

June 9, 2009

Ramona Bennett (Interviewee)

Location: Rainbow Youth and Family Service, Tacoma, Washington.

Cecelia La Pointe-Gorman (Interviewer, University of Washington, Tacoma)

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Preparing for the part two of Interview

Ramona: Segment two, the ninth, this is the ninth?

Cecelia: Yeah.-This is June 9, 2009. We're here with Ramona Bennett, Matt Nagel, and Cheryl Milles and Dawn Quinn and Cecelia La Pointe Gorman and David Octuck (camera) and Brent Anderson (camera). And we're here to interview Ramona Bennett about the Puyallup Tribal history. And we're really honored to be here.

Ramona: Good afternoon, this is segment two. In segment one, we established the hospital, and in segment two we will be loosing the hospital. It's just the story of our tribe. The hospital was approved tribal members were compensated in twenty-nine (1929) by the judgment role, and then the construction actually began. And the hospital was set up as the regional facility, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. It was regional hospital. Top of the line everything, modernistic, futuristic, like something out of the "Jetsons."It was an amazing facility, and immediately our neighbors became insanely jealous and hateful, just haters, [here the] like the last brick wasn't in place when they started conniving around on how to take it away from us. But, they couldn't prevail because we had been hit by Tuberculosis epidemic. And so this facility, which was envisioned to take care of all health needs, became very specialized, very quickly, and there was a clinic downstairs for Indian people. I remember very well being stripped down to my bloomers. It was like running a gauntlet they examined you in sections. We got our inoculations, whatever they did back in those days. And then they weighed us in, and they loved

to take out tonsils in that place. And so, they always checked our tonsils. And examined our little ears, but each room specialized in checking up on a different part of you. And you went from being examined. You had them checking your heart rate, your reparation, your height, your weight, giving your shots. It was a nightmare, it was a nightmare! It was nothing; it was nothing that anybody ever wanted to do. But my mom like to come down here and visit her sister Alice every chance she got. She'd use me for an excuse, and there'd I'd be running around in my underwear just so my mom could eat macaroni and cheese and have a few beers with her sister.

5:30

This is when we lived in Seattle, we lived in Bremerton. So anyway, I know for sure there was a clinic. Because I saw it often, and than the rest of the facility I know Joe Del la Cruz's nightmare story about them coming with buses and loading up all of the Quinault children and bringing them in...and mast for have their tonsils taken out. And you know, the parents just let that happen for whatever reason. And I am sure they took out apedics or two. But mostly right away it became tuberculosis sanatorium. And Tuberculosis had become an epidemic in the thirties (1930s0 and I just recently became aware of that through family correspondence. I came across some old letters that and the letters were from the late thirties and from various friends and associates and relatives of my moms who [were] writing to her from Yakima and Seattle and different places where they were in T.B. Sanatoriums, this was a long epidemic. This was from the late thirties all the way through probably to the late fifties.

7:07

Are we okay? Are you sure? You look worried... (Talks with camera person) So anyway, it became a TB sanatorium and this was another pandemic because they brought Indians down

from Alaska by the boatload, they brought Indians in from Montana, they brought Indians in from all over this region, to that hospital. I could think of it as a butcher shop because they just wacked them up. My poor uncle Johnny they took out a lung, and then they took another half of a lung. At first they took out one lung, and then they trained him to be sheet-metal worker, like you can almost lift sheet metal with just one lung. And they took out another half a lung, and then they trained him to be a pipefitter. I mean these poor Indians, [had] no chance at all.

But anyway it was a TB sanatorium for a long time and there was a lot of suffering and there was a lot of dying. And that not specific or particular to Indian, a lot of people had Tuberculosis, they just happened to be, what we're just most familiar with, which is what happened to us. And I can call it a butcher shop, but they used exactly the same techniques on everyone that had tuberculosis. They just didn't know what to do. They didn't have a cure, and they thought if they could get rid of the infected lung somehow the person was going to rebound back. And it was dreadful and so we have on one side all these haters, totally pissed off because the Indians have this beautiful facility. And on the other hand we have the government just shipping all of these Indians to this facility, because it's the only hospital in the region, and so the hospital was well used. A whole bunch of things happened around that hospital being here.

