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DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR / INDIAN AFFAIRS

TRIBAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 22, 2023

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. CHENEY: Please remain standing for the posting of
3 the colors for Alaska Native Veterans.

4 (Pause)

5 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: Quyana to our Alaska Native
6 Veterans and now we'll have an opening blessing by
7 (indiscernible) Della Cheney.

8 MS. CHENEY: Let's just take a moment of silence.

9 (Tribal song sang)

10 MS. CHENEY: You may be seated. We have a special
11 ceremony that will be done by Martha Senungetuk. She will be
12 lighting the seal oil lamp.

13 (Pause)

14 MS. SENUNGETUK: (Indiscernible - away from microphone)
15 that kills each one of us as we remember our ancestors. Thank
16 you, Creator, for the love that we have for each other and the
17 love that heals us. (Indiscernible - Native language).

18 MS. CROW: We next have Deb Call who will welcome us

19 from the people of this land.

20 MS. CALL: Guyana, Debra Call. (Indiscernible - Native
21 language). Welcome the Honorable US Secretary, Deb Haaland.
22 Welcome, our Haida people family, President Elizabeth Medicine
23 Crow, First Alaskans Foundation; President Richard Peterson,
24 Tlingit Haida and you, the beautiful people of Alaska, the
25 original people. And my heart is full with this event today▲

1 because we are all related on more than just blood, but our
2 issues that we face today and we have a wonderful leader in
3 the US government with the Department of Interior to help us
4 achieve our life that we've lost in terms of fishing.

5 Real quickly, the Dena'ina, if you're not familiar,
6 lived here. My grandmother fished just off the beaches of
7 JBER. When the military took it away, they destroyed her fish
8 house that she smoked the fish right there on the beach. My
9 cousin and aunt, as you were flying in from wherever you came
10 from in terms of Southeast or Fairbanks, Fire Island, you see
11 just on the other side of the airport, is where my cousin
12 Mari, my Aunt Heddie (ph) fished and every summer would go
13 there. And my Aunt Catherine and Uncle Mike fished from Point
14 Possession, which is right across from Turnagain Arm.

15 So we're invisible people sometimes, but our hurt is
16 deep. And as I was talking with Elizabeth and talking with a

17 friend, Alex, we have many issues. We've faced Boarding
18 School issues, my family has, my uncle was hidden in the
19 stove, my grandmother put him in the oven part to hide him
20 from the people that were going to take him away and he was
21 just a baby then, but they came back and took him.

22 And he tells this story to us. Friends of mine tell
23 these stories. And I want to also thank Emily Edenshaw (ph)
24 for taking this issue and moving forward with it. So I want
25 to say thank you and welcome and I'm so glad to be here. It's▲

1 an honor, thank you.

2 MS. CROW: Guyana, Emily for this beautiful space here
3 at the Heritage Center and for all your work making sure that
4 this happens in a good way. I would like to welcome Secretary
5 Haaland, Assistant Secretary Bryan Newland. Welcome.

6 Today we have the beginning of the truth telling on
7 behalf of our Alaska Native people to the federal government.
8 I want to thank our Boarding School survivors who came here
9 today. I know that it was not an easy decision for you and
10 please know that those of us who are here, who are descendants
11 of Boarding School survivors, are going to help carry your
12 stories. Whatever you decide to share, we will help hold. We
13 are here to bear witness to your truth and to hold you up as
14 you tell your truth to the representatives of the United

15 States government who are here with us today.

16 When we come together to talk about something that is
17 difficult, so many things can come out, whatever it is, know
18 that you are loved, that this place is not the place that you
19 were before and we have people here who are going to be
20 supporting, and if there's a need to step out and get a breath
21 of fresh air, please do. If you don't want to do that alone,
22 come and grab one of us youngsters, hey, I'm 52, and we'll
23 just stand with you. But we're going to take the time it
24 takes and we're going to be led by Secretary Haaland and
25 Assistant Secretary Newland through this.▲

1 And I just want to say that I would probably a little
2 bit more concerned, but I've had the honor of knowing Deb for
3 many years and she has always been a woman of strong integrity
4 and care and concern. And so, even though she is the
5 representative of the federal government now, she is our
6 Native sister and we're going to go through this time together
7 and hold each other up. And again, to our survivors,
8 (indiscernible - Native language). You I love, we love you,
9 and because we love you, we are here to bear witness to your
10 stories and I know that because you love us, you are willing
11 to share that. So (indiscernible - Native language). Today
12 is not going to be an easy day, but it will be the beginning

13 of the truth coming out on behalf of all of our diverse Native
14 peoples.

15 Don't forget there's also coffee in the back and food
16 because no one should un-caffeinated or going hungry in a
17 Native place. (Indiscernible - Native language). I'm going
18 to turn this over to Secretary Haaland.

19 MS. HAALAND: Thank you so much and amen to that.
20 (Indiscernible - Native language). That's greetings in my
21 (indiscernible) language. My Indian name is (indiscernible)
22 means crushed turquoise and I'm on the turquoise clan because
23 my grandmother and my mother were a matrilineal society. And
24 even though I don't speak my language fluently, I do know a
25 few words and I understand more than I can speak and that is▲

1 part of the legacy of my Boarding School experience.

2 But greetings and good morning everyone, thank you so
3 much for everything so far. The presenting the colors, I'm
4 honored to be here with Native Veterans, also the blessing and
5 the wise words, thank you all so much for being here. And
6 this is, as Elizabeth said, this is journey that we'll take
7 together.

8 So it's an honor to be here with you on the ancestral
9 homelands of the Dena'ina Athabascan people and I'm going to
10 speak briefly because I'm really here to listen to all of you.

11 Your voices are important to me and I thank you for your
12 willingness to share your stories.

13 Federal Indian Boarding School policies have impacted
14 every single indigenous person that I know. Some are
15 survivors, some are descendants, but we all carry the trauma,
16 the legacy of trauma in our hearts. Deeply ingrained in so
17 many of us is the trauma that these policies and these places
18 have inflicted.

19 My ancestors and many of yours endure the horrors of
20 the Indian Boarding School assimilation policies carried out
21 by the department that I now lead. This is the first time in
22 history that a United States cabinet secretary comes to the
23 table with the same trauma that all of you have. This is not
24 lost on me and I'm determined to use my position for the good
25 of the people.▲

1 I launched the Federal Indian Boarding School
2 initiative in 2021 to undertake a comprehensive effort to
3 recognize the legacy of Boarding School policies with the goal
4 of addressing their inter-generational impacts and to shed
5 light on the traumas of the past. In Alaska alone, there were
6 21 Boarding Schools leaving inter-generational impacts that
7 persist in the communities represented here today. It is my
8 department's duty to address the shared trauma that so many of

9 us carry. To do that, we need to tell our stories and today
10 is part of that journey. Through the Road to Healing, our
11 goal is to create opportunities for people to share their
12 stories, but also to help connect communities with trauma
13 informed support and to facilitate the collection of a
14 permanent oral history. This is the 10th stop on the road to
15 healing, which is a year-long tour across the country to
16 provide indigenous survivors of the Federal Indian Boarding
17 School System and their descendants with an opportunity to
18 make known their experiences.

19 I want you all to know that I'm with you on this
20 journey. I will listen, I will grieve with you, I will weep
21 and I will feel your pain. As we mourn what we have lost,
22 please know that we still have so much to gain. The healing
23 that can help our communities will not be done overnight, but
24 it will be done.

25 This is one step among many that we will take to

1 strengthen and rebuild the bonds within Native communities
2 that Federal Indian Boarding Schools set out to break. Those
3 steps have the potential to alter the course of our future.
4 I'm grateful to each of you for stepping forward to share your
5 stories. I know it isn't easy and there will be some of you
6 in the audience, no doubt, that don't say anything, but are

7 just here to support your community members and that's great
8 also, so thank you for that.

9 Now I'll turn the floor over to Assistant Secretary
10 Bryan Newland, my dear friend and colleague whose team has
11 worked diligently on this issue and I'm very grateful for all
12 of them. Bryan.

13 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, Madam Secretary Neguich (ph).
14 (Indiscernible - Native language). My Ojibway name is Walks
15 Many Paths of the Wolf Clan and I come from the place of the
16 pike and I am an Anishinaabe Ojibway. And along with
17 Secretary Haaland, I'm very grateful to be here with all of
18 you this morning.

19 And I want to thank the Alaska Native Heritage Center
20 for hosting us and our singer this morning with that beautiful
21 song and the blessing song this morning. Those are very
22 beautiful and an appropriate way to start today.

23 We know that whether it was by boat or train or
24 airplane that Alaska Native children were taken from their
25 families and their homelands to lands and schools far away to

1 be placed in these assimilation boarding schools. And as we
2 keep investigating the Federal Boarding School System in
3 learning about your experiences at these schools and the
4 overall system, we know that just our work in looking at

5 federal records can't paint the full pictures and so we need
6 to hear from people who have these lived experiences and their
7 relatives.

8 In addition to hearing from you, our next steps in this
9 work include identifying marked and unmarked burial sites
10 across the Boarding School system and determining the total
11 amount of federal support provided for Federal Indian Boarding
12 Schools. And we also want to encourage you today, those of
13 you who have come to speak, to raise other issues and
14 considerations that we should be looking at.

15 I want to acknowledge President Val Davidson here and
16 the teams from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and
17 the Southcentral Foundation who are supporting our
18 conversation today with traditional healing and trauma
19 informed mental health support.

20 I also want to thank Chair Shelly Low from the National
21 Endowment for the Humanities, which is helping us to share
22 survivor experiences from across the world.

23 We also have BIE Director Tony Dearman (ph) with us
24 whose work is helping play an important role in ensuring that
25 our Indian children today receive a good education that

1 incorporates our tribal cultures.

2 And I also want to make sure I thank Liz Medicine Crow

3 and Emily Edenshaw for their leadership here and for helping
4 to host this event. We also appreciate tribal leaders who
5 came today on behalf of their communities and their people all
6 around Alaska.

7 So some housekeeping items for our conversation today.
8 This is an opportunity for survivors of Indian Boarding
9 Schools to tell us, as representatives of the United States
10 federal government, about their experiences. Other people who
11 wish to provide us with a statement including tribal leaders
12 can do so by sending us an email to the address provided on
13 the information sheet that we shared with you and we
14 appreciate everyone making space for survivors and their
15 immediate family members to share their stories.

16 To make a comment today, we just ask that you raise
17 your hand. We have some mic runners here I think. Can our
18 mic runners raise their hands? Over here. And so, we're
19 going to just bring the microphone to you and you can stand
20 where you are or you can sit if you choose. We ask that you
21 share your name, your tribal identity and the name or the
22 names of the of the Boarding Schools you wish to speak about.

23 I also want to note that we have members of the press
24 here today. This is important because they are helping to
25 share this history with the American people and with the▲

1 world, but I know that some of you may not wish to share your
2 stories in front of the press today, so after the first hour,
3 we're going to excuse them and break for lunch and some photos
4 with the Secretary and then we'll resume after that and those
5 of you who wish to share with other press here will be able to
6 do that.

7 Also note that we have a court reporter here who is
8 going to be taking video and audio of what happens here today.
9 This is for our work in the Boarding School initiative and our
10 research, but please note that, under federal law, some of
11 those records may be made available in the future if people
12 request them.

13 Our goal is to stay until about 3:00 o'clock today when
14 we're going to break and then I understand there's a totem
15 raising ceremony this evening. And we're going to try to hear
16 from as many of you in that time. There's no time limit on
17 those of you who wish to speak, we know that people approach
18 public speaking in different ways, especially when we're
19 talking about these things. We only ask that you be mindful
20 and respectful that other people may wish to speak behind you
21 and also ask that you not come up to the table to speak, but
22 we'll bring the microphone to you where you are.

23 Lastly, we want to make sure that everybody understands
24 we have traditional healing and trauma informed support
25 available here. We have an attendant in the Hall of Cultures▲

1 to talk with you if you need and we will also work to connect
2 survivors and family members with follow-up care as needed.

3 I also want to extend my gratitude on behalf of myself
4 and our team here for showing up with the courage to speak
5 today and we want you to know that you're not alone. We're
6 here alongside you, your friends, your community members, our
7 ancestors are all here with you in the hope that we can heal
8 together.

9 So at this time, we're going to open the floor up to
10 speakers. If you wish to speak, simply raise your hand and
11 we'll be here to listen. (Indiscernible - Native language)

12 MR. LaBELLE: Gosh, it's so good to see you again,
13 Madam Secretary. About a year-and-a-half-ago, I had the honor
14 of sitting at a press table in D.C. after testifying before a
15 House Subcommittee Boarding School with Secretary Deb Haaland
16 and I guess I wasn't prepared for all that press and the
17 lights and camera. And of course, like I said, like I always
18 say, I'm ready for my close-up.

19 I do want to welcome you on behalf of our National
20 Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. I am the
21 President of NABS as we call it and some of our staff is here,
22 Deb Parker, Brad, Sheila. I'm missing -- Teresa, that's the
23 one. Teresa. Thank you guys for coming.

