

- ACADEMY MUSEUM OF MOTION PICTURES

6067 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90036

Mr. Ted Sarandos, Academy Museum Board Members and Trustees

Mr. Bill Kramer, CEO, Museum of Motion Pictures

Ms. Jacqueline Stewart, President and Director Academy Museum

Members, Academy Indigenous Alliance

Monday, December 19, 2022

RE: [Where Is Sacheen Littlefeather Today? Meet Her Husband Charles Koshiway - Oscars Apology - Sound Health and Lasting Wealth](#)

Dear Mr. Sarandos, Mr. Kramer, Ms. Stewart, Members of the Academy Museum and Board Trustees, Members of Academy Indigenous Alliance, Ladies and Gentlemen:

SACHEEN: FABLE AND TRUTH

A journalist recently did ask: "Is the museum more about guilt than history?" and another journalist, Peter Bart, added "what story should it tell?"

The article on Sacheen Littlefeather posted on the internet by Sound Health and Lasting Wealth on August 16, 2022, is misinforming all its (international) readers with false data, erroneous statements, and stories totally lacking in evidence. It is one of numerous newspaper articles and videos which have misrepresented Sacheen Littlefeather as a Native American woman defending American Indian rights. Such widely read articles are wrongly praising an individual who has misled

the Academy of Motion Pictures, its museum, and the public at large as to her identity and her lifework. In addition, there is another recitation of her lies made available by your Museum as a Podcast of 46 minutes, dated June 16, 2022, and presented on the internet in Academy Museum Broadcasts, which recounts Sacheen's falsified version of a troubled family life marked by poverty and violence, and a John Wayne's fantasied display backstage on Oscar's night, being restrained by imagined security people to prevent him from assaulting her on stage, among other numerous false assertions.

In response to such articles which appeared in newspapers and on the internet concerning the representation of Sacheen as a valid spokesperson for American Indian concerns and creating a very false image of who she really was, I would like to submit the comments below; the quotes I address constitute a sample of the many rumors about her that have no factual evidence. This sample is by no means all inclusive. Two recent interviews, one by Jacqueline Stewart, the other by the Museum of American Indians of Novato, California as a discussion with an American Indian elder, are particularly offensive due to the enormity of their lies and pretension. Various interviews taped between 2019 and 2022 contribute to elaborate, with additional invented details, Sacheen Littlefeather's essentially false story of a fictitious and fraudulent character.

I was a close friend of Sacheen's for over thirty years and was a firsthand witness to many aspects of her life. I am presently in touch with both of her sisters, Rosalind Cruz and Trudy Orlandi, who have recently come forth with some seminal facts about her. I am glad they did and support their praiseworthy effort to correct the public record. In her search for recognition and fame, and in a fantasy world, Sacheen acted out many roles, but it was the last one, that of a lifetime martyr, backed by The Academy of Motion Pictures and its new museum, that reached the epitome of falsehood. The image created in the last three years of her life by Hollywood producers of One Bowl Productions ("Sacheen: Breaking the Silence"), espoused by your well-meaning museum staff, circulated world-wide by a credulous press and some of her fans is preposterous, and **untrue**.

As a historian and a cultural and psychological anthropologist specializing in Ritual and Mind, with diplomas from Bordeaux (France) and Stanford Universities, and as President of The Tazzla Institute for Cultural Diversity, Inc. since 1993, with a solid career as a scholar and a defender of indigenous human rights for decades (Attachment 5), I have come to the conclusion that it was my professional duty to raise my voice and point to all Academy Museum officials that they should not confuse schizophrenic delusions with History. I have addressed several times the question of indigenous identities (American Indian and North African Berber) both in writing and through visual means. As a matter of fact, the core of the DVD created by One Bowl Productions which features Sacheen's interview by Russell Means contained moments from the original footage of one of my 1999 Community Access Television Programs, a series I titled "The Russell Means Show". That very footage contributed substantially to her subsequent claim to notoriety as having

