

Going to Pieces - The Dismantling of the United States of America

Elaine Devary Willman

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Going to Pieces - The Dismantling of the United States of America Elaine Devary Willman About Going To Pieces...the Dismantling of the United States of America: Think "Thelma and Louise" – two women who took an unusual road trip. Only the road trip that is Going To Pieces... is about a system taking down this country economically, politically and geographically. The author and a videographer journeyed across 17 Indian reservations from Washington State to New York, capturing over 130 hours of direct testimony on video from farmers, tribal members, teachers, bankers, sheriffs – all manner of folk who live within the historic or actual boundaries of Indian reservations. The stories captured were so stark. The folks speaking had felt unheard for decades. The author promised each of them that their story would be told and offered anonymity to anyone in need. No one wanted anonymity. "Tell the truth; we have to be heard."

While the road trip occurred in the fall of 2004, and the book was written in the spring of 2005, due to serious controversy and risk, the author has just this year assigned an ISBN number to Going to Pieces...and made it available to the open market.

The original purpose of the journey was to produce an 88-minute documentary, but the people interviewed and the stories told were so many, a documentary fell short. So, the author transcribed the actual words from the 130 hours of video, and re-lived the journey for the reader. The reader is asked to realize that this book only addresses 17 of the 565 federally recognized Indian tribes, and leaves it to the reader to imagine the full impact occurring across rural America, and now through tribal casinos, seeping quickly into urban America.

Mainstream media is continuously and substantially funded by tribal casino advertising dollars that the reality of life on Indian reservations is taboo to discuss out loud or on television, in print or on the radio. The end result is "hush-money" to never discuss real life on Indian reservations. Both political parties are equally funded with campaign donations from tribal governments, tribal associations and thousands of lobbyists, to the extent that Congress quickly serves some 565 tribal governments and turns a mournful deaf ear to the hundreds of thousands of their constituents who live on or near Indian reservations but are not tribal members.

Do you know... that at least 90 major public spaces and natural resources, including Redwood National Monument (CA) and Joshua Tree National Monument (CA), are targeted by the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife, to be turned over to private tribal governments? The list includes: 41 national refuges; 34 national parks, wildlife refuges and hatcheries; and 15 regional water projects. In each instance, a tribe will take over the management of these public lands. The problem is that what tribes do rarely involves any public process, oversight or transparency. As can be seen in the areas where tribal governments have taken over or been given oversight of public lands, public access is often limited or ended. And the tribes won't pay for the management of these sites; the taxpayers will.

Do you know... that one small Montana tribe of 5,130 people had in 2004, an annual Operational Management Budget of \$373 million? This annual budget of a single tribe is larger than the national U.S. Fish and Wildlife's annual budget for the entire country.

Do you know...every Indian reservation is co-located within a county or counties and often towns, villages and cities? Their tribal government annual operating budgets exceed the annual operating budget of the counties in which they are located.

Do you know that the Department of Interior or any federal agency has never audited or tracked the annual amount of federal (taxpayer) funds going to 565 separate governments from some 27 federal agencies? It's in the multi-billions while poverty worsens on the reservations.



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Jerry Sonnier:

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Jessica Duncan:

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