



### **General Information**

**Private or Public Statement?** - Private

**Statement Provider:** Delia Saintcross

**Date:** November 19, 2014

**Location:** Portland, ME

**Previous Statement?** No

**Statement Gatherer:** Marcie Lister

**Support Person:** N/A

**Additional Individuals Present:** Carol Wishcamper

**Recording Format:** Video

**Length of Recording:** 50:17

### **Recording**

**ML:** Today is November 19, 2014. We are at the Unitarian Church on Allen Ave, Portland, Maine. And my name is Marcie Lister, I am gathering the statement of

**DSC:** Dee Saintcross.

**ML:** And with us is...

**CW:** Carol Wishcamper, TRC Commissioner.

**ML:** The file number is ME-201411-00143. Dee, have you been informed, and understood, and signed the consent?

**DSC:** Yes, I have.

**ML:** I do just need to advise you again that any information disclosed that indicates a child is in need of protection, or there is imminent risk of death, or serious bodily injury to an identifiable person or group, this may not be protected as, actually cannot be protected as confidential.

**DSC:** Okay.

**ML:** I have a very long list of questions that I will ask you, and feel – answer them to the best of your ability, and some of them seem a bit redundant, I think that is probably purposeful to try to get at maybe some things people have forgotten. But, if you feel you have answered it, just say that and we will move on...Could you please tell us about your current and or past employment in state child welfare?

**DSC:** I'm presently a supervisor at the Department of Health and Human Services in the Portland area, or Cumberland County. I supervise both child protective workers and permanency social workers. I've been a supervisor now for about ten years and part of that, I was a case worker -- carrying cases not doing as much protective work for eight years. Again, basically this Cumberland County, Portland area.

**ML:** How many cases approximately--how many cases involved working with Wabanaki children and families or I guess also supervising other people who have been

**DSC:** I don't know the exact number. I know that when I was first approached, there were two in particular that we were involved in for quite some time so they're pretty vivid in my memory and recall but I'm guessing that there are probably been half a dozen where there's been some component of Native American or ICWA issues.

**ML:** When did you first learn about Maine's policies related to Indian Child Welfare? Including how were you made aware of them and if you could comment on the type and amount of training that you received, related to understanding?

**DC:** When I, actually, while I was still doing my social work internship and it was a second career for me so, but I did, a placement with the department, an internship and I believe part of that was doing the work but also then, ongoing training and I'm pretty sure that--that was 18/19 years ago. I'm pretty sure that was, at least, an initial introduction to ICWA. That training because it was an internship, then I didn't have to go do sort of like the full training that somebody might be coming from outside. So, there was certainly an introduction and then, periodically over the years, I know that the department has offered ICWA and at times, I believe we've even had mandated training and so, I'm going to say there's probably been at least 3/4 other trainings that I've participated in--as part of my work with the department.

**ML:** Could you describe a situation in which you or your staff felt very positively about your work with a Wabanaki child and family? Please describe this in a general way so they are not identifiable.

**DSC:** I think right at the beginning, I mentioned the two cases and I think once we made contact and established sort of a relationship with the tribal contact. One was a Penobscot family and then the other one was Passamaquoddy. I won't say that it was a perfect relationship but I think for the most part, we established contact and we stayed in contact. They often participated in our family team meetings. The children were not placed in Native American families. They were the children--the children were removed from the family of origin but in both instances, the tribal representatives did their own assessment of those families and supported those and right through to the permanency decision and again, I won't say it was



perfect because it was, at times, and I say we, as the supervisor of the department, we probably would forget that they were really a member of the team and the legal part of it sometimes. Because in this area, we don't, we don't have as much involvement sometimes and so when you don't do things often enough, you sort of stumble at times I guess is my best--but I think, and I would hope that the folks that we worked with from the tribes would feel that it was reasonably positive, cooperative, and respectful involvement. *[00:06:12.28]*

**ML:** Could you describe a situation in which you or your staff felt less positively about your work with a Wabanaki child or family?

