

## The Thick Dark Fog Transcript

WALTER: (VO) THEY CALL ME INDIAN, SIOUX, SAVAGE, AND UNCIVILIZED, BUT I AM A HUMAN BEING. I AM A LAKOTA. LIKE THOUSANDS OF OTHERS, MY LIFE WAS TURNED UP SIDE DOWN THROUGH THE TURMOIL FORCED UPON ME BY A SYSTEM DESIGNED BY THE U. S. GOVERNMENT TO DESTROY MY CULTURE. I AM FINDING MY WAY BACK TO THE LAKOTA WAY OF LIFE I DIDN'T KNOW THE MEDICAL WORDS SO I CALLED IT THE PROBLEM I THOUGHT IT TO BE...THE THICK, DARK FOG.

Jane: You're supposed to look excited. Happy!! Oh my God, it's a book.

Walter: Ah, it's a start.

Jane: Walter decided he wanted to write down his memories for his children. And shortly into it, he reached a block where he had started talking about his boarding school years, and he couldn't keep talking. He withdrew. He became very tearful.

Walter: My own children, I'm estranged from them simply because I never figured out how to be a father or even how to be a human being.

Walter: And I realized that they didn't know anything about me because I never talked to them about what I was.

Jane: It took us four years before we finally came to the end of what he had to say.

Walter: when the roads are bad, you know they're not gonna come after you. I'm trying to remember if this is the road here. I think it is. This is the old road that I followed...

Walter: Just one thing on my mind, just to get home. Not get caught in between here and home.

Walter: And I know I ran all day long just to get home. About 16 miles. The quicker I got home the better off I was going to be. I knew they would take me back but just being in that house for a few minutes that was good enough.

Jane: This is a very peaceful place...and you can get spoiled living here.

Jane: twenty years ago, a man in the community I lived in in Connecticut, started a clothing drive for Indians on this reservation. And he said that they were dying of the cold and that they were starving. A friend of mine came to me in tears all upset over it, and I said to her, "What do you mean? What Indians? There aren't any Indians left."

WALTER: (VO) LIKE SO MANY, I HAVE LIVED A LIFE BLOCKED BY FEAR, LED BY FEAR, AND GOVERNED BY FEAR THAT WAS CREATED IN THOSE CHILDHOOD DAYS.

NIGHTMARES OF THE GOVERNMENT BOARDING SCHOOLS, THE LONELINESS, THE BEATINGS, THEY SEEMED TO BE ON MY MIND EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY.

I HAD BEEN BEATEN AND PUNISHED TO INSTILL A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIFE THAT I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND OR WANTED.

Walter: The government school tried to force me to forget the Lakota language but I wouldn't do it. We had a deep sense of preservation for our culture, our language. So we would go and hide in order to speak Lakota.

Walter: If we got caught they were allowed to beat us with whatever they but we took that chance. The Lakota language is something that comes from deep inside of you – it comes from how you look at things and how you see things. Sometimes I feel like I'm not able to communicate with the non-Indian. The Lakota feeling is what forms my language. So I try to put that into the English language but it, at times it just doesn't seem to work and I lose a lot of confidence in myself.

LADY: thank you.

JANE: Not as much as you usually...

LADY: That's fine. Everything helps. We've been really busy this holiday.

Walter: This is where we need an interpreter.

JANE: Okay.

LADY: thank you so much.

JANE: Alright.

Jane: One night I went into a Seven-Eleven store to pick up some things, and I passed by a rack of magazines. And one magazine fell off of the shelf and it had opened to an

article about a man called Walter Littlemoon who had been helping his family and the people in Wounded Knee. So I bought the magazine and I went home and I called him.

JANE: And since then we've become friends. I've learned about the living conditions out on the reservations and it was all news to me.

Jane: In March of 1985, Walter drove across the country with a friend of his. He spoke at the local library.

Walter: We're just about in this little area here. It's a two million acre pact that was given to us by the United States government. We had other ideas where to live but our ideas weren't that important, I guess.