boosted the morale of Indians under siege at Wounded Knee 1973. The story, entered in 2019 by One Bowl Productions as a 26 minute documentary in several film festivals and sold as a DVD, granted Sacheen a role she never had, and can be easily debunked: indeed, my research showed that Russell Means was not even in the Wounded Knee compound the night the Oscars were televised, March 27th 1973 (see his autobiography, March 26-27 1973 and the day by day audio report titled "the Road to Wounded Knee -Part 2 of 5 -, report of March 27th to March 29, 1973). Both Dennis Banks and Russell Means surreptitiously left the WK compound on Monday night March 26 and traveled along a northern route to adjoining Rosebud reservation, reaching Crow Dog's Paradise where they met family and friends. They returned to Wounded Knee during the March 27th night. Neither of them could have been watching an evening television program in a compound which had its electricity previously cut off by the FBI.

I was on the Dennis Banks Defense Committee for several years, serving as consultant to the American Indian Movement and the International Indian Treaty Council headed by Bill Means, a brother to Russell Means. I attended AIM meetings both in the Bay area and in South Dakota during a period of several years. Sacheen did not. Russell Means, a close friend of mine since 1982, never mentioned Sacheen in any role in relation to A.I.M and their stand at Wounded Knee until he and she were brought face to face by me in the television program I created and produced in 1999. Right off, Sacheen thanked Russell for the program and its awesome meaning for American Indians, as if he was responsible for it, ignoring the reality (known to her) that the show was not his idea, but was actually my concept, my creation as well as my production and that she appeared as my guest. I chose her as a guest, and Russell accepted to interview her. Russell Means had accepted to host a Community Television Series I designed because of our friendship, and he extended a certain amount of kindness and courtesy to her as my friend. I should have trashed that interview, as it was replete with inaccuracies and pretense. Before the live taping of the show, she asked me not to mention to Russell the fact that she was a fervent Catholic, because she planned to portray herself as a traditional indigenous healer and her profound Catholicism would not help that portrayal in his eyes. Certainly, the program was never supposed to be used commercially by Sacheen and the One Bowl Productions people she contacted to forge a false image of Sacheen Littlefeather, worldwide. As for Sacheen's repeated statements that the FBI conspired to have her blacklisted following her stunt at the Oscar's night of 1973, it does not appear to have any substance as her name does not appear at all as an activist in their files which I have consulted (see <https://vault.fbi.gov/>).

Furthermore, the Archives of the University of California Library at Davis also contain a series of documents in several boxes, under the label of "Native American Activists of the San Francisco Bay Area, '70s-80s". Several of the folders bear my name. There is no folder with Sacheen' name.

Academy Museum internet advertising for an evening with Sacheen on September 17th, 2022, offered this language:

"In 1973, Sacheen Littlefeather (Apache/Yaqui/AZ), a member of the Screen Actors Guild, became the first Native woman to stand onstage at the Academy Awards ceremony, on behalf of Marlon Brando. Sacheen did not accept his Best Actor award for The Godfather (1972). She gave a passionate and moving 60-second speech regarding the stereotypes of Native Americans in the entertainment industry. She also brought attention to the 1973 Wounded Knee South Dakota protest. This historic television moment is significantly highlighted in the museum's Academy Awards History gallery. As a result, Sacheen was professionally boycotted, personally harassed and attacked, and discriminated against for the last fifty years."

This introduction to their night of celebration states falsely that Sacheen is Apache and Yaqui, that she is the first Native American woman to stand on stage at the Academy Awards ceremony and that she was professionally boycotted, personally harassed and attacked, and discriminated against for the last fifty years.