**DSC:** I think. This might be a more general--I think sometimes where we struggle is getting the contact, knowing who to call and speak with or getting a response and establishing that relationship. That's where we seem to sometimes really or at least in my experience, have the, have the problem. And then, I think legally sometimes and I think in one of those cases, as we were sending out discovery, we missed ---we had to send discovery out to the tribe and the tribal representative just as if it were, you know again, not as if it were, it is a member of that team and a party to the children and the family so it's the same case but it's where we struggled. *[00:07:26.18]*

**CW:** When you're talking about making contact it's beyond the biological family it's also with tribal representatives

**DSC:** Tribal representatives...

**CW:** Could be child welfare, or some other official of the tribe?

**DSC:** Correct and I think, again this might be more general but when we need to do an assessment and I was thinking about this on the way over. Last year, one of my staff members, we have a sort of template that we use to talk and gather information when we first go out with a parent and she tweaked up the template she was using and I certainly am recommending it because the department right now is looking at--what do we use for templates but she really made sure that one of those bullet points was ICWA and another area that we slip up on is--if we're not as diligent from the get-go, because again maybe we don't expect it as much in this area and so if we miss it and then, if children are removed, we're already like behind the eight ball. We haven't done what we needed to do. And I think it is really an area where we have to--the department really needs to kind of, really stay on top of it. Staff are trained. It's part of their initial training but to really understand it is a very different thing.

**CW:** So these are families that are living in Cumberland County, they're not on the reservation, they're here, so they're in your jurisdiction?

**DSC:** If we're doing the work yes they would be here, they would not be, there's no tribe, there's no reservation down in this area, so I mean I think it's not on people's radar but it still is a -- something that should be considered.

**ML:** So to follow up a little more, is it a problem -- it sounds like you may have said this, but I don't want to put words -- to identify who the tribal representative is who you should be contacting or getting the contact information?

**DSC:** I think it is that, but it's also—because again, we don't do a whole lot so we don't have an ongoing contact and maybe that person changes, but the other piece is somebody, or maybe a parent who is attempting to explore it, I think or my grandparent, or it's sort of a family story but they don't have clarity so then we have to dig deeper for that and then, whether or not, again, a worker and a supervisor, a supervisor may miss it because it's sort of a statement in passing so to take any statements that a family may have Native American heritage -- not just including the Wabanaki -- because then we are also being made aware of other tribes...And I think sometimes workers are under the understanding, well if it's not a certain percentage, and again, through training and more work, that's not in fact the case. Each tribe may have it's own determination so we still need to follow up so I think where we encounter difficulties if especially if we believe that the children are at serious risk or in jeopardy or we do the removal. Sometimes we're still trying to catch up to those ICWA issues and the Native American heritage.

**ML:** Could you please describe your experiences in working within Maine's child welfare policies, obviously you touched on some of that...to perhaps further clarify. There are many facets to working within the Indian child welfare policies, some parts of ICWA policies may be familiar to you--ones in which you've had experience and other areas may not be as familiar or were not be part of your work and training, so I have listed a number of different areas and I can go through them and just please speak to any that you feel you've had experience and so what your experiences were in these areas, if any, and what challenges did you find in these areas? And actually you just spoke to the first one: initial identification of a child as Native American.

**DSC:** Yes.

**ML:** Notification of child to tribal welfare?

**DC:** I think it somewhat goes hand in hand, I know and I tried to keep my federal registry handy dandy with law so if it comes up, at least then we have contacts and the letters to be sent out. Our AAGs in this area--one of them will gladly do those letters for us, for the workers. Others don't so there's variability in how we practice.

**ML:** *[00:12:45.06]* And then who would you usually call within tribal child welfare?

**DSC:** It really depends. We call the phone number that we have available to us. I don't know that we always have a contact person.

