

General Information

Private or Public Statement? Private

Statement Provider: Lisa Bullard

Date: July 10, 2014

Location: Bangor, Maine

Previous Statement? No

Statement Gatherer: Rachel George

Support Person: N/A

Additional Individuals Present: gkisedtanamoogk (GK)

Recording Format: Audio

Length of Recording: 39:46

Recording

RG: Alright. So, it is July 10, 2014. We're here in Bangor, Maine. My name is Rachel George and I'm here with:

LB: Lisa Bullard.

RG: Great. The file number is ME-201407-00067. Lisa, have you been informed, understood and signed the consent form?

LB: I have.

RG: Fantastic. And I have to let you know that if at any point during your interview, 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 information may not be protected as confidential.

LB: I understand that.

RG: Fantastic. Is there anything you want to start off talking about, or would you like me to just go through the questions?

LB: You can start with the questions.

RG: Fantastic. Um, can you tell me about your current and past experiences working with State Child Welfare?

LB: Okay. Um, I've worked for the department for almost 30 years.

RG: *(whispering)* Wow.

LB: And I started in 1987. So, over the course of years, those years, I've had a few, um, limited involvement.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Um, and ... I, I can think of an adoption case that I had where the child was Native and we needed to look for a Native family –

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: – and that was about almost 20 years ago, so the details are very fuzzy for me. And, I've had, more recently, I've had, um, families involved through the family team meeting process. And, I have a worker right now who's doing a study for one of the tribes. So, those are kind of the breadth of the experience I've had.

RG: Mm-hm. Can you tell me about which types of positions you've held?

LB: I have been a child protective caseworker; I've been an adoption caseworker; um, I recruited families for adoption; I've worked with youth who are aging out of foster care; um, I've been a family team meeting facilitator; and, most recently, I'm supervising a group of workers who license foster homes, work with youth who are aging out, and, also, case aids who, um, supervise visits.

RG: *(softly)* Mmm. 'K. Wow.

LB: Yeah!

RG: That's a lot. Generally – I don't need an exact number – but, how many cases would you say that you worked with, um, Wabanaki kids and families?

LB: Ehh ... ah, under 10.

RG: Under 10?

LB: And it's, and it may be closer to under five.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Yeah.

RG: Uh, when did you first learn about Maine's policies related to Indian Child Welfare?

LB: Very early on, when I started at the department in 1987, and I, and I can't remember if was specific training or if it was work with my supervisor around policy, but it, and it was made very clear that if we had a Native child, that we **were** to follow policy. And I am one of those people that, you know, I would immediately call whoever was the expert to say, 'Okay, how do we do this?' because I don't do it enough to, to really have those policies and that law solid.

RG: Absolutely.

LB: Yeah.

RG: So when a case that would come to you that, with a Native child, who would you call?

LB: I would usually call whoever our child welfare liaison was—um, so our ICWA liaison in Augusta, and make sure that we were following the policy. I would usually review the policy myself, and then involved my supervisor and whoever the liaison was in making sure that we were following the, the — not only the intent of the policy — but also the spirit of the policy.

RG: Mm-hm. And do you remember the name of that liaison?

LB: Um, I think, most recently, it's been Martha Proulx —

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: I don't know who it, and I know it was somebody else years ago, and I can't remember **who**—

RG: (*overlapping*) That's okay. That's all right.

LB: — but I know it's Martha now.

RG: That's okay.

LB: Yeah.

RG: Could you describe a situation in which you or your staff felt very positive about your work with Wabanaki children and families?

LB: I think, most recently, it would be in regards to the family team meeting, ah, process. We had a young woman, who, um, her child – I can't remember if her child had come *into* the custody — or not, I can't remember. But we had, we were working with them to really create a plan that worked for this mom. And, I thought that, you know, the tribe was doing a great job of coming up with a lot of really *good* ideas for, you know, family. And, and I don't even know if it was family members, although I think that there was a grandmother involved, but other people who could assist her in making sure that her child was safe – and other services that they had available.

RG: Can you tell me a little more about what your working relationship was like with the tribe in that case?

LB: Um, in that case, I was primarily the facilitator.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: So my involvement basically started and ended with that meeting, but my role was really to try and pull out from everyone at that team what services were available to this young mom; um, what the tribe could do, what the State could do to make sure that this child was safe, and that they were reunifying.

RG: Mm-hm. Are there any other cases that stand out to you, prominently, where you had really positive outcomes?

