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4-17-2015

### Statement gathered at the Maine Correctional Center, Windham, Maine, April 17, 2015

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### Focus Groups – General Information

**Community:** Inmates at Maine Correctional Center

**Date:** April 17, 2015

**Moderator:** Rachel George

**Commissioner:** N/A

**Topic:** Reconciliation, Justice and Trauma

#### **Participants**

1. Travis McDonald (TMc)
2. Clarence Meeks (CM)
3. Travis Murphy (TM)

#### **Recording**

**RG:** It is April 17, 2015. We're here at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham, Maine. My name is Rachel George and I'm here today with --

**TRAVIS MCDONALD:** Travis McDonald.

**CLARENCE MEEKS:** Clarence Meeks.

**RG:** The file number is FG-C-201503-0015. Travis, have you been informed, understood and signed --

**TMc:** Yes I have.

**RG:** Clarence, have you been informed, understood --

**CM:** I have.

**RG:** Excellent, and I have to let each of you know that if at any point during this recording, you indicate that there is a child or an elder currently in need of protection or there is imminent risk of serious bodily harm or death to an identifiable person or group, including yourselves, that that information may not be protected as confidential.



**TMc:** Okay.

**RG:** Do you understand?

**CM:** Yes.

**TMc:** I understand.

**RG:** Excellent. So the focus of this group today is to talk about historical injustice and what your perceptions of justice are for things that have happened in the past to Native people across the country and across the nation, or the North American continent. But I wanted to start off by asking what your thoughts are on improvements that can be made to the child welfare system, taking into consideration your involvement, your personal involvement, familial involvement, whether it be somebody like a friend that you saw go through the system. What things you would like to see changed or thinking about your experience, what would have helped you?

**TMc:** Some things I would like them to improve on is, for little Native kids, for them to actually understand their heritage.

**CM:** Yeah, that's the biggest thing. Kids lose track of their heritage. So it should be about kids.

**RG:** Absolutely. How would you like to see either the department or tribal child welfare work on connecting kids back to their heritage for kids that go into the system?

**TMc:** I know some tribal groups that have youth groups or whatever, and for the kids that are in state's custody, they should be able to participate in them youth groups. Help them to know more about it.

**RG:** That's excellent. Anything else you'd like to add? Any other recommendations that you think would help improve the child welfare system?

**TMc:** If they could stay with family, that would be great, but it's hard staying...

**RG:** Absolutely... Okay so I know that through this group's meetings, both with Tom and with Esther, you guys had talked a little bit about intergenerational trauma and past historical experiences and how that has impacted you individually as well as your family. I also know that you guys have a very conventional (western conventional) understanding of what the justice system is. (*collective laughs*) So I'm wondering, I guess, some of the ways that justice can happen for things that have happened in the past there, or apologies that can be made or reparations that can be paid. You can also have bodies like truth and reconciliation commissions, which were established to identify things that happened, and kind of set the

record straight on what experiences have been. So I guess I'm wondering what you guys' perception is and what works for Native communities? What doesn't work, whether even trying to fit it into this kind of western idea of what justice is, if that's something that's beneficial for Wabanaki communities?

**TMc:** That's a good question.

**RG:** Or I can start back and say from what you know about each of your communities, what were your traditional forms of justice? Do you know what that looked like before?

**TMc:** No, not really, no.

**CM:** Well, the Cherokees, they would take and cut half the nose off the women if they committed adultery. It was harsh, but that's how they were. I'm glad it's changed. Everything changes.

**RG:** So when you think back about various wrongdoings that have happened in the past, forcing Native kids into residential schools, forced removal from traditional homelands, as a Native person, if the government, the nation's government, the US government, offered an apology, a formal apology said in front of how ever many people, might be broadcasted, would that feel significant or be sufficient justice for what happened?

**TMc:** Not really.

**RG:** Why?

**TMc:** Because you can't make up for all those lost years that happened.

**CM:** Because every generation is different. They're founded on different beliefs, different settings... drugs and alcohol has influenced them. So yeah, it would take more than that.

