



79 De La Salle Blvd.,
Jackson's Pt., ON L0E 1L0
905-722-6655
www.soulasylumpoetry.com

PRESS RELEASE

December 3, 2009

Artist Detained and Refused Entry to U.S. on trip to volunteer as MC of a Benefit Concert

Ontario writer Ken Cowle was recently turned back at the Niagara Falls border after being removed from the train and detained by U.S. border officers as they searched through his belongings, ultimately leaving Mr. Cowle on foot at the Rainbow Bridge.

The contention was that Mr. Cowle could provide no proof that he was not going to be paid by anyone while in the U.S. Well damned if you do, damned if you don't. Ken never considered that a trip to spend time with associates gathering to party and raise money for kids would be construed as a threat to the security or financial welfare of Americans. Mr. Cowle had volunteered to be the MC of a benefit in Philadelphia, at the invitation of the organizers. The 'Dreams on Wings Benefit show' was created to raise funds for the Hemispherectomy Foundation. This is a charity organization dedicated to children and their families who have been impacted by a hemispherectomy brain surgery. This organization is operated strictly by volunteers. One of the participating hospitals is The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto.

Mr. Cowle was traveling and planning to stay a few nights at his own expense. This is not unusual as he often goes to Philadelphia. His efforts revolve around independent publishing and artist development. If anything, he does more to highlight American artists to a wider audience in the U.S. and Canada on his own dime. Being on permanent assistance from Ontario Disability, in 2005 he made use of one of their programs to start a small business that helps artists collaborate and share their talents. He has consistently volunteered his own time and money to causes that provide no personal benefit to him. During this recent border detention, Mr. Cowle experienced first hand the full weight of the idiom: "No good deed goes unpunished."

Mr. Cowle has questioned how often this treatment is given to travelers, especially artists, when entering the United States. As Canada considers its position on border security, what are the implications for visitors to this country? Ken's compatriots in the U.S. are reacting with embarrassment and indignation. They do not want this treatment to quietly go away. News and entertainment people are picking up this story and bringing it to the attention of the public and to organizations that should be aware if not responsible for the influence this kind of treatment has on the creative community.

Attached with this release is the story in Mr. Cowle's own words, along with supporting documents and media for a background on the accomplishments of Kenneth Wm. Cowle; writer, publisher, radio show producer/host and promoter of independent artists. He can be contacted directly for interviews via the information on the letterhead and at the end of his story.

Submitted by Charles Ross



79 De La Salle Blvd.,
Jackson's Pt., ON L0E 1L0
905-722-6655
www.soulasylumpoetry.com

Artist Detained and Refused Entry to U.S. on trip to volunteer as MC of a Benefit Concert

December 3, 2009

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Ken Cowle. I am the Founder and President of Soul Asylum Poetry & Publishing Inc., and Double K Records.

The Background

We opened our company in 2005 with a small grant from Ontario Disability, as I suffer from a chronic illness. After drafting my first book of poetry, Ontario Disability told me about a program they had, and that I should put a business plan together. If approved I may receive a grant. We received a \$5000.00 grant, just enough to publish our first book and open our website, with a writers forum in place. We have grown some since then.

Our mission has been to bring artists, writers, musicians, and filmmakers together in one place to help support and inspire each other, while we help to promote, and produce their work. The signed artists of Soul Asylum Poetry & Publishing Inc. always retain the rights to their work, and recently we have started helping musicians record and distribute their music. We now have more than 1200 registered members at our site, and we profile more than 300 artists. We have more than 40 published authors at our house, and have 15 musicians signed to distribution contracts, though we are just getting off the ground with the music division.

Since opening we have worked on many charity projects such as The Inner Circle of Poets books helping to raise money for cancer research. More recently we underwrote the publishing expenses for "Smile Through the Tears". a book written by a Rwandan Genocide Survivor.

We have also been working with the New York Coalition for Healthy Foods, volunteering our time to help put together a CD to help raise awareness and money to change the menus in our schools across North America to a healthier choice. Kevin Mackie of the band Only Human and one of the key organizers for this project, had contacted us awhile back and asked if we would be interested in helping out with this wonderful project and cause. We felt honored.

<http://www.healthylunches.org/events/max-benefit-2009.htm>.