Our Puyallup is located in which is commonly as Tacoma, Washington, and we have Fort Lawton up in Seattle, and Fort Lewis here in Tacoma. And we had a lot of Indians who mustered out of the military and had no place to go back to. They didn't go back to their reservations. They didn't know their reservation; they went right from boarding school to the military, with no home place. And so, they mustered out here, and they stayed here. Then we had all these Indians who came to Cushman Hospital. And I hate that its name was Cushman, because Cushman, you'll remember from the earlier recording-was the congressman who passed the law that made

it possible for us to sell our property, whether we wanted to, or not. And so then they named this butcher shop after this same ignorant person that checker boarded and destroyed our reservation.

So anyway the Cushman Hospital was the receiving place for these ones who were sick and of course their families came. That's how Clyde's (Ramona's Husband) family came down from lower Elwha. His brother had tuberculosis, or his uncle Lowell had tuberculosis when he came down to the hospital the whole family came here. Because how would you send your sick child off to a hospital and not go with them? And so Clyde's dad mustered out of the Army at Fort Lewis after WWII, so now he's in Tacoma. And so, I think he actually got a job at the hospital. And he was an orphan, he went right from school to the military, he had no place to go back to, he was Chocataw, and so that's how that family happened, through the hospital. That's where they met. And a lot of these families that came here from the hospital, just stayed here.

And so, we have from the thirties through the forties, we have all of the Indians gravitating to Tacoma, simply because the hospital is here. And we also have migrated workers, which came out here to the valley. And then in the fifties this reservation was used as a relocation center, to get rid of all these Indians. Because the government didn't realize this was still a reservation. They had so nicely sold it all off that they believed that we no longer existed. And so here is the Puyallup tribe attempting to survive homeless on our own reservation. Some job opportunities because of the hospital, absolutely no fishing, and its like a soup or something, it was such an odd mixture of circumstances, we have this hospital now is under siege. This tuberculosis epidemic is waning; those ones who are still infected are being siphoned off into different sanatoriums. The hospital it's self is no longer needed for all of those surgeries. There isn't an Indian kid left with tonsils anywhere in the region.

And so now our neighbors who are our enemies are going to prevail. They're going to close our hospital, and they did. And so, they...I ought to be able to nail down this date exactly, in 1976 it had been nineteen years, okay what is that you guys? Fifty seven?

Cecelia: fifty seven, fifty eight is had been closed sixty one, it opened up again sixty one as a detention center?

Ramona: We'll get there. It was conveyed to the state, what did I say fifty seven? In 1957 or near than, or about than. Our enemies prevailed. The hospital was taken out of Indian service. The United States government negotiated an agreement with Washington State. Washington State wanted the facility. And of course they had there constituents saying, "get that hospital away from those damn Indians, who do they think they are?" So in about 1957 the hospital...Indian Health conveyed the facility to Washington State, Washington State Social and Health Services or whatever they were called than, decided to use it as a Juvenile Diagnostic Center. By Juvenile Diagnostic Center, what we're talking about is a State bogymen. They were going to use the facility to house kids who were behaviorally acting out, they were going to diagnose their little problems were and that implies that they were going to do some kind of treatment. But clearly it was the State Bogymen. If you don't be good, we're going to send you to Cascadia. That's what it was named.

16:49

And so our beautiful facility now is in the hands of state, and they set it up, they set it up so twenty-six kids were in each pod or section. Now you take twenty six disturbed kids and you put them all together, and you isolate them from all of the people that care about them, and let's observe them, and diagnose what their problem is. It was a sick concept, it was bad, and it was

bad practice. It was bad practice from a social worker's point of view, from a clinician's point of view; it was just a bad practice.

