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Dear Mr. Leonard Peltier,

I have recently read your book Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance. My teacher, knowing my interest in topics such as human rights and government cover-ups, gave me your book, and I now realize just how blind I have been to our government's many injustices towards Native Americans. The way you have been treated, from the attack on the Pine Ridge reservation, to the trial, through your continued life in jail, even though there is no solid evidence of your guilt, your story has moved me into action.

The stories of the blacks' and women's rights movements through American history are so strong that they almost wash out any other struggle. It also doesn't help that the government is doing its best to make any note of the terrible deeds it inflicted on the Native Americans fade into the past. We learn about Martin Luther King Jr. in school, we are taught about Malcolm X and his struggle, but we almost never hear about Crazy Horse, or Geronimo, or Leonard Peltier. American Indians have fought harder and longer for their human rights than any other minority in American history; it is the least known struggle that I am aware of. And yet Native Americans are still widely and viciously oppressed because they are all too often ignored or patronized by the very government that promised to protect all citizens of the United States of America.

Another reason that the average American citizen is ignorant of the plight of Native Americans is that there are hardly ever current stories of oppression of native Americans in the media. Students in the American education system are rarely taught of the immense struggle undergone by Native peoples, except for a passing reference to these minorities in one's state history class in 4th grade. If I had not read your book I would still be quite ignorant of these injustices, so I have you to thank for continuing my education of our government's corrupt

policies towards this oppressed group. Your story has made me aware of the situations of your people and is compelling me to educate myself on all aspects of minority problems.

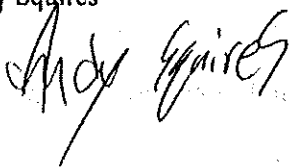
I, personally, have never been oppressed; I grew up white and lower middle class, with enough money to get by. My life could have been easier, but it could have been much worse. I don't know enough about what you and your people have gone through, but through my reading and even personal experience, I have discovered that if enough people realize the truth in any situation, the liars can be defeated by their own dishonesty.

Through your work, I have personally been changed, and I have made promises to myself to be a more responsible citizen, to vote with care and knowledge, and to attempt to destroy oppression and racism wherever I see it. Next November I will be of legal age to vote, and I have begun to realize just how much responsibility comes with that right. I will do my research on the candidates and topics that are up for vote, and based on my newfound ideals I will vote with caution for those who are trying to make a change in our system. I feel a change coming in the American people's way of thinking about government and I think that most of the people can see it also; the people of America are tired of the status quo and are ready for a change.

And so, as you continue your work to spread the truth, I would like you to know that you have other believers out here, and I now count myself among them, who are working to fix what is wrong in the world, no matter how large that task is, and no matter the cost.

Sincerely,

Andy Squires



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