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11-21-2013

Statement by Deborah Yarmal collected by Margot Milliken on November 21, 2013

Deborah Yarmal

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General Information

Private or Public Statement? - Private

Statement Provider: Debbie (Deborah) Yarmal

Date: November 21, 2013

Location: Sipayik, Maine

Previous Statement? Yes – November 19, 2013 (S-201301-00001)

Statement Gatherer: Margot Milliken

Support Person: Penthea Burns

Additional Individuals Present: Sandy White Hawk

Recording Format: Video

Recording Length: 46:43

Transcriber's Note:

This is a non-anonymous statement, however redactions and video alternations have been made at the request of the statement provider.

Recording

MM: My name is Margot Milliken, I am the Statement Gatherer, and the Community Support Person who is here is Penthea Burns. Please say your name.

DY: Deborah Yarmal

MM: And the other person in the room is...

SWH: Sandy White Hawk

MM: The file number is S-201311-00007. Today is November 21, 2013. We are in Sipayik, Maine. Debbie, have you been informed, do you understand and have you signed the informed consent form?

DY: Yes.

MM: I need to tell you that any information disclosed in your statement that indicates that a child is in need of protection, or if there is imminent risk of death or serious bodily harm to an identifiable person or group, including yourself, that may not be protected as confidential. Do you understand that?

DY: Yes.

MM: Please begin your statement.

DY: Ummm... I want to begin when I was...I... I remember a fire on the reservation when we were little, all little girls in this little grey house next to the church. I was comin' out of school and the house was on fire.

Denise was home sick, Sandy, the youngest, was in the crib and DiDi had taken Sandy out of the burning crib. That's all I remember of that. And then I remember going to Old Town, being taken right from there.

Umm... I was just little. I think I was 5, maybe 6, I don't really remember exactly. Umm... remember going to Old Town and not understanding anything, not understanding why we were so far away, why we were going, just seemed like it was just so far...

And... I remember always getting' in trouble. Always. I was either runnin' away to find my mom or I was eatin' or taking food when I wasn't supposed to, or something would get broke, or something would happen and I'd get the blame, but that was okay, at least my sisters weren't getting hurt. I didn't care if I was at least they left my sisters alone.

Umm... it was a really bad place where we were at... A lot of bad things happened to us.
Umm...(exhale).

All I ever wanted was my mom... but I thought 'cause of the fire that's why we didn't have any home anymore. I was just little. I remember all the traumatic things that happened in that house, being put in holes in the yard 'cause you couldn't go play with the other ones 'cause you were in trouble.

Same thing with the food, you weren't allowed to eat anything without being... without having permission. If you didn't have permission you couldn't eat for 24 hours. I was put in the basement a lot. I was at the end of the line to have food, if there was nothing there I wouldn't eat... (pause)

I remember trying to find my mom again. Boy did I get in trouble that time. Had to kneel on a broom while everyone pulled my hair, it was like 14, 16 kids all together and it was in the entry way, and everyone had to pull your hair otherwise they had to sit next to you if they didn't... and she used to watch to make sure. And she used to make me rub her feet. I hated that... She said I was the only one who could do it right.



And then I... I don't really remember leaving there, but I remember being with the Tessios from that point on. And we lived across from the Hampden Academy and I still remember trying to run away to find my mother. At 8-9 years old I was getting' on the bus, somehow I was getting to Bangor from Hampden. I have no idea how, I just always trying to run away.

And... then I remember coming here. My mother was out a lot. The only time she was happy was when guys were around... so I thought that's how you get happy, be with a guy and you gotta do what the guy says otherwise nobody's gonna like you. You gotta give them things, you gotta give everybody something otherwise they're not gonna like you.

So I started stealin'. I started takin' from others to give to others. I never sold it I just always gave it away to someone else that wanted it. I just thought people would like me if I gave them stuff.