**RG:** What would you like to see happen? What would feel like enough?

**CM:** The government to understand what it's like to have everything taken away from it.

**TMc:** I'd like to see them give back what they took, then that would be fine.

**RG:** Talk to me a little bit more about what that would look like.

**CM:** Give them back their lands.

**RG:** Are you envisioning it goes way back to a point where we put all the non-Native people onto a boat and sent them back to wherever they came from?



**TMc:** No, just to give back the land that we owned that they took and now only can stay at this certain place. We can only have that reservation or that reservation, that's just ridiculous!

**RG:** Did Tom talk to you guys about the concept of reservations and how that worked?

**TMc:** No.

**RG:** Okay. So I can give you a little bit of a background history to it. Basically, what happened is the government came in and wanted to settle the continent and how can you settle a continent when you have a bunch of people living all over the place? So their theory was to put the Native groups into a small plot of land, the same way that they would theoretically be doing for the non-Native people. It was also kind of, in many cases, a section of the treaty that came through that this was the plot of land that you were going to get in exchange for whatever. Oftentimes, the land that Native people were pushed onto was very unprofitable. So... now that I started talking about this I don't remember where I was going with it...

**CM:** Reservations...

**RG:** I know... But I don't remember why I was making that point about reservations. Oh, why the state has a reservation system... Often, you'll also find a lot of contention when tribal lands start to yield natural resources. If we were to remove this kind of concept of what reservation lands look like, specifically in the state of Maine, what would you like to see the state give back?

**TMc:** I'd like them... the land they took, I would just like for them to give that back so we don't just have to live in one certain area.

**CM:** I don't know much about Maine. All I know is the black hills of South Dakota and the flat lands of Kentucky. Every tribe has got their own set rules. Sometimes, they get marched off.... That's the hardest part is when you've got to relocate to a place you don't want to go. Whether it's good or bad. They should just leave them alone.

**TMc:** Going back to that thing about the child welfare, I was thinking about improvement. They shouldn't break up their families. That was the worst thing I've experienced when I went. I ended up not staying with my sister that was going a couple years in. After, in the state care, I went back and met with my sisters. My little sister, she was a baby and she was a toddler, it was just weird. I didn't like that....

Then no matter how much money the government gives you, it ain't going to make up for everything in the past. It's just crazy. Even though I didn't live it, it's still, I don't know how to put it. There's a lot of people that's prejudice. That's the hardest thing to deal with, especially when you're going to school, it's hard sometimes. Because I watched my cousin get picked on the whole time he was in school. It was crazy.

**RG:** How can we, as a collective group, move past that prejudice? How would you recommend that we move past it? ... I guess...

**CM:** Patience and practice on both sides.

**TMc:** I know, yeah. They use it so much towards us, it's like we're starting to get prejudice towards them. I know a lot of Native people that's prejudice.

**RG:** So, I guess, if the government, in a theoretical, hypothetical situation were to offer a formal apology, whereas to put in place a truth commission that talked about everything that happened and wasn't teaching children from inaccurate historical textbooks, if they were to offer reparations for things like counseling services and whatever, how could we, as a nation, still move forward? How can we, as a nation, moved passed the deep ingrained prejudice? What would you recommend? ...

All right, so Travis is joining us now. Travis, have you been informed, understood, and signed the consent form?

**TRAVIS MURPHY:** Yes.

**RG:** Excellent, and I have to let you know that if at any point during this recording, you indicate that there is a child or an elder currently in need of protection, or there is imminent risk of serious bodily harm or death to an identifiable person or group, including yourself, that that information may not be protected as confidential.

**TM:** Yes.

**RG:** So, we started off talking about recommendations for how to improve the child welfare system. I'm wondering if there is anything that you would like to add? How would you like to see this improved? What would have worked for you?

**TM:** First, sorry I'm late. Second, I still have to wake up a little bit. You mean as in the child welfare, how to improve it?

**RG:** Yes.

**TM:** I really don't know how it works right now. I haven't really dealt with it in a long time, myself. How I would have like to seen it improved back then, I don't know, as it would pertain to now would be keeping contact with your siblings and your family. That would be, for me, that would be number 1. I guess that would be pretty much it for me.

