

PRESENTING THE TRUTH

Correcting the inaccuracies and falsehoods of Valgard Murray's Deposition

The Odinic Rite (OR.) has been asked to study a deposition made by one Micheal Murray aka Valgard Murray in his role as a paid witness for the State of Ohio Corrections Dept. against Asatru/Odinist convicts. Michael Murray is the head of an Asatru organization or church called the Asatru Alliance (AA). On studying it we found it contained so many inaccuracies and falsehoods, many directly concerning the Odinic Rite, it was felt in the interests of truth and clarity the actual facts should be presented. The Odinic Rite is the oldest established Odinist/Asatru organization or church in existence in North America today, having been in continual active existence since 1973. I am Heimgest and I serve the Odinic Rite as the Director of the Court of Gothar, the Court of Gothar being the governing body of the Odinic Rite. As such it was felt that I should present this statement which corrects the falsehoods and inaccuracies which are numerous in Mr Murray's deposition. Before proceeding with a detailed look and correction of Mr Murray's deposition, it would be useful to just take time for a brief preamble:

It should be noted that there are so many inaccuracies and contentious points that some of them will not be dealt with as there are just too many and this statement would have to be a booklet. However it will focus on the more obvious ones. Also, his obvious contempt for convicts will not be dealt with in any great detail as it is already made very clear in his deposition. Nor in fact would the contempt he expresses appear to be an inaccurate account of his feelings as he has verbally stated before witnesses at an Asatru/Odinist gathering, words to the effect that he thinks prison outreach is a waste of time and the convicts are a waste of time and energy.

On studying the deposition made by Mr Murray it has been found to be incredibly inaccurate, to a degree which renders it as largely false. The inaccuracies fall into four main categories:

- 1) Totally inaccurate information given concerning other organizations, dates etc.
- 2) Complete untruths.
- 3) Presenting his personal opinion as accepted by Asatruar/Odinists in general.
- 4) Totally unsubstantiated statements and hearsay which cannot have any legal authority.

Many of Mr Murray's statements are also extremely ambiguous and this also needs to be addressed for the sake of clarity.

It should be *very clearly* understood that any titles Murray uses, or any authority he claims, relates only to the Asatru Alliance. For example Mr Murray gives the impression in his deposition that his designation as an Allsherjargodi is accepted by all Asatru/Odinists when in fact this is only recognized as having any validity within his own group, or church, which is the Asatru Alliance. . He does not represent any other organizations views but that of the AA , he does not speak in any way for the practices of any other organization but the Asatru Alliance, in short he has no legitimacy outside of his own organization which is the Asatru Alliance. In fact, at one point in the late 1990s until 2002, Mr Murray, who was by then using the title Allsherjargodi in reference to his position in his group, the AA, applied to join the Odinic Rite as an Apprentice of the OR. This clearly indicates that his Allsherjargodi title only relates to the AA and he himself recognized this as he accepted the title of Apprentice with us. *¹.

He further shows extreme ignorance both of the practices and beliefs of other Odinist/Asatru organizations and even interpretation of the religious texts to a degree which is surprising to many other Odinists/Asatruar. This alone would render his designation by the authorities as an expert, highly suspect to say the least, and that is without his other errors.

It is also pertinent to quote By Law 5 of the Asatru Alliance as displayed on their web site. This states:

The Alliance does not espouse a priest class. Each Kindred is free to determine its own spiritual and tribal needs.

That would clearly indicate that unless these Kindreds surrender their own right to determining their spiritual needs, even with his title of Allsherjargodi he really has no jurisdiction over how even Kindreds of his *own* church practice.

Now as Mr Murray has, for reasons best known to himself, chosen to lie about the Odinic Rite and me personally, it would be easy to feel the need to respond with similar personally motivated hostility. However, we the Odinic Rite, feel that this shameful document of his has already caused more than enough harm to our religion and indulging in personal attacks would not help matters. All of us can also learn a great lesson from this, for clearly Mr Murray has allowed the Fenris Wolf to consume him (see 'May Loki Be Bound' on the Odinic Rite web site www.odinic-rite.org) and it is another lesson of how dangerous a foe Fenris is.

I shall now detail the most pertinent inaccuracies and give either the reason they are inaccurate, or at best open to massive speculation and doubt, and in instances where they deal with facts which he has not been truthful on, shall give the truth of the matter. Where documentation is referred to, at times it will be reproduced within this testimony at others the source will be listed. As stated, so numerous are the inaccuracies and instances where he presents what are purely his own opinions as being held by most of the Odinist/Asatru community when in fact they are not, that I will not cover every single one and I will also not deal greatly with the numerous contradictions he makes even within his testimony.

Interestingly, in the face of criticism and condemnation of his deposition, Mr Murray has issued an explanation of why he made this deposition and while we will not even bother dealing with that in any great detail as it is tediously predictable and again inaccurate there is one interesting piece which would indicate he either says whatever he thinks those listening or reading want to hear, or else at the time of his deposition deliberately lied about his beliefs for some reasons which we can only speculate on at present. 2** .

As early as page 7 Mr Murray gives the impression that he can speak as an expert witness and with authority on Asatru when asked what the essence of a previous testimony was Mr Murray replies

Page 7 Lines 2 - 4

“ Basically the same thing that I had done here previously in Ohio, was explain my credentials as an expert witness on Asatru”

The fact is, that he really has no authority to speak for any but his own church The Asatru Alliance. While some individuals not in that church and some organizations *may* consider him an expert, others most definitely do not. But in no way does he have carte blanche to presume to speak for Asatruar or Odinists in general and certainly not for other organizations or “churches”

On pages 9 and 10, Mr Murray answers questions as to when he was retained to testify for the state against convicts in this case. He gives the date he was retained as being sometime in August of 2007. However on page 11 he states this he was asked in July if he would testify in this case. At the time he was helping the Ohio Department of Corrections with yet another case. It is worth noting that rumors

that he would be testifying for the state against prisoners had first circulated in February of 2007. When asked about this he strenuously denied it. It does raise the doubt, if the knowledge that Mr Murray would be a states witness was known widely in the Odinist/Asatru community in February, and if he *genuinely* had no knowledge of that (and we can only speculate if he *really* didn't know), it certainly reinforces the fact that he knows *very little* about the Odinist/Asatru community outside the Asatru Alliance. This is hardly the qualification of an expert witness.