LB: (*laugh*) I had an adoption case – and, and this was the one I was talking to Barbara about – and the more we talked – It's very fuzzy in my head – but I remember that we had a child – I couldn't tell you if it was a boy or girl – but, this child was Native. And I knew that we needed to find a family who could provide that type of cultural experience for them.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And, (*inhale*) and, I think that we had to – like I say, it's almost, probably 20 years ago – that we, we needed to look in-state, but make sure that we had If we couldn't find a family in-state who could meet that child's needs, that we would continue to look out of state. Um, and, honestly, I can't remember, but I remember thinking it was really interesting because I got to learn a lot about the tribes at that time – and then, like, who was federally recognized. Who wasn't.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: So, it was an interesting experience. And I think it was a positive experience. I know that we ended up finding a family, and I couldn't tell you anything else about it at that point.

RG: Yeah.

LB: But I remember it was very involved. And I remember, at that time, really trying to talk to whoever was liaison and, and nail down what it is we need to do; what are the steps we needed to do so that we could make sure that we were doing the right things.

RG: And that was about 20 years ago or so, you were saying? –

LB: *(overlapping)* – It, um, I'm thinking so, based on who was my supervisor at that time –

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: So, just knowing that we were having conversations, so, I, I want to say '96, '97-ish?

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: So, yeah.

RG: All right. Just so you know, I'm checking this because we've had some problems before –

LB: Okay.

RG: –and I really want to make sure everything ... nothing weird happens.

LB: *(laughs)*

RG: *(soft laughs)* Um, could you describe a situation in which you or your staff felt less positive about your work with Wabanaki children and families?

LB: Um, this was, gosh, I think probably about a year ago now. There was a family that we were coming up, and I can't remember all the details – 'cause, again, my role was facilitator, so I didn't know so much about the case – but there were some struggles around ... where we were going to hold the meeting; how we were going to hold the meeting. It, and, and we ended up coming to a positive outcome, and, and we ended up, I think, doing the meeting up at the Penobscot Nation. But it just felt like there was some struggles in trying to nail down how that was all going to happen. Um, and, and initially, some ... you know, like, I don't know, it ... It felt like there were roadblocks that didn't need to be in that – in that place.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And I'm not even really sure where those were coming from, but it ended up resolving

itself, and we were able to hold the meeting, and, and it ended up actually being a very positive meeting, but initially it just felt like we weren't getting anywhere.

RG: Um, so thinking back to that case in particular, what do you wish had been different?

LB: *(inhale)* Um ... you know, it felt like a little bit of lack of trust? And I, so I understand that. So and because I, there were some conversations that had happened prior to me getting involved, and so it didn't have anything to do with me, but you know, I wish I, personally, could've had a conversation and understood, you know, where is that coming from?

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And how can we, you know, how can we work together, so that the folks who were there **felt** comfortable.

RG: Yep.

LB: Um, and it-, and it's such a hard— A family team meeting – especially if you're looking at removing a child or, or, you know, having a safety plan, people are distrustful **regardless** of where it is, and – so I get that. But it just felt like there, there was an additional layer there. And, if we could've just talked through that, and I could have understood that – and I think we, eventually, did do that – but it, it just felt very uncomfortable initially. Yeah.

RG: What was your working relationship with the tribe in that case?

LB: Like I say, my role was family team meeting facilitator. And I **believe** at that point, you know, I think at that point, my coming in and explaining, you know, 'This is what my role's going to be. This is how we typically do things. Um, is that going to work for you?'

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: 'Are there, is there a different way we could do this that's going to be more comfortable?'

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: So, trying to say, 'Okay, this is how, how we typically do things. **How** can we make that a more comfortable experience for everybody involved?'

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Myself included! *(laughs)*

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: *(laughs)* Y'know?

RG: Absolutely.

LB: Yeah.

RG: Um, can you tell me a little bit more about what your role is as a family team meeting facilitator?

LB: So, as a facilitator, um, really the role is to be sure that everyone, number one, understands the process, regardless of what's happening. So, there are times when we're coming in and we are in a situation of a, a safety issue – and we need to either come up with a safety plan, or we need to determine if custody needs to be removed from the parent – and the child needs to be placed elsewhere. So that's kinda, making sure that everybody understands *(dog begins barking intently in the background)* what the goal of, goal of the meeting is. *(dog continues barking throughout)* And, um, and then making sure everybody has an opportunity to participate; that everybody has an opportunity to share information that will give us a *full* picture? – of what's happening for this child and for this family. And, um, and to make it a comfortable experience – that it's not something that, despite it being a very difficult situation, that it doesn't dissolve into a really uncomfortable and, and, in some cases, *not safe* – emotionally or physically – meeting for people.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: So that's the role.