**ML:** Working with the tribes to identify Native children?

**DSC:** I have, well, I guess that's what we were talking about so if there's some indication that there, that a child may be a member of the tribe and then to reach out to them so sometimes that contact is through phone. I think generally, if it's in Maine, we try by phone and if it's one of the other, a national tribe, then we send the letter.

**ML:** And how challenging has that been?

**DSC:** I think I've clearly identified that it can be challenging on our part, but I think sometimes we don't get a response and so the work, you know it's busy and it's moving and so if we don't get a response, we just move on and --which isn't necessarily the right thing so I think it's a challenge on both sides.

**ML:** Determining jurisdiction or residence of Native American children?

**DSC:** I'm not sure, I mean, I don't know if that's sort of speaking to if we remove a placement?

**ML:** I'm not exactly sure what it ---so I guess it's ---the question is what were your experiences in and challenges you've found in the following area: determining jurisdiction or residence of Native American children.

**CW:** So the jurisdictional issue I think may be more complex when it's closer to the tribal reservations because who has jurisdiction, tribal child welfare or DHHS, right? I think DHHS is more when the family isn't living on the reservation. Sometimes they can be back and forth, sometimes one parent can be, so it's tricky.

**DSC:** So I really from my own experience, I don't know that I can speak that much on that, more than what I've said before about, you know, I think once we establish the relationship in the cases that I spoke of, I think we did fairly well and worked collaboratively and respectfully.

**ML:** Child custody hearings.

**DSC:** So I am certainly aware that if a child is a member of *[00:15:25.08]* a tribe that they are--the tribe is a full-standing party and deserving of all discovery, notification of when those hearings are, and preferably are present if not physically than by phone.

**ML:** Arranging foster care placement?

**DSC:** Again I am aware of that. I think I've spoken to it. Challenges if we don't identify it early enough and then a child is already placed somewhere, do you move them? You know, so it's

complex but I am aware of that --that we should be trying to find Native American homes for those children.

**ML:** Family team meetings?

**DSC:** The two cases that I mentioned, um, we were very happy for the most part, we had representation either physically at family team meetings or by phone, and so they were and I mean, it's a big part of how we keep everybody sort of informed and updated and gathering information and they were active participants.

**ML:** Arranging family visitation?

**DSC:** Um, we for the cases we talked about, we would speak about visits at those family team meetings and oftentimes that was where we were making decisions about making changes, and so again, their voices were heard--that they should be a voice.

**ML:** Kinship care?

**DSC:** I think that's similar to sort of the placement but maybe it's different. I think in the two cases that I spoke of--the parents were not successful in reunifying and so we began to talk about permanency and for me, it was a learning experience in terms of tribal views about adoption versus permanency guardianship and so we did, in both instances, I believe it was permanency guardianship and the tribe was very active in assessing the families and whether or not the family would continue to support the children's heritage and knowledge and involvement in tribal activities and so--

**ML:** [00:18:04.27] Termination of parental rights?

**DSC:** It's similar, I would say. That was like, you know, there's so many policies and all and I don't mean to diminish any of them but to try to hold on to everything--so for me, at times it's when you're actually in it, you have a better understanding of what that policy is and why it is because that's when you can really sort of hold on to it and it has meaning--so understanding why.

**ML:** And the last one is adoption?

**DSC:** It's similar. So I think in both the cases we went for permanency guardianship -- I might have -- one of the cases went to another unit, so I'm not 100 percent sure how that turned out. The two girls were with a family member, and that was not on the Native American side and then the father who was Native American, he passed away during the process, so the tribal representative was supportive of permanency, but I can't -- I'm thinking that was permanency guardianship as well.

**ML:** What do you consider and this is in quotes, "active efforts" to prevent the break up of an American Indian family? Please describe how the state conducts "active, remedial, and

rehabilitative efforts to prevent the break up of the American Indian family before ordering an out-of-home placement of an Indian child?