I got pregnant at 13... Didn't know 'til I was 7 months pregnant. They took me in the hospital for... umm...kidney infections they called it. And then Doctor Sentara comes out and tells my mother that I'm pregnant in the 8th grade and my mother just wanted me gone. What are people going to say? What's the community going to say about her? She's such a bad mother, how, how could I do this to her? And I was so sorry that I did that to her, but I didn't know what was really going on.

So I was sent to a home for unwed mothers at 7 months. Ended up with toxemia and ended up having the baby a month early, being induced so I was really only pregnant for a month that I knew of...

And I had him, and I brought him back home and my sisters were in high school and it wasn't fair to them but they helped raise him. [REDACTED] (*mumbles*)...left my son there. Went to go try to get help, nobody would help me. 'Gotta go back home, it's where you belong.' Nobody's supposed to know what happens outside your household.

So I went back, and I got pregnant again at 16. But this one, they wanted me to give him up because it was best for him and I already had my first... So to make my family happy that's what I did. Right from the hospital they took him, they named him, and they took him and they raised him, and I was only his aunty. And he lived here on the reservation.

A week later, after I had my second son I went to Portland to go get a place of my own. And I took about a week to get a job and a place at 14... (*small laugh*)... and I called home and my mother had already given up my first child to Sam and Nancy Barnes living in Massachusetts. And I was only 14 so there was nothing I could do about it. He was gone within two weeks of my second son.

So I just partied around, travelled all over the place. Travelled with the carnival, my mother just signed me away, no problem, take her, she is just a nuisance anyway, trouble, nothin' but...I'm the... I'm the umm... rebellious one she'd call it...hm...

And I got pregnant again with my 3rd child...And I had him until he was 6 months old and my sister Cheryl was child advocate. I went partying in Eastport, I didn't come home on time and I came back and my sisters had moved into my house, all my stuff was on the front yard and I lost my son David.

So I moved to Van Buren. And I was supposed to come back and go to court for David, because I had already lost two sons. So I tried, and I called and they said it was postponed until the following month. My sister Cheryl told me that. So I said okay, so I came home that next month. And they said that the judge said I had no intentions on being there so they awarded custody to Chick and Mary Lou Barnes, and that's how I lost my third son. I was still underage so I couldn't do anything...

And then I went to college at Bangor Community College. And I got pregnant again, at 18 this time. Let's see, 14, 16, 18... I was 20. I got into a fight with this girl, I was 8 months pregnant and she kicked me in the stomach and I ended up losing the baby. I had to go to delivery, and still born... and...I called my mother and she was like 'aw you'll be pregnant again next year'. But I didn't want to get pregnant again next year. I didn't want to get pregnant anymore...

So I lost her. She was in September so I named her Sapphire Star and then two years later I had Jillian. I let Didi name Jillian, I didn't know what to name her, I just didn't know. I had her until she was 11 months old, and it was Mother's Day that they took her from me. My sister Michelle and my sister Cheryl, and she went to live with Michelle. And I fought child welfare 6 years to get her back...I finally did. I got her back, and I raised her until she was 18. And the funny thing is I thought I gave my sons more than I ever gave my daughter; two parents, new clothes for school, medicine if they needed to go to the doctors, rides, anything like that, Jillian had nothing.

I used to be so mean to her. She still loved me no matter what, and she still does. And she turned out better than all my boys, (*small laugh*)...I don't understand, I don't understand how that happened. My boys blame me so much. I just thought I was doing what was best for them. And they were like 'you should have just kept me'... I didn't know what to do, I was still young... I look at kids that age now and I just can't imagine... (*shaking her head*)

And then I just moved everywhere...I've lived in Old Town, I lived in Canada, I've lived all over the state of Maine, I've lived in Princeton... I've just never really settled down somewhere...

