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Statement by Michael Petit collected by Rachel George on November 29, 2014

Michael Petit

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General Information

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Statement Provider: Michael Petit

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Statement Gatherer: Rachel George

Support Person: N/A

Additional Individuals Present: N/A

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Recording

RG: Alright, it is November 29, 2014. We are here in Portland, Maine. My name is Rachel George and I am here today with...

MP: Michael Petit.

RG: Fantastic. And the file number is ME-201411-00149. Michael, have you been informed, understood and signed the consent form?

MP: I have.

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

MP: Right, understood.

RG: Excellent. Can you talk to me a little about your time working for the Department of Health and Human Services?

MP: I worked for the Department of Health and Human services for eight years, so from 1978 / 79 to 1987 so I was the head of an organization that had among other elements within it, child welfare and child protective services but it also had Medicaid and Food Stamps and Health and many other things.

RG: Did you receive any training about the Indian Child Welfare Act?

MP: This was back in 79 and it was either just passed or about to be fully passed and at the time, there was no discussion of it during the eight years that I was there. I am an MSW and eventually ended up in the Child Welfare League of America a number of years later, 10 years later and it was very much a topic of conversation then [00:01:39.25] and then I ended up consulting and working with an organization I founded where the issue came up any number of times. Maybe we could have gone to a library or something but I'm fine if you are.

RG: This is fine. I'll wait for her to stop grinding coffee. Um, can you tell me a little bit about how you understood the ICWA working within the department while you were there?

MP: It never came up in the 8 years that I was there, I do not recall a single conversation involving Native, Indian children and the only time that I ever ran into any of the tribes was on the public health side where they were raking blueberries in Washington county and they were living in very rough conditions and they were working in very spartan conditions and I went out to look at their conditions and then tried and succeeded in getting both our Department of Agriculture and our Department of Labor to require the blueberry growers to provide toilets, to provide running water, to provide cabins, to provide other goods but it wasn't a child welfare issue per say and the families were all poor --the problems with them and the Maliseets were one of the principal tribes. The problem was that they couldn't exactly time the ripeness of the berries. So they might come down 3/4 days early and they work piece work, so there might not be any work for 3/4 days, they had no money and they were in small communities that were also poor and they would need general assistance, they might need a mattress or they might need clothing or diapers for a kid or something like that so it would create a bit of a conflict because the locals were poor as well – they didn't have anything -- so the state, which is what I represented, was able to do extra under certain conditions which is what we would do, is we would say, alright, this small town doesn't need to put up money because they don't have it themselves, and the state will do it. That was the extent of my involvement with the tribes.

RG: Can you tell me a little bit of how your job functioned?

MP: The job as a commissioner? What it entails having a final say on all the rules and laws and programs that are administered by the department which is typically the largest administration in state and frequently has the most employees in the state and in our case, 30-40% of the population receive direct benefits and then 100% of the population eat at restaurants that are licensed by the department and other public facilities. In the case of child welfare, I mean you are familiar with the whole process of [00:04:57.05] child protective services making reports, conducting investigations, working with families to see if the situation is as reported. That is are they abusing their children? If they are, are they receptive to receiving services that would make them not abuse or neglect their children? And if necessary,

children can be removed from families and if necessary, a child, a parent's rights can be terminated and the child adopted. So we received many thousands of reports each year and a good number were validated, substantiated. Most families were able to do the improvements that allowed the child to stay in the family and in some cases, there was too much mental illness, too much substance abuse, too much whatever it was that there was just no way they could care for the child properly. So we had that responsibility under our jurisdiction and it consumed a lot of my time because the consequences are so serious for these children and these families that frequently stuff would be brought to my attention, either bureaucratically within the department or externally by press or lawmakers or others.

RG: If the department was going to implement something like training for the Indian Child Welfare Act, would that come through you?

