An Invitation to the Founding Circle

To my fellow Hoodoos,

If you are reading this letter, you have been hand-selected.

I want you to understand that this selection has very little to do with the size of your following, the recognition you have received, or the extent of your spiritual knowledge. You have been chosen because, in the ways you move through this world, you have demonstrated something I believe to be far more important.

You embody *love* in one of its highest expressions: care for your people.

There is a tenderness in the way you regard our communities. A sense of responsibility that extends beyond yourself. A willingness to preserve what has been entrusted to us while remaining mindful of those who will inherit it. There is a *safety* you extend to others... a quality of presence that allows people to feel seen, respected, and cared for.

I believe these qualities are fundamental to everything that may come of this invitation because whatever we build together must begin with the kind of people we are willing to be *to one another.*

I have spent considerable time thinking about the future of Black Americans. About the circumstances of our present, the inheritance of our past, and the world we are preparing for those who will come after us. I suspect I am not alone in this contemplation.

There is something stirring among our people. Perhaps you have felt it, too.
I see it in the renewed interest in our histories, in the desire to recover what has been obscured, and in conversations about our collective future. And I have been thinking about us. The “Hoodoos.”

Our tradition was born of circumstances that demanded ingenuity, endurance, adaptation, and an extraordinary commitment to survival. Our ancestors cultivated ways of tending to the body, protecting the home, preserving relationships, navigating danger, and making life possible under conditions designed to deny them so much of it.

There is a reason this inheritance has endured, and I believe we have responsibilities that extend beyond preserving its memory. We must protect the **integrity** of our tradition. We must ensure its continuity. **And we must consider what it means to place the knowledge, relationships, and capacities we have inherited *in service of* the Black American communities from which this tradition emerged.**

Preservation. Continuity. Collective responsibility.

These are the three commitments that have brought me to this letter. I am inviting you to imagine what might become possible if we organized around them.

What I Am Envisioning

I have been considering the establishment of a nationally coordinated Black American institution, one capable of connecting communities across regions, identifying shared priorities, mobilizing resources, and developing initiatives that produce tangible improvements in our people's lives. An institution concerned with education, economic security, cultural preservation, community ownership, and the holistic well-being of our people. One that recognizes hope, joy, love, and the freedom to imagine fulfilling lives as essential to the futures we are building for ourselves, our children, and the generations who will follow.

I imagine a network in which communities retain the freedom to respond to their particular circumstances while contributing to a larger, shared undertaking. We would identify a small number of collective priorities, perhaps one to three at a time, and work toward them across our respective regions. The initiatives themselves would reflect local needs, existing resources, and the knowledge of the people who live there.

Why Begin With the Hoodoos?

Because I believe that, at its very foundation, Hoodoo was cultivated to sustain our people. Born of the material realities of Black American life, our tradition provided ways to protect our communities, preserve our relationships, navigate oppression, and secure a future for generations yet to come. I believe this responsibility to our collective survival and continuity is woven into the very fabric of our practice.

There is also a practical reason I have chosen to begin here. As I considered how to discreetly organize Black Americans across the country, I struggled with how to identify those who shared our particular ancestral lineage. Then I thought of the Hoodoos. This is a tradition created by our people, for our people, and within it, I already have relationships with practitioners across the country who share that inheritance. We possess a foundation of trust, cultural understanding, and communal responsibility from which to begin.

Beyond our shared ancestry, I believe there is value in the ways our tradition has taught us to understand responsibility. We recognize that tending to our own lives and households exists alongside obligations to our communities. We understand that preservation requires participation, that knowledge must be carried forward, and that the well-being of those who come after us is inseparable from the choices we make today. These are principles I would hope to see reflected in the institution we build together.

I believe we are particularly well positioned to initiate this work, drawing upon an ancestral tradition devoted to our people's future. My intention is to spend the first year or two establishing a foundation among trusted Hoodoo practitioners, developing our shared commitments, regional structures, and community initiatives before welcoming Black Americans from all walks of life, including educators, scholars, artists, entrepreneurs, organizers, and community leaders. Ultimately, I envision an institution belonging to our broader Black American community. The relationships we establish now would become the foundation of something much larger, capable of serving our communities for generations to come. We would simply be the ones willing to begin.

The Seven Regions

I have been exploring an initial organizing framework informed by the historical geographies of Hoodoo, our ancestral relationships to land and water, and the migration corridors through which Black Americans carried our traditions across the country.

At present, I am considering seven provisional regions:

1. **Tidewater & Chesapeake:** Virginia Tidewater, Hampton Roads, the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, Delaware, northeastern North Carolina, and the historic Upper South.
2. **Carolina–Georgia Lowcountry:** The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, coastal North and South Carolina, Georgia's Sea Islands, Savannah, Charleston, Jacksonville, and northeastern Florida.
3. **Southern Black Belt:** Inland communities of the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, and historically Black agricultural communities of the interior South.
4. **Lower Mississippi & Gulf:** The Mississippi Delta, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Orleans, coastal Mississippi, Gulf Coast Alabama, East Texas, and Florida's Gulf Coast.
5. **Northeastern Migration Corridor:** New York City, Long Island, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and historic Black northeastern communities.
6. **Great Lakes & Midwest:** Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, the Ohio River Valley, and surrounding Midwestern communities.
7. **Western Migration Corridor:** Los Angeles, Oakland, the San Francisco Bay Area, California's Central Valley, Seattle, Portland, Nevada, Arizona, and historic Black western communities.