Jane: After that, we tried, together, various ideas that would be helpful for the people in Wounded Knee. So in 1998 he asked did I want to move out here and stay for a time and see if this was where I wanted to be.

Jane: And that's how I came to live with him.

Walter: This boarding school experience did a lot more damage than we realized. It didn't take away our culture, we just forgot about it. We were made ashamed of our culture. We were not allowed to speak our own language We were called uncivilized. We were called savages. We were forced to submit to things we didn't even know or want. We will never be able to forget what happened to us. Those memories will be with us for all time.

Melvin Young: If you don't learn how to live with it you just blank it out and you don't talk about it. Then all of a sudden you start talking about it and you can't remember pretty soon because you blanked it out so damn many times. You know (00:06:00) there's something you want to say but it's not there.

Walter: Back then we didn't see it as abuse. We didn't even know the abuse.

Moses: Beat up! (laughter)

Walter: We got beat for just about everything. Got beat because you look like an Indian, got beat because you smell like an Indian.

Melvin: ...said the wrong thing.

Moses: To me it wasn't just physical abuse, it was mental abuse, too.

Melvin: ...oh yeah, they get into you.

Moses: To me, what they were trying to do was turn us into a white man. But still they couldn't do it.

Walter: Come on Hooty.

Walter: this is uh, you probably hear it in the movies, is the Sacred Tree, Lakota. That's this ashwood. It's a hardwood. A lot of it grows and that's what they made their bows and arrows out of a long time ago. They were pretty stout. But pollution has gotten to where they've rotted on the inside.

Walter: And this is where we used to pick plums. This tree was here when I was a little boy. If you look up there you can see those plums, wild plums.

WALTER: (VO) I WAS THE YOUNGEST OF MY MOTHER'S TEN CHILDREN. BY THE TIME I WAS THREE ALL THE REST WERE AWAY FROM HOME.

WALTER: (VO) WE LEARNED TO BE LAKOTA IN A NATURAL WAY, AS EASY AS BREATHING. NO ONE SAT US DOWN TO PREACH AT US. ADULTS GUIDED US AS LIFE PRESENTED DIFFERENT SITUATIONS.

WALTER: (VO) THE BRIGHT AND POSITIVE MEMORIES OF THOSE CHILDHOOD DAYS HAVE STAYED BURIED WITHIN ME FOR NEARLY SIXTY YEARS. I HAD TO REMEMBER AND SEE CLEARLY HOW I HAD BEEN SHAPED AND TWISTED, MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY, BY SOMETHING OUTSIDE OF OUR CULTURE.

WALTER: (VO) INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS WERE CREATED BY HENRY PRATT, A MILITARY CAREER MAN, WHOSE MOTTO WAS "KILL THE INDIAN, SAVE THE MAN HE FELT THAT BY REMOVING THE CHILDREN FROM THE INFLUENCE OF THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR TRIBES, AND FORBIDDING THEM TO SPEAK ANY NATIVE LANGUAGE, THEY COULD BE SHAPED INTO THE IMAGE OF THE DOMINANT SOCIETY. BY LAW, FAMILIES THAT REFUSED TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN WOULD NOT BE GIVEN FOOD.

Kevin Gover: You either sent your kid to school school or you could find yourself in jail, or the government would just take them—might tell you where they are or might not. There was every imaginable abuse to getting these kids into these schools and keeping them there.

WALTER: (VO) SHORTLY AFTER MY FIFTH BIRTHDAY IN 1947, A SHINY GRAY CAR PULLED UP TO OUR HOME WITH TWO STRANGERS IN IT. MY MOTHER WAS CRYING. SHE TOLD ME I HAD TO GO WITH THOSE PEOPLE IN THE CAR. I HAD NO WARNING, NO PREPARATION.

Randy: What is this here on the left?

Walter: This is the boy's building.

Randy: Was this here when you were here?

Walter: No, this was a different building.