And then I got a house 10 years ago, there's an elder living there and I wasn't gonna have her move out until she was unable to take care of herself...well this year was that time and I fought with the governor and the chief and the tenant. I fought with everybody here, police department, told them they threatened to burn it down before I ever get the house... no one would listen to me, told me I had to go to court and do it right. Okay. I started court procedures



in May, finally October 18th, last month, I got awarded my house. The elder had to be taken out and she was moved to her caretaker person that was power of attorney...

So I was finally going to get something of my own. Something that my daughter could come home to... she's not on the census, she doesn't have enough Indian blood in her, my son David either... and I finally had a place for them to call home if they ever needed any place, they always had it... And then I lost that 6 hours before I was supposed to move in it burnt down... and it brought everything back from when we were kids and it burnt down...

And I'm just struggling right now to keep going... I don't know what to do. I feel like my own community, my own tribal members did this to me... (*sniffles*)... What kind of community is that? And then you can look at someone and say hi and know that you have taken that much away from them. I wasn't trying to be mean or hateful, I just wanted a home... And I still feel like that, not belonging, today... I don't feel like I do. I've had illegitimate children, I'm no good, never going to amount to anything, all the things I was told just been flying right back. Most of my regret is not keeping my boys, not fighting harder... But then I have to remember I was young, it's just so confusing... (*pause*)... so I don't know...

It's hard to get past things, it's really hard, to just let things go, but the hardest is just to keep going... Like I said today I wasn't kidding that I'm bipolar, manic depressive, PTSD. I'm diabetic... so many things. After my sister died of diabetes we call got checked and found out I was diabetic... (*inaudible*)

Losing my sister... oh my god. Cheryl was our mom. She was the one that looked out for us. She was the one we could make fun of... Now whenever my family wants me I'm there. Whenever they need me for anything, to clean, to watch the kids, if they need something made, because I do beadwork... like these right here (*gestures to her earrings*)...

SWH: They're beautiful.

DY: thanks... I do all kinds of crafts. Tried to make a life out of it... but it just... it's never... I don't even know what life is. I don't have no relationships, never been married. Never had nothing of my own... well I did but it got burnt down... on purpose... (*long pause*)... so many things... (*pause again*)...

I've done things I'm not very proud of... lived on the streets of Portland... Just trying to survive... always running away... I'm tired of running. I thought this was it, I don't have to run no more, I've got a home, my first home... Right now I just feel empty... I don't have any kids at home... all my kids got their own families... I don't have no job... I've got two dogs, God knows I never wanted a dog... (*laughs and wipes tears away*) (*laughs from others in the*

room)... they're my buddies... one was abused, so I feel bad... I feel like I can take care of him, because nobody took care of me...

I've been beaten. I've been physically abused, mentally, sexually, verbally... I still just try to keep going and be positive... It's all wrapped up in a little story guys... (*long pause*)...

I don't blame my mom... I wanted to, it would have been so easy to... but no, she didn't... (*shakes head*)... she didn't have it easy either. I didn't know how bad my grandfather was with her. That's why the beatings were so bad with us... because we were girls...

My mother was in the military so she was pretty strict with us, curfews and everything... and we couldn't understand why she treats the grandkids different... now we know, now I know (*laughs*) I got grandkids. (*Laughs*) (*Laughs from others in the room*). Now I know the difference. You want to try to do better for them than you did for your own. You want to be there for them and let them be able to talk to you without having, just 'shut up and go in the other room,' that's what we were always told. 'We're all adults, go in the other room, you kids of play, go outside, go do something.'...

My mother said when she used to clean up the next day she wondered why all the beer bottles were already all taken care of... I guess I used to take the last of them and drink them... there was one time I was passed out on the floor she took me to the hospital. She found out I drank all the alcohol that was left from the party the night before... she didn't even know what was wrong with me.

SWH: How old were you?

