

Smoke Signals Radio Archive Episode 2002-09-15
Segment 1
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At the start of a new academic year, Dan Smoke has some welcoming words of wisdom for students beginning their university career. Dan speaks about the importance of learning to be a critical thinker in order to create change that will make the world a better place for future generations. After, Dan and Mary Lou share details of their trip to Albuquerque with listeners, where they attended the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide conference and spent time exploring New Mexico.

Host(s): Dan Smoke

DAN SMOKE: Aanii! Boozhoo! Koolamalsi! Waciye. Tunngasugitsi. Skanako:ka. Aniish na. And greetings, to all of our listeners of Smoke Signals First Nations radio here at CHRW 94.7 FM, radio with relevance just west of the dial. My name is Dan Smoke, Asayenes, of the **Seneca Nation, Killdeer Clan**. And I'm in the studio tonight with Mary Lou Smoke, **Anishinaabe Kwe, Bear Clan**.

MARY LOU SMOKE: Boozhoo, everybody.

DS: Yes, and each week we bring to you a little bit of the journey on the **red road**, the **sweetgrass** trail of the First Nations people of this land of what we call Turtle Island. And we are also, at this point in time, beginning a new academic school year here at Western, and we want to welcome all of our brothers and sisters who are here for their first week, two weeks, of their new life here at Western, to get settled into a life of academia, a life of social networking, a life of sports, and a quality of life that is pretty much unsurpassed when it comes to a person in their 18th, 19th year that are wanting to venture out and see what life is all about. You have many choices to make. Some of those choices are going to be choices that will directly affect your life, and they will have consequences on your life, so, the idea is to get into the habit of making good, positive choices at this time while you are here for the next three or four years. I know it takes me back to my university days when I attended university down in Princeton, New Jersey. It was an Ivy League school, and it was a whole new world that was opening up to me, but it was mainly because I was coming into an institution that had a lot of tradition to it, much the same as the University of Western Ontario has, but it offered so many choices that I soon became overwhelmed by them all.

I soon became overwhelmed so much by the choices and the opportunities that presented themselves to me, that I soon had difficulty dealing with why I was really there. And I was there to dedicate my interest to getting an education. But I really did not know about who I was as a First Nations young man, as a Seneca man, about my identity as a human being, because I had been taught throughout my educational life that being First Nations was not a good thing to be. I had been taught by the history books, by most of the textbooks that you see in our educational curriculum, that being a First Nations person was not very nice. Our history, as taught by non-Native academics, was not a very pretty one, was not a very nice one, because it seemed like they were always writing about the conquest of the Native peoples, the Indigenous peoples, of North America. When in reality, I soon found out when I went to university, I went to Princeton, I found out that Native people have never, ever been defeated. Have never, ever been conquered. Have never, ever been made in any kind of a confrontational situation, have never, ever lost. They may have lost some battles along the way, but they always came out pretty much on balance, equal to western civilization. And that is why Western civilization had to

negotiate treaties with us, because they wanted the land upon which we lived, and the resources upon which we lived.

And so, I soon began to learn a history of this land that encompassed a history that is not written about in the history books that I grew up with. A history that was covered over, a history that was glossed over. A history that was not given any account of in the history books that I was brought up with. I never read about the 40 million buffalo that were exterminated so that the **Lakota Sioux** nation would be starved out of existence. I didn't read about that. I didn't read about the **Sand Creek massacre** where women and children were destroyed, were slaughtered, and babies were killed so that the commanding officer, Colonel Chivington, could say "Well, the reason we killed the babies was because even gnits, g-n-i-t-s, gnits make lice." That's his famous quote about why he found it necessary to kill little Indian babies. We never read about this genocide. We never read about the biological warfare that was waged and practiced upon Native peoples. They always talked about these smallpox-infected blankets and how the blankets were given to Native people as a token of friendship, as a token of gratitude. And these blankets, which were purposely infected with spores of smallpox, they were told to take these blankets home and to not open these blankets up until they got home to their home communities. And it was soon after, that once these spores were exposed to the Native people, they annihilated the Native people. And whole villages were wiped out, whole communities were wiped out. All generations, the young ones. No one was spared, everyone was killed because of this, what we now know today as bacteriological warfare. Biological terrorism, that's what we would call it today.

But yet, at that time, in those days it was okay because they wanted to get rid of the "Native problem." They wanted to get rid of the Native obstacles that stood in the way of the land and the resources. So, that is some...just as a message to students who are coming in, we welcome you, we welcome you to come and to learn to think critically, learn to think for yourself. Learn to use your good mind in a good way to help better the world that we exist in today. Not to follow the dogma of the politicians and the professors who are already set in their ways, not to follow their dogma, but to learn to think critically for yourself and ask those questions that you need to ask that will help you understand who you are as a human being in this world and how you can help your fellow man. Because there should not be one quality of life for one privileged class of people and then another quality of life for another class of people. That's not the way the world was designed to be. We were all put here on this planet, on this Earth, to live in balance and harmony with one another, and to express the beautiful diversity of creation the way the Creator has gifted each form of life, and we are all part of a life support system that is designed to keep the world going in a good direction, in a beautiful way, so we can all experience a quality of life that is going to be good and beneficial for us and our future generations.