WALTER: (VO) THEY FINALLY STOPPED AT A STRANGE, FOREIGN PLACE WITH TALL BUILDINGS. I WAS OVERWHELMED BY STRANGE SMELLS, SOUNDS OF CHILDREN TALKING AND CRYING, EVERYONE SPEAKING A LANGUAGE I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND.

Walter: All of this stuff is new. Even the old girls' building is gone now. It used to sit right here. They've got a bunch of buildings I don't even recognize.

Walter: No, this girl's building is still the same. We can go along here.

Randy: We've got a snowball fight here, I believe. Did you used to do a lot of that?

Walter: (laughing) No, they wouldn't allow us to play like that. Got too noisy. We couldn't throw snowballs at each other. All stuff like that was all forbidden.

Walter: that's something we never had in school, all these toys, playground equipment. All we had on the boy's side was just a swing. That was it, and a place to play horseshoes. But other than that, there wasn't anything else there.

Walter: With all of this modern stuff, with all of these new designs, with all of the new buildings and playgrounds, that still doesn't change anything. I still hate this place, and I don't like it. And the sooner we leave the better off I'm going to be.

Randy: this is where they brought you the first day?

Walter: They brought me right where that white pick up is. There used to be an old gymnasium there. And the buses would pull up like that and just dump you off there.

WALTER: (VO) WITHIN MINUTES, I WAS STRIPPED NAKED AND SCRUBBED WITH HARSH YELLOW SOAP AND A STIFF BRUSH UNTIL MY SKIN WAS RAW.

Philomine: my oldest sisters who went to boarding school had their hair cut and I wanted to have my haircut. But my grandmother said, "Eya, no, until I die, or until your mama die or your daddy die." "No." she told me in Lakota she told me (speaks Lakota words) "Nobody does that. You don't ever cut your hair. You can trim it but you don't cut your hair until you lose a loved one."

Walter: and then they march you across, right through here. The building used to be here, and that's where they'd cut your hair off, change your clothes, take your clothes away and give you old clothes.

Philomine: I tried to run but the matrons caught me. They grabbed my hair by my braid and just cut it.

Chris: I started crying because I didn't give them permission to cut my hair and I cried because I felt they had killed my spirit.

Philomine: All of the thoughts going through my mind at the time, "Who died? Did my mom die? Who died so that they are cutting all my hair? What's going on here?"

Jane: Every time we tried talking about his boarding school years, he reached the same block and he couldn't keep talking. We went to his doctor at the V. A. hospital, and his doctor said, "Keep talking. As painful as it is the key is to keep talking. Bring all of those memories out." And he said, "Don't be afraid of any of the emotions that come with them. Go with those emotions. Let those emotions come out." So we started writing down his memories.

Walter: the sound of a car, the smell of food The crying of children. A lot of these things trigger these flashbacks. Emotionally, psychologically you're right back in boarding school at five years old.

Walter: you never knew what kind of beating was coming. Sometimes you would get thrown across the floor, or sometimes you get hit with a book,

Walter: Sometimes it was the things we said. Sometimes it was the way we looked at people. It was just small things like that that never made any sense at all, but you got beat for it.

Willeta: They would hit us. We got hit a lot. Strapped, and mean things, saying mean things to us, calling us names, and jerking us around by the little hair on the back of your head, or the ear.

Chris: Usually, after the third hit you don't feel nothing. And that's what makes them angry and they just beat you harder. You don't feel it. Physically you just don't feel it. You shut it out after awhile.

Willeta: You would have to put your hands on the desk, and the desk lifted up, the lid would lift up and you put your books in there, and then they would come down, and that's what you would write on. Well, you would put your hands there and they would slam your desk down on your hands. (voice breaks)

Randy: Do you remember the day your mother came to visit you?

Walter: Yeah, there used to be a tree right by this power line and that's where I remember her. Her walking from there to the rail. There was a sense of familiarity but then again I didn't recognize her. I couldn't quite make that connection.

Randy: You didn't remember who she was?

Walter: No.