DY: 4 or 5, real young. (*nodding*) Right before they took us, the state came and took us. And I didn't remember the station wagon until Didi mentioned it yesterday. I remember the station wagon pulling up and taking us out there... And I didn't think we lived in the attic, I thought it was bedrooms (*small laugh*). I didn't know we were all... I knew we were all on the floor, but I thought it was bedrooms... All I knew is that we always stayed upstairs all the time because there was so many people partying downstairs. We always had guys watching us... never made no sense to me... (*long pause*)...

Yep... pregnant at 13... going in 8th grade... it was so hard... people talking... but that wasn't the hard part. I think the hardest part was the way my mother made me feel. (*murmurs of agreement from the others in the room*)... I was no good, no one's going to love you with illegitimate kids... never amount to anything... no one is every going to love you. I... I ... Still a part of me believes that I think. I really do. Never had a serious relationship longer than 2 years, I've never been married, I just can't have relationships. I don't know how to deal with it. I can't deal with myself, so can't deal with anybody else....

The stuff with my house... that's taken me for a loop. Some days I don't feel like I can keep going... if it wasn't for Didi. She's always checking on me, won't leave me *alone* (*laughs... laughs from others in the room*).



PB: *(softly)* She loves you.

DY: Yeah she does. I love her too. I'd do anything for her, that's why I kept saying no until she said 'I need you.' 'Kay.' *(laughs)*

PB: And here you are.

DY: Yeah, here I is... No, I'm tired of the crying. I've told my story. I've been in 11 different rehabs, 4 different mental hospitals. Pennsylvania, for a place for suicidal people... I've been all over the place, and gone everywhere. I know that you've got to deal with this and let it go. That's what I thought I did, but then bringing this all back up yesterday and the day before... now I know why my sister's going through hell the past 5 years... this is too much to be brought up constantly, consistently, because it just brings... that PTSD is so real, and it just brings it all back, and all the feelings and the emotions. And it's not fair for her to keep saying her story over and over again, because this is just once for me and I ain't doing it again... *(shakes head)*... no way...

I have to let this go. I can't keep dwelling on it. It happened... I mean... I can help somebody else out through it, that's the good out of it, and the bad I just gotta let go... Because I'm no good for myself or my daughter, or my grandkids... *(long pause)*... or my sons, but my sons really don't... I'm not really... I'm their biological mother...

My friend told him the other night, well a few nights ago, my son David... 'oh there's your mother over there,' 'where's Mary Lou, Mary Lou ain't here.'... how hurtful was that. I may be your biological mother, but I'm still your mother... but they make sure that I know that I only gave birth to them, that was it. They don't realize what I sacrificed for them and how it hurts...

They were taken away from me. I only gave up one and that was to make my family happy. I never gave up any of my other kids.

SWH: Do they know your story?

DY: No. *(shakes head)* No. David doesn't. David blames me for being bipolar. He says I picked and chose which one I wanted to commit to. *(laughs)*... No David don't understand. He wonders why I kept Jillian and not him... and that's *(shakes head)*. I tried to keep him, but they took him away from me. I was too young, and I didn't have any rights. My mother had all the rights of me...

I had my last son when I was 18... 14, 16, 18. 3 kids already...*(mumbles from someone in the room)*... And then lose one at 20 and my last one at 22. They cut, tied, burned, do what ever you've got to do but I don't want no more kids, I can't do this no more.

Jillian knows a lot 'bout what I've been through. And she knows a lot about my bipolar, but my son's don't have a clue. They just blame me...

SWH: Is there a reason why you've not told them?

DY: Well it's, I don't think it's my place to tell them, because they are still with their parents that raised them. Well Richard isn't, both his mom and dad that adopted him died, and he has come to me a couple times for a place to stay, but...never really any closeness at all. And David, he just stays right away from me. But Mary Lou is trying to get us into a relationship. Letting him know that I am here whenever he needs me, but he don't see that yet. He don't know exactly what happened.

PB: How did you come to understand your mom's experience?

