

Declaration of Laura Wass

I, Laura Wass, under penalty of perjury, declare as follows:

1. On or about 1998 to present I worked as the Central California Director of the American Indian Movement. In the course of my profession, I assisted Indigenous Persons with issues pertaining to American Indian rights including but not limited to, land protection, religious and spiritual rights, CDCR Native inmate rights, and Indian Child Welfare.
2. On or about 1998, I assisted Marlin Lewis in securing his tribal membership into the Table Mountain Rancheria Tribe.
3. Between 1998 and 2000, I spoke with and/or met with Marlin approximately 30 times. Throughout this time, as a part of my duties, I gathered a lot of data from Marlin regarding his family history and its relationship with the tribe.
4. My phone calls with Marlin varied in length from several minutes to an hour or so.
5. I met with Marlin in Fresno many, many times over the two-year period. Our meetings lasted from a few hours to a day.
6. The process culminated in Marlin and other family members being accepted as members of the tribe.
7. On or about October 5, 2000, Marlin and his sister, Bernice Grubbs, were invited to attend the General Council meeting at the Table Mountain Tribal Building for the purpose of being formally accepted as members of the tribe, along with a few other families from our group. On information and belief, Marlin and Bernice lived in Sacramento at the time and had no transportation, so I purchased tickets for Greyhound for them to travel to Fresno and brought them to my home to prepare for the meeting.
8. Before the meeting began, I received a phone call from William Stankewitz, Douglas Stankewitz's brother, who was incarcerated. As a part of my professional responsibilities, I assisted William with his criminal case for a few years. I told William that Marlin and Bernice were there, and William asked to talk to Marlin. Based on information and belief, I overheard a good exchange between "Native brothers". Part way through the call, William brought up Douglas's name, and Marlin got a little quieter. After a few more words, Marlin handed me the phone. Then, William, referring to the Graybeal kidnapping, robbery and murder crimes, stated to me that "he knows what he did", and the call ended shortly after. When I hung up, I told Marlin that I didn't know he was that close with William. I also told him that as a part of my professional duties, I'd been working with Douglas on his criminal case. Marlin just stared at me and shrugged his shoulders as I talked. Referring to the Graybeal crimes, I then stated

“you’re the one that did it” and Marlin shook his head yes. He then said that he had already paid for his actions, and that he was sorry Doug was still paying for Marlin’s actions. I then told Marlin to consider coming forward, that Marlin had done his time, so Doug should not be paying the price for what Marlin did.

9. On information and belief, Douglas’s penalty phase was reversed in 2012, and his case was returned to Fresno Superior Court. On or about September 19, 2013, I attended a court hearing in his case and was interviewed by Pablo Lopez, of the Fresno Bee. The article published by the Bee on September 19, 2013, which includes a quotation from me, accurately reflects my statements to Mr. Lopez and is Attached as Exhibit A.

I have given this three-page statement of my own free will. I have had an opportunity to review and revise this declaration. I swear under penalty of perjury that the above statements are true.

Executed on January 8, 2020, at Fresno, California.



Laura Wass