

## **CHAPTER 5**

### ***DIABETES JACKPOT***

By Mariana Leal Ferreira

Mollie Ruud and I first met on the Klamath River in June 1994 at her trailer home in Requa, a coastal town on the Yurok Indian Reservation in Del Norte County, Northern California. As a graduate student in Medical Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, I was making home visits in the area with Lavina Bowers, a Yurok Tribal member who worked for United Indian Health Services (UIHS) as an Outreach Community Worker.<sup>1</sup> During our multiple encounters at Mollie's home on the reservation and at tribal meetings, ceremonial dances, salmon festivals, and unfortunately, in hospitals (given her ill health), Mollie Ruud's life history clearly revealed powerful connections between traumatic events and her twenty-plus-years of experience with diabetes.

After suffering multiple physical and emotional abuses at the Chemawa Indian School in Oregon, Mollie Ruud spent her young adult life working as a fisherwoman, fish filleter, and chambermaid on and around the Yurok "rez." This dialogue starts with Mollie's lifetime perspective on fishing rights at the turn of the 21st century and then goes back in time, presenting the elder's opening statement about her early childhood on the rez until her compulsory eight-year incarceration at Chemawa in the 1940s. As Mollie's life narrative unfolds, diabetes mellitus is brought into discourse in such a way as to call our attention to the historical and political context in which the disorder and its complications originate.

#### **Dedication:**

This piece is dedicated to Mollie Ruud and her husband Reidar Ruud, who have dedicated their lives to protecting the culture and the fishing rights of the Yurok People on the Klamath River.

#### **Human rights issues conveyed in the play:**

- Right to health;
- Self-government for Indigenous Peoples in matters relating to their internal and local affairs;
- Respect for the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (**FPIC**);<sup>2</sup>
- Recognition of the right of Indigenous Peoples to freely define and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development;

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<sup>1</sup> UIHS is a tribally owned and operated health facility in Northern California whose mission is "to work together with our clients and community to achieve wellness through health services that reflect the traditional values of our American Indian Community" (<http://www.uihs.org>). In addition to several satellite clinics, its main site, the Potawatot Health Village, is located in the city of Arcata.

<sup>2</sup> Words in **bold-faced type** are defined in the Glossary.

- Recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ collective right to the lands, territories, and natural resources they have traditionally occupied and used;
- Right of Indigenous Peoples to define and decide on their own development priorities.

**Synopsis of *Diabetes Jackpot*:<sup>3</sup>**

Yurok fisherwoman Mollie Ruud envisions her body as a slot machine that pops pills like coins in order to regain control of her social and emotional health. Her life history reveals powerful connections between trauma and diabetes. Mollie’s rendition of Yurok life emphasizes the impact of colonial history on the social causes of diabetes today, not only for the Yurok People, but for Indigenous communities all over the globe.

**Cast of Characters:**

- **Mariana L. Ferreira**, medical anthropologist and human rights advocate.
- **Mollie Ruud**, Yurok fisherwoman and Indigenous Peoples’ rights advocate.

**Time and Place:**

Yurok Indian Reservation and surrounding areas in the early twenty-first century, a few years before Mollie’s death in 2004.

**Illustrations:**

All photos and drawings with the permission and courtesy of Mollie and Reidar Ruud, Lavina Bowers, and Sammy Gensaw.



Mollie Ruud on the Yurok Indian Reservation, circa 1975. Courtesy of Reidar Ruud.

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<sup>3</sup> “Diabetes Jackpot” was stage-read at the 107<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco, California, Nov. 21, 2008, on the panel “Indigenous Subjects, Diabetes Rights, and Advocacy Practices.”

## DIABETES JACKPOT

*Mollie and Mariana are driving back to Mollie's house after a fish meeting at the Yurok Tribal Office in Klamath on the Yurok Reservation. At some points Mariana acts as the Joker in this play, speaking directly to the audience and offering background information. At other times she interacts as a character with Mollie. Until her last speech, Mollie speaks only to Mariana. As the play opens, they are seated side by side as if in a car, with Mariana driving.*

MARIANA

*(to the audience)* Mollie Ruud was a fisherwoman born in 1932 on the Yurok Indian Reservation in Northern California. Mollie was always a very active defender of the rights of her People, the Yurok Tribe of the Klamath River.