**RG:** Alright... So, we also talked about, a little bit about historical injustice and what you think would work to provide justice for Native people for something that happened a long time



ago. So, knowing that the traditional justice system wouldn't necessarily work, for example nobody is going to be putting Richard Henry Pratt, who started the Carlisle School, one of the most famous residential schools in the US, no one's going to be putting him on trial, because he's not alive. So what forms of justice would... do you think would help Native people for something that has happened in the past?

**TM:** That is almost a loaded question at it's core. Give me my land back! No, I don't really know.

**TMc:** That was the first thing I said.

**TM:** What did you guys say?

**TMc:** That was the first thing I said, that we should have the land back.

**TM:** I don't believe we should just have our land back. Maybe, give us more of what we were told that we were going to have back. They can't go back and say oh, there's an Indian no, he signed it, so therefore it's ours. They can't do that because it wasn't his to give away. They didn't go and ask the whole tribe. They didn't ask everybody if, you know, in their language, can I have this land for the rest of our lives, forever and you will never get it back and this is what we want. Then that would have been a better conversation for them, back 387 years ago or wherever they took it from whoever or wherever. That would have been a little bit better. Some tribes probably were asked, the whole of them. They probably did give them a certain amount of land, but then they kept getting bigger, more people came and they were like, well, we're just going to take more. Then it just happened, there's nobody there, so we're just going to take it, and it just got worse and worse as more settlers came. Really, now it's at the point of what are you going to do about it because the Sioux hasn't give up any rights and they won't give nothing back.

**RG:** So what I hear you saying, and I don't want to put words in your mouth, so tell me if I'm wrong, is that the state or the US government isn't respecting or abiding by the treaties that they signed. Is that correct?

**TM:** Yeah, well, I mean, back then yeah. But now, like in 1980, for the Passamaquoddys, we voted for it and we gave all our stuff up. I mean, it was like the whole two thirds, or like a quarter of the -- like a third of the state. It was a big amount. We still got issues with Canada or whatever, but... we just gave it up in 1980. I was 1 year old. I would have voted no, but they didn't ask me, so, I mean, what are you going to do? Ours, we're done. Passamaquoddys, we're done. We got what we got and that's what we got right now. But we... we're, you know, we're doing tit for tat right now about fishing rights and all that stuff and we should have it. It should be allowed. But, a lot of tribes, they still haven't given up their rights and they still won't give it back, which in a sense, they should. But I'm just me and I'm nobody,



so I really don't count. I could be a voice a little bit, but you know, I just (*inaudible*) for my tribe.

**RG:** So what does justice look like for the Passamaquoddy nation?

**TM:** Well, for us, it -- I don't... I really don't know, I think we sold it mostly. I don't really... We wanted money at that point, and I really don't know what kind of recourse we have right now with their courts and stuff. I mean, let alone, their courts. I still don't even know how to understand our courts in here. Don't make no sense. Because I'm in prison here, and it's like, they tell you one thing, and it's like, okay, I do that, then they tell me another thing, and it's like, okay, I do that and then I go too far on both ends. I like to meet in the middle still and then they come up with some other reason why I can't get out of a write up or whatever. None of it makes -- I still don't get it. I still don't understand their concept, how it works in here. I'm just used to how I grew up on the res. And it just... I don't know, it's weird. I still don't get this place. It's weird. But justice? I don't see any.

**RG:** Can you tell me why you don't see any? I mean, the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act, there we go, had to spell it out in my head, addressed, I mean, part of the issue, but it didn't address everything that has happened to the Passamaquoddys or to the Micmac or Maliseet or the Penobscot.

**TM:** No, I guess it was mostly for --

**RG:** Actually, I shouldn't say that, because it really didn't address anything to do with the Micmac community.

**TMc:** Yeah, I don't know. I don't know much about my --

**TM:** Yeah, it didn't touch anything Micmac because Micmac was mostly Canada. They scraped probably some of Northern Maine and east -- Northeastern, way up Northeastern. They probably had territory up there a little bit, but so little they didn't want to address it for Maine. I'm not really --

**RG:** That's why recognition didn't come for the Micmac community until later.

**TM:** Yeah, I'm not really sure exactly how that worked out, but I mean, I'm sure they went to Mount Katahdin too. I wouldn't doubt that one bit. But it was mostly Passamaquoddy, Penobscot and Maliseet.