I myself am a published poet and also have 2 books for children published. Our company has published more than 40 authors from Canada, the U.S., Europe, and Australia. Everything that has come in to the company has gone back out to help more artists gain exposure. We ship direct to our authors in each of these countries, from our printers who operate in the U.S., Europe and Australia. Through the Ingram books distribution centres, provided by our printers, we reach Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bakers and Taylor and many more online stores for distribution.

We have been using U.S. printers to do the bulk of our book printing, amounting to \$10,000.00 to \$15,000.00 a year in business.

For the last 4 years I have been traveling to the Philadelphia area, helping to promote musicians and artists by booking local studios, namely The East Coast Recording Studio and The Byrdland Studio. We pay our own travel costs, pay for the studio time, and bring in local writers and musicians for interviews and live performances to air back here on our radio show, aired on WhiStle Radio 102.7 FM, a volunteer community station in Stouffville, Ontario.

Each trip including studio time usually costs us approx. \$1500.00 US.

We have two shows on air. "The Asylum for Your Soul Show" which I host and produce with the help of several talented volunteers: Charles Ross, sound; along with Kathleen Stiles, Darlene Fogel, and Dory Bakula who all help to bring themes and material to the table for each show. This show highlights independent writers and musicians. We pick a theme and weave poetry stories and music together to follow that theme, flowing beautifully from one piece into another to create a highly artistic and entertaining show. We have often brought the artists of the U.S. to our show, along with highlighting the incredible talents of up and coming Canadian artists. We also have live studio interviews and performances.

Always crediting each artist for their pieces, and letting our audience know how to find them, we have highlighted the incredible Philadelphia Horror Novelist, Kerry L Marzock on this show, as well as poets Helen McManus, Kathleen Stiles, and Darlene Fogel on the show. Some musicians local to the area are Bevin Caulfield, Dante Bucci, Calling Out Closer, Evro, Ellen Lerner, Paul Kurrey, Dave Alexander, Only Human, Carvin Winan, Freddy Will and many more!

This show airs every Tuesday night from 9 pm to 11 pm EST and then replays on WhiStle every Sunday at 1 am. The shows are also available at those times through the internet by going to the station's website. <http://www.whistleradio.com/>

Our second show, is dedicated to Independent Heavy Metal and is called "In The Pit". I host and produce and Charles Ross works sound. This show airs at 1am every Saturday on WhiStle Radio. We have highlighted many great bands from the Philly area on this show as well, Dawn of Correction being my favorite!

We host a monthly Spiritual Café here in Canada at the Eaglewood Resort in Pefferlaw, home of the Eaglewood Folk Festival. The Spiritual Café allows local musicians and poets a chance to perform in a casual and friendly open mic atmosphere.

The Incident at the border

Now recently I was invited to attend the "Dreams on Wings Benefit Show" for the Hemispherectomy Foundation, an international non-profit group run by volunteers. I was asked if I would like to MC the show at the Tin Angel in Philadelphia, Wednesday December 2nd. I was honored to be a part of the show and to help promote the show. All of the performers were volunteering their time for this event.

I proceeded to set up an event invitation on Myspace, and Facebook, as well as on our site: <http://www.soulasylumpoetry.com/> A poster was designed and we started making announcements to help bring out guests. I had many messages from guests saying they wanted to meet with me at the show, and they would come just to do that. Unfortunately for the musicians, all independent artists and truly talented, they suffered to a lesser crowd as did the Foundation due to my not being allowed into the United States. Yes, I was refused entrance to the U.S. on Tuesday December 1st, when I took the train from Toronto as I always do. I have included the letter from Jane Stefanik, a Director of the foundation, stating that I was a volunteer, and how sad she was to hear what happened to me and that I would not make the show after all was said and done. (*Foundation Letter.pdf*)

My total cost for this trip would have been approx. \$1200.00. We had also planned on donating a gift pack with several signed copies of books plus a few CD's to be raffled off, at a value of almost \$300.00. These were contributions that did not make it to the event.

All was fine initially and I reached the border at Niagara Falls as I always do, where the train stops so the Border Patrol can come on and check the passengers. I had filled out my declaration card as I always do, with the name of where I was staying, the address, and the phone number.