Page 11 line 21

Mr Murray first mentions the Runic Era calendar he brought as part of his documents in preparation for his testimony. The calendar is mentioned again at various places.

Page 14 line 2

Mr Murray is asked “ *Did you prepare this yourself*” (meaning the calendar) to which he responds : “*Yes. My name is at the bottom*”

Now there is ambiguity here as to whether he is stating that he prepared the entire calendar including the Runic Era dating system, or just the Feast Days and Days of Observance as applicable to the Asatru Alliance.

So to clear any confusion it should be known that the Runic Era dating system was formulated and presented to the Odinist/Asatru world by the Odinic Rite in 1973 common era where it had been formulated by the founding members of the Odinic Rite, principally John Gibbs-Bailey whose Odinist name was Hoskuld and John Yeowell whose Odinist name was Stubba. The Runic Era was accepted by many other Odinists/Asatruar across the globe, but not all. For example Else Christensen the real pioneer of Odinist prison outreach used a different calendar and some groups based in Germany use a dating system based on the battle of Teutoberg Wald. However it is true to say in North America the most common system used is the Runic Era system which was formulated by Odinic Rite members. So at the most, Mr Murray is only responsible for preparing the Feast Days and Days of Observance dates that are only applicable as mandatory to the Asatru Alliance. Different organizations have different festivals and ritual days etc. Some may be common, for example the Solstices etc but some are different, so it should be clearly understood this calendar he produced in support of his testimony uses a dating system formulated by the Odinic Rite but dates formulated by Asatru Alliance members It is not a calendar which is applicable to any but AA members.

Page 14 Lines 14 - 16

Mr Murray is asked to explain what something that has been marked on Exhibit 2 is. He responds “ *Its a list of my responsibilities as Allsherjargodi of the Asatru Alliance*”

That is very important to remember, Allsherjargodi of the Asatru Alliance, no one else but the Asatru Alliance. In point of fact that term isn't even used by most of the larger Odinist/organizations. However clearly even Mr Murray admits here that it only relates to the Asatru Alliance.

Page 14 Lines 23 and 24 and the start of Page 15,

Mr Murray continues to define the term Alsherjargodi and states it means “*Everymans Gothi or First among equals*” He goes on to say this title of office *was first manifested during the Gothar Republic of Iceland and continues today among the Asatru of Iceland, Germany and Vinland*”

What would be accurate to say is that it is used by *some* Asatru/Odinists today but by no means all. This would also seem to be in direct contradiction to the Asatru Alliances own by laws as by law 5 states “*The Alliance does not espouse a priest class. Each kindred is free to determine its own spiritual*

and tribal needs” It seems strange that an organization which has that as a by law, would then accept a Priest as first among equals or priest for them all (everymans priest). However, how they operate is their own concern, the important thing to be remembered is that his role, authority and title do not extend beyond the limitations of the Asatru Alliance.

Pages 18 and 19

There are questions and answers concerning the frequency of blot Murray states :

“ Yes. I believe that Mr Blankenship has declared a belief that he has to offer Blot often, like almost daily, to his gods.”

Mr Murray expresses his belief that giving daily honour to the Gods is not right and he uses stanza 145 of the Havamal to base his claim on. Mr Murray indicates that he feels daily religious observance would annoy the Gods.

Now this may be Mr Murray's sincere belief but it is a belief *utterly rejected* by many Odinsts/Asatru and we believe his interpretation of that stanza to be faulty. The Odinic Rite, which is the oldest continually active Odinst/Asatru organization active in North America today, encourage all its members to practice *daily religious observations*. In fact it is *mandatory* for some ranks of members to do so. So the view expressed by Mr Murray is *only* his opinion and absolutely does not represent Asatruars/Odinsts per se. In fact it is tolerably certain the vast majority would be appalled at his idea that daily worship would annoy the gods, it seems totally bizarre to us.

There is discussion again concerning the Asatru Alliance Runic Era calender. He is asked if he is aware of any other practitioners of Asatru who create calendars?

Page 20 line 2 He replies:

“Not in this format ,no”

Now it is unclear if he is saying that no one else produces a calender, or no one else produces one which lists the feast dates etc as the Alliance do. We have already seen that the Runic Era was formulated by member of the Odinic Rite, so if he is attempting to claim he created the Runic Era system or that no one else produces a calender , then that is a complete falsehood. But if he is referring only to the Asatru Alliance calender, then of course he is correct, only the AA follow the dates for feast etc exactly as set down in their calender Again this emphasizes he only has legitimacy to speak on the practices of the AA and not anyone else.

Page 20

He is asked: *“Is it possible that if there were another calendar created it would have different days?”*

He replies: *“ Thats possible”*. Murray knows full well that there are other calendars produced by other organizations that list the days they hold celebration etc. He knows this full well as in the past the Odinic Rite have given him such calendars. Each year since 1973 ce the OR has produced its own calender, 15 years before the Asatru Alliance even existed.

Page 22.

Mr Murray again answers questions relating to the number of holy days in a year. The plaintiffs in this case believed there were 63, Murray believes there are fewer holy days and states that there are 12. That again he backs up by relating it to the calender of the Asatru Alliance, and if that is the belief of him and the AA, then we do not in any way say that is wrong for them. But again it is not something which is necessarily accepted by anyone else. For example the Odinic Rite in our calender for 2007ce. has 57 listed

The frequency of blot and other observances is discussed for several pages and Mr Murray is only giving his opinions or the practice of the AA in this, while he has the right to his own opinions and

practice to present them as some kind of standard is totally inaccurate.