**RG:** So it addressed part of the issue, (TM:part of the issue) but there's still a tremendous amount of injustice.





**TM:** I don't even understand how that all worked out 100%, myself, but as far as I knew we got --

**TMc:** They tricked us, pretty much.

**TM:** Yeah. Again, it was all lawyer talk and stuff. We just learned how to vote. Well, they just allowed us to vote, rather.

**RG:** So... You don't see justice for here?

**TM:** I don't see any. I don't see them wanting to give us any.

**RG:** But what would you want to see?

**TM:** I really don't -- a little more land for our tribe and a little more freedom. I guess that would probably be helpful.

**RG:** What would you like to see for your community knowing that the Maine Indian Claims Settlement didn't apply to the Micmac community, that their agreement and federal recognition didn't come until 1991, I believe?

**TMc:** I would just like to see them actually give -- I can't say give because they won't... Honestly I don't know... That is a tough question. I don't know there's a lot of things that -- I don't know.

**RG:** What would you like to see? Not... Let's create a perfect world, what would you like to see? Don't think about what the government won't do, because they won't do a lot of things. What would you like to see them do?

**TMc:** Like Travis said, I'd like to see them all our rights back and not force us on reservations. But they can't give us back the land, we can't move there because people have already settled. You know what I mean? There's people there. I don't know...

**RG:** Clarence, you're Cherokee, is that right? What would you like to see for the Cherokee people?

**CM:** It's hard. It's hard to say because the Cherokees, they got marched 570 miles from their homeland to Oklahoma City. I don't think they're going to give them back their land. I don't know.

**RG:** So what I'm hearing is a lot of frustration.

**TMc and CM:** Yeah.



**RG:** A lot of identity tied to the land. That's where your communities are. So, knowing that, Native people still have to live in the state, in the country with non-Native people and we can't continue to be adversaries the entire time. How can we work towards reconciliation? Why don't we start talking about what reconciliation means. What does it look like to you in an ideal world? And then we can talk about how we can move to that.

**TM:** Anybody going first?

**TMc:** You.

**TM:** Oh, okay, yeah, get the guy that talks a little bit. I guess it would be like -- 'cause right now, I really don't have a lot of problem with the "white" people now. I really... It's only pockets of a handful of areas like down where I live, where they're really racist. I mean, I feel it, I know it, it's whatever. A lot of white people that I deal with don't have, don't really have a problem with Native Americans, as it is, per say, today. I mean, it's not... It's like 'yeah, we fucking took your land.' I hear that once in a while in ignorant people. But it's nothing that I have to reconcile with them because technically, it wasn't them that did anything. They did nothing. But, if it came down to it, it would be, back then, they probably would have done the same thing, I'm sure, some of them. But um... All they did, technically was reap the benefits of what their ancestor did and now, now they have inherited land. They have inherited money. I call it -- I'm kind of a little bit of an asshole, but I call it white money. Because, dudes come out of the commissary all day long, every week. Hundred sack, hundred sack, every single week. I go over there and I get 8 sugars. I just get the 8 sugars to be an ass. Because they've got to package it up and do the paperwork and I just think it's funny. So, I'm sitting there and I'm like, man, it must be nice. And like 'For what?' 'To have white money.' And it's really not a funny thing, because that's what they're reaping and it is what it is. You can't paint it any other way. Their family directly, I mean, some of them. I'm not saying all of them, but more than likely, their family directly profited for what happened in Maine say, 327 years ago, or whatever the numbers are. We were half way done with small pox. I mean, probably, the Passamaquoddys were a little larger, so we absorbed some of the tribes that didn't make it and are now extinct. Same thing, with the Penobscots and the Micmacs were the biggest. So they were in Canada. They were all along the shores and stuff, and they were the largest, I believe. I know they are now, they've got about 30,000 now, or whatever the numbers are. I'm not sure exactly. I see it all the time. It's just weird how I deal with it.

