December 7, 1982: The United States government rested its case. The United States Marshals Service refused to obey presiding Federal Judge Donald O'Brien's order to deliver subpoenas and pay witness fees for the defense, despite the fact that the government had paid travel and expense costs for government witnesses against the Camp. O'Brien adjourned the trial until the government appeals his ruling to the United States 8th Circuit Court. Yellow Thunder Camp still awaits presentation of its case.

March 17, 1983: The Catch the Bear trial began. The State's two main witnesses proved to be of questionable character and background. In addition, Pennington County Attorney General Rod Lefholz unethically prejudiced the jury. As a result, Judge Roland Grosshans threw the case out of court and dismissed the murder charges against Catch the Bear because of "gross prejudice and negligence" on the part of State's Attorney Lefholz.

July 22-25, 1983: Assistant United States Attorney Reed Rasmussen illegally entered the Camp's first sacred Sun Dance and accused noted AIM members Russell and Ted Means of three separate violations:

1. Damaging the National Features of the United States of America (cutting green timber without a United States Forest Service permit; digging and failing to "rehabilitate" several fire pits);

2. Participation in a Public Meeting Without a Permit, to wit: a Sun Dance; and

3. Failure to Remove a Cardboard Trash Box (from the grounds used for the Sun Dance).

The Sun Dance is the most sacred Lakota ceremony, and these charges are, according to Camp attorney Bruce Ellison, "clearly an effort by the government to interfere with religious practices at the Camp." In addition, these actions are in violation of an October 5, 1981, stipulation approved by United States District Judge Donald O'Brien which prevents the federal government from "engaging in forcible physical action...to terminate" the Camp.

August 9, 1983: Attorney General Rod Lefholz publicly stated he was "watching" Yellow Thunder because he felt two escaped work release inmates might head towards the Camp.

August 10, 1983: During a press conference held at Yellow Thunder Camp, spokesperson Russell Means stated that by implying the Camp is "a haven for escaped convicts, Lefholz is guilty of the lowest, most racist types of attacks on the legitimacy of Yellow Thunder Camp."

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Yellow Thunder Camp is now in its eleventh season of existence and remains a religious and cultural resource area for American Indian people and their non-Indian allies. The people at Camp are living, day-to-day proof that Indians and non-Indians can live, worship, work and play together within a traditional Indian cultural setting. The Camp has the support of many individuals and organizations in the Rapid City area, across the nation and in many foreign countries. 50 members of the United States House of Representatives supported a bill introduced in Congress in 1982 to set aside the 800 acres for 10 years to be used as a cultural and spiritual resource area. Some other supporters are: Black Hills Sioux Nation Council, American Friends Service Committee, Pennington County Democratic Forum, South Dakota Board of Church and Society of the South Dakota United Methodist Church, Greenpeace, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, five different Sioux tribes and many more religious and social service organizations.

Due to Forest Service regulations, the Camp is not permitted to build permanent structures. This, coupled with the continuing efforts by the United States government to discredit and terminate Yellow Thunder Camp, makes the goal of self-sufficiency rather difficult to achieve.

In view of its mounting legal debts, the Camp must still rely on public donations. If you are able to make a contribution at this time, please send your check or money order to:

YELLOW THUNDER CAMP - LAKOTA NATION
via P.O. Box 9188
Rapid City, South Dakota 57709

Please remember we now have two court battles against us. The cost of freedom and self-sufficiency continues to rise in this United States government sponsored absurdity and insult to the common decency of every human being.