MP: Well it wouldn't necessarily have to come through me. It would depend on if there was say a new law adopted or whether it was some administrative decision where we said, let's just train our people. But you know, the department has almost 3000 employees, 100s of programs, you couldn't have a commissioner signing off on every program. There was numerous trainings going on all the time in many, many areas on the topic of power plants, on restaurant sanitation, on nursing homes, on group homes for the mentally disabled, and the child welfare. So I may or may not have known of it depending on whether it was response to something controversial or whether it was just, we do training for all of our workers: it's standard stuff and didn't receive particular attention--it was never flagged. There were issues of child welfare constantly brought to my attention, constantly in which either the parents were aggrieved or family members were aggrieved or schools were aggrieved that they didn't think we were acting. It was either acting too aggressively or not aggressive enough. It's challenging for the workers because they have high case loads--they may or may not have the right kind of training. They have long distances to travel in rural Maine going from one place to the other. So, I don't recall anyone ever saying to me--we are going to be doing a training on the Indian Child Welfare Act. We're going to fund it, we're going to give people the time to do it, and do you have any problems with it--that never came up.

RG: Knowing that the Indian Child Welfare Act was passed in 78 and there was kind of like a lull period while things were being negotiated for the Lands Claims Settlement Act, what are your thoughts on the fact that nothing surrounding the Indian Child Welfare Act and working with the tribes in child welfare while you were there?

MP: Well I think that the first, again, the Department of Health and Human Services administers literally hundreds of programs so the things that would rise to the top for a commissioner are those issues that are political, those issues where there may be life and death consequences right on the horizon, where there's large sum of money involved, whether the congressional delegation is involved, what the governor happens to be thinking about at that

particular time and so --and whatever the priorities are of the department which the commissioner ultimately shapes so what would be the priority? The Indian Child Welfare Act as you said, a kind of slow start--it was only adopted in 78, I didn't come on until 2 to 3 months after that so no I'm not saying this defensively but it really wouldn't have risen to the level of -- going to nursing home, for example, or boarding home, and finding 60 geriatric patients all mentally ill who at noon are all in a near-comatose situation because they are being drugged heavily to control their behavior and there's two staff. That would take an immediate priority. And the tribes are so small in Maine and they're really out of the mainstream press—I mean, you could have -- are they in Washington County, Aroostook County? Yeah, I mean, these are areas that are not in the daily mainstream of news cycles and organizations and everything else. I mean, they're rural areas, they're frequently poor areas, I mean, its a rough environment. We had a presence there, the Department of Health and Human Services, probably had a greater presence in different communities in Maine than any other organization: I mean, food stamps, substance abuse issues. I mean, who does it? Department of Health and Human Services.

RG: Can you talk a little bit about your work with the Child Welfare League of America?

MP: I directed all their consulting and then I was deputy and they do the standards nationally for child welfare. They are voluntarily assembled by people in the field so I organized consultations to the states, visited a number of states, Indian Child welfare issues surfaced in a few of those situations: in Minnesota and North Dakota, and some other places as well, but especially North Dakota where we were actually doing a project that very much was meant to involve the Indian community. And then I think the Indian Child Welfare Association, ICWA, was organized around that time with Terry Cross--you know Terry? So, there was a deep misunderstanding and tension between the tribe's newfound authority and what was going on in the regular laws of the state. ICWA as sovereign status, sovereign nation status confounded things--made it more difficult to understand where did it begin, where did it end? Who is Indian? Who is not? On reservation, off reservation. Who has jurisdiction? What's culturally acceptable? What's not culturally acceptable. I mean it was very complicated. It took me a long time to get the information that we needed from the tribes to be able to use it to their advantage because they were very skeptical about anything [00:12:09.25]. It took a long time to get that information, including my visiting several reservations.

RG: Did ICWA concerns ever come up through this organization concerning the state of Maine that you were aware of?

MP: No, and just so you know, after my 8 year stint as commissioner, within a couple of years, I was in Washington where I've been for the last 25 years or so. I've only, of late returned with an interest in what's happening Maine because I'm relocating here in a few, in a couple of months. So I have not followed Maine press during that period and it just never came up.