**RG:** Do you think there's a knowledge or an understanding by non-Native people about the way that they benefit from the ways that Native people have --

**TM:** Oh, yeah. I've got guys that tease me about it sometimes and they're like, thanks for the land, Indian.

**RG:** But collectively, is there an understanding?



**TM:** I believe so.... They've got to know. They can't be just like -- I mean, some people feel bad about it or whatever and some... It's unfortunate, but yes, I think some of the people know about it and just like, 'eh, well we got it now, whatever. What are you going to do about it?' Do you know what I'm saying? We can't rise up and take it. It would be nice, but it ain't going to happen. It's a good idea.

**TMc:** Well, no.

**TM:** No, it's just nothing that's going to -- I don't see us doing anything about it, for the most part. I mean the Sioux, the Sioux Indians that are trying like hell and the state's pushing back, they don't care. (TMc: That's crazy). Yeah... It's insane, it really is. I mean, Cherokee has a better chance at it than we do because they have -- well I've seen the Almanac, it's like 800,000. They don't have 800,000 Cherokees. It's probably more like 400 ish and they have a better chance at doing something about it than we do. Because they're such a large tribe.

**CM:** It's a well known tribe.

**TM:** Yeah. Everybody wants to be Cherokee because of the song. Whatever. (CM laughs) Every time I see someone, 'hey I'm Cherokee, (*inaudible*), I'm full blood.' I'm like, good for you. It's like, have a nice day. Everybody puts down Cherokee. I mean, I've seen the numbers. They don't compute. They've got roughly about 400,000.

**CM:** They've got several different reservations.

**TM:** Yeah, well, I mean they got 400,000 people that are like at least, a quarter, or a sixteenth or more. That's a lot of people. They have a better chance at anything than the Passamaquoddys do, per say.

**CM:** Only the strong survive.

**TM:** Well, we all are pretty strong.

**RG:** You're still here.

**TM:** We are. I think we'll survive one way or another.

**RG:** So what does reconciliation mean to you?

**TMc:** Just for like, people nowadays, to just stop being so ignorant and stupid. Ignorance and stupidity is the biggest thing for me. What about you, Clarence?

**CM:** I don't know how to answer that. (*inaudible*)

**TM:** I kind of went off topic on that. Didn't I?

**RG:** It's okay.

**TM:** A little bit. Okay, reconciliation. I think they probably might do something one day. They'll be like, we screwed up. They might say here...

**RG:** Would you want that? Would you want them to come, them meaning non-Native people, like the government, would you want them to make an apology or pay reparations? That was part of the discussion that we had before.

**TM:** They did apologize. Barack Obama apologized. (*TMc: When?*) One man. But, I mean it's great, thank you. But, I mean, okay, what's next?

**RG:** What would you want to be next?

**TM:** To reconcile with all native people of North America, Jesus, I mean, give us bigger swaths of land back, even if it has roads and towns in it, whatever. We're not going to run into the town and say give me your house or I'm going to scalp you. Scalping is kinda grotesque and odd, but I ain't going to go and do that stuff. But I mean... Yeah, that would be my best guess. Then everybody in the town, well their taxes are a little lower now. You know, if they wanna run it however they want, whether we cut counties in half or whatever. I don't know how they want to work at -- that would be a good start. That would probably end it. That, and give us up to whatever -- well, we sold some of our rights. I mean, we're kind of screwed, but most tribes give it back, for something decent. Like, here you go, here's 4 or 5 states. No. For whatever tribe, give them back something decent. What they should have for their size and their area. I would like to see that. That'd be good. That would be a really good start. Not only start, that would be half way or 3 quarters of the way where we want to be. That would be my ideal.

**TMc:** You know what would be nice, if they taught a little more about it in school. Not just the... the reality points of it, not just what Columbus or whoever seen, more truthful than anything, that'd be nice.

**RG:** Absolutely.

**TM:** I hate Columbus.

**TMc:** Yeah. We celebrate it. That's crazy!

**TM:** I don't.

**TMc:** No, I don't either.



**TM:** You know what the funny thing is, my daughter will have to go to Columbus Day in school now, because she lives off res. I'm like, ah man, I don't even know how to explain to anybody how annoying that is. But, I don't know....That's just me. Sorry. *(TMc: That's alright)...*Clarence?