MOLLIE

*(to Mariana)* Fish sure is a hot issue around here. People get all worked up when it comes to fishing rights on the reservation. My blood sugar goes up just to think of it, especially after a fish meeting. And everyone is involved in this war... the Feds were here with their machine guns ... arrested a whole bunch of people, knocked 'em on the head. If it weren't for these lawyers who said, "Don't do anything to these people," they would've killed us.

You'd think as a tribe we'd be able to make our own fishing regulations on the Klamath River. But it's not the case. *(growing more agitated)* My hair dances on the back of my neck just to think of all these regulations. I spent my whole life being closely regulated and controlled, always under supervision of some kind, and this has an effect on people. Indian people, it seems to me, have always been closely watched and controlled, all our lives, all our lives.

MARIANA

*(to the audience)* This Yurok elder seemed to be worked up; she was agitated and angry.

MOLLIE

I need to get home and take my insulin first thing. I don't feel good. I bet you fishing has made a lot of people diabetic around here. It's just too much.

MARIANA

*(to the audience)* I had just watched Mollie and other Yurok women engage in a forceful discussion on the management of the gill-net fishery on the Klamath River. Most of the people present at the meeting were women. Like Mollie, they protested against government regulations, trying to protect the Yurok right to fish on their own reservation.

Ray Mattz, a Yurok fisherman from Requa, on the mouth of the Klamath River, fought in court for 12 years so his People could fish again. However, the new set

of federal regulations on “Indian Fishing,” published in 1978, favored sport and commercial fisheries over Yurok fishing rights.

MOLLIE

It was like, “OK, you’ve got the right to fish now, but we’re going to tell you how.” We didn’t like that, telling us when we could fish, how much fish we needed, what ceremonial fishing meant. They wanted us to fish at night not to bother the tourists during the day. Unbelievable. But we didn’t give in.

MARIANA

*(to the audience)* Frank McCovey, a Yurok fisherman who confronted the US strike force in 1978, puts it this way: “Situations like this make me mean.”

MOLLIE

They’ve made people so mad, so angry, so much hatred brought into our hearts...



MARIANA

*(to the audience)* A closer look at the life experiences of eight generations of Yurok individuals, dating back to the gold rush in the 1850s, contextualizes the emergence of diabetes in California. The correlations Mollie makes allow us to spatialize diabetes on the social and political body, on government institutions and private businesses, rather than exclusively on the physical bodies of Yurok People.

Mollie Ruud displaying a King Salmon she caught on the Klamath River, circa 1980. Courtesy of Reidar Ruud.

MOLLIE

I remember when I was young, back in the 1930s, when there was no electricity and we had to pack water. No outhouses either. But we were happy. I couldn’t wait for the evening when grandma cooked acorns and salmon heads. We had lots of fun. We used to get rocks and sticks and throw them at the cars that went down the road. We’d hide in the bushes. We were like wild little Indians. That’s all we did, play in the brush. We never had wagons or ropes. We used to swing in the branches, and if we were lucky to find an old piece of cardboard, we’d slide down the hills. Such bratty kids!



Mollie and Reidar Ruud with their daughter Cassie Ruud (in striped shirt) and family members in Requa, Yurok Indian Reservation. Courtesy of Reidar Ruud.

*Mariana and Mollie arrive at Mollie's trailer home on the banks of the Klamath River where it enters the Pacific Ocean. They go inside and Mollie begins to cook "Indian tea" made from local plants while Mariana takes notes by the fire.*

#### MOLLIE

Below our house there was this island, a little creek, and a bridge. We'd play around in the creek and we learned how to swim, all by ourselves. Once we begged our mother to go across the river in grandpa's dugout, and she finally let us. Right in the middle of the river, we fell overboard. Then we ducked under the boat and hid there for a while. We got a whipping for that!



Yurok man in his dugout canoe, circa 1950. Courtesy of Reidar Ruud.