And so, when I come on council in sixty-eight, that facility had been in full operation for seven years, sixty one. Cecelia believes it was in sixty one when they instituted and implemented their diagnostic program. It already was already a legend, it was a bad practice. And so, I come on council and my office. My first office that I was able to set up was actually at Urban League. I come into town with all kinds of things I wanted to get done. And we had a busted typewriter, and a busted filing cabinet, and the Bureau had all of our records, as I said earlier, we didn't have control over the river, we didn't have clear title to one acre of property, and we absolutely had no budget. There hadn't been an enrollment, a certified enrollment since 1929. And this was already 1968.

We have a medium life-span of forty-five years, so we were pretty much getting down to it. And what else didn't we have, well obviously no educational services, no health services, no job opportunities. We were pretty much so on empty. We had zip and I had been working in Seattle with the "American Indian Service League" and "Seattle Indian Center's All American Dance Club." And what was the beginning of "United Indians" and I what we needed and I knew what we needed to do and how to get it. But I didn't have a base to operate from. And Bernie Whitebear and I had already written out a complete plan for Fort Lawton, assuming we we're going to get the whole thing. So we already had our plan written up and its all in my head.

And so, as I mentioned before, Alice Buelber and Silas Cross were a 100% for reacquiring the land. And Maiselle Bridges and Don Matheson were 100% for reestablishing the fisheries. And I had just come to the reservation from Seattle, and I was 110% for establishing

the services that we were entitled to. Under our treaty right, and so the five of us put our heads together and they gave me the go ahead to do whatever I needed to do, to get the things done that we needed to get done. And so I've been working with coalitions in Seattle. And so I headed right up to Urban League and I just went right in, and said, my name is Ramona Bennett, and I've been elected to the Puyallup tribal council, we have a lot of work to do, we need to reestablish the tribe, and we have zip, we have zero. I have no base to operate from. And Tom Dixon who was then the director of Urban League said, "There's your desk, there's your typewriter, there's your phone, there's your copy machine, and there's your secretary. Just operate out of here as long as you need too." And I did.

22:00

I set up and I just right away started pushing Indian Health and the Bureau and HEW, all of these different programs that had legal responsibility for providing these services that we were lacking. And I just got on them. And they didn't recognize us, we've been elected but the Bureau continued recognizing Frank Wright Sr. because he never pushed them to do anything. He had an Office, an OEO office; it was what was called the CAP program (Community Action Program). He had a Community Action Program that he and Lena Landry worked at. And they were fine, so they had no problems, they weren't creating any problems for Indian Health or the Bureau and the government liked it that way. And they continued recognizing the recalled council; the government did for close to two years.

And Maiselle, Don, Alice and Silas and realized is that, unless we recognize ourselves, no one is going to recognize us. And if you're going to be a government, than act like a government, take responsibility and so we did. We had called, called, called the Bureau for

protection for our fishermen. And called and called and called them, because that is a federal responsibility, it's a treaty right. There's a Washington State Enabling Act, when the State became a State they had to commit to abiding by, and enforcing our treaty right. That was part of Washington becoming a State. And it was Washington that was arresting our fishermen and promulgating all these illegal laws. And so, one of the first things that we did, is we've begin protecting our own fishermen. And we began advocating for healthcare, and advocating within the school system for some reduction in the blatant racism that our children were encountering. And we just started taking it on, issue by issue. And we quickly built a base of volunteers...because we believed in what we were doing, and were interesting and we were exciting.

25:07

And also you need to remember the time it was. And I can't remember if we covered this before. But during this time period, it was a Vietnam War, and so there were the peace strikes, the Southern Christian Conference was at that time doing major demonstrations with Martin Luther King Jr. in Washington, D.C. It was, the Black Panthers were on a move, the Gray Panthers were on the move. And we were able to engage so many other coalitions that came together and worked with us. And so, it was a very exciting time to advocate for our children within the school systems. It was a time when, you know, if I stopped into the Tacoma school district because some Indian child was being maltreated. Thirty people would come along with me, because it was interesting. And so we were able to show some...force of numbers. And it was all educational. It was all very interesting.

