EB2: I guess I haven't introduced myself yet. I'm Erika and I'm a student at USM and I'm doing this as part of my Master in Social Work program. I have to do a project, a research-related project. So I contacted Esther, Penthea and Esther, last summer to see if the TRC wanted any research or anything like that

B2: And I'm sure Esther had to really think long and hard about it right?

[EA2 laughing]

EA2: If she had talked to me first she probably would have – no, she talked to Pen first. [laughing] Which was probably a better idea. Because she's good at thinking about stuff like this. But yeah, for sure.

?: Yeah

EA2: We knew we needed an evaluation component to the TRC and we're fortunate that on the heels of this after Erika analyzes this data we'll have enough to develop a tool and this other student who's doing a capstone research through Muskie is going to be working on that and developing tool so that we can have a pre-, pre-TRC and post-TRC, um, survey for caseworkers. Pre and post to see what they've learned and if their behaviors, attitudes and beliefs have changed with what they've learned. We're wicked fortunate.

EB2: So should we just get started?

EA2: Let's get started.

EB2: So the first question, um, it's a pretty – so how this works is there's kind of a guide for what we do but it's more of a conversation is the idea for it. A conversation among the people here. So we have some questions but it's not like it's a really formal type guide that we're following. Um, so the first one is pretty open-ended, asking about some of experiences, stories,

you have about your work, um, any involvement you've had with Maine state child welfare workers through your work or/

B2: I'm only here til four.

[laughing]

EB2: So I'm just going to open it up and start that way.

[several seconds pause]

B2: I'm going to let somebody else go first, let Carol go first she's more diplomatic.

[several more seconds]

C2: So you want experiences or stories about working with state child welfare. You don't have enough time blocked off. You don't. I can give you good stories, I can give you bad stories. What do you want to hear? I think you need to narrow your, I mean, I've worked for child welfare for fourteen years.

EB2: OK.

C2: I've got all kinds of stories.

EA2: Tell us one that's sticking out in your head right now.

[several seconds pause]

C2: I can tell you one about the latest one that we've had.

EA2: OK

C2: OK? We have two Passamaquoddy children in state custody. Ah, children were removed at quarter of ten at night. The tribe was notified to a degree that a possible petition was going to be happening. Um, but at quarter of ten at night nobody's working. So we didn't know for sure whether or not that was happening. Um [pause]. It did happen. Children were placed. One was placed in a Native home. The other was placed in a non-Native home. That was agreed upon by

the tribe, with the tribe. So that was one aspect that was actually covered. Um, right now, the children have transitioned to live with their dad. They were removed from a non-Native mom, living in Ellsworth in a hotel. Kids were not going to school, had not been in school for. . . over a month. Um, the transition to dad was rocky at best. Dad received the children on February 9th. Was not able to enroll his children into school until February 29th. So twenty days later, still the kids are not in school because DHS would not give him the paperwork needed to enroll his children in school. And that was one of the reasons why the children were removed from mom. Um, holy god. [pause] That's one story. [several seconds pause] Your turn. [looking at Dorothy]

EA2: So/

C2: Sorry, go ahead?

EA2: No, go ahead.

D2: I want to back it up. Because I've been with social services for, close to 30 years, if not 30 years. I've stopped counting. We didn't have any relationship years ago with the state of Maine. I can't remember the lady's name that was the liaison for the tribes. The only thing that we ever got from her was, um, and that was on request, was how much they paid for foster care. Because that's what we have to pay foster families is the same rate that the state pays. BIA's never come up with any kind of figures on their own. It was many years and we had no involvement, and kids were taken into custody and the tribes weren't notified at all. Um, you know that was a lot of years ago. When we started having a functional relationship with the state through Sandy Hodge, um, we started having a semi-relationship with the state. But I can give you one example, we had a young man, that was taken from his mother who, was Native. And the s-, and she wanted her little boy to go with her—his grandparents who were not Native. Which, would

69 have been fine with us. Um. And the state I, I guess told her that they would do that. That they
70 would look into that. And, um. That didn't happen. He ended up in several foster homes where,
71 um, I think that's where Carol was initiated.
72 C2: mhmm
73 D2: Was at a meeting when they moved him from one foster home to another foster home. He
74 had contact with his Native grandparents and they asked me where they moved him and I told
75 them. Because he had had visitation with this little boy. So, anyway, Carol and I go to this
76 meeting in this foster home in, where was it? Woodland? It was somewhere up around here.
77 C2: mhmm. That was one of them.
78 D2: Um, with the state worker. And the state worker was angry because somebody told the
79 grandfather where this little boy was. I said well, you know, I'll take the blame for that because I
80 told him where he was. Because he had been moved and he had had visits with him before, so I
81 didn't see anything wrong with that. She really flexed her muscles, like we had no right to do
82 anything. So that was part of that story. You know that makes you're, very angry because we
83 were looking at what was the best interests for this little guy. So then he ended up in a couple of
84 residential treatment facilities and we fought and we fought because his grandparents, his non-
85 Native grandparents wanted to bring him up. You know, and, and, so they applied for a license
86 and the state had them jump through all these hoops that I think were unnecessary and um, but
87 they did it. You know, they'd call and complain about it, but they did it because they wanted
88 their grandson to come live with them. He didn't need to be in a residential facility that he was
89 in. He just didn't want to be in foster homes. He wanted to be with family. So, um, we fought
90 with them for a year and a half out of his little life with the state to move him to his
91 grandparents' residence. And we ended up going back to court and luckily, John Remay was the

judge in Calais. He had been a judge, at Pleasant Point and here at Indian Township. Um, he know what ICWA was all about. He knew, where, this little boy belonged. So he told the state, um, that they'd not leave that courtroom until they could come up with an agreement with the tribe on placement for this little boy. So we finally got him in the placement but the grandparents had to have psychological evaluations, and. I mean they were norm-, as normal as they could be, you know they were fine, as far as we were concerned. I want to say, I thought it was a great placement. You know, they had a lot of patience, they loved him, they wanted him. But it took us a long time to accomplish that. And, in that process, I think he was damaged.

EB2: Mmhmm

D2: I think his little mind was damaged. And, um, so he had a real rough life after that. You know, he, couldn't understand why people didn't want him or like him, or, you know. They went through a lot with him anyway. I think that was very unnecessary and I always felt, back then, that we weren't, up to the state's level. You know like we didn't have an education, you know, we didn't know anything. You know, um, probably because we're more trusting in people and we know people.

EB2: Mmhmm

D2: You know, like, it's like on the reservation we have to have a background check. And, I know what everybody does on the reservation. I know how they make their chile and how they take care of their kids. [someone laughs] So we don't have to go through that same process that the state goes through/

EA2: And this

D2: But they were forcing us to do that.

EB2: Mmhmm

EA2: This was before 1999, then, right? Before the, the state law passed that allowed them to reimburse tribally-approved foster homes?

D2: Yeah.

C2: It was 1998.

EA2: So it was right before that.

D2: Yeah.

EA2: So it was probably one of the catalysts for/

D2: Yeah/

EA2: For to get that changed.

D2: Yeah and we were working towards that, but. And even a few years ago, I think there was a state worker that thinks or thought that, you know, we didn't know a heckuva lot and we were invited to team meetings but it was like after the fact. You know, things have gotten better. Along the way. You know, and there's been trust built between the state workers in Machias anyway and the tribes here.

EB2: Mmhmm

D2: You know but they have also had big turnover, all depends on who's teaching them, you know, how to do their job. Whether it's to work with us, or. And we just get somebody to work with and everything's working good when that person's no longer there and then they hire somebody else. You know, so, there's a lot of inconsistency. But. That was my one story. I, I just, I was appalled by the whole thing. Appalled. And um, it's, if we thought for one minute these grandparents weren't fit to have this little boy we wouldn't have been fighting so hard for him, them to get him.

EB2: Mmhmm.

D2: You know, so. And um, it was a task. It, it was a big task. Hopefully that wouldn't happen today. But/

C2: It's ironic/

D2: Just recently/

C2: Yeah, it's ironic that Indian tribal child welfare is fighting to get a non-Native to take that child. I mean, how ironic is that?

EB2/EA2: Mmhmm

C2: You know and that's what we were fighting for.

EA2: Mmhmm, well that complies/

C2: For that non-Native/

EA2: With ICWA though.

C2: Grand-, I mean, those grandparents. That's what we were fighting for. They were non-Native, we're tribal and that's what we're fighting for. It just, doesn't make sense.

D2: So I want to think too, somewhere down the line they just do whatever it is they want to do or not. Or did. And not take, or have respect for people that probably would want to bring up their children, their grandchildren and the nieces and nephews or whoever. But. I can say recently we have a little issue going on. Haven't got any response from that?

C2: No.

D2: No. Um. Whenever the law was passed for the state to honor our licenses?

