

STATEMENT

My name is Rebekah Edminster. I am a professional singer and teacher. I have been asked by Mr. John Watson to give a statement about my experience with Devra West.

I first met Devra West in 1993 in Terminillo, Italy, where she was a faculty member at Dr. Robert T. Jaffe's School for Energy Mastery, and I was a student. In the summer of 1995 I took a week-long course in meditation and spirituality with Ms. West in Hinterbrühl, Austria. Between 1995 and the summer of 2000 I attended several events given by Ms. West under the umbrella of her organization, the Circle of Divine Unity Foundation (hereafter referred to in this statement as DU). These courses I attended took place in San Diego, CA, Phoenix, AZ, Lenox, MA, Litchfield, CT and Victor, MT.

In the summer of 2000 Ms. West invited me to join the office staff of the DU as a writer and editor for her newsletter, brochures for events offered by DU, and her book, "The Christ Heart", which she told me wished to heavily edit and re-publish to make it more accessible to a broader, mainstream audience. Among other things, Ms. West frequently called upon my services as a singer during her courses. Although singing for her events was something I enjoyed, it prevented me from participating in the courses as others were able to, and I was never paid for my contribution..

I moved to Victor, Montana with my young son, Daniel, in early September of 2000 to begin work in the DU office. I ended my employment there in November, 2000. During my brief employment there, I was continually asked to do other work for DU, outside my areas of expertise, which interfered with the work I'd been hired to do. Jack West asked me to do "seva", a form of spiritual service in which part of my job would be done without remuneration. I refused as I was already being paid a third of my normal salary to work there.

I was given the work of editing the articles that had been put together by Susanna Felder, one of Ms. West's assistants, for the upcoming newsletter. I was later given the job of writing course descriptions for a brochure of Ms. West's/DU's upcoming events in 2001. I was never given "The Christ Heart" to edit, a primary reason I had accepted the offer of a job at DU. Further, I was given no computer to work on, a necessity in this day and age for any kind of major editing work, nor any list of contacts for the printing jobs. In short, I was on my own. After the first piece of work I got to print, I was handed a protocol sheet by Anandra George, with all of the contact and protocol information on it I had needed while doing the job. I had asked for this information earlier but was not given it: by necessity I had re-invented the wheel. I felt my work was undermined both by Ms. West and her office staff at every turn. Upon reflection, I considered it highly probable that Ms. West deliberately pitted her office staff members against one another, for our unity would have stopped her abusive behavior: she preferred to keep us frightened, off balance, confused, and divided. If Ms. West wanted her organization to succeed, she could not have picked a worse way to run it.

Here are several examples where my work was interfered with and undermined: while I was working with the graphic design firm that did all the design for the DU brochures and newsletters, I discovered that Ms. West herself had taken over my work (without informing me) and was making changes to my work over the phone with my contacts at the graphic design firm and speaking ill of me to them as well. I had been allowed to blithely work away on a project that was no longer in my hands, which was both a waste of office time and money, not to mention personally disrespectful to me. The work I had done was discarded, and Ms. West humiliated me publicly in front of the office staff (Andrea Dazzi, Jack West, Anandra George, Roger Hill, Susanna Felder and Eric Mbacke) on at least three occasions. Office meetings were like inquisitions with Ms. West humiliating whoever her chosen victim-of-the-moment was in front of the rest of us.

Another instance where my work was undermined was when I had made all my final edits to the newsletter on a floppy disc and submitted it for approval: I discovered that Susanna Felder had resurrected everything I had edited out, and returned the newsletter to its unfinished form, then sent it to print with my name on it as newsletter editor. Naturally I did not like having my name on a piece of work that was not mine and contained numerous inaccuracies.

A third instance of egregious interference was when Ms. West asked me to present her with an outline of the brochure for upcoming events and gave me a week -until the following Monday- to complete my work. On the Friday afternoon before the Monday deadline, she called me up and peremptorily demanded to see my writing, which I was not close to being finished with. When I told her she would have to wait until the agreed upon deadline she became hostile and demanded that I work on it all weekend long in her office, which I did. She could not let me get on with my work at that time, and continually interrupted to blame me for incompetence, as well as blaming the rest of her staff for what she perceived as their worthlessness. Further, she blamed her assistant, Andrea Dazzi, and me for her being sick with cancer, citing as the reason the stress we caused her for being incompetent and useless. This weekend episode was very hard upon my eight year old son who I was raising alone.

