Love you some Indians

By Rowie Shebala

Everybody in Cleveland loves the Indians. Everybody loves them some Indians.

Love you some Indians. Be the Indian and not the cowboy. Throw on a war bonnet.

Tell me it’s fashion. Tell me how imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Go to your local truckstop. Buy some dream catchers made from China. Hang them onto your rearview mirrors of your Jeep Grand Cherokees, your Pontiacs, your Winnebagos.

And as you drive down I-40 your vehicle will catch the dream’s roadkill by manifest destiny and this whole time where your radio chimes “This land is your land. This land is my land,”

Love you some Indians.

Honor them by making them mascots. Turn them into cartoon characters. Costume yourselves in crimson paint. Use the blood off of redskin smeared all over. Cover every inch.

You are Indian at big black eyes, big smile, and white, white teeth. Don’t forget the fake feathers. Cover your skin.

Don’t tell me it doesn’t come with privilege.

Cover it. Hide like you’re ashamed of pigment, like it separates you from the norm. Tan that hide. Work beneath suns. Make it so scarlet it becomes purple in the shade. Add feathers. Add bows and arrows.

You are Indian.

Now dance.

This stadium is your bonfire.

You are Indian.

Practice your tomahawk chop.

You are Indian.

Welcome the braves that have a higher enlisted rate in our armed forces.

Welcome the Kansas City Chiefs as they make their way to the field for the halftime spectacular.

Welcome the Seminoles as the ghost of Osceola haunts the end fields.

Washington Redskins, don’t change your title. Instead, hashtag Redskins pride. Make social media our battleground.

We all know that Indians don’t have Twitter accounts. We still use smoke signals.

Applaud the Chief Wahoo’s bright white chompers as it casts your reflection on how to love you some Indians.

Go paint the down. Double-coat over history. Whitewash the red bricks of the reservation.

Let’s have Indian days in our school. Use November to teach our students the turkey dance with colored construction paper, headdresses, and tepees.

Now go home. Wash off the paint. Go back to your thinking that you honored your team, back to thinking that you honored the Indian.

We are only costumes. back to thinking that you only find us in western and Disney films.

Go back to thinking that we only exist in history books.

Go back to thinking that all of this was just fun and games.

Now shake my hand and ignore how your fingers lasso around my wrist, tying us to our ancestors.

Yet we still survive.

Now tell me how you loved you an Indian.