

Anita Adams
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

My name is Anita Adams. I'm from Mentasta and I'd like to bring up a personal situation.

Just recently I had something happen to me and I feel that the State Trooper failed me and the Justice that I should've got. He didn't tell the D.A. everything that had happened. He didn't tell the D.A. what my husband heard. When I spoke to the D.A., she didn't even know that my husband had confronted this guy and so he's not getting charged with what he should've been charged with. And I feel like if I was a White woman and that guy came into my home and violated me, if I was a White woman he'd be in jail and he would get charged with what he should've been charged with.

This is not the second time the system has failed me. I'm a victim. When I was thirteen years old, I also had charges brought before another guy. And this guy was an adult. I was a little girl then. And the system failed me then.

And I just feel like that we as Native people, we could kill each other and get away with it, but that if we kill a White man or if we assault a White man, we're going to serve time for it. But if we do it to each other, they're just going to look—turn their back to us. Well they're just Indians. That's how I feel. I feel like if I was a White woman, maybe I would've gotten justice but because I was an Indian and I was drinking too, nothing's done.

Something's wrong and I would like—I used to be on the Council and we used to do a lot of Tribal court stuff and people acknowledged our Tribal court but when there's a lack of enforcement to help our people and enforce these things for our own people and help our people, we just give up on it. And I think that we've come to the point where we've given up.

In the John B. Baker Case, wasn't that a great victory for us Indians? Was it? No. Because we have Tribal courts and we can't even enforce our orders, the State won't even help us with it. We care about our people. You don't care about us. The State don't care about us. We take care of our own people and that's how it's always going to be. Nothing will ever change that.

And the response time for this Trooper to come down was two to three hours from Tok. Two to three hours. To me that's wrong. We're on the road system. It's a forty-five minute drive from Tok. He had his explanations. But to me that was just wrong.

And like they were talking about before about this guy who's assaulted our people here in the village. They never did nothing to him. But as soon as he was assaulted and he's not Indian, they sure came down.

And this is what's happened to me. Twice the system has failed me. When I was a little girl and now as an adult. To be a victim and then to have charges pressed, that's a totally different situation. I've been a victim before where charges were not pressed and I dealt with it, but this time it's harder.

The next morning it was on the Trooper dispatch. People were calling and asking who was it. I just left the village. I think that needs to be changed too about that. If there's a sexual assault that happens, I don't think it should be on that Trooper dispatch.

You know the village is small. People will know. People are going to call up. To me that was just so shameful for me. I just want you guys to know that the system failed me again the second time. And I blame Sergeant Wells. I blame him because he didn't tell the D.A. everything that had happened that morning.

Thank you.

BURGESS: Thank you very much.

END OF STATEMENT

Evelyn Beeter, Chistochina
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

Hello. I'm Evelyn Beeter from Chistochina and I've testified before, but I just wanted to add one thing that I've been noticing on the work group and all that and working with the folks from the State.

We live on the highway system and we have State Troopers that come out from Glennallen and we also had a Cops program in Chistochina and Mentasta and our program worked really well the first three years that we had and worked with the Troopers. They did a lot of the things for the Troopers. They served warrants and we picked people up and transported people and all of that.

And the Cops program is a federal program. Anyways we had a really excellent relationship—working relationship with the State. And then that all changed when the administration changed on the State level. And then after that, I think it was Trooper Stone came to pay me and Wilson _____ and told us that we were going to be arrested for impersonating a Cop with our program there.

And after that, we kind of just let our program go and didn't do too much with it because we couldn't enforce the State laws. The funny thing about the whole thing was when we first started the State told us that we couldn't enforce Tribal laws; that we could enforce State laws. Then they turned around and came and told us that they are going to arrest us, they told us that we couldn't enforce State laws, but we could enforce Tribal laws. So it was like a little football going on there. It was just kind of amazing to us.

But anyways, they told us that we going to be arrested and that we couldn't run our program and all of that. But the point that I was getting to is that the Tribes have been around here for thousands of years and we survived and the _____ get along before anybody else showed up on the scene and that we have our laws; what the Elders are talking about – the system that we had here amongst all of our people and we followed those and we survived and we've been here.

And like the State of Alaska telling us that we can't do anything. It's like we should be able to if something were--communities that have been here and will always be here. If we want to take care of ourselves, then we can take care of

ourselves. The State don't need to interfere with what our system is and try to enforce another system on the Tribes when they already have a system in place that's worked for the Tribes. And _____ the State doesn't want to work with the Tribes and over all trying to do the same thing. Anybody that's living here in the State of Alaska, they all want to have a good life and raise their kids the right way and providing for their families. All of us want to do is say _____ each of us have a different way of getting there, but we should be able to support each other and the State should support the Tribes and what they're doing. We're all trying to do things for the good of the people whether it's the State or the Tribe.

There should be support amongst of all them and we're all trying to work towards that but the State really needs to look at what they're doing with the laws and stuff that they've come out with. It's kind of against the Native people because we're the ones the highest population out in the rural areas and so it just looks one-sided.

So I just wanted to say that one point that we're—we've been here. We ___ live here and the State needs to respect that and respect us as people and make things work. If you don't respect the other person, its not going to work. So that's all I have to say.

BURGESS: Thank you very much.

END OF STATEMENT

Lena Charley, Chistochina
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
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April 26, 2005

I'm Lena Charley from Chistochina.

First of all I want to say since I was young, I didn't understand much that time when I was a kid growing up like in the old days. Katie there, she's my Aunt. My mom's sister.

And since I was a little kid I was outdoors all the time and learning lots of things out there. Climb a mountain. Look at all the animals. See lots of things. And I learned lots from it. And I see everything.

Sometime I think today's life, I think its different from when we was born. It used to be everything's okay. We just go ahead and go out there picking berries and when we need some food, we go out and get them. Today, you see a sign everywhere. And like us, all the old people right now, we believe those sign—we don't want to go there. If somebody ___ there, we don't want to step in there and that's the way we are right now.

We cannot go over everything because that's the way we grow. And right now I believe in my way more. When I was young, I wasn't that way. I thought making money would be okay to do so I get hired and go out guiding because I know how to hunt. And go out working for construction. I go trap. I mush dogs. Many things I done.

And besides that I've been by myself all the time. My mom used to worried for me when I was gone someplace in the woods, but I took care of myself.

Just when we need something, the only time we get something. Right now we got lots of food on the table. Why are we going to shoot things out there for nothing? The chance we had, the food on our table, I don't—unless I really need it. Right now, I don't eat anything like anybody else because I like my own food and that's the way I grew up. And ___ we can't do that. I can see that. I see lots of different—We used to live—like rabbit, gopher, all those stuff. And then we dried it and keep it for winter time.

I don't think I ever see we waste anything else. When we get moose, even the bone or feet, whatever – we use it. Never left nothing behind.

Even though when I was young I got dogs. I go out and hunt, if I get a moose, I bring them all out; just me and the dogs. Because I grew up—since I was a little kid in the woods like I said I learned lots – cutting the wood, get moose, dry them and work on the moose hide. I do all those things.

And when I was a guide, because I get paid a little bit for food and I went out and guide for sheep and bear and moose. When we—My hunters, when they make mistake shooting at a sheep, there will be two sheep there and they said well bury the thing. We can't it. I said no way, we're going to bring everything that is there no matter what. So we always the meat back every time. If they can't, I'll take the horse and go it.

And then right now--The last few years ago, I just go out there and walk around. I see lots. Sometimes they just take horn and stuff like that.

I hear what you call talking and my Aunt talking now that's the way we are. I don't read. I don't write. I don't go to school. I just learned from hearing people talk. And what I got right now, I learned the way I've been out there in the woods. And the way I see it, I learned that.

And my mom, she used to sew lots of things and work on the skin. She didn't do it like me and go out hunting stuff, but she done lots of things. When we were just little kids, not too big, we lost our daddy. Our mother was dad and mother for us. So that's the way we are.

Like we used to be real strict people. You don't just go in the creek for nothing unless there's something in there. Fish. If we can bring them, that's all we can stick in the creek, but otherwise we don't. Like we set and ___ everything. We believe it that way. We can't mug around with the creek. We can't play in lake. We never—We don't swim in those things. There's food in those thing. We don't bother them that way. We always take care of things. Like Bensanita (phonetic) my Aunt said, we fish there too. I know my grandpa was there every morning about four o'clock in the morning he was down there standing looking to see if there was any kids in our creek. I learned lots of that too.