24 I'm terming out, so I'll be handing this over to
25 someone else at the Board, so in the next probably two or

1 three weeks.

2 But I also come to you as a survivor, a Boarding School
3 survivor or 10 years. I attended two BIE Boarding Schools
4 from 1955 to 1965. The first Boarding School was a place
5 called Wrangell Institute from 1955 to 1961. I was eight
6 years old when I first arrived there with my younger brother,
7 Kermit. And on our journey down from the interior of Alaska,
8 we came into contact with so many other children that were
9 traveling with us and total strangers to us and to each other;
10 however, many of these children were as young as five years
11 old. And from the -- I came to Wrangell being bilingual for
12 the most part. I could speak (indiscernible) and I could
13 speak English, but I quickly shut down my (indiscernible) site
14 because I saw so many of my fellow students become beaten in
15 so many different ways during our stay at Wrangell for those
16 six years. Every conceivable way that one could get punished,
17 many of us experienced and that including getting our mouths
18 washed out with lye soap, being forced to strip and having a
19 water hose placed on us on our bodies inside the shower rooms.
20 We had to run the gauntlet, we had to, again, be completely
21 naked as our fellow students and kids were forced to use their

22 belts on our naked bodies as those of us who ran up and down
23 the gauntlet. And many times, we just didn't do it once, we
24 did it many times and a lot of times, that drew blood on our
25 bodies.▲

1 Other punishments were in anger by matrons who often
2 used their own belts as well as something called a Cat of Nine
3 Tails tattle. I don't know if many of you have heard of it or
4 seen of that tattle, but it's a very thin tattle that had
5 holes in the center with a handle and it was swung at us most
6 likely when we were totally naked again on our butts, on our
7 backs, on our shoulders and arms. And a lot of times, that
8 drew blood again, there was blood blisters showing up all over
9 the backs of our bodies. Those are the kinds of examples of
10 the punishments we received for speaking our language.

11 In the classroom, it included being placed in darkened
12 janitor closets and darkened rooms. But there's another one
13 that was more like a shaming tool and that was the dunce cap.
14 At Wrangell, they were very fond -- some teachers were very
15 fond of placing some of us students at the front of the
16 classroom facing our students and forced to wear a hat that
17 was conical shaped, it was white and sometimes it even had the
18 word dunce on it. And it was a shaming thing where we --
19 those of us who were sole (ph) in the room were grateful not

20 to be there in front of those -- in front of our own fellow
21 students who were forced to experience that shame.

22 But it was the constant -- it was just a total prison
23 system. I can't think of another way to express it. We had
24 to march everywhere, we were ordered to do a lot of labor. We
25 were basically the ones that were ordered to clean the

1 bathrooms, clean the floors. We were -- there was a little --
2 every Saturday, the youngest kids were sitting outside and the
3 doors were locked and they were given little tails and they
4 were forced to go around the campus and pick up trash and they
5 called that seagull duty. And almost all of us first-timers
6 at Wrangell and the little ones, we were locked out of the
7 dorm for up to an hour or so until we could come back and show
8 them that we had indeed something in our little tails so they
9 would let us back in.

10 Unfortunately, Wrangell was a place that attracted
11 pedophiles and many matrons, men and women, perpetrated
12 themselves upon little boys and girls. And what I witnessed
13 in the boys dorm were where matrons were sodomizing boys in
14 their beds or in the bathrooms. We saw girls going home in
15 the middle of the school year pregnant and a lot of these kids
16 were like 11 and 12, 13 years old.

17 And it was a small campus, so we all kind of knew what

18 was going on and so there was no way to hide. They couldn't
19 hide any of this stuff from us.

20 A lot of the -- all of the food we ever ate when we
21 first got there were so foreign and alien to us we couldn't
22 eat traditional -- we couldn't bring any of our traditional
23 foods. We ate industrial Western processed foods and these
24 huge industrial cans of salted meats and salted vegetables.
25 There was powdered juice, powdered milk, powdered eggs. We

1 were forced to eat all those kind of foods, and of course, we
2 all got violently ill because our bodies couldn't process
3 changing our diet over from our traditional Native foods. And
4 we had vomiting, we had diarrhea, we had both and we were
5 often punished for soiling our pants or clothing or bedding
6 and we got beaten for that.

7 It was such a closed system that we knew there were
8 children among us that were there one day and then they were
9 not the next day. And we were never asked -- we never -- they
10 never told us what happened to that child, they would just
11 simply disappear and we don't know -- there's no burial
12 grounds on the campus at Wrangell, although I did hear rumors
13 that (indiscernible) girls dorm in the basement, there were
14 bones that were found, but it was never corroborated or never
15 looked into, so it's hard to say. And by then, of course, the

16 entire campus was erased, there's nothing there that showed
17 what Wrangell Institute looked like.

18 But I think that for me, the biggest thing was
19 developing the estrangement I had with my family. Not only
20 did I not have a father figure or a mother figure, I didn't
21 know how to parent my children, I didn't know how to care for
22 them, I didn't know how to deal with them. I love them and
23 I'm glad they survived in spite of me.

24 But I think in the end, the Boarding School program
25 just -- every year, just further created a distance, a family[▲]

1 separation to my mother. And by the time my 10 years were
2 over, I never even went home after graduation. I didn't go
3 home, I just -- when I look back at that time, I used to
4 marvel at why. One would think they would be happy to go back
5 home, but it didn't happen for me. And there's a lot of
6 things that I -- it took me a long time to get over all of
7 this. I had to go through therapy and I had to go to healing,
8 I had to get counseling and I have to thank my wife for
9 encouraging me to get this done.

10 I can see it helping me and I'm hoping that when we
11 support this bill, this truth and healing Commission bill,
12 that among a lot of things in that bill, we hope that we
13 create healing centers for survivors and their descendants on

14 how to process all these generational harms that occurred
15 because of Boarding School. And I know I didn't have that
16 benefit, but I managed to get it in different ways, but I want
17 to see it more for others as well. Thank you so much.

18 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you for sharing.

19 MR. JOHN: I want to come right behind Jim LaBelle. I
20 went to school with him down in Wrangell. I went from 1950 to
21 '57 and he came in and there were -- I just want to say we met
22 again about 50, 60 years later and I start -- I just want to
23 say first, I want to thank my wife and my kids and my son, my
24 girls and my nieces to all being here to support me.

25 It's a hard thing to talk about it, talk about school. ▲

1 So many, like my brothers and my sisters, they passed away
2 without telling their story. I was -- from that Boarding
3 School years, I was in my own present for about 50 years where
4 I never said anything. I built a wall around me to keep me
5 safe from being hurt again.

6 And then when I went to a recovery camp, the walls
7 start coming down, I start telling my story and it -- and then
8 I start looking, hearing and seeing that there are beautiful
9 people, Native people, white people around all over the
10 country that were there for you to help you. I didn't know
11 that. I was so -- I was hiding.

12 And then I start telling my story to people across
13 Alaska, kids in school, down in California about Boarding
14 School. The more I tell, the more freer I decide I -- I mean,
15 I became. I was all tied up.

16 I was in Wrangell at the age of seven. My sister was a
17 five-year-old, my other brothers and cousins, they were five
18 years old and six years old when they went down there. It was
19 about 12 of us that went down there from my home village. My
20 sisters -- my two sisters, they passed on without telling
21 their story. I think they were safe (indiscernible - mumbled)
22 they made. My older brother, Robert John, who went to -- he
23 went to Boarding School. Ellison, Ben, we all went in our
24 family.

25 I was in Wrangell and I didn't know really what I was[▲]

1 doing down there. I was young, seven years old. They were
2 mean to us. They wouldn't let us talk our language and they
3 make us feel ashamed of ourselves, make us feel ashamed of our
4 people back home. I remember being down there and wondering
5 what am I doing here, where is my mom and dad that's supposed
6 to protect me? That's how I think. I remember being in that
7 library upstairs, you know that one, huh? In the school and
8 the ocean was out that way and on the walls, there were
9 pictures of ships sailing and I just love them ships, you

10 know, because I always wanted to be a pirate anyway, but I
11 remember looking out at the ocean in Wrangell and I was
12 wishing I was on one those ships leaving the port. I was
13 wishing that I could find my mother, my father, my sisters
14 that were home just like Dick and Jane, the book we were
15 taught in -- where they had Dick and Jane and their little
16 sister Sally, a dog named Spot and little Puff, the cat, you
17 know? It was a little happy family that I wanted down there
18 and that was -- I remember sitting there and wishing I was --
19 I had a mom and dad. I wish I was -- I hardly ever see my
20 sister.

21 It was those wishful years that I was there. Jim
22 LaBelle told most of the story. I could say that's my story
23 too, you know, because we went through pretty terrible times.

24 Another time is nobody ever got down on their knees and
25 say you're a good kid, I like you. We marched to places and

1 we marched to that whistle. There was that shrill whistle
2 before they made any kind of announcement, a shrill whistle
3 that was really horrible sound, you know? And before they
4 made any announcement, we marched to dinner, we marched -- we
5 get up, it was all structured.

6 We had three different groups of people down there.
7 There was me, I tried to follow every rule and regulation. I

8 tried to follow what they said, what we're supposed to do and
9 everything, but I'm always in trouble. I don't know, they
10 make it where we're in trouble all the time.

11 And there was another group, like my brother, he
12 wouldn't bow down to any of them. He got slapped, he got hit
13 with a broom, he was always -- they attacked him and hit him
14 with brooms. Sometimes I watch outside on the lawn, they were
15 banging him over the head with a broom. He didn't hit back or
16 nothing, he knows better than that, you know?

17 And there was a third group. Those were tattletale we
18 call them. Nowadays, they call them brown nosers, but they
19 were -- they tell on everything. They tell on us. When we
20 were going through the gauntlet naked getting -- we were
21 getting hit with belts, they would set those tattletale kids
22 up that would tattletale on everybody, on bed to watch who
23 didn't hit hard or who wouldn't hit. They'd get them, strip
24 down them naked and let them run. They tell us -- they tell
25 the matrons who they are. I hated them.▲

1 I was going through recovery camp and one of my
2 counselors, Dorothy Pickalut (ph), she said Freddie, you told
3 me you hated those people, are those that tell on you and
4 everything and I said yes, I did. She said, Freddie, what did
5 you do to survive and I told her just like I told you guys, I

6 followed every rule, I did everything, I tried to do
7 everything that's perfect, but it seemed like it didn't work.
8 And she said, Freddie, you think they were doing the same
9 thing too? I never thought that way. I never thought. In my
10 heart, I had to forgive them. I had to forgive them.

11 In recovery camp when I finally started telling my
12 story, that's when I found out I had to forgive. I had to
13 forgive my God. I had to forgive the white people. I had to
14 forgive my family, my father and mother for being down there
15 and I had to forgive the white people, and you know, those
16 that I -- those that hurt me.

17 And it took a while. It's not just, you know,
18 forgiveness, it's not just one day. It's something you work
19 on, something I have to work on. I'm okay now.

20 I started telling my story after recovery camp and I
21 started getting feedback from different people that they said
22 I didn't know why my uncle or my grandpa or my -- you know, a
23 certain auntie, I didn't know they went to school. They never
24 talk, they never say nothing about it. They never told any
25 one of us that they went to Boarding School. We always▲

1 wondered about them.

2 And then Facebook came into being. I'm the Chief of
3 Facebook family now. I decided to send information out about

4 Wrangell. I saw my role behind closed doors that I wrote what
5 happened, but it was all behind closed doors. Even the white
6 people didn't even know what was going on. And I start
7 writing and it -- doing that, I believe I broke the generation
8 curse in my family. My daughters and my son there, that I
9 tell them the story, I tell them what happened and everything
10 and I believe that broke and those people that read some of my
11 story, I think a lot of them start becoming free, start
12 figuring out what happened out there.

13 Some of those best friends of the elder white people in
14 Delta Junction that listened to me, the Egahok (ph) family, on
15 you know, the white side, I think they never heard a story
16 like that. They didn't know it happened, they didn't know.
17 It was all behind closed doors.

18 My daughter, Gwendolyn, she's in California now, she's
19 the only one not here and my other daughter, Genevieve and
20 everything, one day my daughter, Gwendolyn was riding --
21 driving on the highway of California and she started thinking
22 about me and my years in Wrangell. I was number 77, that's
23 what they gave me.

24 Let me tell you one little story before then. They
25 strip us down, they cut our hair off, shave it off. They put▲

1 us in cold showers, we got out, they burn our clothes. This

2 story is the Anaktuvuk Pass Eskimo from Central Alaska just
3 above us, when they came in to Wrangell, I remember, they came
4 in after we did, they had all their parka, their caribou pads,
5 I mean, they're dressed -- I remember coming in, I was so
6 impressed about how beautiful they were. They came in, they
7 stripped them down, put all their clothes, the food they bring
8 in, dry caribou, salmon and stuff like that, they put it all
9 on the side. They made them go through the shower, shave
10 them, give them their uniform and a number.