Randy: And that was after 3 months from home?

Walter: Yeah. So it happened to me and it happened to a lot of other kids. A case of not recognizing your own parents.

Walter's mother: Ina (Lakota for mother)

Walter: It just completely broke that connection.

Randy: As she was leaving you did remember so something finally clicked in.

Walter: Yeah it clicked in. I ran down this way to try and catch her but it was just too late. And I don't know what happened after that. Up to this day I just don't remember. But I knew that I, I told myself I'm not gonna forget anymore.

Jane: Walter kept talking. His memories would come out in fragments, so I would write down whatever he said, and as time went by, we started cutting those pieces of paper and putting memories together that belonged together.

Walter: then Jane brought in a book, 'Trauma and Recovery'. The author was Judith Herman. This was based on the holocaust. When she was reading I was able to take out a lot of the words and replace them with Pine Ridge, the Lakota, the environment here. It began to make sense. I began to realize that there was a lot more damage done than just being estranged from my own family. And that's when I realized that my mind lacked focus. It was fragmented. And I would change the subject to avoid a lot of the pain. And I didn't even know where the pain was coming from.

Jayne: I came to meet Walter Littlemoon and his wife Jane through my work here at the Victims of Violence program.

Jayne: When Walter and Jane walked into this building, Central Street Health Center, it was very clear that, he was in a lot of pain.

Walter: This is a picture of my mother. This is how I remember her growing up. I don't remember exactly when this was taken but this is probably one of the last pictures that we have of her. Because when my sister took all of these pictures then our house caught on fire and just about all of these pictures burnt down.

Walter: So this was her family these are all the older brothers. This is Moses, this is Ben George, and this is me here. I know we had a lot of pictures. But this is the last picture that we were able to salvage. This picture is about my mother and my father. I never knew my father. This was taken somewhere in Brussels when they were there with the Wild West Show.

Walter: (VO) The thunder beings came and took my father home when I was 6 months old.

Walter: So this is where my father was killed on the day my family stopped here to rest.

Walter: (VO) A single small cloud appeared in an otherwise blue sky.

Walter: That stove sat just about right here and my mother and I were on this side and I think my dad was sitting right here, right in this area.

Walter: (VO) Suddenly a bolt of lightening shot down through the chimney, blew open the woodstove door, and struck my father dead.

Walter: My two brothers were on each side of my dad but never got hurt. But it killed him instantly.

Walter: (VO) Step by step, as I uncovered the stories of each generation and added them to the memories from my life I began to realized that the trauma we Lakota have experienced for so many generations is a part of who we are today.

Walter: Even before the reservation was established a lot of the wars or massacres that took place, all of that gets passed from generation to generation through memory genes, through behaviors, through flashbacks. We still experience a lot of that pain, a lot of those memories and people want to know why they drink so much and people want to know why people are abusing their own families.

Jayme: Walter's experience embodies the context of inter-generational trauma. So you have a culture that's survived near genocide on its knees and then you pluck a child out of this family and everything that's kept them alive. There was no safe context in which to talk about the abuse and things that he suffered, you know, he had to keep it secret, he had to keep it silent, he had to bear it alone. There wasn't a place where these words were welcome.

Walter: (VO) Every Saturday we would go into the theater. They would force us into these movies. We never had the choice. Everything that we saw were western movies. It was always Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. There was always the calvery riding the horses. It was always the Indians there. Just before we went in there was somebody standing there. They would say 'whenever you see the calvery you start clapping your hands and you start stomping your feet. If the Indians get killed then don't say anything about it.

Melvin: Down inside you always wished the Indians would win but they never would, you know. Movies didn't let you do that. (laughter)

Moses: No, oh yeah.



Melvin: You did a lot of cheering and stuff. I can't even remember what movie it was, and that's what we did, cheer for the Indians. They marched us out of that theater. (laughter) They came down there and got us. Shined the flashlight on us and marched us out.

Walter: We weren't allowed to talk, we weren't to go to the bathroom. We weren't even allowed to buy popcorn. We just had to sit there.