EA2: mmhmm

D2: Recently, um, there was a request for a family to be licensed for a foster child from the state. Carol and I spoke with the worker and she said all I'd, she would need is the application. So we, course and this woman's been licensed in the past where we just dropped it because there

hadn't been any placement there in a long time. So we sent the application in and we didn't hear and we didn't hear and the foster parents hadn't gotten paid and hadn't gotten paid. They still haven't gotten paid?

C2: No.

D2: Um, so I inquired. I called one day to inquire about it and she said, oh, well we sent that information out to the foster mom she needs to have a fingerprint. I said, "What? Why? We don't fingerprint anybody here."

EA2: mmhmm

D2: And she said, "Well, it's a federal law." I said, "Oh. When I have BIA come down to go through my files as long as I have an application and a background check, they're fine with that." The state's not fine with that. So, she sent me the information that comes from the higher up, which was Martha Proulx and said they had to have a background check and fingerprint before they can get paid any foster care money.

EA2: Hmm. This is new huh?

D2: So Carol has asked a question but she hasn't gotten any response. There was a conflict of interest in, what was that report?

C2: Policy. It's the new policy that we're to be approving that Martha did.

EA2: Oh, the Indian Child Welfare/

C2: Welfare policy/

EA2: That we've been working on. Yeah. Oh it's in there?

C2: mmhmm

EA2: It has, so it's been enacted then? I mean if it's in the policy that, that we haven't approved yet, but it's happening, so what's going on?

D2: Yeah, but it says it would honor/

C2: What doesn't make sense is that the policy has a contradiction.

EA2: To the practice?

C2: Yes.

D2: Well it's/

C2: The first, one part of the policy states that the state of Maine will *honor* the tribe's licensing procedures. So if the tribe, if the tribe does not fingerprint then/

EA2: The state accepts whatever they do. They don't even have to know what they do/

C2: That's right/

EA2: They don't have to know if you guys fingerprint or not/

C2: That's right/

EA2: If it's a home for a Native child, a Passamaquoddy child, they need to recognize your foster home.

C2: Absolutely.

EA2: And they used to do that and now they're saying they need fingerprints?

C2: That is correct.

EA2: OK so there already practicing this "you need fingerprints" but it's in the policy that we haven't approved yet?

C2: Correct.

EA2: So how could they be doing it if it's not in the policy yet?

C2: That's a good question.

EA2: So we need an ICWA workgroup meeting.

C2: We asked that question and we have not gotten a response back.

EA2: I was, I was wondering what it was. I saw the exchange but I didn't realize, um. Maybe can you reply to everyone that is reviewing that Indian Child Welfare Policy and explain that so everybody can be thinking about it? I mean, I, I'd like things to be more, like, inclusive? And, transparent, so that we can have those conversations.

C2: [laughing]

EA2: Because no, like, I saw that but I didn't know what it was because I, I guess I didn't read it as—I wouldn't—reading it I'm not looking at the same things that you're looking for anyway. Because I'm not in child welfare practice, I'm looking more globally so,

C2: mmhmm

EA2: it's good for the, everybody to have that, know that feedback. Um, because I bet you the other folks either haven't read it or haven't, didn't notice that.

C2: [to B2 & A2] Did you guys notice it?

B2: I didn't get the correspondence, but I would be very interested in being involved in it.

EA2: Yeah, everyone got a copy of the Indian Child Welfare Policy. Everyone that's on the ICWA workgroup. Um, so. It, it would be/

B2: Dolly may not have and passed it on, and not passed it on to us. But it sounds, yeah and, she's been gone too so it sounds like something we all need to get on board with.

EA2: We need to have another ICWA workgroup meeting too to give final approval to that anyway. I don't know why the deadline said the February 29th. But um, yeah.

D2: ICWA workgroup. Is that the one with Becky Harvey and?

EA2: Sometimes with Becky Harvey. When she was helping us with the online training which was, I don't where that's at either. I think she went on medical, Becky. Part-time, so.

D2: Well I was involved with that because of the poster the other day.

EA2: MMhmm

EB2: Do you have to leave at two? [to A2]

D2: So anyway, that's one of my stories. One of probably many that I could haul off. [C2 laughs]

A2: Barb does everything that I do, so I'm okay.

B2: My turn?

EB2: If you'd like, yeah.

B2: I'm not sure, this would qualify, I don't um, you know I don't have a lot of specifics but um, going back to what Dorothy said I do find that, um, in working with the Machias office I have much better success. I have a more personal relationship with all their workers, um. However, I have found that the further south I get the more difficult it gets. And I have complained over and over to many supervisors and I am very frustrated because I keep running into the same situation over and over again. It just happened again this morning where the state got a report. Mom is Native, they are in the [Bentmore?] area and I understand that the state is bound by certain guidelines where they have to out and check and a call and I believe it's like, I don't know 72 hours or whatever. Well um, the caseworker called me today at 10:00 and left a message because we were out on another call and said, "I've got this report. I have to go check on it today. Do you want to come with me?" You know, Bentmore is two hours away. I have other things going on. I cannot drop everything at the last minute even though, I do, I would have wanted to go. You know even if it's because of the domicility issue even if it is the state case, I have found, as I'm sure you have found that when those interviews and those safety assessments happen and their off the reservation and they see one of us, or you, it's a familiar face , it kind of puts them at ease, they feel more comfortable you know they know that um, you know that worst

253 case scenario we are always there for them. And the, the thing is I don't think it's an intentional
254 sabotage but it's more of the attitude that bothers me.
255 EA2: mmhmm
256 B2: The attitude is more, "Look at me, I'm calling you. I'm ICWA compliant." And for me it's
257 so much more than that. It's not just that you're compliant; it's that, you know, their tribe is
258 represented in this too. So I have a real problem with the attitude, and I've had a problem with
259 attitudes that come from, more like, other counties that may not have the localized tribes. You
260 know because we're not in close proximity but, you know, the southern part of the state doesn't
261 have a lot of dealings with it. So I get a very condescending you know, ah, "I didn't know about
262 ah, did you want to come for this assessment?" And you know, it's, it's the fact that they're
263 calling me at the last minute, which I think is really disrespectful to us, and, they're not giving
264 me an opportunity to collaborate with them before about what they're gonna be looking for what
265 their concerns are/
266 A2: Services they may put in place.
267 B2: You know, what services, what you know and it's just. So I show up at the interview and I
268 really don't know, because I would like, to prepare myself you know for what the interview, or
269 what the assessment is gonna contain and, um, you know we had one case where it was right
270 across the bridge. The state had done an assessment and we went over there and it was fine, um,
271 and you know mom and dad, or mom and boyfriend took us, we went outside afterwords and
272 they were like, "You know I don't think I could have done this if you weren't here, you know I
273 felt so good thank you for coming" and, I'm not get-, I'm not getting that consideration from a
274 lot of them and I have another case I'm dealing with right now which is turning out to be a legal
275 nightmare, because, started out as a civil case. Um, whatever happened during that civil case the

judge, all of a sudden took it from being a civil case and um, it was a custody—custody hearing? No, motion to modify child support. Judge yanked the kid out of mom and dad's care, custody and put them in the Department of Human Services. So then it must have been a really bad custody hearing [laughing] you know whatever dad, dad chose to represent himself, so apparently he wasn't very, he didn't impress Judge Remay, so Judge Remay said, "That's it the kid's going with the state" so now I'm working with this caseworker in Augusta and that's not going, it's not going well at all. Um, she is working out of Augusta and totally excluding mom from the reunification process. Totally, um, you know ignoring the needs of this little boy's sister

A2: And ignoring our/

B2: And ignoring, yeah/

A2: Our input

B2: Completely disregarding our input you know, um, and she's, she's you know kind of looking at all of these, she's calling me she's going "We need to drug test mom" and I'm like "Wait a minute, mom-- he wasn't removed from mom." He was removed from dad because dad had the primary residency. And the only reason he was removed into the state custody was because he was a threat to mom because of [they hit the child was? 26:32], because of his violent outbursts and um, you know it all started as a domestic violence case. So she called me this morning, you know "we need to drug test mom" and I'm like, "Huh? Wh- why?" I mean mom, mom is limited but she's not you know, and, and so I said, "you know I don't think that's appropriate." I said, "You're not even letting mom"-- there's no business with the child, because the child doesn't want to see his mom so the state is not forcing the child to see his mom. So it's not like they're drug testing her before she goes for a visit because there are no visits. So, I'm just getting a real

condescending attitude and I think through all of that, that's my biggest problem is the attitudes that I run into, um, when it comes to certain state workers. And especially she's like, [in a shocked, stage whisper voice] "Do you know that he has to sleep on the floor in his sister's room?" It's like, "Yes, it's a two-bedroom trailer. What, what?" [laughing] You know, I mean, because for them, that rules out this child ever coming home for a weekend visit, because he doesn't have his own room. And, you know for us its just like, "Well, there's room for more."