DY: By going into the rehab and places the places I went to. They only teach you what they learned, so it made me wonder what she went through as a kid. *[REDACTED]*

And when this happened with the house I went to see my mother and said 'I feel like I don't belong here, in my own community.' And she goes 'you belong her honey, don't let them treat you like that, just hold your head up high.' Easier said than done. Now I'm in fear that something is going to happen wherever I'm at, I've got lights on outside. First little thing my dog barks at I jump up... *(shakes head)*... it's just so scary around here...

So that's what it is in a nutshell. There's a heck of a lot more but I just can't think right now.

SWH: If you could say anything to a social worker that would be helpful for them to do their job better working with a family what would it be?

DY: Check on them. Be consistent. Check on them. Talk to them.

SWH: Check on them after placement?

DY: *(Nods head yes)*

SWH: Check on them immediately...

DY: Consistently

SWH: Asking the child and not the...

DY: *(still nodding head yes)* not the parent how they are doing. Take them out to the park or go play and tell them your experience so they can talk a bit about what's going on with them

instead of asking direct questions. It's so much easier if you tell them what's going on with you, and they're more willing to talk. I learned that with my kid. (*laughs and laughs from others in the room*)...

So it would be: be more consistent and once you place them somewhere, keep checking up on them. Because nobody checked up on us. They just took us, left us and that was it. People knew things was going on but no one said anything until 4 years later. And we finally got out of there. We were split up by my foster parents in Hampden got us all together again...Christmas Eve they brought our two younger ones, Sandy and Jody. They lived in a different, they lived in Bradley. So... Christmas Eve they brought them home and they stayed with us for good.

MM: All seven of you?

DY: Six. My one sister stayed in New York with my dad... (*nods*)

MM: uh huh.

DY: And my mom took us, she said she had to take us because he was in the mafia and she had to run away with us and make sure that his people knew that she didn't know anything. And he had to make sure that they knew she didn't know anything. She lived in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, Canada, and finally on the reservation, where it was safe to bring us. And I was only 6 months old she said once we got here, because I did ask her about that. She said she had to run with us to make sure we were safe. She was locked in the house from the time he went to work until he got home. There was one room, with a white rug where all the business men, just the men went in there, no women were allowed, in this one room was the meeting room. Just really like, whoa...

Went to meet him once. He sent me back home because I wasn't of age yet. He told me to get my GED or get my diploma and come back and I never did... The first thing he needed was a drink out of his car, a portable bar, out of his Lincoln Continental, a black one. I put him on such a pedestal and then I found out he wasn't what I thought he was... And I don't know what abuse my mother went through, she won't talk about it so... (*shakes head*)...That's probably why I'm so protective of her.

PB: Yeah (*nods head*)

DY: [*REDACTED*] I know she lives with her own guilt of what happened us. She knows. She don't deny it. She lives in the elderly now... And I know this is hard for her, to have us go through is. She is really having a hard time with this.

SWH: With you guys giving your statements?

DY: (*nods*) mhmm.

SWH: What is she afraid of?

DY: She's not afraid. She is worried about us.

SWH: Oh, what will happen because of what you say?

DY: No, because of bringing it up and then still feeling on it and still thinking about it, and I'm suicidal and because I'm bipolar, manic depressive. She just doesn't want me to take on too much.

SWH: (*softly*) yeah, yeah. Can I ask you a question about your treatments?

DY: mhm.

SWH: Um, with any of the treatments that you were at, were any of them umm...culturally, did they have a cultural approach?

DY: One, Lone Eagle in Canada.

SWH: So you have been to how many treatments?

DY: 11 treatments.

SWH: And one of them, not in this country...

DY: In Canada...

SWH: Now, what is the difference for you between that one and the ones that are here in the States?

DY: Umm..

SWH: For you...

