



Hashtag MMIW

CREDIT: Jaylyn Gough

Okay, so we've now followed the dotted line of history from the Plains Indian Wars all the way to the present day. We've seen how the brutality of the Sand Creek Massacre started it all, how it propelled the Cheyenne and Arapaho and their allies to give up on making peace with the U.S. government, how their war parties threw themselves into battle – for revenge and to safeguard their way of life. And in one battle after another, how the Plains Tribes resoundingly triumphed. Yet the army wasn't interested in diplomacy or recognizing the tribes' right to sovereignty. What mattered was clearing the so-called "hostiles" off of land they wanted to own, even if that meant genocidal tactics, like cutting the tribes off from their children and their bison herds. Talking to tribal members about this history, we've heard how raw and recent it still feels. As Westerners,

some of us might prefer to call this all distant history and close the book on it. But when we look at life on reservations today, we can't help but wonder – are the Plains Indian Wars really over?

Violence Against Indigenous People

It's one of the first questions that Lynnette Grey Bull asks when she talks to audiences full of police officers and social workers and educators. Lynnette is Northern Arapaho, Hunkpapa Lakota and the director of Not Our Native Daughters, an organization working to educate people about the high rates of human trafficking and homicides in Indian Country. "I start with kind of the statistical view of Indian country, what we face in the country across our nation, and to also expound on the fact that the exploitation and rape and murder of Indigenous women, children and persons is no new thing. It's not a new hashtag, or a new element that has to be added to social justice movements. It's something that's always been here since the first ships have arrived on this land," says Lynnette.

Here's just a few of the statistics that Lynnette brings up when she talks to folks. "Native American youth have the highest suicide rates across Indian country, we have the lowest life expectancy, we have the worst statistics and health disparities, we suffer extreme poverty in comparison to third world countries. And yet people still send support to third world countries, but it's right here in your backyard, right here in the United States," Lynnette says. Here's a few more statistics: believe it or not, Native Americans are actually the number one ethnic group most likely to be killed by police. And are incarcerated at more than double the national average, the second most of any ethnic group after African Americans, and four times more often than white people. And maybe the greatest proof that the Plains Indian Wars are still reverberating is

that Native Americans are five times more likely to die by homicide than whites. And this [violence has hit Indigenous women and girls the hardest.](#)

“Native American women are the most stalked, raped, murdered and exploited of any other race in this country,” Lynnette says. In fact, Indigenous women and girls are ten times more likely to be murdered than their white counterparts. Let me just say that again -- ten times as likely to be killed in a homicide. In fact, it’s their third leading cause of death. Lynnette remembers finding out about that last statistic. “Now, me being a full-blooded Native American woman that impacted me, that impacted raising my children. That impacted looking at my own daughter. And something just sparked in me and I said, we need to do something about it,” she says. And so she did.



CREDIT: Ana Castro

CAPTION: Lynnette GreyBull is the director of the advocacy group Not Our Native Daughters.

Ever since I was hired on to cover the tribal news beat in Wyoming, I've been doing stories about the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous people, with a focus on the people who were stepping up to stop it. It didn't take me long to connect with Lynnette. The first time I met her in person, we scheduled to meet at the Shoshone Rose Casino outside Lander, Wyoming. When she walked up, I immediately felt her presence. First of all, she's a glamorous lady with long, colorful earrings and a dynamism in the way she holds herself and speaks. But she's also fast to form friendships, she's just a very warm person. After our interview, she offered to take me to visit the Day family.

We drove out to a lovely home under the cottonwood trees in the middle of the Wind River Reservation. A breeze blew in through the screen door as we sat on the couch. Talking with the Days was an intensely moving experience, one of the most impactful interviews of my career. They told us about witnessing their child, [Dawn Day](#), endure a violent relationship that law enforcement failed to stop. Dawn was always spunky, funny, someone who didn't give up on her relationships. But that may have been her downfall. Boaters found her floating in a nearby lake on the Wyoming plains. No one was ever arrested for Dawn's murder and authorities dismissed her case as an accidental drowning. Her father said that wasn't true – that she was beaten to death and he was fighting to keep the case open. Their story visibly affected Lynnette. Normally, she doesn't talk about her own history. But that day, she shared it. "All of this I can relate to, because I once was young, and was in a violent relationship. And just hearing you speak, just triggers so many different things for myself and my own story. Because I was in an abusive relationship, and got beat up and I was thrown out of cars, too," she says.