**CM:** What? *(small chuckle)*

**RG:** We can continue talking about what justice looks like, what you would like to see happen. Or we can talk about what you guys understand intergenerational trauma to be.

**TM:** Well, what about you? What would you like to see? All the injustice, what would like to see?

**RG:** I'm asking the questions, not answering them.

**TM:** Well, I was curious, because you're in it with us, too. You signed the paper, right? *(indicating the consent form)*

**RG:** No.

**TM:** Don't lie.

**RG:** I didn't sign the papers. I mean, I signed them as the moderator, but --

**TM:** But you're all in there. What would you like to see?

**RG:** I try to keep my opinions out of it.

**TM:** Well, you're in Canada. You guys are both in Canada, so what we can't -- we're -- he's down in the south. I'm all East. They think I live in Yonkers how I talk. I live on the res. But you guys are from the most eastern tribe in Canada, and the most western tribes in Canada. So that has got to be an odd combination, in itself.

*(CM chuckles)*

**TM:** So...

**TMc:** I've only been up to big cove once. That was for a pow wow. That was all right. Different, a lot different than they have down here.

**TM:** Yeah.

**TMc:** A lot different.



**TM:** Yeah. Bigger.

**TMc:** Yeah.

**TM:** More tribal.

**TMc:** Yeah. A lot more drumming bands. It's nice.

**TM:** German bands?

**TMc:** Drumming bands. It's nice.

**TM:** Passamaquoddy's more like a, it's turned more like into a show.

**TMc:** That's how it is, yeah up in my... in Presque Isle.

**TM:** And selling vendors and stuff. It's like, okay, whatever.

**TMc:** But up in Canada, it's nice. They just drum, dane, don't matter, it's nice. Good gathering.

**TM:** And then you've got --

**RG:** The west coast? I think that there needs to be a combination of justice initiatives. I don't think we can just offer an apology or just pay reparations or just have a truth commission. I think it has to be a combination because each of those addresses something. Don't don't all address one -- or everything. One doesn't address everything, there we go. Yeah, I don't know. I try to keep this out. I try to keep my opinions out of it. I'm just in here to listen.

**TM:** But you're allowed to talk though. That's allowed.

**RG:** That's true. I can talk. But I just choose not to.

**TM:** I won't make you talk if you don't want to.

**RG:** I know that it's also very hard to address and work towards reconciliation when there's ongoing injustices. I think there needs to be a collaborative effort at looking at what's actually going on all the time. I think that the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act needs to be looked at and I think it's all well intentioned to have something address one thing, to offer an apology for something that happened in the past. If you look at one issue, what will you have, people that are still fighting for fishing rights. I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done.



**TM:** Oh yeah. If we had 30 -- how many African Americans in this country now? 80 million? Ah, shit what the hell's the number? 30%. I don't even know where that number comes up to. If we had 30% of the people in this country, they would have a serious issue. They would know that they have to deal with it. Period.

**RG:** They still need to deal with it.

**TM:** I understand that, but we don't have 30 million people. We have less than 10. That comes up to like 8 and a half or 8 -- 7 and a half, 7.9 or 8.9 or whatever. It's a lot smaller.

**RG:** Why do you think that is?

**TM:** Well, because we've been half wiped out. The fact of the matter remains is that we have so few people now. They don't think we're going to be a problem. They can keep controlling us, and how they are. That's one of the biggest reasons. Because we don't put up a big enough noise. It's just a few people walking down Main Street in Calais with masks and stuff. You know, pull that mask off. Show them who you are. You're Native American. But, there's not enough people, and where you don't have enough people behind microphones, like Al Sharpton and his racist rants and stuff. We don't want to go that route, but I mean, we need somebody close to that.