DY: You got to do your own program and work on yourself, what you wanted to, not what they told you to do. You got to go into sweat lodges, and before we even started the day everyone smudged and said a prayer for the day and we do a circle and do a prayer at the end of the day... the biggest thing was that they let you work on what you wanted to. Yeah. And they understand what it is like being on a reservation and having the stigmatism of: 'oh you're a rez kid, and you're drunk.'

SWH: And what year was that that you got to do that?

DY: That was about 25 years ago.

SWH: So none since then? You haven't had any cultural...

DY: I haven't had any counseling, I haven't had nothing in the past year because of our health center and getting new counselors. I haven't been able to talk to nobody. So yesterday I when went home I went right to bed at 4. And all this stuff was going in my head and I was mad at the commission for making my sister go through this a hundred times when I can't even go through it once without having all them feelings. No wonder she has been having it so rough the past few years. I was wondering why is she like this... now I know why. All this stuff coming up... PTSD is really a big big thing. It brings back all the feelings, all the thoughts, all the wondering... (*shaking head*).

SWH: Do you know what, have you heard the term epigenetics?

DY: mm-mm (no).

SWH: I'd love to spend some time talking with you about how we store trauma in ourselves. There is a way that we can work with ourselves until we can get more help. If you would like, I would love to talk with you.

DY: Yes that would be great, because all I'd like to do is sleep when I don't want to deal with anything.

SWH: Exactly and, I know... we shared earlier so I know exactly what that feels like and um, that sense of powerlessness and helplessness, that's something that we can actually get out of. And you know, it doesn't happen overnight. We can have some of that back. And we have ways through our ceremonies, but science has kind of given us an opportunity to explain in a different way through this term called 'epigenetics.' And it really makes sense in terms of what we understand as 'PTSD.' And um... I would just like to say that you haven't had the treatment; you haven't had the medicine that you needed for this. (**DY:** Right [nodding]) You know, you haven't had the nurturing circles; you haven't had the songs put in where the pain is. (*DY still nodding in agreement*).

DY: This is the first time ever about when I was a kid. All the other rehabs was about alcohol and drugs and suicide (**SWH:** right), not the reason why.

SWH: See... And for me that was like the turning point for my mental health, because that's, that's, I'd say that's what saved me. That's what brought me out of that, whatever, I don't know how to describe it, you know what it feels like.

DY: yeah (*nodding*) yeah.

SWH: It gave me my life back, it gave me my sanity back. So we can share some more before I...

DY: That would be awesome. Well I'm all done.

MM: I have...

SWH: You're all done?

MM: I have two questions that we ask everybody at the end. And um... you can answer them as best as you can or, it's up to you. The first question is: What does reconciliation mean to you?

DY: Reconciliation? Bringing something back, that you lost. Bringing it back together, reconciling with something that you lost from before.

MM: Do you feel like this process of making a statement helps you move in that direction?

DY: I have no idea. (*laughs*)

MM: That's fair.

SWH: Ask her in 3 months. (*laughs from PB and DY*)

DY: Right. Ask me... (*nodding*) keep in touch. (*laughs from everyone*)

MM: (*joking*) more to come.

DY: Yeah.

MM: The second question is what do you want people to know about your experiences?

DY: That nobody should have to go through that, and there are people out there that care and that really want to help you. You've just got to reach out. You can't be sitting at home in your bed 24/7... (*laughs*) Where it feels safe. You've got to take that risk and go ask for help, you've got to... Because in your own head it's a bad neighborhood to get into, get out as fast as you can, and that's my problem...

SWH: They say that when you're in your head you're behind enemy lines.

DY: Yes. (*nodding*)... Yes... most definitely... yep... bad neighbourhood.

PB: You are so strong and so courageous. Truly, I don't... I'm not just saying that...

SWH: Yeah. I was thinking...

PB: Honest to God, what you just told us... not just the telling of it, but you... you have...you survived that and you are still looking for ways to make things better for you, and for your siblings, for your mom, for your kids. You are so strong and so courageous.

