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Statement by Anonymous collected by Marcie Lister on August 6, 2014

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General Information

Private or Public Statement? Private

Statement Provider: Anonymous

Date: August 6, 2014

Location: Presque Isle, Maine

Previous Statement? No

Statement Gatherer: Marcie Lister

Support Person: Dena Joseph

Additional Individuals Present: Matt Dunlap

Recording Format: Audio

Length of Recording: 49:07

Recording

ML: Um, I am Marcie Lister. I am the Statement Gatherer, and, um, I am here with the Statement Provider and her support person, and:

MD: Matt Dunlap, Commissioner.

ML: Um, today is August 6, 2014. The file number is A-201408-00083-001. And we are in the Tribal Council Room of the, um, Micmac, the Tribe Micmacs, in, uh, Presque Isle. And, you may begin any time you wish to share —

MD: We have to ask if she's gotten all the disclosures.

ML: Oh, I'm sorry, right! Yes, and in fact, there's one I haven't given you. Have you been informed, understood, and signed the consent form?

A: Mhmm.

ML: Yes. I do need to advise you about one other thing. And that is that any information disclosed in your Statement that indicates a child is in need of protection or there is imminent

risk of death or serious bodily harm to an identifiable person or group including yourself, this may not be protected as confidential.

A: I understand.

ML: Okay. Then, please begin whenever you're ready.

A: Mm, I'm not sure exactly, um ... how, *how* we're going to be able to, I've been writing down things like, what I want to identify, or how.

ML: Mm-hm.

A: I know this is related to foster ... children? More or less? And, I (*exhale*) was a foster child. When I was a child, it, ah, I was taken away from my mother because it was reported — She was reported to the, ah, Department of Human Services here in, I think it was in Canada, or, I think it's Maine. Um. And, um ... She, it was, I was taken away ... and — When I was a baby, and I was raised for two years? Er, something, up to two years old with another family downstate.

And she fought to get me back; she straightened out her life; she got children back; um, and we're all back together again, and that's how we came up here, and we were raised up here since — since I was ... two, we lived up here, and I was raised with my family.

Um, I don't *remember* ... I didn't remember a lot, but I did thought — I was having dreams about me being in a house I didn't recognize; me running around a house, seeing people's faces I don't recognize. I didn't recog-, — And, I like — And it was like that for the longest time —

ML: Mmm.

A: — until my sister told me I was a foster child. And that kinda made sense after that! It's like, Oh! That's why I'm remembering a home I didn't, I'd never seen before, ah, faces I'd never recognize.

And then, I also was, um, my foster parents did meet me, when I was older, and they're still in contact with me now, um, the family does. And, they said, 'You know, you were a cute baby,' and, stuff like that. They were — They are — They wanted to keep me, they said, but, um, you know, Mom kind of fought for me and got me back.

So that was a good thing. I, I was lucky. I think I was lucky because, compared to my siblings. My siblings didn't go through such, such a, um, treatment *because* they were in Canada — I *think* they were in Canada, I want to say — And they were taken away from Mom, too, earlier. Now, I'm the youngest.

ML: Okay.



A: They're like eight to 13 years older than I am. And they were children. They were taken away from Mother. Not sure **what** the situation, **why** they were taken away at the time, **but** they — I, (*clears throat*) I was told from my sisters, they were treated wrong. Um. Very wrong.

And, there was this one time, my sister was telling me how my other sister stood up for her, and what happened was she almost was going to get **beaten,** and her sister actually stood up for her and got beaten instead. And that's very moving, (*tone of voice softens*) because, you know, when you hear that, you know, you, you think going in a foster home would be a little less stressful.

Um, and also, I, I heard one of my sisters, um, was, was raped in one of the families. She was raped by the father. The foster. And, she, **to this day,** you know, it still haunts her. And she never got therapy for it, 'cause she never **told** anyone. She told **me,** um, when I was old enough to understand what rape was, of course.

And, they (*clears throat*) I'm not sure about my brother, of his treatment, but I heard it wasn't so good either. But I don't know the details of that.

They were later on brought back to my parents, after **all that** happened.

ML: Mm-hm.