Right now I try my best for my kids, my grandkids and they got two months to do all the things like—I don't know. Its just that we got a different life and this other life – they join in one things and they ___ all behind. That's what happened.

I can't speak like you people. I know lots of things to say but sometimes I couldn't say it. I don't know what's _____ make everybody understand. I don't think everybody understand us when we say something like that. I know it's hard to understand because they went faraway from what we got.

Like right now what we doing out there while I'm still here, I like to do that. I don't want to stop that. There was too many way low, but we're the only ones that believe about the other way—other things anybody care. Months. And lots of time I see it and I hear every word. I just can't help but say anything—this is no good. This is the way it will be. But can't say that much.

People are too busy for many things. Right now my Aunt over there, she's using her head. She's using her mind. She don't have to use anything to say anything. I'm the same way. I don't have to read. I don't have to take a book to tell somebody. I use—speak with my own heart. I like them to understand, but they couldn't.

Like right now I'm glad my granddaughter is ___ he come up with some language but because we loose our language, because we didn't care and let go. That's another one. Its our own business what we do and like we do ___ stuff. This is our business and our way. This is our life. We about to lose that too. We already loose our language. We loosing half of our lives just because we didn't believe our ways. Sometimes I think its just our fault. We shouldn't ___ anything. I can do that. But we can be good to each other.

But I think that everybody go ___ for everything what they're doing. Me, right now I just try to help my best to _____ this job. I like them to understand in two ways. I like to be with them because I can be--help the kids. Right now there is lots of little ones speak lots of my language. But I hope the kid -- that's the way I feel every day. And I still talk with them only _____ to teach them but they doing a little better; learn a few things. I love to teach kids. I like to tell them about my life what I did. But I don't know where can I bring them to tell them – but I never see them. Even my grandkids, they never come around too much. I'm just too busy at my place with everything right now. I don't just sit down. I got too much to do. People order this and that like slippers and all that. Every day.

Not only once. So I'm just busy myself. I like to be with the kids every once and while, but I couldn't.

That's another way. What's going on is Chistochina right now, its good. Everything is going good. _____ be that way. I want to that way. I like everything just the way it is.

We got places to go picking up berries. We got a place to go hunt and we got a place to fish and just do our own business. That's the only thing—every day I think I hope everything's come out and all these young ones understand the right things and go the right way. That's the way I feel. Straight to the heart to make them understand.

It looks like we will lose our language. I'm the only one that who's speaking a little bit right now. I don't speak the whole thing. There's lots more to speak but some people that never hear it, they think I speak pretty good, but I know I got lots of things to learn yet. But I don't know. The old people is all gone. There's no way to bring them back.

That's all I want to say now.

BURGESS: Thank you very much.

END OF STATEMENT

Nora David, Health Aide
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
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Hi. My name's Nora David. I'm the Health Aide here in Mentasta and many issues that we talk about – the response. Sometime I guess I end up being the responder.

And I end up going to these things as a medical person or a person that's being called because they have nobody else to call and there's times when I walked in and there was guns being pulled. There's times when I walked in when I've been threatened. There was times when I walked into place and I'm taking care of patients and I have to watch my back because I was afraid of the other person coming in.

The Troopers—There was a Trooper years ago. I don't remember his name. But he came to Mentasta. He was up in Tok. But he came to Mentasta one day and he drove through the village and he said Mentasta was the coldest village he's ever been to. He said he'd been up north to all the other villages, but Mentasta he said even the dogs disappear. And it sparked a curiosity in him. So invited and asked if he could come and introduce himself down here. And he did. He came down to our Tribal Council meeting and he met with us and he talked with us. We developed a relationship with this Trooper. That relationship isn't there anymore. It's gone.

And what I see is that a relationship needs to be developed with the State of Alaska. They don't have to see us as their enemy. Because we're not. Our heart is for our people. We care what happens to our people. We care what happens to our children, our Elders. We care for the people that come to this village that are visitors.

The State of Alaska needs to put down whatever hostilities they have toward the Native people; the villages and work out on a relationship—a government to government relationship on building a relationship to work with each other and supporting us.

When we make a decision, we make it for the best of our people because that's where our heart is. To the best of our people.

Our ICWA law that's put there for the State—Alaska—Alaska to obey. And now they're thinking of doing away with it. Hey, wake up people. This has—protect our children. We have a say in what happens to our children. Sometime the decision that we have to remove the children from the village—at least we have a say that our best interest is in the child. The State of Alaska doesn't know what's in their best interest—They need to come back to where we are and listen to what we have to say for our children.

Our Elders need the protection. We protect them, but we need the State Troopers. We need the people to protect—to support us in what we do. We have issues here in the village that we deal—right here in the village--with before it even goes to the State. We intervene on behalf of our people when things are going wrong.

If the school has problems with the children, it's brought before us. We go to these families and we talk to them and intervene on their behalf. We deal with it within here. We have that authority and we will keep that authority. The State of Alaska needs to stand up and say they have that authority and recognize it. Whether they say it or not, we will continue to do it.

When my mother or the families here, say that they are hungry – they need a moose. Hey, we're going to go out and we get a moose and we'll take it to them. And boy, we'll probably get—If the State wants to come in and take the moose, we'll ___ take the little piece, the rest has been eaten. We want to protect our people but the State of Alaska needs to learn to work with us because we care.

That's all I have to say. Thank you.

JUSTIN: Thank you. I don't have a question. I just want to....

BURGESS: The mike's on.

JUSTIN: Thank you. I don't have a question. I just wanted to complement you on your testimony. Thank you.

BURGESS: Nora, I had a question. If you ___ this question, if you want to answer or if you feel uncomfortable, I certainly understand. Maybe somebody else can answer it. But one of the things we're taking--and I know you're coming from the health background. One of the things we've been seeing in some of the other villages is problems not just

with alcohol, but with other drugs as well. And I was wondering if you're seeing some of these here and specifically we're hearing a lot of testimony about a problem with marijuana and actually some drugs that now that we're seeing problems with is methamphines. If you can generally describe ___ the primary problem you have all the drugs. Is that here or are there other drugs that are showing up?

DAVID: The main problem we have is with alcohol. And I've known of other—I don't know who the people are. But I've known of people that have come in here selling other drugs and people have stood up and told them, get the hell out with your stuff; don't bring it to our village. So we've had people that have stood up and have kicked—literally kicked people out of the village that brought stuff in here. But that's all I—most of the things is with alcohol.

BURGESS: Great. Thank you very much.

LISA WOLF: Excuse me. Most of the problems we have alcohol are the people that come into our village. They are the people that are causing destruction. Where the most problem is the people from the outside of our village with alcohol.

BURGESS: Okay. Thank you.

END OF STATEMENT

Agnes Denny
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
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Okay. The first thing I wanted to talk about was ICWA. I went to a meeting down in Juneau and they had representatives from Stevens' Office and Young's Office and one of the things they talked about was there was a dissatisfied Senator and I forget what State he's from, but he's trying to change or totally do away with the ICWA law as it is.

And I think for the last year, I think it was just last year, we had to do all kinds of reports and stuff to show what we've done; how many cases we've had; where we're at in those cases and how successful we were. And it was an audit that was requested by this person because of his personal dealings with ICWA. It's a non-Native family who was trying to adopt a Native child and when the Tribe found out, they intervened and then they followed the ICWA law, they lost these kids. These kids then went to a Native family. So based on his personal feelings, he's using that and I guess he's powerful enough to where he's actually introducing a Bill.

And still today, like we currently—Chistochina is working on a case where we have Native kids from Chistochina who the State—not Alaska, a different State is looking at placing them in a non-Native home without even contacting the Tribe. It's still happening today. We have kids that are third generation down that originated from Chistna that are still coming back trying to find out where they're from and these kids have been adopted out to families that don't even live in Alaska. And it's taken them that long to trace their roots.

The other thing that I wanted to talk about too was the COPS program that Evelyn kind of went through that. And I think everybody else has said the same thing. When it first got started, we had good support from the Troopers and to me it was a really good program. And I think the State really liked it then because they were enforcing some of their laws and chasing down people that they wanted. As long as we were on their agenda, it was a good thing. And then when we started enforcing things on our behalf, then it became a bad thing.

And a lot of the issues that people have brought up was domestic violence, all these other child issues could be taken care of within our program if we had a

functional COPS program. We have the funding. We just need some sort of an agreement with the State of Alaska on that part.