RG: Can you tell me some of the major concerns that came up with relation to the Indian Child Welfare Act in the other states that you were working with?

MP: I mean, I just mentioned some of them. The issue was, who had jurisdiction? What were the standards being met? There were a lot of issues around substance abuse, around sexual

abuse. There was real questions about how responsive either party was to the needs of the kids. In some of the jurisdictions when I was in the Standing Rock reservation, I think I recall something like 50% of the kids were in out-of-home care, frequently with relatives and frequently because of alcohol abuse, right? And domestic violence. There was a lot of it in North Dakota. So the Indian children were way over represented in a whole host of negative indicators about child wellbeing---put aside child abuse and ICWA -- but education issues, health issues, substance abuse issues. I mean, they were much, much higher than the rate for North Dakota's white children by multiples, 3,4,5,6,7 I mean big difference.

RG: So when you are looking at something like that high over representation, what in your opinion is the best methods to solve that kind of representation? To reverse it.

MP: You know, 400 years of very bad treatment of Indians who are and you know, it's 500 tribes so I don't want to speak in a way that says everybody looks the same because they don't but certainly there is wildly disproportionate poverty, suicide, substance abuse that is a result of you know, colonization, genocide, etc., and I don't think it's an easy flip back to say, well why don't you regain your earlier health, ten generations ago? I mean, the last 3,4,5 generations were very, very rough whether it was in Canada or in the US, and the legacy of all that--you know, I was on Standing Rock and I was escorted around the reservation by a woman named Bertha Gipp. Bertha Gipp was a great, great grand daughter of Sitting Bull. And she was the first Native public health nurse in North Dakota. *[00:15:44.09]* Do you want me to stop? I said, Bertha what's the difference between you're being on this reservation now versus when you were on this reservation 60 years ago? She said well, other than the fact that there was a 15 year interlude where I wasn't here because I was in South Carolina in schools where they exported kids to these other places--she said, the difference is when I was a young person, if a woman was pregnant, she was treated with respect and deference. This year I've been down here a dozen times on domestic violence situations where drunken men are beating up pregnant women that they fathered a child with. And she said that's a big difference. It was unheard of when I was young.

I think that kind of situation where you have a lot of manufactured bad behavior, a lot of self-destructive behavior, I don't think you can fix it with--let's sit down and have a talk, I think it's a lot more complicated than that. It's a lot more complicated than seeing a psychiatrist, it's a lot more complicated than AA. When you are talking about the kind of self-destructive behavior that we see among many Indian young people with suicides, for example, which as you know is way over represented. I don't know what it is in Canada but in the US, it is sky high. Alaska Natives, I think their suicide rate is triple or quintuple Massachusetts white children suicide rate. You know it's off the charts.

So I think that the turning around of this issue is going to require a lot more than the Indian Child Welfare Act. I think the Indian Child Welfare Act is less about producing healthy human

beings and promoting child well being than it is protecting children from harm and, to the extent that you can work with a family--that's a secondary goal --which is true with child welfare generally.

I mean, I'm on this Presidential Commission right now to eliminate child abuse fatalities and we've been conducting hearings all over the country including Terry Cross from ICWA was presenting it, we're meeting with some tribal people in the next month or two. But the issue of child safety or family preservation if you just posit it that way--the issue first and foremost for just about everybody is the safety of the child. [00:18:22.17] The child should not have to pay for the sins or commissions or omissions of the parent, right? So that is a constant struggle and it's not just the Indian community although it occurs disproportionately in the Indian community, it occurs disproportionately in the Black community but what you're looking at is a legacy of poverty and a legacy of genocide--whether it was the Black community- slavery or whether it was the Tribes.