11 And I know it, I think I probably cried when they took
12 all their clothes down there and burned them in the furnace,
13 all the beautiful, beautiful parkas and everything.

14 But it was a big group, they kept their language. I
15 talked to them years later, they still talk their language
16 while I lost mine. I shouldn't say lost, mine was stolen.

17 Anyway, my daughter, while she was in California, she
18 knows my story and I just want to tell you, she wrote a story
19 about me that -- how I talk and she called it number 77 and I
20 want to read it to you if it's okay.

21 Anyway, it's going to be a little.....

22 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: (Indiscernible - away from
23 microphone).

24 MR. JOHN: Okay. Number 77. My number in Boarding
25 School at Wrangell Institute. I was called number 77. I▲

1 hated myself because of who I was, why I had been born and
2 mostly because of the face that always looked back at me. I
3 learned I'll never be anything worthwhile, so I decided to
4 change. I learned the language they taught me, I went to the
5 school they sent me and tried my best. I played their sport
6 and I was good. I excelled and I furthered my education just
7 like they taught me and I was smart. I dressed like the
8 magazine and I ate their food.

9 I even married the blond who looked like the cover of a
10 model in a magazine. She's back there. I did my best to fit
11 in and lucky the hippy years allowed me to get almost there to
12 the point of being somewhat comfortable in public.

13 But then came my kids, one after another until there
14 were five little brown faces that overtook my two-story house
15 with its plumbing and refrigerator full of groceries and they
16 all looked like me, all of them. It was looking in the mirror
17 again, but this time when I looked, my mirror image at these
18 kids, I loved them. I loved them with a heart (indiscernible)
19 and love that I wanted to love myself when I look into my own
20 mirror and then I slowly being the journey.

21 Through them, to learn to accept who I was and who I
22 was always going to be, an Indian. My kids were confident and
23 proud, I became confident and proud. They were outspoken and
24 I became outspoken. They knew who they were and they wanted

25 to learn where they came from. I began to teach them and as

1 my long ago memories resurfaced, I began to heal.

2 They forced me at times to hurry with my journey to
3 regain my self confidence. They were young and curious. They
4 did not know the pain and the humiliation, the scars I carry,
5 but they also did not know they were the ointment, the healing
6 touch I needed to survive and begin to grow again.

7 Through it all, I began to realize that one person
8 didn't know about my struggle, the true gut-wrenching through
9 sadness and anger I carried. My wife, Lanae, knew and she
10 watched and waited until one day I could journey on my own and
11 share my story.

12 This is my childhood. This is who I was, who I became
13 and who I am today. I am Fred Jones, Jr., I am part of the
14 (indiscernible) of the state, the last of their assimilation
15 on our owners of this country. I am no longer scared. I have
16 regained my voice. I want to share my story. Thank you.

17 MS. CROW: Quyana, Fred. Our next speaker is Timothy
18 Alex from Eklutna.

19 MR. ALEX: Good morning. I heard about this event on
20 the news yesterday and I wanted to make sure that I made it
21 here.

22 My feelings for the people that have spoke before, that

23 was a lot earlier than I. My story started in 1954 when I was
24 warehoused in a children's home called Lazy Mountain. And
25 much like the people that have spoke today, you know, they --↑

1 you were expected to go to church, eat their food, which to
2 me, I didn't know the indigenous way. I didn't know hunting.
3 Most of these kids were Alaska Native that were in the
4 children's home mainly because of flu epidemic, orphans,
5 whatever.

6 But The same thing, you know, you're expected to do
7 certain things and either you're bad, you got punished, but
8 not to the extent of some of the other speakers.

9 After that and well, there's a couple things that
10 happened while I was there. We were transported to Montgomery
11 Wards, which was in Mountain View then, to see Santa Claus.
12 Who's Santa Claus, you know? We got in line, you stand in
13 line here and wait until you get up there and then you tell
14 Santa Claus what you want. I did. I got up there, but I
15 didn't say anything, so Santa Claus says well, you've been a
16 good boy, here's a couple of presents. Two big presents, one
17 about that size and another in a shoe box. If it's mine, what
18 do you do? You open it. Well, when I opened it, it wasn't
19 for a kid, it was for an adult, brand new suit, brand new
20 shoes. The following Sunday, all the elders that were taking

21 care of us, which we had to call aunts and uncles, were
22 wearing brand new suits, brand new shoes.

23 Following year, we got a bunch of donations of
24 bicycles, brand new bicycles. They said this is yours. After
25 about a week, I come back and I look at it, I said what▲

1 happened to it? Oh, that's your bike. I said mine was new.
2 The only thing I can think of is that these people traded
3 their kids bikes for those new bikes.

4 I left Lazy Mountain Children's Home on the last day
5 that -- of existence. The home burned to the ground. My
6 journey continued on to California where my mother remarried a
7 military guy.

8 For 2 1/2 years, we stayed down there, picked corn, did
9 manual labor. I wasn't afraid of that. But the way they look
10 at us, they probably thought I was Mexican because of my brown
11 skin. And one day, my mom said you're going back home, I said
12 oh great, but she didn't get on the plane with me, just me and
13 my sister Linda. We went down on PanAm prop jet and came back
14 up on Northwest Orient on the latest state-of-the-art jet. It
15 was snowing, I stayed with my sister, Julia, about a year-and-
16 a-half and then finally said I wanted to go home, which I did,
17 until brother and sisters, Mildred and Linda, left home, which
18 just left me with my dad.

19 We were assaulted by the local kids, not during grade
20 school. In grade school, everybody was friends, but as soon
21 as you were age of majority and they started seeing you as a
22 threat to their sisters, they would come up and tell you stay
23 away from my sister, don't look at her. I'd tell them, I'd
24 say, well, I've been looking at your sister since three years,
25 third grade.▲

1 Family history of mine is my oldest brother, Herbert
2 Alex, was the first graduating class of 1950, I believe. He
3 transferred from Eklutna Village, which Eklutna Vocational
4 School to Sitka, Mount Edgecumbe. I was the class of 1972, I
5 was there from 1969 to '72. After being assaulted by a couple
6 of local kids that were driving around, I'm not sure if it was
7 their car, their family car, but four guys picked us up from a
8 swimming hole to take us home. They said we'll give you a
9 ride, but they went off the road, pointed guns at me, cocked
10 it, asked me a few stupid questions and they said oh, we're
11 just messing with you, you can go. I wasn't their target, it
12 was the young man that I was with.

13 We started walking away, they came up behind him and
14 smacked him in the back of the head with his cast, a big tall
15 guy. Next thing you know, they started throwing rocks at us.
16 I've never been afraid of just about anything after being

17 beaten at Children's Home, so I started pelting them back.

18 I talked to the young man and asked him if he was going
19 to press charges, he said no. He asked if I would make a
20 statement, I said yeah, no problem. You have to realize that
21 in this period of time, the teachers in the public schools
22 weren't giving me any support. Just another Native.

23 So in 1969, I went to the BIE and asked them to send me
24 to a Boarding School. I was -- I wanted to go to the farthest
25 Boarding School I could think of, which was Oklahoma, but BIE▲

1 said -- figured out well, no, you're not going there, you're
2 going to Mount Edgecumbe.

3 So when I got on the plane, you know, it was kind of
4 like a relief. I got off the plane, I said wow, that was a
5 short trip.

6 The teachers in the public schools, they were not very
7 supportive, they didn't care about you and I soon figured out
8 that I was not going to get any support from them. That's
9 when I went to BIE and requested that. Made my dad mad, but
10 there was nobody else at home except for him. He wasn't
11 ignorant, he knew things. He couldn't read or write. I
12 taught to make his signature, taught him to read which bills
13 that he was looking at, climbed on a plane and left.

14 I have to say that Mount Edgecumbe was the most

15 positive thing that I experienced probably because of the
16 story that I had already told you of first year, not bad;
17 second year, all I had was the clothes on my back. No money
18 for supplies or anything, so I went to the dorm superintendent
19 and asked him, I said I need help. That's one of the things
20 that you people need to know and request. I need help.

21 They made sure I worked all the way through my high
22 school years. I was offered a job with FAA as an air traffic
23 controller, but I declined. I wanted to go home.

24 I went to Upward Bound the year before and all I could
25 think of was this is just another way for them to reclaim

1 their land. You give somebody something, you don't get
2 everything. I made the land claim selection for Eklutna only
3 because I had some mechanical skills. I blanketed everything
4 that wasn't nailed down, I made some mistakes. I already told
5 myself it was just a matter of time before they figure out a
6 way to get it all back.

7 True housing, true health, everything that we get,
8 everything that we take for granted. My last person that went
9 to Mount Edgecumbe with my daughter, non-commissioned officer,
10 Jessica, LeeAnn, Morgan, Amek, Alex, NCO, Sergeant. She died
11 last year. There's not a moment I don't think of her. A lot
12 of times I wonder why am I here and I'm sure everyone else has

13 felt the same way. Maybe it is if you have something to say,
14 share it. That's all I have to say.

15 MS. CROW: Quyana, Timothy Alex from Eklutna. And I
16 just want to acknowledge that these are the traditional --
17 where we are meeting today are the traditional homelands of
18 the Eklutna people and (indiscernible - Native language) for
19 allowing us to meet on your land and our condolences on the
20 loss of your daughter.

21 Our next speaker will be Bob Sam from Sitka. Following
22 him will be Irene Sherry from Minto. If you'd like to speak,
23 be in this queue, if you wouldn't mind raising your hand,
24 we'll come to you next.

25 MR. SAM: Good morning. You have to forgive me, I'm

1 very touched by the power and the humility that is happening
2 today and the truth that is being spoken.

3 My Tlingit name is Shagunesta (ph). I am Tlingit.
4 Shagunesta (ph) roughly translates to the man who taught human
5 beings how to respect the dead. That's a very old name.

6 I am a caretaker. I take care of cemeteries and I
7 bring human remains home from Nagpra (ph), Universities,
8 institutions. Tlingit means human being, so I am human being
9 just like you. I treat all bodies the same.

10 In 2004, I received the advisory council of historic

11 preservation award from the Secretary of Interior, Gail
12 Norton. When I received the award, she said this is the man
13 who's changing the way American Indian human remains are
14 treated. It's work that I've done my whole life.

15 I have brought hundreds of bodies back to Alaska, from
16 sanitariums, institutions. I restore cemeteries. It's work
17 that I have dedicated my whole life for. I am here because of
18 the Boarding School. Many of the survivors that are here,
19 they made it home and I'm so honored to meet Jim LaBelle and
20 my brother, Fred John. When I talked to them, I listened to
21 every word they said. This is going to get very deep.

22 The 1884 Alaska Organic Act that established
23 territorial jurisdiction. In 1884, the pioneers of Alaska was
24 formed. Number one was Nome, Alaska. In 1884, gold was
25 discovered in Nome. The pioneers of Alaska organized. It▲

1 took six pioneers to declare somebody insane. Six pioneers.
2 So what happened? They completely emptied out the village of
3 Nome of every single indigenous person and St. Michael as
4 well. They sent them to Morningside. There's a term that you
5 will hear, inside, outside, morningside. It's either you're
6 inside of Alaska or outside of Alaska or you were morningside.
7 Many Alaskans were sent there.

8 During that same time, there was Carlyle, Pennsylvania.

9 The Apaches and the Nespierce (ph) where the wars were going
10 on at that time. They took the men and sent them to Florida.
11 They took the children and sent them to Carlyle. They died of
12 broken hearts. They started to send Alaskans to Carlyle,
13 orphans. They died of broken hearts. They're coming home.

14 This gets even deeper. I will go back to Morningside.
15 Over 6000 Alaska Natives died at Morningside, 3800 of them are
16 still down there. Morningside is an insane asylum. They send
17 students to Morningside from Boarding Schools (indiscernible -
18 Native language). Many died.

19 This gets even deeper. They were sending Alaska Native
20 people outside of Alaska, relocation, termination, all because
21 of gold. Nome, Fairbanks, Eagle, Alaska, Juneau, Sitka. They
22 all have bodies at Morningside. They sent some of the
23 students to Chemawa, many of them died of Tuberculosis.

24 This gets even deeper. You know how Morningside was
25 funded. It was funded by the Department of Interior. 1916▲

1 was the Alaska Organic Act that established the path to
2 statehood, but something that's so sad that I had to put
3 something on my own body from my ancestors because I can. The
4 Department of Interior established Baby Louise Haven. When I
5 came across Baby Louise Haven, I was medivaced out of Sitka.
6 I almost died. I was three days in a coma. I can't even

7 voice it, it's so sad. I thought Alaska Native people were
8 spared this kind of history. I thought. Baby Louise Haven,
9 over 20,000 babies were taken from Alaska and sent to be
10 cremated. Some of them were cremated alive. There were no
11 services, there were no mental health services during
12 territorial time. There was no place to send our children and
13 any babies that were born with deformities, they cremated them
14 alive, 20,000 babies, funded by the Park Department of
15 Interior. I almost died.

