

March 25, 2014
The Most Guilty Never Have To Answer

The latest email from Thomas Sullivan, summarizing the torture endured by the children in the Grand Forks Article, and including a summary of what he has done to attempt to inform those agencies and heads of agencies, including his own – ACF, to prevent these crimes for the past 20+ months, and their rebuffs of his reports, ridicule and smearing of him and his sources for daring to report these crimes.

We will see the women named in the Grand Forks Herald article tried for their crimes against these children. We will never see any of these agency individuals investigated, nor arrested much less tried for their failure to follow protocol, simple basic protocols, to end the abuses and to prevent further abuses to these children and others.

Government is a great place to reward the inept, the incompetent, the corrupt for their political fund raising, and other politically connected activities. They are given positions of extreme importance, but never have to fulfill their duties.

When the heat is on, they can instantly jump from one government position to another, either within the same agency or in another agency, and never even miss a paycheck.

We have seen these individuals conspire and work together to shut down the reports of horrid, extreme abuse, and take no action to prevent or stop it. They praise themselves for their good work, and praise one another. But they never have to answer for their failures to protect these children or investigate the crimes against these children, or for the abuses heaped on those whose efforts to bring this to the light, are met with outright hostility.

They never have to answer when the crisis and the crimes become tragedies. They whirl around in an atmosphere of complete immunity and absolute authority.

The Public is appalled at the abuse these little children endured. They should be appalled that these top agencies and their leaders, knew about it for over a year, and did nothing to stop it. But those agencies, their heads, their leaders, including the USAG and the FBI, never ever have to answer for any of this, and they alone could have stopped it or even prevented it. They knew.

Their actions protected, outright, the abusers and the rapists.

They never have to answer, but you can be assured, they will claim they had no idea or knowledge, and take credit for any prosecution of the monsters they enabled and protected. There is no penalty nor consequences to those who fail or who protect the corrupt and the abusers. They are often rewarded with higher positions, better pay, and never have to answer for a single tragedy they created or enabled. Never.

They are still protecting the abusers and the rapists you haven't seen hit the newspapers. They never have to answer. .. Unless we make them answer. We must demand they be held accountable.

Thomas Sullivan's Letter to McMullen, et al:

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Subject: FW: Spirit Lake

Ms. McMullen:

The Grand Forks Herald posted an online report on Thursday evening (March 20, 2014) describing the arrest of three women, a grandmother, her daughter and a female friend of the daughter, charged with multiple counts of felony abuse of six children between the ages of 4 and 9.

The specific abuse cited in this report included:

1. Beating the children with a wooden stick and belts;
2. "When Grandma gets mad she would hit us" one of the older children told forensic interviewers;
3. Taping the four-year old child's eyes shut when he was put to bed to force him to sleep;
4. Taping the same child's eyes open during the day so that he could not sleep;
5. Taping dirty diapers over the children's heads;
6. Keeping the children from eating or drinking;
7. Videotape showing the grandmother swearing, yelling and beating her grandchildren;
8. Forcing the children to eat spoonfuls of hot sauce;
9. Forcing the children to eat two scoops of hot sauce if they ran away,

spit it out or cried and that the four year old boy "would get it the most";

10. Picking up one child, a girl, by her hair and lifting her off the floor;
11. Stitching up a cut on a five year old child's head "with a needle and thread because she refused to take the child to the hospital";
12. Withholding food and water from her grandchildren, forcing them all to drink out of one water bottle;
13. One little boy got so thirsty he drank from the toilet and developed unspecified health problems, and;
14. Holding a boy's mouth shut so that his screams could not be heard when she was beating him with a stick.

No children should ever be subjected to torture like this.

The younger women are charged with several felony counts, one of which is the failure to intervene to stop the abuse.

More than twenty one months ago when I filed my First Mandated Report with the US Attorney for North Dakota and the BIA I cited the cases of approximately 40 children who Tribal Chair Roger Yankton had ordered removed from safe off-reservation foster homes and returned to their own families or to the homes of relatives immediately. Four of the six children included in the Grand Forks Herald report were part of the group of 40. Those four were placed in the care of this grandmother who, even at that time, had a long record of child abuse. I have been told Mr. Yankton issued this order to reduce the Tribal cost for these off-reservation placements. Money was saved and continues to be saved. Spirit Lake children have been sacrificed and continue to be sacrificed.

My reports were greeted by the Tribe, state, BIA, DOJ as well as the leadership of my own agency with libel and slander directed at my sources and I. No one defended us. More importantly, no one defended the American Indian children whose lives were so adversely affected. Do any of you understand the long-term harm done to children who are abused or the public cost to society for the services these children will require as adults?