This is highlighted on PAGE 28 where we learn that Mr Murray only gives honour to Tyr once a year and sees no significance it seems in the fact that Tuesday is named in honour of Tyr. Again this is merely Mr Murray's own opinion and practice . For Mr Murray the fact that the days of the week are named in honour of our gods and goddesses doesn't have any significance. For many Odinists that is viewed with surprise.

Many practitioners of the Odinist/Asatru faith would find that honoring Tyr only once a year to be neglectful, and to see no significance in days named in honour of our deities peculiar. I have never met another practicing Odinist who takes this view, but again, Mr Murray has every right to hold the view he does, and worship Tyr as infrequently as he does. What he doesn't have any right to do is try to pretend that his own personal whims are taken as a standard across the entire Odinist/Asatru community **as they most certainly are not**. This subject of when worship is given and if the days named after the gods hold any significance continues and Mr Murray does state on

PAGE 31

when asked

“Do you know of other practitioners of Asatru who worship their patron deity on the day which is named after that particular god or goddess”

He responds

“I personally do not”

Now in most questions relating to worship, either its practice or frequency, his answers only reflect his own view yet he attempts to present them as being general practice which they most certainly aren't. Only here does he actually acknowledge that he doesn't know any *personally* , but this in no way means others don't, because some most definitely do, and as previously pointed out, the Odinic Rite encourage all members to conduct daily worship and some levels of membership make such mandatory. Again it also demonstrates that Mr Murray's knowledge of practice beyond his own organization is woefully limited, in fact to the point it renders the idea that he is an expert on the practice of Asatru/Odinism in general, without justification. One might hope Mr Murray has stopped presenting his own view as being a fact, but that hope is dashed very quickly when he reverts again to portraying what are purely his own ideas as being somehow the only way, and of course that is not correct.

Page 31 line 8

He is asked *“ Is it fair to say, though , that different followers of Asatru would worship a different god or goddess or their patron deity on a certain day of the week?”*

Murray responds *“ The days of the week are not relevant. Its the days of the month thats relevant”*

Now this again is *purely* Mr Murray's view and it seems bizarre to us .Pretty obviously the days are named in honour of the gods ,so to many, it is clear that they are indeed significant. This does not mean certain days of the month don't also have special significance, but to suggest a day actually named after a deity has no special significance concerning that deity is obviously not true and it is odd that someone would not realize this.

Page 32

In a question relating to daily Sunna rites,Mr Murray states

“ I know of no one that practices Sunna rites daily except Mr Blankenship” Now presuming Mr Murray is telling the truth, that would really indicate he knows very little about practitioners of the faith outside of the Asatru Alliance membership, because I know many people who practice these and other rites daily. The Odinic Rite for example have included in the *Book of Blotar of the Odinic Rite* details of rituals which are encouraged to be practiced daily. This book of Odinist/Asatru rites is the most widely read book on the subject by those within the Odinist/Asatru community. So it is not credible

that Mr Murray doesn't know that there are many who practice this daily, or else he really has next to know knowledge of practice outside his own very limited sphere.

Pages 48 and 49

Mr Murray is asked to read from a copy of the Asatru Alliances calender, which he himself wrote. In this he clearly states that High Feast Days are also *days of rest and no work is to be performed*. There is no ambiguity in the statement. Yet Murray himself has apparently never even observed the religious observances of the organization he heads, the very observances he himself laid down. Despite being confronted with his own words on the matter of days of rest, he shrugs the clear statement off as not being mandatory after all. Once again his credibility is deeply suspect for if he doesn't even follow the practices he set down for members of his own organization, how can he be questioned as to the sincerity of those who actually do?

We now come to a section of his deposition where he speaks about the Odinic Rite, myself and the IAOA.(International Asatru/Odinist Alliance).

Mr Murray's false statements about the IAOA, the Odinic Rite and me personally are so numerous and so untrue, that rather than detail which page and line he makes these false claims, it will be better for you to read a copy of his false words in his deposition and then refer to what I say next as I give a truthful account of things. We will start here by just summing up what Mr Murray's false account of things was.

Basically he has it thus:

He first encountered the Odinic Rite when the IAOA was in existence and both the AA and the OR were members of this confederation. He gives the time frame as being from 1990 until 1994.

That is false. The first contact he had with the Odinic Rite and me personally was in 1988 shortly after the formation of his group the Asatru Alliance. The Odinic Rite wrote to him, enclosed some literature and offered our comradeship and support. As an older and more established organization we felt it was right to offer this kinship to those we thought (then) were true Odinists/Asatruar and we wanted to help a fledgling organization

He continues that the IAOA was dissolved (in 1994) because the Odinic Rite had been subject to a hostile take over by me and he didn't agree with this. Rather comically he also admits that this alleged hostile takeover was accomplished by me being *elected* to the post of leadership and that this election was not hostile. Despite his glaring contradiction he does continue to try and battle on with this lie that I somehow took over the OR in a hostile manner which he personally objected to (as if our affairs are in his business anyway, though of course his version of our business is wholly fictional). He has it that the OR was based in England and in the eighties I was elected as the OR's spiritual leader. He then says eventually there was a chapter of the OR built in the US and Canada which was known as the Odinic Rite Vinland. He continues with his tale by claiming that in approximately 1994 I moved to Canada and dismantled the ORV in a manner he didn't consider correct so they voted to dissolve the IAOA because of this. He also claims that how this was achieved was by me driving off members so that I could achieve control. A fine bit of fiction with an evil European taking control of the OR in Europe and then flying over and taking control of the OR section here.

Well once again, and predictably I suppose, **he is telling lies.**

Here are the real facts.

The Odinic Rite was not founded in the 1980's, it was founded in 1973 by individuals who had practiced Odinism for years prior to that, some going back to the 1930's. It is not based in England, it was founded in England but is not based there. It has various "offices" and

distribution centers throughout North America and Europe.