Ms. West then left on an eight week trip to Europe and India, and I had time to contemplate whether I wished to continue in any capacity with DU. In November 2000 I handed in a letter of resignation to Roger Hill, then head of the DU office. I contemplated whether it was possible to return to the status of workshop/seminar participant and gave myself until the end of the year to sort things out. When Ms. West returned from overseas, she demanded that I accompany her to Hawaii for her January event. She offered to pay my way and my hotel in exchange for my singing for her event. I told her that I wouldn't go because of my son and the financial debt it would incur (missed work, babysitting costs, and the stress for my son who was new to Montana being away from his mother for eleven days). Ms. West told me that agreeing to go on the trip despite my "fears" was the prerequisite to my enlightenment. I still refused to go. She called me into a meeting with Jack West, Roger Hill, and Andrea Dazzi. I brought my friend AJ White as moral support and witness. Inquisition-style, Ms. West fired questions at me and refused to allow me to answer any of them.

She lectured me for my defiance for about one hour and admonished Andrea Dazzi to convince me to submit, as Andrea herself had done, to Ms. West's 'teaching', which amounted to allowing her to say and do anything she wished, including subjecting one to mental, physical and emotional abuse. I refused. She then told me that the Christ as well as a well-known spiritual authority she consulted had told her I was unworthy of remuneration for my singing work. I did not believe that this spiritual consultant of hers had said any such thing, so I called up the consultant's office. I was able to ascertain directly from the consultant that she had never even discussed the issue of whether I was to be paid or not with Ms. West. Armed with the knowledge Ms. West had lied to me to further her own agenda, I decided to face her and then leave the organization entirely..

The following day December 21, 2000, I stood in a semi-circle with approximately 35 people in Ms. West's Winter Solstice gathering on the DU property. She went around the room, one by one, asking each person what their commitment was with regard to her organization. When it came to me, she wanted to know the answer to the question "Will you go with us to Hawaii?" I answered that I would not. She became very angry and told the rest of the group that I was a seductress and surrounded by dark energy that the Christ could not pierce through. She asked Andrea Dazzi to come over to me and tell me that it was important to subject myself to Ms. West's teaching, which amounted to being held up for public ridicule, using the names of departed spiritual teachers such as Christ or Buddha as authorities who were allegedly talking and working through her. I had already recently witnessed Andrea Dazzi being publicly hatefully treated (to help her along in her quest for enlightenment, according to Ms. West) and had resolved that that was not the way I wanted to be taught. Further, armed with the knowledge that Ms. West had publicly lied about what the spiritual authority had said about me, I was clear that I would not yield to any threats or entreaties by her or the group to change my mind. Ms. West then demanded that the group come over to where I was standing and surround me, "witnessing" in the "name of Christ". Only one person stood up for me, and that was Mrs. Connie Pray of Stevensville, MT. The rest of the group began to pressure me to give in and submit to the routine "teaching", which amounted to mud-slinging, name calling: in short, public humiliation. I refused. Ms. West then issued an ultimatum: either I submit, or I must leave. I responded by saying I would go. As I left, she sent several people to follow me and convince me to come back. I was, however, able to leave without undue delay.

In a separate incident, two days prior, I was a witness to Ms. West stopping Aaron Fox from leaving the room during this gathering by sending three men to physically bar his way.

My opinion: Ms. West operates with a mixture of truth and deceit that is much more credible and potent in drawing people in than if she only employed deceit in her endeavors. She can be enormously charismatic and authoritative. Because of the gifts she possesses, I and others have experienced revelations, greater understanding, love, and bliss under her tutelage. My point: people have gone to her because there has been something of unusual and enormous value to be experienced there. On the other side, there has been emotional, physical, and mental abuse.

People have apparently been willing to put up with it until it was their turn to be humiliated because the experience of spiritual energies routinely available was so intoxicating and rare. Along with such a spiritual gift comes the need for responsibility and humility, neither of which Ms. West possesses or exercises thus the massive abuse of power and taking in of many people.

I declare this statement to be true to the best of my knowledge.

Rebekh Edminster

3/29/04