A: Ahhh, (*exhale*) It, it, it's not, it's not, it wasn't, um, our, their lives, before I came along — and they say I was a miracle baby, when I came along, 'cause I brought, the family brought back together again, when I came along, they — It was like, I was first, and then they came later, the other kids came in. I was first to brought back. And they, they said, I was the one that brought them back. And I was like, 'Wow! I didn't do that.' Y'know, it's like, okay. So, um —

ML: It, were they all in different families?

A: Yes, there were all in different families.

ML: So they were all split up.

A: Yes. I believe that Donna and Marlene were in one family, once, but then, I think they were separated after. I think. Yes, I think that's what it was.

So, when, um, that happened, everything went swell. Y'know, Mom and Dad were working and trying to make a living. And they got a nice, um, place to stay, a farmer's pla-, a farmer let

them stay where, at a house that they had. Paid rent. And they worked for them. (*exhale*) And it was like that for a long time.

(*inhale*) Um, I didn't know — I'm a baby, I was a baby, I didn't know anything about residential schools. I didn't know about the foster homes. I didn't about this 'til later. So, it's kinda like, coming to me in pieces, little by little, and you're putting together a puzzle, as you go along. And (*exhale*) and you feel, every time you hear it, you feel like something was *knocked,* knocked you — 'Cause, it's like, 'What?!' You know, and — This happened. And this happened. And, I'm pretty sure more happened! But, I don't hear — I didn't hear everything.

There's this one time — Of course, Mom and Dad had drinking problems. Um, Mom quit first, then Dad later. And they did separate. Um. I did hear of them separating, Mom and Dad. And, ah, when they did, ah, Mom had to take care of the kids.

And, ah, there was a night that, and, um, and I, I, still moves me now, to the day, that Mom, um, got in a fight with a, with a man, another man. I'm not sure. She knew him! I'm not sure, what happened or what got out. But she — (*sigh, exhale*) She's trying to protect her kids, I think. Because her kids are hiding. Two kids were hiding.

She was, um, I'm not sure how many men there were, but she, she took 'em on. She was a tough woman. (*laugh*) She took 'em on. She fought. She, I don't see Mom running. Unless she had to, with her kids. But she fought (*breath*) a man, ah, somehow. (*voice shaking*)

I'm not sure who got her down there, who hit her, or wh-, you know, or who's responsible. But they got after the, everything happened, broke her jaw. Um. And, and, as this was happening, the two girls watching, because my sister was saying this as she was watching, and she — My mom broke her jaw. The men broke her, and left her ... there. And, my sister saw ... it ... dislocated ... off of Mom. So, she saw all this *horror* going on.

And all she wanted to do was pr-, go out there and protect Mom. On the other hand, mm, mm, mm, (*voice trembling*) Mom was, 'No, you protect Donna. You protect her, instead.' So, here we are, like ... (*voice trembling*) They rushed her to the hospital. She had to get her, her whole jaw wired shut. So, it was, the whole thing was wired shut.

Um. And, I don't, I never heard this until two years ago. And, I didn't know. And I, I, just cried — 'Cause, you don't see ... your mother ... that way, you know. And my older sister's seen a lot. And she's seen this violence against my Mom.

And (*exhale*) so, uh, it's not that Mom and Dad had their ... had their, um, 'comings,' but there were times, my Mom would tell me, that Dad would get mad, to a point where he would use physical harm upon my Mom. Not the girls, but my Mom. And Mom was tough enough to stand up again, and, take it again, and she, she stood up against Dad. She stood her ground. And, ah, it wasn't good. It wasn't good. Y'know, there were times when ... you know ... tough. It was ... physical and ... mental.

M-mom and Dad met — They both went to a residential school.

ML: (*softly*) Mmm.

A: And they both met after — Well, Mom, Dad — Who left first? Dad left his first, the residential school first. And then Mom. Dad pursued Mom 'cause he, he said, ah, this is the way his story goes: He saw her on a bus. She was ignoring him. And, he was trying to get her attention all this time, and she was ignoring him and ignoring him. And, and I guess it, he pursued her enough (*laughs*) to get it to, to a point they got married!

So, um, they, they, um, Mom's two brothers and a sister — I believe her sister, too — went to a residential school with her. Dad and his brother went to a residential school, too. Two brothers. So, Mom —

ML: Mmm.

A: Um, this is where the part where the residential school comes in. Um. My mother ... is, is a very strong woman: mentally, spiritually and physically. And she, she told me of an incident in the residential school.