**RG:** Can you guys talk to me about Blood Quantum and how that plays into it?

**TM:** It plays into if, for me personally, excuse me guys. I don't know how you guys perceive it. For me, after I read that No Dog -- what the hell's that -- that book that I read? No uh... what the hell was it? Nor Wolf Nor Dog. That was an awesome book. It was one of the best books I've ever read as it pertains to Native Americans. The old man was talking and he said -- he's full blooded Sioux, Lakota, I think it was Lakota. What he was talking was it doesn't matter how much you have, as if you are Native American. 'cause, you're not -- like, for me, I look, I can pass as white if I wanted to. They'd look at me, they'd be like, oh jeez, look at you. You tan in the wintertime? No. Oh, you must be from the west Indies or somewhere that the people are a little darker and they look a little off, but that's me. I can try to pass as white, most people won't really notice. Some people pick up on it and they're like, yeah you're Native right? I was like, yeah. They were like, I could tell, I thought so. But, I'm just around half and that's kind of a blessing in disguise. I don't get yelled at, 'hey you fucking Indian,' and all that shit. That would be not good. I probably would have gotten into a lot more fights than I probably wanted to. But umm... Blood Quantum for me would be anybody that recognizes as Native American that has blood in them, that has relatives that are Native American. That would be they're Native, whether they look Mexican or almost full blooded or they look mostly white. You know what I mean? They're Native American. 'Cause I mean, for me, I'm not going to be fully integrated or accepted as part of a white society. I'm always going to have that issue where, let's give it to the Indian. He's probably hungry or something. You know what I mean? It's annoying as shit. But I know... I know... But when I read that





book, I was like that's exactly what I deal with all the time. It's a pain in the ass. So I get, hey Indian, Chief. I'm like, you've got to be kidding me, really?

**TMc:** That's one that I hate, when they say Chief.

**TM:** I'm like, here we go. All right, what do you need white wisachu. Or Anglais Man. It's annoying as hell, but I accept it. I accept their ignorance and whatever, but Blood Quantum to me is anybody that's Native and will and can be accepted by Native people. If your full blooded white, there's no point in being like, hey I'm half whatever. It's like, dude, all your ancestors are from EnglanO, it's like really? Rr France. It's like, come on man. I'm like whatever, you can come hang out with us, but it feels weird.

**CM:** It does.

**TM:** But, whatever, that's what I think. I like that book.

**TMc:** Never read it.

**TM:** You've got to read it.

**TMc:** So what does that Blood Quantum mean?

**TM:** Blood Quantum means what percentage are you. You're about 3 quarters, roughly? I'm just under half. I don't know what the hell the number is. I have a bunch of white people in my family and it brings me down to roughly about half. Then south of the border here, *TMc: laughs*, South of the Boarder. *Laughs.*) He's I don't know, but he's probably a quarter or half or whatever and his people are all over the place. Right? See, you've got the beard too. Half piece. But yeah...Oh, and whatever accepts you into the tribe. Say Passamaquoddys, we accept a quarter and above for tribal affiliations or tribal issues.

**RG:** It's a federal thing. All tribes --

**TM:** Have to have a number.

**RG:** -- have to have -- you have to be a quarter to be a tribal member.

**TM:** Depending on what tribe it is. Some tribes will accept a sixteenth or something. You start getting more than thirty second and like that, it's like, 'your less Native. But you're more white' and they won't accept you. Or they're not allowed to accept you. They can if they want to and you can be there, but federally you're not allowed to be accepted for the tribe.

**TMc:** Anybody with any Native blood should be able to in my opinion.





**TM:** Yeah, if you're in a family and it just got pushed down --

**TMc:** Right, even if it's a long way down the line, it don't matter, it's still running in your veins.

**TM:** Yeah, like say my greatgrand- no my grandfather was a quarter Sioux and my Dad was a sixteenth and that makes me a thirty second. 'Hey snowflake,' you know what I mean? But that would probably be what they call me. 'Hey snowflake. Ckuwi! (*Passamaquoddy Word*)' Yeah, I'd run over and we'd do our reindeer games or whatever, but I would have been on the res, probably. But he moved off and my father ended up in Calais somehow. I don't know how. But he ended up with my Mom, which she was almost full blooded Passamaquoddy, and here I am. Yay. I'm the fastest swimmer... So, that's Blood Quantum. Well, they make the tribes do it. The tribes pretty much do whatever they want, in a sense. Some of them do. The Passamaquoddys, we wouldn't let you come and get your teeth fixed or --