Growing up, Lynnette lived as a homeless teenager and ended up in an abusive relationship herself. “I always remember thinking that he would change and how he thought he did really love me, he just had some problems, and one day, he'll be better. I remember thinking that way. But I also remember being very low self-worth. And there was a horrible day in my life where he put a gun to my head, and put a few bullets in there and spun the wheel and pulled the trigger. And I remember that day, and I remember praying in my head, asking God, if He lets me out of here, I will never come back to him ever again. And that's what I did. Thank God, I'm still alive. Thank God, I have three beautiful children that I'm able to raise and teach them about this,” she says. Lynnette said she felt called to work for Indigenous people with stories like hers and Dawn’s. One time, she went to speak at one of the high schools on the reservation. “I spoke at Wyoming High School a couple of weeks ago. And we were talking about this very same thing. And when I asked the audience how many had either missing or murdered family members in their own family, I would say at least 40 percent of the room, hands went up. And a lot of that is tied to dating and violence,” she says.



CREDIT: Ana Castro

CAPTION: Lynnette talks to Melodie at the public library in Lander, Wyoming.

I interview Lynnette again in a quiet room at the local library. Lynnette tells me it hasn't been easy to survive and find sources of healing. "I survived a lot of things, and a lot of young women that I was encircled with during that time and during those years, a lot of them did not make it out alive or a lot of them didn't survive life in itself, either from addiction or going to prison or whatever the case is. But my trauma in my past is not a pretty one. And it took a lot of years of me going through various forms of trauma-informed care," she says. For Lynnette, her path toward healing involved helping others. She started volunteering for organizations working to stop human trafficking. "I went through training and went through education, to understand the different formats of trauma-informed care to psychological impact of trauma, especially in children and adolescents, and adults. And this journey of my own healing has led me to where I am today," she says.

She started the nonprofit [Not Our Native Daughters](#) 15 years ago – well before there was a MMIW hashtag – to advocate for Indigenous women and girls. She began traveling the country, talking to tribal councils about the realities of the crisis. "They would tell me, this doesn't happen here. Human trafficking is a city thing that happens in Los Angeles, Seattle. So I had to change my approach to tribes. And my approach to tribes during that time was, I was always able to find a victim from their tribe, I was always able to find a missing person, a murdered person, a trafficking victim, a teen, a missing child, whatever. My approach to get their buy-in for these trainings was that I had to approach them and say, this is your tribal member, this might have happened five years ago or whatever. But this is how I was able to get the buy-in from tribes to understand that it does happen in rural regions. It does happen in tribes, and it is happening to our people," Lynnette says.

Seeking Justice



CAPTION: Nicole Wagon has turned her pain into advocacy to make sure other families don't go through what she has.

Northern Arapaho member Nicole Wagon is the mother of five daughters, which means she's a very busy lady.

One day, in early January 2019, her oldest daughter Jocelyn called her up.