C2: Mmhmm

EA2: Mmhmm

B2: And um, you know, so I really feel like she's being totally disrespectful to what we do and go about things.

EB2: Mmhmm

B2: You know because unless the child was removed because of a substance abuse issue we wouldn't drug test.

EA2: Mmhmm

C2: Mmhmm

B2: So, um, yeah, I, bottom line, my biggest problem I think is attitudes. Although, you know, thanks to the group, the work that the workgroup did, I do notice improvements in the Machias office because they've been more involved, where you know, until they do their turnover things you know we were on kind of a first name, casual thing with them and um, you know I'd like to see that with the other agencies. And then there's also the frustration when I call a state worker, they honestly don't know because they're like "Well I don't know if I can give you that information. I, I have to check with my supervisor and then I have to check with our attorney" and I'm like, "No, you can give it to me" [laughs] "really, you can!" And they're like, "[Big

sigh exhale] I don't know what to" and they don't they really seem as, as much as, is, they, they tout, um, how far they've come with ICWA they really have not, and I really think it's like a five-minute blurb in their training process. And we went to/

EA2: It's two hours. [laughing] It's me and Carol. Two hours.

B2: Okay, and well,

A2: [Maybe they're only getting five minutes ? 29:19]

I'm not saying you guys don't do a good job. I'm not saying that, but do you get them at the end of the day or? [laughing]

C2: We get them at different times during the day.

B2: Yeah, you know and I don't know if they're just not paying attention to that part, but I mean, and then um, you know when they're, when they're telling you, "Well, I really don't know how does that work? How does that work?" And I'm thinking, "You don't know?" And then, we went to the na-, to the child welfare convention in Orono last year? And um, the, one of the head directors, and it was right after the Truth and Reconciliation Project and, um, you know one of the directors spent about twenty minutes talking about all the wonderful work um, you know that they're doing you know on their end and you know, and, um, just shy of breaking into "Kumbaya" suffice it to say I will probably not be invited back [laughs] to any of those meetings. [laughing] You know because I think they like to present it that it's all rosy, and it's not horrible but there's, there's a lot more that could be done. And I don't know where the change has to happen.

A2: To me, the, this one worker just recently, she showed no compassion to, how old is the little girl? Nine, ten?

B2: Eight.

A2: Eight, yeah. No compassion, very leading questions, very just/

B2: Yeah, yeah.

A2: She was actually talking to her almost as if she was talking to an adult.

B2: And she was actually using it as a way, she was actually asking more questions about um, mom's parenting, her life at home which I don't understand because it wasn't a safety assessment because they already have an open case.

C2: Hmm.

B2: So, I mean the whole case is just/

A2: It's a cluster.

B2: It's the first in the state of Maine, so leave it to us. I guess, um.

A2: I gotta go.

B2: Then there's the whole question of when did ICWA apply, so.

A2: Yeah.

EB2: So there's, um, I have a lot of follow-up questions sort of, but there seems to be, well what you've talked about, it's been talked about um, because part of what we're interested in is like what from your perspectives are the beliefs that kind of drive this. . . stuff? And one of the things that came up is just, I mean part of its just the value of your knowledge, like what's, it seems like there's, um, like kind of like what you're saying they don't take your input into consideration, and what's so what do you feel like is, underneath that? From your perspective?

B2: I don't know I honestly and I don't know and I don't know if I, if, if Carol's experience, if Dorothy's experience is the same as mine but I almost get the kind of like "wink wink, nudge nudge" you know okay, look at what we're doing, see? And um, it's [pause] to me I don't think that they're ICWA, um, whatever you want to call it ICWA compliance is really, I don't think

368 it's child-focused. I, I, I do not think it's child-focused. I mean we, the interviews and this is
369 just my experience, but the interviews um, where I've been involved, um, as a parent I would
370 probably fail miserably. You know, um, they're, they're--they're invasive. We tend to do things
371 a lot more casually.
372 C2: Mmhmm
373 B2: I don't, you know, I don't know what drives it. I don't know if it's just that their training
374 and trying to cross their training over into how we do things, I don't know if that's the problem.
375 You know because I don't know what their training is, but, for me it's just attitude. You know
376 it's almost like their offended that we're involved and again, just my experience.
377 EA2: Well [several seconds pause]
378 C2: I'm really not sure how to answer that question. I find that to be a very difficult question.
379 Um [pause] the only way I know how to respond to that question is there again the latest case we
380 had with DHS I think they're trying, I think that they're not sure, they're not sure how to
381 incorporate the tribe with their mandates, um. We were called for assessment, we went, we were
382 called for team meetings, we went. Was there ever any joint decision-making? I think the joint-
383 decision making came when foster placement was requested, um. When they actually went and
384 removed the children and did the petition, we didn't know that, um, when the kids were being
385 transitioned to dad, that was, you couldn't get straight answers from DHS, you know when is,
386 when are things gonna happen, what is that gonna look like? Um. Just dad trying to enroll his
387 children in school, they, didn't get the proper paperwork to dad, you know *twenty days later*, and
388 then dad's able to put them in school? Um, so I think they're not having a clear understanding of
389 how they're supposed to work with us. They've got some of it down, and they do very well at it.
390 And other parts, they don't have down yet. I guess is the best way to answer.

EA2: So when, you're being, you know, when you experience their behavior of, you know, not giving you a straight answer, or getting the run around or being evasive or whatever. What do you think is behind that, what do you perceive their beliefs behind that?

C2: I just think that whoever it is that we may be calling, if it's the caseworker I think that they need to take, um, whatever question that we may be asking to a supervisor. So it hasn't followed through down that path yet. Where it's/

EA2: So you think/

C2: Where it's department to department. Discuss it, let's find a solution for it. Rather than DHS making the decision.

B2: Mmhmm. Do you feel a lot, do you feel a lot of it is about control? Because that's the feeling I get.

C2: Um, I think, yeah. It, there definitely having an issue in, um/

B2: Yeah.

C2: Releasing that control.

B2: Mmmhmm.

C2: And that's understandable. I can definitely understand that. I can relate with that. But if the whole premise of the Indian Child Welfare Act policy is to um, co-, um, co-

EA2: case manage.

C2: Yes, co-case manage, then that's exactly what that means and at every freakin' point of the case.

B2: Yes.

EA2: So, so/

C2: *Every* point.

EA2: So let's go further then. So, they're, what is the belief behind that, why are they not treating you all like equals even though they've been told you are? Why would they, let's, let's postulate I mean there's, I'm, we don't know, we don't know what it is but we can only guess, and we can only guess based on our own experiences with them. So, in, in a way we are asking you to climb that ladder of inference and to try to, you know and we always say don't do that but we're trying to, you know what do you think the value, if you were in their shoes and you were treating somebody that way, and you are afraid to give up control, what is the belief behind that? What drives that fear to give up control? What do you think their belief is? You, you know what you think it is. You, you can feel it. What do you think it is? You guys know, it's okay to say it. Whatever it is.

C2: [laughing]

EA2: No, I mean really because we're not, we're not saying/

B2: I know what it is, Esther. And I know it because you're right.

EA2: What is it?

B2: I do feel it. When, when and I'm sorry, I can [looking at EB2]

EA2: You can say whatever you want.

B2: You're gonna edit the tape, right? But when we have cases when the state is on here and they're working with families, um, that are on the reservation, I get a *fierce protectiveness* like "those are my kids, stop it." [laughing] You know, I don't like that they come in and tell us, you know, or try and run things different than how we do it.

EA2: So why do you think they're doing that? What is their belief? What value or belief are they going on that makes them act in that way?

B2: Superiority. Superiority.

C2: White privilege? Is that what you want?

EA2: No, I'm saying what do you/

C2: Oh my god. [slaps hand down on table]

EA2: I'm saying you know what you think it is.

C2: Yep.

EA2: If you think it's because of, what, of racism, classism, it could be because maybe this was a classmate you had in college and there's competition, I don't know, *there's something*.

B2: It is, it's the white supremacy.

EA2: There's always that drives be-, I mean behaviors and attitudes and values drive, I mean, beliefs, attitudes and values drive behavior. So we've already talked about what the behavior is and what we're trying to do is get your perception of what underlies that behavior. Not that you're right, we don't know I mean, maybe they just had a damn bad day. We don't know, but if it's a pattern and you're seeing it over twenty years, and, and you know you trust your own thinking and you know, you know what it is. I mean/

B2: And I don't think that you really want to think too much about it/

C2: Jesus, Esther. (40:24)

EA2: I mean, if you're a woman and you're having these experiences and it happens to all be with men, you can say, "Geez, I wonder if there's some sexism at play here?" I mean, it's not like, out of the realm of possibilities. It's not unreasonable, I mean we know, we know the dominant narrative in Maine is that Indian people can't take care of their kids, right?