DS: But we have now come into a world, a place, where we see the rich getting richer, the poor getting poorer, we see the political economy starting to make what we considered a basic element of life, for example, water, one of the four basic elements of life—air, earth, water, fire...water has now become one of the number one commodities in the world today. I never thought, thirty years ago, that I would be paying for water. I never thought that I would have to go and buy water. I thought that water would always be in abundance, that it would always be clean, but I'm sure that my ancestors also believed that. I'm sure that my ancestors prayed, and did ceremonies, and asked the Creator for the future for our benefit, for my benefit, that there would always be an abundance of clean water to drink. Now that that same responsibility is now part of our generation, we have to undertake that responsibility for our future generations. We have to ensure that for the next seven generations of our descendants, that they have clean water. We can't make that. We can't promise that. We've come to a time in the history of

mankind, in the history of the world, that we can't make that kind of a promise anymore because our generation seems to have lost our way. They seem to have lost their focus on what is important, what is valuable about our quality of life, about the way that we live today.

So, these are some of the questions we all have to answer. These are some of the problems we all have to deal with. Not the instant gratification that our political economy wants us to be dealing with about the next stock price or the price of oil. You know, those aren't important considerations when you think about the place where all of our future generations are going to be, five, six, seven generations from today. There won't be—if we continue down the path that we're on—there will not be a world as we know it. If the Creator wanted us to be living on other planets, or living on other solar systems in other worlds, he would've put us there. But here we are, living on this world. We have a responsibility to this Mother Earth. We have to learn from her. She is trying to teach us. She is starting to exhibit some of her force, some of her life force, some of her powers of purification, and we have to begin to change. We have to renew and do things differently. We have to renew our relationship with the Earth, with each other, with our higher power, with the environment, with the cosmos, so that we do things differently because, you know, from what I have been told, the **Hopi calendar** ends in the year 2006.

The **Navajo calendar** is done in the year 2009. The **Mayan calendar** is complete and comes to an end in the year 2012. Now, that tells me that the Indigenous peoples of the world know that this is the time where we have to renew our relations with the world and everything in it. We have to renew and do things differently from the way we have been doing them because we have seen and witnessed the extinction of plants, of animals, of whole human being races. Communities, races of human beings have been exterminated because of the globalization, the political economy, of the world today. And so, now, it's incumbent on us to change that. We have the power to do it. We have the power to make change, positive change. Change that will be better for our future generations. Change that will be better for all of our brothers and sisters so that we can have a brotherhood and a sisterhood for our future generations, that will be able to coexist and live side-by-side in a good way with one another, to experience, appreciate, living in freedom, in joy, in peace, in power, in righteousness.

DS: So, we've been travelling, and we want to thank Valerie George, who has been our guest host for the past couple of weeks. She's also been a real good sister to us. She has been our summer student for the summer, helping us to archive and catalogue most of the shows that we have done over this 12-year career that we have been here on the air at CHRW Radio Western, Smoke Signals. And we also want to thank her for learning something new. She never knew how to run a radio program or program a show like this, and she took it upon herself to learn. She came in, she had a technician who helped make sure that her words got out on to the air, her music selections got out on to the air, and she was able to do it. She was able to bring news and events, current affairs, some traditional teachings, some music, and some of the arts of our people, of our world, of our culture, out to you so that you will learn some public education about us as First Nations brothers and sisters. So, we say miigwetch, nya:weh, to Valerie.

DS: Yeah, we've been down in Albuquerque. We were in Albuquerque for a five...actually it was a four-day conference down there at the Albuquerque Convention Centre. There was a conference there entitled **Healing Our Spirit Worldwide**, and because I sit as a volunteer director on the board of directors at the **Atlohsa Native Family Healing Service Agency** here in the city of London, which is located down on Richmond Street. And the agency, in a partnership with six other agencies, felt that this conference would be beneficial for representatives of the seven different agencies that we are part of a project for, if we sent some representatives from each of the agencies down to Albuquerque, we would benefit from this

conference, Healing Our Spirit Worldwide. This is the fourth gathering. It's a cultural celebration, inviting the world to share the healing experiences with the Indigenous people in the movement toward self-determination. And that's a theme of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide, 2002, the fourth gathering.