Now, there was the nuns, but, to this day, she forgives every single one of 'em. (*inhale*) Um, she says they had — They were doing their job, as far as what nuns do. (*laughs*)

And, at the time, my brother, my brother, (*correcting*) *her* brother. He, see, when they do somethin' wrong in the classroom, they get up, they bring 'em upstairs — They bring 'em up front, and whip 'em. And they have 'em bend over, and they whip 'em. They actually hit 'em. And she *knew* her brother wasn't doing *wrong.* It was somebody who blamed him. She stood up for her brother. She went up there.

And she, (*laughs*) and she hit a few heads along the way, she said. She was mentioning that. She was — Because she wouldn't shut up, (*laughs*) she said. She had to.

She, she was, she wanted to have justice with this. And, um ... after her brother got, got it, she did, too. So, just for standing up for him, so. She said she had to watch him as, as they took the pants down — bare butt — and, and hit him, in front of the classroom, she said.

And you wouldn't hear this anywhere's else, and, I was like, 'Oh, my goodness.' And she goes, 'Oh, yeah. That's the way it was.' If you're not, if you — That's the way it was if you speak your language, you talk out of hand, you fight and, or something like that. Or don't eat.

Ah, there was this one time she, ah, she felt bad for this one girl who didn't eat. She, she wouldn't eat! And she kept getting hit on the knuckle ... right, right here by, by, ah, a nun, because she wouldn't eat. Mm, um, Mom was the same way, she said. She, if she didn't like what she ated, she didn't eat it. And, she got hit ... for it.

And (*sniffs*) there was this one time ... And, she didn't like this one nun, 'cause she kept after her. And she ... somehow, got a hold of her, for something, I forget now. What did Mom do? Probably was a small thing at the time.

But, she hit her so hard, she, her whole hand, um, was bleeding. It, it was all bl-bleeding and ... and she just kept hitting her and hitting her and hitting her. Well, she hid it in a closet. She found a closet, hid in it, and a nurse — Another nun found her and, and helped her, and, and (*rubbing her hand*) put bandage on her and say, 'That, that g-, that lady, the nun that b-b-beat her, shouldn't be a nun.' (*shaky laugh*) So, I, I was thinking, oh, my goodness, so.

She tried so hard to stay away from the nuns, so they got her to do work somewhere's else away from the nun in the kitchen, and that's where she taught, where she was taught to cook, and taught to clean, and taught all the knitting and ... she, she was taught there, at the, ah, kitchen where she worked sinc- 'til she's 16 — She got out when she was 16. They just, ah, she just, she didn't have any, I don't believe she had any — They didn't give her any, like, where to go or what to do or how to do it. She just, Hey! You're out.' And that's it.

ML: Mm-hm.

A: Y'know, and she did. She left and went back to her dad, to see her dad. And took care of her dad, for a while, she said, in a lumberyard. So, lumber — He was working in lumber or some — He was working in the woods, or something like that, when she was staying with him. Yeah.

And, um ... Th-, Then she — After that, then she went and met up with Dad, then they went off to ... raise kids. They went to Boston. That's where Marlene was born, um. (*sniffs*) But, um, then they moved from Boston up here, 'cause Boston's not a place to raise your child, so they came up here and raised the rest of the kids.

Um, *when* the foster thing happened was later. After. I believe the kids were nine? Around nine? Five, nine? Five to nine, or something like that.

And, ah, I believe when, when *I* was born, the *oldest* was 13 years old. So, you can imagine how long they were in a foster home.

ML: Mmm.

A: I think, two, three years, they were saying. Probably. And then I came along, and things went back together. It was like this, (*audible gesturing*) and then it went back like this. (*audible gesturing*) So, um.



(*shaky voice*) It—it's not that my life was any *easier,* um, (*sniff*) but, um. Mom kept denying the fact that, um. Well, she kept — (*exhale*) I'm not sure if she's denying it, or she's, she's just, 'Didn't happen.' But she denied the fact there was sexual abuse in the ... border home, in the residential home, but they say they were some, she said that there were some. But s-s-*she* denies the fact that it happened to her —

ML: Mm-hm.

A: — Or him — Or my dad. ... But, I don't *know.* Th-there's a missing piece of the puzzle that I don't think I'll even know, because all that record burnt down and, and if it was, it wouldn't be recorded, if it was —

ML: Mm-hm.