"I was gonna go see her but I was

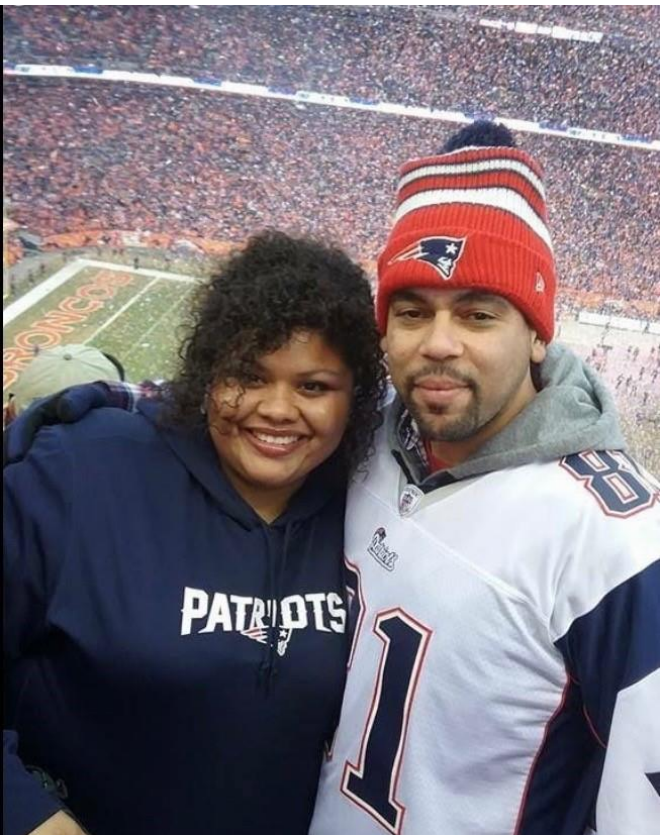
working out at my local gym, and chose not to, because I know when we get together, we tend to visit and I needed to get my other daughters ready for a basketball trip. So I didn't want to stay out late. But I just felt a strong need

to go see her," Nicole says. Nicole was very close to her 30-year old daughter, Jocelyn. They had a really unique relationship. "I had her at such a young age, it was kind of like, she would always say, Mom, we kind of grew up together and basically, you know, it felt that way. And the firstborn, basically for me, she wasn't really mine. She was my parents," she says. But Jocelyn was one of her great joys. "Very outgoing. Made everybody feel good and was a good listener. And, you know, if somebody's having a bad day, she would just turn it around, flip the script and make them feel better and look at the bright things of life," Nicole says.

Jocelyn was a vibrant member of the Wind River Reservation community too, famous for her singing voice. "She would get requested for birthdays or funerals or different things like that to sing, and she sang in my dad's band for certain events. So she belonged to a band called Sand Creek," Nicole says. Nicole stayed in close daily touch with her daughter but still, she had a lot

going on that winter afternoon and never got a chance to drop by Jocelyn's house. She went home and got her kids ready for the basketball game. But then, "that morning, I woke up before my aunt calls. I woke up with an extreme headache. And after knowing the details of everything, it makes sense to me as a mother. Like my grandmother would share with me that I gave life to my daughters, I can feel their pain. And I felt my daughter's pain," Nicole says. Nicole didn't think much about this headache and went on about her morning until, "my aunt gave me a call and wants to know where I was at and wanted me to get to my daughter's house immediately. So that's how...I did not know. And when I got to the house, law enforcement was there with yellow tape," Nicole says.

Yellow tape was strung around Jocelyn's home because she and her boyfriend, Rudy Perez, had been murdered. Nicole says that because it happened off the reservation, the state of Wyoming conducted the investigation. She didn't know it then, but that was a good thing. "The state took that on, Riverton Police Department because that's where the jurisdiction was in charge. So the detective that was assigned, I have a lot of respect for him. We're good friends to this day. And like I said, it's better to work with them, not against them. And I really felt that they worked with each other. Again, the key is open communication to make sure that my daughter's case was going to remain open," Nicole says. "Right, was that a concern at certain points?" I ask. "At certain points, I felt frustrated. I felt reassured once there was a team assigned to me," Nicole says.



CREDIT: Nicole Wagon

CAPTION: Four people were recently arrested for the murder of Jocelyn Watt and her partner Rudy Perez.