The other thing, there was a little discussion on children with FAS or FASD, I guess is the correct term for that. My thought is if we put more money into prevention, that's 100% preventable, I don't know if you want to call it a disease or whatever, but if we--I think that if people really believed in helping people that would probably be the best bet is to put money into villages and prevention. Prevention is the only way it goes because that is a preventable thing.

And then on the same __ too, we have—the Native people have the highest rate of suicide in Alaska. And I think it's in the other States as well. Native people have the highest rate of suicide.

I recently went to a conference that was held in Portland and Alaska had selected their team to go down there and we—Chistochina has a Suicide Prevention Grant and each year we go to a training and we think of ideas and stuff like that; activities in our community. There's not a whole lot of villages that have those grants, but there's a few that do.

Anyway, I was selected from that group to go down to Portland. Other than one other person—There was just two of us that were Native from this whole group that came from Alaska and all these people were from Juneau, Fairbanks and Anchorage and they're talking about how to prevent suicide and to develop and plan to reduce the suicide rates in our villages. And I thought that was kind of odd and so I said so and I didn't get a response from anyone. They had the Troopers there. It was a Task Force—A Committee, I guess that is appointed by the Governor. There were some Native people on there. Agnes Hootzer was on there and she was removed by our Governor.

So I think if the State is really sincere about reducing the rate of suicide, they would at least have the Native people from each of the communities join in that effort and put some of that money back into the villages rather than—they had the Anchorage School District there, they had the Fairbanks School District, they had the Crisis Line in Fairbanks there, they had a Pastor from Anchorage that was there. I mean these are the people that are designing a plan that they're going to implement in each of these villages and that kind of didn't make sense.

And the other thing is Tobacco. There's a lot of Tobacco grants that were given out. Again, they sent statistics and I don't know who did the recent study on that,

but the statistics shows that the rural youth have the highest rate and they're continuing using Tobacco where children in the urban areas have lowered their use. And again, all your big cities and schools and stuff are the ones who's getting the funding for that program and I think some of that should be shared out in the rural areas because that's where you're showing the increase.

And I think that's it on my list.

Thank you.

BURGESS: Thank you. Can we get a copy of that list for the record?

END OF STATEMENT

Rose Jerue, CEO/Copper River Native Association
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

My name is Rose Jerue and I'm the CEO for the Copper River Native Association. And I know previously that the Copper River Native Association had testified along with other tribes here.

I've been here in the Valley for just about seven months. I know the urgency of our people and the need they have to get immediate response to their very, very sincere and urgent needs.

Right now I'm not really talking on behalf of CRNA, I'm talking on a personal level and I just want to remind those people especially in Anchorage that we in the Native villages, the land is our refrigerator. When we get hungry, we go out there and get our food from our refrigerator. That's our land.

The people that don't understand this, I would ask them if they had a house with a full refrigerator and if I went to their house and robbed them of their food, how would they feel? I don't think they'd feel too good. So hopefully they can understand how we feel when people say you cannot hunt. It would be like me, what if I went over to Anchorage or Fairbanks and I said for two weeks out of the month we're going to shut down Safeway and Carrs. How would you feel? They wouldn't feel too good. They would have to buy loads of frozen foods and keep it in a refrigerator until the next time the store was opened. That's how we feel when laws are placed upon us. We don't like that.

These are just some of the things that I want to do to help explain how we, people in the village, feel about our land and our food.

One example—Another one is and I taught culture for fifteen years at the Alaska Native Medical Center to new comers that were providing health care to our people. I would say what if Thanksgiving was outlawed? What if I said, no more Thanksgiving? You can't go kill a turkey or get a turkey from Safeway or Carrs. No more yams, no more pies, nothing. That's outlawed. And how would they feel? It would totally be against whatever they feel would be freedom. The freedom to eat what they like and the freedom that their tradition has for so many years given them to celebrate.

Those are just some of the things that I think we need to help people that are not familiar with our culture understand.

When I hear people say the State Troopers don't respond, you know what it tells me? It tells me that any injustice could continue and nothing would be done about it.

Lastly I think the biggest injustice that was allowed to happen to our people as a whole was they took our language. Mainly the government and the churches got together right after Alaska was bought and they said you cannot speak your language anymore. You have to speak English. For the English speakers, I would ask them if they had little children – I would say when your child is five or six years old, send them out to Athabaskan country and they could only speak Athabaskan. How would they feel?

These are the injustices we've put up with for a decades and decades and decades. Now our people are brilliantly saying what they're feelings are and we need justice. Plain, pure and simple.

So I always thought sometimes I get a little antagonistic, I guess. I always think— Even though I already got my degree and I took a language which was Eskimo because I wanted to take a Native language. I often said, you know what? I'm going to take Athabaskan language. So I went to the University, they said \$360 or whatever it was tuition. I said what? After they took my language away, now they want me to pay \$300 to learn my language. I said no thank you and left. It just angered me. Injustice.

So really look forward to the outcome of the Commissioners Report because I think our people sincerely want the same amenities, the same things other laws are afforded to every other citizen.

Thank you.

BURGESS: Thank you.

JUSTIN: Rose. No question. I just—I know what CRNA stands for. But....

JERUE: What?

JUSTIN: But _____ just for our record just in case they need the information.

JERUE: I'm sorry. I thought _____ CRNA is Copper River Native Association.

JUSTIN: And it's headquartered in?

JERUE: Headquartered in Copper Center.

JUSTIN: Thank you.

BURGESS: Thank you.

END OF STATEMENT

Katie John, Elder, Closing Remarks
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
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I'm going to talk about the—A long time ago they talked about chief in every village and then after that I talk something of myself -- how I was raised; how my people raised me. That's what I'm going to say -- something of myself.

My daddy was—He's a chief of _____. Before my daddy, they had Copper Chief then. That's what my daddy speak of. One name the Elders talk-- One name that's only -- that's the one right now that chief name—they call _____. That's why they put that name on _____ but they just cannot learn. They're from _____. That's _____.

That's the Chief name. They call him _____. I don't think nobody know about that. That's the way ___ old chief name. ___ they call him. That's where all of my daddy's people were ___ two brother the chief—before—after that, my daddy set out to get the chief _____. So my father's name is _____. That's what they call—They used to call _____.

That's where my daddy come from, down there by Chistochina—the other side someplace where the—I don't know where either, but the _____. That's where my daddy been raised and they come up. My mother's come from other side from _____ country. That's where my mother's come from and dad and grand___. They came over from Chistochina. And he went and stayed in Chistochina. He's no longer the chief there that time. Old Nicolie, his name. Chief Nicolie they call him. He's the chief down there and they come up—my dad had come up _____ when he was chief home—And my daddy take over the chief _____. _____ Chistochina chief and _____ Chief is all my daddy's family and up from Mentasta, that's where my daddy's family—through my daddy relative. He's the chief. Chief John they call him. And his dad, they named him Russian John. His dad is Russian John. He's Russian's kids. His father was part Russian. That's the chief of the—First chief of the Mentasta, that one. But he die and his son take over. Chief John they call him. _____ used to be his dad. That's where dad—My husband come from. Grandpa—The great grandfather's a Russian. That's where my—right now my kids are little Russian _____ too. They got a little Russian blood.

All of those things—People used to _____ there's no time for their Chief and people have tribe—different tribes. We are eight tribe in this Alaska. Whole different tribes from the other side. We're really not—People really not close together. Another tribe is full the other side. And there's two furs, their grandfather say. Its like all tribe is ___ grandpa. This side, there's a full tribe of Black Crow—my grandfather. That's why they ___ tribal people—that other side was—other tribe _____ how _____ kids go on. They go different country. They always keep track every place they—where they go. They used to keep track and they know where, who they are. Everybody right today nothing. People don't know. I used to know a lot of peoples down in Anchorage, Eklutna, Fairbanks, Minto, Nenana. I used to know all those people. Those old people who they are. Today, all mixed up and _____ people—white people. They got white people kids. They're all mixed up and I don't know who they are. I used to know. I see some man, I ask who your mom; who your dad and I recall the name and I'd know. I know who they are. Right now you can't even do that. There was a chief _____ we stayed. _____ chief. They got to talk. Everybody got to be under him. When the chief say something, ___ work. Nobody can hang down ___ for nothing.