*Mollie brings the tea and sits down opposite Mariana. She takes out binoculars and scans the Klamath River below.*

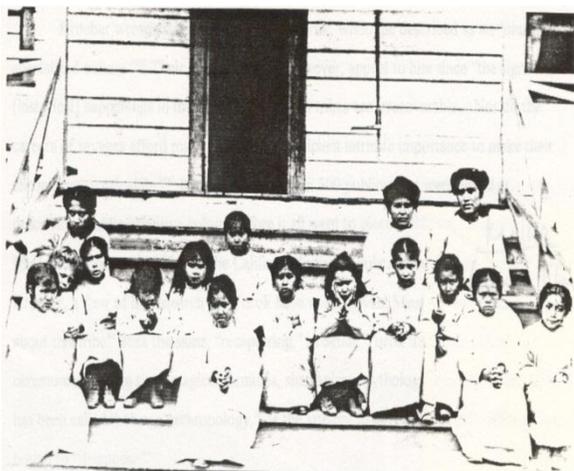
## MOLLIE

The other thing we liked to do was play tourist. (*pointing out the window*) See those tourist fishermen down there? Fifty or sixty years ago, all the kids that lived on this side of the river lo-o-o-oved to play tourist on the Klamath. Grandpa had this dugout. We'd paddle to the cove, hook a fish, and pull it right in; then we'd let it go. But then Grandpa would get mad at us and say that we couldn't play with food. He said food is sacred, and if the whites go around sport fishing, we don't do that. Naturally, we cried. See, I was just six or seven.

Now, there was work to do, too. Mom worked at the cannery, filleting fish all day. She had us sit under the deck, waiting for salmon heads. Oh, what a stench in that muddy water! But we really wanted the heads. We couldn't afford the fish Mom filleted, coming from our own river! We'd smoke 'em at home for the winter. These are such good memories!

But then it happened. Mom told us that they'd take us away to boarding school. I was only eight and I thought we'd hide in the bushes! When the day came, mother made my brother and me get on the cattle truck and go. I felt like a real animal with a big hole inside my chest. Most of the kids cried. Then I thought of what mother often said about Indians, that Indians are the worst people in the world. Basically, we're ugly. Mom said Brush Dances were downright dirty. If I went to Chemawa, I'd quit being so ugly, quit speaking Indian, and turn into a real human being. I wonder what they meant, a real human being?

So one day I got my period and I thought I was gonna die. No one ever told me about menstruation. Then I thought: if mother came to Chemawa, how come she isn't being a mother to me? Don't real human beings treat their kids good? As the matrons said: Indians won't civilize! They couldn't civilize my mother and they can't civilize me.



Yurok girls in Boarding School, circa 1920.  
Courtesy of Lavina Bowers.

I'm pretty tough, you see; I was conceived behind a redwood tree. Even doctors tell me: if I was a normal human being, I'd be dead leaking all this protein with my blood sugars way up high!

That was eight years away from home, no visits, no letters. Like being at Pelican Bay state prison. Gray, dark, cold. When I got out, I was sixteen. I went wild. I just couldn't handle all that freedom, just couldn't handle freedom.

## MARIANA

*(to the audience)* The way in which Mollie associates traumatic events and the onset of diabetes is in no way exceptional but extraordinarily similar to the life experiences of Yurok people. Traumatic experience is an important risk factor for Type 2 diabetes because it raises blood sugar. Statistically speaking, there's a strong, positive correlation between trauma and diabetes worldwide. The hyperactivity of the nervous system appears as a persistent consequence of childhood abuse that has been shown to contribute to the epidemic of diabetes across the globe, whether you are an Indigenous person or not.

*Mollie invites Mariana to go out and cut wild flowers to take to her daughter Cassie's grave in the cemetery behind her house.*

## MOLLIE

Let's pick all these yellow flowers. They are my favorites. *(They pick flowers)* We'll put them at my daughter Cassie's grave in the cemetery over there on the hill. *(They walk toward the cemetery and place flowers on a grave. Mollie points to the graves)* See, there are more than fifty Yurok People buried here. Their names and times of death are marked on their gravestones.



The Klamath River running into the Pacific Ocean. Photo: Mariana Ferreira, 2010.

*The two women weed graves in the cemetery as they talk.*

MOLLIE

The fishing situation still makes my sugars go up. You should take a look at my chart. This whole month I was up in the 200s because now it is the pesticide spraying from the timber companies and all the debris from cutting the trees that run into the river and kill the fish. My diabetes will never get better, no matter how much insulin I take. I get home and see the salmon floating on their bellies because of all the dams and the pollution in the water. It's totally upsetting. If you could see my blood sugar log! It's going straight up!

MARIANA

*(to Mollie)* Oh my. I'm so sorry. Tell me how your body feels.