After her release from a one year internment in a California State psychiatric facility where she was treated for schizophrenia, Sacheen Littlefeather's delusions began to include the role of a fictitious American Indian child having grown in poverty, abused and neglected by her parents, subjected to racist mistreatment as she grew up. Thereafter, she consistently portrayed herself as a suffering, victimized woman. Her sisters, however, both describe their family life and childhood environment quite differently. I was a friend of hers for many years, witnessing her somewhat comfortable existence in Marin County which definitely did not reflect harassment and attacks. She carefully crafted the tale of her life story, constructing a false identity and claiming a false ancestry.

To the board members of the Academy for Motion Pictures, I would like to suggest that her image, let alone a permanent Littlefeather Exhibit which we learned has been prominently displayed in the Academy Museum, does not have a place of honor next to the portrait of Sidney Poitier on any wall of any space of your museum. It is offensive. It is degrading to the minority actors and actresses, American Indians and others, who spent a lifetime working successfully in the industry. And, I must add an emphatic "No" to a deconstructive philosophy that would make Jacqueline Stewart, the Director of your museum, state that we all should espouse the very dangerous idea of legitimizing "self-identification". Such a claim on the part of your organization would support, unfortunately, too many "fake" Indians to prosper at the detriment of legitimate ones. I am aware of the new intent of museums which see one of their functions as that of leadership in the creation of social categories and identities, rather than perpetuating an antiquated role of repositories for art. Such re-definition of the role of any museum, however,

does not include the advocacy or promotion of indigenous self-identification. There are official tribal entities with established rules which attend to such recognition in regard to American Indians. And you are no doubt aware by now that no official tribal recognition has given her claim to American Indian ethnicity any validity.

Comments on miscellaneous internet and Academy Museum misinformation:

1. Sacheen Littlefeather "was born into a Native American family" is **untrue**. Sacheen – Marie Louise Cruz being her birth name - was born into a Mexican American family with no ties whatsoever to any Native American tribe. A letter from my daughter to film critic Ebert has been circulated: when Sacheen called me for help in dealing with an internet theft of her identity, I suggested that Jennifer Hagan, my daughter who is an attorney, could help her. My daughter knew of my friendship with Sacheen, and out of courtesy toward me, listened to her story and executed her wishes, drafting a quick and elementary web site one can still find on the internet at <http://www.sacheenlittlefeather.net/pages/1/index.htm>. The subsequent letter my daughter wrote to Mr. Ebert was written from notes dictated to her by Sacheen as a client. Sacheen lied to me consistently and to her attorney repeatedly. My daughter's notes do not even reflect Sacheen's married name of Rubio, hence the inaccurate name of Marie Louise Cruz which appears in that letter as her married name.

2. 'she lost her career and survival abuse cases as a result of the speech she gave' is **untrue** (and not making much sense as phrased), as her relationship to the film industry picked up a bit after the Oscar refusal in 1973, when she had indeed very few film credits before. She soon displayed her nude body in Playboy magazine in 1973 and acquired much of her doubtful reputation as a nude model, particularly despised by the majority of American Indian women, after that. You can see her indecent photo for yourselves on the internet under her real name, Marie Louise Cruz nude photo. It was not her Hollywood career that suffered; it was her reputation as a serious actress and as a self-appointed spokesperson for American Indians.

3. "Charles Koshiway was Sacheen's husband and they were married for many years." is **untrue**. She lived for many years with Charles Thomas Johnston, (mother's name Koshiway), a California registered sex offender and former prison inmate incarcerated for manslaughter, and no record exists that would indicate they were ever officially married. Charles Johnston was previously married to a

Korean woman named Moon Sook Ho who is still alive. He had a daughter from this previous marriage, named Coleen Johnston (married name Kuhail). He is identified as being "white" both on the 1991 State of California document registering him as a sex offender, and, on his 2021 death certificate filed by Sacheen in Marin County, obtained by her sister Trudy Orlandi and furnished herewith (Attachments 2 and 3).

4. "One daughter of a Korean couple had been adopted (by Charles and Sacheen) and given the name Coleen" is **untrue**. Coleen, according to Sacheen's confidence to me, was Charles' daughter with Moon Sook Ho, Charles' only wife on record. It is now unclear whether she was his stepdaughter, adopted daughter or biological daughter. He, Charles, has admitted to Sacheen's sister she was one child he did molest. There is no official record of adoption of that child by Sacheen.

