

Statement by Keith Shoulderblade regarding Jacqueline Keeler's accusation that Rain is not part of the Strange Owl family

People who never grew up on a reservation, no matter if it's my rez, or Crow, Poplar, or Pine Ridge, don't know the struggles that we go through, they don't understand our family values and they don't know how close we are. They can't know because they never had that.

We call them 'City Indians' because although they know they are Indian, they are out there doing rash and crazy things and fighting for a way of life that they don't know. It's easier for them to say "I'm fighting for this, I'm fighting for that" than to learn the real ways. So they don't know the core values of *being* an Indian. They are the ones that raise hell about things like mascots, but they never come to the reservations to hold meetings to ask if we would support their fights. They take things upon themselves, thinking that they are a higher Indian than we are, and they don't ask our opinion.

They are the ones that raise hell about things like mascots, but they never come to the reservations to hold meetings to ask if we would support their fights, they just take things upon themselves. They have the luxury to pick and choose their issues because they aren't having to fight for daily survival, and it's their own form of privilege to do this. Maybe going after people strokes their egos and maybe they went to some fancy school so they're thinking that they are a higher Indian than we are. Whatever it is, they don't ask our opinion.

These people should come home and learn about their ways, ask questions, go back to their roots, to where natives come from, here at home, at the fire, at the lodge.

This person who says Rain is not part of our family is wrong, and she thinks she knows but she has not even come to speak to us about who is in our family. Not doing that is ignorance. I don't have much respect for those type of people because they're lost – they don't know who they really are. They assume they know everything, and just because they're native they think they know what to talk about, but they don't know a damn thing and they're blind to what goes on for us people who live on the reservation, people that live in poverty, that have hard times – they don't know what we think.

I'm very lucky that I'm born into this family because I'd rather be the way I am than any other way. I'm thankful that the Creator gave our language and this way of life to pass down through our people. Our family is still very traditional, and we follow our ways. We are one of the most sought-out families that people come to for help. Now that my dad, Don Shoulderblade is gone, they will come to me, my brother and my cousin (who was also my dad's student). My dad was a Sacred Hat Keeper, and he had a lot of knowledge, so he taught us many things.

Every day my dad would tell me 'Don't forget to pray every morning, bring some smudge, ask for a good day' and he'd tell us how we should live, and be. I try my best to live how he taught us, even though it's hard in these times, in this new age. He always said don't forget where you come from, and always remember who you are and he reminded us all to be proud that we are Cheyenne,


My dad taught Rain, and he gave Rain the name he carries and that's a good thing. You have to understand that our names are only given within our family. If someone from outside our family wanted our name, they have to buy it from the family. For my dad to give Rain his own name is a high honor that shows Rain is part of our family. He's one of us, and there's strong ties there because that's how a name

is given – *inside* the family, and only two other people have that name. This is how we carry on our ancestor's names - we name our young ones in that manner so that names live on. For example, my brother is about to name his new baby, and he is giving him the name of one of our first Sacred Hat Keepers from a long time ago. That name is a powerful name, and my brother is bringing it back.

Rain is proud of the name my dad gave him, and he should be because it's an honor, and he's very lucky to have it.

The lady that is talking bad about Rain and trying to say he is not a member of our family, she's wrong. We need to pray for her that she gets a clear mind, and she has a better heart. Because we Cheyenne should always pray for our enemies, we shouldn't get too angry, and stay humble.

We will burn some cedar and sage when we pray about this because when you have a clear mind you make better decisions. Jacqueline Keeler should do this too because what she is doing isn't right.

Signed 

Date: 2/15/22

Keith Shoulderblade