So I don't think it's an easy one to turn around. It's very sad. I've been on reservations where the Indian population was solid. They were conducting their business, people were doing fine. And I've been on other reservations where I was struck at how depressed and passive the adults were. How every decision had to be approved by Bureau of Indian Affairs, every decision had to be approved by Indian Health Services. I mean it was like, a very bad relationship—you know, it was a dependency that nobody thrives under and yet they had been in the situation for a century, since reservations got formed. And Standing Rock is a rough reservation. It had, on the surface, no natural resources. But today, what is going on in North Dakota with oil and coal--they may be booming, I don't know but it was a rough, rough experience.

RG: With what you know about the Indian Child Welfare Act, do you think it does enough to protect the rights of Native children and families?

MP: No, just like I don't think that the... any... I've been involved with the child protection system for almost 50 years so I can say flat out that none of it is working well. There are 3 to 4000 children a year that are killed, 80 percent of them are three and younger. Maybe 30 or 40 are Indians. The other 3,960 are somebody else. So all of it concerns me but I would say we have not yet figured out what the best way in our culture is to produce healthy human beings. There are other cultures--Canada generally, but not in regards to its Indians historically. But if you take a look at -- there's 15-20 countries that are much more welcoming of children on the planet, they're much more supportive of families, the kids start out with a much greater likelihood of success and ICWA--I guess NICWA is the act--you know Terry Cross has been a leader in that for the 30/40 years since it's been law and Terry spoke very, very eloquently at one of our commission hearings a couple months ago and to listen to him, I don't think it feels like there has been a lot of advances. I think Terry and ICWA and others, have some ideas about what it would take to improve things, some of it requires action by the federal government. And I don't think they get much support from the federal government and part of it is there is just great confusion among people with this sovereign nation issue---it gets very confusing for people about how to intervene, when you are overstepping your boundaries, when you're doing too much, too little, or whatever it happens to be. So I think, it's not clear

yet --Terry seems clear about what it would take to improve things but I'm not sure that's penetrated mainstream child welfare culture at this point.

RG: Where do you see improvements that could be made?

MP: Well the very first thing that has to happen is people need to be ready for parenthood. And if they're not ready for parenthood because of poverty, because of mental illness, because of poor schools, because of suppression, because of depression, because of their own bad cycle of being raised--if they're not prepared for parenthood and they bring a child onto the planet and they lack the supportive environment that would allow the child to thrive--that is the single first problem. I mean, all over the world from now and millions of years ago, people have given birth to children in a supportive environment with extended families helping them. [00:23:25.03] The era that we live in, the culture that we live in--there is so much substance abuse --that frequently, the extended family culture that is meant to support is unable to support it. When it can support it that's great and in many instances, there is a repetition of a long cycle, forget where the men are --the mothers, the grandmothers, the great grandmothers have had their own history. So I think in the first instance, if you are unfortunate enough to be born in certain states that have very weak social safety net standards, you better hope that you are born to a parent who can kind of manage and guide because you're not going to get much help from the state. On the other hand, if you are born to a parent that has trouble parenting, hope that you are born in a state that is going to be much more sympathetic in terms of providing health and services.

So I think the first thing is: have children when you're ready. Secondly is look CPS – Child Protective Services -- is very, very threatening. It's like dropping an atomic bomb into a household, I mean, nobody wants to deal with Child Protection Services. It's one of the toughest jobs in the world: Are you having sex with your kid? We hear that you are beating up this pregnant woman? I mean, who wants to be spending their time going into trailer parks and rural areas or 20 story housing projects. So that kind of an environment, it's not good for kids. So what helps is if you have public health nurses, what helps is if you have substance abuse treatment, what helps is if you have very strong schools and a lot of the schools are very poor. There's a lot of--there's not a lot of Pre-k. There's not a lot of early education for the parents and kids, which I've seen... And it very much stems back to poverty and then the question is what is the poverty caused by? And the poverty is caused by a bunch of things that a lot of us talk about. And it's difficult to act politically in a constructive way. We're in a period now in the US where the idea of helping poor people is a very minimal kind of a consideration. I think people are so frustrated with their daily lives that they are not looking for an activist government to help address these kinds of issues. And then when you get involved with minorities, whether they're urban or whether they're distant rural ones, they're often invisible. You know to the political power structure which I don't think there's a Native American in the

US Senate. I'm sure they're must be some in the House but there aren't very many. And you know, my guess is maybe in Canada as well.