And the Urban League people were, you know they were honest, so that was a good base for me to operate out of. And meanwhile, there's this Diagnostic Center here, and we knew it was ours. And my Kya (Grandmother) had told me, "We own the river, we own Vashon Island, Will-loc- it which is McNeil, you know we own Will-loc-it Island. If somebody else is using our hospital, they must have stolen it. You know she had told me these things. And so, I knew that was our property. And I knew that we needed to get it back, because you've got to have a land base. You got to have a land base, if you do not have a land base and you're an Indian tribe, you're just like so screwed. Forget it you're dead.

And so we began working on that, you now doing public education on that. And trying to fact find on it. And like Milwaukee railroad, when they abandoned that property, it should have reverted to the tribe. Asarco, when they left that property, it should have gone to the tribe as compensatory land for the destruction that they did to the shellfish. When the railroad abandoned that, there's senior housing up on McKinley hill, it should have reverted back to the tribe, and you know all of these things should have reverted back to the tribe. And when the United States ceased using the property that was sold to them by the tribe, it should have reverted back to the tribe. Because it was bought for a very specific purpose, and that was to establish healthcare for Indian people. Especially Puyallup people on this reservation, and that hadn't happened, and so we began talking amongst each other. Well, one of the first things that happened is the National Lawyers Skill had a summer project. And they had, like twenty lawyers that we could use for the summer, if we could think of things for twenty lawyers to do. Well, I never had any trouble for thinking of things for people to do. Since then, I'll take them. ...Cheryl laughing, because I bet she seen some of the things that Molly did, Manuel, and all of tehm...okay we had a little house

out in Fife, and we stuck them all in there and that's how we got John Bell (current Puyallup tribal attorney). He was John Clinebell back then.

But all these young law students they came out here. And we say, find out what's happening with the Saint George's property, can you find out what's happening with child welfare. How are we losing our kids? How are they doing these things to us? What happened to the tribal this and what happened to that? Silas Cross had so many things he wanted them to find out about, so each one of them was given an assignment, and off they went like a bunch of little squirrels. And... they'd come back and they found all kinds of stuff, you know. And all of a sudden we have documents. Because our old people tell us these things, and we know our old people aren't liars and we know there's got to be bases for this. But when people actually coming up with papers, it's really quite astounding, so we begin laying the ground work on what had happened with the-

For instance just the cemetery. We didn't know we got thrown into a congressional hat and got picked by the Presbyterians. We go, how did the Presbyterians get title to our ancestors bones? You know how could that happen? Well, you know those law students that found out all this stuff.

So in 1976 [this] was almost a hundred years after we had gotten pulled out of the hat. I really put together a letter to the Presbyterians. I said, in such and such year you were awarded this property to civilize the Puyallup people. Civilize us savages and I sent them a bunch of clippings of us being arrested, and fighting back. And I said you have failed in your contractual obligations and we want our title back. And they met nationally because, I sent it to the national, I wouldn't send it to the local, because Frank Wright would have blocked it. (laughs) So, here

comes the national Presbyterians to the local senate and they say, "We got this letter from Ms. Ramona Bennett, your chairwoman saying they want the title back to their ancestor's bones. Because we haven't really civilized you." And Frank said, "You know, that's true." (laughs) You haven't civilized her in anyway. And they met, and they really gave us the title back to our cemetery...you know, little baby steps. We actually have clear title to our cemetery, and the little church that is on it. And just so many little things that needed to be done and undone.

And all the time this hospital property, you know this is the main thing. You know this is absolutely needed for any social, commercial any anything. I wanted to do a dog track there, if we'd gotten the title when I had it, it would have been a dog track. And we would have been into gambling, like ten year earlier than we were, which would have open lots of doors. But that's neither here, nor there. I certainly didn't see leaving the hospital standing there, and I never envisioned the tribe actually moving into those buildings which were like dinosaur buildings, it's impossible to heat and maintain. It's a ridiculous premise, but nonetheless we needed that property, not the building, they property. I didn't treasure the memories of building. I viewed it as a butcher shop and I think a lot of suffering happened there and it needed a cleaning really bad.