**TMc:** Yeah, for healthcare or whatever.

**TM:** You couldn't get the house and the discounts on living, standards and all that crap. But you could say hey you know, oh, your great-great-grandfather is so and so, that's awesome. We wouldn't have a problem. I wouldn't anyway. Like I said before that last time, it was like yeah, my great-great grandfather was the last great Native American Chief, Tomah Joseph. I'm not going to turn into a wolf or anything like that kid on that movie, the twilight movie. He was the last great Native American Chief of the Passamaquoddy, roar! Then I turn into a wolf and run off into the woods. No, that ain't going to happen, but I mean that'd be kind of neat. Actually it would be more like a coyote. We don't have wolves up here anymore, or we never did. Or we did, but that was a long time ago. That ain't, that's ain't, that wasn't recent, so I'd probably turn into a coyote or something. (*collective laughs*) Whatever we had around here at the time.

**TMc:** Just turn into a bear.

**TM:** There we go. We were a bear clan, so I guess I'd turn into a bear. I wouldn't be running very fast, but I guess I'd be running off in the woods. Roar!

**RG:** Is there anything else that you guys would like to add about justice for your communities, or about the child welfare system, or about reconciliation, or about intergenerational trauma, or Blood Quantum? Any of the number of topics we've spoken about?

**TMc:** No I think I'm all right. I know the child welfare has changed quite a bit since when I was in custody. My son's in right now and he's living with his grandmother instead of totally different strangers. I'm grateful for that, but like we've got a school called Little Feathers and



I wish she would have kept him in there, but she didn't. He went like 2 weeks and she took him out. There's not much I can do sitting in here, you know what I mean?

**TM:** Yeah, that sucks.

**RG:** Is that your grandmother?

**TMc:** No not mine. No, hers. It would be my exes'. She's white, so it's been -- I don't know, she's naïve about it I guess you could say. She thinks it's all boot toot ah...-- it's crazy. 'What, are you dancing around in a circle? You putting a hex on somebody?' Holy Christ lady. Oh my god! It was so bad I wanted to choke her. Explained to her about the pow wow and that's what she said. Oh my lord, help this woman.

**TM:** The biggest one I get is rain dance. And I'm like, 'oh my god!'

**TMc:** You know what a lot of people ask me? Oh, your Indian right? Yeah. Well, doesn't the government give you a check? Uh, no! What the hell do you guys come up with?

**TM:** Oh, man, that's awesome.

**RG:** That is across the board and across the border. I get that all the time.

**TMc:** You get that too? Yeah, all the time.

**RG:** I don't know why you're complaining, you don't have to pay taxes. Okay, yeah I do, I still pay taxes.

**TMc:** Yeah

**TM:** Oh man, that's awesome.

**TMc:** And I don't get a check. *(laughs)*

**TM:** Oh my god.

**TMc:** It's crazy.

**TM:** So you get a check and you can make it rain? *(collective laughs)* Really? Come on man! Are you serious? Aw man! Idiots! Some people, I noticed that some people will do it if they have an issue with you. Like if you had an issue on the street or whatever, they'll say shit just to piss you off so you can get into a fight with them.

**TMc:** Oh yeah, then try to use it against you.



**TM:** That's happened a couple of times. That was weird. I was like, okay whatever. Then they just keep digging and digging. You can do that all you want, it's not something that I'm going to go and beat you about. But yeah, sometimes it would piss me off so much. He's harping on me and he's right behind me or whatever, time to go night night. That didn't happen very often, but it does. Probably more in racial areas.

**RG:** Anything else you guys would like to add?

**TM:** Anything you would like to ask us more, or add?

**RG:** No.

**TMc:** No.

**RG:** I want to thank each of you for your contributions, for sitting and sharing, for putting me on the spot.

*(collective laughs)*

**TM:** Sorry.

**RG:** That's okay. And for having to listen to me talk. I hate listening to my own voice. So, thank you... I'm going to stop the recording, as long as that's okay with everybody unless...

**TMc:** Clarence?

**TM:** What happens after we stop the recording?

**CM:** We can leave.

**RG:** You guys can go.

**TM:** Oh we have to leave after we stop the recording. That's fine.

**[END OF RECORDING]**