A: — because it was one of those things, y'know. So (*exhale*) I, I can only know what my Mom tells me in these stories of hers, and she tells a lot. And there's, she's — It-it's not all bad stories, either. There's some good stories. She liked baseball. She liked —

She almost died, um, going to the ice rink. She fell in a culvert, holding on for her life, *dear life,* and, um, 'cause she slipped and fell in it. While she's holding on, her fingers were getting cold, of course. And, y'know, how cold it was. And her friends were going over, but they weren't, didn't see her. And, she said there was this one friend that went back, because they didn't find her. And when she went back, and they found her, and she was still hanging on. So. She was on the, she said she was almost gonna let go, too. And I said, 'Gee, I wouldn't be here.' (*laughs*)

DJ: and **MD:** (*laughs*)

A: Like, y'know, just that, little moment is, things I hear about her. But sh-, she did! There's a lotta good times. She learned a lot, she said. She w-, she wished she learnt more.

ML: Mmm.

A: She wished she got to learn more.

But, um, she ... uh, isn't (*inaudible*) choice. You — They couldn't speak. They had to cut their hair. They had to, um, they couldn't talk while they were sleeping, or somethin'. You, you name it! They, they probably did it. Um, and, that's why we speak English today, I think, 'cause she did not speak Engl-, she did not speak —

ML: Mm-hm.

A: — the Native voice with *us* when we were kids. It would've been different, I think, I think it would've been different if residential schools didn't interfere. I think we would've been fluent in our language. *(inhale)* That's my opinion, though.

(exhale) Another thing is, is ... I know I've said a lot about Mom, and I thought maybe I would start that way, because, I was ... I don't say it, I think it's been ... carried down, generation to generation ... that ... what you know, some things will go to your grave. Some things will. And I *know* with Mom, some things will go to her grave.

ML: Mm-hm.

A: But something ... kinda unleashes ... a clue ... to what happened ... is, is because *(tapping her hand on the table with emphasis, her ring clicking)* you don't, when — *(exhale)* It's when you don't say something *about* something that happened to others, and that quiet and that silence says a lot.

And, I believe that's what happened, that I was taught silence first. You deal with it in within the family. You keep it in the family. You deal with it in the family. The family takes care of themselves. We don't want no outsiders ... no outsiders to know anything.

She's afraid, and she *was* afraid, that if anything leaked out, that what will happen is the kids would be taken away, again. Things will happen *over again* in this time. And I believe that was her fear. Um, because we were ... *(exhale)* As *I* was a child, I was sexually abused. *(pause)* Um. It was kept silent. Ah, I didn't say anything —

ML: — When you were living at home?

A: Yes.

ML: Mm-hm.

A: So, I was — It was kept silent. It was k-, I, I did face up to Mom once, and I said, 'Mom, look, this is happening.'

She goes, *(voice changes)* 'You just want to ruin the family. You just want the family to fall apart.'

That's all ... I got. And, I shut up after that. I didn't say a word after that. I didn't say a word to anyone. It happened from age seven to age 19.

ML: Mmm.

A: *Only because,* nobody said anything. *Only because,* everyone turned the other way. And, it was happening. I, she, *she* put, ... that family came first. Family was everything. That, if you said something against family, you'd be shunned. *(hits table with her hands)* It was, it was one of those things that she felt —



She ... put us through school. You know why? 'Cause she didn't want anything to deal with the Department of Human Services. She didn't want the kids taken away. *She knew* that will happen, if the kids weren't going to school. DHS put fear into her *so bad* that she, she didn't *trust* them!

ML: Mm-hm.

A: *With anything!* 'Cause she feared that the kids would be taken away. And I *feel* that's what happened when this happened with me, that she be fearing that *I* was being taken away, and she's not going to do that again. And I'm not the only victim. I do not have *one* perpetrator. I have *five.* ... Five perpetrators. ... I counted them (*painful laugh*) as I was going on. ... Um. (*long pause, sounds of objects moving, sniff*)

(*whispered*) Sorry. (*pause, sound of tissue*)

(*voice shaky*) Um. ... It's, it's funny when you start, and it's — You're a kid, you don't understand what's going on. You're scared. But when you're an adult, and you put the pieces together, *you know* something happened! You know something went wrong there, with them, that they — Something happened that, a hush thing happened, and everybody kept quiet about it, and you kept living without dealing with it.