But anyway the way we had to go about getting the building. Now first stop, we attempted to get it administratively...and that would be by negotiating with Washington State. At that time, it was "Dirty Dan the Government man." Dan Evans was the Gov. And his right hand man was Slade Gorton, who just endlessly dragged us into court and got his butt kicked time after time. You know, and so we did. I met with Dan Evans. We told him we have moral claim, and we probably have a strong legal claim. But mostly, you have a bad program there, and we would like our land back.

And so he told me, "I'll look into it and so he did, and he came back, "We put 1.6 million dollars into upgrades and improvements, and we would have to get that back." And I said, so 1.6 million dollars and you'll convey it? And he said, "Sure." Okay, that good. And that could be plan A. Then plan B, we went a met with the Native American Rights Fund, and that was NARF they called it. And we told NARF that we have strong moral and legal claim. They looked into it and they came back and said, "We don't think you have that strong of a legal claim, because there's not a reversionary clause, in your original sales document, and we don't want to take any losing cases because it could mess up our funding (Laughs) okay.

And then, we've got administrative, we've got litigated, let's see what's left? We'll get to that. So anyway, in the summer of seventy-six we took a caravan back to Washington DC and it was Caleb Shields from the Assiniboine, Sioux, Myrna Small Salmon of the Assiniboine, Sioux, Georgia Jorge from Suquamish a good little delegation Suzette Mills and myself from Puyallup. There were other tribal reps, and a bunch of students, including-

Cecelia: Me, I was there too.

Ramona: I was there, I was there. Anyway, we took a bunch of our kids from all these different reservations and all I intended to show our beloved children was that the Bureau truly is not, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is truly not there to serve you. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is really terrified of you, they hate you, and they were established out of the war department. And they first were committed to the genocide of each and every Indian person on our soil and then to retrain our brains, and turn us into little brown white people. And now they can't get rid of us, and they don't know what to do with us, because they really don't like us, and their there under the premise that we're incompetent. And so they look down on us, on top of all of our other

problems. The agency that you think would serve us treats us like a mineral or a tree or something. We're not even in any human department. We're the department of interior. So my whole lesson plan for these kids was to show them that the government really doesn't like us. And the bureau is truly not there to serve us.

And so we're back in D.C. and there's a lot of Indians back there at the same time. We're just a little side trip. Because we maybe have met seven, eight hundred, nine hundred Indians there was a lot of Indians from all over and we were camped back there. Well, four years earlier we had inadvertently occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs building. We were told to wait there and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Fifteen hundred of us from all over the country were told to wait at the Bureau building. And the Department of Commerce was setting up an auditorium; they were going to set up fields, kitchen and fields and showers. And they were going to set up all kinds of support services for us.

And we would have our national forum for our issues that we would come to D.C. to discuss. And so we were told to wait there. And while we were waiting there, GSA guards came in and started beating people up. We ended up barricaded in this building. The twenty points¹ never did get the circulation that they deserved. Because there we were blockaded in the building with the government threatening to blow us up or burn us out. This sounds familiar. But anyway we were known for having occupied the bureau building, whether or not we intended to.

So now, it is seventy-six and we're Indians and we're back in D.C. and its election year again. And we're knocking on the doors of the bureau building saying, hello, we're a delegation of tribal officials and we are here with our students and want to tour them. And they said, "Two

¹ See back of the interview for details on the 20- point position paper. Laura Wittstock. "The 2-points position paper." *Indian legal Information Development Service*. November 1972. Vol.2, No. 1. 57-64.

or three at a time.” And we said, no, we are tribal officials, these are our students we want to tour them. We want to take them through the building, and show them where the maps are, where the contracts are negotiated, where, we just want to tour our own kids. Hello? We’re official. And so you recall what they did? (Talking to Cecelia). Would you like to go on camera and talk about what they did? Because she was a kid...the camera’s over there.