C2: Mmhmm.

EA2: And we know that the other dominant narrative is that whites and Indians can't work together and this, this whole process of the TRC is challenging all of that.

C2: Mmhmm

EA2: So, that's one of those values: Indians can't work together. I mean that might be one of those beliefs that they have. You know, we can't trust these Indian people to do this because their systems are so different and they don't understand them, I know that was a problem back in the 90s.

C2: Mmhmm.

EA2: Um, they didn't understand what our child welfare systems are like. They didn't understand that we have standards of excellence and expertise just like they do.

C2: Mmhmm

EA2: We have licensing procedures for soc-, you know we have licensed social workers just like they do, so that, back then their belief, their behavior was being driven by the belief that they didn't think we could do the job or we couldn't be trusted or, so there's something, and you know what it is when you're interacting with people/

B2: Yeah.

EA2: You know we make assumptions about what their values and beliefs are all the time, and this is what we're trying to get you guys to do. Make those assumptions.

B2: But you know one thought I keep going back to too is if I am a caseworker and I'm working with a family because you know I mean our, we approach things so differently um, in terms of the reunification, you know the state has their mandates, they have their guidelines, they have you know, X, Y and Z and you know, I , I , you know we work on a different philosophy which is you know, every family has within them what they need, let's just build on that. So I'm thinking if I'm a par-, as a *caseworker,* if I am picking up on this, what is this like for the parents dealing with these caseworkers? You know, I mean what are they picking up on. You know if,

483 if, if it's a Native parent and they're living off-reservation without the support of their tribe,
484 that's gotta be terrifying. You know to have this caseworker saying, you've gotta do X, Y and Z
485 and if you do X, Y and Z, then when you're done with X, Y and Z, we're gonna start back to A,
486 B and C, and then you can have your kids back. You know, imagine what it would be like for
487 those parents.
488 EA2: So what is the, what is the value or belief that drives that kind of behavior that control
489 behavior?
490 B2: I think we go right back to superiority/
491 D2: They're superior.
492 B2: Yeah.
493 EA2: Because I know when you were relaying the [talking to C2] story about the non-Native
494 grandparents, I was thinking you know back in the, 98, kinship care wasn't even being practiced
495 in the state.
496 C2: Hmm.
497 EA2: So thing, things have changed as far as that goes.
498 C2: Mmhmm
499 EA2: So you know back then, the beliefs and attitudes, there might have been a lot of stuff
500 around grandparents, you know, that whole adage, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree or
501 whatever, so
502 C2: Mmhmm
503 EA2: these parents obviously can't, and tho-, a lot of those things have changed so those beliefs
504 and attitudes have changed. And the behavior has changed with it. So it's like the same thing.
505 You know, these, these behaviors of how they interact with child wel-, Indian child welfare cases

are driven by some beliefs that they have, and you know, what we're trying to do is develop a tool so that we can measure those. That's why we need you guys to tell us what you're thinking is about on that. Not that you're convicting them or judging them or anything it's just that, you know, um, we all, we all um, make those inferences all the time, everyday when we interact with people you know the cashier at the store, we're always thinking "geez, they must really, um, you know they must be this or that if they comment-- political like, oh, he must have been a Republican because he made a comment about whatever." I mean, we do it all the time, and this is what we're trying to get now. Um.

C2: You know when Barb was speaking, I think that the major difference between us and them is that to them, this is a case. To us, those are our children.

B2: Mmhmm.

C2: You know, that is a major difference. It's a case to them, it's our kids to us. They have to follow rules, regulations, time frames because that is their mandate, that is what they have, that's their structure. We don't.

Others: Yep.

C2: We don't have time frames that we follow. We don't have, um, rules and regulations that are so stringent that fifteen of the last eighteen months if you don't, if you can't reunify your kids are going to be adopted out. We don't do things like that. Because we do everything to help that family to get back together again, to *re*-unify that family. [pause] So I think that, you know these guys are so, it, it's control it's superiority, whatever you want to call it. Whereas with us, it's community, it's family, it's [pause]

EA2: Survival.

C2: Yeah. [5 second pause]

EA2: So the beliefs and attitudes that drive your work and your behavior are different than theirs. Obviously.

C2: Absolutely.

D2: Yeah.

B2: Absolutely.

EA2: But there is common ground somewhere. I mean the fact that, the, you know those caseworkers are in that pos-, position to begin with, there is some common ground, I mean, there's probably a lot more common ground that we realize when, when we're on that uncommon ground, that's all we're focused on, but.

B2: And you know they have a different attitude there, they're, they have this "let's fix it" attitude. And you know, it's, it's, I've seen some really unrealistic things for parents in part of what they wanted them to do. You know and I think our philosophy is different, it's, it's, you know let's just strengthen. You know we can't fix it. And then, you know, they, they have their stupid little timeframe, and, and I'm sorry but, we'll-, you know mi-, it's mind-boggling to me because they say "Well, after so many times you're going to terminate parental rights," well, and then all of a sudden you're going on, on the computer, or on the wall and all of a sudden there are all of these children up for adoption, it's like, "Did you even think about what you were going to do with them before you terminated their parents' rights?" I mean, they don't have anything to do with them. They go into this big adoption pool. How is that in the best interests of these children? They terminate the parental rights but it's not like everybody's lining up, you know, to adopt them. Because they don't, you know, they want the babies and the young ones but the older ones they don't, so here they are with that family connection terminated and probably living in foster homes, and you know they've got their picture up there like it's, you

552 know, a pet finder registry. How, how is, how does that help the kids? How is that improving
553 their, their, their life? So instead of going into it saying, "Okay let's fix this and get what
554 everybody needs to be done in thirteen months" why don't they just go in and say, you know,
555 "You have what you need let's just work with you to get everybody together"?
556 [Exhausted/disgusted exhale] And then if you're really good and you read between the lines
557 [laughing] you can kind of figure out, "Michael, highly energetic child" [laughs] "Suzie, learning
558 difficulties."
559 EB2: So there's a belief you have about families that is/
560 B2: Absolutely
561 EB2: to strengthen and/
562 B2: Mmhmm
563 EB2: And then so thinking about the belief about families if the child, if it's just a case, or like
564 you said, what's the thinking about families do you feel like, from, um, the state perspective?
565 EA2: What does the state believe/
566 C2: For me/
567 EB2: Yeah, about the families.
568 C2: I'm just going to answer that from a tribal perspective. Um, I think for families we have a
569 vested interest, we have a vested interest in our children, in our community, um, whereas state
570 workers it's a case, there's no vested interest there. Um, yeah, maybe they do want what's best,
571 what's in the best interest of that child, but there's, there's nothing to guide that. Other than, um,
572 their mandate, their rules, their regs. You know, this is how they have to do it. We don't do it
573 like that. Um, that's the only way I know how to answer you. If I did answer you.

B2: And they seem, and I don't want to make this universal because I'm sure, and, and it's not even 100 percent my experience because I have, and, and to be fair I'm not bashing all the state workers, I have worked with some good ones.

EA2: Mmhmm

B2: You know I have had some that have really, you know developed a relationship with the parents, and then I've had others who um, almost you know from the get go have said you know "they're not going to do what they need to do." And they've had, kind of a, you know almost like a prey-drive in terms of the parents, you know it hasn't been about supporting them, and helping them and saying, "what can I do for you?" It's been more about getting, you know, getting more information on them and, um, you know, setting the bar so high, that you know a lot of parents can't reach it, and the attitude seems to be a lot of, that it's not, and sometimes it's, it's not in the best interests of the child to reunify, you know? Sometimes it's not. But the flip side of that is, you know, we don't get to pick the parents we have to work with you know and a lot of times if a parent will rub a state worker the wrong way, oh, heaven help them. You know where I, you know, where, we're, here they don't really have a choice, you know they can't really ask for another caseworker, they can't, you know, it seems like a lot of times they do, go, kind of zero in on a parent that's been, that's being difficult and that's when the bar starts getting raised higher and higher and higher. And I mean, we've all had our difficult clients, I mean we, we'd be out of work if parents did what they're supposed to do all the time, but I don't think, a lot of times they become too adult-focused and not enough on the kids.

[about 13 seconds of silence]

EA2: Want to do the word things?

EB2: Yeah, we can do the/

B2: Now I've thoroughly depressed myself. What's this?

EB2: Um, so the next um, part that we have is that we have four different statements that we picked from, they came from a lot of different places. Um, but everyone will get the same one and, well we can pass them out first. [passing out the papers for statement 1] And kind of the general question with all of these, comments, does a statement like this relate to your own experiences with state child welfare involvement in your communities?

C2: Can you ask that question again?

EB2: Does this relate to your own experiences with state child welfare involvement in your communities?