MOLLIE

My body? My body's worn out, tired, sore, full of holes from all these needles I stick myself with. What I do is never think about myself. I hurt and I just try to get it out of my mind. Like I can have sharp pains on my breast and then I just forget about it. When you live your whole life with people beating the shit out of you, that's what happens to you, you want to give up. It eats you up. I know I am a wreck for everything I've been through, and see what I've got: diabetes.

Thing is, you can put the hurt out of your mind and just feel numb, but you can't stop the sugar from eating you from inside. Since I became a diabetic, my health has gone down hill. I've had so many infections. So I take antibiotics to prevent infections. I take twelve different pills a day! This is how I take care of my life: taking pills, lots of pills! Would you say I am in control of my health? I don't think so. We Indian people have never been in control of anything. I run out of medicine, what happens? I get a pretty bad spell, my urine turns gray and the infections pop right back. I've run out of life and now I can't run out of medicine. It's the end.

MARIANA

*(to Mollie)* What do you think would help your diabetes?

MOLLIE

What am I going to do, go back in time and fix my life, my family? I was part of a broken family, never really had a father or a mother. Now see how much trouble the kids are in today? Doing drugs, getting into car wrecks. Everyone knows why these kids are in trouble, but does anyone care? Who really cares if Indian kids are in trouble?



The arrival of colonizers. Illustration by Sammy Gensaw, reproduced with permission.

*The sound of a helicopter is heard in the distance.*

MARIANA

*(to Mollie)* What's that?

MOLLIE

*(pointing to the sky)* That's another rescue helicopter. Yurok fishermen often drown at the mouth of the Klamath this time of year when the salmon are running. It's real dangerous.

MOLLIE

*(resuming her story)* Now, ask yourself: have you seen families around here doing real good? Out of trouble, folks that do not have cancer or diabetes? They are rare in your studies, aren't they? That's always made me think: how do some folks get through?

I, myself, feel like a slot machine, popping pills like quarters, dimes, and nickels into my mouth. We all wish we'd strike it rich gambling around here in these casinos. But who does? The machines are tight, real tight; they aren't letting you win easy, just swallow up your money.<sup>4</sup>

You think you have a chance; you hear stories about folks who get a few grand. But most people? Nothing! Spend all their money in the casinos. They can't help it. That's what the government gave us Indian people for development: casinos!

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<sup>4</sup> The Yurok Tribe does not own or operate casinos, but other local Indigenous tribes and Rancherias do.

I'm hooked on gambling too, just like these damned pills. Now you tell me, how many people actually get cured? I don't see anyone around here. All my relations are dying off and they sure take a lot of pills! If it weren't for Medicare, I couldn't afford it. But if you look at these prices, (*showing her monthly medicine list*), they add up to a lot of money, more than five hundred bucks a month. Who pays the bill? The government pays the pharmaceutical companies, who are making big bucks on us Indian people. Just like mining or logging or fishing and now casinos. So every time I pop a pill, I feel like a gambler; I close my eyes and hope to hit the jackpot, that my diabetes will go away forever.



Yurok baby in a basket. By Sammy Gensaw.

*The two women walk back to the house.*

MOLLIE

What about a bowl of acorn soup and some smoked salmon?

MARIANA

(*to Mollie*) You know how much I love that!

*Mollie prepares the meal while Mariana continues taking notes.*

MARIANA

(*to the audience*) I often asked Mollie Ruud if she had any insights on why a select number of individuals she knows or knew survived in relatively good health despite all the hardships they went through, while the vast majority developed diabetes and correlated illnesses, such as hypertension and heart disease.

*Mollie brings food; the women sit down together and begin to eat.*

MOLLIE

My life as a wild little Indian, remember? There was so much happiness, I guess because we felt good inside. That didn't last too long for me. It doesn't last too long for Indian people around here. You know all about my life. Wouldn't you say I should have died a long time ago after Chemawa, a broken family, and Cassie's death ...why have I lasted so long? I'm sturdy like a redwood; like I said, I was conceived behind a redwood tree! But there's something else, and that is the

love my husband Reidar has given me. Whenever I felt angry, really pissed off, wanting to give up, what happens? There he is, right by my side, ready to help me. Not many women I know were lucky enough to find love in their lives.

MARIANA

*(to Mollie)* What happens to people who aren't as fortunate? How do they deal with problems in their lives?

