

Internet Porn and Gambling Promoter Slated as New Leader of Oklevueha Native American Church

May 19, 2016 – Los Angeles, CA – In an enlarging rift between leaders of the Utah-based Oklevueha Native American Church (ONAC), the church's spiritual leader, James "Flaming Eagle" Mooney, has recently slated Howard Mann to lead some or all of the church's business operations. Mann, a Canadian citizen, launched a number of Internet gaming and pornography sites that he eventually combined concepts from to create a gambling website featuring nude dealers and porn stars. After the gaming sites were closed-down, Mann began peddling songs and memorabilia owned by the estate of the late Michael Jackson. Eventually, Jackson's estate sued Mann and, in 2012, a federal court in Los Angeles issued an injunction against the Canadian prohibiting him from continuing to infringe on rights owned by the estate.

Following Mooney's affiliation with Mann, an attorney for ONAC wrote in a resignation letter to the church that Mooney has been taking money from people, promising them church protections and leaving former members charged by authorities without support or representation. Last year, an Oklevueha member in Michigan charged with violating federal drug laws argued that Mooney's church protected him. The federal prosecutor in that case said, "ONAC appears to be little more than a scam designed to provide constitutional protection to drug dealers. To apply for a membership in ONAC, all that is required is the purchase of a membership card for \$200. Once a member of ONAC, the purveyors of ONAC represent that cardholders can legally possess and use controlled substances." The prosecutor also said the true Native American Church has a "strident disassociation" with ONAC and does not recognize ONAC as a chapter. After a federal judge ruled the ONAC defense was not valid, the member pleaded guilty and is now facing between two and three years in federal prison. Earlier this year, in Phoenix, Arizona, another church member relying on Mooney's representations was found guilty by a jury and was immediately imprisoned. The church did not provide that member with an attorney and she represented herself in court.

Strife between various ONAC church leaders has led to growing strain in ONAC's leadership. Whether former ONAC CEO Peter Tran and Shaun McAuslin, one of Mooney's closest allies, remain with the church is uncertain. Mooney is reportedly meeting with Howard Mann and Mann's attorney, Richard Mull, who has been appointed counsel for ONAC, in Los Angeles next week.