WALTER: (VO) I DIDN'T LEARN MUCH THAT FIRST YEAR. ALL I KNEW WAS THAT I WANTED TO GO HOME.

Walter: Vacation. The end of the school year. You know your mother's there and there's going to be something to eat, and you can take your shoes off and throw them away and go barefooted for the rest of the summer. First thing you do is you go check the water to see if it's warm enough to go swimming. (long drag on cigarette) So that was the best time.

Walter: about the second or third week of August. The whole community would just suddenly become a little bit more quieter. it was almost like a death in the community.

Walter: No matter how you worked it, no matter how you looked at it, it always came down to the same thing, that we were leaving.

Randy: ...you talked about, you could bring something, things from home, little things, that would maintain that link with home that were important to you?

Walter: (crying with hands over face, wiping tears with back of his hand, silence, wiping tears with tissue, sighs deeply)

WALTER: (VO) BY THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTH GRADE, I DECIDED I DIDN'T WANT TO GO THERE ANYMORE. I STARTED RUNNING AWAY. I'D RUN HOME, SIXTEEN MILES STRAIGHT ACROSS COUNTRY.

Walter: There was only one thing that went through my mind and that was to get home and that was it. It didn't matter, I didn't care if I ran or walked, I just knew there were certain routes, areas that we had to take in order not to get caught. And you run as far as you can and you don't look back. There was always somebody out there looking for you.

Kevin Gover: So if you could destroy the Indian society at its roots, which was the family, then you destroy the society, and children are the core, obviously, of any family and especially, I think, of the Indian families.

Jayme: he had never seen children being beaten before, by adults, because in traditional Lakota culture your children are your most precious resource, and who would ever think to harm the children?

Walter: we learned that it was okay to beat up on kids, and it was also okay to beat up on your next of kin, your siblings or whatever. And so that behavior carried right into marriage. I know I slapped my wife around a number of times, but I always felt bad after.

Chris: When I had my own family it took a long time for me to realize that all I did was punish them and discipline them. There was no love, no respect, no nurturing, no honor.

Walter: It didn't come from me naturally. That wasn't even a part of me. But it came from some place. it came from here, the boarding school.

Kevin: That whole trauma associated with shame about who they are, being told by the government, "You are worse than the rest of us. You're less than the rest of us." Is it any surprise then that they become abusers where there is violent abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse? All of the things that were done to them they are going to carry out on the next generation.

Walter: (VO) Some of my former class mates committed suicide, some drank themselves to death, and others just gave up and didn't care whether they lived or died.

Walter: He died in California. He was trying to quit drinking but didn't have any help and committed suicide. These graves fill up so fast. I can't remember who those were. One of these are Moses' son.

WALTER: (VO) I HAD SURVIVED SEVEN YEARS AT THE OGLALA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL BEFORE MY MOTHER WAS ALLOWED TO TRANSFER ME OVER TO THE HOLY ROSARY, RUN BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN PINE RIDGE. I LIVED DAY BY DAY IN A DARK FOG, GOVERNED BY STERN MEN IN LONG BLACK ROBES. FINALLY, MY MOTHER WAS ABLE TO GET ME TRANSFERRED AGAIN—TO THE COMMUNITY PUBLIC SCHOOL. I WENT THERE FOR TWO YEARS, GRADUATED FROM THE EIGHTH GRADE AND QUIT.

WALTER (VO) OUR WORLD ON THE RESERVATION HAD BECOME MORE OR LESS MEANINGLESS. THERE WAS NO PLACE TO GO, NOTHING MEANINGFUL TO DO, NO MOVIES, NO LIBRARIES, NO JOBS AVAILABLE TO MAKE A DECENT LIFE. TWO MONTHS AFTER MY SEVENTEENTH BIRTHDAY I LEFT THE RESERVATION.

Randy: Were you in Vietnam?

Melvin: Yeah, um hum. To me, that was easy too, because that was just like boarding school.