The Odinic Rite is NOT composed of lots of little autonomous units who share only a common name as is the case with the Asatru Alliance. The Odinic Rite is and ALWAYS has been a single organization which follows the same discipline and regulations no matter where in the world its operations are based. Let us make that very clear, The Odinic Rite is a single body. Now the next thing to be absolutely clear on, the executive body of this organization is the Court of Gothar (CG). The CG is the governing council and the entire Odinic Rite come under its executive decisions. In some countries, we have set up national branches, such as Odinic Rite France, Odinic Rite Holland, Odinic Rite Vinland and so forth. In no way at all are these units autonomous, these national designations are basically administrative terms. Areas where we have distribution points, offices etc. BUT in no way are they separate organizations or churches to use Mr Murray's term, in no way are they independent entities and they are under the guidance and leadership of the Court of Gothar. Its pretty simple for most people, one organization and one governing council. Now I was elected to the position of Director of the Court of Gothar (DCG) in April 1989 after serving the OR in various capacities prior to that. As DCG I could be considered to be the steersman of the Odinic Rite, or its leader. This was, as even Mr Murray admits, a post I was *elected* to (unanimously I might add) with no sign of hostility. There is only one DCG so I was and still am, steersman for the entire OR where ever it may be. A member was appointed to act as the day to day admin manager for the OR in North America, but this member had *no* executive authority at all as is made clear in the following announcement actually made by the member concerned shortly after the decision to create an *administrative* unit called OR Vinland. The entire statement can be accessed at the following web address www.irminsul.org/arc/199705b.html but I repeat the most pertinent part of it here:

*“For those who are confused about the connection between the Odinic Rite Vinland and the Odinic Rite (BCM Runic London WCIN 3XX UK) it is best explained as follows:
The OR(V) is a fully authorized section of the Odinic Rite and recognizes the Court of Gothar and its Director, Heimgest, as the supreme governing authority for administering the discipline and all other matters whatever pertaining to the Odinic Rite”*

You can see it is totally clear, and we can only conclude that Mr Murray has chosen to deliberately lie on this matter or else has some mental impairment which makes the understanding of such a patently clear statement beyond his capacity.

It is utterly ludicrous for Mr Murray to state that on arrival in Canada I took over the OR unit in Vinland, how on earth can you take over something you already lead? Of course you cant and only a fool would suggest you could. As a point of interest I didn't relocate to Canada until December 20th 1997. Far from the Odinic Rite Vinland being dismantled, it has in fact become an exceptionally vibrant and progressive section of the Odinic Rite today. He refers to people being driven off by me? Again utter nonsense, there were internal problems where officers appointed to carry out OR policy were failing to do so and they were relieved of their posts and replaced. That is of course a purely OR matter and it is incredible hubris that Mr Murray feels he can stick his beak into others organizations affairs, and incredibly hypocritical since the history of his own organization is littered with his ditching people he personally didn't like, maybe he was judging us by his own standard, in which case that is another error of his. It is apparent how utterly false his claims are. Not only are they lies in their content, he is also so wildly wrong with the dates, that we can only wonder if he was really aware of what was happening?

As already seen, he has claimed his contact with us was from 1990 to 1994. We have seen how that claim is false as he was in contact with us from 1988. He claims his only contact with us revolved around the formation of the IAOA. Again that is false. In fact the IAOA was not even founded until 1997, three years after he claims it was dissolved. 1997 was the year I moved to Canada and was the year I attended the Althing in Utah where the IAOA came into being. The IAOA was actually dissolved in 2002 and the reasons for its dissolution are very different from what Mr Murray says. Following now is a reproduction of the actual announcement of the dissolution. It is also worth noting that at this time the IAOA comprised the OR, the AA, AFA and AET. The dissolution was carried out by just the AA and AFA so in fact 50% of the members didn't endorse this and according to the laws of the IAOA as set down and agreed upon at its foundation in 1997, all decisions had to be unanimous, so actually the dissolution was not in any way legitimate. It should also be noted that neither the AA or AFA ever kept to the laws agreed upon, only the OR did, and so as we had already deemed the IAOA to be a millstone to our advance, we did not attempt to prolong this failed experiment.

From: [S. McNallen](mailto:S.McNallen)

To: iaoa_forum@yahoogroups.com

Sent: Sunday, June 16, 2002 9:42 PM

Subject: [iaoa_forum] The IAOA

[Message from Valgard, forwarded to the list by Sheila]

On the evening of Midyear 12, 2252 RE an emergency meeting of the Delegates of Record of Althing 2 of the IAOA was called by Valgard Murray to discuss the state of affairs within the IAOA.

By phone conference the following transpired:

Allsherjargythia Sheila McNallen presided. Delegates of record were: Valgard Murray for the Asatru Alliance, Stephen McNallen for the Asatru Folk Assembly, and Torgeist for the Odinic Rite.

The following grievances were brought before the Thing by Valgard Murray:

- 1) The IAOA received serious harm by the actions of Eric Wood, which resulted in the lack cohesiveness and trust within the IAOA.
- 2) The attacks of Eric Wood also seriously affected the future of the AFA and its willingness to be a membership organization and to maintain Kindreds. This affected the IAOA directly.
- 3) Constant confusion within the leadership of the Odinic Rite resulted in a complete lack of communication between the IAOA and the Rite. While in the middle of an emergency brought on by the actions of Eric Wood, the rest of us were uncertain of just who was in charge of the Odinic Rite and where Heimgest was. The rejection by Heimgest of Thorgeist, the seated delegate of Althing 2, and the subsequent dissolving of the Odinic Rite Vinland by Heimgest, was a further issue which caused dissention.

- 4) The apparent close association of the leadership of the Odinic Rite with the 14 Words Press is detrimental to the future of Asatru. This prohibits any dealings by the Asatru Alliance with the IAOA and the Odinic Rite. The leadership of the AFA shares this concern.
- 5) The recent information provided in public forums and private emails that the AET is, in fact, a universalist group and is in violation of the By Laws and spirit of the IAOA.
- 6) The result of all of this is that the IAOA no longer serves the needs of Odinn's Holy Nation and thus should be disbanded.

Valgard proposed a vote which stated: "The Delegates of Record of the IAOA hereby vote to dissolve the IAOA". The motion was unanimously approved and the IAOA has been dissolved.