The officers started at both ends of the train and met in the middle. I was sitting towards the back of the car. The officer that started at the back passed right by me without asking for my passport and card. He met the other officers in the middle of the car and they all came back towards me. The one officer asked the others if all passengers had been checked. They all said yes, and that is when I put my hand up and said no one had checked me yet. I thought that I had better say something I didn't want them to think I was trying to hide something by not speaking up; so the officer named Williams came up and took my passport and declaration card, and then asked me what was my business in the U.S. and the reason for my trip.

I explained to the officer that I had been invited to MC a benefit show for the Hemispherectomy Foundation at the Tin Angel the next evening and that I would be staying down for a few extra days to visit friends.

The officer then asked if I was being paid to perform at the show, and I replied that I was not, that it was a benefit show and all of the performers were volunteering their time.

I added that I make several trips a year to record radio shows to air back home on Whistle Radio where I host two shows. I told the officer that the station is a community station and it is completely run by volunteers as well.

The officer then asked "Why would a radio celebrity from Canada come all the way to the U.S. to perform if they are not getting paid?" I replied that it was for a charity, a charity that helps Children who suffer from severe seizures, and that I would never even fathom asking for pay to appear for a cause such as this.

The officer then asked if the two bags above me were mine. I replied yes, and the officer took one of my bags down and motioned for another officer to take the other.

The officers then pulled out every item from my bag in front of everyone; unfolded my clothes and dropped them to the floor, went through each book I had brought, reading a little of each before dropping each to the floor and going to the next. When the officer was finished he started shoving my belongings back in the bag and that is when I asked if he could be a little more careful with my belongings. The officer shot back that I was to sit there quietly until they were finished.

By this time I was feeling a little shaken. Then Officer Williams came up to me with my bag and said that I could repack the bag now if I wanted. I stood up and collected the bag from the officer. I put it on the seat to start repacking when all 5 officers came over and basically surrounded me, all within a foot or so of me. I felt very intimidated at this point, and asked if this was all necessary. At that point officer Towdry (I believe that was his name) said let's pull him off the train. Officer Williams told me to grab my coat and come with them.

Once inside the customs office I was asked to sit while Officer Williams typed out a document to give me with the reason as to why I was not being allowed entrance in to the U.S. It was at this point I realized I was not going to make the show. I felt sick.

The officer then proceeded to put on a pair of rubber gloves which made me feel very uneasy and confused. Then he motioned for me to come over to a computer at the far end of the office where he proceeded to scan my fingerprints in to the computer and take my picture. I have never been printed before. I was shaken by this.

After I was scanned and photographed, Officer Williams handed me a sheet, a scan of which I have included with this story. It shows why they were not letting me in. (*Border Letter.pdf*)

The top line was checked; Proof of employment, pay stubs, employer, etc.

I am not employed in the U.S. I would have no such thing.

The officer then wrote onto the sheet above the line, letter, who, what, fee + no fee.

He then motioned to the Deputy Sheriff, who told me he would be giving me a lift to the Canadian side of the Border.

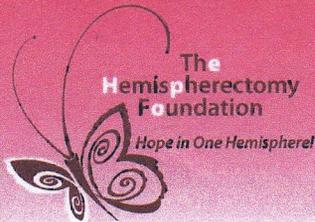
The Deputy Sheriff drove me to the Canadian side of the Rainbow Bridge and told me to go home and have a nice day.

I had no idea how to get home from this point so I used a pay phone, called a cab and asked the driver how I should get to Toronto. He drove me to a bus station. I got a bus to the local train station where I caught a train to Toronto Union Station. I was exhausted by this time and had to now get a hold of family to pick me up, as they were not expecting me back so soon.

All the way home, all I could think about was how I would not be able to make the show and that I was letting down a Foundation. Then I started to wonder while they were detaining me, who may have gotten through, why on earth would they send me home, what is the world coming to; so many thoughts and feelings.

All of this has left me rather drained but I feel this needs to be addressed, and that the public should know what is happening at our borders these days, Thank you for taking the time to read this, and if you would like to speak with me please feel free to call anytime toll free 1-866-902-6655 or email at authors@soulasylumpoetry.com Yours truly, Ken Cowle.

