

My story brings up so many emotions, for a moment I decided not to go through with it, but this isn't about just me anymore, if I can prevent this from happening to any other struggling parent then everything my family has endured will have not been in vain. I began going through all the paperwork I have collected over the years, believe me when I say those wounds are just as fresh as they were 7 years ago if not worse! I still carry so much guilt, shame for what I put my children through. Emotions I will never allow myself to forget. Anger and bitterness is the hardest to overcome. The picture enclosed in my Bio, I chose it because for the first time in my life, I was proud of myself. I was getting my life back. I was making progress, I had hoped that if I kept moving forward my family would see things had changed, and allow me to at least have contact with my children. I know I've burnt bridges. I have accepted that. The hardest realization and what hurt the most, is knowing my family never wanted me to get better. What I have learned about myself and our family dynamics has changed the way I perceived myself then and now. I think back now after all is said and done it makes me furious is how my family thought so little of me and my life. How easy it was for them to take from me the only beings that loved me, fill their heads with lies to make them hate me. They made me out to be a monster. It's hard to look at myself in the mirror at times or to go out in public because the person they portrayed me out to be is what people believe me to be and after awhile I started to believe it myself. I felt unworthy of anything good that came into my life and felt as though what was happening I deserved. Saddest part about how I perceived myself, has nothing to do with my shortcomings. The way I was treated was EVIL, that is the only way I can describe it. My family, tribal council members, tribal judges, Juvenile Presenter, guardian ad litem, the foster parent, their actions were beyond unethical. Nothing short of Cruel. They never had any intentions of returning my daughter. They knew from the very beginning I didn't want my case transferred, I did not reside on the reservation, my home was Grand Forks and had no intentions of ever returning. After numerous attempts at having my case transferred back to Grand Forks failed and the Judge assured me that once I completed my case plan I would have my daughter back, I began case management. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Right from the beginning there were obstacles, I lived 100 miles away, which created a barrier when it came to visitation, I was shuffled between 5 different case managers. At one point the social workers refused to take my case because of the fate of the previous case managers. Majority of employees that tried to help me reunify with my child had been terminated or resigned. One was given a lifetime exclusion order. I was assigned 3 different attorneys, the first two fought for me, after the second resigned, she made it clear why to myself and in her resignation letter. I was never meant to win. They never anticipated that I would fight back. They wanted me to fail and did whatever they could to ensure I would fail. When I say "They" I am making reference to my family, tribal council, Juvenile Presenter, the GAL. and the foster parent. Social Services did what they could to help me, it was most of the time hindered by council intervention and the foster parent making false allegations and the GAL supporting them. They absolutely did whatever they wanted, I was treated as though I was non-existent, when I brought these matters to officials who were supposed to be unbiased in this situation, I was ignored, most times I wasn't even given the time of day. The accusations were horrible, my probation officer received an anonymous letter with false allegations that could have sent me to prison. They sought out

recommendations from two doctors to have my parental rights terminated. I confronted one Doctor, I had advised him that the information he had been given was not true and that he should have actually verified the information before making that recommendation, the truth would be found in our medical records. This is the letter that the Juvenile Presenter used as her reason to file for the TPR. which was not her call to make. She did it on her own without consulting Social Services. My rights as a parent, as a citizen were violated. I had no rights. I could do nothing but sit there and take the abuse and blatantly that is exactly what it was, every day was a battle, I was brought to tears so many times, they had no empathy at all, they did not care that the constant accusations, harassment was taking a toll on me. I fought with everything I had, I told the truth, I was in trial home placement, yet my rights were still terminated and the reasons were absolutely ridiculous. What happened to me is cruel at any measure. I have gone through ICWA guidelines and made note of which never took place, never implemented or followed in my case.

My right to Due Process.

My rights under ICWA were never explained to me, when I asked about an attorney, I was told this was a shelter care hearing and that would come later. When asked if she was an Indian child I stated she was ineligible. I had questions, the judge called a short recess and I spoke with the case worker from social services, I told her and the other social worker that came after I gave birth, I did not want ICWA intervention. I did not live on the reservation, I had been a resident of Grand Forks for nearly 4 years. I was told again it was a shelter care hearing and another hearing would be held in 30 days and this would be addressed. I agreed to the 30 day shelter care. This hearing took place June 3, 2016, that very same day Spirit Lake Tribe had accepted the transfer of jurisdiction. There was no hearing held, the tribe did not have exclusive jurisdiction over my child, the reservation was not my child's domicile or residence nor was it mine. I did not give my consent, I wasn't asked or notified of the transfer til July when a social worker From Grand Forks came to see me.

Right to Notice.

Parents must receive clear and understandable notice, by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested of an involuntary proceeding. The court will not hold a foster-care-placement or TPR until at least 10 days after receipt.

Never received any notice.

ICWA requires documentation that Active Efforts have been made to prevent the break up of the Indian Family and that those efforts have failed.

I was never offered any services, I completed my service plan on my own, I had to seek out resources in Grand Forks.

After the TPR, the foster parent license was not renewed by the board, it was decided by the regional Supervisor that my daughter would be placed with me while I appealed the TPR. The day Social Services went to retrieve my daughter, she was notified that the tribal judge had awarded emergency custody to the foster parent, without any explanation.

My right to appeal.

Spirit Lake has no appellate court. They coincidentally terminated their contract with Northern Plains intertribal court of appeals 2 weeks after my TPR was finalized.

I filed with my intent to appeal with Spirit lake Tribal Court and my objection to the adoption which took place less than a month after the TPR.

When it became evident that trial home placement had commenced and my daughter would be with me 5 days out of the week, the tribal chairwoman issued an executive memorandum forbidding my daughter to leave the boundaries of Spirit Lake. She wasn't enrolled, the entire time they had custody I would not allow her to be enrolled.

I have come to the conclusion that what happened in my case is of no importance. And it will continue to happen. There is no one ensuring these guidelines are followed or anyone held accountable for violating ICWA. No resources or an entity to report misconduct. This has to change.