These are starting points for collective consideration, with their boundaries and representation to be refined through historical scholarship, ancestral knowledge, and the experiences of our communities. I envision regional councils operating within a shared organizational framework while retaining the flexibility to address their communities' distinct needs. Together, these councils would coordinate their efforts toward the priorities we establish as a national institution.

The Founding Circle

This is where you come in =) I am inviting a small group of practitioners to consider becoming the **Founding Circle** of this undertaking. Our initial responsibility would be to determine whether this vision is one we believe is worth pursuing and, if so, to develop its foundations together. We would establish our shared commitments, governance procedures, leadership expectations, regional structures, accountability mechanisms, and the process through which collective priorities would be selected. **I also envision a Council of Elders and Cultural Stewards:** individuals whose experience, historical knowledge, wisdom, and demonstrated service would help us remain attentive to the inheritance we are responsible for carrying forward. Beyond offering guidance, this council would serve as an essential mechanism of institutional accountability, providing independent oversight, safeguarding our collective commitments, and ensuring that authority remains answerable to the communities we serve. Together, we would determine its responsibilities, the limits of its authority, and the procedures through which every participant, regardless of reputation, influence, or standing, remains accountable to the collective.

I am particularly concerned with the ethics of what we build. We have witnessed the ways influence, spiritual authority, and even a history of community service can be used to excuse harm. I do not believe that someone's contributions should ever purchase them immunity from accountability. If love and care are to be the foundation of this institution, they must be reflected in our procedures, our relationships, and our willingness to protect one another. **I envision a covenant of collective care and responsibility, developed by the Founding Circle, that establishes our ethical commitments and the standards to which we will hold ourselves.** ***Our love for our people must be evident in the institutions we create for them.***

A Shared Direction

One principle I feel strongly about is that our regions should operate within a common framework. We may have different histories, resources, challenges, and community needs, but we should be able to identify a small number of shared priorities and coordinate our efforts toward them.

Perhaps one year we concentrate on intergenerational economic security. Another year, cultural preservation or educational opportunity. The precise priorities would emerge from collective deliberation and the needs identified within our communities.

A council in California may approach a shared priority differently from one in the Carolinas or Mississippi. That is to be expected. **What matters is that we are building toward something together.** Each council would develop tangible initiatives with designated responsibilities, timelines, funding strategies, and ways of measuring what has been accomplished. I want us to be able to look back after a year and identify what has changed because we chose to work in concert. I want those efforts to become the foundation upon which future generations can continue building.

A Word About Who Is Writing

You may be wondering who has sent you this letter.

For now, I have chosen to leave my name out of the initial correspondence. I want you to encounter the vision before the person extending the invitation. My identity will be made known to those who choose to participate in the founding conversations.

I have **no** desire to become the face or singular voice of a movement. I do not imagine myself as the person who should direct the lives or aspirations of our people. My role, as I understand it, is to facilitate: to bring people into conversation, recognize possibilities for connection, and help establish the conditions through which people with different knowledge, experiences, and capacities might build something together.

I am a Black American Hoodoo practitioner who loves our people, honors our inheritance, and believes deeply in our capacity to create futures worthy of those who will come after us. I am also aware that I do not possess every skill or perspective this undertaking would require. That is precisely why I am writing to you.

An Invitation

If what I have shared resonates with you, I invite you to express your interest in participating in our initial founding conversations. There is no expectation that you commit yourself to an institution that has yet to be established. The first step is simply to gather those willing to consider its possibilities with seriousness, care, and *imagination*.

You will find a link to our website in the email accompanying this letter. There, you can complete the Founding Circle expression-of-interest form, identify the region with which you are most closely connected, share the knowledge and experiences you might contribute, and offer your perspective on the needs of our communities.

In December, those who express interest can expect further correspondence requesting their availability for our first virtual gathering in January 2027, along with an opportunity to contribute to our inaugural meeting agenda. My hope is that we enter that first conversation prepared to listen, exchange ideas, and begin determining what we might build together.

I also ask that you exercise discretion and discernment in sharing this letter with one Black American Hoodoo practitioner whom you know and **trust.** Consider someone whose character, care for our people, and willingness to serve would make them a meaningful contributor to this conversation.

I believe the future of our people deserves more than our concern. It deserves our imagination, our labor, our resources, and our willingness to care for one another in ways that can be felt beyond our individual lifetimes. Our ancestors made provisions for futures they would never see. I believe we are capable of doing the same.

With love, reverence, and hope,
A fellow Hoodoo

To respond: *Visit the website linked in your invitation email and complete the Founding Circle expression-of-interest form.*