

Transcript of live translation of Tigre's presentation

>> Good afternoon everyone.

Welcome, I just wanted to take a moment to introduce Tigre to our audience. I hope everyone had a good lunch; it's a true pleasure and an honor to introduce you to Ramon Perez, who's known affectionately by many as Tigre. Tigre has been a mentor and teacher to me and many in the community and he is a spiritual leader, zooming in from Saltillo, Mexico today.

He is here to share a little about his journey on the Red Road.

Before we go back to Tigre, I want to let you know that there are two options to listen today.

The toolbar in Zoom there's an interpretation button and you can toggle and listen to him in English or in Spanish, your preference. So, without further ado, I return you back to Tigre, thank you so much.

[Spoken in non-English]

>> Canned chilies, one little piece of chili per person because, we had to sell what we raised in the fields, sometimes you have to sell a cow and able to celebrate in the towns Festival because in the community and the town you always contribute to the town and the people. The only thing that would make me feel strong would be when my great grandmother would embrace me in the afternoons.

That's the way the first stage of my life was, and I consider it very beautiful because I would play with the dogs, I would play with the animals I would bathed in the streams and the rivers in a very wild way.

But it also pained me so much the way we were treated. I was 14 when I realized how my people were living and so I went to work in crafts, and I had to go to a school and go to a city far away and there was a bus and if you took it it was good but if you missed it you would miss your classes. My father returned after some time and he got back together with my mother and I had to scratch his feet and take care of him and make sure that he didn't go to certain people and we had to be very careful that if anyone were to come around to let them know.

I don't really remember that time with my mother very well, so in school they would say, I would say that my great grandmother and great grandfather were my parents. They said you will be a priest, you will become a priest in the church and, they started by taking away your mother tongue now what or not let you speak it.

I started to feel at 14 years old, I may contact with alcohol and I stop believing in God and it was better for me not to believe in anyone and they spoke about the devil and they would say which trees the devil would appear in and I went to that place I went to that place and I remember that I left frightened and the seeds of the Amada tree and I ran away. I was afraid of things and at times I would think that I wanted to be Superman like those that they tell about in history and in culture.

At that time the people who I most admired were those who talk about the Mexican Revolution, the Chiefs, the soldiers in the town where I lived there were towers that had been blown up by the canons with the federal troops fighting and so we were very full of history. My great-grandfather told me how they would hide in the church during the times of the revolution, during the basement of the church, when they would filled the streets with corn so the Revolutionary are passed by and it was the fantasy that kind of made me get out of what we were living at the reality, my great-grandfather my brother and myself.

>> When I was 14 are stopped believing in all of that and I started to search for a vision I started to look at the mountains and think the there is something more beyond the mountains. So, for 10 years I was lost in alcohol and drugs.

I traveled to Mexico City, the big city. When I was 17 years old I joined the Air Force, the Army, I enlisted I was just thinking, in finding my father at some point, I thought about dying and the mission of the armies.

And what I was earning was what I was dedicating it to and the missions that we had with the military service in the exercises, well we would fill up with marijuana, so, we were just thinking about drinking and drugging.

And there, I also ended up going to prison so I wasn't thinking I would live for very long I would only live for whatever time and I would see that more brothers and sisters from other nations in Mexico were coming and they would make fun of them because of indigenous languages . Nevertheless we realized that all those that were making fun of us were all indigenous people though, the majority of us. So, once we were drunk we would understand each other, we understood each other and we would support each other.

>> I finished my Air Force service and I realized one day that each mission that we did into the mountains, we had in order to shoot at whatever moved and I realize that we were shooting at the people, at our own people. I heard a song and it touched my heart.

I wanted to get to know piece. I returned to my village but, I realize that there were more than 50 warriors defending the people, the village.

There was no electricity in the village, we put in electricity. I was an artisan and I started to teach arts and crafts, but there was something that I just couldn't escape still, that was alcohol and drugs.

And, once again, I went back to prison very soon after that. At that point I had already contacted my paternal mother, my paternal great-grandmother had passed away at that point, so, I made contact with my grandmother who was a medicine woman, recognized by the state of Guerrero and at one time we were fleeing because the federal soldiers were chasing us because of what we were doing. I said grandmother to give me something to not be afraid when she took out a drink that she had prepared with the tooth of a rattlesnake and Anson the scorpion claw and various animals that had spines and we drank it, my friends and myself and basically we lost our fear, but I know that it was also the alcohol, there was also alcohol in it, so at any moment I knew that I could lose my life as well as those who were accompanying me, my friends.

In a goalie, my friends and myself became separated and the Air Force came back I went back to the Air Force but I was still not finding any piece, so, I couldn't go to school any longer either and I went back home, but I didn't know my mother and we didn't get along very well because we didn't know each other and I said mother I'd like to have you stop working and she told me, what you earn is for yourself, invest it in your future. I can still work.

But, I realized that she was getting more and more white hair and she told me you have three paths, my son.

The jail, the hospital or the cemetery. I did not listen to that. So, every time I went to jail, I didn't want her to find out . I knew she would feel bad if she found out, so the last time that I was in prison it was just to forget everything, I couldn't even remember what they were accusing me of but it turned out it was intentioned for killing someone and I don't remember I just remember he was talking a lot about how he was the coyote and how he crossed people over the border and what abuse women.