Right now you folks—people like that—there's nothing for them. And they can't hear. People talking _____ right now I try to talk and its like they shut their eyes. Their ears. They can't listen. That's why kids never learn nothing. They go ____ . they go to school. They learn more _____ other thing and kids don't—they left all their way. Their old folks' way. They never think about it. People was like long time ago, how they raised their kids. I know how I was raised.

Even training us—their kids. Their training. Right now they say—they pick up people for army. They go army. They training kids to go to war. That's what they used to train the kids. I had training like that. When I was kid, they training me for everything.

Today was—I had all kinds of sickness why I get down. The other way _____ young and I still do a lot of things. I just know about sickness got me. I got my heart surgery. I got three by-pass on my heart. Its still running—about twenty years ago. _____ me years ago.

That's why they training their kids. They want their kids tough. Work hard. Our mom and daddy, always _____ Older than us and we _____ they say something, we're going to do it. Today, no. People don't listen to each other.

I know my dad and my mom raised me. Since I was kids, I don't know how many years old. No money, but four o'clock in the morning, go out in the woods. Get wood. They tell us. And me and my sister and my brother, then we go out. So dark. We can't even find anything out there. _____ can't even find dry wood and we just take up those fresh dried branches they get back.

And then one time when I asked my mom, I tell her how come I'm so ____ I start. She says, I get wood. I went to find wood. You look—If you go out in the woods, nobody—You don't know what kind you're going to get. And my mother tell me, you know, you go out. You bring me those little dry branch. That's good enough. Its like you bring back wood. That's why I'm training you kids. We let you learn something. That's the way I raised. No money. Even ____ I bring water. I don't want to get water in the morning. We went after dark-- never get tired, go to sleep and _____ tip over bucket. All _____ upside down. There's enough of what they can use. Water. That's all they going to tell them. In the morning _____ me out, out there. Take water. It was so dark. I know where the water is, but you got to chop ice before you get water too. They got ax there. I run down and chop ice and bring water. And that one too, I ask my mom—I said why I bring water for tomorrow morning? You always dump it out. She laugh. Well that's what you got to train. You got to know what's you're doing when you grow up. You take— You raise your kids the same way and you're going to have good working kids. She always tell me. When I get old, that's the time I find out what my mom and my dad had raised me. That's for our life.

Now I been use it for many, many days and I live 88—89 years, I am. Now today I _____ I got heart trouble. That's why I got down. But still, when I start feeling good, I get up and start to do something. When I get sick, I lay down again. That's where they train us _____ living—how we like. Like today _____ years old, I see it in those canes-- walk around. Can't even walk. Now-a-days when I wake up, I never see ___ people. _____ squirrel up there. They go hide and run around _____ no matter how cold it is and it don't matter _____ anybody just run out there just like a squirrel. _____ people are training—its not a race.

Like today—Even that phone, I try my kids that way. I teach all my ____ my kids. When they go to school, down _____ and they talk their language—Its not _____ this one. And they get punished for that. After that, my kids would come back from school, they told me mamma you better not teach us your language anymore. I said, why? We get bad ___ report school—we told its not our language. They put tape on around our mouth. Put paper on our mouth so we don't have to talk

our language. They got a lot of crazy, crazy people a long time ago. Those White people, they don't know nothing. Now today, they want kids to learn back all the language. How many years ____ kids my language. Nobody listened to me. Nobody _____. So I just give it up. Kids no more.

When people was _____ nothing well. You can't do nothing. You ____ too. Even the walk—We used to walk about fifty miles a day, used to be. Go out and get something. I used to remember my dad had tell me story and my mother when they lived in Chistochina. They go down and _____. Walk all the way down and they go _____. Walk all the way over to Dawson. People _____ stampede. Today even _____ take a walk five miles. That's too much for them. Summer time they go out in the woods for food. Walk so many miles. Sometime __ and sometime _____ stay out there in the woods to get our food. We bring it in. Now today they'd like everything so easy. I don't think they know how to walk. Jump in a car. Jump in a snow machine. _____. All those things, they get and they can't even walk. I tell my kids sometimes, I say you go ____ winter time, I go _____. I'm going to make it and you kids never going to make it. You don't even know how to build a fire right in the middle of snow and _____. I tell my kids. I say I go many miles, many miles. I still go ____ I know how they _____. That's what I tell my kids. People just raised a different way from us. They _____.

Some day starvation come back. There used to be starvation a long time ago. My daddy go through that starvation and he talk about the starvation business. And like today, I tell the people right now—even right now when I go to town, I got to have a car to go to the store to buy something. _____ once you _____. You don't know what I talk about. Instead I'm going to ____ and gas come out _____ and how people going to live. Every time I go some place. I know something's going on. _____ go to store, you got to have a car to go to the store to get groceries. You got to be ___ store. You got to get groceries. One store I pay \$45 a month every year. Every one year. I go to that store to pay my stuff. _____ a little store I go. I _____ and take out my cards and put them in a machine before I get something. _____ I go. I got _____ I got four other—four kids together right there and _____ and _____ I give ___ dollar. I get ten dollar back. _____ go put my--_____ my cards through that machine. And I forgot that card. I've had it for _____ right there something—I've seen what's going on. I started to think about it.

END OF TAPE 1

SIDE B

.....and all that. You get card to _____. You got credit cards. Sometime they overdraw their credit cards and they _____. _____ they don't know. They don't know what's going to happen after this _____ everything's going on. Nobody—I don't think nobody know. _____ same way, same thing. That's all they think. But they don't know something come up; all the way true. Something—Different thing come up. Since I was young, I know. Even _____ I know. Even in here I know what's going on. Sometime _____ sometime nothing. Sometime not much game. I know what's going on; what's going to happen. I tell them something come up. Starvation. Take care of your food. _____ you want. Nothing. But some just stay—they going to see something come up. Starvation. They _____ store. They get into store, sometimes _____ anything, they got no money. _____ nothing. _____. They got pocket money _____ to buy something. But they _____ nobody going to have anything _____ people. That's what I know who gets young people right now. _____ like that. When they go to school. Sometime I used to go to school and I used to teach kids like that. How many days _____ I didn't do that and I'm feeling worse. I didn't _____ no more.

That's good. I got tired again.

END OF STATEMENT

Robert John, Jr., Mentasta Lake
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

What I wanted to bring up was trespasses on the hunting land—my hunting—or the hunting land because there is a lot of hunters going through here to go up to where our hunting lands—there's a—I know there's a lot of hunters in the area.

But there's more commercial hunting and when they do go up that road, they do trespass on our land and when they do go hunting—This is about fifteen years ago, we went to check out up there at the land—our hunting area. And I remembered seeing at least ten moose carcasses on the ground, dead, with their horns on or their leg there. And I don't think that's right.

I don't know how to—I don't know—if I'm wording this right. But they are trespassing on our moose. Like grandma Katie said, we use everything on our moose. We don't just use the horn or the steak pieces.

But a lot of our moose and a lot of caribou—For instance we were out hunting over at—up at Ross Creek; we call that Ross Creek where our hunting ground is. Just last fall we were up there. We were hunting caribou. I mean we weren't hunting caribou, we ran into a few caribou. I remember when that caribou was a big a herd. Now there's only a few. But when we tried to track this three or four caribous we found, we tried to track it. Then two four-wheelers drove by us. Right by us. And then you heard a couple of big bangs about five minutes later. And that's what's happening on our hunting area. And I just want to say it's not right because we don't take advantage of our moose. We don't go and kill more than we need.

We want—I want it to be stopped the hunting parties coming in and coming out with five or six horns. I mean, I don't know. That's just what I wanted to say. There's other issues, but that's what I really wanted to talk about because I hunt every fall.

BURGESS: Thank you. Questions by the Commissioners? Have you reported some of the trespassing to the State Troopers or to U.S. Fish and Wildlife? Anybody like that?

JOHN: No. Back then what we did was—we went to Grandma Katie and Grandma Katie said—she told us what to do from there and it wasn't very nice what we did. But we did what she told us to do. I don't know if I should say it or not. But (laughter in the background) we did what she told us to do. We went and confiscated all their tires and windows on their cars at _____. But we haven't seen them back since, but they are coming back. Its going to probably happen again if don't—if it don't stop.

BURGESS: Right. I understand. Okay. Any other questions? Thank you very much. I appreciate your testimony.

END OF STATEMENT

Robert John, Jr., Mentasta Lake
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005
2nd Testimony

Hi. I just wanted to mention that along with that—My name's Robert John again. I'm from here, Mentasta. My grandma is Katie John _____. My mom and dad is Yvonne and Robert John.