(dog barking becomes even more loud and intense)

RG: *(soft laughs)*

LB: You going to get the dog? *(laughs)*

RB: I'll make sure to write a note: 'Dog barking.'

LB: *(laughs)* That wasn't me.

RG: *(laughs)* Um, so there's a number of things on this list here that I'd love to ask you about.

LB: Mm-hm.

RG: So if you don't have experience working with that, that's okay – just let me know.

LB: Okay.

RG: You don't have to answer all of these questions.

LB: Okay.

(dog barking ends)

RG: But could you describe your experiences in working with, or challenges you found in working with initial identification of a child as Native American?

LB: I ... you know, I think, certainly, whenever we did an assessment, we would ask if there was any Native American heritage.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And we were very clear that, that was critical. So that, I think that would be the extent of that.

RG: Is that for every child that comes in –

LB: Yeah.

RG: — through child protective —

LB: Yes.

RG: That's good to know. And how about for notification of children to Tribal Child Welfare? So, if a child comes into, or is brought in through child protective services, you guys are notified. How do you notify the Tribes? What's your experience in that –

LB: Okay.

RG: – and what challenges have you found?

LB: So, I don't ... I'm trying to think if I've had any experience with that, and I haven't, but it's been my understanding that, if we have any reason to believe at the outset, then we would be involving the Tribe right at the beginning – that they would be involved in that assessment, um, and that we would have some discussion about, you know, who's going to take the lead in that? Are they gonna do that? Is the department gonna do that?

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: So, as much as possible, working collaboratively around that.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: I think if we become involved in an assessment, and then we find out afterwards, then we

would immediately call the Tribe and say, 'This is the situation. How do you want us to proceed – '

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: 'How, how are *you* going to proceed?'

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Yeah.

RG: Um. (*softly*) This question's not relevant. How about working with the Tribes to identify Native American children?

LB: Like I say, I mean, typically, I think it's really from the get-go. Sometimes we have that information right at the outset – and we're working with them to say, 'Okay,' you know, 'Are you going to take the lead on this or we are? Are we going to work collaboratively on that?' And I've seen that happen most of the time, people working collaboratively. So I guess I'm not sure how, what would be different.

RG: How about in determining jurisdiction or residence of Native American children?

LB: Again, I think, we would have some understanding: Are they living outside the boundary of, of that nation –

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: – Um, are they living within those boundaries and, if so, then I think we would say that's their jurisdiction, unless we need to be involved.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Um, and, then, if, if a child is *not* living on Tribal land, then how are we going to involve that Tribe – so that they're involved in that.

RG: Fantastic. And, how about in child custody hearings – experience, challenges?

LB: I haven't had, I'm trying to think if I've had any. Like I say, I had that case – and I don't even know that that adoption case, that child may've been from a Tribe outside the state?

RG: Mmm. Mm-hm.

LB: And, I'm almost, in the back of my head, I'm almost thinking that, that child may've come from Vermont, and that's part of the reason we had to determine Federally recognized vs. non. So, in terms of Tribal Child Welfare, I mean, they have, they have the jurisdiction – and so, most of the time, I think those would place there, unless we hear something differently.

RG: Mm-hm. Um, how about in arranging foster care placements?

LB: Again, I think they take the lead, and we, you know, if they – for **what*ever* reason – **can't** place within a Tribal home, then we would offer.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: (*softer*) We have **very** limited homes right now – so our ability to provide families is becoming hard for, **all** the way around.

RG: Mm-hm. Um, and I know we've just talked about this, but in family team meetings –

LB: Mm-hm.

RG: — any challenges?

LB: Like I say, that, that, was the only time, that I felt a challenge, and I've had limited experiences doing that. And it, it resolved itself in a positive way but, most of the time, they come to the table – and I think of them not so much as equal partners, but having a role above ours – but acting in an equal, you know, everybody's providing information at that point.

RG: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Arranging family visitation?

LB: I'm trying to think if I've had, I don't know if I've had any experience with that.

RG: Kinship care?