16 The intense trauma is so deep that many of the
17 survivors, every single one of us have somebody out there. We
18 suffered from trauma, through so much pain in our soul that
19 many of us even forgot where this came from. So I do
20 everything I can to bring my brothers and sisters off the
21 streets. We have suffered.

22 I'm going down to Morningside next month. I'm going
23 down to Baby Louise Haven next month and have a ceremony.
24 Every single Boarding School child that has died, their last
25 thought was I want to come home. So I do my best and this is▲

1 what I do. I talk to them, I put a robe around them, I sing
2 Tlingit to them and I myself have healed. They have suffered
3 immensely, but so have we.

4 So I know there's so much more that we have to share,

5 but this is what we're going to do. We are going to heal. We
6 are going to get past this because we are Alaska Native. We
7 still have our culture, our language, our songs, our
8 ceremonies. It was never taken away from us, it's in our
9 soul. And even though it was, if we are a people who have
10 nothing left, it makes us even stronger.

11 So let's bring the language back, let's bring the
12 culture back, let's be the best of who we are and let's bring
13 our children home. It's their inherent right to come home to
14 Alaska. It is a world indigenous right for our people to come
15 home. So I will turn this back over to the survivors, but I
16 am speaking for the children that are still out there. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. Thank you, Bob. So we're
19 going to hear from one more speaker and then take a lunch
20 break and then we'll excuse folks who are here from the press,
21 the media and then we'll come back after lunch and continue
22 with the session, so one more speaker before lunch, please.

23 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: Quyana. Our next speaker
24 is Robin Sherry from Minto.

25 MS. SHERRY: Thank you. I just wanted to tell the

1 Secretary thank you for being here and this morning I was so
2 excited. I said oh, Deb Haaland is here, oh, I'm going to

3 meet her. I didn't even know this was going on. I'm from a
4 small village of Minto, there's about like 200 people, but
5 even less now. I come from a warm, loving family and my mom
6 and my dad, we live in a small one-room cabin with my -- I
7 have three older brothers and one older sister. I don't know
8 exactly how I ended up in Boarding School, but I was in grade
9 school. I think I was nine years old.

10 And everything you heard about Boarding School is true.
11 I don't think anybody would make up stories. Wrangell -- but
12 I would like to say my aunt said after we all left, after the
13 planes came and we all left, she said the village was so quiet
14 because there was no children. No children in the village.

15 When we landed in Wrangell, I'd never been out of my
16 village and our village is right in the interior of Alaska, so
17 we were just -- us kids were just amazed at the ocean because
18 we'd never seen it before. And we landed in this plane that
19 just kind of took off and dove into the water and I think that
20 was where fear of flying really -- I just -- I didn't want to
21 get on the plane.

22 Anyways, I have older cousins that went before me, so
23 they kind of know what was going on and my one older cousin
24 kind of just looked after me. We were separated from the men
25 -- I mean, from our brothers and our cousins and then we were▲

1 separated again. The older girls went to the -- where the big
2 girls stay and I was in with the younger girls. But I think I
3 cried so much they moved me because there was nobody from my
4 village in the little girls dorm, so they moved me in with the
5 big girls where I stayed.

6 I'm sorry. I could just hear all -- you could just
7 hear crying. First it would just start really slow and then
8 pretty soon, you could hear the whole dorm crying. You'd hear
9 girls saying they want to go home.

10 And it was true, all our clothes were taken away from
11 us and we were given government issued clothing and like Fred
12 John said, we were given numbers, you know, we weren't -- we
13 never called by our name, we were all called by our numbers.
14 My number was 77 too because my sister was there before me and
15 her number was 77 and then -- and it was marked on everything
16 you owned. And they never call you by name, they always call
17 you by your number. We were not allowed to speak our
18 language. To this day, I cannot speak my language. I could
19 understand it, I could sing the songs, but when elders would
20 speak to me, I could understand them, but I cannot answer
21 them.

22 When my cousin, who is older than me, always looked
23 after me and she was more outspoken than I was. I was always
24 really quiet and I always tried to obey all the rules and she
25 never did. She always answered every -- whenever they said▲

1 anything to her, she always answered.

2 One time in the middle of the night, they came and got
3 her. When she came back, she could hardly walk. They took
4 her down in the basement and underneath the basement was
5 another room. She said where they just -- I don't know what
6 happened there, but she said they beat her up.

7 And so I started being vocal and started answering
8 questions and what they did was they just locked me in the
9 closet. In a dark closet and they just sat on the mop bucket
10 and listened to see what was going on.

11 My cousins Kenny and some guys from Minto said they
12 were going to -- came over to us girls, they said we're going
13 to run away and we're going to go home and when we get home,
14 we'll send for you. They told us we'll send for you girls.
15 So we said okay and we ran up a fire escape, which was out --
16 on the outside of the building, we ran up there and we could
17 see them running way over by the trees and we waved to them.
18 They waved to us and were just really happy because they said
19 when they get home, they're going to send for us. Well, they
20 didn't know they were on -- the school is on an island and the
21 next morning, we went into the dining hall and they all came
22 in. They were all wearing -- their heads were shaven and they
23 were all wearing little black and white prison suits and us

24 girls just started crying.

25 I had forgotten that I went to Wrangell. I never told▲

1 anybody, I never talked about it, I never mentioned it until
2 one day my cousin said we're going down -- we're making a trip
3 down to Wrangell for some kind of healing thing and I said oh,
4 that's fine, you know? But we had -- our middle son was eight
5 years old and he came into the bedroom and he said oh mom,
6 where are you going, and you know, I said how old are you and
7 he said eight and then it just -- everything just came back, I
8 said oh my God, that was how old I was, around that age when I
9 left home. I had it so buried in my mind that I just never
10 talked about it. Never. Never talked about it. Never.

11 I don't even -- even on my applications, I never -- I
12 didn't go to Wrangell. It was really bad and I only went
13 there one year, but it just took one year just to take my
14 language, take our identity, take who we were away from us,
15 everything.

16 And we started talking about it, we told our children,
17 you know, we'd talk to them about -- I made up my mind that my
18 house was going to be -- just kids could be free to say what
19 they want to say, so we always had children coming through our
20 house. Yes, there was abuse, there was physical abuse, verbal
21 abuse, sexual abuse, you know, you name it, it was -- it

22 happened there.

23 But there is -- you know, after I came home, I went
24 back to Wrangell with Jim LaBelle and some other people down
25 there for healing and that was a real time of healing I think▲

1 for all of us and we have so much to talk about and we just
2 kind of told our story there and it just created a bond and we
3 -- it was -- you know, I think every person should go back to
4 where their trauma was and just try to find that healing.

5 I'm so glad I went on that trip because it made me
6 realize hey, I could tell my story, I could share. I don't
7 have to be ashamed, I don't have to feel guilt, you know,
8 because it happened and it's a long time ago and you can get
9 healing, you can be healed from the past and I'm just glad I
10 found that peace in my own heart.

11 But I think about my family and I think of all my
12 brothers when we were in Boarding School, I never did see my
13 brother because the girls were on one side and the guys were
14 on the other side and the only time we see them is during
15 class, but he was like older than me and I never seen him.
16 And he never, ever talked about it.

17 I asked him one time and he said oh, I don't want to
18 talk about it, so I know there's people there that are still
19 struggling. Thank you.

20 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you so much. So I misspoke, we're
21 going to hear from one more speaker before we break for lunch,
22 I apologize. Lunch is not quite ready yet.

23 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: (Indiscernible - Native
24 language). Next we'll hear from President Richard Peterson
25 from Kasaan. And after lunch, we'll hear from Teresa John.▲

1 MR. PETERSON: I apologize, I texted my sister so
2 (indiscernible) speak. I don't know if I would call myself a
3 survivor. I didn't endure what I heard our elders speak
4 about. I went to Mount Edgecumbe High School, Boarding School
5 and when I went, it was a very different experience. It was
6 probably one of the best times of my life, but I sat here
7 crying because I listened to my friend, Jim LaBelle, talk; my
8 friend, Fred John talk and my grandmother went to the Wrangell
9 Institute. And my mother lived a very difficult life because
10 of the abuse endured by her mother who didn't know how to be a
11 mother, didn't know our ways because she was removed.

12 And all I know is short verse of the abuse she endured
13 and I've had a difficult time understanding my mother in my
14 life. Sometimes I'd view her as weak because of the abuse she
15 endured that I didn't understand. And I remember one time
16 being at Ma Cheney's house and my mom started to speak about
17 it. My mom today is dealing with head trauma that she

18 suffered as a child at the hands of her own mother because her
19 mother received that same treatment at the Wrangell Institute.
20 Sorry.

21 I'm trying to be a better son today than I was growing
22 up when I didn't understand my mother and the abuse that she
23 endured because her mother didn't know how to be a mother. So
24 I don't consider myself a Boarding School survivor, although I
25 went to Mount Edgecumbe. Again, it was a very different▲

1 experience, but I just want to thank Jim and Fred for being
2 able to share that, for working to be the parents that you
3 weren't taught how to be. I want to be a better son and
4 understand this abuse that happened.

5 I just want to say to Secretary Haaland, Assistant
6 Secretary Newland, thank you (indiscernible - Native
7 language). This work is -- healing work is the hardest work.
8 Hard work is not easy and I hope that we can start to heal,
9 that folks like Bob Sam, their work can be uplifted by having
10 these conversations and bring our relatives home. I think
11 part of that healing process can't happen until our relatives
12 come home. (Indiscernible - Native).

13 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, President Peterson. We're
14 going to take a break now and the Alaska Native Heritage
15 Center has provided lunch for everyone here and we'll give

16 folks a time to catch their breath, do what you need to do,
17 get some food. We will come back, Secretary Haaland and I
18 will be available for meet and greet and a photo line and
19 then, you know, we'll go back into more listening session in
20 the afternoon without having the press here. Thank you very
21 much for being here with us this morning. Thank all of you
22 who shared with us already this morning for your courage and
23 your guidance today.

24 So we'll take a break and we'll see you very shortly.

25 (Indiscernible - Native language).↑

1 (Off record)

2 MR. NEWLAND: First before we get started again, can we
3 give a round of applause to the Heritage Center for helping us
4 organize this today? Thank you. Thank you for the wonderful
5 lunch and the break.

6 So we're going to go, I think, straight through right
7 around 3:00 o'clock, then we're going to close today's session
8 and then prepare for the event later this evening.

9 MS. CROW: Yes, thank you to the Heritage Center for
10 the lunch as well and to all the people and staff who are
11 helping. We are going to get started with the listening
12 session now, so we're going to ask everyone to please keep it
13 down so that we can hear our speakers. Do you want to

14 announce your next speaker?

15 MS. NURR'ARALUK: Our next speaker is Teresa John from
16 Toksook Bay. And after Teresa will be Marge Nakak (ph) from
17 St. Mary's.

18 MS. JOHN: I'd like to ask you to stand up, please.
19 I'm going to invite the ancestors to join us and I want you to
20 raise your hands as I sing this song and sway your hands back
21 and forth because what we're going to do is (indiscernible -
22 Native language) our ancestors, we have (indiscernible -
23 Native language). Our ancestors are looking and watching us
24 and caring for us and so this is the pathway in Yupik for us
25 to connect with the ancestors. And since we've been having so

1 many heavy, beautiful stories told this morning, we will
2 connect with them and send those stories to them because they
3 will guide us and help us. So raise your hand.

4 (Native song)

5 MS. JOHN: (Indiscernible - Native). They're with us
6 now. Yeah, (indiscernible - Native language).

7 (Indiscernible) is my indigenous name, that's my identity.

8 Everybody call ms (indiscernible). They never call me my
9 Christian name, Teresa. Teresa John, Toksook Bay.

10 Many of you know me wearing different hats. As a
11 professor, as a dancer, as a singer, as a subsistence person.

12 But today, I'm going to wear the hat of a student. I come
13 from Nelson Island, Toksook Bay. My English name, Teresa
14 John, was given from the church Bible, St. Teresa, St. John.

15 When I became aware of life, there was no school
16 buildings, there were no Native -- non-Native people in
17 Nighthute, Alaska. I'm 67 years old. When I was born, we
18 only spoke Yupik, we only wore mukluks made out of fur, parkas
19 made out of fur. Our food came from the land. We were told
20 many stories from the time we woke up, all in (indiscernible -
21 Native language) of our systemic cultural values every single
22 day.

23 Our ancestors who are here with us today gifted this
24 time for us and thank -- I really want to thank the Secretary
25 of Interior's office for developing this opportunity because▲

1 what we need in our religion is (indiscernible - Native
2 language), the traditional healing centers we call
3 (indiscernible - Native language). We call the mens communal
4 home, those who were also destroyed when the colonizers
5 arrived to our land.