Respectively submitted to the Allsherjargythia/Director of the IAOA by Valgard Murray on Midyear 15, 2252 Runic Era.

This is an unaltered copy of the actual announcement made concerning the dissolution of the IAOA .

As you can plainly see, the reasons given are very different to what Mr Murray presented in his deposition. It should be noted that of the 6 reasons given only two involve the Odinic Rite and both those reasons make *totally bogus* claims. Let it be clearly and completely understood that the Odinic Rite Vinland has never been dissolved since its official formation by me or anyone else at all. It also needs to be clearly understood, that the designation Vinland in the Odinic Rite Vinland title, refers merely to it being an administrative section of the Odinic Rite as a whole and the Odinic Rite has been active in North America (Vinland) since formation in 1973 ce. The claim that the OR leadership had close association with the 14 Word Press is also totally false.

I reproduce now, an unaltered copy (typo's included) of the pertinent parts of the e-mail I sent in response to this announcement of dissolution of the IAOA.

To: iaoa_forum@yahoogroups.com
From: "heimgest holley"
Date: Mon, 17 Jun 2002 16:07:25 -0400 (EDT)
Subject: Re: [iaoa_forum] The IAOA

Greetings Comrades?

First why is it so hard for you to understand that the Odinic Rite is NOT associated with 14 words press? It baffles us. We have never been associated with 14 words. This is just nonsense to say we are as ridiculous as allegations such groups as ADL make about Steve McNallen and Valgard, why are you playing this game?

Second, Torgeist never ever had any authority to represent teh OR. The OR`s rules are absolutely clear on so there should be no confusion. You just dont seem

to get it, or else deliberately dont get it. It would be like us deciding Robert Taylor of the Wulfings in fact spoke for teh AA. So dissolve teh IAOA if you will but dont try and pin things on us which arent valid. Even here we have an emergency meeting called without contacting us prior to it and dont say you couldnt because I check e mail every day as does Asrad. Dissolve the IAOA if you wish, it was floundering anyway but be noble. You could have contacted me but chose not too. You say things which are patently false.

You will see that some of the lies contained in the dissolution notice were corrected at the time. Though general frustration with the ignoble way Mr Murray had acted meant we could no longer be bothered to continue trying to get the IAOA to work and we couldn't be bothered to correct all the lies told about us in detail. It should perhaps be explained who the Robert Taylor referred to is. Mr Taylor headed a Kindred of the Asatru Alliance called the Tribe of the Wulfings. In point of fact, Robert Taylor was one of the founders of the Asatru Alliance. This kindred is no longer associated with the Asatru Alliance as they lost all confidence in Mr Murray's competence to head the organization and also did not support his claim to be known as Allsherjargodi. The point I was trying to make, is that members of one organization cannot decide who another organizations IAOA delegate is. Torgeist, who at that time was an Apprentice member of the Odinic Rite, was never given any authority at all by us to represent the OR as our delegate to the IAOA. In fact I was elected to act as our delegate. I was, in referencing Robert Taylor, pointing out how for the leadership of outside organizations (The AA and AFA) to try and tell us who our IAOA delegate should be, would be like us telling them that Robert Taylor and not Valgard, was the AA delegate.

We can also see again, that far from only having contact with the OR and myself between 1990 to 1994 as he claims, the contact was between 1988 and 2002. During that time in fact, the Asatru Alliance paid my travel and expenses to attend two of their Althings in 1995 and 1997 where the IAOA was founded. At such meetings, and in other communications, Mr Murray was made totally aware of the Odinic Rite's structure, operations, viewpoints, practices etc etc, so for him to now make statements which are wholly untrue on such matters, and to get dates so wildly wrong, shows either a diminished mental capacity which means he cannot retain such facts or else he is choosing to tell untruths in a sworn document. Either would bring his suitability to act as a paid witness or any kind of witness into question for he is simply not telling the truth.

Before moving on from this section of Mr Murray's deposition there is another important matter which must be corrected. Mr Murray has deliberately given a false definition of Odinism and the Odinic Rite.

He is asked about the Odinic Rite and among other things is asked on:

Page 54 Line 14

" Is it Asatru?"

To which he responds "No" (p 54 line 15)

He is then asked to explain the difference and among other things of minimal importance, he makes a

claim which it is important to correct when answering the question :

Page 55 Lines 5 -6

“Well, their particular focus is on one god, which is Odin.”

That is totally false and furthermore Mr Murray is fully aware of that fact as since our inception, years before the Asatru Alliance, we have always made it very clear that we do not focus on any *one* of the Gods or Goddesses. His answer implies we are rather monotheistic which is wholly untrue as we are polytheistic. Various individual members may focus more on one or other of the Gods or Goddesses, this is commonly known as having a particular 'patron' God or 'patroness' Goddess. It would indicate that particular practitioner feels a greater sense of closeness or affinity etc to the God/Goddess they regard as a patron. But it does not indicate any kind of monotheism. The Odinic Rite describe our religion as Odinism most usually, and ourselves as Odinists. However the term Asatru is also used and we hold that Asatru is basically just another name for Odinism. There are in fact a number of different names used, Odinism and Asatru being the most common, but Forn Sed is another term used by some, so is Germanic Heathenism and various others. But all this is basically a matter of semantics and essentially they are the same religion. It should be noted the *first* overt Asatru group in North America, founded by Else Christensen and her husband Alex, used the term Odinism. In actual fact, it is the elder term for the faith with it being the preferred one for the earliest pioneers of the modern resurgence.

The Odinic Rite have made it crystal clear why we use the term Odinism in various articles one of which can be found in the booklet *Interview With a Gothi* ISBN 2-912122-00-7

or another explanation *Why Do We Call it Odinism* can be found at the following web address

<http://www.geocities.com/odinistlibrary/OLArticles/Articles/odinismbyanyothername.htm>

or for a fully comprehensive spoken explanation visit the Ravencast web site at the following address:

<http://ravencast.podbeam.com/2007/09/02/episode-13-nationalorganizations-the-odinic-rite/>

There are other articles in various publications but these will be sufficient and make the matter very clear.