These children were part of a lengthy list of children in the Spirit Lake Social Services system who were listed under two different names allowing billing to be made twice for the same child. This information was provided:

- To the BIA twice in 2011, once at Ft Totten to the then BIA

Superintendent who shredded the documents given to him and once in Aberdeen to Randeem Fitzpatrick;

- To Ms. Olson, the former Director of the North Dakota Department of Human Services and Ms. Tara Muhlhauser, Child Welfare Director for the state of North Dakota in January, 2012;
- To the BIA's Ms. Settles in June, 2012;
- To the FBI in October, 2012;
- To the two US Senators for the state of North Dakota in February, 2013, and;
- To the newly elected Spirit Lake Tribal Chair shortly after he was sworn into office in 2013.

As of this date there is no indication that an investigation of these allegations of double billing has even been initiated by any of these senior officials.

The BIA and DOJ have publicly claimed that all of our allegations have been investigated and that most, if not all of them, have been proven false. Where are their reports on the investigations into these allegations?

Who are the liars now?

The fourteen items listed above give all of us a snapshot into the lives these children have been forced to endure since Mr. Yankton ordered their return.

Four of these children, I have been told, were removed from the home of their biological parents when the oldest child, a little girl, was 5 or 6. The cause of removal was neglect and sexual abuse of the two little girls. Even though the sexual abuse was confirmed on Forensic Interview, no charges have been filed against their rapist and no services have been provided to help these kids overcome the trauma of the hell they experienced in their own home.

The entire leadership of ACF, including the Acting Assistant Secretaries, heads of the Children's Bureau and you have swallowed the lies emanating from BIA, DOJ and the Children's Bureau. Your unwillingness to change your minds despite the overwhelming amount of detailed, factual evidence placed before you suggests you have an agenda far removed from the safety of children.

These children and the hundreds of other Spirit Lake children being housed in comparable circumstances have suffered and continue to suffer because of

your unwillingness to speak out on their behalf or to allow me to do so.

As Dr. Martin Luther King wrote, "He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it."

Unfortunately, you were not just a passive participant in this process. Without any substantiation that you are willing to reveal to me or my sources, you have endorsed the lies of the BIA and the US Attorney. At the same time you have dismissed the detailed, factual reports we have provided, again refusing to provide any rationale for that position. Despite our repeated requests for that information, you have remained silent, non-responsive.

It is my understanding that finally the suicidal young boy whose placement with abusive, drug dealing foster parents I have been complaining about, has been moved off the reservation to a town close to the Canadian border. I raised the safety of this suicidal child with you on September 23, 2013 and you did nothing for five months, except falsely claim his safety was assured. Moving a suicidal child so far away from his siblings and their support may not have been the best move for him.

I understand this little boy's siblings who were subjected to the same physical and sexual abuse from their biological father remain in the full time care and custody of those abusive, drug dealing foster parents. If these siblings have not yet become suicidal, one has to wonder how much additional abuse they can absorb before they begin thinking in those terms.

In my January 15, 2014 email to you I cited the abusive foster home placement of two little girls where the foster mother's method of disciplining them has been to strip them to their panties, duct tape their hands in front of them and force them to sit on a stool in an uninsulated attic for hours at a time. Nothing has been done to remove these children from such abuse.

In my December 19, 2013 email I cited the case of the 13 year old girl who was being raped, in her grandmother's home by a Level Three Sex Offender, a man who has a reputation for violent sexual attacks on young women. When reported to BIA Law Enforcement, they reported it would take at least 30 days to "initiate" an investigation of this young girl's allegations. It is my understanding that, as of this date, more than 90 days later, no such investigation has been "initiated".

I believe a quote from an article, entitled, "A Tribe's Epidemic of Child Sex Abuse, Minimized for Years", by Timothy Williams, writing in the New York Times about Spirit Lake is relevant here, "The action comes after years of failure by government and tribal law enforcement officials to conduct proper investigations of dozens of cases of child sexual abuse, including

rape....members of the tribe say that sexual violence against children on the reservation is common and barely concealed.....The crimes are rarely prosecuted, few arrests are made and people say that because of safety fears and law enforcement's lack of interest, they no longer report even the most sadistic violence against children.....members of the tribe say that leadership has often sought to hide abuse." This article appeared in the New York Times on September 19, 2012, more than 18 months ago. There has been no improvement in conditions at Spirit Lake in the interim, despite your claims to the contrary.

Children at Spirit Lake continue to be raped, abused and neglected because of the intransigence of a few in tribal, state and federal leadership positions who are unwilling/unable to recognize what the facts are and act on them.

Thomas F. Sullivan

Regional Administrator, ACF, Denver

Demand They Be Held Accountable

You know where to find me.

~Cat