6 We were very, very lucky in our community. Our
7 ancestors made sure that we learned our fluent language fluent
8 so that we can gain and aspire and connect through their
9 teachings to our ancestors knowledge system, their

10 traditional, educational knowledge system, ecological
11 knowledge system, their scientific knowledge system, their
12 spirituality knowledge system, their (indiscernible - Native
13 language) knowledge system, their healing knowledge system.

14 We knew all that. Our men know how to connect and
15 learn and feel with the spirit of the ocean, the power of the
16 ocean where our ocean marine mammals and seals and their
17 spirits live. We were the stewards of that, caretakers for
18 them. We protected them because we need them to survive.

19 Same with the land. (Indiscernible - Native language) is the
20 land. The spirits of the land, the spirits of the moose, the
21 caribou. We did the same thing, everybody.

22 So one time these non-Native people showed up and told
23 us they're going to build a BIE School. So I watched the
24 first BIE school being built in the village of Nightmute and
25 that was the first time we saw non-Native people. Our village▲

1 was very quiet, we had dog teams and our fathers, men never
2 stayed home. They were in the ocean, they were in the land
3 making sure that we have enough food for our people, for our
4 ceremonies, for our elders, for the orphan and the widowers.
5 Everyone took care of themselves in (indiscernible - Native
6 language) very much needed to be reclaimed and rebuilt, a
7 place where we feel safe, a place where we call on the

8 ancestors to come and help us, protect us, guide us, counsel
9 us.

10 It's a psychology center, that's where all of our
11 indigenous doctors lived. They had so many PhDs in
12 spirituality, in Nativeness, in living off the land, in
13 weather predictions. They were very powerful people and I'm
14 so, so grateful that many of us have this history, beautiful,
15 beautiful history. That is why they make sure that we are
16 represented to show who we are as Native people, by our
17 regalia, by our language, by our mind, by our heart.

18 And how we share today, what a beautiful opportunity.
19 Our stories are so important. Every one of us has a story to
20 tell. The creators help us to bring those stories out just
21 like we've been hearing different peoples different roles,
22 that's how we live in the community. We share everything. We
23 share our pain, we share our happiness, we share when we honor
24 the children, we share when the elders are sharing something.

25 So when I was 12 years old, in 1969 -- no, let me back▲

1 up to my BIE school. When they first built the BIE school, I
2 don't know how old I was. There was a division between
3 culture of the BIE school, culture of the community because
4 the new teachers that came from the lower 48 did not know who
5 we are, our language and our culture and they didn't eat our

6 food, they didn't visit our parents' homes. There was no
7 communication whatsoever.

8 But the real learning I had was from my grandparents,
9 my great-grandparents about how to be a good mother, how to be
10 a good caretaker, how to be a good family member, a community
11 provider. They are the real education providers.

12 When the BIE school came, we didn't know how to
13 communicate with the teachers because they didn't know our
14 language, we didn't know their language. So I spent many
15 hours in the hallway, I don't know for why, for what reason.
16 I spent many hours in a corner of a building to a point where
17 I learned to count the nails. That's all I could see. But I
18 was shamed, but because my grandparents and ancestors, already
19 relatives told me already, you will know in your heart when
20 somebody's wrong. You will know the right and the wrong
21 things because we already taught you those things.

22 So those were my powers. Those were the things that
23 kept me strong. And as a little girl, even though I was
24 punished for speaking my language apparently now that I think
25 about it, I never told nobody and I'm 67 today and I still▲

1 haven't told anyone how many hours I had to stand in those
2 corners in a little Boarding School -- I mean, in the first
3 really school, BIA school. And they only build them up to

4 sixth grade, so we had no choice but to leave, relocate
5 somewhere else.

6 And I saw a lot of blood in the classroom unfortunately
7 because those teachers, because they cannot communicate with
8 us, they were frustrated. They were in culture shock
9 themselves, so they tied the childrens legs with wires and
10 they would start bleeding and they would really scold us for
11 speaking the language.

12 But there was no resolution because they never talked
13 to our parents and our parents never learned, so I'm also
14 speaking on behalf of the voiceless, either living or not
15 living.

16 My grandmother, I lost her when I went to Western
17 school the first time and I lost her again when she left this
18 earth. They were the real teachers. In the Western school
19 system, we did not learn about who we are, where we come from
20 and what's important for our survival skills.

21 My father, late Paul John of Alaska Villages, Council
22 President, right before he died, he told me they promised us
23 that they were going to prepare you for life. And little did
24 he know, he said if I had known what they were doing to you,
25 children, I would have made different choices. They said they

1 were lied to by the government system.

2 And then when I was 12 years old, because we had no
3 choice, remember, the schools in all villages went up to sixth
4 grade. So at 12 years old, I went to St. Mary's Mission High
5 School, which is up about 200 miles, I believe. And at that
6 time, we already started hearing stories of how the boats came
7 and took orphan children and they would tell them to pack
8 right now and we're going to leave right now. There was no
9 preplanning. There was no knowledge that these children were
10 going to be removed from the relatives that were taking good
11 care of them. And once they took them, they never said a word
12 about them. That was the end of the story.

13 So I heard my grandparents talk about the lost
14 relatives that never came home. They wonder where they're
15 buried, they wonder where they ended up. And at that time,
16 I'm the first generation to learn ABCs. I'm the first
17 generation to be in a classroom with another cultural teacher
18 who doesn't look like me, who doesn't dress like me in those
19 high heels in the village and I thought they never needed to
20 go to the bathroom because they're so white and different.
21 One time, they said I need to go to the bathroom and I go they
22 go to the bathroom like us. I was thinking like that.

23 So at the Boarding School, I was so happy. My
24 grandmother used to tell me, you will know what is right and
25 what is wrong. They must have known the future already. They↑

1 must have prepared us well. That's why those learning
2 centers, the (indiscernible) are so important to reclaim and
3 rebuild in our communities because that was where the powerful
4 people prepared everyone for every situation. Either they're
5 stranded in the ocean or on the land in the blizzard. They
6 know exactly how to survive where it's all about survival.

7 Out of 10 of us children, my parents saw seven of their
8 children go to Boarding School. And as I'm thinking about it,
9 that must have been 20 years (indiscernible) at least because
10 my youngest sister is 17 years younger than I. I lost my
11 family when I went to Boarding School. Since I'm the only
12 first generation to learn ABCs and 124s, my parents could not
13 write to us. There was no telephone, there was no radio
14 system back then. Guess what? We never heard or talked to
15 them from August to May. No Christmas, no Easter, no
16 ceremonies.

17 I had my first period in St. Mary's. In the village,
18 that's the most important ceremony for a young girl because
19 that means they're becoming a woman. Right of passage flushed
20 down the toilet. The mission school did not write those
21 ceremonies for us. They put us in segregated dormitories,
22 girls dormitories, boys dormitories. We had monitors all
23 over. They had flashlights. Every night, they checked our
24 rooms. When we're sitting there consoling crying children

25 because they want their mothers and their family. They would▲

1 scold us. They would physically remove us from that crying
2 child, so that child is left alone with no one to hug them and
3 no one to talk to them, with no one to console them.

4 So I remember three of us getting into the plane one
5 time and I looked at my mother's eyes and I'm like I wonder
6 when those tears are going to come down. And for the first
7 time, she told me five years ago, she's 87 now, bless her
8 heart. She said I waited until you guys were in the plane and
9 the plane disappeared to cry. I waited. I didn't want you to
10 watch me cry. And to this date, none of us talk about this
11 (indiscernible - crying) too painful. (Indiscernible) there
12 was children, thank you. We don't talk about it. We never
13 talk about our experiences whatsoever that are painful.

14 My poor dad, he died before he talked about any of
15 this. He's the teacher of his five sons, but he successfully
16 taught them how so they could survive too like he did.

17 And I watched the dorm students suffer a lot too, like
18 we heard this morning. My cousin that just died last week, I
19 watched -- I remember her when that nun grabbed her head and
20 she started shaking her head just like that in front of all of
21 us and I'm like she doesn't deserve that. All because she
22 spoke the language. And I remember cutting dogs, butchering

23 dogs into (indiscernible - crying) 30 degrees because they
24 didn't want to (indiscernible - crying). They needed
25 (indiscernible) those church people that they needed the▲

1 (indiscernible). So I butchered the dogs (indiscernible -
2 crying) as I could because I was so cold, it's that cold
3 temperature because they needed fur.

4 And then I had to drive (indiscernible - crying). My
5 parents don't know any of this. And I would think my parents
6 would not treat me like this. Our grandparents would not let
7 us feel like this. And when we finally have a chance to eat
8 Native food, they would kick us out of the dormitory. They
9 said that smelled too horrible, you guys have to go out and
10 eat out there. Minus 40 degrees. We were shaking. But our
11 sharing cultures, we shared our food with our dorm mates.

12 So anything that identified us, who we are, what we
13 eat, how we speak, how we live, how we think was being
14 attacked and it was destroyed. They tried to flush it down
15 the toilet. But we're protected by our ancestors. Our
16 ancestors blood is in us, in our heart, in our stories, in our
17 dances, in our form of prayer. The dance is our form of
18 prayer, that's when we need those (indiscernible) to bring
19 back those healing methodologies, those healing things, where
20 we counsel through song and dance, where we laugh together,

21 where we smile together, where we honor our children. All
22 these things that the Boarding School system have destroyed.

23 I remember me and my brothers, we would say it's time
24 to go to the trees and that is when our hearts were too heavy
25 being nine months away from our family with no writing system,▲

1 with no telephone system, with no cell phones.

2 We would go hug each other and cry. It's time to do
3 that again in a private way. That was the time when we talk
4 about our pain. What do you miss about dad? What do you miss
5 about mom? What do you miss about smelling your siblings?
6 Taking care of them, helping mother, helping grandmother. All
7 those are gone for nine months out of the year.

8 So when the summertime came, I felt ashamed about not
9 having been gone too long, from being a helper because that's
10 how we were raised. You're supposed to help your parents,
11 raise children and to take care of food, what we survive off
12 of. I felt go guilty. Whenever I go home, I work, work, work
13 until I fall on the ground to try and make up for all those
14 months I couldn't be there with them. And I tried to visit
15 every elder so I could try and catch up listening to their
16 stories as much as I can. So the day was utilized -- when I
17 take a break from school to try and make up for all the last
18 time.

19 In the meantime, our relatives died and they were
20 buried and we could not be there with our families. Earlier,
21 when somebody said the whole village was quiet, after the
22 children left, it makes sense because when we were in the
23 village, there must have been children that only stayed behind
24 were less than sixth graders in the whole community. Can you
25 imagine that? Can you even imagine that? All the children

1 above sixth grade were sent out. That's traumatizing for the
2 mind, body and soul for the whole community. That's tragic.
3 That is why we need the centers, to help bring back those
4 systems that will create for people to gather like this, to
5 heal, to talk about them.

6 I don't think my siblings are ready to talk about the
7 pain yet because they -- I tried to invite them here and they
8 live here. None of them responded. That's okay, their timing
9 is not there. Every one of us is given time. Like my dad
10 always used to say, when somebody invites you to talk, it's
11 not them, it's the spirit world that is asking you to be
12 there, that is inviting you to be there so they can speak
13 through you, so they can be with you. Our ancestors are here
14 with us, there's many of them. We can't see them. That is
15 why it is important for us to learn how to reconnect with our
16 ancestors, to learn, to ask them to help us create the healing

17 methodologies for our mind, body and soul altogether because
18 our pain is being passed on to our relatives, the younger
19 generation. We all need help, we all need to learn how to
20 take care of each other like our ancestors did and we all need
21 to start standing up and lift our heads up like they used to
22 ask us so that we can have a pathway to our ancestors and
23 learn how to connect with them again.

24 We need to learn how to speak our language, that is why
25 every culture needs to develop and make a programmatic system▲

1 where that can happen, where the speakers and non-speakers
2 need to share because that was the only way our old traditions
3 are our history pathway, the pathway about our life, our
4 ancestors ways.

5 I'm sorry I'm taking the time away, but these are the
6 few things that I was just thinking of because everybody else
7 shared the other stories. When I accidentally ran into school
8 employees of male bodies that aren't supposed to be with the
9 girls in the dark spaces, that was scary for me. That was
10 traumatizing, but I didn't tell anybody because I didn't know.
11 In my mind, body and soul, that was too hard to tell my
12 parents who they were fondling and how they were treated.

13 And we could not -- the dorm monitors read our letters.
14 They told us don't ever say anything to your parents about

15 what's going on here. That's what they used to tell us. I
16 remember I was so happy when I heard one of them died. My
17 heart was so happy because she caused too much pain for us in
18 our past. You know why I felt happy? Because that meant
19 she's not going to be with us anymore, she's not going to hurt
20 more hearts. That was how painful it was.

21 But I know the spirit world is with us here today and I
22 know our ancestors are with us today and willing to help us
23 heal and I'm so, so proud and very, very happy from the bottom
24 of my heart and my ancestors hearts, for the Secretary of
25 Interior to allowing this space to start having the

1 discourses, the dialog that is necessary so that we can help
2 our communities move forward to a healthier space.
3 (Indiscernible - Native language).

