

## Written Direct Testimony of Hawane Rios

Aloha 'Āina,

'O wau 'o Hāwane. 'O Mauna a Wākea ku'u mauna, 'o Kohākohau ku'u kahawai, a 'o Pu'ukapu, Waimea ku'u 'āina kūlāiwi.

My name is Hāwane Rios, my mountain is Mauna Kea, my river is Kohākohau, and the land that raised me is Pu'ukapu, Waimea on the island of Hawai'i. I am a descendant of Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) who inhabited the Hawaiian Islands prior 1778 as established through my genealogical lines of 'Umihulumakaokalanikia'imauna'o'Āwini and Ka'ā'īkaulakaleikauilahāmakanoē Naweluokekikipa'a. My ancestors come from the 'Āiwini Valley of the Kohala Mountains connecting me and my bloodline to a lineage of indigenous peoples rooted in honoring the land, waterways, and all living beings. The practice of aloha 'āina – to love and care for the land, was passed down by these same ancestors through the generations all the way to my mother and then to me. It is a practice of our people to know where we come from, to remember our creation story and how our family genealogies connect to it. I offer this part of our genealogical creation story here to create a space of better understanding as to why I stand to protect Mauna a Wākea from the further destruction and desecration of the Thirty Meter Telescope.

Born to Wākea, the infinite incredible expanse and Papawalinu'u, the deep womb of the universe, is Mauna a Wākea. Born to Wākea and Papahānaumoku, the mother of our islands, is Ho'ohōkūkalani, the Goddess of the star realm. Born to Wākea and Ho'ohōkūkalani is Hāloanakalaukapalili, a still born being buried at the east end of the house. From that burial grew the first food of the Kanaka Maoli people of Hawai'i, the Kalo. Born to Wākea and Ho'ohōkūkalani is a second child named Haloa, the first Kanaka (Hawaiian). From Haloa comes the

Kanaka Maoli (Hawaiian) people. The transcendental interconnectedness that dances between the creation of Mauna a Wākea and the movement to protect Mauna a Wākea exists in the beat of my very heart. When I say, “We Are Mauna Kea,” I am bringing forth an ancient knowledge that teaches that we are made of the same force. We are a manifestation of the same love.

This genealogy was taught to me by my elders with the intention to always remember my birthright and responsibility to uphold the tradition of caring for the earth in a good way. My upbringing is rooted in the traditional dances, chants, and ceremony of my ancestors. I am a Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) cultural practitioner who continues to exercise my traditional and customary practices on Mauna Kea. These traditional and customary Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) practices, including pilgrimages to the top of Mauna Kea, pre-date 1892 as evidenced through cultural sites, oral traditions, and several reports. I am only including this information in my testimony because I have to. I am deeply offended that according to this court system, I have to prove the legitimacy of my bloodline and my cultural practices on my ancestral mountain in my own homelands. The Kanaka Maoli people are a living a people. We survived the illegal annexation of our Kingdom, the Great Mahele, the ban of our language and dance and so many more painful atrocities. Despite all of that we are still here and our beliefs and traditions deserve to be respected.

My advocacy work for the Protect Mauna Kea Movement and my life work as a musician has taken me to the far reaches of the world to stand in solidarity with many movements rising up to protect the rights of the earth. Through these travels I have shared time and space with different indigenous peoples speaking of the devastating affects of the Intergeneration Trauma that was passed down by the people in our respective lineages that experienced the immense suffering of war, violence, rape, forced displacement, and colonization. The trauma that I carry in my DNA has come to the surface time and time again since my family and I entered into Thirty Meter Telescope Case on behalf of the

spirit realm in 2011, through the Protect Mauna Kea Movement these past few years, and up until now. The constant questioning and belittling of my spiritual connection to Mauna a Wākea, my beliefs, traditions, and cultural practices in the court system, the Astronomy community and University community has been wearing on my emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing. The pain in me recognizes the pain in my own people and the people from around the world that are dedicating and risking their lives to protect what is left of the clean air, land, ocean, and water.