For the Riverton Police, a double homicide was unusual and they made it a priority

to solve it. But still, the investigation kept grinding on and on. Then something unimaginable happened. A little over a year after Jocelyn's murder, Nicole's 23-year-old daughter Jade disappeared. Jade had two little girls and was just getting ready to go into a training program for a medical career. For a month, no one knew where Jade was

or what happened to her. Now Nicole was not only trying to get justice for one daughter's murder but was also searching for another child. Even though Native Americans account for only three percent of the state's population, they account for 14 percent of missing person cases and 21 percent of the state's murder cases. "When Jade went missing, there was another young lady that went missing at the same time in Montana. She was at a rest area. They couldn't find her. And their family reached out to my daughter's, and we were just supporting each other through that ordeal. And it was ironic how we found our kids within the same timeframe. Her name was Selena Not Afraid. And she was very young, 16 years old. So we just supported each other. We still support each other with the campaign of MMIP. You kind of have that connection, that bond," Nicole says.

Nicole says she needed help from other families like these because the federal law enforcement and the Bureau of Indian Affairs – also known as the BIA – didn't provide much at all. "It was on federal lands. It was on the reservation, and there's no communication. There's nobody assigned, there's no advocate that cares, or reaches out. And I think I'm not impressed with BIA at all, I mean, nobody can ever get a straight answer. Or the support or encouragement. Not impressed. But I have to give this back to the state because my daughter Jocelyn is through the state process, and my daughter Jade is the federal and BIA process," Nicole says. Nicole has an up close view of the serious jurisdictional gaps that Native Americans deal with when they try to get justice. While the state did assign an advocate to help her navigate the system, the BIA and the FBI did not. For one long month, Nicole struggled to get help finding her daughter. Because her daughter was an adult, there was no amber alert system to get the public to help look for her. Nicole finally made friends with one BIA police officer. "He stopped by to check on us daily and I just had some kind of intuition. I know you're the one that's going to find my daughter. And he just looked at me and I said, yep, you're the one. Don't ask me why I know that. And he was the one. But when he came to me and asked me for certain things, I didn't feel good. And I told my daughters, I gotta go pray. And the kids were just watching me and I said, I believe they found your sister now. And the very next day the officials told me. I could feel it in my heart. And both times that my daughters have passed, I can honestly say, I felt it when their life left their bodies. That's how close I am to my kids," Nicole says.

CREDIT: Nicole Wagon

CAPTION: Nicole and her family have become active in the #MMIP movement.



Jade's body was found on the reservation. Not long after, the BIA decided her death was an accident and closed the case. This isn't unusual, in fact, U.S. attorneys decline to prosecute over half of violent crimes in Indian Country. Meanwhile, Jocelyn's case was being investigated by the state of Wyoming and it was still open. Recently, four people were charged with the murders. Nicole remembers that day well. "December 9th of '21,

that's when I was notified. And I remember the date because it was the day after my birthday. So the police came to me and it was a belated birthday gift to me, and they wanted to talk to me in person. And I really respect them for giving me that respect before everything hit the public media," she says. So now she's waiting for one daughter's case to work its way through the state court system. And another daughter's case that she's working hard to get re-opened because the feds have decided not to investigate it. Lynnette says working as an advocate for families like Nicole's, she's learned what a tangled mess it can be.

"There's no clear avenue to justice in Indian country. And it talks about our jurisdictional issues and to explain it on a board would just be like squiggly lines all over the place," says Lynnette

Grey Bull. She says federal prosecutors only go after the most clean cut cases that they have the best chance of winning, the ones with eye witnesses and testimony from victims. When they don't have that kind of evidence, they dismiss it and call it an accident. In fact, over 40 percent of the time, [crimes are dismissed](#) because of quote "weak or inadmissible evidence." So the same perpetrators just keep victimizing over and over. She says only about a third of cases involving Native Americans even get investigated. "I know on my other reservation in Standing Rock, Standing Rock is the size of a state and so is Wind River, but sometimes they don't even have enough officers to cover them. Another epidemic across the country is we get domestic violence calls across Indian Country and not even 50% of them get answered. And some of those victims end up murdered or killed, because 911 calls are not answered. So it's an issue of public safety. And it's an issue for tribal law enforcement and tribal BIA not having what they need to execute justice," Lynnette says.