So, we got to be a part of something very historic, and it was a very good conference. There were many workshops. The actual program, the book for the workshops, I have in front of me, and there was a youth agenda, there was an Elders agenda. There were 130 workshops for the public to attend over the course of three days. Each day they began with a plenary where we all came together, all 4,000 delegates from all over the world, and we would sit in the main convention ballroom, and we would hear speakers. And we're going to play a couple of those talks today on the show. One in particular by the name of Jane Middleton-Moz. Jane Middleton-Moz is a First Nations woman who grew up with many childhood traumas and grief that was intergenerational that she did not know what was causing all this traumatic stress in her life until she started to look at it in her adult years. Once she started looking at it, she realized there was extensive healing and a lot of healing that had to take place in her life. She has written about it in several books. She was one of the main keynote speakers that spoke at the Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Conference, and we're going to listen to that a little bit later on in the show.

DS: Mary Lou, why don't you tell our listeners a little bit about our time spent in the pueblo of **Cameo Canyon**, where we got to go become transported back in time in an **Adobe** home on a little encampment area that has all kinds of facilities for living with the land in a good way, in a place called Cameo Canyon, just north of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

MLS: Yeah, Dan. That was a place where we stopped at. The two vans filled with the eight of us travelling, including the **Oneida** six. We stopped at the home of Dan and Theresa. Dan is an author, but I don't remember his last name. Anyway, his wife is Theresa, she's from the area, I believe. She also works in that area. They have a nice piece of property there, it's at the foothills of the Santa Fe mountains. It's really huge. Part of the river runs on their property, too, and we walked around there. They took us on a tour. A lot of kids go there for help. These are troubled children, and they have a **sweat lodge** that's just for the youth. They have an area where the kids can camp, also an area where they can make crafts and just do things together as kids. A lot of times, in the real world, a lot of kids don't have the opportunity to experience those kinds of things, you know, making crafts and spending the night outside in the wilderness where it's safe and they can be with other kids their same age, and other kids who have experienced the same life problems. But anyway, outside this beautiful Adobe house they had, which I have to tell you too, the house was built a room at a time and it's very much like **Art Solomon's** house that's up south of Sudbury. But his house was built a room at a time, too, so it's very unique. Each room that you walk into is different and has its own personality.

So, when we got there, it was dusk and we took a tour of the property that Dan took us on, and we met their daughter Loretta who lives in a trailer nearby. They have several little houses on the property where the family lives, so it's very communal. There's a lot of people who live right next door to each other; they're very close. It's really nice there. They have a great big peach tree in the backyard. I was walking by there and I saw a peach on the ground, which kind of looked out of place to me because we don't have peaches growing in our backyard. Anyway, I went to investigate, and there was a peach tree that had all kinds of little wee peaches on it. That one big one, I guess it got too heavy and it fell off. Then I saw this rock that I wanted to bring home as a souvenir. I seen it when we were on the tour that night, and the next morning I asked Glenn if he remembered where we went because I remembered the exact position of where the rock was but I didn't know how to get there, so we went down to hunt down this rock.

Along the way, there was salamanders that were wrestling in the bushes. It was so unique for that land there. And it's so warm. There's hardly any grass at all, so if you're down living down there, you don't have to be mowing your grass once a week. We also stopped at a place and picked **cedar**. Not cedar. **Sage**. I didn't know this until after we're done picking, but there's snake holes all over the place. Had I had known I might've thought twice about going into that field. But we had a grand time.

And then, we travelled off to Laguna City. We bought, Dan and I got some pottery there. Then we went forward on to a place called Gallup, New Mexico. And if you ever go down to Gallup, you have to go to this restaurant called Earl's. When you get inside there, you just order your food and then the local people just start coming towards you carrying trays of goods on their trays. They come from all sides, and they're coming at you one at a time, and you're just kind of overwhelmed by them. They tell you the price that you want for it, and then you can haggle with them. And you know, they'll go down so low, it's just incredible. You feel like you're ripping them off, but it was such a thrilling experience. Then, after that, we went to a pawn shop, too. We didn't buy anything there, but we did find Pendleton blankets there for \$69, which is an incredibly low price. At the conference we were at, we ran into some old friends of ours, friends that we met in California when we were there last year. We ran into Nick and Mary Deleary, too, at the conference. They were part of the group that came with us, but we didn't see them until we got to the conference. We also ran into Isaac Day, who's one of our teachers and he runs sweat lodges locally. And they had a shuttle bus service that was going from the hotel to the conference every day, and one of the shuttle bus drivers was a sister to this guy that we know in London here, Fin Antone, so we ran into his sister. That was quite a surprise.

DS: Yeah, that was a...the whole trip. They call New Mexico the "land of enchantment," and it was a very enchanting experience, I thought. You know, another thing we noticed that was quite different, quite a departure from when we were there in 1990 when we went to see the **Gathering of Nations Powwow** in Albuquerque was the proliferation of casinos. Casinos are all over the place now, and there's just busloads and busloads of people pulling up to the casinos all the time, and they're as busy as Rama, Niagara Falls, and Windsor are here in Ontario.