Cecelia: Yeah, we sat there. I remember you going up there and knocking on the door. “The trail of Self-Determination,” three of my sisters we’re with me: Joanie, Bridget, Kathy and me... So, it was a real educational, and it was also something that really brought back what we as a people, brought as solidarity-a people together for a cause. I think one of the most excited persons was my younger sister Joanie. She was so into it. She was so disappointed the time we got arrested though. Kathy [and I] was there. I had no clue that we were going to be arrested though. We’re sitting outside the Bureau

Ramona: We were going on a tour.

Cecelia: We were sitting there for like four hours into it, I was thinking, nothing happening, we’re just sitting here and it was hot. And pretty soon the doors opened up and this SWAT team comes out. SWAT team! Like bees coming out of a hive. I said, oh my god! And they did, they, anybody that made any move that they detected maybe...we were kids!

Ramona: I told [the kids] don’t run they will kill you!

Cecelia: Yeah! And so they were getting madder and they still threw us down. And I remember them stomping on your legs. Stomping on you, and I go, oh my-gosh. Then me myself, they threw me down and put six of those things on wrist and they had their foot on my neck. And here I am sixteen-years old probably ninety-five pounds, six big burly guys holding me down. And

they threw us into the paddy-wagon, my sister and a bunch of us into a paddy-wagon. And Kathy had real little wrist, my sister Kathy, so she slipped out of the cuffs. And she had nail clippers in her pocket. And I am crying because these plastic things really hurt. And she cut everybody loose that were wearing the plastic ties. And when they opened the paddy-wagon, we walked out not tied up anymore. (laughter). We stayed in, we spent the night in. we had sandwiches; you know how they fed you. The first time I was, last time actually. And one of the gays that was my cell mate. Valencia? And, I don't know her last name.

44:50

Ramona: Van---, she was my foster daughter.

Cecelia: yeah, she was my cell mate. It was an experience I will...

Ramona: and she was tough.

Cecelia: Yeah, she was tough and you don't want to piss her off. But it was a grand experience.

Ramona: Okay, so we're at the Bureau building, we simply want a tour. You know, how hard can that be? And we got all these kids with us, and their big kids. You know, our good kids. And so, we wouldn't leave without our tour. We simply insisted on our tour. They wouldn't let us have it. So obviously they were getting frustrated and upset. And so where, Georgia Jorge began chanting, "Two-hundred years of your god-damn glory! Two hundred years of your god-dame glory!" and gets everybody chanting. And these GSA guards watched one too many John Wayne theater flicks. They're all black, they're all black and they're all paranoid. (talks to Cheryl).

Anyway, Georgia says, at the time she was chairwoman of the Suquamish tribe. She's say's "two-hundred years of Kentucky fried chicken!" And one of the guards with a club whacks

her and it's on. Then it's up for grab. One of them snapped, and when one of the snap, they all snap. They were all that close to snapping anyway. And we had told our kids, do not run; they will kill you if you run. I mean it's like a dog-man mentality, you know just a pack mentality. And so we told the kids to hold their ground, well they took one of those clubs and put it on Kathy's neck and picked her up by her neck with a club, and they were pulling her into the building. And our boys just couldn't take it. They had to go and rescue her, which they actually got her lose. We looked at Eric who had five different GSA guards trying to take him down and he was like up in the air because he was jumping on them, staying up every time they'd try to put him down, he would somehow with an elbow or with a knee or a heel flip himself back up in the air. And they were just trying to get him down and he was just punching and kicking and airborne, he was like spinning. You know Valencia she was going to duke-city she had GSA guards down at one time. And Harvey boys were just staring, they couldn't believe it. You know these Indians really fought back because it was on, so they were pissed, they were very, very mad at us. And we really hadn't done a damn thing.

But they were pissed and so they put us in these paddy-wagons, and we got Al Bridges with us too, Al and Alison, Suzette and all of us. They put us in these paddy-wagons, and it was hot and they parked us out in the sun. And it was like June-July. It was the end of June, or the first of July, because we always try to celebrate Independence Day getting locked down (laughter).

