Something must be done and the money is not going to where it is supposed to be going.
That he did not come up with the ideal solution on the spot, nor even have all the facts to figure out how it got to be that way, should not count against him. The fact that he spoke up is highly in his favor.

Those who have "had all the facts" should have spoken up and acted sooner. Not lie in wait for someone from the outside to witness the appalling neglect and mention it. But they chose not to. Rather, they preferred to tout only their successes and ignore the neglected as they had for generations.

Do we address the crisis? Or do we take a tour of the more scenic spots and successful types and put all that into a very well-balanced, equally ineffective report?

Crisis must be addressed and acted upon without the need for including that which is obviously not in crisis. To do anything else is to dilute the effort and leave no chance for the issue to be set right.

**Name Calling**

If we were to look, to see and to understand more about what does go on in Indian Country, and work together to insure that everyone has the same rights as does most of the rest of the country, we can go a long way to helping people to help themselves. We can give them a fighting chance.

Or we can continue to ignore the issues because we don't want to be called names.

Democracy is a lot of work. We have a lot of work to do before we can call ourselves a democracy again. We have become lazy and easily misdirected.

It is time we hold government accountable in all areas. I think we will be surprised at how well it works.

Some say it is too late. I say that if we are still breathing, we should at least give it our best effort.

Others will be content to roll over and play ignorant.

We get what we work for. We also get what we deserve. If we don't work to insure that everyone has rights and that they have our government support in securing those rights, then none of us really has any rights. We are just as guilty as any other country that oppresses any of its people.

We say we are better than that. Well, you have to prove it, not just say it.

We continue to suffer from ailments we thought we threw enough money at, yet they continue to grow and we lock our doors in a feeble attempt to be safe for one more night. We know it is coming to be our turn, but we just ignore it until it is our turn.
We used to feel safe in this country. We used to trust our government. Now we can begin to see how we were all misled and how those in power have lied to us.

We can now see how money laundering, kiddie porn, and drug manufacturing are allowed to continue and to grow on the rez, unabated, but not unabetted, by our government.

If we don't fix this in our generation, there will be no hope of it being fixed in any other generation and we will all pay the price as our children are consumed.

We now know that what goes on in those backwaters is what poisons the well of Democracy from which we have all been drinking.

You know where to find me.

~Cat