Walter: It was a little bit better.

Moses: It was similar to that.

Melvin: I used to lay at night and listen to these guys cry. (00:19:30) “What am I doing here?” and stuff. You know, what’s wrong with this, man, they give us three meals a day; they get us up and run us.

Moses: And you get money.

Melvin: Yeah. And they talk to you. At boarding school they beat you—

Walter: It seemed like after Viet Nam, everything, everyday was nothing but looking for drinks and staying drunk, landing in jail, getting out of jail. And that was the extent of my life,

Walter: Something was wrong with me. I couldn’t function like what I thought a human being should. I began to look within myself and get rid of the things I knew made me feel negative. Like drinking was one of them. That didn’t fit into my life so I had to get rid of that.

Walter: Oh, that’s a credit counseling workshop. That’s something I don’t understand.

Randy: Why not?

Walter: Because we don’t have credit. First time I seen that sign I thought it meant they were going to teach us how to apply for credit. I just don’t pay attention to it. You can’t get credit out here.

CRONKITE: Four days after Christmas in 1890, gunfire rang out on the plains at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Last night, near the site of that massacre, some 200 Indians took control of two buildings.

REASONER: The Indians held ten hostages and they said through a spokesman that they are willing to die if necessary to bring about federal action on their grievances.

CHANCELLOR: The Indians are from an extremely militant group called AIM.

REPORTER: AIM leaders said they seized Wounded Knee to force attention on their charges of corruption and mis-management in the BIA.

Russell Means: Either we force the federal govt. to kill us all once again like they did 83 years ago at Wounded Knee, or else they come out and negotiate and meet our demands.

Walter: This is the original site for the Wounded Knee Trading Post. It was here ever since I could remember.

Walter: They destroyed everything in this store. That was destroyed out of carelessness.

REPORTER: AIM leaders sent word that they wanted South Dakota's two Senators to visit them and a promise from the White House to honor all treaties with the Sioux; treaties going back as far as 1868.

Russell Means: Either negotiate with us for meaningful results, positive results, or you're going to have to kill us. And here at Wounded Knee is where it's gonna have to happen.

Randy: So this was the first house you ever lived in?

Walter: Yeah. This is where I grew up.

Randy: What happened to this house?

Walter: This house was torn apart during the '73 occupation. They used all the lumber to line the bunkers with. Used to be the Catholic church up there. It's no longer there but that's where everybody was. There was a bunker up here that people--that's where they took all the lumber.

Randy: There was an AIM bunker up there?

Walter: Yeah.

CHANCELLOR: The occupation at Wounded Knee, South Dakota by militant Indians ended today. The Indians and their supporters put down their guns and surrendered to federal marshalls and FBI agents.

WALTER: (VO) THEN THEY LEFT. WHAT ONCE WAS OUR WOUNDED KNEE COMMUNITY WAS SHATTERED. NO TRADING POST, NO RUNNING WATER, NO HEAT, NO ELECTRICITY. OUR PEOPLE HAD TO LIVE THE BEST WAY THEY COULD WITH NOTHING.

Indian woman: I thought that AIM was doing us good. Look what they did to us.

Walter (VO cont.) LONG-STANDING FRIEND-SHIPS AND TRUST WERE REPLACED WITH SUSPICION AND HOPELESSNESS. WE WERE LEFT TO DEAL WITH OUR PROBLEMS AS NO HELP CAME.

Walter: The guys that came into Wounded Knee at that time were nothing more than just little bullies with guns. They've promised many times they would rebuild this house but they never did. Just a lot of empty promises, and so this is all that is left. Now, they take something from you when your house is destroyed like this.

WALTER: (VO) OVER THE YEARS, I HAD SOUGHT OUT LESSONS IN LAKOTA SPIRITUALITY, ATTENDED SWEAT LODGES, SAT ON HILLS AND SOUGHT VISIONS. YET NIGHTMARES OF THE GOVERNMENT BOARDING SCHOOL—THE LONELINESS, THE BEATINGS—SEEMED TO COME BACK STRONGER.