And then, all of a sudden, it happens to you. And you understand now, as you get older. But as you understand and get older, you know it's wrong. So, guess what? That stops with me. It goes nowhere. I have children. There's no way.

But then, on the other hand, here I am trying to protect them. On the other hand, there were perpetrators. It wasn't *me.* I thought I was protecting them, because *I* wasn't *the one!* I wasn't the one doing it! Instead, there were others ... that did. And, it did not go nowhere. And I felt bad because, guess what?! I didn't say anything. I was my own enemy. And I was faced with it once — *twice* — and didn't do anything about it. Um.

(*voice trembles, begins crying*) And that's ... how it ... continued. And that's how the sickness grows ... is that no one says ... anything. You don't report it, it *won't* — It's, it hasn't happened. And that's how ... our past ... affects us today. Either it was sexual abuse. Emotional abuse. Physical abuse. Any abuse. If it's not, it's not reported, it didn't happen.

ML: Mm-hm.

A: And that's the way it's been done through our generation — That everyone, we, we concentrate on other things to make us forget that it happened.

Mom is, is so — I love her ... to death, I do. But I feel that (*exhale, shaky voice*) fear does *so much* to the human mind ... that it will *deny* the one you love. It will. It's so easy to. And so, I got to live— No! I get to, um ... (*inhale, long pause*)

A-, And I know this, this is, I hope this helps somebody, I really do. (*crying*) I hope it helps one person out there, and say something, to prevent something like this from happening. 'Cause no child or adult should go through abuse, at all. Period. They're against their rights, and ... (*inhale, pause*)

And I know (*exhale*) things happen for a reason. I always tell myself that, too. So. (*quick inhale*) And, and so I'm thinking to myself, 'Why?' (*sniff, inhale*) Then, I'm into, um, lately, I'm into a, a, my, a, a religion. And I'm in, um, I'm praying more. And, stop, 'cause I'm not going to be here for long. I, I mean I'm, yes, I'm in my late 40s, but still, I'm here and I've got to take, make most of what I have now, and help. And — (*exhale, sniff*)

So, yeah, it has — Ah, this has not been said, only under — Confidential, um, I did seek some therapy. And I did seek it because I felt I — (*sniff*) Instead of telling ... my children, I would need to tell someone *else* ... that I could trust. And, and, I told my children ... once, when they could understand what was going on, and why. And, ah.

And you think by this happening — You *think* right? You're preventing it, by not being the perpetrator. You think it's a sickness that runs from one to the other, from father to child. Well, it does. But it also runs from mother to daughter, when it comes to silence. 'Cause, it happened to me, too. And I don't feel any better about it. 'Cause it happened to my kids, too. So. (*sniff*) Maybe I just didn't know what to do. I don't know. I still ask myself that. (*sniff*) And my, um ... ah, it ... (*quick inhale*)

I just want to say that (*exhale*) the people who had ... did this, I'm not sure, I never asked why. You don't. Ah. You just want to get away as fast as po-, (*quick inhale*) as possible. (*voice trembling*) And you try to make sense to this. (*breath*) But, I guess ... things (*quick inhale*) like this happen, and ... you just learn from it, and you gotta move on. And, you just take it with you, and you, you educate others, if you can ... about it. And ...

Like that — It's, it's similar — I think it's similar to drug abuse, and everything else, you know, you — It's carried down. And, ah. (*sniff*)

I'm not perfect, and I've never been a perfect parent but, still, I ... tried my best to protect them. But, *still,* somehow or another, it got to 'em. And, and, and it's weird, because — And then you feel you, 'Oh, my goodness, what did I do?' (*painful laugh*) So, um ... (*pause*)

I-I, and I, and I — And I didn't want them — And I'm thinking, I don't, I don't want my kids separated from me. I don't want my kids taken away from me. That, too, you know, you think about that. And you think about all the families out there that had their kids taken away, and you're thinking: *Hhhow-how?* That's like someone taking an arm ... or a leg.

ML: Yeah.



A: Or it's, it's just like you, you know, you don't, can't imagine your life without your kids. And now I have grandkids. *(strikes her palm on the table)* So. And you can't imagine. *(voice trembling)*

But, then on the other hand, you have ... you know, you have good parents. You have good parents that would watch 'em, and *(sniffs)* you know, protect them, and that's *(exhale)* helpful, too, 'cause ... the, when, when the mind — I'm not sure if you guys hear of any stories that *revolve* things, but it's pretty similar.