LB: Well, I would think that, in all, again, I'm trying to think if I've had any situations in terms-. I know that we've had families. Um, but again, I think, you know, if it's not a family, then it would be a Tribal member.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Yeah, because it's family, Tribe and then – yeah.

RG: Yep. Termination of parental rights?

LB: I haven't had any involvement.

RG: Adoption?

LB: Adoption! With that one experience I had.

RG: That one, yep –

LB: (*overlapping*) And like I said, I, I think in the way back in my head, I almost think that this child did *not* come from the state of Maine?

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And so, that's why we were looking in-state, but we were also looking out-of-state, because that – so we were looking to place this child within a Tribal setting, but I don't think that they originated here.

RG: What do you consider active efforts to prevent the break-up of Native American families?

LB: So, active efforts are a step above reasonable efforts.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: So, in my mind, reasonable efforts are: we've made referrals, we've tried to connect people. Active efforts are, you know, we're not just making referrals, we're getting people involved; we're checking to make sure that members of the immediate family – and if not the immediate family, than the, the wider tribe, so – really, the extended family, what they can provide and how they can keep that child in that family setting, and hopefully within their, their Tribal group.

RG: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. How are Tribal Child Welfare – and we've already talked about this, but I'll ask again – (*soft laughs*) how are Tribal Child Welfare staff included in the development of family case planning involving a Native American child?

LB: So, like I say, in the case of these family team meetings, really providing information about what *they* could provide –

RG: Yep.

LB: – you know, what services were available that could complement what we could provide, that were different then, um, yeah ...

RG: (*softly*) Perfect. To the best of your knowledge, if a Tribe declines to intervene in a child custody proceeding covered by ICWA, what are the reasons for this decision?

LB: Well, ah, hmmm. I guess would expect maybe that they don't have staff available at that point? Um, I don't know. I guess that would be a conversation between the Tribe and, and the Department.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Um, what, at that point, why they're choosing not to be involved –

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Yeah.

RG: Um, and to the best of your knowledge, if the State declines to transfer a child custody hearing to the Tribal court, what are the reasons for that?

LB: I can't imagine the State (*laughs*) deciding to decline that – because they would have jurisdiction – and we would, we would be very much secondary or even out of the picture at that point.

RG: Mm-hm. (*softly*) This one's not relevant. What State Child Welfare policies, practices and events influence your work with Wabanaki children and families?

LB: So, when we have had ICWA training – and we've had it, you know, at various junctures throughout. And, for me, it's always been, right from the get-go, very, made very clear: If we have a Native child, we **need** (*taps surface*) to be sure we are following policy. (*taps surface*)

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And that's really from the get-go, since 1987. And, again, myself being who I am, I want to make sure that somebody is telling me – that I've read the policy – and that someone's telling me how I'm going to follow that.

RG: Mm-hm. Have policies changed since you've been with DHHS regarding Wabanaki children and families?

LB: Well, I'm sure that there are some policy changes, and that's usually why I've called to make sure, 'Have there been any policy changes.' Because I'm not using it every day, and so I'm not aware – 'Has anything very subtly changed?'

RG: Yep.

LB: Yeah.

(*sound of a door creaking open*)



gkisedtanamoogk (GK): *(softly, at a distance)* Excuse me for ... coming in so late.

(sound of a door closing)

RG: This is our Commissioner gkisedtanamoogk.

LB: Hi.

GK: Nice to meet you.

LB: Nice to meet you as well. I'm Lisa.

GK: Lisa.

LB: Yes.

(sound of beads, sound of a chair moving across the floor)

RG: So, currently – if something came up, you would be contacting Martha?

LB: Yes.

RG: Do you mind if I ask who your supervisor is?

LB: My supervisor's Bobbi.

RG: Okay.

LB: So I would usually start with Bobbi and say, 'Okay, we have this case.'

RG: Yeah.

LB: 'What do we need to do?' Um, and then she would say – She would give me some direction and then, you know – might say if we need to, you know, check in with Martha.

RG: Yeah. Um, over the course of your work in State Child Welfare, what do you, or did you, see as barriers to the successful implementation of ICWA?

LB: Hmmm. I think, probably, again, it's, it's that idea that people *don't* have – Because, you know, there are some things that you do every single day, and as a result of that, you get very fluent in it and you know, um, this is what I need to do. And because, you know, nobody like

specializes um, in terms of – at least, we don't, in ICWA cases. I think that there's always that kind of feeling that you want to be sure that you're following the policy and the law to the letter of the law. And, so, so I don't think you have that fluency available to say, 'Okay. I know this. I've got this.'