THEY SEEMED TO BE ON MY MIND EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY. MY TRUE SENSE OF SELF WAS BURIED WAY DOWN, DEEP INSIDE ME.

WALTER: (VO) FINALLY, A BREAKTHROUGH IN MY UNDERSTANDING CAME WHEN I SOUGHT COUNSEL AT THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE PROGRAM, IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS. THEY GAVE ME THE NAME OF WHAT I WAS SUFFERING FROM—COMPLEX POST TRAUMATIC STRESS. ONCE MY FEAR HAD A NAME I COULD BATTLE IT AND WIN.

Jayne: Walter's world probably became quite small, until he was able to process and, um, begin to reconnect with people.

Walter: I always had this need to help people. sometimes, growing up I would go out and visit with elderly people, just sit around and talk to them, and sometimes I would haul water for them or bring in firewood for them. And it just, it was a good feeling. So after I got out of the service, I relocated to Denver. Eventually I got certified as an alcohol and drug counselor but it didn't fill in that void.

Jane: He had seen such a decline in this community--which he had grown up in-- after the 1973 occupation where people tended to withdraw, and they tended to mistrust each other and not work together like they had.

Walter: we had to be very careful on how we dealt with the people because that occupation had drove all the people inside of their homes and they wouldn't come out. So there was no social gathering, nothing like that,

Jane: he had ideas that perhaps it would spark more caring and sharing in the community if he held Easter and Christmas gatherings to bring people out of their homes and socialize together. He tried gardening ideas. He brought in rotor tillers. People donated livestock, chickens, and goats at one point, buffalo, all sorts of things. he was trying to ignite the atmosphere that he had grown up in to try to restore it.

Geraldo: Walter, I covered as you know the takeover at Wounded Knee and the response of the federal government and I remember aside from the crushing poverty, a pervasive sense on the reservation of depression. And it seemed almost as if the whole uprising and its aftermath, with the people being hurt, and some people being killed, had stripped the people there of their self respect, their self esteem. Was that the hardest part...to overcome?

Walter: Yeah, basically, it divided us up into two or three different parts. But every project that we developed was more or less set up for developing self worth, self confidence, uh, a little respect which I felt was completely destroyed. There was too much drinking. People were dying. There was a lot of sicknesses. And it was case of slow starvation at that time. People were trying to survive on fifty four dollars per month. So we tried a number of projects. Sometimes it was trial and error but in the end, we still have a long ways to go.

Geraldo: life on the pine ridge reservation in terms of pride and really in terms of the quality of life, is better because of that man, ladies and gentlemen.

Walter: So we tried everything to try to bring life back to this community. it seemed to have worked to a certain point. But I was hoping that it would catch on and that it would go on by itself but it never did.

Jane: It took us four years before we finally came to the end of what he had to say. And at that point, he was able, finally, to look at his whole life and see it in its entirety. At that point, he began to feel peace.

Jane: positive memories started coming to him, things that he had not thought about for years and years. It was as if, buried under all of the agony that he had suffered through as a child, and all of the negative behavior that he had displayed as an adult, that buried under it all was the positive of what it means to be a Lakota.

WALTER: (VO) THE FEAR CREATED BY THOSE BEATINGS IS GONE. THE ANGER FUELED BY ALCOHOL IS GONE. MY MIND IS CLEAR. EVEN TODAY, AFTER SO MANY YEARS, THE MEMORY OF THE ELDERS WHO RAISED ME IS STRONG. I SEE NOW THAT THROUGHOUT THE MOST DIFFICULT TIMES THEY WALKED STRAIGHT-BACKED WITH CLEAR AND FOCUSED EYES. THEY HAD NO NEED TO BEAT THEIR CHILDREN, THEIR WIVES OR EACH OTHER. THEY HAD NO NEED TO SHOUT IN ANGRY VOICES. THEY KEPT THEIR HOMES NEAT AND THE GROUND THEY LIVED ON WAS CLEAN AND FREE OF LITTER. THEY WERE LAKOTA AND THEY KNEW IT DEEP INTO THEIR SOULS.

