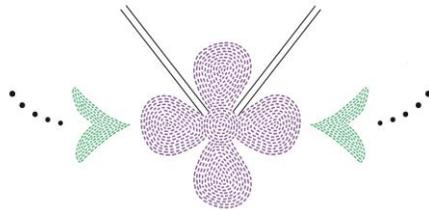


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process - Part 1
Public Hearings
Edmonton Inn, Courtyard Ballroom
Edmonton, Alberta**



PUBLIC

Tuesday November 7, 2017

**Public Volume 20:
Paul Tuccaro and Judy Cardinal, In relation to Amber Tuccaro;**

Carol Bear, In relation to Mary Emily Bear;

Stephanie Harpe, In relation to Ruby Anne McDonald

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Government of Alberta	Ashley Gelinas (Student-at-Law) Laura MacLean (Student-at-Law)
Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women:	Non-Appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, AnânuKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association Inc., Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, Manitoba Inuit Association	Non-Appearance
Women of Metis Nation / Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak	Alexandria Winterburn (Legal counsel) Melanie Omeniho (Representative)

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel and representatives are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Edmonton Inn Courtyard Ballroom (Public Hearing Room #1).

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1 to share with us about the types of things she liked, or
2 how she mothered.

3 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, she was pretty
4 happy with -- well, she loved her son, Jacob (ph) very
5 much, and, you know, that was her -- her everything.
6 And --

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm (indiscernible)
8 you guys and support you.

9 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** The Amber -- that --
10 that -- we knew, when she used -- used to stay with us, she
11 was always -- she was happy-go-lucky, you know. And she
12 liked her music. She liked her -- she liked her family,
13 her nieces and her nephews. She -- she was always proud of
14 them, and she was only -- she was always happy that she had
15 four brothers to look after her. And -- and it was just,
16 you know, there's so much you could say about her.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So you had said,
18 when she stayed with us, so did she spend some time with
19 you and Judy growing up?

20 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah, she did. She
21 did -- she did stay with us for -- for a few years. That
22 was after my mom and dad divorced and, you know, me being
23 the oldest, I kind of -- the responsible one for my family,
24 so she -- she just stayed with us, and she got -- well, she
25 was always close to all of us anyways. But then now she --

1 she was my sister, but -- it's a little -- yeah.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you share any
3 more about your background? You mentioned you have four
4 brothers. Do you want to tell us a little bit about your
5 family?

6 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Well, there's four --
7 there's -- there's seven of us in our family. There was
8 four -- four brothers: me, my brother Billy-Jo (ph), my
9 brother Conrad (ph), my brother Justin (ph), and Amber, my
10 mom, and my dad. And I remember when my mom and dad went
11 to pick up my sister, you know, she was only three-days-old
12 because my sister was adopted. And my mom -- we always
13 wanted a -- to have a sister. Mom and dad wanted to have a
14 girl and she could have any more kids, so through -- within
15 our own family, there was an opportunity to -- to get my
16 sister. So when we got the call, you know, they didn't
17 hesitate. And they drove all day and then they brought her
18 home when she was three-days-old. And when she came home
19 everybody was happy.

20 And that was our -- our pride and joy and,
21 you know, she kind of did -- well, she was the baby, and
22 everybody babied her. And -- and there was a lot of --
23 there was a lot of good moments in her. And I remember
24 she -- she walked when she was eight-months-old. And that
25 was a big deal for us because not too many babies walk when

1 they're 8 years-old [sic].

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So in terms of
3 growing up, where did you guys grow up?

4 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: We grew up in Fort Chip
5 all of our lives, except when my mom -- my mom and dad
6 divorced. My mom left for a bit, my dad moved -- moved
7 away. And then, and I stayed mostly in Fort Chip, except
8 for when I left to go to school and came back and --

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I understand,
10 you said you were the oldest, and you helped keep the
11 family together. Can you explain a little bit more about
12 that?