5. "John Wayne attacked her...." a fake story, with absolutely no evidence of having taken place, and solid evidence that it was fabricated years after the actual event of March 1973. **There is no evidence whatsoever even pointing to the presence of John Wayne backstage as Sacheen is escorted off the stage.** Also, Sacheen added another fictitious detail in her last interviews about "tomahawk chops" being sent in her direction on Oscar night, and as it was reported by the New York Times on October 31, 2022. In 1973, the "tomahawk chop" had not yet been used by anyone. It was first done in a football game between Florida University and Auburn in 1980 and did not become a topic of contention until later when used in other football games. Both stories often repeated by Sacheen are **untrue, mere inventions on her part.**

6. "home she and her daughter purchased with their money" is another fabrication. There is no evidence of any ownership of home by Sacheen, and there is no daughter. The only two surviving members of Sacheen's are two sisters, Rosalind Cruz and Trudy Orlandi. Another individual, Calina Lawrence, also represents herself as her niece, which she is not. In the Stewart interview, the relationship between Sacheen and Calina is explored and given a deep spiritual meaning founded on Native American beliefs and practices, which does not come off as genuine since Sacheen was not an American Indian. The link evoked between the two is supposed to be the spirit of John Chiquiti, a Pueblo Indian from New Mexico who lived in a Suquamish reservation of Washington State, participated in the Alcatraz occupation of 1969, was a co-founder of the Yakima Group of the Northwest Native American Peyote Church and, we are told, the father of Calina whose last name, however, is Lawrence.

Some articles have also quoted Sacheen stating that her "long lost brother" with whom she had reconnected died of Aids. She had no brother. The car she borrowed to drive two AIDS patients from San Francisco to Sacramento, to which she refers in an Interview, was my car.

7. "Red Earth Indian Theater Company". There are many references to Sacheen being instrumental in founding a program, a center, or an organization, which in every case, will prove to be fictitious. This is one of them. One version of her obituary also states that she was credited with the founding of The American Indian Registry for Performing Arts, and The Red Earth Indian Theatre Company of Seattle. The American Indian Registry for Performing Arts was created in Los Angeles on Sept 8, 1983, and suspended by the Franchise Tax Board in 1992 for failure to pay taxes. (Date of dissolution: June 1, 1992) Only name associated with this organization is well known late actor Nick Ramus. There is no record of Sacheen being involved. In Seattle, there is no Red Earth Theatre, but a Red Eagle Soaring Native Youth Theatre (RES) which lists the names of founders. Sacheen Littlefeather is not one of them. However, a Red Earth Theatre was founded in 2013 in Arizona, and the names of the individuals who drafted the mission, set up the web site and the first season are listed. Sacheen Littlefeather is not one of them.

Concerning a circulated obituary, it is also indicated in one version that Sacheen received an Emmy award for her involvement with "Dancing in America: A Song for Dead Warriors". See link at [Dance in America: A Song for Dead Warriors, San F](#) The ballet received one nomination and one Award that went to Michael Smuin in 1984. No award was given to Sacheen. Mr. Smuin's award has been misappropriated in some press reports.

8. Attachment 1: "She Crashed the Academy, Now Playboy Magazine" - Her reputation among traditional Indian women was really shot after her nude picture was made known all over the country. In this SF Chronicle article, several lies are apparent: a) Her parents did not live in the White Mountain Apache Reservation in Arizona then moved to Salinas: they met in Phoenix at a saddlery; b) there was never a mix-up on original birth records at the Salinas Hospital, necessitating the correction she made in 1973, but c) there is evidence uncovered by her sisters that Sacheen falsified three birth records, changing on her own birth record the ethnicity of her father to "Indian" in August 1973, five months after the Oscar night . At that date, by the way, her father no longer lived, and he and his wife could not have "sought legal recourse to get birth records straightened out". Documents recently obtained by her sisters offer clear evidence of a falsification by her of a legal document in 1973 to support her newly forged American Indian identity. In a recent conversation with her sisters, I also was informed by them that Sacheen falsified both of their birth records in 1974, without their consent, changing the original entry of their father's ethnicity from "Mexican" to "Indian".