MOLLIE

They go find happiness in casinos, drinking, smoking, even fighting with their relations, things we didn't use to do before. Not like this. *(She points to family photos on the wall)*. Or they take pills, medicine that makes them feel good, like tranquilizers. Look at all the people doped up around here! I myself have to admit that when I was unhappy, that's what I felt like doing too. But when I got back home, well, I even had a home! And food, a beautiful garden and a clean bed! I have a generous man that cares for me so much! That's what I am thinking, that some folks that get through life feel good about themselves and have a bunch of people caring about them. Life's problems never seem to get out of hand for them. They don't seem to me to be dying from diabetes.



Mollie Ruud at her home in Requa, circa 1985.

Courtesy: Reidar Ruud.

MARIANA

*(to the audience)* Mollie directed me to the lives of some of her relatives in Northern California who have been spared from the signs and symptoms of diabetes. A close look at the social relationships and professional lives of these individuals seems to indicate that social well-being stems from strong family ties and positive personal achievement such as schooling, jobs, marriage, and intense ceremonial life. Mollie explained, citing a family in Requa she felt very close to.

MOLLIE

You know these kids right here *(pointing to specific photos)* have always felt like they were loved, that's how I see it. I know all of their elders very well; we are all related. It made a difference in their school grades, too, and most of them have good jobs and feel proud of being Yurok. Not that they've only led the good life, no! Suicide, drugs, you name it! But most have always come through one way or another because of love and tradition. Love is part of Indian culture.

## MARIANA

(to the audience) Generosity and solidarity are cultural characteristics that Indigenous Peoples have in common across the globe. In many cases these societies practice what is known as a Gift Economy, whose goal is to circulate wealth rather than accumulate it. Generosity and solidarity have been shown to tighten social bonds, fostering positive parenting skills in Indigenous societies worldwide.<sup>5</sup>



Generosity and solidarity, the fundamental axes of love and social bonding, have the ability to create pleasurable and desirable sensations that help overcome grief in situations of great distress or emotional shock – experiences and sentiments that Yurok women, Mollie in particular, have shown to trigger the sign and symptoms of diabetes.

Mollie and Reidar Ruud,  
married in San Francisco, CA, in 1957.  
Courtesy of Reidar Ruud.



The narratives and genealogies of Yurok families considered here play the role of recording a history of love in colonial light; a political history of emotions, ideas, and spiritual concepts; a history of love, anger, sorrow, and ecstasy; a history of emotional suffering as it is played out in the desire for liberty and peace; a history of how Yurok love, as a force, has also reacted against itself, giving rise to distress and mortifications as manifested in the high incidence of alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, and diabetes.

Mollie and Cassie, 1974.  
Courtesy of Reidar Ruud.

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<sup>5</sup> Neglected for centuries by experimental sciences, love and social attachment have recently become the topic of extensive neuroscientific research to elucidate their biological mechanisms. Love and its main component, social attachment, are seen as highly significant experiences for the brain's "reward system," responsible for the release of dopamine – a neurotransmitter that carries signals between neurons (nerve cells) in the nervous system (see Ferreira, Mariana Leal "Love in Colonial Light: History of Yurok Emotions in Northern California." In Mariana L. Ferreira & Gretchen C. Lang, eds., 2006).

MOLLIE

*(rising from the table and addressing the audience directly)* As the poet of our people Pudoh Jene says –

*Walking in faith, we believe in love.  
Like a blossom, we bloom, we grow, bringing out the best of us.  
In our lives we all need the fun of new beauty and new love.  
In our hearts there is always room.*

*This is my secret:  
Sometimes love doesn't love love;  
it is not a personal fault;  
we make mistakes in whom we choose to love.*

*Sometimes the one we choose to love doesn't love the love you have to offer. Sometimes love doesn't love love.<sup>6</sup>*

**THE END**

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<sup>6</sup> Pudoh, Jene, "In My Heart" quoted in Ferreira, Mariana Leal "Love in Colonial Light: History of Yurok Emotions in Northern California." In Mariana L. Ferreira & Gretchen C. Lang, eds. *Indigenous Peoples and Diabetes. Community Empowerment and Wellness*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2006. 357-386.

# LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR *DIABETES JACKPOT*

## **WARM-UP ACTIVITIES** (to be used before reading the play)

### ACTIVITY 5.1: TROUBLED WATERS

- Overview:** In a guided imagination, participants identify with the depletion of Klamath salmon stock.
- Time:** 30 minutes.
- Materials:** None.

