

STATE OF MONTANA     )  
                                  ):  
County of Ravalli        )

VERIFIED AFFIDAVIT OF  
A.J. WHITE REGARDING  
DEVRA WEST

COMES NOW, A.J. White, and states the following is true:

My involvement with Divine Unity and specifically Devra West began in 1998-99 when I attended sessions of the Sacred Arts Institute. I attended bi-annual sessions and decided to come to Montana in the fall of 2000 to assist the Foundation in its spiritual pursuits.

I first became involved with the office in the spring of 2001 when I went to Jerusalem as a support person. At that time I became aware of the extravagant lifestyle and personal catering needed by Ms West. She required a suite when the whole project was a money loser and also required several people to be at her beck and call. In fact, all of the personal assistants that I encountered in my time with Divine Unity were verbally, emotionally, spiritually and sometimes physically abused. There were rumors spread around the departure of the Director, Roger Hill, disparaging his name when he had decided to resign as Director of the Foundation at the end of March, 2001. Devra West insisted that he remain through April even though she was the instigator of the rumors. He refused. I then became the Director of the Foundation for a very short period, approximately 4 months. Roger Hill was most helpful in passing on information but could not really pass on the difficulties that he encountered: the secrecy, questionable financial practices and institutionalized abuse.

I soon realized that the position of Director was in name only. All decisions were made by Devra. There was no possibility of handling the personnel issues within the office, as Devra would countermand any or all of my decisions. I was denied signatory on the checking account and access to financial statements. The controls of all the monies were in the hands of Devra and Jack West. When people approached me wanting to know where the donations they had made went, there was no trail. When I insisted on having this information, like monthly financial reports, I couldn't get them and my investigating caused angst within the office. There was one specific circumstance concerning a donation of \$80,000 by Tanmayo (Corrine [I don't remember her last name]) from Brazil. I became aware of the donation when Devra called me at 10:00pm at home to inform me that she called her "little kitty" (referring to the donor), for some money that she needed. Cheryl O'Brien, DU accountant, was specifically told by Devra that she was not to tell me or Mike Hendrickson (volunteer auditor) that this money had come in. Because of our close relationship and her discomfort, she did disclose this to me and asked for my secrecy. To my knowledge this money did not show anywhere on the books.

From a business standpoint, DU makes its money by putting on conferences. I chaired the June 2001 bi-annual Sacred Arts Institute. I found there was no clear methodology in preparing for the 2-week event. It truly was a fly-by-the-seat-of your-pants organization, at the whim of Devra West. I was able to track the monies in and receipting of funds for that 2-week period. It was one of the largest conferences and the gross funds taken in for that major event was approximately \$95,000. The immediate expenses written off against that conference brought profits well below \$50,000. In screening the expenses of the association coupled with the huge personal expenses of Devra, the organization was on shaky ground financially. In trying to attract donations, and trying to put in place some controls of fund usage, I proposed to earmark donations specifically for specific programs i.e. the Children's program etc. There was major resistance to this as all monies were to be given to Devra personally for her use as she saw fit. She stated at that time that she needed to spend over \$100,000 on legal fees for her son and a custody hearing. I do not know the truth

of that statement but was puzzled on how this in any way related to the Foundation. I do know that the handling of monies was shrouded in secrecy. When I asked her why she always called the monies hers and not God's or for the Foundation, she told me how important she was and without her there would be no Foundation, and it all belonged to her. There was an obvious blurring of lines between her personal ownership and that which belonged to the Foundation.

Her outbursts and tirades existed both within spiritual sessions and at those who worked for her. I personally only experienced the verbal abuse and the screaming over the phone was so intense that I told her that I would not speak to her until she got in control of herself. I hung up on her, a first for me in my life. I observed many occasions of verbal cruelty in which she ranted at people, threw water in their faces and caused severe emotional anguish, all in name of assisting them in their spiritual quest. In late July 2001, while I was on a business trip to Denver, Susanna Felder, a committed assistant for over 9 years and editor of Devra's writing, called me. She called me in severe distress as she had gotten into a heated discussion with Devra on whether or not I should be put on the BOD – there was no Foundation BOD at that time. Devra became so incensed that she attacked her and ripped clumps of hair out of Susanna's head. This was severe abuse and ultimately led to Susanna leaving DU within the month. I returned to the office several days later and the first thing I did was to address this abuse in a staff meeting with Susanna in attendance. Jack West, who was present at the event, categorically denied it happened while Anandra accused Susanna of causing the problem. This collaborative deception was so shocking that I resigned, effective immediately. The cover-up was endemic and serious abuse issues were lied about and swept under the rug. The lack of integrity by Devra, her impropriety around money and her physical and verbal abuse of individuals were the reasons for my leaving.