**DSC:** I would, I would hope that our best efforts are the same for any family. It's, it's a big decision to remove a child. We know anytime you do remove, there is trauma so and I spoke earlier on if we don't recognize or we haven't found out fully whether or not a child is of Native American heritage, we may not be reaching out to the tribe so that I think that could be difficult but I think the department should be doing everything and anything it can in terms of maybe supportive services. I think in situations where there is not tribal involvement, sometimes we might try to safety plan, a child out of the home but with kin or family or kinship, so I think if we knew it was tribal and then we've made that contact with the tribe, I think that's a much bigger community and resource. So we would involve them in that process, not to remove the child or, could you do a safety plan while you're trying to make things healthier and better but if we haven't recognized that or identified it then we're going to miss that, we're not going to be able to reach out to the tribe.

**ML:** Is the active effort standard used in cases involving Indian children different than the reasonable efforts standard applied to cases not involving Indian children?

**DSC:** Yeah, um, I think it is. Um, it should be, you know, a higher effort i involving the tribe but again, I think sometimes we miss it, especially in the assessment phase.

**ML:** How are tribal child welfare staff included in the development of a family case plan involving an Indian child?

**DSC:** I think I mentioned the two that I had, they were very – they were active; they were participants at the table. Um, and so I would, I felt like they had an equal voice in those plans and I would hope that they felt so as well. It's a good point though, you know, I'm thinking in terms of our reunification or our family plans—there's a place for the family to sign, for the department to sign, or the parents to sign, and I'm not quite sure in those instances whether we had actually the tribal representative sign or not but they really should but I can't recall whether or not they did but they, they participated.

**ML:** Were there any cases that you had or someone under you --where you wanted a tribal representative to be involved but the child had been identified correctly as being a member of the tribe but they weren't for some reason?

**DSC:** I think in one of those early on--before we had made the connection, they were not involved and so, and again, I can't -- it's probably eight years at this point in time -- I don't recall for one-hundred percent whether it was us slow in contacting the tribe or their being slow. I think there was a change in who was doing the tribal welfare at the tribe at the time, and



so when that switch happened and when we made contact, there was very active involvement but there was probably a period very early on where they weren't involved but I can't say for 100% whether or not that was on us or them or a combination of both. *[00:24:03.13]*

**ML:** Um, to the best of your knowledge, if a tribe declines to intervene in a child custody proceeding covered by Maine's Indian child welfare policy, what are the reasons for this decision?

**DSC:** I don't know that I could speak for that. I don't feel like I have that experience or knowledge.

**ML:** To the best of your knowledge, when the state declines to transfer a child custody proceeding covered by Maine's Indian child welfare policies to tribal court, what are the reasons for this decision?

**DSC:** Again, I don't feel like I can speak to that.

**ML:** Have you had experience working with expert witnesses for Indian Child Welfare? In your experience, what criteria does the state use to establish a qualified expert witness in Indian Child Welfare? What are the resources used by the state for finding and determining an expert witness?

**DSC:** I don't recall the details but I remember our AAG coordinating and speaking with representatives from the Penobscot because that did go to trial and someone came in and in the introduction, was established as an expert for the tribe and tribal matters.

**ML:** What state child welfare policies, practices, and events influenced your work with Wabanaki children and families?

**DSC:** I think the trainings in general, and I know there was one in particular where tribal representatives were there...I'm doing the memory thing...but I don't know if the correct word would be reenacted but they really did, they did sort of -- I don't know if it was a dance or some sort of traditional the drums and the smoke and they smudged us and so it was, you know, pretty powerful and moving because again it was awhile ago but I still have this picture. *[00:26:34.22]* Just this past year, the Portland Press Herald ran a whole series and I really religiously kind of followed that and read those things. I have worked with one of our AAGs and when I was first approached and asked if there were other people and I mentioned one of our AAGs but I guess they are not speaking to the council, I'm not quite sure.