9. Finally, her interview with the American Indian Museum of Marin County and her pretension at American Indian elder status dispensing wisdom which accompanied her in the course of the last two years or so of her life are without a doubt offensive to legitimate elders of all American Indian tribes in ways that may not be comprehensible to the public at large but are nevertheless unacceptable. Unlike a genuine American Indian woman raised in the traditions

of her community and instructed by elders of her family and her community, Sacheen offered fantasies which have no American Indian ancestral roots nor corresponded to any American Indian tradition. I was made keenly aware of such difference between genuine tribal elders and individuals who pretend to be American Indians, as I worked for several years with reservation elders in a photo project I designed and conducted on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Respect toward elders is based on the very real fact that they carry and transmit group traditions and rituals specific to their people. Sacheen spoke intensely to Jacqueline Stewart of her own Catholic upbringing by a devout (white) grandfather, but she displayed no evident knowledge of an essential aspect of Native American spiritual life firmly grounded in myth and ritual because she did not belong to any specific tribal group of American Indians. I have explained the all-important difference between genuine American Indian medicine people and non-Indian individuals who pretend to be healers in an article which is still available on the internet at Hagan, Helene E. 1992. 'The Plastic Medicine People Circle', Institute of Archetypal Ethnology Newsletter. Online: <https://archive.org/details/theplasticmedicinepeoplecircle>

10. There is an April 12, 2022 video of 1973 Oscar presenter Liv Ullmann on YouTube in which she reveals that, when she came across Sacheen several years after the Oscar refusal, Sacheen admitted to her she was not an Indian. There is also a posting on a Facebook page for One Bowl Productions, written by an AIM supporter in Germany, stating that Sacheen personally told her she was not an American Indian, but was a Mexican traveling with the 1990 Sacred Run organized by AIM leader Dennis Banks. This AIM supporter added that as far as Sacheen was concerned, AIM accepted membership of non-Indians and did not discriminate against her or any non-Indian of any origin.

11. cbs8.com published an article on October 22, 2022 which read: "Littlefeather, born Marie Louise Cruz in the agricultural town of Salinas, California in 1946, dedicated her life shedding light on the mistreatment of Native Americans and its cultural significance. She earned a degree in holistic health from Antioch University, where she also minored in Native American medicine. According to [The Hollywood Reporter](#)

Sacheen Littlefeather, Who Delivered Marlon Brando's Oscar Rejection Spe...

Rebecca Sun

The Academy formally apologized to the Native American activist and former actress in June after she was blackli...

she later penned a column for the Kiowa tribe newspaper in Oklahoma and taught in the traditional Indian medicine program at St. Mary's Hospital in Tucson, Arizona." These articles, as well as the brochure of her funeral, reprint what Sacheen also stated during her interview with Jacqueline Stewart, indicating that she obtained a college diploma in Holistic Nutrition before teaching indigenous medicine in various venues throughout the United States.

I recently contacted Antioch University and received a prompt response from the registrar's office which indicated that Sacheen attended some San Francisco classes in 1981 and 1982, but never obtained any degree from their institution (Attachment 4). The college diploma claimed by Sacheen, a bachelor's degree in Holistic Nutrition with a minor in Indigenous Medicine from Antioch University, is another false claim.

Sincerely, and respectfully,

Helene E. Hagan, Cultural and Psychological Anthropologist.

President, Tazzla Institute for Cultural Diversity, Inc. (1993- 2022)

Executive Director, Amazigh Film Festival USA (2007-2022)