C2: In our communities, state child welfare wouldn't be coming to remove them. Not in our communities.

EA2: Right, but does this statement that "When Native children are removed from their homes"/

EB2: Sorry

C2: [laughing]

EB2: You always get me.

B2: Somebody's gonna get hurt, I'll tell you that/

EA2: "the whole community is hurt" how does this statement relate to your, to your experiences with state child welfare workers? Whether they were there to take children away from their home or from the community or whether it was a joint case or whatever. How does this statement relate? What do you think about this statement? Is this something that the tribe believes, is this something that state child welfare workers believe? Is this something that they reject? Is this something that they don't know about? [5 seconds of silence] So is this statement true? First of all.

C2: [still chuckling] I think you're speaking to that brick because I'm not getting what you're asking me for.

EA2: The statement okay, "When Native children are removed from their homes, the whole community is hurt" based on/

C2: When they're, when they're removed from their home, who's doing the removing?

EA2: It doesn't matter/

D2: From their home.

EA2: who's doing the removing.

EB2: Well, actually though/

B2: Are you talking about their homes or the reservation?

EA2: Their homes. So because remember when we did the, we did the "Belonging" video and we talked to all those folks. Regardless if they're, if they're experience in child-, foster care was good or whether it was bad, the theme that came out of that was there was trauma in the taking, right?

C2: Yes.

EA2: And we did, remember we used to do that training and we put, what happens to a Native child as opposed to a non-Native child when they're taken into care and the differences, right?

C2: Yes.

EA2: And, and, we came out with the value and belief that a Native child is more intrinsically tied to their community and there's more of an, a ripple impact on the community when that Native child is taken out of the community as opposed if you took a non-Native child out of their community.

C2: Mmhmm

EA2: They're not as tied. So this, this statement, "When a Native child is removed from their home, the whole community is hurt" is that a how, what do you think about that statement is that something you think that tribal child welfare workers believe, is that something that state child welfare workers believe, is it something they don't know about? Um.

C2: [laughing] You're asking me to, make an assumption/

EA2: Yep, exactly.

C2: I have no idea.

EA2: We're asking you to make assumptions.

C2: No clue.

EA2: You do know.

C2: No.

EA2: You do know what you think. You know what you think, Mol.

D2: The only thing that I can say about this statement is that, um, if a Native children are removed from their home and the whole community hurts, does this mean this Native child is moved out of it's community?

EA2: Mmhmm.

D2: Then, yes it does. Because they probably didn't have the option to come back to the community, so there's a loss, for the tribe.

EA2: Now the way I would answer that/

C2: I don't like this.

EA2: Based on my own experiences/

EB2: I want to know, wait hold on/

EA2: Wai, wai, wait a minute [to EB2] based on my own experiences with state child welfare when Carrie was taken into care, I assume, and I know with every fiber of my being that they did not believe this. I know damn well that they did not believe that taking Carrie out of their community, out, out of her home on the community made a difference to everybody else. Because I constantly had to educate them about that. So, yeah, I'm making assumptions about what she believed but it's based on their behavior. And I'm making assumptions that I feel are pretty rational. I believe this. But I know that caseworker didn't. Because I had to educate her. Many times about it. So based on your experiences with state child welfare workers, how does this statement relate to what you know about them based on how you've interacted with them? Is this something that you think they believe? Is this something, is this how they act? Do they act like they believe this? Do they act like they value this?

C2: No.

EA2: Right, so you know. And, and you can say it's assumptions but you, you, your, you know based on your interactions with them. You have an opinion about this. And I want to hear it.

C2: [laughing] I just think that it's an unfair question, it's, it's, um, ah, who's removing, the, there's not enough information to this.

EB2: So, but that, but, but that's a good thing to bring up is that where, what makes the difference?

C2: What what?

EB2: You said it makes a difference like who's doing the removing. What's going on?

C2: Absolutely.

EB2: So what, so what's the difference and so/

EA2: And talk about that.

EB2: If it's true sometimes and not true other times, what's the difference?

EA2: If tribal DHS or tribal child welfare is going in and doing a removal of children from a home I don't think that, um, I don't think that the whole community is hurt/

EB2: whole community is hurt. Mmhmm.

C2: I think that, some of the community may be saying, "Jesus, it's about time. Why didn't they remove those kids a long time ago?"

EA2: So when a Native child is removed from their, their community sort of like and put, placed off-reservation sort of like what happened, you know or even, even a kid that is under state jurisdiction because they weren't living on the reservation but they're still very much a part of that community are taken away and put in another home somewhere else, does it hurt the whole community? What is, you know, what is the belief around that and what is, what do you think the state's belief around that?

D2: Sure it does because it doesn't make the community strong if, if they took all the kids out of the community what would they have left?

EA2: Mmhmm

B2: My experience/

D2: What would their future?

B2: One experience I had was that the state really did not, ah, did not care. It wasn't a tribal member, not a tribal member had grown up on the reservation his friends were here, his relatives were here, his life was here, um they gave a half-hearted attempt to find a relative placement or a family placement on reservation, none lived up to their standards, so both kids were, were removed off-reservation, placed in care, one was adopted the other wasn't, well, ah, flash forward to a couple years later the same child is all of a sudden getting into all kinds of trouble,

and everybody's like, "I wonder why?" "Well, *you wonder why, really?* You took him away from everything he knew, um, and now he's angry and he's acting out." So now all of a sudden they're calling me and they're going, "You want him back?" You know, so no, they don't care you know they don't, they don't give any regard you know that th-, this community lost one of it's children. And this is what happens when they're snatched away from everything they've known.

[about 7 seconds of silence]

EA2: That's consistent with my experience with state child welfare. You, you know being on that side with having Carrie removed and then having to share office space with them in Bangor. I mean, that's, really consistent with what I've experienced, they, they don't, they don't understand. And I think a lot of it has to do with really basic philosophical differences because our federal and state child welfare laws are all based on property law. It's based on the fact that children are property. And our traditional laws, we don't view children as property. You know, we view them as gifts that we are entrusted with. Um, and, and I think that is that deep philosophically.

B2: Yeah.

EA2: So should we do the next one?

EB2: Yeah.

[C2 laughing]

EA2: Okay we got four statements. And these statements came/

C2: These are going to be interesting then. [laughing]

D2: Maybe that was the hardest one.

EB2: I… don't know.

EA2: These statements came from

C2: Erika's saying, "uh oh, let's see what Carol has to say about the next one…" I need one more.

EA2: [speaking to Robert] Oh, if you're gonna speak you gotta sign a consent form. Yep, because it's a focus group it's, a research

EB2: Because you're being recorded, so/

EA2: You're being recorded, yeah. So what is the one? And these statements were derived/

C2: Bullshit.

EA2: These statements were derived from, um,

B2: Do you need a soda or a cup of coffee or something? [all laughing]

EB2: A lot of these came from

C2: I'm gonna need a five-minute break.

EB2: So a lot of these came, from the, different places but a lot well some of them came from looking through the evaluations from the participants/

EA2: From the trainings we did in 2000. Some of these statements from some of the trainings.

D2: [?] just bite ya. [laughing]

EA2: So this statement, how does this comment relate to your experiences with state child welfare involvement in your community? This is actually, I remember this, this was actually on one of those evaluations when we went around in 2000. This is one of the participant's comment.

EB2: This one is verbatim, actually/

EA2: I remember this very well. Yep.

C2: What was your question? How does what?

EA2: How does this statement relate to your experiences with state child welfare involvement with your involvement with state child welfare?

R2: I've got a question.

EA2: Yep.

R2: I'm a tribal council member. Didn't know anything about this.

EA2: No, it, it's, the focus group we're targeting people, um, either tribal child welfare workers, former tribal child welfare workers, guardians ad litum, anyone who had, or, foster parents who had in-, who has had interaction with state child welfare workers.

R2: Oh.

EA2: To try to gauge their beliefs, attitudes and values around certain things like this, so.

R2: Are we talking now? Or are we talking 21 years ago when I was a police officer?

EA2: If you have some input you can definitely give it, it doesn't matter.

R2: It's probably better off not, not actually even sitting in on this.

EA2: It doesn't matter.

R2: Because you really wouldn't like my comments.

EA2: No, there's no, there's no, ah, we don't have any judgment on comments [laughing] it's research.

