



December 11, 2020

Jonnie Davis, President  
David Ambroz, Executive Director—  
Corporate Social Responsibility  
ABC Studios  
500 S Buena Vista St  
Burbank, CA, 91521-0001

David E. Kelley, CEO  
David E. Kelley Productions  
1600 Rosecrans Ave., Building 4B  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.

Dear Mr. Davis, Mr. Ambroz, and Mr. Kelley,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to convey our deep concerns surrounding the omission and disregard of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in the recently premiered ABC prime-time television series, *Big Sky*. It appears that while the series centers around the abduction and trafficking of women on Montana highways, *Big Sky* lacks a depiction of MMIWG, despite the disproportionate number of Native women and girls that go missing, not just in Montana, but nationwide. It has come to our attention that ABC has recently responded to outreach from Tribal Nations and Tribal organizations on the frontlines of the MMIWG crisis. While we are glad to see ABC respond to outreach from Indian Country, this is a mere first step. We urge that the corporation consider what greater actions can be taken to fully acknowledge and call attention to the MMIWG epidemic through its platform.

For too long, Tribal Nations and Native people have been battling the crisis of MMIWG in our communities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, homicide is the third leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women between 10 and 24 years of age and the fifth leading cause of death for AI/AN women between 25 and 34 years of age. In some Tribal communities, Native women face murder rates that are more than 10 times the national average. However, even these numbers do not provide a complete picture of this crisis. Due to complex jurisdictional issues at the Tribal, state, and federal levels, full data of MMIWG in the U.S. is not completely available. Combined with this lack of data, media coverage on the crisis is extremely uneven, with the vast majority of cases never covered by the media at all.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to bring truth and justice for our missing and murdered grandmothers, mothers, daughters, sisters, nieces, and friends while fighting to bring them home. However, ABC's erasure of our experiences undermines these efforts by rendering the crisis invisible to the broader American public and exacerbating the obscurity felt by our people, who remain unseen or overlooked on our own ancestral homelands. To that end, it is imperative that an influential corporation like ABC seek to promote truthful narratives about Tribal Nations and AI/AN people by confronting the MMIWG crisis head-on in its programming. In doing so, ABC must engage in meaningful dialogue with Indian Country on opportunities to represent MMIWG honestly and respectfully within *Big Sky* and future projects.



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We further join our Tribal partners in calling for the inclusion of information at the end of future *Big Sky* show credits directing viewers to the [Somebody's Daughter](#) documentary. This important film examines how "man camps" from the Bakken fracking boom have brought drug cartels and gangs into the Rocky Mountain and Great Plains regions, giving rise to the sexual exploitation of Native women and girls in neighboring Tribal communities. Including the documentary, as well as factual information on MMIWG, would be a critical and influential step toward ensuring that the magnitude of this crisis is fully conveyed to your viewers.

### **Conclusion**

As Native peoples, we are called upon to protect, honor, and respect the sacred roles women and girls have within our societies by ensuring they live free from violence and other harm. However, historical inaction on MMIWG by the federal government has left Tribal Nations to address the traumas associated with the violence to our women and girls with little to no resources. Because of the added harm that inaccurate depictions of Native people in media have on our communities, it is critical that our partners at ABC bring awareness to the truthful narratives on MMIWG as told by Native people. Continuing to ignore these traumas will hamper efforts to bring greater awareness to this crisis, and further impede the pursuit of justice for our missing and murdered relatives.

Linked [here](#) are the Confidence Building Measures as suggested and put forward by the representatives of the Indigenous alliance.

Respectfully,

Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana  
Global Indigenous Council (GIC)  
Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (GPTCA)  
Native Justice Center (NJC)  
Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council (RMTLC)  
Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO)  
Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA)  
Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA)  
Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Nations (M.A.S.T.)  
National Indian Education Association (NIEA)  
National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC)  
Nis'to Incorporated  
Tribal Education Departments National Assembly (TEDNA)  
United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)  
United Tribes of Michigan (UTM)