RG: Yeah.

LB: 'And, and I, I'm confident that I'm not going to mess something up.'

RG: Yep. Um, what strengths and weaknesses do you see the State having in ensuring ICWA compliance?

LB: I think a strength, as I said, in **my** opinion and in my experience, people have always been very clear: (*emphasizing each word*) There is a policy. We need to follow it.

RG: Yep.

LB: And we need to be sure we're following it. Again, I think the weakness would be, unlike something like licensing foster homes – **I do that every day** – so I get familiar with, and I have a comfort level with it. Because I'm not involved with ICWA cases every day, I don't feel as fluent, and I don't feel as confident that, 'Okay. I know this and, therefore, I **know** I can do this without seeking guidance.'

RG: Yeah. What strengths and weaknesses do you see that Wabanaki Tribes possessing in working with State for ICWA compliance?

LB: Well, I think we've done some joint training. I mean, certainly I've worked with Esther in the past. She's done some training. We have a youth that's actively involved in the Truth & Reconciliation group. So, I think there's a lot of cross-conversations happening, and I think that's really good, so, I think if, especially in the last few years, it's really come to the forefront.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Again, not enough that I feel that I have any comfort level in making sure I'm 100 percent doing the policy correctly, but I think there's more of an intention. I think those people who are doing it – and there are certainly child protective workers who have, are probably way more fluent than I am because they have more cases.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Yeah.

RG: Okay. Could you talk about the importance of caseworkers learning about and having knowledge of the Native American family structure and culture?

LB: I think that's very critical so that we are able to be respectful of, that this is a different

culture; um, that we need to understand what's important to this particular group of people; that we're respectful of their values, how they raise their children, what's available to them in their community. So, I, you know, I think it's very critical.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: Yeah.

RG: Do you think enough is being done right now to ensure sure that caseworkers are getting that kind of information?

LB: I suspect we can always do more.

RG: Mmm.

LB: Yeah, I think we can always do more. And, again, I think it's ... you know, because, for everybody, you know – . And, and maybe, if there was one person who *did* most of the cases, then they would develop a fluency. Because it's spread out over so many different people, and it doesn't come up enough, I don't think anybody ever gets to a point where, 'I'm 100 percent solid.' Now, I may be speaking out of turn; there may be people who're very solid with it. Um, but I'm not sure if that's the case.

RG: Mm-hm. Um, could you talk about the importance of having a Native child who's placed in out-of-home care to be placed within a reasonable proximity to their birth family?

LB: Personally, I believe that's very important because a family who is not connected is not going to be able to provide those cultural experiences.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: You know, it, I was saying to – (*softly*) I can't remember if I was telling Barbara, or I was telling someone else – in, in my own family, my grandfather – and, um, his parents divorced – this would've been back in the early 1900s, and he and his siblings were all separated at that point. He was six – sent out. They were farmed out, 'cause there was no, um, State Child Welfare, at that point.

And, so, he lost contact with his father's family, and we have this information, this anecdotal information, that somewhere in his father's family, there was a Tribal connection. (*taps surface*)

RG: Mmm.

LB: They were from the county, so I expect to see they were either Micmac or Maliseet, if it was. But anybody who would have been able to provide any information around that is gone.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And I've tried to do some research. I would love to know that information, so I could provide that to my children. And, so, from a personal perspective, I get that – that may be anecdotal; it may not be true – but I know that, that's a connection. There were people in the family who said that, but we have no way of ever finding that out.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And so, I kinda get that as a loss, you know, um, to have that information. And, and for *him* to have completely lost connection with this family, so I kinda And I, and I know how that impacted him, and as a result, impacted our family. So I can use that experience to say: I can see how a child who loses connection with their family, loses connection with their culture, the impact that's going to have on them for their rest of their life, and then, their generations to come.

RG: You kind of just touched on this, but could you perhaps elaborate a little bit more on the importance of an, uh, Native child who's placed in out-of-home care to participate in his or her traditional Tribal events, spiritual customs, social activities?

LB: I think that's critical because who else is going to teach them about their roots and their culture, uh, except someone who's experienced that?

RG: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

LB: And, without that, you're going to be in the situation where, I think, Tribes across the country have found themselves, of trying to rebuild that again.

RG: In what ways do you see the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Adoption and Safe Families Act working together? And in what ways do you see them not working together?

