

Greetings Judge

Aug 7, 2012

Nahua no toca, Professor Roberto Rodriguez, I am Macehual and a Tucson resident.

I have never met Mr. Thompson and I don't know where he lives. Yet in his messages to me, he claimed I was trying to take his house and as such, threatened the use of a 357 magnum, to take me out, and to wage war against Mexicans.

He called my office phone not once, not twice, but three times.

The calls are full of hate and lots of anti-Mexican vitriol. It is the kind of hate that unfortunately has become common in this state. If you doubt me, look at the comments section in media, particularly here in our daily newspaper.

What puzzles me is why Mr. Thompson isolated me? Apparently, he is not the only one who seems to believe that I am a ringleader of sorts.

I do teach in Mexican-American Studies at the University of Arizona. During the past several years, the TUSD's Mexican American Studies department and the discipline have been under unrelenting attack... and I do freely admit to defending both. Yet, I have not insulted or disrespected anyone. I have simply asked that the teachers, students and parents -- and their views -- be respected in this process.

The right to culture, history, identity, language and education are the linchpin of any society and are protected by the 2007 UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, along with 8 other international treaties.

Defending the department and discipline and asserting my rights as a full human being, should not warrant threats to my life or other forms of violence against anyone else, regardless of their race or culture.

It doesn't have to be this way. In Tucson, we teach In lak Ech-Tu eres mi otro yo-you are my other me and Panche Be-buscar la raiz de la verdad-to seek the root of the truth. We teach our students to see themselves in each other, regardless of race or nationality or culture. But we also do teach them to stand up for their rights.

Somehow, all this has been severely distorted. The Atty. Gen. Tom Horne, continues to insist that we teach a highly racist curriculum. He appears not to understand that that is highly insulting. Combating inequalities or fighting against racial supremacy is part of a historic struggle to treat all people as full human beings.

I don't want anything else. I don't want anybody's land... especially nobody else's house... just the right to be treated as a full human being. I don't want anything from the court, except to ask Mr. Thompson why he isolated me... yet I do have a question for the court: do these threats -- given Justice Department definitions -- not rise to the level of hate crimes?