4 MS. NURR'ARALUK: Quyana, Dr. John. (Indiscernible -
5 Native language). We have four more speakers on our list.
6 First, we have Marge Nakak from St. Michael, Jamie Bricker,
7 Patrick Anderson and Della Cheney. So Marge Nakak from St.
8 Michael?

9 MS. NAKAK: Good afternoon, dear friends, family and
10 relatives and each one of you is welcome here to the Alaska
11 Native Heritage Center and thank you for coming to participate
12 in this very important situation.

13 My ancestry originates from the orange section of the
14 map, way up there. My mother's father was from Big Diomed
15 Island and his last name was Nakak, which means to die in the
16 Inupiaq language. So fortunately, I have inherited that last
17 name, Marge Nakak.

18 And my grandmother's from St. Michael right at the top
19 of the yellow section, my mom's mom. And my grandmother there
20 gave me her sister's name of (indiscernible) which means
21 seamstress, and indeed, I have inherited those skills of
22 sewing and making parkas and other cultural items.

23 So when I heard that this Heritage Center was going to
24 be here, I said that's where I'm going to work, so I've been
25 here for 24 years and I have helped many students in high

1 school programs and Friday evenings, I help the whole
2 community and anyone who wants to come and learn sewing from
3 6:00 to 8:00 every Friday evening.

4 So the best thing I enjoy about the Heritage Center is
5 our youth in the summer are trained how to speak on the stage,
6 participate in the events, any Native games. They also learn
7 how to give tours for all the cultures of Alaska.

8 And my childhood, I was born in Nome, which is at the
9 top of the -- right above the area of the yellow section,
10 right at the bottom of the orange section on the map. So I've

11 been a mother since I was four years old. My two years
12 younger son and I were at home one night and I was four years
13 old and my mom wasn't home and I got up, I got dressed and I
14 went out on the Nome streets and the policeman asked me what
15 are you doing, I said I'm looking for my mom. And then the
16 policeman said come on in the car, we'll look for her
17 together. And I said wait, my younger brother is in the
18 house, he's asleep all by himself.

19 So the policeman came out with my brother in a blanket
20 and put him in the back seat. And we went up and down the
21 streets of Nome looking for my mom. We never found her and
22 so, the policeman said do you know where you can go stay and I
23 said yeah, my Auntie Irene, my mom's sister. So we went there
24 and the policeman knocked on the door and my Uncle Frank
25 opened the door and I'll never forget his one-piece underwear▲

1 suit and the policeman said do you know these kids and he said
2 yeah, bring them in.

3 And then my auntie in the morning said we're going to
4 go see your mom. She took me to a building and there was a
5 glass, and on each side, there was a black phone. My mom was
6 in prison for excessive drinking and she didn't know how to be
7 a mom. She was also in a Boarding School at Pilgrim Springs
8 near Nome.

9 And so the child service department said if you don't
10 quit drinking, we'll take your children, so my mom moved us to
11 St. Michael where her mother was from and I was five years
12 old. And we landed in a family of 21 people and the adults
13 all made home brew and were constantly drinking. I was the
14 oldest sister, so I took care of all the kids.

15 And then the Catholic priest strongly urged my parents
16 to send me to St. Mary's and said I would get a good education
17 from the Jesuits and the Ursuline (ph) nuns.

18 And so the Jesuit priest took us -- several students,
19 about five of us in his boat and you see that Yukon River on
20 the yellow section? We went south and went up the Yukon River
21 and to the Andraefsky River where St. Mary's mission is
22 located. And when we landed at St. Mary's, the priest looked
23 at his watch and he said oh, that took us 72 hours. I never
24 forgot when he said that. It was a beautiful drive along the
25 river where there were trees in the fall time with many▲

1 different beautiful colors.

2 I was 10 years old, I cried for two months missing my
3 family, but after that, I snapped out of it and I participated
4 in everything and I excelled in everything. I decided to just
5 learn how to do things at the school.

6 So we took turns doing chores like in the chapel, in

7 the kitchen, in the bakery, et cetera. And we had nuns who
8 took care of us, they took turns taking care of us in the dorm
9 and we had three sections of girls. The early learners, the
10 middle learners and the advanced learners of girls. And
11 fortunately, by that time, the priests and the nuns had
12 decided to have us participate in our Native cultures.

13 So Saturdays was cultural day and we learned how to sew
14 and make dolls and some garments and that's where I achieved
15 many of my very accurate sewing on sewing machine. And then
16 the older girls taught us how to make dolls, Native dolls with
17 Native clothing. And then the superior of the village -- I
18 mean, the St. Mary's mission was in favor of cultural
19 enhancement, so he had the St. Mary's village Yupik dancers
20 come up to the school and taught us Yupik dancing.

21 So after that, after high school, I moved to Anchorage
22 and had jobs here and there and I heard that this place would
23 open and this is where I have been working for a while. And
24 while I was at St. Mary's, some of the Jesuits would
25 improperly, you know, feel the girls bodies and stuff like▲

1 that. And overall, I had a good experience there and I was
2 participating in al of the teachings that they had.

3 And so, presently, I have two sons. The older one is
4 36, the younger one is 32 and my grandson is 16 and my

5 grandson is presently at Job Corp. He was having a hard time
6 because his dad was in jail for 17 years.

7 And presently, I'm very grateful for everyone to
8 welcome me with my job here at the Heritage Center and ever
9 since my childhood, I hate drinking because it was so
10 disastrous continuously because I was the older sister taking
11 care of all the children. And my step-father would threaten
12 to kill my mother, so I would take all the children and run
13 and hide in the grass so we won't see him killing our mother.
14 But fortunately later on, they were members of a church, which
15 discontinued their drinking and my brothers came to St. Mary's
16 and they said mom and them don't drink anymore and I said no,
17 I don't believe it, so I didn't go home for a long time.

18 But when I was 17, I went home and sure enough, no more
19 drinking. Wow. I was so impressed and when I first went to
20 St. Mary's, I walked up and down the hallway and I said wow,
21 no drinking. I kept walking up and down the hallways in the
22 buildings saying wow, no drinking. And to this day, I despite
23 alcohol.

24 But in general, my experience at St. Mary's was very
25 well. I excelled in all the programs and thank goodness there

1 was a place for me to go where there was no drinking. Thank
2 you.

3 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you, Marge.

4 MS. NURR'ARALUK: Quyana, Marge. Next we have Jamie
5 Bricker followed by Patrick Anderson and Della Cheney.

6 MS. BRICKER: Thank you. My name is Jamie Bricker, I
7 want to acknowledge and thank my elders in the room to
8 teaching me how important it is to say the hard things and to
9 speak the truth in order to move forward and heal. This is an
10 important lesson that I'm learning today.

11 I promised the Skagway Traditional Council and my
12 family and the survivors of the Pious Ten Mission in Skagway
13 that I would speak on their behalf today. I am a descendant
14 of survivors of the Pious Ten Mission in Skagway. Many people
15 haven't heard of it, I feel like our community has buried it
16 along with a lot of truths and it's important to me that the
17 federal government recognize that Pious Ten Mission was a
18 federally supported Boarding School. It was absent from the
19 first investigative report and it is part of my duty as a
20 Skagway Traditional Council President to ask on behalf of our
21 survivors, descendants of our survivors and our council that
22 that school be recognized in the next draft of that report.

23 My grandfather was only four years old when he was
24 relocated from Kodiak Island with his two brothers and they
25 spent the remainder of their childhood at Pious Ten Mission. ▲

1 Unfortunately, all three of them passed away fairly early in
2 their adult lives, all of them were a fan of alcohol and that
3 came with its own set of problems. They not having been
4 raised with parents experienced a lot of the problems that I'm
5 hearing about in this room where they did not know how to be
6 good parents.

7 The mission that I feel like my ancestors are asking me
8 for now is to find these documents associated with Pious Ten
9 Mission. As of right now, there are no enrollment records for
10 the years the school operated, from 1930s into the 1960s.
11 Virtually no enrollment records from the 30s and 40s. Skagway
12 Traditional Council has done an excellent job trying to
13 located these things on our own, but we need help.

14 It's our understanding that there may even be some
15 enrollment records at BIA, but we've been told that they're
16 not accessible and maybe that's because they're -- they
17 haven't been electronically saved yet or whatever the case may
18 be, we need to locate these records so that we can build the
19 enrollment records.

20 In my mind, until we know how many people arrived at
21 the door of that school, when they left and how, we have
22 missing children. So it's really important to me that we
23 reconstruct those records.

24 A good example of some of the things that we're finding
25 that don't add up, for example, this photograph from 1940s▲

1 where 70 children are standing in front of Pious Ten and the
2 census from that year only recognizes 21 children at the
3 school, and you know, is this a matter of timing or is this a
4 matter of children that are unaccounted for?

5 There are more important things to say in the room, but
6 I just wanted to lay eyes on you on behalf of my ancestors and
7 my family and ask for your help in recognizing that this
8 school existed and in helping us locate those documents.
9 Thank you.

10 MS. NURR'ARALUK: Quyana.....

11 MS. HAALAND: Thank you. Jamie, if you could make sure
12 that you get one of our staff's email addresses and connect
13 with us through email, that would be really great before you
14 leave today, please.

15 MS. NURR'ARALUK: Quyana, Jamie. Our next speaker is
16 Patrick Anderson followed by Della Cheney.

17 MR. PATERSON: (Indiscernible - Native language) Madam
18 Secretary and Mr. Assistant Secretary. I'm Patrick Anderson,
19 a descendant of a Pious X Boarding School student. I'm
20 fortunate in many ways. I grew up Tlingit with an Aleut
21 father. I knew my father, I could remember my sisters did not
22 and this story is really about them and my one brother that I
23 didn't know about until I was an adult.

24 I'm from the Dry Bay area, my Tlingit name is
25 (indiscernible - Native language), that is the name of Blind▲

1 David Dick, the last clan house leader in Dry Bay before they
2 relocated to Yakutat. I come from a very distinguished
3 family. I am the descendant of a Shaman (indiscernible -
4 Native language) and in the line of succession to inherit from
5 him his Shamanic spirit and I don't know if I did that or not,
6 but I do feel that I have been working in the world of healing
7 for quite some time.

8 I've ran compacted health services, compacted
9 behavioral health, substance use development programs. While
10 mom was sent to the Pious X Mission when she was 4 1/2 years
11 of age and spent the rest of her childhood until she went to
12 the Mount Edgecumbe school in about 19 -- I think '48 or '49.
13 She went to Pious X in 1938.

14 She would return home every summer where her father was
15 Jay Byron Mallot, Sr. He helped incorporate Yakutat. My
16 step-grandma started the Mallot General Store. For a small
17 community, they were very prominent. In addition to my Native
18 ancestors being a descendant of a Shaman, of a clan leader and
19 one of the five Chiefs of Yakutat, my family participated in
20 state government, local government, around school Boards,
21 Mayors, Commissioners and there was a very heavy public

22 service orientation.

23 But I was separated from that when I was very young,
24 eight years of age. My mother moved me to Seattle. About a
25 year after getting into Seattle, my four sisters and I were

1 taken by the State of Washington. Only my baby sister was
2 left with a foster parent, the rest of us were taken to the
3 Seattle Youth Detention Center.

4 I haven't been to a Boarding School, but I can imagine
5 that detention center is a whole heck of a lot better, except
6 that I didn't get beaten like my friends were. It was a very
7 traumatizing environment. When we got out of there, when they
8 finally let my mother have us back, we moved into the High
9 Point Housing Project in South Seattle. There, my sisters
10 took a little different path than I did and I didn't know why.
11 Three of them were pregnant at 15, delivered at 16. All of
12 them were smoking at 11. I know one of them was smoking -- or
13 was sniffing airplane glue at 11 or 12 years of age. The
14 three of them gave birth at 16, dropped out of school, began a
15 very troubled life. They all had alcoholism later on. Those
16 three are dead today. I'm the eldest.

17 And I wondered why. When the first one passed away,
18 she passed away three months before my dad did. She was 45,
19 he was 67. It was difficult for me because I was the only one

20 of that first family that knew dad, but I began wondering why
21 did this happen to them and I decided I was going to change
22 careers from being a lawyer to trying to find a helping
23 profession to see if I could learn. What happened is I found
24 that in 2008. I was the Executive Director of Chugach and
25 Susan LaBelle is somewhere sitting in here and Jim. They were▲

1 with me at the time and Susan was my Social Service Director
2 running behavioral health and a number of other programs and
3 we discovered the Adverse Childhood Experience study in 2008.
4 We examined it and as a system scientist, I began to realize
5 that that gave me the root cause for the dysfunctional
6 behaviors that my sisters had adopted.