But ... you know, you just ... take one day at a time. You do the good with the bad, and the bad with the good, and you *bless* every day ... that something good happens to you, so. And you thank, um, you thank God ... that you're alive still. You thank God that ... y'know, you have healthy children that are still with you, 'cause ... *(sniffs)*

You know, I thought I was being punished once ... *by God,* *(inhale)* 'cause I lost a child, and it was stillborn. She, her name was Norma. And, I lost her after nine months of pregnancy. And I *really* got, I beat myself up, you know? Near suicide. And then, I, I just — And that was 1989, y'know and ...

But it's fine now. I can handle it now, you know. I can handle it. I can talk about her without crying now. And I can — And then, there's saying that LeAnn came along. 'Cause Dena was already here. And LeAnn was a miracle child, like I was, so. And, ah, so that's a blessing, my children. So, that's where I stand in, in this ... circle of life. *(laughs)* So. But,

Nobody ever asked me for my story. Nobody ever asked to see, you know, why? Where's this *line* that draws down from the blood of your grandfathers? Is it there? Is it hidden? It's there! It still runs! Maybe it doesn't run as thick. But it runs. And, ah. And I think about that for our Tribe, too. I think about that whenever I hear of somebody committing suicide. Or somebody who attempted suicide. Or somebody into drugs. Somebody into alcohol.

I'm thinking ... we didn't *have* ... a system ... that we could sit on ... or, or a belief or *something* foundation-wise to have, help us believe *something* out there is helping us with our, with us, you know. There's so many lost souls out there, it's so impos — I just ... feel that, um ... if only, you know, if ... they could get their help they need to — 'Cause there's so many, ah. Ah, ah, that's all I hear, somebody on drugs.

ML: Mmm.

A: An, and then, you don't know where ... to start. You don't know where to, how to help or anything, you know. This is, hopefully, gonna help ... our future.

ML: *(whispered)* Yeah.

A: Our kids. I, I see the kids, and I think of 'em, and I, I was like, 'Oh, my goodness! There's our future.' And I think about how, *hopefully,* we can get out of this right? I mean —

(distant sounds of children playing and calling out)

ML: Yeah.

A: It's not as bad as it is, is it? Or. So ...

(distant sounds of children playing continue)

I just, my — *(pats a surface)* This is where I come from. You're hearing this ... because — I didn't know whether I wanted to talk about it, but I feel it's a very important thing ... to hear ... *that it is happening!* You ever hear of a theory and you hear of it always talking about, right? *(sniff)* You always hear stories like, there has to be *something,* SOMETHING that, that's causing something in the community. Because look at this! Look at this happening and that! It's because ... it's that silence that ... the grandparent or the parent *carries* down to the child, and thinking that, if you don't say something, it'll go away. So ...

And we don't want outsiders. And we don't want people to take away our children anymore. We don't want us in jail. You see? Because we carried that down from our parents that, if we ignore it, you know, everything's gonna be fine. So ... and you know what? Me talking about this now? And it's weird because I'm dealing with it right now. I'm dealing with a child that tried to commit suicide three times. ... It's. *(exhale)* ... And it's one of those things, you know? You're just, you're trying to protect your child, and you can't, 'cause there's a silent killer, and you don't know where exactly it's coming from. So, yeah. Um.

And you have to ask yourself as a parent: 'What did I do?' You go back, you always, you *build* something. You go back to see if it work — If it's not working, you'll go back, right? You fix it. You try to fix it. Or you try to see what's, what's what was it that went wrong, but you don't — All you have to be is there. And somebody told me, 'You just gotta be there for her! You gotta be there for her! You gotta just support her. Hear her.' Yeah. 'And, and tell her that, how much you love her.'

And, ah ... and if it — I was just wishing I could exchange with her, when she does that. I just wish — You're ready to take your life for your child. *(crying)* To the day. ... How do you, ah, do it, when they're trying to commit suicide? *(crying)* It's been a struggle. So. *(inhale)* I just, I just don't know what to do.

And I try ... *(sniff)* Ohhh. You wanna get mad. But you're afraid to make it worse. *(sniff)* ... So, yeah. It's ... hard. I'm, I'm not sure if anyone — I mean, I, I, here I am comparing myself to other people, but this ... this is just me. And nobody knows. *(sniff)*

ML: Do you feel that there is ... help available in the community for *you* and for ... your child? No?

