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Blame Game: Nebraska Gov. Tells Oglala Whiteclay Their Problem, Not His

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Oglala Sioux Tribal President Bryan Brewer met with Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman on July 8 hoping to discuss issues surrounding the town of Whiteclay, Nebraska. The town, which is made up of alcohol selling establishments only, sits on the border of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and sells millions of dollars of alcohol to tribal members annually.

Brewer says he was treated disrespectfully by Heineman who refused to shake his hand or take a picture with him. After an approximate three minute heated discussion, Brewer walked out. Brewer says Heineman was likely upset because the meeting meant to be kept private, was leaked to the local press.

“The governor was the one that asked for a secret meeting and then he turned around and told the press that I was the one who asked. Why would I ask for a secret meeting? I would want everyone to know that I was going to meet with him. He was the one who said it had to be secret,” Brewer said.

Brewer says to meet with the Governor, he went through the Indian Commissioner and was told the press was not to be informed, no press releases were allowed and that only he could attend the meeting.

“But somehow it got out, says Brewer.

According to Brewer, the morning of his meeting with Heineman a press release from Alcohol Justice stating campaign donations the governor has received from the alcohol industry was in circulation and when Brewer arrived, the governor was upset about an [article printed from the release](#).

In the article by PR Newswire, a description of the meeting was addressed as well as the claim that activist’s claimed that “Beer, liquor and wine companies have contributed \$96,000 to Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman. Making the alcohol industry one of his top contributors.”

“When I went to the meeting, the governor had everyone with him. He was upset. People asked if they could have a photo opportunity of me and the governor and the governor said absolutely not. He wouldn’t shake my hand. He wouldn’t sit down with me and he threw the article down on the table,” he said.

“I just wanted to talk about Whiteclay because he has been a governor for a number of years and I wanted to find out what he has done in the past and what worked and what didn’t work. I had some proposals I want to share with him but he wouldn’t listen to anything.”

“He told me, ‘Whiteclay was my problem not his,’ said Brewer. “He was pointing at me, and I think we were pointing at each other for a minute there, finally I just walked out because it wasn’t going anywhere. It was just getting worse and worse.”

Though Brewer said nothing was accomplished in the meeting, there was some good news about Whiteclay.

“There is one distributor that will no longer go to Whiteclay,” said Brewer. Citing the distributor will now only be delivering as far as Rushville, a town 20 miles south of Whiteclay. Brewer also said store owners said they would just drive to Rushville but he questioned if such a move would be legal.

According to an article in the Rapid City Journal, Jeff Scheinost, the owner of High Plains Budweiser in Scottsbluff, has decided to stop delivering to Whiteclay, due to repeated incidents, marches and road blockades.

“That is a small victory right there,” said Brewer.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/07/12/blame-game-nebraska-gov-tells-ogjala-whiteclay-their-problem-not-his-150390>