And she says that the media doesn't help the problem. She cites a recent study in Wyoming showing that the media only covered about 30 percent of Indigenous homicide cases but covered over 50 percent of non-Native homicides. "When a white person went missing in the local paper or any media outlets, that person was always depicted in the best light. They were depicted as they were the star in their high school or their family does this, or they have good attributes to say about this person. Now, when a Native American person was missing, it was in the paper or media outlet, they mentioned that they were alcoholics, or they were known to party or they were known to occupy bars, even that they have family members who were convicted, like things that were not a relevant to the person's case," Lynnette says.

That discrepancy was on full display back in 2021 when a young white woman named [Gabby Petito](#) went missing in Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park. Here's Nicole again, "that went global, across the US, compared to my daughter's case. And then, when that happened, social media picked up my daughter's story again, so I got to thank Petito's family for awakening the issues up again for the state of Wyoming. It's pretty sad that somebody had to pass away, but I feel the pain of the mother of Petito, because I've been there, done that. It doesn't matter who you are, or what color you are, the point being is a mother lost her child. How come the news media didn't cover my daughter? Is that because she's Indigenous?" asks Nicole.

The Task Force

For Nicole and Lynnette, these inequities just seemed to become more and more obvious. At a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's march on the University of Wyoming campus, Lynnette had a chance to make change. "I was the last person to speak out of the series of people to speak. And it so happened, I was right before Governor Mark Gordon. And when I realized I was the last person to speak, and he was right after me. I was sitting at the table and my head started spinning. And I was like, I'm gonna propose a task force. And at that time, there were only five other states that had this. And I was like, this is my time. I did my presentation and towards the end of my presentation, I just humbly asked Governor Gordon to have a Wyoming MMIW/MMIP Task Force," says Lynnette. The request took the governor by surprise but he got up after Lynnette and this is what he said, "Thank you, Lynnette, for your comment, about we need to do a task force. Senator Ellis and I just talked and let's do this. So we will." "And I was so honored that he obliged, it wasn't my intent to put him on the spot or anything like that. And

ever since then the task force has been in place. I will say, in the couple of years that the task force has been in place, I think a lot has been done,” said Lynnette.



CREDIT: Nicole Wagon

CAPTION: Before Jade disappeared, she participated in the #MMIP March. Seen here, Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon with Nicole’s daughters Trinity, Tianna and Jade.

The task force went on to release [a study](#) of the problem in Wyoming, some of the data which you’ve heard here. Not only is Lynnette a member of the task force but so is Nicole. She worked on the task force to propose an adult amber alert system that could have saved her daughter Jade’s life if it had been in place. And a bill was recently passed to adopt what’s called an Ashanti alert program in the state to help locate missing people between 18 and 64 years old.

Lynnette took her message of including the Native American perspective to the entire state when she ran for the U.S. House of Representatives twice- once against Liz Cheney and then again against Harriet Hageman. Here she was at a debate, “Also, I want to thank my opponents, Mr. Haggitt and Ms. Cheney, I want to thank you for your attendance and your presence here tonight. Again, I’m Lynnette Grey Bull, I live in the heart of Wyoming on the Wind River Reservation. And you know what, quite simply, I want to represent the people.”

After losing those races, Lynnette moved to Denver to be closer to her older son in college and has joined forces with Colorado’s MMIP task force working to pass an even more ambitious bill, [the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Act](#). I hop on a Zoom call with Lynnette and some of her colleagues in Colorado to learn more about it. “My name is Danielle SeeWalker. I am a citizen of the Standing Rock Sioux Nation in North Dakota. But I currently reside in Denver, Colorado, and I am one of the members of the MMIR task force of Colorado.” “My

name is Raven Payment. And I am Ojibwe and Guardian Bahagia. And I am also a member of the MMIR taskforce of Colorado.” Both Danielle and Raven personally witnessed how violence hurt their communities.

CREDIT: Shawn Kinsey.

CAPTION: Raven Payment in front of a mural by Nanibah Chacon.



