

JOHN SMELCER VINDICATED AFTER DEBBIE REESE KILLED OFF HIS FATHER

For nearly a quarter century, every negative article and social media attack against me and my writing has been based solely on a single sentence uttered by my abusive father to a newspaper reporter in 1994 and repeated to Debbie Reese more than a dozen years later: That he is not my father (and therefore I must not be Native). Everything else stems from it. For over a decade, Debbie Reese has reported the statement as if it was an indisputable fact and has relentlessly tried to destroy me based on it. After more than two decades of scurrilous attacks, I finally posted a letter my father wrote in 1987 to the U.S. Army in which he stated unequivocally that he is my father. I also posted my official birth certificate that proves my father is my father.

September 28, 1987

COPY

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

RE: Letter of Recommendation Mr. John E. Smelcer

This letter of recommendation is for my son John who is applying for active duty military service. Although I am his father and may reflect some preference on his behalf the following is a very unbiased recommendation.

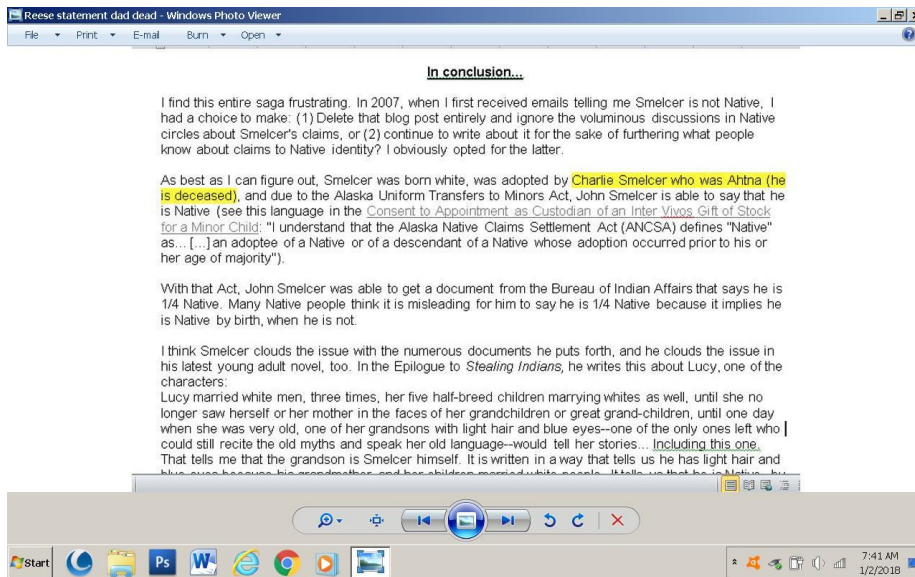
John is certainly one of the most talented individuals that I have known. His professionalism is always at the highest level with his technical and managerial competence absolutely superb. He has the special knack of motivating challenging and developing other personnel to achieve maximum performance in everyone. He performs extremely well under physical and mental stress with always a positive attitude reflecting on his abilities. He is extremely adept in both oral and written communications being clear and concise and understandable. He always displays sound and mature judgment with no hesitation in making rational decisions. He seeks self improvements, is adaptable to change, and sets/enforces high standards at all times. His professional ethics such as dedication, loyalty, integrity and responsibility are absolutely outstanding and above reproach. John continually

1. PLACE OF BIRTH		2. USUAL RESIDENCE OF MOTHER	
a. COUNTY	b. CITY OR TOWN	a. STATE	b. COUNTY
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]	
3. CHILD'S NAME		4. DATE OF BIRTH	
a. (First) John		b. (Last) Smelcer	
5. SEX		6. DATE OF BIRTH	
Male		[REDACTED]	
7. FATHER OF CHILD			
a. (First) Charles			
b. (Middle) Smelcer			
c. (Last) Smelcer			
8. AGE (At time of this birth) 25 YEARS			
9. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) Alaska			
10. USUAL OCCUPATION US Army Officer			
11. MOTHER OF CHILD			
a. (First) Marie			
b. (Middle)			
c. (Last)			
12. AGE (At time of this birth) 17 YEARS			
13. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) Tennessee			
14. CHILDREN PREVIOUSLY BORN TO THIS MOTHER			
[REDACTED]			
15. INFORMANT		16. SIGNATURE	
Mother		[REDACTED]	
17. DATE REC'D BY LOCAL REG. 8-3-63		18. DATE SIGNED 7-26-63	
19. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE		20. DATE ON WHICH GIVEN NAME ADDED BY	
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]	

(Charles Smelcer's 1987 letter to U.S. Army & John Smelcer's birth certificate, redacted to prevent identity theft; note name of father)