I felt the immensity of that pain on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 when the first 31 arrests of peaceful protectors occurred. I remember running up the Mauna Kea Access Road passing by my fellow protectors standing arm in arm in lines as far up to the summit as they could go. My heart pounded as the police chased us up the mountain to the proposed Thirty Meter Telescope Site. When we got to the summit we took our line and began to chant. In that moment I felt a current of strength, pride, and honor while feeling this sense profound sadness, anxiety, and fear as the police made their way toward us. I can still feel the waves of tears that flowed down my face as my friends and family were arrested and taken down the mountain in State vehicles. It was on that day that the reality set in that we would literally have to lay our bodies down to protect our mountain.

I was reminded of the truth of that reality on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 when I arrested in prayer in a ceremonial circle of women on Mauna a Wākea. Reflecting on these moments and sharing what I see in the spirit realm is not always an easy process for me because it is a part of my ceremony and gifts passed down to me from my ancestors that I hold deeply sacred. I have chosen to share some of my very personal experiences and messages in this testimony and I ask for openness and respect as I do so. On that evening as I watched the way the sunset painted the slopes beautiful shades of pink and purple, I felt called to make the journey to Hale Pōhaku. At that time the Hawai'i

State Board of Land and Natural Resources declared Emergency Rules that prohibited people from being in restricted areas on the mountain between 10:00pm and 4:00am which included the land across from Hale Pōhaku that had become the gathering grounds of the 24/7vigil of the movement. Before I decided to head up I got wind that the Department of Land and Natural Resource Officers had plans to go up and do a sweep. I was raised to listen to the messages of the ancestors and the land when they come to me so I decided to follow this call regardless of these rules that were so blatantly targeting the people of the movement.

When we reached Hale Pōhaku my feet immediately took me to the hill that carries offerings of pōhaku (rocks) from all of the main islands in the Hawaiian Chain. I began to chant a prayer of clearing and cleansing with my eyes closed and for the first time in the duration of the Protect Mauna Kea Movement I felt total peace and compassion flow into my heart. My eyes opened to see hundreds of spirit beings of the mountain coming over the slopes. I could feel the mountain breathing and releasing all of the heaviness and tension and emitting a breath of healing calmness. I heard a voice come to tell me to trust the wisdom of the mountain and its waters and to let that powerful energy guide the peace and compassion I felt so deeply through the prayer in my life. This voice was much like the voice that came to me in a ceremony that proclaimed that if the Thirty Meter Telescope was built then the access to the ancient wisdom of the high counsel of the spirit realm would be severed and never to be recovered. This is the one of the many reasons why my commitment is so strong to Mauna a Wākea and one of the many reasons why I was on the mountain that night.

Upon closing the prayer ceremonies on the hill we decided to go to our vehicles to continue our prayer vigil because the temperature started to drop quickly. We met in front of Hale Kū Kia'i Mauna with the intention of protecting the wooden deities that resided in the house with our prayers and chants from the DLNR sweep. We stood in a circle and began a chant that summoned our Gods and Goddesses to come from

the above and below and from the uplands and lowlands to grant us guidance and protection. It was in the middle of this very sacred chant that the DLNR officers forced us apart and began arresting us. This was one of the most offensive and traumatic experiences of my life. Our ceremony and prayer was disrespected and mistreated by these officers and this system that allows this behavior. Our rights as native people were violated. According to the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples Article 12,

“Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects...”

The depression and heartache I felt thereafter was profoundly painful and damaging to my health and wellbeing. I experienced symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder such as intense anxiety, negativity, and overwhelm. It is still emotionally difficult for me to go back to this memory and recall the details of that night without feeling emotional.

If build, the Thirty Meter Telescope Project would not only have a significant and adverse impact on the mountain but also on the people. The anticipated trauma is immeasurable and devastating to even think of. I was taught by my elders and spiritual guides that we as human beings are not separate from the earth. Whatever we do onto the earth we do onto ourselves. The health of the land is a reflection of the health of the people. We are living in a time where the land, the waters, the oceans, and the people are in need of a great healing. We still have a chance to shift our ways to remember union with this planet and with each other. The eyes of the world are watching now and people near and far continue to stand in solidarity with this incredible movement.

Mauna a Wākea has shaped the way I move in this world. I, Hāwane Rios, am hereby writing this testimony in protest of the building of the

Thirty Meter Telescope on our sacred Mauna a Wākea.

Kū Kia'i Mauna,

Hāwane Rios

Pu'ukapu, Waimea

Lā (Day) 6 o 'Okakopa (October) 2016