**ML:** We have had some AAGs.

**DSC:** She is quite passionate about Native American and ICWA issues. I'm not quite sure where her passion comes from but she had wanted like one unit in the Portland area to kind of try and handle those so I had agreed to do it and she had come in to a unit meeting and done like a mini training for us -- its difficult because of how we transfer and also community partnerships--to maintain that, but, so sometimes people on the floor will come find me but I



think that was helpful because she would go to not what the law is or the policy but again, that spirit of it, where does it come from? So, um, and um, I don't know, I guess a combination of those things.

**ML:** How did state child welfare practices and policies change during your employment? And how did this impact your work with Wabanaki children and families?

**DSC:** I think I would say that the department has in a lot of areas, but certainly in this one recognized that our work was not up to par and it probably still is not where it needs to be. I have worked alongside Martha Proulx from the northern part of that state. I know she's been quite active. So sometimes if we have missed or, you know, someone is not feeling like they are being responded to in our area, she certainly jumps in and intervenes. So, you know and she's been at a reasonably high level so I think to have someone contact at the department who feels quite passionately and not just about the policy or the law but sort of the spirit of it and the meaning of it, so I think we take it more seriously and I would hope for the most part, we try to do it correctly but I think we still have a ways to go. [00:29:44.23]

**ML:** Dee, over the course of your work in state child welfare, what do or did you see as barriers to the successful implementation of Maine's Indian child welfare policies? And if you have seen these, please describe the barriers.

**DSC:** Um, so I think previously I've talked about sometimes we don't explore for it, but I shouldn't say that because I think we do explore for it but I think it's brief, it's superficial. We have folks who do assessment and then if it becomes a case, it goes to a caseworker and anytime you do this transfer, information can get lost. That might be a piece. I think that that's an area that really needs to be paid attention to. Down here at least in this area, not maybe knowing who to contact so we have a contact phone number but who are we reaching out to? Staff turn over so even though staff are trained and again, in this area, you might go a year or so that you never experience it, and then you come up with it, at least through the training you know---or maybe the role of the supervisor but it just -- anytime you're not doing something with enough regularity, I think it's a pretty difficult thing--you sort of know you are supposed to do something but what are you supposed to do? So, um, and then, you know, you might put that off because it's harder or and you know, the work pace keeps going so I think those are barriers, and then like I said occasionally, probably less so within Maine but sometimes when we go outside of the state because it's a letter that is being sent requesting--is this child a member of some tribe and we may not get a response so that's a barrier.

**ML:** What strengths does state child welfare possess in ensuring compliance with Maine Indian Child Welfare polices? What effective procedures or practices does the state have in place for promoting compliance?

**DSC:** Um, I do know, I think about some new staff that I've had over the last couple of years, and we have a checklist so they have their initial training and then other trainings that are required within the first six months or within the first year and so ICWA is a part of that [00:32:41.21] and I guess, you know, that's a strength but then I'm thinking on the other hand, if you haven't had it right at the get go because I do believe it's required within, and I may get this wrong. It's either within the first six months or within the first year. But I think it's the first six months but that's a period time that someone may be working and hasn't had the training and so, like I said, I'm certainly going to advocate when we make our decision about the template about when we go out for the first time speaking with a parent and an assessment, that if it's not in there, that ICWA really be a sort of a bold, and that right now my staff is doing it but again I don't want to take credit because it was another person who came up with so I think quite a few staff in the Portland area are using it. It really is, it's right up there front and center so hopefully we will not lose it. I think in this area, our AAGs are cognizant of it. The legal documents always reference ICWA whether or not it does apply, doesn't apply, it's still being determined. So hopefully that's sort of a safeguard but that's the nuts and bolts of it. It's that, really kind of understanding why and having a heart and a passion for it where we just have to keep always working on it.

**ML:** What weaknesses does state child welfare possess in ensuring compliance with Maine Indian Child welfare policy? And what could the state do to promote compliance?