SWH: You have a really beautiful spirit, a really beautiful spirit. When Pen started saying that, I was just about to say basically what she just said and I was thinking that one of the things I really felt where you're at when you were saying being told that you're good for nothing. I used to hear that all the time that you're good for nothing, drunken Indian like your mother. And um, that was my identity for a long time, but I'm here to tell you, I don't know and I can't make everything the way you want it to be, but I can tell you this as a sister who as suffered as well, and had been able to get to this other side: It doesn't, by you talking, is not what's going to keep you in the back. It's this, getting it out. But what is important is what do you put in place of this. So what I'd like to do for this what you've done, what you're put out here, is I want to put a song in that for you. And this song says umm, I don't...I'm not a singer, but I sing for healing because this is what helped me...and umm... I was taught by, the first times I went to speak I used to share in circles with elders and I didn't want to tell my story, I didn't want to do any of that, I just would always fall into these situations, and that's what they taught me: when this comes out make sure something you put back in. That's why we smudge, because that's a medicine; it's a salve to your spirit that offers that healing. The songs do that. So I just want to put something back in there for you, from me to you. And I want that... the words are "because I want to live I'll do this first, I'll pray."

[Sandy Sings]

DY: That's beautiful. Thank you.

SWH: So when that comes in your body again, just stop and breathe and if you can look East. If you can't don't worry, it's still going to come but it helps to just look East because everything comes from there. Everything, all your guys lives, and umm...ask, just say help me. You don't have to have any other prayer than that and it'll come. You're on your way to a good healing by coming here and doing this. And I know you've been diagnosed and you have this, but that's not who you are. It's a normal reaction to the trauma you went through, it is not who you are and you can have a good quality of life and it will get better. It may not be perfect but I know it can get better.

I am so...This is why I am here on this, because to just meet you and share this with you is really and honour.

DY: Thank you.

SWH: Yes.

DY: I'm not used to so many people caring that don't even know me. *(laugh)*

SWH: I know isn't it weird?

DY: Yeah

SWH: The first time it happened to me I just acted like I took it in. I just pretended. *(everyone laughs)* Okay thank you... ahhh.

DY: Yeah. *(laughs)*

SWH: It was overwhelming.

DY: Very, very.

MM: Well. I wish that you had gone last, but I need to also say something.

DY: Okay.

MM: Thank you for being here. I feel very touched by, not so much your story, but by your presence. By who you are. Umm... I know you have had a really hard life. I know that you have really suffered a lot, and still do suffer a lot. I feel that, and I hear that. And umm... but who I see in front of me is a woman who is really brave and really strong, because you are here. Not everyone would be able to show up the way you are right now, with the life you've had. So, umm... what I feel is your strength, and your um...like your life force is strong, **(PB: [softly] yes)** and good, it's really good. **(PB: [softly] yes)** There is nothing bad about your life force. You have a big heart, you are generous, and you want to be with the people you love, and you're trying really hard to show up...like you showed up here.

(PB says something softly to DY)

DY: Blame Didi *(laughs)*

MM: What'd you say?

DY: Blame Didi *(laughs)*

PB: *[jokingly]* we will, we will.

SWH: Well thank God for Didi.

MM: And Didi could talk herself blue in the face, but you show up.

SWH and PB: Yes



MM: You did show up here. And that's a really strong part of you so thank you for being here... and um... I believe that by sharing your story as you did, and by being willing to share it with others that it will help other people as well.

PB: yes, yes.

DY: Thank you.

SWH: And you're glowing right now.

DY: Am I? *(laughs)*

PB: It's so true!

MM: Your face has changed a lot.

PB: It's true!

MM: I'm honored to have met you.

DY: Me too. This was awesome... Hugging time. Time to go. *(PB laughs)*

SWH: Time to have a cigarette.

PB: Go do some smudging and... *(laughs)*

(Everyone hugs)

[END OF RECORDING]