A: Not available help. You gotta go through channels. You gotta go through things. It's not automatic. When something happens to somebody, emergency's right there, if you get a broken leg. But there's nothing there for a broken mind. There's nothing there. They gotta go through channels. You have to (*sniff*) go through, um. Oh, (*sniff*) this has happened three times! You think, right? (*painful laugh*) Yeah. But ...

I said, "When, when is it, when is it when they're gonna pay attention, is when she's dd- she's dead?! And she actually succeeded?! You know? (*exhale*)

And then, you call them, and say, 'Well, you gotta set up an appointment, and then you go see this, and you gotta see them for so many months, and then, and THEN we decide whether if she needs help. Whether if she really needs help.' And I said, 'Okay, well, how many times does she actually have to ... do this?' *We* witness it. *We* see what's happening. *We* know she needs help, but she's an adult. So we can't — (*inhale*)

ML: Mm-hm.

A: — you know — (*sniffs*)

ML: Make her get it.

RS: Exactly. (*sniffs*) So it's, I feel so helpless. It's ... it's like watching your child walk over an edge of a cliff, where they're — And you being held back. (*sniff*) It's, it's not fun. (*exhale*) And ... An-and, ah ... And I just gotta be strong. And, and I'm — And it's just — I'm glad I took my blood pressure pill. (*laughs*)

ML: (*soft laugh*)

A: But, um, yeah, um, my sister's in the hospital, as we speak, too. So, it's not — And she's (*quick inhale*) trying to get well. ... Thank you. (*sound of drinking*)

A: So. ... No. Everybody (*sniff*) ... And I, I want to be happy for people. I want to be, you know, I want to be showing that I'm strong. I don't want to show that weakness. I don't want to show that I ... have ... *problems* at home. You know, that kinda thing. And (*sound of a tissue being taken from the box*) it ain't, y'know, nobody's business but my own! And I think that's what Mom said.

ML: Mmm. Mm-hm.

A: 'Nobody else's business! It's no one else's business but the family's!' Okay? But it's never been dealt with. It was just our business. And I think that's the same goes with us now. It's only a family business. That's it. This is gonna be, this is the way we're going down. This is how we're going do it. And if you don't, guess what happens? *(sniff)* Y'know. 'Hey, why'd you get Mom mad? Why — ?'

It's like, there was many times *(laughs)* we got Mom mad. And it's not like she's an evil person either. She's the nicest person on earth you would meet.

And, um, maybe she knows inside that what she did ... was wrong. But I don't know that. Nobody will. Only between her and God. And, ah ... she never said, 'I love you' to me. And I have found that weird, because a mother would say, 'I love you' many times. And I tell my kids that *every day.* *(voice trembling)* But I have to wonder why ... they don't say it.

Well, there's this one time, I got attacked. Um, I was attacked in a street. Ah, I was attacked by two men. *(sniff)* Th-they were there to harm me. They had knives. I-, I-, I was screaming aanndd ... two people came out of nowhere. Two men. Scared 'em off. Took me to the hospital. Got a statement done. Couldn't recognize the men.

I got a call from Mom. *Nobody* knew me. Nobody knew my number. Nobody had information on me. Um, she called. And it was three o'clock in the morning! And she says, 'What's wrong?'

And I'm like, 'What? I-I-Anybody call you?'

'No,' she said, 'I, I got a bad feeling. I had a dream. What's wrong?'

And I was like, 'I was attacked.'

And she goes, 'You okay?'

She goes, 'Yes,' I go, 'Yes,' err, 'I'm okay, Mom. I'm fine.'

And then, before she hung up, she said, 'I love you.' *(voice breaking into a cry)* So. It happened some ... *(sniff, exhale)*

And it was the one thing I needed to hear. So. *(sniff)*

But, ah, *(sniff)* I, I say that to my kids every day, *(sniff)* 'cause I felt it was denied ... at the time. But I don't think it was — *(voice breaking, crying)* I don't think she didn't love me, I just felt I needed to hear it.

But I think she was just trying to raise us tough. You gotta be tough. And I was the cry-baby of the family. *(sniff)* So, I was probably a good challenge for her, *(laughs)* as far as being tough. You know, 'You don't cry. Stop crying.' When I lost my baby, I wasn't allowed to cry. Ah,

they were sitting there at the emerg-, the room, in *my* room, okay. I was bawling. They told me to stop.