**DSC:** I think I mentioned both. You know, right from the beginning, we really just have to be mindful of it, exploring for it in a very respectful way and then diligent in the follow-up and prompt follow-up and even if we don't get an answer maybe, you know, pursuing it a second time, because it really is, it's about the children and not just the families and maybe that's the-- I don't know if in the training, you know, we really get, get to that, I mean, it's been a long time since I participated in the training so, whether or not the spirit of it really comes through. I would hope so. So.

**ML:** What strengths do Wabanaki tribes possess in working with the state for ICWA compliance? What procedures and practices does the tribe have in place that helps facilitate state ICWA compliance?

**DSC:** Um, I think the fact that the training is, ICWA training is part of a beginning for a new worker--probably goes both ways. The judicial symposium this past year at least down in this area, included, because it was about youth, included components so I think, I think that the tribes are vocal. [00:36:04.05] They will, as I said, they'll reach out. I've had an email from Martha on occasion if someone feels like they are not getting responded to so I think they have a good connection with at least someone at the department so as it works its way down, it's not working the way it should. I think those are some of the things I think of.

**ML:** Uh, what weaknesses do Wabanaki tribes possess working with the state for ICWA compliance? What more could the tribes do to ensure that ICWA is followed in every case?

**DSC:** I guess just prompt follow-up if there is contact made or when contact is made. Because that's where I think--it's getting that relationship going at the onset and I think in all things that response to a phone call or a letter.

**ML:** Please talk about the importance of caseworkers learning about and having knowledge of American Indian family structure and culture?

**DSC:** I mean I've talked a lot about the initial training but I think about, you know, I've been supervising now for ten years and I'm not quite sure it's such a different concept than American families or of the basic culture here. I mean, I think in this area, we're trying to also be more aware of other cultures because that certainly is a growing issue so we're trying to be culturally sensitive but I don't know that we fully understand that and that's where the learning came for me in the two cases I had around adoption--sort of the tribe as the family as opposed to this nuclear family so it's a very different concept for someone who has been raised American. And raise yourself up by your bootstraps and this is your family so I think you know that's a piece of education that probably always needs to happen with our staff. *[00:38:36.21]*

**ML:** Please talk about the importance for an Indian child who is placed in out of home care to be placed within reasonable proximity to his or her birth family and or community?

**DSC:** I would say this as an issue across the board. I spoke earlier. Anytime you remove a child it's a traumatic event and so not only if you're taking them out of their community, often then not only you're doing the trauma of moving them from their family of origin but also their friends, perhaps their school, everything that they know and they are familiar with so, I mean, I think we try as hard as possible to keep kids within their community. But resources sometimes are limited and so we can't always do it but we know for the most part, kids do better the more that they can hold onto what they know and have comfort in, the better they'll do.

**ML:** How often are you able to keep siblings together?

**DSC:** I think I'm surprised at how much we are able to do that. I think it becomes more challenging when you have a larger sibling group, but resources are a tough thing today. They really are, so I think -- resource families for the most part have unbelievable compassion and sometimes put themselves into difficult situations trying to do the right thing and keep siblings together, so *[00:40:31.11]* But if they can't be together, can we--what's that contact? So, I think that -- you asked me before about changes and those are changes that the department has made. It's part of case plans and it's certainly part of the federal review so I think we're more aware of some of those relationships and contacts. I didn't think of it necessarily in relation to ICWA but across the board, I think we're trying to do better that way.

**ML:** Please talk about the importance for an Indian child who is placed in out of home care to participate in his or her traditional tribal events, spiritual customs, and social activities?

**DSC:** You know, so the ones for the two cases that I had, and even though they weren't tribal families, they were very supportive of bringing the children up to the reservation for some events. As I mentioned, the tribal representatives did their own assessments of the home and the family to determine whether or not they would be support and would do that. Our involvement with those children are going to be for a brief time. Their involvement in their heritage and who they are is a lifetime, so, and once they become adults, if they make their own decision, that's theirs but we need to try and help them know it and hold on to it and then make whatever decision they want to as an adult so, I mean, it would be like and my generation, you know, go back several--it would be like someone saying to me suddenly, you can't be Irish anymore or if I went to some other country, I can't be American. I mean it's, it's who they are so I think it's important that we try to help them hold on to that.