Raven didn't grow up on the reservation, but still, "I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. And there were a lot of interactions that I had and how I was treated and these communities that I anecdotally knew, and my family members, specifically my aunties, and my other female cousins, we all knew it as a reality of our lived experience," Raven says. Danielle did grow up on the reservation in North Dakota. "It wouldn't be that uncommon for me to see crime tape or the FBI coming in or hearing my aunties talk about a body they found across the street over coffee, just very nonchalant, kind of very desensitized. And I didn't realize how serious this was until I started to understand as an adult, like what this really meant in that this was not something that was normal. This was not unusual. And in 2007, my brother was found murdered. His body was found burned up in the backseat of a car. And to this day, we still have zero answers on what happened to him and this was back on the reservation. And then just a couple years ago, my auntie, my dad's sister, was murdered on the streets of Denver. Thankfully, we know what happened to her, we know who her perpetrator is, we're still going through the court process of trying to seek justice for her. But this is something that has personally touched me in a lot of different ways," says Danielle.

All three women worked tirelessly to pass the new bill that sets aside funds to better investigate these cases, and creates an advocate position to help families deal with the logistics and trauma of these crimes. Soon after our zoom call, in May of 2023, the bill went to the governor's desk for his signature. But still, Raven says, the bill is far from perfect. "So throughout the process with the initial Senate Bill 150, there was this incredible opposition that came from Governor Polis, his administration, and a large part of that was based upon wanting to withhold data on just

Native people's violence. There was a lot of excuses that were thrown around, but essentially, they just didn't want to hand over any data," says Raven.

A lack of data is a huge issue when it comes to understanding the scope of the problem of why people go missing and are murdered in Indigenous communities. Many of the most important sources for numbers – like the Central Bureau of Investigation – are locked up behind firewalls and not accessible to Native researchers. And even if that data is available, it's often inaccurate. Here's Lynnette, "A huge problem on the human trafficking side of Indigenous people is that we're constantly misclassified. So you can have a missing person individual in a CBI or in a system and we can still be misclassified as non-Native American. Most often we are classified as either Mexican or Hispanic, or even Southeast Asian or Pacific Islander, just about every other ethnicity down the line," she says.

When I ask them why Colorado is so reluctant to share their data, Raven says, "The Department of Public Safety and by extension Polis' Administration, kind of took up this narrative that they didn't want to share data, because they were worried about it jeopardizing an active investigation, which is absolutely a valid concern." But Raven says, they're not interested in that kind of classified data for specific cases. They're interested in trends and big picture analysis. She wonders if lawmakers aren't worried that some of those trends might point an unflattering finger at law enforcement and the justice system. "I would actually take the step further and say that what I think what they're worried about is being found either negligent or outright malicious," Raven says.

Historical Underpinnings

It's known that Native Americans are killed by police at higher rates than any other ethnicity – releasing data that shows that could open agencies up to liability. And when you hear stories like Nicole's, Raven's, Danielle's and Lynnette's, you can understand why Native Americans traditionally have a long standing distrust of law enforcement. But it's also deeply connected to the brutal history of American colonization. When the police came to the door it wasn't to provide security but often to take away children or women. “When we walk into a place like the Capitol building, or a government building, specifically the Colorado State Capitol, there's this whole dome that is filled with portraits of all of our presidents. And it is filled with these individuals who instituted policies to try to eradicate the existence of Native people. Our ancestors, our great-great grandfathers or great-great grandmothers, every time we walk in that building, we are confronting the legacy of these individuals and these policies that tried to make sure that we weren't there, and that we wouldn't be able to advocate for ourselves or that we wouldn't have a knowledge of our culture or who our ancestors were,” says Raven.

