

General Information

Private or Public Statement? - Public

Statement Provider: Anonymous

Date: November 20, 2013

Location: Sipayik, Maine

Previous Statement? No

Statement Gatherer: N/A

Support Person: Belinda Miliano- Bernard

Additional Individuals Present: Sandy White Hawk, Matt Dunlap, Carol Wishcamper, gkisedtanamoogk, Gail Werrbach. – Public circle

Recording Format: Video

Length of Recording: 15:19

Recording

A: I'm not going to tell my story. I thought about it, 'cause I don't know what my story is....
(*long pause*)

I don't remember my childhood. I've been in 3 foster homes. I don't know why. But every time I think about it this happens (*gestures to herself, she is beginning to tear up*)...

So, I'm 50. And I thought to myself, 'do I wanna know, or do I keep it buried?' ... This past year has been hard. A year ago I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I'm a 6-month survivor. I have been through chemo, I've been through remission, I've been through a lumpectomy, radical hysterectomy. Umm... I went through breast cancer with my mother. Umm... I was a lefty, she was a righty, so we balanced each other. (*small laugh*) ... Mother and daughter battling cancer together... Her cancer came back in the opposite breast. I have a cousin who is 44 whose cancer came back and she's got 4 months...

So... with everything going on, I decided that I don't want to know. So, I'm going to tell you a different story.

I had a nephew who was in foster care. I had a niece, I have a niece who was taken, who was stolen. Umm... and was adopted out. Umm... I have a granddaughter, presently, who is in state foster care. And umm... so I'm going to tell you their stories. Because today I am who I am, even though I don't know who I was when I was little. All I know is that I need children in my life, all I know is that I need to protect children and care for them, and that's who I am.

So with that being said, we'll talk about Ashley. Ashley, who is now Allison, was my brother's child. She was born to two young parents. She was born addicted. At that time, I was young myself, I was 23 with two children of my own, working and going to college fulltime. I couldn't take in another child, but my mother could...

But instead of giving her to my mother, they allowed her to be adopted out to a non-native family when there was family members who wanted her. It wasn't the current administrator now.

She was adopted out to a minister, which everybody thought would be good for her. He didn't want her to have any contact with her... She got a hold of me last summer. I got a call from her... (*tears*). She searched for us; she wanted to know who she was. She has two beautiful children, we keep in contact. She calls her father. She allowed me to talk to you guys on her behalf.

She didn't have the perfect life. Because she had a child out of wedlock she wasn't allowed to go to any family functions. Here, that would not have happened. Here he's supposed to be a man of the cloth, you should embrace, accept... instead, he... the family turned their back on her...

Why they did not give my mother an opportunity I don't know why, well I do know why. It was... I believe it was just because of who my mother is. A lot of politics play here. So I'm not just blaming the state system. It's two folds in my eyes...

Now the person who was to blame for this, she past on... And my grandfather, I always remember this, he says 'you need to forgive. Forgiveness is not for the other person, it's for yourself.' Never understood why he told me that. I do now, so that you can move on. Still having a hard time trying to forgive her, because I was never being able to be apart of Ashley's life...

Then again, we had my other nephew, who was going to be adopted out, we were able to get him back. But there was issues with him as well, but we got him back. Then he went into a therapeutic foster home, and my mother tried to get him back but then there was issues with him not getting him. But we were able to get him back. It took awhile, but I got him back in my care. He's now 16 and back with his dad...

And then there is my granddaughter now. She doesn't make the census. Mom's non-native. My son just makes the census. Because I'm only half, so that makes him a quarter, makes her 1/16. And umm... the state came in and they have these little contracts.... They make you say 'okay'... they make you sign this little piece of paper, it's almost like an anon... (*gesturing to Belinda to help her get the word*)... you have to forgive me I have what they call umm.. chemo brain because the chemo makes me forget the word...

Acknowledgement! An acknowledgement, almost like admitting he did something. 'You don't sign this, you're not going to be able to see your daughter.' And then they use it against



him...Now if both mother and father was (inaudible) both were at fault, but they sided with the mother and she got all these services. Gave nothing to my son.

So went into state custody, with the maternal...oh with the mother's grandmother, so with Alize's great grandmother... with the mother living with them... but yet there was a problem there...

So... I got my visits... They gave the mother, who there was drug issues back, gave her back custody. I don't get my visits with my granddaughter anymore. Tried to call social services, (*shakes head*)... don't answer, don't get... I haven't had a visit with my granddaughter...since August...

Then... one of the workers there said umm, because there was a protection order, this is how it works against you, and I have the paperwork to show them. It says that they seen my son driving with her, and when they check the records my son had been in jail at that time and they said no it was wrong... It's like why are they trying to go against our own people here, trying to keep them away from their own children. And it's like they should be trying to reunify a child and the parents together, instead of separating...

There's more to the story than this...I should have wrote it first because I think I've taken things out of order here...What I'm trying to say, not necessarily when you go into foster care there is always going to be that physical abuse. There is always going to be other types of abuse going on, the abuse of taking that child away from the family, the mother or the father, or the other family. ("Did I say that right?" to Belinda quietly).

Because of what happened to me, or whatever happened to me, I need to have my children with me. I need to have my grandchildren with me. In my home I have my daughter with me, and my grandchildren. Anybody in this community will tell you I have my children and my grandchildren, always with me. Why? I don't know. And I will do anything for them. Except for lie and cheat and steal.

And I'm lost without her, but I'm not getting any help this time. And there's politics that are playing in there, there's personal differences that play in there. I mean if we're going to be fair, let's be fair. And it's like... I don't know where to get the help. Where do we get the help to straighten this all out? ...

I just don't see how...I mean I called that worker, and she says 'well you have visitations, call Mary.' I call Mary and she doesn't answer my phone calls. I text her, she doesn't answer my phone calls. I see her at Walmart, she takes Alize away from me. She... that is my granddaughter...(tears and long pause)

And have the tribe here, help the state keep her away from me... and I've not done nothing wrong. I work here, with the kids. I have no criminal background... Why do they keep her away from me? ... Where do I go from here? ... That's my story... Where do we go from here? I don't know what else to say...that's it...

[END OF RECORDING]