To the Facilitator: Adjust the numbers in this activity to the number of participants.

1. **Getting started:** Explain that all participants are salmon in the Klamath River. Assign each actor a number. When their number is called, they should sit down where they are.
2. **Enacting the story:** Read this narrative and ask participants to respond. They may make noises and gestures as well as motions.
  - a. The Yurok Tribe has depended for centuries on fish from the Klamath River as principal food supply. Salmon were plentiful at first with enough for all the Yuroks.
  - b. Salmon canneries began in 1877 and provided some wages for Yuroks, but overfishing quickly depleted salmon stock. The record catch, in 1912, was 17,000 salmon in a day. *(Ask those with numbers up to half the group total to sit down.)*
  - c. All the canneries were closed by 1934 because of overfishing and all fishing, including traditional salmon gill netting, was banned. *(Ask number 1 and 2 to stand back up.)*
  - d. The right to fish for salmon was not restored to the Yuroks until 1977. However, by then careless corporate logging had caused silting in salmon spawning beds. *(Ask one or two of those remaining to sit down.)*
  - e. Herbicides polluted the waters. *(Ask another one or two to sit down.)*
  - f. Overfishing by foreign and US commercial offshore fleets meant fewer salmon ever reached the river to spawn waters. *(Ask another one or two to sit down.)*
  - g. Water levels lowered by upstream dams had drastically decreased salmon stocks. *(Ask another one or two to sit down.)*
  - h. Thus, even when their fishing rights were restored, the Yurok could not depend on salmon fishing as a food source.
3. **Imagining the results:** Discuss the emotional effects of this story on the Yuroks by asking questions like these:
  - *Who benefitted from these changes?*
  - *Did any of these changes benefit the Yuroks?*
  - *How do you think the Yuroks felt as these changes took place?*

- *Why do you think these things happened?*
- *Who could or should have helped them preserve the Klamath salmon?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 223.

## **ACTIVITY 5.2: READING ABOUT THE SALMON WAR**

**Overview:** Participants read articles about the real events reflected in the play and respond from different points of view.  
**Time:** 30 minutes.  
**Materials:** Articles about the Salmon War, 1978.<sup>7</sup>

### **1. Getting started:** Explain the context of the Salmon War.

*There was once a thriving salmon canning industry at the mouth of the Klamath. The canneries employed Yuroks as fishermen; the record catch, in 1912, was 17,000 salmon in a day. After the first dam came in 1918, salmon runs declined, and by the end of the 1920s, there were no canneries. By cutting off hundreds of miles of habitat, the dams reduced the spring chinook, which spawned in the Upper Basin, to a remnant population.*

*California's response to the demise of the canning industry was to ban the Indian fishery. However, a US Supreme Court decision restored Indian fishing rights and the Yurok reservation forty years later. But during the drought year of 1978, commercial and sports fishermen blamed the Indians for the decline of autumn chinook salmon, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service tried to enforce a moratorium on Indian fishing, even instituting a Court of Indian Offenses to punish violators. The gillnetters responded with nonviolent resistance that became known as the Salmon War.*

Ask participants to identify the different points of view involved in these events: sport fishermen, Yurok fishers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Supreme Court, and the State of California.

- ### **2. Responding to the Press:** Assign a participant to respond from the perspective of each identified point of view. Give a few participants selected contemporary news stories about the Salmon and ask them to read aloud in a neutral tone. As each story is read, ask those representing a point of view to respond in the voice and emotions of their perspective.
- ### **3. Analyzing Perspectives:** Ask participants to explain the responses they have heard by asking questions like these:
- *What motivates each speaker?*

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<sup>7</sup> See the Yurok Tribe's homepage, <http://www.yuroktribe.org>, for recent news on the tribe's salmon fishery, the Klamath Dam Removal project, Marine Life Protection, and other information.

- *Who has the most to gain? What would they gain?*
- *Who has the most to lose? What would they lose?*
- *Do these stories seem to represent all sides of the issue fairly? If not, what perspective does the press seem to favor?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 224.

## **EXPLORATORY ACTIVITIES**

### **ACTIVITY 5.3: LIVING SCULPTURES**

**Overview:** Participants make “living sculptures” based on scenes from the play.  
**Time:** 30 minutes.  
**Materials:** None.