LB: So, I think in terms of them working together is a recognition that children need to remain, first of all, within a, their family setting –

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: – a family of origin. And if it can't be within a family of origin, then someone else within that Tribe, that culture, who can provide that to them.

RG: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

LB: So I think ICWA in, um, married to the adoption, that that's really critical, and, and the adoption piece speaks to that as well. If it can't be with a parent, then it would be with a

relative; if not with a relative, then someone who is connected to that child, a foster parent, and then so on. And I think we really need to be very sensitive to the fact that, it's-. I think it raises it to a higher level, because we're not just looking at this child losing connection with their family, they're losing connection with a culture as well.

RG: Mm-hm. If you could change anything, or make anything happen at the Tribal, State or Federal level to improve the lives of children involved with ICWA, um, what would you do?

LB: I think it'd be great if we had probably more foster families that were available, either within the Tribes themselves, or very close to-, who have a close connection to the Tribe, because I think, for all of us, we're, *we are struggling* to find families. And, there was a, an email that came out last week that Martha was asking, 'Did we have a foster family?' And I don't think we had – um, and this was for a Native child – and I don't think that the Penobscot Nation had one, and *we* were struggling to find –

RG: Mmm.

LB: – We, we were struggling to find homes, *period.* And we had a bunch of kids we were looking at, and so we had provided them with a name. And, we found out that individual was either retiring or on vacation, and we're like, 'Okay. Now what?' You know, so, our recruitment of families across the board, and specific to, um, Tribal homes, I think that would be great, so that we can, with confidence, say, 'We've got somebody to take this child, if they need to be, you know, in a foster home.'

RG: (*very softly*) Yeah.

LB: Yeah.

RG: How could the State Child Welfare system improve in terms of Indian Child Welfare policies and practices?

LB: Hmmm. (*exhale*) You know, I sometimes wonder, you know, would it make sense to have somebody within each office who has a specialty line who – and it, and it may not be the only thing they do – but they, they and their supervisor really have responsibility for the bulk of those cases, because then there would be a comfort level, a fluency, and you also develop relationships, so, um. And, and I think that was, as I've talked about, that trust thing?

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: You know, once you've started working with someone, you've had relationships, and you have some successes to build on, then I think it makes the next time easier.

RG: Mm-hm.

LB: And, and, so, you know, we've had specialty lines around different things so, that's just kind of a thought I would have. Yeah. And I think that comes out of my own worry and discomfort that I, *I* don't feel fluent. So I think if you, if you had someone who did, that would be much easier. You wouldn't have to be re-learning it all the time.

RG: Yeah, exactly.

LB: Yeah.

RG: Is there anything else that you want to share with us today –

LB: – I think that's –

RG: – that I didn't ask?

LB: – that's it. Yeah.

RG: *(softly)* Okay.

LB: Like I say, I don't have a lot of specifics, um –

RG: No, but it's very helpful to know.

LB: Okay. Good.

RG: *(to GK)* Is there anything that you'd like to add? Ask?

GK: *(coughs)* 'Scuse me. I'm apologetic for coming in so late. I would've loved to have heard, been here with the full range of your perspectives and, um. You know, just a basic reflection from *(sound of tapping, papers shuffling)* the, the brevity of what I've heard so far.

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: Um, *(clears throat)* on the matter of specialty and, uh, within the agency, I would think that would really be a good idea, if a, and not just one person, but almost like a whole staff –

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: Um, and that there would be kind of an intra-agency working, um. Uh, I, you know, that ... that would consume a lot of time because there's more to ICWA –

LB: Right.

GK: Um, because ICWA is kind of a reflection of a long-standing –

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: – sometimes morbid history –

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: – in relationships, you know. And I'm not sure if, at this point, how much of the agency has a full working knowledge of treaties of the, um, uh, because somewhere – I know they, I know there are some State agencies that do – particularly, uh, the AG's office –

LB: Yep.

GK: Ah, because, you know, as far away as that particular knowledge is concerned, it does have an undertone in relationship – and particularly, as we're trying to develop relationships with the communities, there's a distance –

LB: Yeah.

GK: – and probably, and sometimes a distrust, and sometimes a reluctance. And, and, and it's not necessarily the wrong personalities, but *it could be* –

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: Sometimes, personalities, somebody coming in really aggressive and all and it becomes, um, you know, the really subtle nuance of the energies that we all carry really matter.