13 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah, this is -- this
14 one's a tough one to say, here, but it's a -- well, when my
15 mom -- my mom and dad divorced, with me being the oldest,
16 and I was under 18, you know, I won't get into details, but
17 then, you know, when they split up they kind of wanted to
18 split -- that's how welfare got involved, I guess. And
19 then, they wanted to split up our family, but they kind of
20 knew our history, and our background, so they didn't.
21 Family's important to me and I knew I, you know, I could --
22 I could keep care of my -- my siblings and -- so they
23 supported me until my mom, or my mom -- my mom or my dad
24 came back to Fort Chip.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So it's fair to say,

1 you know, at that time you were kind of the glue that was
2 holding the family together?

3 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** I would say yes, but at
4 the same time, there -- I think it's me and my brothers
5 too. My brother Billy-Jo, you know, he kind of kept things
6 in order there. Like, even though I was the oldest, like,
7 it took all of us to do everything in the house. From
8 cooking and cleaning to just, you know, taking care of my
9 sister.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Did you all go to
11 school in Fort Chip?

12 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. Yeah, we all went
13 to Fort Chip, Athabasca Delta Community School.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And when you were --
15 and when you were helping watch the other kids, was it
16 important that you encouraged your siblings to -- to go to
17 school as well and stay in school?

18 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. Education's
19 important because where -- where I'm from, the Fort Chip,
20 if you -- if you don't do nothing, you'll end up doing
21 nothing when you become of age. So education was
22 important. I made sure, you know, always stress important,
23 even to this day. You know, always -- even myself, I --
24 whenever something comes up I'm always willing to take
25 whatever. And then, but my sister, you know, we kind of

1 push her to go to school and -- but being a teenager, you
2 know, you'd -- sometimes they don't want to go to school,
3 or they make excuses. But I always used to tell her, "Some
4 day when she's older, she'd -- she'd thank us for it. It
5 may seem like nothing now, but it -- in the future."
6 Because we lived there, you know, we've been at -- so we
7 kind of knew -- we kind of knew that it -- it'll pay-off in
8 the end.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask you for --
10 for young people in Fort Chip, is there lots -- a lot of
11 things they can do? Or, like, what -- what do kids and
12 teenagers and young adults get to do in Fort Chip?

13 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, right now, there --
14 there -- weird noise --

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm not sure what
16 that is (indiscernible).

17 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Sounds like somebody's
18 rapping. Well, in Fort Chip, there's -- now, there's
19 things to do. Like, there's a lot of programs and services
20 now available to -- to the youth. But then again, there's
21 always -- there's lots -- there's lots more that -- that
22 can be done, especially, coming from a Native community.
23 You know, it's good to do stuff, but you -- you need to
24 give the youth the tools they need for when they -- when
25 they grow up. They can't just live day-to-day. Get up,

1 you know, do whatever, and then go home because eventually,
2 they, you know, they get older and stuff. And the biggest
3 thing that I find is they, you know, even -- well, me and
4 Judy here, we do a lot of sports with the youth in Fort --
5 Fort Chip. And when we do talk with the youth, you know,
6 you talk about, you know, sometimes we talk about my
7 sister. But then we also give them -- we give them a
8 positive place to come, where they feel safe.

9 And because I know for some of those kids
10 in -- in Fort Chip, you know, they're going through some --
11 some tough times, and -- and it hits home for me because
12 I've -- even though I'm where I'm at today, there's a lot
13 of stuff that's still going on that I went through. And
14 then you'll think with -- over time, with everything that
15 comes out, with all these programs and services and
16 nothing -- nothing -- nothing happens. And what frustrates
17 me, and a lot of people, is that just because of -- of
18 who -- of who they are in the community, or if they have
19 their -- if you have the right last name, or you're
20 somebody's friend, or somebody's buddy, then you kind of
21 get pushed to the front of the line. And -- and if you
22 don't then you're -- it's almost like, if it happens it
23 happens, if it doesn't it doesn't matter. And I don't like
24 the -- that's why we do the sports that we do because when
25 we do play, you know, we treat everybody as equal.

1 And we -- we have a lot of fun with the
2 youth. And for us, for that time, in that moment, you know
3 they're happy and they're supportive. And that's -- that's
4 what it's about. Plus, our kids get to play sports with
5 them too. Thanks.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So in terms of
7 family background, I understand that -- and it's good that
8 you think education's so important, and you're doing so
9 much good work in the community. Did your family have a --
10 a history at all with the Indian residential schools?