I just wanted to say that when they do and come and kill the moose and they leave it, and they do leave a lot of trash behind with them. And I just want—If they do go hunt, I want to them to at least to clean up after themselves and I know they are crossing our river where the salmon goes. I just want to say that it was brought to my attention that it wasn't the people killing the salmon, it was the beaver dams or the beavers that's blocking that salmon run.

And that was what I wanted to say, that they're leaving behind a lot of trash and I was taught not to do that. I was taught to clean up my camp; clean up my area. And I can go show you the camp right now that we don't have trash – you can go about a half a mile up and you can see trash in their camps. That campsite. Just this fall one of my cousins, he found a homebrew and he took it to the camp and he said didn't say nothing. He just walked up to that camp—the other campsite and gave them their brew and he walked away. And that was _____ to clean up the camp. Thank you.

BURGESS: Thank you.

END OF STATEMENT

Donna Pennington, Ahtna Board of Directors
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

My name is Donna Pennington. I live here in Mentasta when I'm not up in Tok. I'm on the Ahtna Board of Directors and I want to follow up on a little bit of what Robert John Junior was talking about.

This problem has been going on ever since ANCSA started. Ahtna itself had 1.7 million acres conveyed to them. And as a Regional Corporation, it's really hard and very expensive to patrol all of that land and comply with the State of Alaska regulations that we must post it every 100 feet. We posted much of it. But people come through and tear them down. And when it comes down to it, the legal system seems to be stacked in the favor of the trespasser. We have been unable on many levels from the Regional Corporations, from the village council side even as individuals to get any trespass dealt with from the State of Alaska.

The State Troopers came to a Trespassing Summit that Ahtna hosted in 2003 and I was told to my face by more than one Trooper, it is their unwritten policy to not prosecute trespass on Native lands. They won't put this in writing. But we just have too much land. So we are being discriminated against when it comes to not only just responding to the call, but prosecuting it in court. Ahtna has spent considerable monies on this issue.

I think its unfair burden that's been placed on the Natives because of this. We— Currently, we can call the Troopers from this village. There have been calls to this day—health and welfare calls, that babies were in danger and they were not responded to, to this day. They are on record. However we had one person catch a moose once and I'll tell you what, they were all over her because she's Native.

The priority over at the State of Alaska must change. Our health and welfare issues must be addressed before they start arresting our people for food.

And the other thing is all of the State agencies need education. It's not just the Troopers. It's Health and Welfare, its Social Security, its other agencies. They have this perception of Natives and I know some of the calls that have been called into the State Troopers, if there's even alcohol involved, automatically you're guilty whether you've been the victim or not. I won't go into detail on some of

those and I hope other people talk on them because there's too many issues for just ten minutes for me.

Our people are being discriminated against protecting their own land. Even our Native allotments are not being protected. An example is the Copper Valley Electric Association is crossing Native allotments and refuse to compensate these Natives. We can't even get BLM to respond. BIA. It doesn't matter. All agencies you are at fault for the lack of enforcement.

We keep getting new regulations placed on us. Ahtna, itself has had to spend a lot of money responding to the—what I consider a hostile legislature.

Currently there is some bills right now; they want access across all of our Native lands without compensation. Now where else in the United States does that happen?

One of them has access to every river and lake. That applies to all us. We selected our lands based on our subsistence patterns. We wanted to protect those patterns; those lands. An example right now is down in Chitna. The State of Alaska is trying aggressively to figure out a way that they can have access through Chitna lands to the Copper River while Chitna has to go through the expense of paying for a surveyor and putting up a fence and they're only going to leave one mile for people to hunt on. Those ___ going to go up in arms. It's their right to protect their land. The O'Brady Creek, they selected it to protect subsistence and now we are being attacked by a hostile State government that's going to do anything it can to obtain access there.

That's just another example. Bone Creek, we cannot stop all the hunters that go up there. The Tribe needs to be empowered in some way. _____ who's the Ahtna land manager now and myself, we want to talk about the role of tribal governments in prosecuting trespass and this is just a new idea that we'd like to propose the idea that other agencies need to be empowering our Tribes because our Corporations can't do it. Not without being the long drawn out expense.

But its not our responsibility to. It's the State of Alaska's. We are equal citizens of the State of Alaska. If I wouldn't count on some non-Natives private property, ___ shot a moose, I'd be in jail. However, we watch a lot of people come through here. Our attitude toward the State of Alaska right now is not very high because they only seem to enforce what the Trooper's priority is that day. It just does not fit in with our. Their unwritten policy needs to be written out because I can tell

you it is discriminatory. Our people live in fear sometimes out here because we know we cannot get Trooper response.

Certain issues--there a couple of years old Not only will they not answer some of them, many times we've been told to contact Tok; contact Glenallen. We're in the Glenallen District, but we're fifty miles closer to Tok. We've gotten the runaround, the runaround, the runaround. I personally made some calls and gotten the Fairbanks Dispatch and I still hadn't gotten a response back from the Troopers.

There is no real law enforcement out here. This is why poaching runs rampant. We watch more moose come out of this valley—this is our moose. This is what we eat. We feed our families. When we catch a moose, it feeds the whole village. The law needs to be adjusted somehow to recognize that we're not just feeding our family like the non-Natives do. We have an individual Elder who has just recently arrested in the Ahtna Region. He was turned in for poaching. _____ illegal. But all his life, it wasn't illegal to get moose when his family was hungry. And so now he's facing a thousand dollar fine, jail time. I forget how old he is. He's in his 80's. Our Elders need to be treated better than that.

MSTC has to spend a lot of money defending our rights. We have the COPS program and the VPSO. I mean this is because the State of Alaska would not enforce their own laws on our lands. We could not get them to respond to the rural areas. And I know the Department of Justice thinks that we're on the highway so therefore we get enforcement, but that's not the case. It really isn't.

The Judicial system; if you look at the statistics—I missed you last time in Anchorage, but I did see that you provided statistics. That's—I don't know why its not raising red flags anywhere. That is a sign of discrimination to me. If not, then let's get help to these individuals. The money is not there. All these agencies said, oh well help somebody if they come to us for help for alcohol, but the money is not there. The follow-up is not there.

The State of Alaska needs to realize this is a long term problem. You can't just treat a person once and let them go and expect it to be fixed. Some issues are lifetime issues. FAE. FAS. They've created a program, but they don't realize you need to fund it for a lifetime, not just a week. This is why our programs are failing.

Law Enforcement—The Judicial System, I think is unfairly stacked too towards Natives. We make up the majority of the population in jail. Nobody has ever done a study on this. For some reason people think this number is average for Natives.

This is not average for all populations of the world. There's a problem. We need money put into it.

Child abuse. I did not do child abuse. It happened in my lifetime. We never got a Trooper response. It happens today. We're very fortunate that the people have been educated to this point, but that's a silent epidemic. Its even more silent than the domestic abuse. That happens too. And I don't want someone to have to die before the Troopers will finally respond to us.

I'm building a place up in Indian Pass Lake. I've been threatened. I've had gun leveled at me. I've reported it to the Troopers. I don't want to be the next victim before somebody comes up there and responds. The same individual leveled a gun at a Trooper. At least they got a report out of it.

The hostility that we get from trying to defend our lands. We need help. We need help educating all of these agencies. BLM must do their job. BIA must do its job. The State of Alaska; the Troopers must do their job. The regulations are in place, they're just not being enforced.

Its illegal for people to drive across fish bearing streams. They call them _____ streams because the fish lay their eggs there. And yet we can't get a single person to enforce that at this stream up here. This is why we don't have King Salmon up here anywhere. Our salmon are in danger. We write letters to the Army Corp of Engineers to help us with environmental issues. They don't even respond. We're supposed to have a government to government relationship with these people and we can't get our letters answered. There's a file in this office, you can go see – requesting assistance from these agencies who have a fiduciary responsibility to us. Its lip service.

Our people are in fear. Some people don't call the Troopers anymore because we can't get a response. Others—I'm sorry to say, our young men are spending the beginning of their young lives in jail. The money is not coming to our area. You're in Mentasta. We have no playground. Look over there. What are our kids supposed to do? The State of Alaska takes all this money from the Permanent Fund dividend and build something in Anchorage and something in Fairbanks, but they're not giving to the dime to the schools here who need at least the bare minimum of something.