7 It wasn't a character flaw, it was something that
8 happened to them and there were 10 things studied that, as I
9 traced to them, I found that they had seven of the 10. Or
10 maybe eight. I had six, maybe seven. And as I sat there in
11 my office at Chugach (indiscernible) and I looked at the
12 study, I saw that from people who had six, they had a 19 1/2
13 shorter life span than those who had zero. I thought, this is
14 something we need to address, so I wrote a paper for the
15 Alaska Native Health Board, it wasn't even considered.
16 Basically, I said that in terms of management and in terms of
17 addressing traumatic events, we could make a difference.

18 It didn't make any traction in the state system, so I
19 tried with the Indian Health Service. I re-titled and re-
20 purposed it, a proposed path to wellness for the Indian Health
21 Service. It didn't make it anywhere. I did continue to try
22 to inform people about the Adverse Childhood Experience Study
23 because one of my colleagues at Southcentral had informed me
24 and it changed my life. It didn't change my sisters lives.
25 One of them passed away from dual lung infection, which is the

1 exact same thing that happened to my grandmother at Texas
2 Rooming House in Juneau in the 1940s.

3 The second passed away from COPD. Smoking at 11 caught
4 up to her when she was 65. The last one had a number of
5 issues, was also an alcoholic, but she contracted, again, a
6 lung infection and passed away from substance.

7 I was fortunate in many ways because I had a little
8 different path, but I did not escape the scourge of the
9 dysfunctional behaviors that come out of being subjected to
10 some of the parental behaviors.

11 Now I heard President Peterson talk about him wanting
12 to be a better son. I understood what mom went through. The
13 reason I know anything about Pious X is that mom was an
14 alcoholic and she would come home from being on First Avenue
15 in Seattle with a cheeseburger. She would wake me up around

16 3:00 a.m. and talk to me for one to two hours, and during that
17 period of time, she told me about the Pious X Mission. We
18 called it -- she called it X, I don't know if I'm supposed to
19 call it Ten or not. Yeah. So she always called it Pious X
20 Mission.

21 She didn't dislike it. She named the middle names of
22 two of my deceased sisters after Sister Mary Cecile and Sister
23 Mary Amy. She corresponded with both of them until they
24 passed away in their 90s.

25 The reason I say this is that I believe we can heal. ↑

1 If you're still remembering all of that and crying, as we've
2 watched a number of folk do here today, you've not healed from
3 it yet. I think there is a pathway to go back to what the
4 ancestors had, which is a great home life, but to get rid of
5 what science has shown us as the basis for a lot of the
6 problems that we heal, excess productions of cortisol, the
7 fear response. The science of the future, I think, can help
8 combine with the science of the past and send us out on a
9 pathway to healing.

10 That's all I came here to say. I wrote the papers for
11 both of you, I also have a thumb drive with a lot of other
12 materials. But I've always been told that there has to be an
13 ask that comes around with it, so my ask is that you take a

14 heartfelt look at childhood trauma that comes from the
15 historical trauma that we have encountered in the past. I
16 know that what happened to my family started before mom going
17 to Boarding School. It helped -- started with grandma and
18 grandpa, great-grandma and great-grandpa. It started with
19 those signs that said no dogs or Indians allowed. It started
20 with not being citizens. There was a whole history that led
21 us to this point where we are and my ask of you is to take a
22 heartfelt look at that. If you don't want to do it yourself,
23 you've got lots of staff and I'd be happy to talk to any of
24 them. In the written testimony, I talk about six people I
25 think you should talk to. I also have information on here▲

1 that, if you can have a staffer look at, ask questions about,
2 be curious. I believe we can heal or I wouldn't be here.

3 With that, I want to thank you very much for being
4 here. I appreciate it.

5 MS. NURR'ARALUK: Quyana, Patrick. We have time, I
6 think, for two more speakers and so, I'm going to call upon
7 Della Cheney who we all know as Ma Cheney. We all claim her
8 as our mother and followed by Joel Jackson, President Joel
9 Jackson from the organized village of Cake. First Della
10 Cheney.

11 MS. CHENEY: (Indiscernible - Native language). I'm

12 holding up your words, your thoughts. It's so important for
13 us to hear from the people who have actually lived through
14 this Boarding system, Boarding School syndrome.

15 My mother and my dad were in Boarding School. My dad
16 went to Chemawa after Sheldon Jackson Trading School in Sitka
17 and my mom went to Sheldon Jackson Training School.

18 (Indiscernible - Native language). My Haida name is
19 (indiscernible), my Tlingit name is (indiscernible).

20 There's so much to learning our language. I've been
21 learning since 1970 to speak Haida or (indiscernible). There
22 has been breaks in that learning because of no teaching or no
23 teachers or no programs.

24 When my mother was in Boarding School, she retained her
25 language by carrying on a conversation with her mother every

1 day, every morning, every evening. She spoke Haida to her
2 mother in her mind. So she returned to her language, retained
3 it.

4 I'm a weaver of red cedar, yellow cedar, spruce root
5 and wool and what we're doing here is weaving our ways of life
6 back into us. I hear you. And the process of weaving is so
7 important to giving yourself time to grieve.

8 I used to laugh at Dr. Delores Churchill. She'd say
9 remember to breathe, but it is important to breathing all this

10 wonderful, beautiful air and breathe out all the hurts and
11 pains.

12 Before I weave, I meditate. I have to put aside all my
13 anger, all my shame, all my guilt, all my hurt because weaving
14 is healing and that process is healing.

15 So that time that I take to practice what our ancestors
16 have left us and when I'm teaching people how to weave, I
17 teach them how to breathe. I teach them how to meditate. I
18 teach them how to talk to themselves in a wonderful place, to
19 love ourselves first. It is up to us to love ourselves first.
20 It's a long journey, but it's sure worth it. I hear it in the
21 healing voices of these people who are sharing. I hear that
22 love. It's a long journey, but it goes on.

23 So as we weave our ways back into our lives, my dad
24 used to tell us the cultural memory that you feel when you're
25 doing something your ancestors used to do, whether it's▲

1 weaving, carving, sewing, walking, being on a boat, all of
2 these muscles and joints and eyes and ears and nose, remember,
3 they remember how to do things. If I forget to do a certain
4 technique in weaving, I sit quietly and try to remember and
5 then, all of a sudden, my fingers weave.

6 So one of our elders used to tell us it's inside of
7 you. His name was David Katsik (ph). I could never remember

8 the Tlingit words he used, but I really believe that it is
9 inside of us. It is a sovereign loving place that we have our
10 family inside of us.

11 So (indiscernible - Native language) for being here
12 today. I really appreciate hearing the stories and knowing
13 what the firsthand knowledge from you folks from the Boarding
14 Schools. My mother wouldn't tell us. I asked her when she
15 was 86 years old, what happened to you while you were at
16 Boarding School, and I'll end with this. And she said, I
17 could tell you the physical things, but I'm still healing with
18 the mental and she started to cry because of all the things
19 they did to them, her mental health was probably the last
20 place she could go. She still couldn't face it and still
21 began to cry. So at 86 years old, she still couldn't tell
22 what had happened to her.

23 So (indiscernible - Native language) and just know that
24 we are here witnessing with you what your stories are and hold
25 you up and love you, so (indiscernible - Native language) for

1 sharing and opening up my eyes. (Indiscernible - Native
2 language).

3 MS. NURR'ARALUK: (Indiscernible - Native language)
4 Della. Our final speaker before closing comments from
5 Secretary Haaland will be Joel Jackson who's President of the

6 Tribal Council of the organized Village of Cake and so, how
7 appropriate to have an elected tribal leader as our last
8 speaker. Joel?

9 MR. JACKSON: Thank you. I'm the younger brother of
10 Della Cheney. I have seven brothers and three sisters. Now I
11 got her and one brother left, going from a big family to just
12 three of us. It's a real reality check for me. I'm the
13 youngest now, now I'm 67 years old. I should say only 67.

14 But I started hearing about the Boarding School issue,
15 I don't know how many years back, and I attended workshops on
16 it, but when I hear your stories, it hurts. I tried listening
17 in a national Boarding School stories by survivors. I could
18 only stay on the line for half the time because this is what
19 happens to me. I get so mad and I can't vent and I hate being
20 mad. People wouldn't like it if I got mad because I have no
21 control.

22 I was glad to hear somebody say when they get up to
23 speak, they listen to their ancestors and I've been giving
24 testimony for years. I tried reading scripts that my staff
25 had written for me and I get about a page through it and after▲

1 that, I just put it down. I was taught to speak from your
2 heart. I was taught that by your elders. I can't read a
3 script. It just seems too generic. I have to speak from my

4 heart and I listen and a lot of times, I have to go back and
5 listen to what I talked about because those words that came
6 out of my mouth were spoken by my ancestors for thousands of
7 years. We've been fighting the same fight since
8 (indiscernible). They tried to eliminate us, but as we bear
9 witness today, they did not succeed. We are still here and
10 we'll continue to be here.

11 (Applause)

12 MR. JACKSON: So like my sister said, we hear you, we
13 see you and I found out in my own healing journey in working
14 on trying to open up a cultural healing center in my village,
15 from listening to people, people that are struggling with
16 alcohol, drug addiction is that people don't see them, they
17 don't hear them and it's the same thing with you because, you
18 know, people don't want to hear it and they don't want to see
19 you and that's sad. It's part of our history. It's a bad
20 history, but you know, we have to learn from it, we have to
21 learn to listen and find a way to heal and I agree with
22 Patrick, it's time to heal. As hard as it is, it is time.

23 And I just want to say, you know, we're here to support
24 you. We love you and we hope that, as time goes on, like
25 Della shared about mother, 86 years old, she couldn't share

1 about the mental part.

2 So I just want to say again that, you know, we lost
3 generations because of the Boarding School, inter-generational
4 trauma when I learned about that. It made sense what I saw in
5 my village growing up, it made sense and we still bear witness
6 to that in our village of how that inter-generational trauma
7 is passed on to the younger people. It just breaks my heart
8 on how we still are paid because of that.

9 And once again, thank you for sharing your stories.
10 Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for letting us know
11 what happened in those Boarding Schools, and hopefully, they
12 are being recorded and this will go down in history. I always
13 think of what can we do. What can we do and I've been part of
14 my tribe, we have taken people to court, government agencies
15 and we've won, so you know where I'm going with it, but you
16 know, it's important that the government of the United States
17 is held accountable for what they did and allowed to happen.

18 But once again, we heard you, we see you and we love
19 you. Thank you.

20 MS. CROW: (Indiscernible - Native language) to each
21 and every person who shared their stories with us today and
22 the words of encouragement offered by some of the descendants
23 who spoke. I've been informed that we're going to be moving
24 in to closing out our time and our session with the Secretary
25 and the Assistant Secretary. I want to remind everyone that▲

1 we do have healing people with us for those who would just
2 like to spend time. I will say that oftentimes, as Native
3 people, being able to share our stories is healing in and of
4 itself, the power of saying these things out loud is like a
5 bomb and it is enough for some people to feel some healing and
6 relief.

7 But other people might need a little bit more support
8 and that is absolutely a good thing because we all need
9 different things because we are different people, so we have
10 those healing supports here. You got a chance to see them at
11 lunch, but I just want our healers to stand up one more time
12 who are in the room and you can just go up to them and go for
13 a walk or go sit in the back someplace quiet to support you
14 because every single one of you is way too important to us.
15 We don't want anyone to suffer alone. Sometimes here we can
16 be enough for each other, but sometimes we need our own
17 private time too, so I just want to make sure to remind
18 everyone of that before we go into closing comments from the
19 Secretary and Assistant Secretary.

20 Also to remind you folks that the Alaska Native
21 Heritage Center will be converting our space here to make
22 preparations for the totem pole raising ceremony that begins
23 at 4:00, okay? So we're going to have lots of movement
24 happening here. Again, (indiscernible - Native language) to

25 those of you who shared and I'll turn it back over to the

1 Assistant Secretary and Secretary.

2 MR. NEWLAND: Thank you. I first want to thank all of
3 you who came today to share your stories and your family's
4 stories. We know how hard that is for you and for the
5 families and we're very grateful. And we want you to know
6 that every single person that we've heard from in the past
7 year-and-a-half has made an impact on all of us doing this
8 work. Every single person who's spoken and we will carry your
9 stories with us and honor them with our work.

10 I'm going to turn it over to Secretary Haaland to give
11 some closing remarks and then we'll have, I think, some youth
12 singers and dancers close the ceremony today, so thank you.

13 MS. HAALAND: Thank you, Bryan. Thank you all so much.
14 Everyone who shared today, I'm very, very grateful for you,
15 and as Bryan said, we carry those stories with us as we move
16 forward.

17 I'm honored to be here, this is my third trip to Alaska
18 and I always feel at home when I'm with all of you, so thank
19 you for always welcoming us and helping us to feel that we are
20 welcome in your homes.

21 So I can't stop thinking about the image that Freddie
22 talked about when he saw those Alaska Natives coming in from

23 the interior and how magnificently they were dressed. And you
24 know, there was so much beauty and just beauty in the culture,
25 the ways that we lived and cared for one another and cared for

1 the environment. I can see that image in my mind too and
2 wonder how anybody could think that was a bad thing, how
3 anybody could want to destroy that in someone because I'm sure
4 it was truly beautiful to see, so thank you for sharing that
5 with me today.