11 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. My mom was in the
12 residential school. My dad was, but I think he was only
13 there for a couple days, I think. And then he got kicked
14 out. But my mom -- my mom was in there for a few years.
15 And -- and that's the sad part because I never got the mom
16 that I -- usually I don't cry for anything. But yeah,
17 it's -- you -- you don't -- like, you only have one mom.
18 And in my case, for my mom, you know, she raised us the
19 only way she knew how and, you know, it's like I --
20 for -- for my anyways, I think, you know, if we didn't get
21 all we can get from my mom because the residential screwed
22 her up so much, you know.

23 And also, there's a lot of other people, and
24 it affects even -- to this day it still affects me. And
25 my -- and my other brothers because it's like, you know, my

1 mom knows what -- what she went through. Doesn't really
2 talk to us about it. But it -- it just took away -- it
3 took away the, I won't say the best years, but it took a
4 lot -- a lot of good time away from -- from me and my
5 siblings. And like, even now for her grandkids. But you
6 know, we talk about it now and then, you know. We're all
7 trying and -- because it -- it's kind of frustrating
8 because it's -- the residential school, it did impacted,
9 well, my family. And that's all, you know, I could
10 reference to because everybody else goes through their
11 own -- their own thing with -- with that. And I don't
12 think it's my place to comment on -- on that stuff.

13 But for my family, it just screwed up my
14 whole -- my -- especially my mom's side. And it's almost
15 like you -- you want to talk about it, but you -- some
16 people aren't ready to talk about it. And it's hard
17 because of what the residential school, there's so much
18 stuff that went on, and then it happened even with their
19 own families, and it's -- it impacted everybody.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so when you got
21 the chance to help out your sister and let her stay with
22 you, can you -- can you tell me a little bit about that
23 time in your lives?

24 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, I -- I don't think
25 I'd say, you know, I helped her out, you know. She was

1 always welcome any time. Well, anybody in my family. Even
2 to this day, like, if some -- one of my brothers is having
3 a tough time, I'll say, "Come stay with us." And like, we
4 got a family of seven ourself. I got four boys, and -- and
5 one girl. My girl's 12 years, I'm -- I'm bad with birth
6 dates and stuff. But yeah, when my -- when my sister was
7 there because I was, you know, I was always -- I wasn't
8 always home because I was working or whatever, but then she
9 spent a lot of time with -- with Judy and -- and my kids.
10 And I wasn't around to see -- to see her. Well, I was
11 around most of the time, but it's like I -- I wasn't around
12 to see, like, when Judy and her talked, or when she was
13 alone with my kids.

14 Because Amber liked her music and she used
15 to play her music for my -- for -- for my kids. And they
16 used to just -- just jam-out, I guess, and laugh and
17 everything. And play it loud. And -- and my kids really
18 loved her. She got close to -- to two of them for sure.
19 But, you know, there was a lot of -- we -- in our house
20 there was a lot of laughs because we always used to tease
21 her and bug her and stuff like that, and --but I know with
22 the -- but I know with the -- when I wasn't around, she
23 always spent a lot of time with Judy and -- you want to say
24 some stuff about her?

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Did -- do you want

1 to share anything, Judy?

2 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: (Indiscernible). Okay.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I'm going to ask
4 if we can, sort of, turn our attention to when Amber
5 went -- came down to Edmonton in 2010.

6 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: M'hm.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: If you can share
8 with us what you recall from when Amber came down with one
9 of her friends to Edmonton?

10 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Well, at the time we --
11 what it all -- the way it went -- the way it happened that
12 day, my mom was kind of -- she knew something was going on
13 because she came home and then she knew that she was going
14 to leave. And then -- but -- but she was -- she was taking
15 Jacob. She said she was going to go to Edmonton for a
16 couple days, whatever, and then she would be back. And
17 then, they came home and the next thing you know, she --
18 she left and then he [sic] went to Edmonton. My mom said
19 she was texting her, and then that night she stopped
20 texting.