I would say, Rachel. My wife is an MSW and she works in child welfare and she has for 40 years and she's written the standards and we've both been involved in child welfare for 40/50 years. I think we believe that there's much greater knowledge then there was. I don't think anyone believes that the child welfare system is much improved. I think it's still only a halfway answer to what families need. Well, right now this commission that I'm on—you know, there's kind of a debate going on about preventing everything but there is the question of the immediacy of dealing with kids that are in great jeopardy, great harm. How far do you go in letting them remain at risk? We're talking about one year olds, two year olds, three year olds, who can't fend for themselves in any way--nor can they at 5,6,7,8,9,10. But you know you get very bad behavior towards these kids and you stop it and at some point that requires law enforcement because you're talking about felony offenses against children, right? And you see a lot of it in Maine I think we're seeing more of it in Maine then we have before. I can't believe how much we see, day in, day out just looking at the Maine papers on domestic violence and child abuse. It's not, it's going in the wrong direction. There are a lot of people that work hard but the issues that they are facing are greater than the tools that they're bringing to the table.

RG: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

MP: I think that *[00:28:17.10]* the only way that this is going to improve is I think there has to be -- I don't want to say earned trust --between the parties that have interest in this. But the reality of our culture is that the Native American community is about 1%, 3 million-4 million tops. Somewhere in there. So, the political power the ability to allocate resources, the lawmaking responsibilities, remain with the dominant culture and that's going to be true for probably decades to come. At some point the demographics will change that, but that doesn't assure anything. You need to look at African countries 50 or 60 years after colonial independence, they're not functioning much better than they were previously. So I'm just saying it's not an automatic. If we were the majority, it would be fine. There are plenty of people in the majority that aren't doing fine.

So I think one of the pieces and I've talked to Terry about this--is extending some greater trust among the parties and earning and trust to verify. And I'll give you an example of a situation where this works against everybody's best interest. The tribes that I work with in North Dakota were really hurting and this reservation, Standing Rock is as big as Connecticut. It had 5000 people living on it and when they gave them that acreage, it wasn't the best acreage for farming and cattle and everything else. So I said listen, you guys --the Natives and I met with some of the tribes and they were great and you know, I learned a lot about history with them and I mean they were very interesting to be around. So they said, we really would like for the state of North Dakota to be more supportive and I said, right. And I've been commissioned by the legislature. I was hired, me, I was hired by the North Dakota legislature, to look at the overall child wellbeing in North Dakota and I said, You know there needs to be a special look at Native children. So everyone agreed we should take a special look and so I'm meeting with the tribes and I say, so listen, how many of your kids do you show as abused? How many reports come in? How many substantiations come in? How many kids die? How many kids are

separated from their parents, all the usual kind of stuff. **[00:31:13.11]** We're not telling you. You're not telling us, why? Well we don't have it. I didn't believe that. We don't have the information or we don't trust what you'll do with the information. We think that if you have the information, you will just use it to stereotype perceptions that people have and that will harm us or--and this came up with some of the tribes-- you are going to use our numbers to make money for yourself--you're going to be doing research and you're going to get degrees and you're going to earn money based on looking at our numbers.