Right now in the U.S., one in every three Indigenous women will experience sexual assault in her lifetime. Lynnette says the reasons for those trends go all the way back. “There's been studies and research on that from other universities that actually have documentation that the first settlers that came, the Plymouth Rock story, that when they land, or that region was acquired, by the new settlers, or the pilgrims, that as more and more ships came in, they offered women and children to the new settlers to do as they please to these women and children, and they did it as a sign of their impurity. This is their stance of, we have conquered these people, we have conquered their land, we have conquered the resources here,” she says. As a society, we haven't

been willing to shine a light on that history. It's just entrenched. And it's embodied in the American system. We're still painting Columbus as a hero, not a rapist, not an exploiter, not a trafficker. These are the things that he was, along with all of his other comrades,” says Lynnette.

I ask Nicole if she sees this same connection between the high rates of violent crimes on her reservation and the history of the Plains Indian Wars. “I believe there is a connection. I know I can trace my bloodline all the way to Sand Creek and what happened to our ancestors and our people back then. So if we really think about it, this has been going on since then, which is very unfortunate,” she says. Nicole lived in Germany with the military and she sees a parallel between the genocide of Native Americans and the holocaust. “For example, witnessing living in Germany for seven years, watching what their people went through, watching communism, watching East and Western Germany and the suffering that their people went through. And visiting concentration camps. And then my parents being at the wall when the wall came down. It's the same kind of concept of what happened to our people,” she says.

“I know that Germany has worked pretty hard to try and like come to terms with their history of genocide. Is there anything that you kind of wish that the United States would do that you saw maybe over there to kind of just reconcile itself with this history?” Melodie says. “Yes, I do. Admit it, and do something for people that are struggling every day. You talk about third world countries, right? I believe the reservation in itself is a third world country in our backyard now. The struggle of my people I believe it's even worse, even after COVID of the trauma and the cause and effects of my people. So what is the government going to do about it?” Nicole says.

Each of these women are doing everything they can think of to stop the violence passed down from the U.S. history of genocide. Nicole organizes an MMIP march on May 5th every year as well as red dress dances at powwows. She's taught her three remaining daughters how to protect themselves and passed on her calling to become an activist. "What gives me the strength is my three daughters, and my beautiful grandkids. I believe that my daughter's Jade spirit lives on to her kids. And they give me the strength to get up and greet the sun," says Nicole.

Perhaps most importantly, all four women volunteer as family advocates. Until the government starts hiring enough people to do this work, they're filling the need by doing work like Raven describes. "I have a commitment to support families of MMIPR and be accountable to them more than I will ever be accountable to the government. So whether that's taking a phone call at two o'clock in the morning, or understanding that I have a five minute window to send Denver's police chief an email, like 'Why haven't you gotten back to these family members?' That's what I do in my realm that I can control to try to address this crisis," she says.

Lynette is now working with an architect to design [a traveling monument](#), a sculpture of an Indigenous woman that can journey around the country, educating people about the issue. She's putting out a national call for MMIP's families to submit the names of their lost loved ones. "So that we can incorporate their names into the monument, because it is an essence of memorial. I think not only is it going to be an educational piece, but I think it's going to be a piece of honor for these families, that the majority of them have not received any sort of justice or closure to the cases of their loved ones," she says.

Lynnette says it's efforts like this that will make real, lasting change because at the helm is an Indigenous person speaking up for their community. "We should be able to tell our own stories. They should be able to hear it and how we want to tell the story, how we want to explain it, in our own words. But most times, as we see in the racism and the historical, systemic things that we still face today and fight is that they want to keep telling our stories, they want to keep impeding on something that we have the ability to do ourselves. So that's why it's important that the stories that we have, especially our victimization stories, our historical trauma, our generational trauma, the traumas from colonization into the present time, that we are the ones being called to tell the stories, and we are the ones to call to advocate for it," Lynnette says.

Lynnette says she has a big question that keeps her working every day to make change. "You know, I don't understand why it's so hard for others to care. I think anybody who is human who hears someone is missing, or someone was found murdered, regardless of race would be like, Oh, my gosh, that's terrible. That shouldn't have happened, or why is this happening? But why? Why is it so hard for them to care is really what frickin' fires me up. And I just don't understand it. I call it a silent crisis across our nation," she says.