Jayne Shorin: It took a lot of courage for him to come forward and tell his story in this book, to break this legacy of isolation, if you tell your story and you learn something from your life story and you can share it with others, that's how healing happens.

Willeta: The more survivors that can speak as far as their experiences and tell that story, the closer we are to becoming who we used to be.

Walter: This is my sister. This is my oldest brother. This is Frances.

Walter: What I know about Brussels are stories that my mother told me. she never told us very much. Part of our culture is that the mother does not tell the son anything. The father is the one that tells the son. The mother tells the daughter. But as part of the culture our uncle steps in to fill the father's position. But he's never been to Brussels so we were lost there.

Walter: That one. See my sister is being pulled into the picture.

Walter: a lot of the pictures we had from that time got burned up in a fire. We only had one family picture left that we were able to salvage. So from that time on up to the present, there is no information.

Francois: In 2004 I had the opportunity at that time to buy about 150 Indian artifacts. the guy who collected the artifacts, bought that collection in 1935 from the Indians of the Wild West Show when they were at the World's Fair of 1935. So I found a few pictures and The very first one (18:00) I found was Walter's family I recognized immediately the two vests that I had. That was just incredible. I had a T.V crew stop by because they hear about the story and they said, "Maybe we can make a nice reportage and we can fly with you to Denver I said, "What do you think? Shall we drive to Pine Ridge?"

Francoise: thank you, sir. Down this road and then, thank you.

Man: Moses.

Francoise: Moses.

Man: He lives right here.

Francoise: Moses. Yeah.

Francoise: We drove to Wounded Knee and we found Moses, Walter's brother.

Francoise: We are from Belgium.

Moses: Oh, Belgium.

Francoise: We are from Belgium and we are looking just for history. In 1935, there were chiefs that came to Belgium to the International Fair. And I've got a picture here...

Moses: Oh yeah...

Francoise: of Joe Littlemoon with his family. Are these relatives of you?

Moses: That's my mother and father and my oldest brother Al, Aloysius, and then Francis, Wilson and my sister Pauline.

Walter: This is history that we need. What boarding school had did to us was make us feel ashamed, make us resent our culture for what it is. To overcome a lot of that then this is the type of knowledge that I need to put it into a book to say that we are people. We are people. We are human beings.

Francoise: Thanks so much. I'm really happy that I found a relative of people that came.

Moses: Thank you for the pictures.

Walter: the frosting on the cake today is this display here, and meeting Francoise here. The history of our family is something we've been putting together. That gives me the strength to stand up and walk a little bit more taller and be able to look people in the eye and say 'how are you?' And that's about it. That's what this means to us.

WALTER: To be a human being, in our world it means something big. It's almost like a title. You earn the right to be a human being. You're not born with that. You need a lot of respect. You need a lot of honor, you need a lot of dignity, a lot of compassion to reach that level of being a human being. It means something to us.

WALTER: (VO) TODAY I STAND FACING THE SUNSET WHERE MY LAKOTA GRANDPARENTS HAVE GONE HOME. I ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR WISDOM, COURAGE, AND GENEROSITY. I AM GRATEFUL TO THEM. THROUGH THEIR EFFORTS, I HAVE DIGNITY, RESPECT, HONOR, AND PRIDE. I CAN FACE THE FUTURE UNTIL I GO HOME TO JOIN THEM. BECAUSE I HAVE REMEMBERED THE LESSONS FROM MY LAKOTA ELDERS I AM DISCOVERING WHO I AM. THE DARK FOG HAS LIFTED. I CAN FINALLY HEAR THE CREATOR, TOUCH THE CREATOR, TASTE THE CREATOR, AND SMELL THE CREATOR. I SEE THE CREATOR. I AM ABLE TO SAY, "I AM LAKOTA. I AM A HUMAN BEING.