R2: I think you're going to get enough from the ladies that are sitting [C2 laughs] here. I really do, and I think/

EA2: You're just chicken to sign the paper, no just kid/ [everyone laughs]

R2: If this is what the focus group is concentrating on, getting, from these ladies that are sitting here, they are our child welfares, I think you know, me as a, as a member of the tribal council I should be, they should be coming to us and filling us in a little bit on what their progress is you

780 know they can't get into the day-to-day details and stuff but they can say, "this is what's
781 happening."
782 EA2: And this is all part of the TRC effort we're/
783 R2: And that last question you asked about um, how it affects the communities and stuff?
784 EA2: Yep.
785 R2: Really you don't want me to answer that question, because/
786 EA2: No, we really do.
787 R2: Because I feel exactly the same way you feel but I also have an understanding, how each one
788 of the child welfares have to work and listen, anytime that there's involvement with the state of
789 Maine and everything else, it's never a good thing. It's never been a good thing. You know, and
790 that's as far as I'm going to go with that but I think they've dealt with/
791 EA2: Well now that you've, you gotta sign it now/
792 R2: I can't sign it.
793 EA2: You're on the frickin' recorder now, we just got like five minutes [all laughing]
794 R2: Well I you know, ah, Dorothy, [nickname] as I call her asked, said, "Do you want to come
795 in?" So I thought this was something that the council would be invited to do.
796 EA2: Yeah, you can totally be part of it/
797 R2: Because normally, I'll come into just about every meeting that I can, come to, and if I had
798 known about this earlier, I would have been here.
799 D2: I think they should have involvement.
800 EA2: When did you, um, when did you guys reschedule your council meeting for? (1:05:10)
801 R2: Which one?
802 EA2: The one that was supposed to be tonight.

R2: I have no clue. Not as of yet. I have no clue. Actually you guys were supposed to be at that meeting.

EA2: Yeah, but Matt wrote and said it's gonna be rescheduled for another time.

R2: There's a lot of different things going on, last night we dealt with some, some personal inter-tribal matters so. And that was an emergency joint-council meeting. Special joint-council meeting.

EA2: Right.

R2: We still have to do a regular joint-council meeting and that's not normal. Normally, we're right on schedule and we do everything that way. But I'm going to go. You get to have this back.

[C2 laughing]

EA2: We'll have to delete that whole piece of tape!

EB2: We actually, yeah, we won't, we can't um, keep that if you don't sign it so we'll just/

D2: Why don't you sign it after you just made that big spiel?

EA2: Yeah. Trust me, [stug?].

R2: I trust you, Mama. [signing consent form]

EA2: So what do you think of that statement? Does a comment like this relate to your experiences?

B2: With the state workers?

EA2: Yes. Or is this like, "Oh my god, this is so foreign, this is nothing I would ever imagine a state worker believing no way"/

B2: Oh yeah, they definitely/

EA2: This relates in no way at all/

B2: have that attitude.

D2: Because they don't know the value system of the Native tribe?

EA2: You want a copy? [asking R2 if he wants a copy of the consent form]

C2: [?] What? On that statement there?

R2: I think that if it was the state they should actually have a clear, um, go to each one of the tribes get a definition of, and understanding of what their, although our councils are intermingled, I think that each place is, is, is different and distinct in their own, and, you need to know that. They should know that and there should be more emphasis on the state workers to be able to come here to say "We want to learn a little bit about the Native people." Then, you know, stay here a little while. Look at it, you know. See what we're all about and whatnot, um, I, I, I think that they, the Native children are treated differently, I definitely feel that no doubt in my mind.

B2: You know it's funny you mention that I had a call from a state worker this morning from Augusta who's dealing with a tribal child who is in a, um, non-Native home because his dad lives in that area, and, when we went to court on this matter I was very clear because their reunification plan added nothing about culture, nothing about working with us, because I'm working with mom, nothing about the culture. So I went back to her and I said, to the mom, and I said before you sign this she needs to put in something about their culture and the state worker did and then she called me today, and this is the same one that I've been having problems with, and she says, "I want you to know that" um, "the child put Indian dancing on the YouTube and he was showing his foster parents how to do it so he's getting his culture" and I'm like, "Oh, *thank god*" [sarcastic laugh] Yeah that's really good, and I, what I suggested was that they come down to the big social, the 31st that they're having in Bangor you know because he would see

some familiar faces because he's from this area and it would be, you know, a good experience for him. You know, but as long as he's dancing I guess he's doing, they're doing their part for his culture.

R2: I don't believe that. If they think just taking him to go look at who we are identifies him as Native American, that's not allowing him to be who, with their people, that's not allowing him to even come close to, what that is.

EA2: And the/

R2: Years down the road, they're going to be yearning, saying you know, "Why?" What about the language? What about the basket making? What about our actual feelings and you know, who we really are, you can't just get that by going to a powwow.

B2: And you can't just get it by dancing in your living room either.

R2: That, that, no you can't, you know? And anybody could turn on a TV and say, or they could turn on the TV and say, "Okay this is, this is, you know, Native American." Well that could be Native American from out west, that could be a Native from over in, Samoa or somewhere. I mean, it, the, those things, that's a, that, that's crazy. For them to think that, to know that they should be getting ahold, trying to get ahold of the family, trying to get ahold of the tribe itself. And say, "Hey, can we, you know maybe as a summer thing, you know, we'd like to try to let you be, go, go with a foster family there?" You know, let him have that, that opportunity. You know or even reach out and say, "Look this is where we can take you to a language that's for the Penobscot or the Passamaquoddy." There's a little bit of a difference but it's there, it's almost the same you can understand both languages, including the Maliseet. You know, you know an incident like you're saying here, about a year and a half ago, my personal experience with something similar to this was that my family was introduced to a nephew of mine that none of us

never even knew until one day, there was a phone call upstairs, actually that was in 2006? It was a few years ago.

EA2: Six years ago.

R2: It was a few years, that, there, the child's probably or whatever, however it was, but it was my nephew. And I've only seen him twice, yet now he lives here, he's, the, the father's involved with the child. The father didn't even know that he'd had a child -- at one point -- you know, I mean, it, it and it's the truth. But before this child could be adopted out from the state of Maine, they had to let us know. They had to let the, one, they had to let the tribal chief know, and the leaders know that "Look, we're gonna do this" and they have to sign off. Matter of fact, the tribal chief was my brother, was the uncle to the child, never knew. None of us knew. The mother knew, you know, and for me, something should have been done on that aspect of it. Not to just take and say, "Okay well there's a baby born, here you go." There should be some sort of reach, when that child is born and if the Native mom does not want to take care of the child, there should be some sort of a law that says, "We need to contact the family" and make undoubtedly sure -- or the father, if they know who the father is -- and say, "This is your opportunity." Don't hide it, don't wait until, whatever. That's personal, and, and if I had known at any one time, I would have made the trip down to see my nephew if he was in foster care that whole time. I think he was two years old, three years maybe, come, somewhere around there, before any of us even knew. How do you take and bring the child, you know, and you're, not know the family and say, "Here you go, take care of the child." Or even the father for that matter. The mom knew, the mom did take and give a chance but it didn't end up doing that way because that lack, from the beginning, was taken. You know, that, and, I have a hard time with it, and I still have a hard time with it, and I'm gonna go because I could really get deep into this.

[Everyone laughing]

R2: Really, really big time. You know, truth and reconciliation/

EA2: You'll have to sign anoth-, another consent form.

D2: Next time, we'll make a big block of time and we'll make sure you're here.

R2: And, and, and if you do do something please let me know because I would have been here. I, you know, I normally have the thing at the council meeting because you know I got the letter on that but I didn't know this was going, I just heard people talking, and I'm nosy because one, I'm a council member and I like to know what's going on/

B2: As long as you sign, you can come in. And Esther's being real stickler about the signatures/

R2: Yeah. You know, and honesty, you know one thing it's, you, you, if you look at it and look at us as a Native people. You know, we *value our people*. We value our culture, it's not something we just take and we just throw aside just because. And every child that is taken, and everything else that happens, because it has happened in the past so much, I'd reach out to them in a heartbeat. I could, I, I could remember going to a legislature down here in, in Augusta and meeting a guy that was taken forty-three years ago? And telling me, "You're my people" and he's a representative in the legislature. And how messed up he was because he did not know half of who his people were. As a matter of fact, he's Penobscot. Did not know. Forty-three years, and still, has a hard time relating to his people. That was taken away from him. And I st-, you know, I hear what she's saying but I figured, you gotta do something right from the beginning, have some sort of thing that when a baby is, is, put up for adoption, whatever that they know they're Native American. For one, we value our blood, we're so few, we do everything we can to make sure we keep the bloodline going. For eternity, as far as I'm concerned. So that child that's born, whether it's here or on, somewhere else, there should be something saying, "Look

you have another member of the community." Even though we have rules that says you gotta be a certain percentage but that doesn't matter. They're still family, they still have that bloodline. And that's very important to me, and I know it's very important to my Mama Lou. [Laughs] You know?

B2: And that's my biggest complaint, you know, is, is, is, I don't know where, you know I know it can be changed but you know the census eligibility and they're not on our census, but they are full-blown members of this community. They are full-blown, you know they are considered tribal members, their life is here and yet because of that, what, one-eighth of a blood we, we're pretty much powerless.