ML: Mm-hm.

A: You know, 'Stop! You don't need to cry. It's over. It's done with.' (*big exhale*) That was tough. (*sniff*) So, yeah. I've always, always been told not to cry. But, I'm, can't help it. (*laughs*) I've gotta cry. (*laughs*) I have to. I feel that ... ah, it's just a way of venting, a way of letting it out. So.

Now, on the other hand, I ... you know, I don't think I need, I don't tell the story to get my pity, to get the pity. I want to tell the story to get the opposite. To get my strength.

ML: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

A: So, right now, I think we better stop, because my stomach is turning. And, when my stomach turns, I don't, I throw up. (*laughs*) So. (*sniff*)

ML: Well, I absolutely, I respect you so much for what you have shared with us and if, if this is the point at which you need to stop, then we're going to stop.

MD: Mmm.

A: Okay.

MD: Extraordinary story.

A: (*sniffs*) Thank you.

MD: A lot of strength and a lot of courage and a lot of beauty.

ML: Thank you so much for being willing to share, and I can only hope that sharing your story helps you as much as I think it can help other people.

A: (*inhale*) I hope so, too. (*exhale*)

ML: We want to just give you this as a little — ceremonial tobacco — as a thank you for, for sharing with us.

A: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much.

ML: (*whispering*) Thank you.

(*long pause*)

A: (*exhale, sniff*)

ML: I just want to make sure of one thing, because I'm not positive that I actually had you sign the waivers, so this — (*laughs*)

A: (*whispering*) Oh, it's all right.

ML: I was ...

A: Yep.

DJ: Yeah, let me get back here again. (*whispering*) Sorry, my phone is going off. I have to check it, in case —

ML: I didn't!

DJ: — 'cause I don't know if my sitter can get a hold of me.

A: Oh, okay.

ML: Well, I hate to ask you to do this now, but we need this done. Um, if you can sign here — I know you'd like this pen back — but sign up there. I had this nagging feeling I had, I had forgotten something.

A: (*laughs*)

ML: (*quietly*) The sixth.

(*pause, sound of writing*)

A: Oh, yeah, I don't know how I got my name either. ... My Mom said she didn't name me.

ML: Really?

A: Yep! (*exhale*)

ML: As you say, so many missing puzzle parts.

A: Yeah, (*laughs*) that's one of 'em. (*sniff*) I often figure, try to figure out — She said a nurse did. Why would a nurse name me? She said it was supposed to be a —

DJ: The nurse gave you a strange name.



A: Yeah.

DJ: Because nobody else has your name. (*laughs*)

A: There you go.

ML: Thank you.

A: If you would excuse me.

ML: Yes! Yes —

MD: Thank you.

ML: — absolutely. Thank you so much.

A: Thank you. Okay. Thank you. (*sound of keys*)

DJ: Where're you going?

A: (*sniffs*) I gotta use the bathroom, so I'll be right out.

DJ: All right. Well, come see me after you go to the bathroom.

A: Where're you gonna be?

DJ: Um, probably out there? Or, where do you want me to be?

A: Ah, somewhere's where the kids can't see me.

ML: I was going to say, do you, do you have to go back to work now?

A: I'm probably gonna take the rest of the day off and —

ML: I, I hope you —

MD: Nice.

ML: Yeah, that's a —

MD: Smart idea.

DJ: Do you —

ML: — a good plan.

DJ: Do you want me to talk to Nicki for me — You want me to talk to Nicki for you?

A: Could you?

DJ: I can.

A: Okay, I'll be out in the bathroom over here, and I'll —

UNKNOWN: Who you guys talking to? ... Are you okay?

DJ: *(softly)* Okay. Thank you guys.

ML: I remember you telling — when we were up here before, you — I constantly overheard you saying to your Mom, 'Please. I want you to give a statement. Please, could you — ?'

DJ: *(soft laughs)*

ML: And now she was ready for it.

MD: Uh-huh.

ML: It's a hard thing to do but she's, she's a brave lady.

DJ: She had the hardest time.

MD: Should we, ah —

DJ: She was going to go home.

MD: — stop the recording?

DJ: I'm going to be —

END OF RECORDING