**ML:** In what ways do you see Maine's Indian Child Welfare policies and the Adoption and Safe Families Act working together and in what ways do you see these two policies not working together?

**DSC:** That's a big question. I think where they work together is a recognition that timely permanency is important for a child. Then, really helps them settle and then feel safe and grow and so I think just that attention to timeframes. Where I think they divert is potentially with non-Native American families, we would look if we can't safely reunify, adoption usually is then the primary choice and if we are going to do a permanency guardianship, we really need to sort of explore and rule out why adoption is not the best permanency plan. I think that's very different for a Native American family because more likely, we would do permanency guardianship so I think they could potentially crash and that's an area where I guess our staff really needs to have that really good understanding of the culture and the reason for those decisions. [00:44:27.06]

**ML:** We're down to the last three closing questions. If you could change anything or make anything happen at the tribal, state, or federal level to improve the lives of children touched by ICWA, what would you do?

**DSC:** I think... so you're saying at the tribal response, not the ...

**ML:** tribal, state, or federal...

**DSC:** I guess would be prompt response if the department reaches out to them because I think the sooner we connect and establish the relationship and then begin to work together, the better it goes. It's so hard to un-do you know like if you've kind of been going down this track and all of a sudden, you know, the two tracks are going to crash as opposed to, you know, maybe coming together. I don't know so I think prompt response.

**ML:** And what about the state or federal level that would improve?



**DSC:** I think I've touched on it a couple of times. We need to be so vigilant in the exploration from the get-go. We need to make sure that staff understand and that supervisors clearly supervise that it's not about a percentage, it's about the child. If there is some mention of it, we need to explore it, we can't disregard it. It's hard, I know that and there are other things to do but it's about the child and what's best for that child and so then you know, so for us it's that early identification and then the training as soon as possible and ongoingly just reminding us not just about what the policy is but what's the basis of it? The heart? It's kind of like, I think, a lot of our data you know, people kind of go,..Ughh..but what does that represent? None of us came into this field about numbers or policy or for the most part I would say but when you can explain something to someone in a way that touches their heart and has meaning, they are more likely to hold on to it so that's what I would say.

**ML:** Any recommendations at the federal level?

**DSC:** You know, I think the same thing--really trying to be responsive if there's contact. It's just tough when you reach out and then there's no response, so the assumption then is that ICWA doesn't apply but that's not necessarily the correct assumption. One of the ladies, I think that, you know, she had managed one of the cases that I talked about, she's originally from Oklahoma, [00:47:50.12] and as I mentioned this and somebody might be contacting her because they did give her name, she pulled out her card and she pursued her membership in the Cherokee nation and I never would have guessed that but so, but, so it has meaning at many levels and at many ages.

**ML:** How could the state child welfare policy improve in terms of Indian child welfare policies and practice?

**DSC:** You know, I think I've tried to touch on different things. I don't know that I could add much more to it. It has to be part of our initial training. It's the policy but again I don't participate always in new training but I'm pretty sure that tribal members come in and do the training, so I think that's important and ongoingly to make sure that our documents bring it to our attention, remind us of it, supervisors are managing and supervising for it. I guess, I think all of those things.

**ML:** Well and finally, is there anything else that you want the Maine-Wabanaki TRC to know about your experience working with DHHS and child welfare cases with Native American children?

**DSC:** I hope I conveyed it but I think particularly the Penobscot one because at times, I would have face-to-face, or more phone contact. The Passamaquoddy did more work directly with my caseworker but it was, it was meaningful and it helped me grow and it helped me understand a

little bit more about Native American heritage, culture, policy, and I am very grateful for that experience.

**ML:** Well thank you. If there's nothing else to add now, I'll turn the recording off.

**DSC:** Okay, alright.

**CW:** I just wanted to say that...

**[END OF RECORDING]**