EA2: And there's also no incentives for tribal members to have children together are there? I know the Pequots used to do that. They're per capita distributions were, you know, higher if it was two tribal members that had children together/

B2: And even more frustrating is when they're, their not on this census but you they, they're, they're part, um, you know of another tribe. So you know that they're more than enough Native.

EA2: Oh because we don't recognize anything but Passamaquoddy, yeah, that's a big problem/

R2: The individual tribe/

EA2: That's a big problem. My kids that are on the Penobscot census are more Indian than my kids on the Passamaquoddy census/

R2: That's the same thing with mine/

EA2: Because we don't count other, that, it is ridiculous.

B2: We don't. Because ICWA applies. It, it applies.

R2: It does, because I have ten children. Believe it or not, I have five boys and five girls.

EA2: I believe it.

[Everyone laughing.]

R2: And not all of the same, same Native woman. But they were all Native women. They may have been Penobscot. I have, the children that I have now with my wife. I'm more Passamaquoddy than my children that I have with, my ex-wife. My daughter, my oldest daughter just misses the census, and I mean just misses it. But only because we don't recognize the other part of another tribe.

EA2: Right. It's ridiculous.

R2: And I, was that what you asked about if that's emphasized? My father, my mom is, is white. Um, and, she passed three years ago. But she, it, our heritage was *so important* to her that she's been part of this community for over thirty-three years. She treated everybody the same, it didn't matter who they were and everything, but, my father emphasized "Marry into your tribe. Marry Native so we can build the bloodline strong." If it isn't just this tribe, we can still marry, you know, it, it was there but if you decide not to, that's okay.

EA2: So how do we get that changed? I know my sister tried years ago/

B2: And how would that make you feel/

R2: Yes.

B2: having it emphasized your whole life and if you were not a good parent that the state would be showing up on your door, on reservation to question you about your child that doesn't quite make the census.

R2: How would that make me feel?

B2: Yeah.

R2: Wh, why would the state come knocking at my door?

EA2: If the child wasn't/

B2: If the child isn't on the census it would be state case, not a child welfare case?

R2: Th-, how would it make me feel?

B2: Yeah.

R2: Wow, it, I/

B2: See?

R2: I would really, it would be like/

B2: That's what I'm saying/

R2: Like, "hooo, hold on, wait a minute"/

B2: Like you said, she missed it by that much [making a pinching gesture with fingers]

R2: I can--, but then, but then, you gotta look at why is the state, you know, for me I'm a parent that doesn't have the state knocking at my door.

B2: Exactly, but/

R2: But the people that *have that* was because/

B2: Yeah

R2: Well it's right here on the reservation a lot, especially that I see it a lot here. We have children that, do not make the census even though we try to make, we make them feel they are Native irregardless.

D2: They are Native.

R2: They are. *They are*. They are, I mean, they are. It's just/

D2: You meant qualify for federal money/

R2: because of where our census has done and the way we do our blood quantum that it screws it all up.

B2: Right, and that's the thing because of that little tiny blood level/

R2: It, it, it's true.

B2: they could be removed from this reservation and never come back. That's what's frustrating.

R2: I mean, even myself, I could go from here to whole Penobscot and be Penobscot/

EA2: Yeah.

R2: I have that option, I've had that option my whole life. And I'd be more Penobscot [EA2 laughing] than I would--realistic--I'd be more Penobscot than I would be Passamaquoddy.

B2: I, I would like it so any child on the reservation/

R2: And it's, but it's the truth/

B2: is a child welfare case, that's what I want/

R2: And, all my kids went from here down to Penobscot, they'd be more Penobscot period. No matter what.

D2: They'd be a hundred percent.

R2: Pretty close. [D2 laughing] And so, yeah, I mean, I just, I have strong feelings about the child welfare system, it's something that I really, you know, I think here, we gotta come a long ways, it's not gonna be easy.

EA2: Well you know what we're gonna need since you're here and you're from council is we're gonna need a lot of support for the community group in this community. Um, Carolyn Maher is organizing Pleasant Point and Indian Township and so she'll need meeting space, it would be good if she had, um, a place to, to do some office work here while she's in this community recruiting people. So, and, and that's one way tribal government can support this work through the TRC.

R2: That's not a problem, I got, I got my office right/

D2: Just give her his name.

R2: Yeah/

EA2: Okay.

R2: Just give her my name.

EA2: Well I was, yeah, and I was gonna say all that when I came to the council meeting tonight, but it's not happening. [Everyone laughing]

D2: So we'll tell you.

R2: You can let her know to get ahold of me, and/

EA2: I will.

R2: Actually send me an email or something so I can bring it upstairs and say/

EA2: Well what's your email address.

R2: [Giving email address] And just send it right here to my email.

EA2: Okay.

R2: Kind of put it in specifics what you need, what she plans on doing, the whole nine yards.

EA2: Yep. Because I know she visited with [Person's Name] for awhile and she's really interested in being part of the group, so/

R2: I mean, I sure don't, I don't mind her using my office, um, we also have the courts there so she can't use that computer but if she's got a laptop we can, you know, figure it out that way and I don't mind her using my computer but I deal with Department of Defense contracts and stuff and I kind of don't like very few people looking at mine.

B2: We'd appreciate it that too thanks. We don't want any, ah, big secrets getting out. [laughing]

R2: Well I mean that would be no problem/

B2: Make anybody mad, don't wanna make the Department of Defense mad.

C2: Mm-mm.

R2: But/

EA2: Awesome.

R2: You also gotta realize that I'm out in the community everyday.

EA2: Well here, take some more brochures. Pass them out.

R2: Yeah, I'll give them to a couple of the council members.

D2: Governor.

R2: Chief upstairs.

EA2: I'll get them again at the council meeting, I'll give them to them all the time.

D2: Chief, or whatever he is.

EA2: Sakom.

R2: I'm not saying anything/

C2: There you go.

R2: Our chief.

EB2: We've got two more of these.

EA2: Yeah, you are being recorded you know.

R2: Very [helpful?]. See you guys later. [C2 laughing]

EA2: See you, thank you.

B2: Yeah, thank you.

D2: Take care.

EA2: Oh, the next statement. See ya.

C2: See ya.

EA2: Okay, here's another statement.

D2: Oh, we must have answered that other one, thank goodness.

EA2: Well it's not really answers it's just-- okay: "When a Native child is raised outside our culture, that child knows a part of their life is missing. There are lifelong impacts to the trauma of being taken. A sense that you don't belong as an adult, a belief or fear that can't raise healthy kids or grandkids." How does this statement, how does this statement relate to your own experiences with child welfare involvement.

B2: Child welfare or state?

EA2: State. Your, your experiences with state child welfare in the community. How does this, how does this statement fit in to that experience?

B2: Well they don't give a flying rat's ass.

D2: I wanna back up again if I can to this other statement which might answer some of this one.

EA2: Yeah?

D2: When I was reading the second statement, um, about Native children, Native children shouldn't be treated differently from white children. White children don't have a culture, per se, is like, I wanna explain that. I'm Scotch, English, German, Native American, something else. I never had any focus on a belief system other than rules and regulations, you know your spirituality or

EB2: Mmhm

EA2: So that, word "epistemology" that Lois was talking about at the meeting.

D2: Yep, yeah. So I think that's where ah, when a Native child is raised outside of it's culture and they're lost in a, not having any of those things, not having their own language, and not

1078 having their whatever, whatever is the, you know the drumming, or just the *socializing* with
1079 people you know, um, I might be way off track here.
1080 EA2: Nope.
1081 D2: I want to share with you about death on the reservation. When anybody died when I was
1082 younger we went to a funeral parlor and, you know, did your thing for an hour and you left.
1083 When somebody passes on the reservation, um, they're waked in their home, it's part of their
1084 living. You know, and until I *experienced t*hat myself, because I went to plenty of wakes on the
1085 reservation, but until I *experienced* that myself with my mother-in-law it was like when I woke
1086 up at five or five thirty in the morning and went downstairs, I could sit and talk to her and
1087 socialize with her and um, [tearing up, pausing, EA2 pats D2 on the arm]. It's an experience
1088 beyond belief. That I really wish I had that with my own parents. [Wiping eyes.] So I can
1089 understand what kids are missing. You know when they're not brought up in their own
1090 community because *things are different*. I've lived there, you know for, probably close to forty
1091 years. And the experiences that I have had being a non-Native up here, ah, person, is
1092 overwhelming, you know that, how they're all in community. You know, when, when ah, with
1093 anything, it doesn't have to be funerals, it's, you know with anything that they do, you know we
1094 just had a fundraiser at Pleasant Point. The experience of that, and the people that were there,
1095 and the people that, you know, gave their time and helped with that because they were a caring
1096 community. You know that is, ah, really overwhelming. (1:26:07) Especially for to, somebody
1097 that has never experienced it. So if they're lost, I can understand why they are, you know?
1098 Sorry.
1099 B2: I think that's, you know as Dorothy was speaking I was thinking back to when we were
1100 talking about the attitudes from state workers and we were trying to pinpoint what it was, and I

