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Spiritual leader has plans for healing center in Whitefish

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Flathead guru faces host of lawsuits

By CONSTANCE SEE
Whitefish Pilot

A self-styled clairvoyant and spiritual healer from Lakeside who claims the Osprey House on Angel Point as a future VIP spa faces criminal charges stemming from an alleged assault on a Whitefish doctor.

Devra Patton West's goal of opening a series of healing spas -- including one in Whitefish -- has been stalled while she fights allegations ranging from black magic to fraud, extortion and breach of contract.

A temporary restraining order against West, who calls herself Surya Ma, was issued by Judge David Ortley last October after Dr. Patricia Cole, of Whitefish, requested protection.

Cole was the director for one of West's ventures, The Sacred Archives Institute. They worked together for several years. In her statement to the county sheriff's office, Cole claims West abused her verbally and physically.

"She has told me that she has the 'spiritual' power and authority to 'take me out,' to be composted," Cole wrote in the temporary restraining order statement.

Cole claims West threw a lamp at her and hit her with a briefcase, cell phone and her hand.

"She took off her shoe and hit me on the top of my head, causing my scalp to bleed onto my face, neck and clothes," Cole's statement reads. "She threatened to kill me with a gun to my head, 'blowing my brains out,' and advised me to commit suicide by slitting my wrists, after I'd taken out an insurance policy on myself."

Photos taken after the alleged beating were submitted to the sheriff's office.

When the Pilot asked about Cole's claims, West said her attorney advised her not to comment on the misdemeanor charge. A hearing for a jury trial is scheduled for later this month.

An author and speaker, West claims she recognized her clairvoyant and healing gifts at age six when she began "interacting and communicating with archangel Michael," according to her book "The Christ Heart."

West claims to have been trained in shamanic visioning and healing by Native American elders and to have been both a Cheyenne medicine woman and General George Patton in past lives.

She also claims her "gifts" can heal people with various illnesses, including leukemia, and she plans to teach what she knows to cardiologists and other physicians when her plan for healing spas unfolds.

"If you ever saw me heal, you'd be down on your knees crying like a friggin' baby," West said.

According to her biography, West went back to school at age 38 after raising her children. She graduated from the College of the Redwoods in 1994 with degrees in social science and humanities.

After graduating, she founded the Divine Unity Foundation and the Sacred Archives Institute in Victor, Montana. The institute was charged with organizing and recording her ongoing monthly "transmissions" -- channeled telepathic messages that come at 3 a.m. from a group she calls the Ascended Masters, some living, some not. They include Master Jesus, Buddha, St. Francis of Assisi, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mohammed and Babaji.

Michael and Lori Hendrickson, of Colorado, worked with West in Victor and paid off a promissory note for West's foundation in 2005 to prevent foreclosure. They are now suing West, the Sacred Archives Institute, West's husband and Dr. Cole for breach of contract, claiming West moved the money out of the foundation to a personal trust.

Here in the Flathead, West ran into problems over several properties where she lived. On June 1, she was evicted from a \$2 million Lakeside waterfront home when she failed to pay a second \$50,000 down payment. She then moved into another Lakeside with her son and daughter-in-law.

"All she got out of the house was her cat," said Larry Phillips, a Realtor with Land Rush Realty.

When asked about the eviction, West said a few weeks away from home were worth the trouble. She claims to be negotiating a better deal on the property due to a water rights dispute.

According to court documents, West is behind in payments on the second home. The issue has not yet been resolved, according to one of the homeowners, Larry Brazda.

A third Lakeside property -- the well known Osprey House on Angel Point, owned by Robert and Tabby Ivy -- is promoted in the Surya Ma Enterprise brochure as the "Surya Devi VIP Retreat Spa." Tabby Ivy refutes that claim.

"Devra consistently misrepresents her involvement with our house, erroneously saying she has an offer on it, but we have had no formal offer nor accepted any from her," she said. "After I saw our house in her brochure, I walked into her office and said, 'I don't want my house on any of your marketing materials.' For two years, she claimed she was going to buy our home. She wrote a bad check for several million dollars to the Realtor, and that was our experience with her."

One more lawsuit dogs West's plans to move forward with healing retreats in Lakeside and in Whitefish at the former North Valley Hospital site. Her former business consultant and stockholder in Millennia Mind, John Watson, is suing her for fraud, constructive termination and breach of contract. Watson claims he was not paid for the services he provided, including setting up stock in Millennia Mind.

"She told me the Masters decided they didn't want stock, out of the blue, no discussion, and that was that," Watson said. "She is an evil and dangerous woman."

According to Watson, when he demanded payment and threatened to sue, West psychically attacked him and his family by sending migraine headaches from Lakeside to their home in Nova Scotia.

Watson created the Web site www.universalteachings.com, where he accuses West of a host of offenses ranging from extortion to black magic.

"Our attorney told us to just let him hang himself with the Web site," West said when asked why she allows the Web site to continue.

West has filed a libel suit against Watson, but he said he has not yet been served.

More information about Devra West's organization is available online at www.universalteachings.org.

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