Maybe if we can provide a direction—get them involved—give them something to do, they don't return to alcohol. I think the children are reacting to the abuses and

neglects. And in ways its nobody's fault except for the enforcement agencies. More regulation isn't going to help. Its getting what I consider a hostile State of Alaska to enforce regulations fairly on Native lands. And I'll answer any question. I got much more, but I ___ first up.

BURGESS: Well first of all, I'd like to thank you for your testimony and I don't want you to think that we are not interested in what else you have to say, so my suggestion if you wouldn't mind if – so that we can make sure we have time ___ today, if you can submit the rest of the statement in writing to us so we can have that when we try to make our decisions in regard to recommendations, that would be very helpful.

And I think you've got quite a number of really unfortunate needs that we've heard all too often in areas we have visited. But you also touched upon the ___ statistics that point out the really disproportionate rate that Native Americans are victims of crime. The ___ just came out with a new National study which brings out some for Alaska but we're also trying to gather through the Alaska Native Justice Center for Alaska specific statistics because I think it pretty much calls that National trend in many cases – in ___ even worse than some of the National trends.

So in one statistic that—In _____ a lot of them that are extremely disturbing, but I know you were talking about domestic violence and sexual assaults. We are now first in the Nation in _____. We're also now first in the Nation women being killed by men. So your thoughts are accurate.

PENNINGTON: Thank you. I didn't have time to get into that one. But I can speak all day on many issues. I would've done it in writing, but I just found out about this yesterday. But I will have Ahtna provide a statement also in writing.

BURGESS: I would very much appreciate that.

JUSTIN: Thank you, Donna. I have one question _____ speaking for the record. I think I heard both you and Robert Junior speak to a total lack of response on calls and complaints _____. Did they ask the

question ___ forward and do you know that ever the State of Alaska responded to any complain ____ around Mentasta?

PENNINGTON: Only after Ahtna decided to start prosecuting when we hired our Trespass Officer. He came through and for example the homesteaders up here, we removed their vehicles. We had to go through a long drawn out process of the courts and getting all these writs and all this stuff before we could even do that.

Now once we got that _____ the State of Alaska—The Troopers realized we're serious. Their reports now come ____ with them and got their comments on reports. So we did start getting responses. But I would say that it was after Ahtna started going through a long process – we now having trespass abatement manual our staff must follow. We have hired Trespass Officers – all our new staff over there. This is a considerable expense by Ahtna in order to start getting these responses.

Because once our Trespass Officers started going out there, we needed just a little bit more enforcement authority; they were faced with considerable hostility too. If I could have a copy of ___ report—the incident report done by – where the Ahtna Land Manager went out there and he was threatened; the individual told him _____. This is the kind of attitudes that we've been going out there with and because we had finally approved person of authority, I believe. Just a villager calling the Trooper, isn't a person of authority. You see what I'm saying? But just say that Ahtna Trespassed Officer, that's a person of authority.

JUSTIN: So if I follow up on your question. Did _____ and other _____ the State of Alaska will not or has not responded to any complaints by the person who is a part of the Mentasta ___ Tribal Council or _____. And this is just trespass. I know its _____ other ways, but....

PENNINGTON: Not until Ahtna got involved. I'm pretty sure that I can say with surety that not until Ahtna got involved. And then we had _____ let a Trooper follow up on things. But this brings me back to where we need to empower our Tribal courts a little bit

to where somebody here has the authority to say listen I need you here now. And we don't get a Trooper for two days. That person of authority is already threatened

JUSTIN: Thank you. I appreciate it.

PENNINGTON: Oh. And if I can make one more point now. Some of the individuals that Ahtna has gone after have written letters threatening Ahtna. They want to get the State involved; they want our lands condemned through adverse possession. I mean, we're talking about an attitude that must change. The non-Native perception of our lands must change. It is private property irregardless of who owns it. And this is why—Ahtna is taking a lot of flack for something they shouldn't. Thank you. I can talk all day, but....

JUSTIN: Did you want to _____.

PENNINGTON: Let me work _____ but I do want you guys to have a copy of these because it shows the attitude – the hostility.

BURGESS: _____ does the law enforcement – Ahtna.

PENNINGTON: Yes. I'll run over to the copy—office and make a copy. I keep my own trespass file.

BURGESS: Thank you.

PENNINGTON: In fact, I have a huge trespass file. _____.

BURGESS: Thank you very much.

PENNINGTON: Thank you.

END OF STATEMENT

Donna Pennington, Ahtna Board of Directors
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005
2nd Testimony

Thank you. Donna Pennington again. I want to get back to justice. We're not treated fairly in any arena. The State, the Feds, Park Service, non-Natives coming in. We can't protect our lands, we can't protect our children. We can't protect our Elders. I can't ___ safe myself. That's not right.

The main injustice is that the State of Alaska will not treat Natives as an equal resident of the State. The reason this is being established right here in our village is because you know there is a problem, but you just don't know how big it is. And we can't even give you every detail, but what we can tell you is we're discriminated against. We're penalized for being who we are.

Our people live in fear. We have an individual walking around and her attacker is still around. How can we say we're helping our people when we're living in fear and we feel that there is nothing being done? Nothing will be done. I too, look forward to the results of this Commission because this has been going on for years. Years and Years. Thirty plus years. We have testified before to other people. We've gone to every agency we can. We've been given the lip service. But what I want to know is when are we going to be equal when this is done? Are you going to tell the Troopers you must enforce the law on Native lands too? They're not going to do it unless a powerful Committee such as yourself or Congress says you must treat the Natives of Alaska fairly.

Let's talk about environmental justice. The military built all these roads up here. They buried all their stuff. We have a pit right here at the head waters of our drinking water. We can't even get them to clean up their own contamination. All of our right of ways in Alaska; all the power lines and all those were sprayed with DTA and Agent Orange. We pick berries on those. We have the highest cancer rates of the world, I believe. Right here in Mentasta which is—If you look statistically, the highest rate is cancer. The highest death rate from suicide.

If you want to talk about rural justice, something will be done. You put money into the system; you'll force the agencies to enforce their own regulations.

It hurts me to see my people live in fear. Okay. I know that when you're gone, that fear will still be there. I know that when you're gone these Troopers will still not respond. We've exposed ourselves to more ridicule ___ the State for this.

Discrimination is very ugly. We live it in a day to day environment. Our children, just right now are being discriminated because the State of Alaska won't give them money for a playground. I've already brought that point up. But look at our education system. Because we are rural, we cannot—we have to fight for every dime to teach anything. We can't—It's really frustrating to beat your head up against the same wall when you're dealing with State and Federal agencies. It's really hard to see people trashing your land. Leaving their contaminated waste. Taking all your resources without permission and seeing the government turn a blind eye.

The laws of this land are to be fair including the laws that were supposed to protect us and the laws that are supposed protect the wildlife. If you look at our prosecution rates, we're the only ones being prosecuted for poaching, for example. Not the only ones, but the majority of the cases.

I feel we're easy targets and I'm really depending on you guys to carry this forward because we've spoke about this to many agencies 'til we're blue in the face and yet nothing gets done.

We talk about the high suicide rates. I can see why. We've got young individuals who are no longer allowed to hunt; no longer allowed to practice their culture; no longer allowed to be the individual that we want them to be. Drugs and alcohol are just a side affect.

The main problem of discrimination has not been addressed yet even at a preschool level. It's unfairly being, not taught, but showed. Those agencies that are discriminating, there is no recourse for us. They continue to discriminate.

The State of Alaska--You can have the entire State of Alaska tell you the State Troopers won't respond to Native lands. But what are you going to do about it? What can we see from here? How can I make these people feel better? Safer?

That individual that went around shooting a gun--He was shooting guns. People were trapped in their own homes. To this day, he can still come back. He could walk in here today with that gun and what are you going to do? You'll be as helpless as we were.

I respond to a lot of the domestic violence calls. I'm just a young lady. I should be _____. I'm going to be an Elder here soon. They'll be times I won't be able to. But you know what? I know why they call me because they can't call the State of Alaska.

I know why most of the Natives are in jail and why they have durement towards the State of Alaska. It's a mirror image of what's been shown us. We are clumped in as drunk Natives. Not all of us are drunk Natives. Some of us really fight hard to get others off—to help each community. And it's frustrating. I've been doing this a long time. There's other people that have been doing it a long time. Some of us are numb now to this discrimination. And I hate to say that, but I'm kind of—I have thick skin now. I see it every day that my skin has gotten thick and that's not right because we have young ladies being brought up—their skin isn't as thick as mine. They're going to get out here in the world and they're going to get torn apart. And a lot of this kind of started when we were young. We weren't taught how to defend ourselves against the non-Native aggressor who knows the laws; who knows the rules.