So anyway, they put us in the hot sun intent ally to torture us, because they were pissed off at us, because we messed up their day. And they had all this paperwork they had to do and so they were pissed, so they parked us in the sun. Now, what do you think a bunch of Indians in hot metal vehicles are going to do?

Brent: Sweat.

Ramona: Exactly, thank you, it was as hot as a sweat lodge. So I one paddy-wagon some of them started singing sweat songs, and then it come on around because we sing the same songs. They're all kind of Sioux-age. Well any way every body started singing these sweat songs. And that really freaked these GSA people out. I mean that got like six paddy-wagons full of Indians and their all singing together out in the hot sun, and their just like just, they don't know what to do. They don't know what they've done. They know they've done something they shouldn't have done. They know that Gods going make them answer for their actions someday. Because they could just feel that, because these songs are in other languages that they don't even know. And these Indian people are not begging for mercy. But is really having a really good sweat. And so they took our kids and they took them to another facility. And then they took us to the Washington D.C. jail. Which, hopefully you'll never go to hell the Washington D.C. jail; I think it must be kind of the same thing. But, they kept Suzette and [me] together, somehow we made it through the whole process, being debugged, you know all of the places they search as of that, they kept us right together.

And then they took us into this cell which was huge, with a lot of women in the D.C. jail. And it was late by the time they processed us. And there's a bunk all the way around. And there are these heroin addicts up on the top bunks that are like puking unto the floor. And cockroaches are this big, and rats this big and mice that big and their all running around. I mean this is the Washington D.C jail. And the people that worked there were very nice, they got us some mates. They put us out in the middle of the floor, so the heroin addicts wouldn't be puking directly on us. And they brought us these baloney sandwiches that were big thick pieces of baloney. They were trying to take care of us, it was late, and we'd been out there all day. All this so our kids

could see the Bureau really doesn't like us, or is scared of us. But you guys got that picture I bet.
Good.

So then, I get a call, [which] I got to go out, because I am like the leader of the pack or something. I've got to go out, because our kids are refusing to give their names. Our kids are refusing to say who they are. And they are saying we will only give you, our rank and serial number. We're not giving you any of our names. And so they said now, "Do you have a message for the children?" And I said well, I would like them to identify themselves, because that's probably the only way that we're going to get them back. And they said, "Oh". That's right we're going to want out of here one of these days, probably should say who we are.

So anyway, the kids eventually really gave their names. So we slept over, now the next morning. They you kids over-oh this really pissed me off. The next morning we get up, they line us up for court, they march us down a hall, they open a door, we keep walking, and we're in an alley, they lock the door after us and they didn't press any charges. And I said now where our kids are? And they said, "Oh, we gave your kids to somebody, Ratler from Browning?" I said, you what!? They said, "Well this guy showed up at the youth facility and said he represented the caravan and he was there for the kids." I said these are our children; we really have temporary custody of these kids! You can't give juveniles to some person that we don't even know! and they said, "Well we did, and their back at your camp."

So anyway these lawyers at D.C. by then are all just going crazy. Because there are just so many laws that GSA and the city has broken. Well, it's not a city, what's it called?

Brent: District.

Ramona: Yeah. The district has violated its law so many times over. There are all kinds of D.C. lawyers buzzing around us wanting to problem solve. And they did, I mean they worked on that stuff for years. And every time something would conclude on our behalf they would send us messages. Well, anyway we got our babies back. They got the lesson we wanted them to get. And they all learned it very well. Now we come on back home. This is seventy-six. Now I was continuing to lobby to get the Cascadia facility back. Cascadia, Cushman, the Industrial School property back. And what I was doing, back in Washington D.C. a great deal of the time. And I was working on a line-item request for 1.6 million dollars. To give to Dirty Dan the governor man, so he would give us back our facility. And we had the whole logic of it, the moral legal claim, future use plans; just remember I am good at future use plans. We had all of that stuff written up and good to go with the line-item [and] we had to go through the congressional Indian Appropriations Committee.