1101 think we settled somewhere between racism and superiority. And [pausing] that's why children
1102 need to stay where they are. They need to stay in the communities. Because if we're picking up
1103 on that as adults, you know the kids that aren't, that don't have that connection are constantly
1104 struggling with that. And plus the wake thing, I can't, I don't even want to go to funeral homes
1105 anymore. I don't, I feel so awkward an uncomfortable now when it's in a funeral home. I'm
1106 like, this is wrong, everybody is sitting there all prim and proper. [Pausing several seconds]
1107 And plus when, when they're in the home there's always good food.
1108 [Several seconds of silence.]
1109 EA2: They don't do that on Indian Island the closest they have ever come is to waking people in
1110 the church. When I first went there they didn't use funeral homes, um, I mean we did it this past
1111 year with my mother in law but it was usually not heard of.
1112 B2: My mother was French Canadian and that's how always done for her too. Always.
1113 EA2: Well it's only been in the past sixty or seventy years where we started using funeral homes
1114 and embalming people. Before that we did our own funerals. Green funerals. [pausing] Do you
1115 wanna, go, we got one more statement. I'll read it to you, we don't even have to pass it out/
1116 B2: I think Carol still, Carol's still working on the last one?
1117 EA2: This last statement was, see if you can remember where it came from. "Native people
1118 don't rat on each other. They lie for each other and cover up for each other all the time." That
1119 statement actually came from the Human Rights Commission ruling against a OCFS worker,
1120 against a, for racial discrimination against a Penobscot woman. And that was one of the
1121 statements that was made. So how does this, how does this statement, "Native people don't rat
1122 on each other. They lie for each other and cover up for each other all the time." How does that,
1123 um, relate to your experiences with state child welfare?

[about 12 seconds of silence]

B2: I think Carol and Dorothy answered that with their first example when they came in here.

[about 5 seconds of silence]

EA2: Is that statement something that you, is foreign to you, or is that, the belief around that statement is it shocking, is that like, "Oh my god, I would *never* think a child welfare worker would ever say that" a state worker. Or is it something you think is, that is, would be more common. Plausible.

[About 15 seconds of silence.]

EA2: This is the last question. [laughing quietly, more silence] No one has any feedback?

C2: You know Esther with all of these questions, that, all four of these questions, you have, you're asking us to make assumptions/

EA2: Yep.

C2: It's both, I'm sure that you can find caseworkers out there that have exactly those beliefs that you have written there. You have caseworkers out there that don't have the beliefs that are written there. Most of the time I don't experience caseworkers that way. Most of the time. Most of the time whatever caseworker is there, I can work with that caseworker, so I think that's why I've had such a hard time with your little statements. Um, I think I try to find the good in people, and when I'm working on case with another professional, that's what I want. I want that to be an open communication where we are working together. You know, um, so when I hear about statements like that one being made, I'm like, "Oh my god, you know and she worked for state DHS?" That just, it, it's like *unacceptable*. Um/

EA2: And if it's not reflective of your experiences then it's, that's the feedback that we need.

C2: There you go.

EA2: Okay. I mean, it, we're not asking you to say one thing or the other. We're asking you what has been your experience, you know, with state child welfare workers and if you're saying a statement like that, you wouldn't ever come across, you would hardly come across a caseworker that would have that belief then that's the feedback that we need to design this survey instrument.

EB2: Right.

EA2: That's all, I mean that's all it's about. So that's good to know. Because this, this will direct the, the evaluation of this data, this raw data will, will direct us, will shape what this survey instrument looks like that all the caseworkers will get. And it's, we need to know if it's a common statement or or if this relates very directly or indirectly or um, whatever. To be able to do that. So yeah.

C2: You know I don't know if they actually stop and think of things like that.

EB2: Mmhmm

C2: You know what I mean? You know, do they stop and think that it's a loss for the, for the tribe if this child is removed? I don't think they stop *and think* like that. You know? It may end up down the line that yeah, it points to that, but they didn't stop *and think* like that. You know what I mean?

EA2: Yep.

C2: I think that's why I find your statements so difficult. I'm not there. You know what I mean?

EA2: But and/

C2: I'd rather look at moving ahead being positive rather than going back and being negative.

EA2: Well I mean, it's the whole same/

C2: Hold on.

EA2: Yeah.

C2: It's the same thing like oppression. You know, if you want to find oppression then you're going to go out and look for it. I don't go out and look for it. Yes, sometimes it's really blatant. And yes, sometimes it hits me right in the face. And I recognize that. But I don't go out looking for it.

EA2: And in that statement that you made, you don't think they stop and think about it, I believe that because what I know about the dynamics of oppression is that *they don't have to*. And you made that statement you said, "it's just a case to them." This is not just a case to you, so the, those dynamics of it not being their children and it not being part of their survival lets them not -- they don't have to think about it. They don't have to stop and think about these things that you have to stop and think about.

C2: That's right.

EA2: So, I mean that says a lot right there, I mean there's a lot of information right in that one statement you made. I, I think. There's a lot of feedback there.

B2: That's, that's a really good point. Because you know where you, you know as you've all said that you know your tribe is getting smaller removing a child from the, reservation, never to come back has, has, has an impact. You know, whereas taking little Joey who's not on reservation doesn't have that impact. You gave me something to think about. [A few seconds pause] I think I'm having, what I'm struggling with is, is, is like, um, you know that, that we're dealing with the caseworkers, like theories or ideals or thoughts you know and I mean, let's face it people are allowed to have any kind of cockamamie thoughts they want, they're just not allowed to put them--, especially into their job.

EA2: Yeah, but the reality is those behaviors and attitudes and beliefs that people drive what they do.

B2: Exactly.

EA2: So we need to, have a, we need to be able to measure their attitudes and beliefs and behaviors now, and after the TRC. So we can see what affect, how, so we can evaluate the effectiveness of this work that we're doing.

B2: And I will be very interested in seeing that data. Very interested.

EA2: You know and I know Martha Proulx and Dan [Despa?] they, they want to have workers that have the same beliefs and attitudes and values that they believe in in their policies, right? Their, that statement that they have, their mission statement for OCFS. And that's why the, you know the, okay the people go to school, right? They learn a little bit of that in school, and then the CWTI training that they have they learn some of that but when it comes down to it, it's really hard to teach values that have been, or to re-teach a value that you've had since you were, you were indoctrinated with it and you were socialized, it's really hard to re-teach that.

C2: Mmhmm.

EA2: So it's, you know, I'm, it's all, a lot of it's hit or miss. And everybody's so individual and you won't get, you'll run across a caseworker who does not have the same beliefs that her ag-, their agency does. You know, and they don't act that way. Um so it's, you know it's a big complex problem, but um, yeah, I'm tired.

C2: So how do you measure that?

EA2: How do you measure beliefs?

C2: How is that gonna, how is this information that we just shared with you today gonna help you design a tool that is going to help you measure that?

EA2: Go ahead, researcher.

EB2: Um, well, pulling out, based on things that you all have talked about, and your experiences and your perceptions of what these beliefs or ideas might be, that are driving this, um, we can kind of like pull those out and say that you know this might be an important one that might be worth looking at, has there been any change in that before the TRC or after it. Um, I mean, so in the end it will be a survey, you know how much do you agree or disagree with this statement? I mean there's certainly, those are really imperfect tools but there's, that's one way of doing it.

EA2: Yeah, qualitative research is a lot more difficult that quantitative. But we could employ some quantitative measures too, um, like, like we're doing with the PQI, pulling out those, those cases of Native children and, and how many visits did they have? You know did they contact the tribe, yes or no, I mean that can be measured. But this beliefs and attitudes, that's more of a qualitative/

EB2: Yeah.

EA2: And it's a little, there's different science but it's you know we couldn't just sit down and design a survey without having this feedback from everybody to get the baseline of what they perceive.

EB2: Right, like is, like this last one is it something that you encounter or is it not? You know that kind of thing is what we wanted to know.

EA2: So, um, there's another researcher, Paul Mayhew I think is, his name is that is going to be working on taking her data and putting it into that survey. So we have plenty of time to, have input in that too, along the way. And we need more people on the evaluation subcommittee.

[C2 laughing]

EB2: People who ask good questions. Tough questions.

EA2: We need those abstract thinkers. [C2 laughing] So we, are you, do you think you're done, Erika? We told people until three, so.

B2: Yep, and I have…

EA2: Do you have a lot?

EB2: I got a lot. I think. I think it could go on for/

EA2: Oh yeah we could talk forever.

B2: All I ask is that you don't ever sit state workers down and ask them what they think about us. [C2 laughing]

END