Following the section on the OR and IAOA Mr Murray continues his deposition and continues to make false claims and highly contentious statements.

Page 63

Mr Murray is asked about his religious education and he is then asked :

“When did you first come into contact with Asatru?” to which he replies on

Lines 22 -24

“I didn't. Asatru didn't exist when I first became part of what is now Asatru. We created it. I'm one of the founders”

Now it is just not true to say Asatru didn't exist until he helped create it. Asatru or Odinism is the modern expression of the indigenous religious/spiritual path of the Northern European peoples and is a direct descendant of the religion of the earliest ancestors of those peoples. It has of course undergone great changes and was greatly suppressed with the arrival of Christianity. However it continued to exist and this is referred to in the booklets published in the early 1970s called “What is Odinism” and “Hidden Gods” Both these booklets are available from the Odinic Rite. The booklet “What is Odinism may also be viewed at the following Internet address: www.paganlibrary.com/reference/Odinism.php. Of special note in this old booklet is the reference to the period of Dual Faith.

Further more, the writer Conrad Malte-Brun (the founder of the 1st modern geographic society) referenced Odinism in 1924. The new England intellectual, Orestes Brownson also wrote of the

resurgence of Odinism in 1848. This can be found in The Works of Orestes Brownson.

The Odinic Rite was formed by people who had been practicing Odinism for decades, in some cases going back to the 1930s and Rud Mills of course had founded an Odinist church in the 1930s called the Angle Cyn Church of Woden. He also published a number of books between then and the 1950s which detailed the Odinist/Asatru religion and practices, the most well known being ' The Call of our Ancient Nordic Religion'. So Mr Murray's claim that it didn't exist until he helped found it, is wholly untrue and shows a total lack of knowledge of a faith he claims to be a great figure in.

Mr Murray's account of how he came into contact with our religion (or founded it as he has it) is also at great variance with accounts given elsewhere. Referring to the book Gods of the Blood, is a rather different story than the one Mr Murray gives over the Pages 63 – 69

'Gods of the Blood ' author, Mathias Gardell, had interviewed Mr Murray (along with various other Asatruar/Odinists) The book “Radical Religion in America”by Jeffrey Kaplan also presents a different route to Asatru rather than the vision Mr Murray claims to have had in his deposition. For those who are interested enough to read on this, the two books mentioned here will give a different account. Other former Asatru Alliance members, including former members of the Arizona Kindred have also given an account which is at great variance to Mr Murray's claims. This isn't to say that Mr Murray has not done a lot for the Asatru Alliance, and we acknowledge the fact that he was an important figure in the formation of the Asatru Alliance and has helped a particular strand of Asatru to develop. That is another one of the reasons this deposition is so disappointing because it casts a major shadow over his previous efforts. It is disappointing that he gives no credit at all to those who first introduced him to Asatru, in particular to a man who was one of the original founders of the Arizona Kindred. We shall not name him here as we do not feel that would be appropriate, but former members of the Arizona Kindred can provide information on that.

It should also be understood that Else Christensen, whom Mr Murray mentions on PAGE 66, and widely known as the Folk Mother in the Odinist community as a whole, had , along with her husband Alex, founded an Odinist church in the 1960s. Further details of that can be found at this web site : <http://geocities.com/odinistlibrary/OLArticles/Articles/elsechristensen.htm>

We can therefore take it that the details given in these pages 63 -69 are subject to great speculation at best, and at places outright rejection. Another example where his claims can be totally and utterly rejected occurs on

Page 69 lines 22 - 23

where he makes the claim that “*We reconstructed a dead religion*”.

That is a completely inaccurate statement and one which seems filled with hubris. As already demonstrated Odinism was being practiced long before Mr Murray ever met with those who introduced him to it. As mentioned earlier, Odinism (or Asatru which is the name Mr Murray gives to Odinism) was referenced by writers over a century and a half ago, and practiced by many throughout the 20th century.

To members of the Odinic Rite (and other groups)to make such a claim that our religion was dead and reconstructed by him is just a false statement and a stupid one.

The deposition meanders on for a few pages and what is stated is probably not worth dealing with until Page 76 Line 7

where he gives a definition of what hell is (we are sure he meant hel and the additional L was added by the person transcribing the deposition) for the Asatru religion.

Mr Murray responds “*It's a place of nothingness, total isolation*”

Now that is **his** understanding of what Hel is in our religion, and it may well be that other adherents of the faith would hold this view. However, it is most definitely **not** the only understanding at all and is

absolutely rejected by many Odinists/Asatruar who do not see it in that way at all. Furthermore many hold such a view as being very shallow and more influenced by Christianity and monotheism than the polytheistic ancestral faith we follow.

Mr Murray then gives details of his working for various correctional departments and the Federal Government, we have no reason to challenge that at all as he is obviously a paid witness against the prisoners claims in this case. What we think is of great importance to point out again though is in reference to

Page 77 lines5-8

where he states that he advises states etc

“ as part of my capacity, what I do as Allsherjargodi ”

It has to be understood as already stated, that while he is an Allsherjargodi for the Asatru Alliance, he is not THE Allsherjargodi of the faith. There is no such thing, so his credentials carry no weight outside his own organization. He has no credentials to speak for any but his church.

Again the deposition meanders on its way, and though there are certainly claims made by him which are contentious, they do not merit detailing here. On reading them one will have their own views on the factuality of his words, but compared to many other of his statements, they are not worth mentioning in this. We will comment on his explanations of what an oath is and isn't which he speaks of on

Pages 83 and 84.

It must be understood that once again he gives *his* view of what an oath is, what makes it binding etc. and while some of it would be agreed with by most, it is again rather limited and dogmatic. He states for example an oath cannot have a time limit. That is not correct. Some oaths are, as he says, for all time, but there are other oaths which are limited by time. For example a practitioner may make an oath that they will not do something until a certain goal is achieved. Once achieved the oath is no longer relevant.

We now move on though to something which must be very strongly challenged again.