And I said, listen, you don't have to give me the numbers but here is what the North Dakota legislature is not going to do --they're not going to say, "let's give these guys a million bucks because they say they need it, and when we ask them why do you need it, how many, what's going on, the numbers that anyone else would have to go through," I said, they're not going to give you the money, they can't. They don't just do it because you say, "Give me money I need it." And it took about a year and finally, working with the tribes, they said look, we have been assembling the numbers, we've been working them and here's what they look like. And so I said let's present this to the governor, let's present this to the legislature and so forth and you know what happened is they actually--the legislature was very responsive. And they funded an Indian Child Welfare training academy for both Indians and --social workers, cops, judges, lawyers. They had cross training. The state paid for it. The Indians, Debra Pank who was the head of the tribe, the head of the association of tribes. She ended up being the first director of the academy. It was well funded, everybody said this was a great program and I had hoped at the time that it would be a model, you know, for **[00:33:12.16]** other jurisdictions. Now, North Dakota is a small state. The Indian children were the only minority population of any significance. They were about 7% of all kids but they were probably half the kids, three-quarters of the kids in trouble even though they only represented 7% of the kids, right? I mean, they were just rough situations. So I was very, very encouraged by that.

I ran into the same situation elsewhere where I have said--what are your numbers show? And they would say, that's a European-centric approach to problem solving and you want numbers and we're really wanting to pray our way through this, or do this or do that. I mean it was another way of approaching it. I said that might be true but when you're going to people that have to run for election, they have to talk to tax payers, they can't just say: We're writing out checks and we hope people are doing something with it. I mean, that's not the way it works.

So I think one of the things is this business about, I don't think there is enough interaction between the Indian community and the non-Indian community. I just don't see a lot of places where their paths cross so that you would have, be able to have a discussion about this without either party, hiding behind something or being patronizing. If you take offense to everything that I say to you, fine I'll stop saying what I think, you will now be removed from what I perceive to be the truth but at least we won't be in conflict. Some people, they're happy with that. They don't want to be in conflict with each other but I think there are some hard circumstances here where it behooves everybody, adults, to jump into this.

On a positive note, my friend, with my friend, Bertha, who is since deceased. I said you know Bertha, I really appreciate you taking me around the reservation area. I said you know North Dakota is the 49th state I've been in, and she said what's the 50th? And I said, South Dakota, and she said, you wanna go? And I said yes. And she had this Oldsmobile convertible—it was about twenty years old. She's 60 something, I was 30 something and you could drive to South Dakota on the reservation from North Dakota on a dirt road and there's a sign that says, You are now entering South Dakota and there's a picture of me, Bertha, and her car with that sign behind us: You are now entering South Dakota--that was my 50th, that was my 50th state. But, you know there was that piece in the New York Times today or yesterday, did you see it? On Sand Creek--you know the Sand Creek massacre? Well this marks the 150th anniversary of this.

[phone call]

He had 3 strokes and a heart attack in one day. At the time he was on 29 prescription drugs. In one year, he gained 100 pounds because one of the drugs retained fluid so he's been in a nursing home for the last 6 years getting dialysis every other day and we talk a couple times every day. His entire existence is the range of his right arm. He can't walk, he can't get in a wheel chair. It's very, very challenging but you know, I'll say Dennis how are you doing? Excellent. You are? I say, you're not reading the papers are you?

So you know what I was trying to say is that the history is a sad, sad history. The Sandcreek thing, you know today, it was very difficult to read it and I've read a lot of stuff myself before and have a pretty good idea that there was a lot of bad behavior. Overcoming that, I think is -- we're not close. It's, there have been some improvements and I'm sure there have been some success stories. I'm sure there have been some improvements. But overall, it's got to be as sad dimension of US history as there is. There is nothing certainly that surpasses it and the only thing I can think of that might be equal to it is slavery. So, how do you overcome that? It's tough.

So **[00:37:58.29]** but you know what? I have an inscription in my office on the wall that says: "We are not called upon to succeed only to try" Mother Theresa. And I think, you just gotta try. There's always some individual successes but on the grand scale, it's a very tough culture that we're in. It's a very rough culture. You know, most of us--I could give a 3 hour speech on what's wrong with us and I could give a 6 hour speech on what's right with it. There's a lot more good than bad but the bad is bad. I look at right now--all this immigration stuff from South America, especially the Central American countries where it's rape, mayhem, murder, I mean, it's just brutal. It's fueled by US demand for the product. It's people self-medicating. It's widespread depression.