21 Eventually, my mom call -- she called the
22 last person that was seen with my sister. And then she
23 said, "She left." And -- she kept changing her story,
24 really. And so, right -- right away my mom kind of knew
25 something was up because she kept changing her story. The

1 next thing we knew, and then -- then my mom tried to phone
2 RCMP, and do all that stuff, and -- because she was getting
3 worried now. Because she -- my sister was gone and then
4 the woman there, she had my -- my nephew there, Jacob. And
5 the next thing you know, my mom -- I know when, before the
6 same night, or the next day, she -- she got a call that
7 Amber's -- she said, "She's taking her [sic] to -- Jacob to
8 Child -- Child Services in Edmonton."

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So do you
10 recall how old Jacob was around when this happened?

11 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** He was a little baby, I
12 think.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So just to take a
14 step back, if we can, so Amber goes with Jacob to Edmonton
15 with a friend? And when you said, "Her," you knew some --
16 your mom knew something was up because, was it the friend
17 or Amber you were talking about?

18 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Her friend.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So when
20 your -- when your mom couldn't get a hold of Amber through
21 texts anymore, she was speaking with the friend? But the
22 story kept changing is what you said?

23 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. She kept -- she
24 kept changing her story because she was like, "Oh, Amber
25 went -- she went here, she went there, and she's not come

1 back." And, yeah, like, my mom never really got into
2 details with me on -- on that part.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Do you recall what
4 happened? Like, did your mom go down to Edmonton
5 (indiscernible)?

6 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. She got -- so now,
7 when the -- she took Jacob to Child and Family Services,
8 they phoned -- they phoned my mom and they told her that,
9 "You know, that we got -- we got Jacob now." And, you
10 know, it had to be her to call -- to go and -- to go pick
11 him so. Even then, it was a struggle just to get him, to
12 get him back because he was here for I -- I don't know how
13 long. And I know, I think she had to go to court, or
14 whatever, to go -- to get him back.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So as your sister
16 was missing and the family was looking for your sister,
17 your mom was also having to fight for her grandson back?

18 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. Because she -- she
19 just kept changing her story. That's why -- that's what I
20 don't understand. So even now, we're still trying to get
21 the -- the information for what happened at that day
22 because it -- it didn't -- it didn't make sense.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can you tell me a
24 little bit about one -- what happened when your mom
25 reported your sister missing?

1 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Well, when my mom
2 reported her missing there, they said, "She had to wait 24
3 hours." And, you know, and should I wait? We went online
4 and checked it out and we found out that there's no law
5 saying you got to wait 24 hours. So I don't know why the
6 RCMP always tells people that because those 24 hours are
7 critical. It's always like, oh, yeah, let's go submit, but
8 we wait 24 hours and on the 24 hour, oh, let's get up,
9 let's go, let's start doing something. But, you know, had
10 something done -- been done at that -- that time when she
11 reported, maybe -- maybe we wouldn't be sitting here.

12 But even -- even when she reported her
13 missing, it, like, she had to -- even that was a struggle
14 in and of itself. Because they -- they told her that
15 there's, you know, "We'll file a missing person's report
16 and then you got to -- then you wait," And they said,
17 "Okay, the only way she could -- she'll be taken off --"
18 Then right there, they're, like, "Oh, yeah, maybe she's out
19 partying or stuff like that." Without even knowing. "You
20 know, she's young, she'll come back or whatever. That's
21 why we'll -- let's -- that's why we'll -- we'll give it 24
22 hours." You know, my mom was kind of upset because it was
23 kind of -- my -- my sister just met this woman, and for her
24 to be alone with -- with Jacob, like, my mom is here in the
25 City, it's, you know, there's a lot of things going

1 through -- through the mind, like, you know. And for the
2 RCMP to tell her that, you know, "She might be out
3 partying, she'll come back, and she's young." And I know
4 that wouldn't sit well with me.

5 And they told us that -- well, he told my
6 mom that it's going to take -- "They got to be 100 percent
7 certain -- they physically got to see her to take her off
8 the -- off the missing person's list." And so, the ad was
9 out there for a bit, and all of a sudden, she -- my sister
10 got taken off because somebody in some reserve said they
11 seen my sister in a gas station. And my mom said, "Well,
12 why did you tell us you got to see -- you got to see her in
13 person?" And now all of a sudden just because somebody in a
14 gas station said they seen her, they removed her.