On Pages 86 – 89

he is asked about various rites performed by Odinists/Asatruar.

He is asked about a daily Sunna ritual and if he agrees its reasonable that some practitioners perform these rites daily.

Page 86 Lines 11 – 13

He responds *“ I have never known anyone at all that has done the daily Sunna ritual. Its not even a common ritual amongst the Asatru. ”*

Now this is utterly incorrect, Once again Mr Murray claims his own practice (*or great lack of it*) as the norm. In fact that is far from true. As already stated,daily rites, including the Sunna rite, are encouraged by the Odinic Rite and, an **absolute requirement** for some levels of membership .Many other practitioners of Asatru/Odinism also conduct daily religious observances.

When asked if he is able to say that no one does it daily, his responds

Lines16 to 17. of Page 86

“I cant say that. I know no one, and I know more Asatru than anybody in North America ”

. The plain fact is , that daily ritual is a very common practice among Odinists/Asatru. His claim that he knows more Asatru than anybody in North America is just an infantile boast and cannot possibly be proven or known with any certainty at all. As he seems so ignorant of the history, beliefs and practices of anyone outside himself and probably his own organization, his claim to know more Asatru than anyone else would again seem to rather hollow.

Once again, though there are matters which could be very much debated, we think the next matter to merit attention here is Mr Murray's assertion on :

Page 89 lines 1 – 3,

where he claims he had conducted a remembrance for the martyrs in sixty seconds while he was sitting there giving this deposition. To the Odinic Rite and in fact many other Odinists/Asatru it would seem incredible that someone could claim to have conducted such a thing in only a minute and apparently unnoticed by those sitting in the same room speaking to them. Quite frankly it is rather embarrassing that someone who claims to be a Gothi in our religion, and a senior one at that, could seriously suggest that such a thing is in any way acceptable or even valid. I cannot think of a senior representative of any other religion who would not only seem to display such a careless attitude towards a ceremonial act, but actually highlight that fact.

We would also like to highlight that his views on prisoners having as he puts it on

Page 91 Lines 15 - 19

“a lapse or a deficit of knowledge and information” Is as he himself states on line 8 of page 91: STRICTLY AN OPINION. And that opinion is his own opinion. It is most definitely NOT one shared by the Odinic Rite. In fact, often we find convicts have a deeper knowledge and understanding than those in the free world because they have a great deal more time to study and practice etc than most people in the outside world. Certainly there are many convicts who are OR members whose knowledge and understanding of our religion is considerably more profound than Mr Murray has displayed his to be in his deposition.

Page 91 lines 22 – 24 continuing on Page 92 lines 1-9

Covers his view of the number of holy days and the calender of holy days used. Though mentioned earlier the the facts around this need to be made strongly clear

He states that the Asatru Alliance have 12 holy days. That is likely the truth and the Asatru Alliance do only have 12. However he goes on to state that this calender is

“pretty much the basis of all calenders in the United States and in Europe” **That plain and simply not true at all.**

As previously stated it was the founders of the Odinic Rite who first presented the runic era calender to the Odinist/Asatru community, and our calender of holy days recognizes considerably more than 12. The 2257runic era or 2007 common era calender for example lists 57 which are considered holy. While the very minimum number of observances acceptable to us is 12 (the monthly blots) we hold considerably more days to be holy days and encourage many more ritual observances.

In NO WAY at all is the calender of the Asatru Alliance considered to be the basis of calenders in the United States, let alone Europe and he overlooks the fact that the very dating system and appearance of a runic era calender was done by the Odinic Rite long before his organization even existed.

Immediately following his comments on the calender system on

Page 92,

he once again considerably overstates his importance when he claims that

“it is my job as Allsherjargodi to advise people what Asatru is and what it isn't.”

Quite simply that just isn't true.

He does not have the authority to speak for any but AA members. The Odinic Rite do not recognize his authority as extending in any way at all beyond the Asatru Alliance. We are far from being alone in this and it is tolerably certain most other Odinist/Asatru organizations,

churches etc. do not accept Mr Murray as anything but the Alsherjargothi of the Asatru Alliance with no relevance or validity to speak for them, and he most certainly cannot speak with any authority for any other groups.

He continues grossly over estimating his own importance on

Page 93 Lines 5 - 8

where he states that he is “*the elected spokesman for the largest Asatru community in North America and the oldest*”.

Firstly, he can in no way at all substantiate his claim that the Asatru Alliance are the largest Asatru group, clearly he cant as he doesn't even know the number of members in his *own Kindred* of the Alliance, as he admitted in his deposition. If he has no idea of the number of members of his *own* kindred it is ludicrous he can claim the AA to be the largest Asatru organization in North America. Added to that, he has zero knowledge of the membership numbers of other organizations or Asatru communities . So that claim is pure speculation and cannot be substantiated.

However, to claim the Asatru Alliance is the oldest, is not speculation, ludicrous or otherwise, is totally untrue as is clearly known. The AA wasn't even founded until 1988, fifteen years after the Odinic Rite was formed and from its inception the OR had a presence in North America. Once again Mr Murray, for whatever reason, makes false claims.

His sense of his own importance continues of course, despite the long catalogue of inaccuracies and so at the close of

Page 93 lines 22 – 24 he states:

“*Anyone can call themselves Asatru, but its my position to explain what Asatru is to those who don't understand it*”

More correctly what he should say is he can explain what his and the Asatru Alliance's view of Asatru is, but no one else's. And it has been clear that he has virtually no knowledge beyond his own church of the practices or history of other Odinit/Asatru churches. His claiming to be able to define what Asatru is and what it isn't across the board is akin to the Pope deciding he can tell Baptists what their belief and practices are, and what they are not. Mr Murray simply does not have the authority he claims (and possibly genuinely believes in some delusional way) he has.

On Page 95

dealing specifically with this case, it seems that Mr Murray is peeved because a prisoner has used words Mr Murray himself wrote ten years ago to support his claims. Now it may be that Mr Murray has changed his view over those ten years so he no longer believes what he wrote ten years back. Just because Mr Murray no longer believes what he wrote back then, is no reason to assume the prisoner in question no longer has those beliefs, he may not be as changeable as Mr Murray so to question the mans sincerity is rather poor form.