So the central Americans aren't near our school saying here, take this, it's marijuana, try this cocaine. It's US citizens who are out of the mainstream whose lives are far from being fulfilled that are self-medicating. And while it is true, it's more true especially in Black and Indian families--it's no less true but it also happens with other cultures like in Maine which is the

whitest state and every victim you see day in, day out, and every perpetrator is almost always white. So it's just not the same intensity is the difference --there's not as many in prison, there's not as many--you know so it's rough one. And I think it's good that you guys are doing this and if you haven't seen them, ICWA has some very specific recommendations, pages of them that recommend be considered and I would think you guys would want to fold that into what you are reviewing at least.

Do you know Terry Cross? I mean, he's in Oregon. That's where they are based. No he's very good, I'm sure he's --you can't be in the work without having a certain sadness that you feel in seeing the harm of some people and how difficult it is to correct that harm. I mean it's very, very difficult and a lot of people never recover. They never recover. The stuff that they experience as children and all you have to do is look at the prison population and you see how many come out of... not the child welfare system. I mean, I think people don't know really what to do and that's part of what the problem is. Can we introduce A, B, and C and get the desired result that we want? It's human behavior, I mean, with some people it's terrific, and the next thing you know the one you thought was good ends up killing a kid. **[00:41:04.03]** So, that's it for me. Yeah.

RG: Thank you so much for your time, for meeting me on this cold evening.

MP: Well, it's not really cold by Maine standards, is it? It's only in the twenties. And for forty years, I've been winter camping, in the snow, sleeping in tents when it's been sometimes thirty-five below. So this is acceptable for me. But I'm glad that we were able to chat, and I'm happy to follow up, I'd be happy to follow up at some point. And I understand how focused you are on ICWA which you kept returning to faithfully with each question -- which is good -- but I think one has to look at sovereign nation status or not, the level of help and interaction that both sides can have with the other, I think transcends--it has to transcend the narrowness of law. Law, it's just not rich enough, not nuanced enough, it's not subtle enough, it's not loving enough, it's not caring enough to be able to foster the kinds of interactions that say--we're all interested in protecting these kids and strengthen this family, how can we do that? And as soon as you introduce a battery of lawyers, protocols, procedures, there's so much paper work, there's so little interaction with the families themselves. They need much more than that. And do I think the people can climb out of the hole they are in? They can. But they have to be offered help and they have to be willing to receive help and a lot of people, they're too hurt. And I think on a grand scale, that's part of what is going on with this issue with the Indians and this piece today was good--yesterday I think --you should read--Sand Creek. There's still so much hurt within the Indian community and I don't think the dominant culture appreciates the depth of that hurt. And I'm not saying that everybody--there's all sorts of people thriving and doing well. They're taking trips and spending money and they're making love and they're doing all kinds of things. But there's a significant number that aren't. It's too much isolation and we project onto people, you know, what we think they are like. We stereotype them. We start thinking if he's this--he's bad. If he's a he, he's bad. You know, that kind of thing. That's it.

RG: Thank you so much.

MP: How many more do you have Rachel?

RG: Interviews? That's a very good question. Right now we're going through a list of people that we really want to talk to. Our statement gathering process will hopefully be all done by the middle of January.

MP: Are you getting other people that you're running into who have had substantial experience with ICWA in Maine?

RG: Yep,

MP: In Maine? With the Department?

RG: Some with the Department, some not with the Department. It depends on the timeframe.

MP: So, Wabanaki doesn't include the bands of Maliseet and other..

RG: Yep.

MP: They do?

RG: Wabanaki includes the Micmac, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot,

MP: So, are most of them in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia...

RG: No...

MP: For awhile I know the rakers would come down from like Cape Breton Island,

RG: Yep, there are some. There are Micmac and Maliseet in New Brunswick and into Canada

[END OF RECORDING]