We have regulations put on us now with the Federal Subsistence Regulations just to get a caribou around here. You got to know which boundary you're in; which area. Unit 11. Then you've got to know where the Federal boundaries are and then the State boundaries and then every hunter really has no chance against you guys. We have no chance. And as soon as we find a way somehow, we're beaten down.

The State of Alaska didn't even have a law against gambling until a Native decided we could be like those guys and have economic development. We can do _____ and have gambling. There's a chance. But no, no, no, no. The State of Alaska clamped down on that first. Somehow we don't have those rights.

And I feel that sometimes these laws are being made in response to what's happening to us in the courts. I can't say enough that the biggest point we probably have is discrimination by all agencies.

And when you leave here, I want you guys to think about it through this testimony you've heard. You better cry for that young girl because she has to live with this when you're gone. That person would still be here too next week when you're gone. The Troopers won't _____. And what happens next time? What if _____ threatened all her life? Or my life? My life's been threatened many times. The

Troopers don't care. You don't care not as individuals. People who know me, maybe. But really, the law doesn't. Only after I'm dead, will something happen if it came to that.

But the many times that my life's been threatened, I've stared down the barrel of a gun. I realize that I was on my own. The State of Alaska wasn't going to help. I can't call Lars. He's got things to do too. But sometimes we feel like we are the law. So if we're going to be the law, we better need more authority.

Thank you.

END OF STATEMENT

Shawn Sanford
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

Hi. My name is Shawn Sanford.

One thing I wanted to talk about is domestic violence. We have domestic violence in our community and the Cops get called and they don't respond. And if they do respond, it's usually three days later. When someone's getting beaten up, they don't respond at all.

I wanted to clarify what Lisa was talking about, about this person not from the community. They were a non-Native person and they beat up about four or five people around here. One guy was medi-vac'd out of here to Anchorage. And he pulled guns on people and the Troopers never came down. He got beat up; the Troopers were here that day investigating that.

And also to get turned in before and in return they turned the person in for shooting a moose, the Troopers were down here investigating that day.

I know a lot of times when we have domestic violence in the community it's usually up to the community members to help out the person that needs help because the Troopers won't respond.

I notice they respond a lot more when its non-Natives that are in danger.

With trespassing too, we've gone up there and seen people trespassing and we try to go talk to them to inform them that they're trespassing and they've pulled guns on our people too. The Troopers haven't come down for that either. They haven't responded.

I know one time when I was younger there was some non-Natives that accused my uncle of robbing them. They came up with a gun. They wanted to shoot him. He hid from them and we called the Troopers and they didn't respond to the—but when these non-Natives called the Troopers and reported my uncle for robbing them, they responded that day.

There's a—This village was a dry village that just voted to become a damp village. And the village would turn people in for bringing alcohol into the village. The Troopers wouldn't respond to that. There's been people banished from this village and the Troopers did not enforce those banishments neither.

We had a Cop through the COPS program and the Troopers wouldn't acknowledge that Officer either.

I thought that was a good opportunity for the Troopers to work with him to enforce laws here in the community, but they wouldn't acknowledge him.

That's all I wanted to say.

BURGESS: Thank you. One of the things that—the law enforcement working group has been working on is trying to come up with a way for the different law enforcement agencies in the State to ___ what kind of training other ___ officers have when it's a village _____ officers so that they can feel comfortable when they talk to that person and understanding who it is they're talking to; what kind of training they've had and one of the things they are taking a look at. But I guess the other thing I want to tell you is its not an uncommon theme we've been hearing about a lot is law enforcement out-- in response to calls to a community when they need somebody whether they're not getting out at all or whether it's taking a long time to get out. And this is important for us to hear this and it's also _____ you're not alone in having that problem.

JUSTIN: Thank you, Shawn. I have two quick questions. The first one, when you talked about someone named ___ and there's no help from the State Troopers. Do you _____ the—What I'm trying to get at is presumably the person that's being _____ enforce ___ state is..

SANFORD: Yes.

JUSTIN: Right?

SANFORD: Yes.

JUSTIN: You have to go. And ____ causing trouble. Do the State Troopers come in later on if you make repeated calls about that same person? Or _____?

SANFORD: I have never seen them come down. It was the same person Lisa was talking about. He assaulted at least four or five people. They have never come down until he got beat up and they were here that day.

JUSTIN: What I'm trying to clarify for the record is that it doesn't matter really what or how the Tribal Council does try and protect its citizens here, it only matters ____ and it sounds like to me, it really matters what the color the person is, is what determines the response. That's kind of what I'm trying to get at here.

SANFORD: Yeah. That's what I've seen.

JUSTIN: I just needed clarification. The other question is you spoke about domestic violence. In domestic violence cases, one of those things that nobody keeps tracks of and there's no statistics because people _____ draw back ____ but just off the top of your head tell me in the last 90 days, how many times the Troopers were called on domestic violence situations.

SANFORD: I'm not too sure. It's not always reported when it happens. But I know it does happen and another thing I know is if the person that's getting beaten up is drinking or drinking alcohol, they won't respond either. And to me that's not right because they're still a victim, regardless if they're drinking or not.

JUSTIN: Thank you. I appreciate it.

SCHUTT: How much does the Tribal Council intervene or play a role in domestic violence since the Troopers don't seem to respond?

SANFORD: They don't really intervene unless it's brought to the Tribal Council. But the community members have—there's times when community members have to intervene just to protect that person while they're getting beaten up. That's what I'm talking about.

SCHUTT: I see.

SANFORD: The community. But if it's brought to the Tribal court, they'll take them to Tribal court and it's up to the victim to do that.

BURGESS: Well thank you very much.

END OF STATEMENT

Elaine Simeon, Chistochina Tribal Council
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

Hi. My name is Elaine Simeon and I work for Chistna Tribal Council which is in Chistochina. I've worked there for the last ten or twelve years.

The Tribal Council of Chistochina has been around since way before I've been and the Tribal Council has always handled issues and problems in the village; things that come up.

In the last few years, as you know, Tribal Court and Circle Sentencing has become a thing that the villages are utilizing. The Village of Chistochina has utilized these and we've found that the people that come through these—the Court or the Circle, they feel better about sitting down and talking with your own Tribal government rather than working things out with the State system.

In the State system, what people don't know—the people before them, they don't have their best interest at heart where I think in the villages you find this. People want to work out solutions and they go out of their way to do this and it helps them in the long run.

Like everybody else, one of the things is the no response from the Troopers even though we're on the road system. We're not even fifty miles from Glennallen but sometimes we call and there's no response. And like everybody else said, it depends on what it is and who is calling.

Another thing that has been brought up is trespass. We have a lot of trespass in Chistochina and the Troopers don't deal with it. We have to deal with a lot of it. One of the bigger ones we had problems with was on the Chistochina River Trail and the Trail--the Elders told us—they always—it was being ruined. And so we started calling around trying to get help about it and no one ever responded. And so finally the village took it upon themselves to come up with a documentary on the Chistochina River Trail and we had it published. And it wasn't until we went did that, that there was some notes taken and some action done on that Trail. But it's a far beyond __ now.

The other thing is the dispatch system and this is just for Glennallen. At times when the Troopers aren't in their offices, there are calls that go in—go straight to Anchorage or Fairbanks or wherever. So when you call in, the people that answer it they don't know where you're at so you have to take the time to explain to them where that—where this place is at and what's going. And then it just stops there. It never goes anywhere else. So sometimes you wonder where--some of these calls are serious and there's just no call back to let people know that it got heard and it's being taken care of.

I know years ago the dispatch used to be local in Glennallen, but now pretty much all the calls, I think, get patched through so it's hard to get a hold of the local Troopers in Glennallen.

The other thing I wanted to touch on is that like everybody else has said that the State needs to recognize the Tribes because the Tribes have been here doing what they've been doing for many, many, many years and they've dealt with their issues and their problems and the State can't come in and tell you what to do if they don't know what we've been doing.

Our Tribal court is really now starting to get active, but the State isn't recognizing them. So we only get cases that they think we can handle even though there are many of those out there we can address.

They just need to communicate with us and recognize us as a Tribal sovereignty entity. We have many other partnerships out there. We have government to government relationships with the National Park Service, with the Bureau of Land Management but the State itself won't recognize us as a Tribal entity and they need to do that.