Mr Murray continues talking about why he is testifying *against* a prisoner and why *he* doesn't believe the prisoner is either sincere or even Asatru. Obviously his words express purely his own opinion and nothing more. But it could perhaps be seen as irresponsible as a leader of any kind in any religion, to question a persons sincerity in this manner. Weekly blots to Tyr for example are clearly not appropriate in Mr Murray's opinion but to question the sincerity of those devout worshipers who do wish to honor their patron God on the day named in his honor, or in fact to prevaricate on the whole matter of a persons sincerity in this case can easily be seen as undermining the RLUIPA law which ultimately could hurt us all, especially

(though not exclusively) those behind bars. To be the instrument of such possible undermining of this law, is irresponsible, some might say shameful.

However on

Page 97 he makes another misleading and ambiguous statement. He states on lines 9 – 10 :
“*I'm the Allsherjargodi. That means every mans Gothi.*”

Now it is true that he is the Allsherjargodi of the Asatru Alliance, and it is true that some translations of that term give it as meaning “every mans Gothi”, but it is not true to suggest that he is THE Allsherjargodi of the Asatru/Odinist faith adherents in general. As consistently pointed out and explained, his authority is limited purely to the members of the Asatru Alliance. He most certainly isn't every mans Gothi at all. This term is also in no way unique, as an example; a prisoner serving life in the California state system is accepted as an Allsherjargodi of his organization. So the term means nothing beyond the organization to which that particular Allsherjargodi belongs.

Mr Murray closes his deposition as he opened it, with a flurry of hubris, contradictions and giving what are his views as a common fact when they are not. It is almost funny when on

Page 98 Lines 8 – 9 he claims that the prisoner involved in this case, has “*Practically invented his own religion and calls it Asatru*”

Does he miss the irony of his comment? He has, throughout the deposition basically claimed that it was he who founded Asatru from what he calls a “dead religion”. The truth, as has been shown, is he neither founded Asatru nor was it dead. But here he declares a man who took much of his religious practice from the words Mr Murray himself wrote, albeit ten years ago, has invented his own religion. He again brings up the fact that he believes that honoring Tyr every week on the day named in his honour would annoy this deity .That of course is purely Mr Murray's interpretation of things. Others might say the fact Mr Murray only honors Tyr once a year and not on the day named for him, is actually neglectful and therefore offensive. However that again would represent the views of an individual or an organization. The irony (unintentional I am sure) of Mr Murray's deposition continues on

Page 99, Lines 12 -13

when after continually presenting his own ideas on Asatru and how to practice it, as being *the* correct way, he states “ *We don't have dogmatic laws that are written like in the Koran or the Bible*”

Now finally it seems he is presenting a view that the majority of Odinists/Asatruars would accept, but lest anyone think he is going to relinquish his self perceived role as arbitrator of what is and what isn't Asatru, he reverts

Page 100 Lines 1 - 5

to his claim to be Allsherjargodi and showing the world what is the common practice.

His exact wording here being “*What I do as Allsherjargodi, is show the world this is the common practice, this is what we do, this is our commonly held beliefs. Pretty much in a nutshell*”

Now I do realize that in a blow by blow correction of the inaccuracies and ambiguities of Mr Murray's deposition, I have had to make repetitive comments. It does not make for the most exciting reading (or writing I can assure you) but as he constantly repeats the same inaccuracies and or ambiguities, the presentation of the facts need to be repeated also. So once again in the closing page of his deposition, we encounter what at best could be called an ambiguous statement. Mr Murray states “what I do as Allsherjargodi” and that could lead the unknowing to assume that there is only one Allsherjargodi, who is somehow empowered to speak for all who claim to follow our religion with authority. Such an assumption, though understandable given the statement, would be completely erroneous. There is no such figure in our religion who has such authority. Mr Murray would have made things far clearer and been accurate had he said “I am the Allsherjargodi *of the Asatru Alliance*”. As such he can speak for the Asatru Alliance, but for no one else with any authority. He also states that he shows the world :”*this is the common practice, this is what we do, this is our commonly held beliefs*” Again that is not accurate as it gives the unknowing the idea he is speaking for the whole of the Asatru/Odinist

community and presenting what is commonly believed. We have already seen how he has no legitimacy to speak for any but the Asatru Alliance, and we have also seen clearly that many many of Mr Murray's beliefs are not commonly held by those outside his own organization. Some of his beliefs in fact, far from being commonly held, are strongly rejected by many Odinists/Asatruar. And though it may seem to have been belaboring the point, due to the fact he has been going to court and making these claims, it is vital the inaccuracies and falsehoods and ambiguities he presents are corrected and the truth presented. For otherwise, our very rich religion which offers a path for the individual to embrace a positive lifestyle and advance spiritually, therefore becoming positive benefit to society as a whole, will continue to be misunderstood, marginalized and its beautiful radiance hidden.

Heimgest

Director of the Court of Gothar of the Odinic Rite.

1* Mr Murray has himself stated in writing that he was an Apprentice of the Odinic Rite. This was in the late 1990's. It should however be noted that this was never legitimized. To join the Odinic Rite, all applicants have to be approved by the Court of Gothar and while in the overwhelming number of cases this approval is largely academic, in Mr Murray's case the CG never approved his application. It was an administrative error that led to him being placed on the membership list as an Apprentice, so technically his claims to have once been an Apprentice member of the Rite are bogus.

2** The following is a direct copy of the most pertinent part of the defense Mr Murray made of why he had given this deposition, in answer to the question he poses in it 'what would they have done' I think we can say, "We would say what we actually believed"

The race issue...having facilitated the recognition of Asatru by the
Ohio
Bureau of Prisons in August of this year, how could I say anything
different
regarding Asatru, without seriously compromising the Asatru/Odinist
inmates?
Again I ask any of those who wish to diminish my work for prisoners,
what
would have they done?