

Leonard Peltier June 26th Statement 2024 ©

Greetings my Friends, Family, Loved Ones, and Supporters,

Hope is a hard thing here. But I always hold hope in you, My People. Pay attention. The parole decision on July 11th may show you what justice truly means to this nation and to whom it is meant for.

Living in lockdown, time has twisted into something that has nothing to do with minutes, hours, or years. They have taken what little freedom I have outside this box. Art – gone. Ceremony – gone.

Yet they will never take the Spirit of a Sundancer. I have never given them my integrity. I remain undestroyed.

I will not pretend my body is sound. The lockdowns have been tough on all of us, in ways I cannot begin to explain and those on the outside cannot begin to imagine.

I am counting on you if this decision does not go my way. I always need your prayers. I need you to demand that this country finally commit one act of Justice.

My attorney assures me the battle is not over until it is over—she will not back down. I am counting on you not to back down. My time is running out here, with no medical care. I do not fear death, returning to Mother Earth's womb, but I do not want to die in lockdown.

In my solitude, my mind often returns to Raymond Yellow Thunder. The profound tragedy of Raymond's murder sparked change in our people and showed them who the American Indian Movement is.

Raymond was a hard-working man. When he came into town to give money to his sisters, it was not enough for the Raye brothers to humiliate Raymond, strip him, and parade him around an American Legion Dance.

Raymond was shoved into the trunk of a car and died the next day. The Raye brothers were charged with 2nd-degree manslaughter and released with no bail.

Raymond's sisters were distraught that even that small charge may not stick. The authorities would not release the autopsy report. They would not allow Raymond's sisters to see his body. The sisters sought help from the BIA, the Tribal government, and private attorneys. In desperation, they turned to the American Indian Movement.

AIM members are Spirit Warriors, not merciless savages. We organized 200 carloads of people and demanded justice.

With dignity, we demanded justice.

Sheriff's deputies, state troopers, and FBI agents agreed that serious charges should be filed against the Hares and that the local police chief should be dismissed.

Indigenous people started holding their heads up after that victory. They started speaking out against abuses by the BIA and Tribal government, and white ranchers profiting off their land.

We must not allow Raymond's fate to befall others. My mother used to ask with dismay, "Why is it so bad to

be Indian?” I find myself wondering why they hate us so.

We will triumph over the misguided hate of others. Never, ever, forget who you are. We are the First People. Mother Earth herself fires the blood that runs through our veins.

Protect each other, protect Mother Earth for future generations, and stand with oppressed peoples everywhere.

Remember that true strength does not reside in holding power over others. Strength comes from living out of a place of humility and integrity, inspiring others to find their unique strengths.

Oppression is rising, running like black mold through every facet of society. We must stand together and let society know that Indigenous lives are not cheap. The lives of our oppressed brothers and sisters are not cheap. All people are worthy of basic human dignity.

Colonialism has all but destroyed us. We must do nothing less than transform society into a place where human beings are not disposable.

Do not weep if I am not granted parole. Cry freedom. Coalesce yourselves, galvanize your relationships, establish alliances. In the power of our people we find strength. Hold your head up high. It is not over, until it is over.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse.

Doksha,

Leonard Peltier