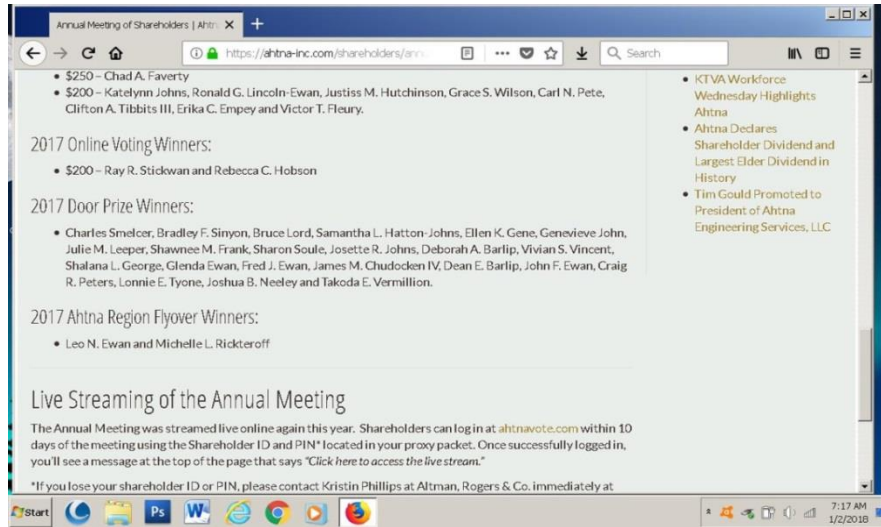
Both documents threatened to undo everything Debbie Reese had ever said or written about me. I imagine that in a panic, Debbie Reese tried to contact my father, leaving a series of desperate phone

messages telling him about the documents and demanding an explanation and that he help her refute them. Sick and tired of Reese harassing him, unable and unwilling to refute the documents, and no longer wishing to perpetuate the tired controversy, my father asked his wife to tell Debbie that he had died so that he'd never again be bothered by her or anyone else. And so, shortly thereafter, on June 9, 2016, **Debbie Reese published an article on her blog in which she pronounced that my father was dead** (see screenshot below taken on January 2, 2018; highlight added).



For eighteen months after Reese published her deceitful article, friends contacted me to ask if I had heard that my father had died. Some even offered their condolences. It surprised me that no one ever searched for an obituary for my father...for there is none. **My father is alive and well.** In fact, he was seen at a salmon fishing charter a year after Reese said he was dead; and he was a door prize winner at our Native Corporation's annual meeting on July 8, 2017, thirteen months after Reese said he was dead! It astonishes me that Reese did not verify my father's death before publishing it as fact, but then she has always been loose with facts when it comes to anything related to me.





(Above: Charles Smelcer 2017 Door Prize Winner, Ahtna, Inc. Annual Meeting, July 8, 2017.

Below: Charles Smelcer in Copper Center, Alaska, June 8, 2017)



In response to me posting my father's letter and my birth certificate, Reese complained in her dishonest article (see above) that she is "frustrated" and that I "cloud the issue by posting such documents"—documents that prove the truth that she has been wrong about me (most people would say evidence clarifies an issue). Because of the untrue things Reese has said about me, I have been unjustly abused by people who have tried to censor my writing, denied me opportunities, shunned and excluded me, sent me hate mail and death threats, questioned my integrity, and mistreated my children, while some organizations have surreptitiously blacklisted my books from even being considered for awards, while others unilaterally rescinded my awards—all because they believed what my father and Debbie Reese said about me. Some misguided individuals who aren't even Native felt compelled to attack me out of a false belief that I had "appropriated" my Native identity. The basis of the controversy has always hinged on the credibility of what my father said about me in 1994 and later repeated to Debbie Reese. No one ever questioned his credibility. But when my father feigned his own death in order to avoid talking to Debbie Reese and to distance himself from the controversy—the controversy *he* created—his veracity must come into doubt, and therefore the veracity of anything he ever said about me is in doubt.

In the following paragraph of Reese's June 2016 article (see above), Debbie Reese outright lies that my character Lucy in my novel *Stealing Indians* is based on my grandmother. In fact, Lucy is based on Lucille B., a full-blood Native woman born in 1911 who was sent to Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon. I interviewed her in her home in 1996. We had to stop the interview several times as she started crying from the recollection. She asked me to tell her story, which I retold faithfully in the novel. The real Lucy died in 2002 at the age of 91. I attended her funeral. (See photo below of Lucille B. taken by the author.) As always, Debbie Reese misrepresents the truth about me and my writing.



One of the most prominent Native writers who perpetuated the injurious stories about me is Sherman Alexie. In a *Seattle Times* article published on February 28, 2018 detailing allegations of years of extramarital affairs and sexual harassment/misconduct by more than twenty women who complained that Sherman abused his power of celebrity to manipulate and lure them into uncomfortable sexual situations, Sherman admitted that "over the years, he has done things to harm other people." It wasn't only women he had been injuring with his fame over the years. Sherman had the audacity to attack my integrity in a small Seattle newspaper only seven months before the revelations of sexual harassment. A week after the *Seattle Times* story, NPR published a story about Sherman after interviewing many of the accusers (see "The Absolutely True Fall of Sherman Alexie" about two-thirds of the way down this webpage).

After a quarter of a century, the controversy is finally over as it has been proven conclusively that my father deceived Debbie Reese, just as he deceived the newspaper reporter in 1994. Nothing Reese says about me or my father can be considered credible. My longtime attacker Sherman Alexie has also lost all credibility. Certainly, Reese's most fanatical followers will not change their opinions of me. I doubt a single individual will apologize for their unkindness, for like "Birthers," some folks are too stubborn to admit they were wrong even in the face of the overwhelming evidence that's been public for years that proved I am Native. I'm counting on the rest of you to see this for what it is—the end of the controversy. (To share this story with others, download the pdf below.)



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