6 You know why my grandmother was taken from her home
7 when she was eight? She told me once that the priest went
8 around the village to gather up the children, those were her
9 words, to gather up the children and put them on a train and
10 they sent -- it was only 125 miles away, they sent them to
11 Santa Fe from Laguna or Santa Fe from other pueblos around New
12 Mexico, but it still took her dad -- he was able to go visit
13 her twice in the five years she was gone. It still took him
14 three days by horse and wagon just to be able to visit his
15 daughter.

16 We're very fortunate that she went back to Mesita (ph)
17 Village when she was 13 and was able to live her life there
18 until the next assimilation policy happened and then she moved
19 to Winslow, Arizona and lived there for 45 years because my
20 grandfather was a diesel train mechanic.

21 But I feel -- you know, I feel really grateful. I
22 don't speak my language, but I learned how to cook from my
23 grandmother. She wouldn't let us in her kitchen, but I used
24 to climb up on a picnic table outside her kitchen window and I
25 would put my hands to the glass and just watch her in the

1 kitchen for hours and hours. I would just sit there and watch
2 her cook because it was just really a sight to see.

3 My grandfather still was a farmer and he grew the corn
4 and the other vegetables and he'd go back to Mesita (ph) on
5 the weekends during growing season and then she and him would
6 go harvest together and they'd bring back a whole pickup truck
7 full of things that they had grown and she would process it
8 and it took her days and weeks to process everything. And it
9 was just really a sight to see her in her kitchen.

10 And I guess when you're that young, you don't realize
11 what -- how important it is for whatever reason and I will
12 also say that the ancestors have been present in my life for
13 so much of my life and I didn't even know it. But when we are
14 called to sit through something and be patient and learn, for
15 whatever reason, you just do it. No one told me to sit there
16 for hours and hours, but I did it day in and day out
17 throughout the summer whenever I was there with her. And of
18 course, now I can teach my child how to cook the food that she

19 taught me to.

20 But I just -- I guess I want to just acknowledge that
21 the reason that we did not perish, the reason why they didn't
22 win, the reason why we're all still here and all of you in
23 your parkas and your seal vests and your beautiful jewelry and
24 everything that you bring to this room is because of the
25 ancestors would not let that happen. And so, I acknowledge

1 them because they are the ones who sacrificed so that all of
2 us could be here today.

3 So I just thank you deeply for giving me the
4 opportunity to be here and listen to you and feel your hearts
5 and your love and everything that you wanted to express today.
6 It really came through in a good way.

7 So I want to also thank everyone who continues with
8 this important work. Debra Parker, when I was a member of
9 Congress, she came to my office to talk about the Boarding
10 School bill that they are working on and her and a group of
11 women came in, and you know, when you're in Congress, you have
12 10 minutes for a meeting and everyone's like rush, rush, rush,
13 hurry up, you know, say everything you can in 10 minutes and
14 then you have to leave and the next person comes in your
15 office. It was kind of, you know, that's just the tone and
16 the -- and I guess the pace of the job, but they all sat down

17 and she said can we just sit here for a minute and breathe and
18 we did that and it's almost like when you're in a space like
19 that with everyone bringing their thoughts and feelings to the
20 room, that in and of itself is the most powerful thing.

21 And so, I really want to acknowledge the -- all of the
22 work that NABS has done from the very start because I know
23 that they have done that for all of us, so thank you, Debra
24 and team. I love all of you and appreciate so much all of our
25 sacrifices.▲

1 And just so you know, I did go to Congress and testify
2 in favor of the bill, so hopefully, that's something that can
3 happen. It's -- you know, we don't always need laws to do the
4 right thing, so hopefully, people will just do the right thing
5 as time goes on even if the law's not passed in a timely
6 manner. So thank you all of you very much for being here.
7 You know who you are, I'm grateful for everyone who has had a
8 hand in helping us to lift up this initiative in the
9 Department of the Interior. We say consistently and I said it
10 in my remarks, this is a department that has done really
11 terrible things to Native people across our country and it's
12 our opportunity to always do better, to correct the wrongs of
13 the past and to really lift up the voices that need to be
14 lifted up, so we'll work at that every day and thank you,

15 Levi, also. Levi's been to every one of our Road to Healing
16 since we started and we rely on you to make sure that the rest
17 of America knows and understands what is being said, so thank
18 you for that. Thank you everyone.

19 MS. KAGANAK: (Indiscernible - Native language). We're
20 the Yukton (ph) Choir from Alaska Native Cultural Charter
21 School and I'm very honored to be here to sing for our
22 relatives. I just got back from New Mexico last night and it
23 was just an awesome, awesome conference that I attended.
24 Please stand up for the National Anthem. In the past, when we
25 started singing the National Anthem, one of the organizations▲

1 said sing it in English. I wasn't happy with that. I was
2 told when I was growing up going to school, English only.
3 Normally I listened to all my teachers. My parents used to
4 say (indiscernible - Native language), listen to your teacher,
5 follow in their -- follow their instruction. But when it came
6 to my language, I'm glad I didn't listen to them.
7 (Indiscernible - Native language) is my first language, so
8 when that person told me to sing English only, I went straight
9 to the Director and said he wants us to sing it in English.
10 The Director told me no, you sing every single time, you sign
11 for us, you're going to sing (indiscernible), so I'm really
12 proud of these students we have at Alaska Native Cultural

13 Charter School.

14 (Choir sings)

15 MS. KAGANAK: As this land is your land, the Alaska
16 version, we'll sing (indiscernible) first and then translated
17 for those who can't understand.

18 (Choir sings)

19 MS. KAGANAK: This next one is a dance that two elders
20 would come 7:30 in the morning to our school just to teach our
21 youth how to dance. Mr. Jimmy passed away a few years ago, so
22 this is in honor of him and I'm very proud that our students
23 are learning. I know we have two little ones out there from
24 our school, are they here? I know we have two little
25 students, Pavadori and another one. (Indiscernible - Native

1 language). How do I turn this off?

2 (Dance group)

3 MS. CROW: (Indiscernible - Native language) to these
4 beautiful children. Thank you folks for coming and singing to
5 us. To close out our time together, we have another dance
6 group, but I just want to give our crowd a fair warning that
7 once they're done, we are closed out with this part of the
8 session and we're going to have to convert this room pretty
9 quickly to prepare for the totem raising, so I don't want
10 anyone to get upset if people are trying to get the chairs and

11 move them around, okay? Okay?

12 (Dance group)

13 MR. STOKES: (Indiscernible - Native language). What I
14 said, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Gill Stokes, my Tlingit
15 name is (indiscernible) which means Coho who lives in the
16 mountain stream. My (indiscernible) is (indiscernible -
17 Native language) Wrangell. Southeast is my home.
18 (Indiscernible - Native language), but we live now in
19 Anchorage. Ladies and gentlemen, our group, the
20 (indiscernible) dancers are all from Southeast or involved
21 with Southeast, some way or the other. (Indiscernible -
22 Native language).

23 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: (Indiscernible - Native
24 language). We are the ancient Kwan dance group and we just
25 warmed up with (indiscernible) this is owned by the▲

1 (indiscernible). We have permission from them to sign it.
2 That's my little raven daughter there peeking her head around
3 the corner. And now we're going to enter on (indiscernible)
4 this is a song that was composed by the (indiscernible) clan
5 leader, Harold Jacobs in 1992 and shortly after that, he
6 gifted it to everybody. It's a universal song, we can use it
7 -- or anybody can use this song and we use it as our entrance
8 song. And the language translates to we will again open this

9 box of wisdom that has been left in our care.

10 MR. STOKES: And just one more thing. The
11 (indiscernible) dancers are relatively new. WE were
12 established and started in 2021, but we got picked up -- we
13 got caught with the virus and so we do have some problems
14 here, but right now, enjoy. We are growing every day. We're
15 here to please you. The (indiscernible) dancers of Anchorage
16 formerly of Southeast one way or the other. (Indiscernible -
17 Native language).

18 (Dance group)

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: (Indiscernible - Native
20 language). We actually don't have any bear cubs, not yet.
21 (Indiscernible - Native language).

22 (Feedback in background)

23 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: I think we're having some
24 technical difficulties there.

25 (Background noise)↑

1 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: (Indiscernible - Native
2 language). Good evening, thank you all for having us today.
3 We're so honored and feel just humbled to be able to share our
4 songs, our culture, our dancing and have our children with us.
5 We have two out of about eight today, so we're happy they're
6 able to join us.

7 So one of the things that we've learned over the years
8 is, for applause, in lieu of hand clapping, around Southeast
9 Alaska especially, we do foot stomping, so when you're ready
10 to applaud, feel free to do that in the audience as well and
11 save your hand clapping for later.

12 The next song we will be performing is called the Aleut
13 Hat Song. This was written by an Aleut man who had been away
14 from home for a very long time. He had five children and he
15 wrote songs for each one of the five children, and at one
16 point, he combined three of those songs. And some of the fun
17 history among our people, you know we trade up and down the
18 coast, up and down the rivers of Alaska and this song, Aleut
19 people went to Yakutat. Anyone here from Yakutat?
20 (Indiscernible - Native language) glad you're here. Anyone
21 hear of (indiscernible) heritage, Aleut heritage?
22 (Indiscernible - Native language) glad you're here.

23 So this song, the Aleut people presented in a
24 competition with Yakutat and I don't know all the details, it
25 was way before I was born, and in that competition, the

1 Yakutat clan that was hosting them won this song and our
2 elder, Shirley Kendall, who's not able to join us today, she
3 has permission for us to use this song and you'll see that the
4 women, as we are singing this song, they will dip their heads

5 up and down and that's mimicking sea birds as they forage for
6 fish, small fish in the ocean. And then later on, we'll be
7 mimicking the sea birds flying and so we'll be flopping our
8 wings very quickly. And then at the end, our men will get to
9 come forward and really dance for you and feel free to stomp
10 your feet for them or clap your hands and encourage them.

11 (Indiscernible - Native language).

12 (Dance group)

13 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: Thank you. Our next two
14 songs we'll be performing are our children songs. We have --
15 the first song is called (indiscernible). Can you say that
16 with me? (Indiscernible). So we have a Tlingit verse and a
17 Haida verse, that was butterfly (indiscernible - Native
18 language) and in Haida, it's (indiscernible - Native
19 language). And I do have to say I'm not a Haida speaker and
20 so, please forgive me for my mispronunciation and I'm happy
21 to be corrected later on. Feel free to let me know.

22 This song was written for our children to celebrate
23 their life and to celebrate our culture and the energy that
24 they bring to us and we have both, again, the Tlingit and
25 Haida verse and Mr. Ralph Yates was so gracious to help us▲

1 with translating for the Haida verse and let's see, I think
2 that's all. Thank you.

3 (Choir song)

4 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: Okay, our next one will be
5 the Halibut Hook song. Has anyone seen a Tlingit or Southeast
6 Halibut hook? Yeah? It's kind of an interesting V shape,
7 right? And traditionally, we've be out there in our canoe and
8 throw it overboard when we're jigging for the Halibut and then
9 we catch it. We feel it on the hook and then we're reeling it
10 in. So I know I'm especially going to depend on
11 (indiscernible) though I'm putting him on the spot. He's one
12 of our older young people, I'll ask him to come up and join us
13 for the hook song and this is traditionally also boys lullaby
14 written by Clara Peratrovich of Klowak.

15 (Choir song)

16 UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: Believe it or not, I used to
17 fish and I used to dance. Now I have to watch.

18 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: (Indiscernible - Native
19 language). We've been so grateful to dance for you today and
20 participate in our culture on a day like today, we can't help
21 but have our hearts moved as we hear all our ancestors and
22 relatives have endured and yet, we see that our songs and our
23 dances and the sound of our drums still go out across our
24 land, so thank you so much. (Indiscernible - Native language)
25 for letting us dance for you and I'll give it to Gill for any▲

1 final words.

2 (Choir song)

3 MS. CROW: Okay, ladies and gentlemen, we need to make
4 room so that we can clear these chairs. If you just came here
5 and you thought these Natives were really on time, we have not
6 yet started the totem pole ceremony, we're just ending the
7 listening session from earlier. So we need to convert this
8 room right away, please forgive us, we're not trying to be
9 rude, but we do need to ask everyone to get your things.
10 There's staff here.....

11 (Off record)

12 3:32:10

13 ~THESE PROCEEDINGS WERE CONCLUDED @ 3:32 O'CLOCK P.M.~

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TRANSCRIBER CERTIFICATE

I, Sonya Hewes, Certified Transcriber with accu-Type
Depositions, do hereby certify that the foregoing
pages numbered 1 through 86, are a true, accurate and
complete transcript of the Department of Interior/Indian
Affairs, Tribal Conference, transcribed by me from a copy of
the electronic sound recording to the best of my knowledge and
ability.

10/31/23
Date

Sonya Hewes, Transcriber