And by now, I have been to Montana, to Alaska, to Idaho, to Oregon, all over Washington. I've talked with tribal councils, I've talked with elder's committees, I met with teachers, I met with social workers, I met with every Indian who had ears who could possible give a damn about that hospital, and that property, and why Puyallup needs it back. And everybody knows about the moral claim, the legal claim, the future uses, all Indians know. And I had gone to the National Tribal Chairman's Association NTCA which is another whole story. So remind me someday. I had gone to them; I had gotten a resolution from them (NTCA) I had got to the National Congress of American Indians, I was their national elected secretary. I've gotten a resolution from them in supporting us in reacquiring the property. I have been to the Urban League Minority Concerns Task Force, Church Council of greater Seattle Associated Ministries. Why don't you know that? Why do I have to do all the thinking? So anyway I had gone to all

these people who make things happen. And they all knew. They all knew what all the issues were. Made sure we had petitions that had gone through every reservation, we had mountains of petitions. Everybody knew about the issue.

You know how hard it is to get somebody to stop for a minute, understand an issue and sign something? Especially in Indian country, and we'd had done it, I'd been working on that since sixty-eight (1968). Now it's seventy-six (1976). I got eight years into this. And I could talk, and I had talked. And so everybody knows what was going on. And I was lobbying for that 1.6 million. And the way I would lobby is, they got their offices, and they got corridors under ground where they go to their chambers were they vote. I would wait outside their doors. Now I smoke. And I did that until the bell would ring for them to go to session, they'd pop out of their office and I'd run with them. And I'd be telling them all about it, and I'd be handing papers, I'm running with them. And they were for us. Ragel, Duncan, all of them. All of them supported us. They endorsed us, loved us.

And so, their going for it, their going to vote our line-item in! And one of them said, "Have you talked to the congressman from your district, Floyd Hicks?" and I said you know I haven't, he's not on this committee. And they would say, "Well, you would be much stronger if you came in endorsed by your own congressman. And I said, well I just bet I would be. I don't know if he'll do that or not, but I will give it a shot.

And so, they actually took me in, and introduced me to Floyd Hicks, who I never met. And [I] went on into his office. And the other congressman had actually gone with me to support me, and said, "You know, "This Indian, here from your district, her tribe is trying to reacquire a facility and property... And you know it would be stronger if you endorsed it. You know we

believe in this woman and her tribe. And Floyd Hicks went over and he pulled off the wall a big picture of Cascadia. He said, "This is the place she's talking about." (Talking to other congressman) And [he said,] really, you got a picture of it? And he said, "Yeah, it's a beautiful place." And so they had that little conversation and Floyd says, "How did you land on 1.6 million?" and well Dan Evans said if we can raise the 1.6 million to compensate the State for their improvements that he will, he personally make sure that it's conveyed back to us. Because, clearly there were both moral and legal reasons, and Floyd says, "Really? Well great!" He said, "While you're here, there's someone I want you to meet. And he really took me over to Magnusson's office. He just left his world and walked me over to Magnusson's office. That's how prominent the tribe was in the news back then that the congressman would just drop everything.

But he walked me over to Magnusson's office and there was a guy there named Norm Dicks...and Floyd Hicks says, "This is Norm Dicks and he, and he said, this is my last term, and he's very likely going to succeed me. So I want you to get to know him. I want you to know him. Well, I said, hello, Floyd wants us to get acquainted. Like his an old friend of mine. I said, my name is Ramona Bennett, Chairwoman of Puyallup tribe. And he said, "Oh I know who you are, I know who you are, and I've... wanted to meet you, because I have a very important question to ask you." Now I have just had a baby and so had he. He had just had a new child. He said, "How much would your tribe except as a payment for all of your rights?" And I said, well that's a really good question. I said how much would I have to pay for your son's citizenship? And he said, "What?! That's not for sale! And I said, oh that's the answer! (Laughter) Dang you clever!

END PART TWO