To the facilitator: These activities assume that the participants are already familiar with the play. You may wish to read aloud relevant parts of the play as the sculptures are formed.

1. **Getting started:** Explain the process of making living sculptures.
2. **Creating living sculptures:** Announce each theme in turn and ask the groups without speaking to form themselves into a “sculpture” that expresses each theme:
  - A Broken Family: *“I was part of a broken family, never really had a father or a mother. Now, see how much trouble the kids are in today?... Everyone knows why these kids are in trouble, but does anyone care? Who really cares if Indian kids are in trouble?”*
  - The Body as Slot Machine: *“I myself feel like a slot machine, popping pills like quarters, dimes and nickels into my mouth.”*
  - Hitting the Diabetes Jackpot: *“Who pays the bill? The government pays the Pharmaceutical companies, who are making big bucks on us Indian people. Just like mining or logging or fishing and now casinos. So every time I pop a pill I feel like a gambler; I close my eyes and hope to hit the jackpot, that my diabetes will go away forever.”*
  - A Strong Family: *“You know these kids right here have always felt like they were loved ...It made a difference in their school grades ... most of them have good jobs and feel proud of being Yurok ... most have always come through one way or another because of love and tradition. Love is part of Indian culture.”*

To the facilitator: Groups may create their sculptures all at the same time or in turn, allowing the others to do a silent “gallery walk” around each creation. You might also ask them to consolidate their individual “sculptures” into one large group creation.

3. **Discussing the sculptures:** Debrief the activity, asking questions like these:
  - *What did you experience in creating living sculptures of these themes?*
  - *Were there significant differences in what the living sculptures expressed about the same theme?*
  - *Did expressing a theme with your own body provide you with any new understanding of the play? Of the issues the play addresses?*

#### **ACTIVITY 5.4: BEFORE OR AFTER**

**Overview:** Participants improvise what could happen before or after a scene described in the play.  
**Time:** 30 minutes.  
**Materials:** Copies of *Diabetes Jackpot*.

1. **Getting started:** Divide participants into several small groups. Explain that in this activity each group will be given a section from Mollie’s narrative. They should imagine the scene she describes and improvise what could happen before it began and/or afterward, then enact what Mollie describes with the additional beginning and/or conclusion.

Suggested scenes:

- Mollie and siblings under the deck catching salmon heads.
  - Mollie and siblings playing at being “tourists.”
  - Mollie and siblings being taken away to boarding school.
  - Mollie’s experience of seeing fish dead from pollution.
  - Mollie and other Yurok women protesting government regulations on fishing.
2. **Acting the scenes:** Ask each group to perform. Afterward, ask for reactions from the group.
  3. **Discussing the scenes:** Debrief the activity asking questions like these:
    - *What did adding a before or after scene add to your understanding of Mollie Ruud?*
    - *How can you relate these scenes to her adult life? Her diabetes? Her social activism?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 232.

## ACTIVITY 5.5: OVER THE TOP

**Overview:** Participants exaggerate emotions from scene described in the play.

**Time:** 30 minutes.

**Materials:** Copies of *Diabetes Jackpot*.

1. **Getting started:** Assign each actor a scene from *Diabetes Jackpot*. Explain that her/his task is to exaggerate everything: emotions, movements, conflicts, etc., without changing the main idea of the original.

Suggested scenes:

- Opening interview between Mollie and Interviewer.
- Mollie describing her childhood.
- Mollie describing being taken away to boarding school.
- Mollie describing getting her first period.
- Mollie describing seeing fish dead from pollution.
- Mollie describing her health and how her body is worn out.
- Mollie describing her broken family.
- Mollie describing her strong marriage.
- Mollie describing a strong family.

To the Facilitator: With a large group you may assign the same scene to more than one person, but allow for at least half the participants to be the audience.

2. **Acting the scenes:** Ask each actor to perform. With a large group you may assign the same scene to more than one person, but allow for at least half the group to be audience.
3. **Discussing the scenes:** Debrief the activity asking questions like these:
  - *What was your reaction to the exaggerated scenes?*
  - *Did you learn anything further about Mollie's actual feelings? About her personal problems? About social issues that concern her?*
  - *What would happen if you underplayed these scenes rather than exaggerating?*

Adapted from Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 234.



Yurok family fishing on the Klamath River. By Sammy Gensaw.