

Tim
McGRAW.

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Wilma P. Mankiller
Cherokee Nation
P.O. Box 946
Tahlequah, OK 74465

Dear Chief Mankiller,

I was deeply distressed by your letter and I felt it necessary to respond personally and immediately. I was born in a small Louisiana town which was the crossroads of many cultures and I was raised to understand and appreciate the strengths that each brought to our community. I have always been proud of my own grandmother's Cherokee heritage. In fact I insisted that my record producer include the bridge from Paul Revere and the Raider's 1972 song "The Lament of the Cherokee Reservation" in his arrangement of "Indian Outlaw" as a tribute not only to my grandmother, but also to the great Cherokee Nation.

I am saddened to hear that a strict interpretation of the song has offended you so deeply. I have taken great satisfaction during recent concerts, watching as many Native Americans were among the first to shout their approval as we began "Indian Outlaw". The overwhelming approval from Native American fans - both in the form of fan mail and concert response - causes me to question your statements about bigotry.

In response to my "appropriation of the Indian culture", I want you to know that I do not dress in Indian costume nor do I use artifacts or props of any kind during my performance of the song. In fact, the video we shot to accompany this song makes no reference to Native American culture at all and features my riding a vintage motorcycle through the streets of Los Angeles.

Last night while in Tulsa I had an opportunity to sit with Jo Kay Dowell and listen to her concerns (see article attached). I also had the opportunity of talking to many Native American fans who, regardless of the protest, purchased tickets to the show and stopped later to express their support of "Indian Outlaw". I feel it would be a dishonor for me to turn my back on the many Native Americans who have said they proudly adopt this song.