Thank you.

JUSTIN: One round-about question. I know that you were talking about trespass on the Chistochina Trail and that's just one system, one individual _____. Who knows how many. Can you, off the top of your head, give us a number for the record of what you think it cost Chistna to document the trespass _____ for that video documentary you spoke of.

SIMEON: From start to finish with all the time involved and the working of it, over a \$50,000.

BURGESS: Thank you very much.

END OF STATEMENT

Lisa Wolf, Second Chief
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

Hi. I'm Lisa Wolf. I'm Lotha Wolf's daughter. Katie John's great-niece. I am on the Board of the Mentasta Traditional Council. I serve as Second Chief. I served as First Chief for five years before this year.

My concern was about law enforcement here in Mentasta. Many times we live in fear here. There was an incident we had here – a guy that didn't even belong here; wasn't from here, but was going out with one of the members of our village. _____ went around with a gun threatening people. I was serving as First Chief at that time. I called the Troopers. The Troopers never responded. So I called the Anchorage State Troopers and I just got the run around on the phone -- call here; call here; call here; call here and we just kept living in fear until this guy finally got hurt. He walked around after that.

I mean we just—All kinds of incidents like this. We have—We call end up getting Fairbanks Dispatch. Then a Trooper will sometimes will call or else he will say we'll call or they will respond maybe about a week later—two or three days to a week later, by then we're over with our anger and a lot of us we tend to forgive easily. But then—I don't know.

We have a lot of problems with getting help here with the Troopers. We try and build traditional laws with our old ways like grandma Katie says, we want to be equal; we want our traditional laws to be equal as the White law or the Western law or whatever you call it.

We have to obey the White law or else we will go to jail. But the White law or—I don't know how you put it—won't even acknowledge our traditional laws or our tribal laws or anything that we had put out—If we ask a court to help us ban someone, they won't even—they won't even acknowledge our banning and people are able to come back into our village and threaten us at any time. We have to live in fear. We can't get these people out of here because we can't get no help.

This is my main concern. I have children. I have to keep them in the home because I fear for them. I want nothing ___ my children or my nephews or anything. And it's just not right.

Its time for us to be equal with our—the State of Alaska to start acknowledging our traditional and tribal laws and helping us out with it. That’s the way I feel. Thank you.

JUSTIN: Thank you, Lisa. I have a question. You talked about the individual that had become-- being _____ involved and no response....

END OF TAPE 1
SIDE A

JUSTIN: ...without any Troopers around or any kind of protection. Was it a day? Two days? Hours?

WOLF: I believe it was—Was it a three days later that you got threatened? Three days later my mother got threatened and she called the Troopers and still the nothing—there was no response.

JUSTIN: So how long was that, did he stay?

WOLF: About two months.

JUSTIN: Probably two months.

WOLF: _____. They finally ran into the wrong person and got hurt.

JUSTIN: Thank you. That’s all I wanted to know.

BURGESS: The Troopers never come out and respond to that?

WOLF: No.

UNKNOWN PERSON: When he got hurt, they finally responded. When he got hurt.

WOLF: When he got hurt they finally responded, but it was almost two months later. And then one of our tribal—we charged with is assault but they never come out to intervene when he was assaulting people with guns and shooting around. _____ come out and investigate.

BURGESS: Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much for your testimony.

END OF STATEMENT

Lotha Wolf, Mentasta and Chistochina Tribal Council
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Mentasta
April 26, 2005

Hi. I'm Lotha Wolfe. I work for the Mentasta and Chistochina Tribal Council. I'm their ICWA Coordinator.

And my main concern is with the ICWA program and the reason why I—Its really dear to my heart because I work with these children. And I had a lot of issues and block that I had work through especially when I had to work with children with the State.

I came across an issue when I first got into this program almost five years ago. I had some children that had special needs and the children were FAS and the State had custody of these children. So now was placed into an institution in different homes which were not Native homes. They were some children home and everything. And we intervened and tried to see if we can get the children into some of kind of program to help these children because of their special needs; their FAS.

And I found out to my ___ that the State didn't have any such program for FAS kids. None at all. The only way I can be able to help them, I had to get them into a mental health to determine whether their mental ill before they could get any help. And I argued, argued back. I told them they're not mental children; they're FAS. They're brain damaged children. They're not mental. And we went around and around and around. I had to contact different agencies in Anchorage and Juneau and tried to get across to the agencies that I need money for these kids to help them.

I can't just let them be moved from institution to institution. We didn't have no place in Alaska to put these FAS kids to get any kind of basic skill or anything for them to learn. They said well we have places out in the States where we send these kids. And I find out that's where all the FAS kids went to. I said no, we're not going to send our kids out there. It's not right. These kids got to be home. These kids got to be with their family. These kids have to—The only way they learn—they're special need is in their home from their care taker; from their village. They can't leave these kids somewhere and then be forgotten.

Well anyway, they had one of the kids in North Star. They drugged him up and he was deteriorating in there for over three months when we went to see him. He didn't know who we were. He didn't know who he was. He was just mentally worse than—And it was so heart broken and I finally went and said well I'm going to try to get a lawyer for this boy. So I went and asked—went to a meeting. I asked—I said I need somebody to represent a sixteen year old boy that was put into an institution; he's FAS. He needs somebody to represent him; to speak for him because he shouldn't be there.

So they went ahead and moved him out of there and put him into another service which was a little better. And I asked them to wean him off those medication. He doesn't need no medication. Well to make a long story a little short; we finally got him back home anyhow. We weaned him off his medication. Now he's off medication. He's back to school. He's back to normal. He's a wonderful, helpful kid now. But these things shouldn't happen. They should never happen.

I still ask where the money is going to come for these kids. And they said, well we're still working on it. We'll try to build a place; we'll try to get a place somewhere in town. I said why it's got to be in town? It should be where—the service should be where the kids need it. At their home. Some kind of thing should happen. Here. Even the family could start a home for them and learn how to take care of them. Have people learn to—money in there for therapeutic people. They might be a therapeutic family. It deserves money.

We can't do all these service our self, but we don't have any of those kinds of—we can't send people to school without any kind of money or anything like that. We're just struggling. We're just –how to say—most everything we do is volunteer. We do get a little bit of money for ICWA and its not very much. But at least its there __ help our people for eyes and ears for the State also because – we are mandatory to report a lot of – we do report them. But we're on top of it also. We already intervene. We're always there to help to make sure that its not going any further; its not spreading out. We're always—We try to prevent these things from happening before it even happens. If we note there—problems start arriving, we try to intervene; we try to get into the problem before—And if we don't have a program anymore because what the government is saying that well the State is doing a good job; the State has social worker working here-- we'll put more social worker on; we don't need the ICWA program. No. I don't think its right. I think you do need it. I do think its one of the savior for the children because the children can't speak for themselves. The children can't do these things for themselves. Somebody got to be there for them.

This is the only thing that we—we real concerned. We have a lot of other issues. A lot of other problems. But we have other people here to speak to these other issues. But this is my issue that I very, very concerned about. You got anything for me?

BURGESS: Thank you. I appreciate your testimony.

JUSTIN: Thank you. I have a question on the—part of your statement you said-- you mentioned that you were directed or told to seek a mental health evaluation or take the FAS child to a mental health institution. My question is, was that a part of the State's approach to the way to handle it? Or?

WOLF: That's the way they—That's the only way they could have handled it. That's the only way they could have dealt with it is to put him into an institution or sent him out to the State where they have programs for FAS.

The State of Alaska don't have a place for FAS kids in Alaska. Just recently they finally started working on some kind of system to be able to accommodate the FAS kids. But I haven't seen anything to this day that and they been on this for almost four years trying to approach the agency to move up-- pick up their process. But so far I haven't.....

JUSTIN: So you're saying that an FAS/FAE child has two choices in Alaska today. The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority process or they go....

WOLF: Well right now if you bring up this question to other villages, we've gone to these conference—ICWA conference where they—you'll hear some real terrible horror story from what I have. The FAS kids also are all -- part of them are all in institution out state or in North Star and they don't have any other program for any of these kids.

JUSTIN: Thank you.

BURGESS: I just want to thank you for the work you're doing because I appreciate that. And also just to echo what you – when you

mentioned the importance of family. I've been ___ prosecution for a long time now and I have seen first hand how important that is to kids' if they're going to be successful. Thank you.

WOLF: You're welcome.

END OF STATEMENT