I'm Canadian, and a poet, what a terrorist,, with my words I might attack you with a rhyme,,, since when is writing down some poetry a bad thing,,, writing poetry has become a brutal crime,,,, :) a misplaced comma, must be code for something nasty,,, a secret message held within, this little rhyme,,, he's Canadian, and a poet with a pen man,,, best be careful when dealing with this poet's mind... :) Kenneth William Cowle



(410) 456-0504
1137 Robin Hill Court - Bel Air, MD 21015
www.HemiFoundation.org

December 1, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Northeast Regional Director of The Hemispherectomy Foundation, a 501(c)3 charity organization dedicated to children and their families who have been impacted by a hemispherectomy brain surgery. This organization is operated strictly by volunteers.

On December 2, 2009, I am hosting a Dreams on Wings Music Benefit for The Hemispherectomy Foundation @ The Tin Angel in Philadelphia, PA. Ken Cowle had offered his time to come to Philadelphia to be an MC for the event. Ken was coming strictly as a volunteer as there are no paid performers or participants in this event. In addition, travel expenses were not being reimbursed as the participants in this event were absorbing those fees as well.

I am truly devastated that Ken will not be able to appear at the Benefit due to the situation that was presented as he attempted to make the trip to Philadelphia on December 1, 2009.

If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jane Stefanik
Northeast Regional Director
The Hemispherectomy Foundation
www.hemifoundation.org
jane@hemifoundation.org
410-456-0504



**United States Department of Homeland Security
Customs and Border Protection
Port of Buffalo, New York**

Dear Traveler / Applicant for Admission:

At this point in time you do not appear to be clearly admissible to the United States as a temporary visitor for pleasure. In order to satisfy U.S. Officials as to your status and intentions, please provide this office with the indicated items below:

Letter what, who, fee + no fee

- Evidence of Employment (recent pay stubs, employee ID, letter from employer, etc).
- Proof of Foreign Residence (recent rent receipts, copy of mortgage, utility bills, etc).
- Evidence of Financial Support (bank statements, savings and checking account statements, income tax report forms, etc).
- Evidence of Financial Assistance (receipts or government correspondence of unemployment insurance, mother's assistance, welfare, disability, etc).
- Evidence of Educational Ties (valid school identification, letter from school officials on school letterhead).
- Utility Bills (recent phone, gas, electric/hydro, bills, etc).
- Income Tax Return Forms (current and past year).
- Confirmed return date (airline tickets, train/bus tickets, date specific).
- Sufficient funds for intended trip (cash, traveler's checks, etc).
- Contact name of family member, friend, or individual who you, the passengers, is/are travelling to see in the U.S.
- Address and/or telephone number where you can be reached in the U.S.
- Other items: _____

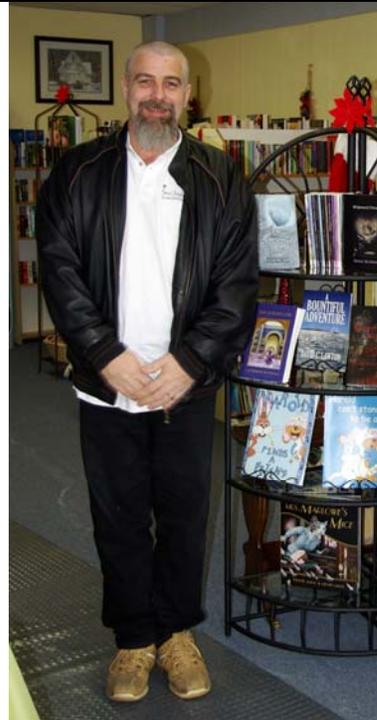
***This list is intended to be used as a guideline only to assist you in returning with the necessary materials to help you sufficiently meet the burden of proof which is incumbent upon you as an applicant for admission to the United States. This list should not be considered to be all-inclusive.

THE FINAL DETERMINATION IS ALWAYS MADE BY AN OFFICER AFTER ALL ITEMS ARE CONSIDERED.

OFFICER WILLIAMS | Temporary



2006 Book Release – Art Gallery



2008 Published Books Retail Display



2008 Book Signing Appearance



2007 Publicity Photo