That's the only thing that I remember. So every time I would beat up police and then people would applaud me but at that time it was a more serious crime.

So they had me in water in that cell, it was raining and each drop the drops would fall from above and they would build up said you couldn't sleep. So I started to go through DTs and they would beat me, and then I fell into a dream or a vision, I'm not sure where it was I was carrying my small child I was holding his legs and I remember how he was yelling . And, at that time, I had a wife and she would say to me that she wanted me to change that she was hoping that I would change, but really I was not able to stop because I don't know how many people we had killed, how many people ended up badly because of the encounters we've had in the military, so I myself I didn't forgive myself.

When they give you your sentence I said okay that's okay I will pay and I thought about escaping.

Then one night it was a full moon and the man was in for a rate and he was praying and I told him, accept it, pay for what you did and then he was looking at me, and I look out and I saw the moon and it was a full moon and I asked for help.

And I said, creator, if you exist, give me an answer, if you give it to me I will follow you, I will do whatever you want me to and accepted that there was a creator but I knew that he was Indian because there were other things that had been imposed that were taught to me, I went to bed, I slept like I never had before I woke up completely renewed, but I had a dream. I saw city I don't know if they were buildings or mountains but they were silvery and beautiful, everything all white, but, there was a line of trees that were very green with red fruits, then on the same day, in the prison there were a number of people that came and spoke with me, there were Catholic people that came and I said, I have clothing, have food and I said to them it's not possible that a person such as myself has committed these and you come in with food and clothing.

And Alcoholics Anonymous someone came in the AA in the man showed a ring, a golden ring, wedding ring and so that was completely not in my life plans and then I thought he looked pretty kind of selfish, there were several of them that all came in one day in the last group that came in that they didn't want to change my life, they just got into a circle. They took me by the hand and they said we are going to pray. I discovered that being in a circle, making prayers lowers the powers so my sister paid some money for me to escape but I went out to the big door, and so instead of living the city I went to seek out AA and NA a group Alcoholics Anonymous and that I came to the group and already gone through the DTs and hallucinations and visual hallucinations and sometimes without even using drugs or alcohol I would see how people would lose their flesh and I would look at their eyes and say yes, these are powers and sometimes I would feel that I was being followed.

I would turn around and I would just see a poll and I would get home and I would hear steps at the doorway and I would go out armed, but it was nothing and there was no one there, so I made contact with the creator and Alcoholics Anonymous, with the catharsis.

He started to show me the path to life and also their men cook, but for me cooking was for women. And I said well I can sweep and mop, I can cut trees, whatever but not the kitchen because I'm a soldier and I have on and they said okay so you will spend two weeks in the kitchen. So I found my father in Alcoholics Anonymous. It was a place where I was invited it because despite everything I love my people in my village because it was negative with authorities and people who were suppressing the people. So, one had been there for a year I told my godfather, godfather others just two of us here in the differences that you don't have children, and I have two children.

I didn't even know my second daughter, a few days before I begin my trip and I wanted to see them. My godfather said to me, go, go for your family.

We had a very elegant party and if you had come you would think that people had never gone to the path and so I was raising my children and I would ask myself if I was dignified enough or honorable enough to carry them.

>> So, I went home, I went to my wife's home and for a year she had in working washing clothes, ironing clothes in order to have food and bring food home and, I asked her, do you truly love me?

She said, yes, I've been waiting for you and your children are waiting for you.

So, we go to sleep and eat the tree and, we slept under that tree and I started to build a small house and bring together the artwork that I did, and meetings and the house.

And I was also known as emotional artist and so they said go back to the gym and teach people good things and that's how it started.

I started to pay with my service, the last two years of my sentence that I was going to do that for the people instead of in jail, my people, people who the majority of them had turned their back on me, but then they said I taught them how to assault people and plant marijuana but now I was against all that but others did come to see what was happening with me and at that time I did not talk about what went

on to in the group because we were more anonymous . He would only say, come to see what is going on.

And I changed, it changed their lives.

I had a vision about tattooing and tattooing in Mexico was illegal at that time.

So, I'm an indigenous person envisions would come to me but I didn't know what was happening.

I had an uncle that used to tattoo and I decided to seek that vision and immediately my mother said, son, you can't live from that but I had been living in peace.

So, it had some fights with some old enemies but with good behavior I could see that the families were using things, so, I came to ceremony and now I work ceremony, that's what I do now, so, I made contact with the North and they said search for your roots and we are involved in activism and I've been struggling for the brothers and sisters were the mighty companies are trying to come into Mexico and we are united with the number of tries - tribes and we work with people and addictions and people who are wanting to commit suicide, young people, so, California made me part of a plan, the bear clan and the Lakota family made me a chief in that tradition . It's a very short time to talk about my life and we hope that people who listen are truly, well will understand I was born in the mountains and my blood runs, it's the indigenous is in my blood and now my children.

And I think they are now proud of that and having good times now. So we also talk in the sweat lodge.

We practice the vision quest, we practice the Sundance. We support the piece and dignity journeys and I live up in the mountains. Now we have a big forest fire that is killing our deer, bear, Eagles call those living in the mountain and we are there we are in prayer and in service and we share, we share with other tribes throughout the entire continent . So, thank you all my relations.

>> Thank you, Tigre, for a riveting and heartfelt talk, very moving.

I know many of us will be drinking that in over the next few hours and I'm grateful that you could come on and share your story with us today.