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: And, and the value systems that, ah, sometimes are very [34:03] (*unknown word*), you know?

LB: Right.

GK: (*Clears throat*) And this is kind of a long-winded way of saying that I think it's, in terms of the training, uh, in-house trainings, that, we have in the agency, a fairly reasonably developed timeline of what led to where we are now.

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: Because it's critical.

LB: Right.

GK: Part of those is, is the treaties – the treaties have habitually been unenforced. The reality of the State of Maine, for instance, it has a territory based on Wabanaki treaties.

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: You know, so if the Federal Government is neglectful or, then the State is neglectful of that. And that kind of thing has not been lost on the Wabanaki. So there's point one.

LB: Right.

GK: And then, the whole orientation of, of adopting children (*tapping a surface*) out of their communities – and usually by force – no consent, anything, historically, just when-. But that has residual effect on a much larger, widespread experience with residential schools and mission schools, which, which had a, a connection to the creation of reservation systems – not necessarily land-based systems that were, that have come as a result of the treaties, the agreements. But this was some, these were, these were land systems that were based as a *subterfuge* to the treaties. And Oklahoma is one of those places where whole nations were forcibly relocated, you know.

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: So there's, there's this legacy, if you will, that, that not only influences the relationship that the State has – or, maybe, in some cases, the non-relationship that the State has — with Wabanaki people.

LB: Mm-hm.

GK: But it also, it kind of contributes to the mistrust.

LB: Right.

GK: So, I think, at some point, it's really important that *that* becomes also part of the training and the development. So that people can clearly see the links – and the reasons why – there's this resistance and reluctance.

LB: Yeah.

GK: Because, ultimately, you know, the ultimate collaboration and partnership came by way of the treaties, you know? So there's the formality of that relationship as we, as individual citizens engage the treaty relationship – that that is a fundamental reflection in the agencies working with the Wabanaki.

LB: Mmm.

GK: You know, so it's not just between governments, but it filters down to how we work together and everything.

LB: Yeah.

GK: So, just as a reflection, I kind of put that out there to, um, as something that's important, and I sense that, um, collaboration and working relationship with, with the agency and with, um, Wabanaki agencies are really critical, and really important. Culture is really important, and understanding the aspect of genocide.

LB: Right.

GK: You know, the State has been guilty historically, but much of the policies continue to be genocidal.

LB: Mmm.

GK: And I think that's why ICWA came into being, as a response to that.

LB: Yeah.

GK: And, and I've even have heard in some of the testimonies coming from community members that, even in the best homes, where they experienced a great deal of care and love, you know, that's there's this *traumatic* you know, um, displacement from their own families or their own communities. And as you were earlier talking, that we have a result where people don't even know their ... context.

LB: Mmm.

GK: Um, and that's genocide.

LB: Yeah.

GK: You know, that's the whole point of assimilation and so forth, is to remove that. So, I think that, as the Commission ends its mandate next year, that the presence of Wabanaki REACH continues this work, and I would hope that maybe you would work in that regard –

LB: Mmm.

GK: – along with the rest of us –

LB: Yes.

GK: – that want to see this working, and I think REACH has in there-. And, and the really beautiful thing about Wabanaki REACH is that it's a composite of collaborative working relationships with members of the agencies: with the communities, with academics, with people of interest.

LB: Yeah.

GK: You know, so this is kind of like a reflection of where we want to be – you know, working in this, so.

LB: Right. Well, and I think that's, really is, that's a core of everything is the relationship.

GK: Yeah.

LB: If I can understand where you're coming from, and you can understand where I'm coming from, then, then we can work tog-, then we have a common understanding, and we can work together in a collaborative way.

GK: Yeah.

LB: So, I would agree with that. Yeah.

GK: Yeah.

LB: Very good.

RG: (*overlapping*) Thank you.

LB: Thank you.

GK: It was nice to ... nice to meet you, and –

RG: (*overlapping*) Thank you so much.

LB: You are very welcome. Thank you!

GK: Thank, thank you for taking the time to come in –

LB: You are more than welcome.

GK: – and share with us. We **really** appreciate this.

RG: Yeah, absolutely.



LB: (*overlapping*) Thank you – and I wish I had, as I said, more specific – I said to Barbara, ‘I don't feel like I have really any specific information.’

RG: No, it was great. Thank you.

LB: Um, well, thank you. ... Thanks.

[END OF RECORDING]