MLS: We went to one casino. I think it was called Eagle Dance Casino? They had a little bingo hall that was adjacent to it, and I went in there to check it out, but they weren't going to start the bingo for several hours later, so I ended up not playing. But all the local people started arriving. And you should see the beautiful turquoise they wear, turquoise and silver, just to go to the bingo. You see little old ladies all hunched up and bent over wearing their giant turquoise necklaces. So, I just had a vision of what I'm going to look like in 40 years or so.

DS: Yes, and also a nice little feature highlight was the opening night registration day. They had kind of like the opening ceremonies, and that night they had a reception by the **Pueblo** community. There's 19 pueblos. "Pueblo" in the Pueblo language means *the people*. Actually, that's Spanish. "Pueblo" is a Spanish word for *the people*. The Pueblo themselves don't call themselves Pueblo. I don't know what the term is they use, but there's 19 pueblos. 19 communities all around New Mexico that each one is quite distinct, quite sovereign in the way they determine their future as a community. And apparently, they network with one another because we got there just around the time they were beginning to have their annual feast. They have a feast, which is a public event that is part of their Christianized, what's that? They feast a saint, or something like that? And then they bring the public in and they feed everybody? Then after that takes place, then the next community will have their feast like two, three weeks later, and everyone goes to that community and goes for that feast. And then another community will

have another feast a little further away, and so there's like a little circuit that people can take to go and attend all these feasts. But each one of the pueblos also have their own closed spring and fall feasts, as well, which is just for their community. Ceremonies that just their community partakes in.

So, it's really, they're keeping their own traditions alive yet at the same time, they've been heavily Christianized. But they're starting to put a Pueblo face on that Christianized way of living that they live down there, so I thought it was quite interesting. The landscape down there in New Mexico is just beautiful. They have the foothills of the...they have an extension of the Rocky Mountains there. They have the Sandia Mountains. You can see for miles and miles from the crest of the Sandia Mountains. We went on that trip 12 years ago when we were down there. So, this was like a second honeymoon for us, and even at the reception, the **Maori**, one of the Maori dancers, they had a Maori dance troupe there that did some very powerful medicine dancing with the Maori dancing. If you ever get to see Maori dancing, the Maoris of New Zealand, they are the Indigenous people in New Zealand, don't hesitate checking it out. Go and see it because when they dance, they bring apparently their ancestors to life within them and they're very, very powerful. Very beautiful to watch, as well, because there was a ceremony that I got to see right up close.

It was the passing of the torch because New Zealand hosted the last Healing our Spirit Worldwide Conference in the year 2000, and so the torch was passed to the **National Indian Health Board** of the United States who was hosting this conference down in Albuquerque. So, they passed the torch, the ceremonial passing of the torch, and once the torch was passed the Maori dancers did a presentation of power, of peace and righteousness that I was really impressed by. I was really glad to be up close to be able to see that. And anyways, one of the dancers was, he's an entertainer back in New Zealand, and he was singing similar to karaoke but not quite karaoke. He was singing himself with musical accompaniment, but he sang for Mary Lou and I as we did a dance to celebrate our 25 years of marriage, which was really nice, eh?

MLS: Yeah, it was. It was. They had a reception after the first day, like Dan said, and we were with this friend of ours, **Star Nayea**, who you may have heard on Smoke Signals because she's a singer and she's been around for a couple of years, although she's not that old, she's been...I think we've had her CD for about three years now or so. Anyway, she said you guys got to get up there and tell him that you've been married for 25 years. She said you have to share that with everybody. So, I went over there. And also, sharing 25 years together is Nick and Mary Deleary. So, they announced it that we were there, and Nick and Mary were there, but Nick and Mary had already left the building, so, anyway, Dan and I danced all by ourselves to that song that that guy was singing.

DS: Yeah, and so, the rest of the week was like that. The rest of the week was just filled with lots of things to do, lots of fun, lots of socializing, lots of visiting. It was just great. Just a beautiful time. Can't wait for the next one. Apparently, Canada is bidding to be the next host for Healing Our Spirit Worldwide in the year 2004. So, we will keep you posted about that.

DS: Right now, we're going to listen to some music. We're going to listen to **Mitch Walking Elk** from his *Indians* CD. It's titled "**Indians**." And we're going to listen to the track "**Eagle Horse**." And we're also going to listen to **Shingoose**. Shingoose, an **Ojibwe** brother from Manitoba, from his *Children of the World* CD. We're going to listen to "**Indian Time**." So, here are Mitch Walking Elk, from the **Hopi Zuni Ojibwe Cheyenne** nation, and Shingoose, here on Smoke Signals.