I make this statement as I feel a responsibility to those who may become involved with Divine Unity, to those with whom I worked and to those who were affected by these behaviors. I do this in the clearest and most truthful manner.

DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of May, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_  
A.J. White

Subscribed and Sworn to before me on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of May, 2004.

(SEAL)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public for the State of Montana  
Residing at \_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Expires \_\_\_\_\_

**DEBORAH COFFEY**  
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To whom it may concern,

This is a statement about incidents of physical and psychological abuse by Ms. Devra West towards her students, staff and course participants. These incidents described here were witnessed by me, Deborah Coffey. I was a student of Devra West for approximately seven years and unofficially employed for a brief period of two months.

I read a letter that Ms. West wrote to a staff member, her personal assistant, whom had given notice to her employer, Ms. West, to leave her job. She had taken the appropriate steps to terminate her position responsibly. The letter from Ms. West was full of intimidating statements of a psychological nature. One in particular stated that she (her personal assistant) would fail miserably in her life if she left; that this assistant had a soul contract with herself (Ms. West) and that if she broke that soul contract she was doomed to suffer not only in this life but for many life-times. I have read three other letters that were written to three individuals whom had not complied with Ms. West's desire for their money, attention or services. The method used in each letter was psychological manipulation using seduction, coercion, intimidation and ridicule.

I witnessed two occasions in which Ms. West threw water in peoples' faces. On one occasion while she was teaching in front of a group, Ms. West forcefully threw the contents of her glass of water in the face of her personal assistant. She did the same to a student during a teaching session.

I witnessed three occasions in which Ms. West violently pulled the hair, of three female staff members. In each case the hair was pulled and the head was shaken forcefully from side to side. On some occasions she would hit people in the face. I witnessed one occasion in which she hit a man in the forehead, leaving an abrasion where her ring cut the skin. She said afterwards, that she didn't do it, God or a deity of God did it. This was the rationale she often used to justify her own violence. I was present in Montreal in which Ms. West tore a woman's ear. The woman was kneeling in front of Ms. West and had quietly challenged her authority. Ms. West reacted physically. She grabbed her hair on both sides of her face and shook her and told her to leave. I learned later that the woman was injured. Evidently the woman's ear had been grabbed too and then torn. She underwent reconstructive surgery for the injury. I was present in the room on two different occasions (but did not witness the precise moment) in which Ms. West hit students in the face. One of those women reportedly suffered a dislocated jaw, the other was hurt but not injured.

I was personally involved, as were others, in what I will call public humiliation or degradation rituals. The pattern of dominance, humiliation and “bonding” was essentially the same in all cases. In my case, I had just moved to Montana two days prior to the incident to build a life among the other members of the group and contribute to the goals of the organization. That day, and for the first time, I became the focus of degradation. My apparent flaws and failings were paraded by Ms. West in front of the group. It was personally shocking and humiliating. She continued until I was sufficiently disorientated. Then at a strategic moment, she began to build me back up. Because I had nothing left of my self to stand on, I connected to her to make it through. In this way a false bonding to her, the teacher/leader occurred. She said afterward to me that she did it with love. She often said this to people whom she abused. I witnessed many of these kinds of “treatments”.

This is my statement.

Sincerely,

Deborah Coffey, November 18th, 2003

October 28, 2002

Dear Beatrice,

I have returned from my peace work project in the Middle East to receive a letter from your advocate. I hope this exchange continues to be an opportunity for your growth in all ways possible. Because as a non-profit organization, we are bound by our bylaws and mutual agreement to proceed with your payment by seeking closure through our attorney, you will receive your check in full in the very near future directly from the office of our legal council.

While I cannot share in many of your perceptions and assumptions, I do share in your pain as a human being and the trauma that has been so difficult for you. While I witnessed and experienced something very different in nature than what you expressed, I wish to take full responsibility for any and all problems that take place in the domain of my retreats and classes.

Despite the difference in viewpoint, all of us in the Divine Unity family support you in your healing process and offer you the financial sum that you have requested with love and compassion. This is not merely a legal decision to quell a dispute, but rather it is an offering of the heart. May all confusion and trauma be lifted from your spirit. May we all take from this experience lessons of faith and move on as better human beings for having worked through a difficult experience. Our deepest apologies are offered for any and all responsibility that belongs to us and I trust that you will choose the same approach to self-responsibility in your own life. All experiences are a mirror of our selves, if we are wise and accept the reflection. May you be blessed in all things, and all undertakings and be well of body, mind, heart and spirit.

Sincerely,

Devra West