15 And my mom didn't even know. That she was
16 search -- because she was always on the internet and all of
17 a sudden she wasn't on the thing. So she phoned. Then it
18 took her a month to get her -- to get my sister back on
19 there.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So when the
21 police -- do you know which police service took her off the
22 list?

23 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Leduc. Leduc detachment.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** The Leduc detachment
25 of, is it the RCMP?

1 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: I think so.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah. So they took
3 her off the missing person's list?

4 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And then, your mom
6 was able to get her back on?

7 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Whatever came of
9 that? Can you recall? What was the RCMP response?

10 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: About what?

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: About removing her
12 from the list?

13 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Well, they just said
14 that -- they never really gave a -- an answer. Like, they
15 just said, "That guy thought he seen her, it looked like
16 her." But it wasn't her, so even to this day, we still
17 don't -- we still haven't had that answer.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Right. Did they --
19 did they ever admit that they made the mistake?

20 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: No.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did another unit of
22 the RCMP ever get involved after all this happened, that
23 you recall?

24 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah. Well, I think
25 there was -- my sister's case went from a lot of

1 departments. It went from -- I don't know, I might be
2 wrong, but I know Project KARE was -- got involved. And
3 then, we were told something -- somebody from B.C. and the
4 Leduc -- I don't know, we were just told it got passed
5 around from, like, a lot of different departments, and
6 that's all I know.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** At one point, the
8 RCMP KARE project actually releases an audio tape of your
9 sister on a phone call. Can you tell us a little bit about
10 that?

11 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. Well, I was in
12 Fort McMurray once, and then, they always told my mom, "If
13 something came up -- something big, they would call her."
14 So they called her and they said, "Okay, we need you to
15 come to the -- the detachment in Fort McMurray." So when
16 we went up there, they -- I was there, but I -- I had to
17 leave to go back to Fort Chip. So we didn't know what it
18 was, so I told my mom, you know, she could go. She could
19 take my brother Conrad. And now, when they went there,
20 she -- they brought them in the room and then they played
21 that -- they played that recording for -- for them.

22 You know, that -- that really -- that
23 really, really hit, well, it really hit my -- it just
24 blew -- it just kind of shocked them, I guess, because it's
25 like, you know, they came there and they played a

1 recording. They said they were able to get a recording, so
2 they got it. And so when they played it, it was like, I
3 think, it was 14 or 17 minutes long. And they'll be
4 talking and then it'll go, beep, you know, so that means
5 they must of took out -- took out some -- whatever was
6 said, or someone's name, or something else. And then, so
7 my mom said, "Well, how'd you guys get this?" And they
8 said, they got it from -- they said, we got it from where
9 they said they got it. And -- but the thing is, they said
10 they had it for -- I may be wrong, but I'm pretty sure they
11 said, "They had it for a year." A year for sure. And we're
12 like, "Well, why -- why did you guys wait for this long to
13 -- this long to play the recording?"

14 You know, if it -- because a few weeks or a
15 few months before then, we got a call from them and said,
16 "Okay. You -- we know -- we know your sister is gone.
17 Like, she's -- she's passed on. She met foul play," is
18 what they said. "And so, we think you guys should have,
19 like, a -- a memorial, or have something, like, not a wake,
20 but something, like, because we know, you know.
21 We -- we know -- we know she passed on." And we're like,
22 "Well, where's the body? How do you guys know that?
23 Where's the proof?" But, they said, "We know she's gone,
24 but keep posting on Facebook, like, she's still
25 missing." You know, so that -- we're like, "What's going on

1 here?" And we -- that kind of took us back. And you --
2 you want us to say my sister's dead, and then you want us
3 to have a memorial, or -- or something to honour her, but
4 then, yet, you want us to keep posting on Facebook like
5 she's still missing and hoping she's coming back? You
6 know, that's not going to sit well with anybody. And my
7 family's like, "Well, we're not going to do that. There's
8 no body."

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm going to give
10 you an article, and I'll also pass one to the Commissioner.
11 At one point, the RCMP actually publicly released about two
12 minutes of the audio tape, and they did like a, sort of,
13 for lack of better word, an infomercial that asked people
14 to listen to the video. This article discusses that. I'm
15 just going to hand a copy up before I ask you a question.
16 Thanks.

17 We weren't able to pull up the -- the short
18 video clip today because it's -- it's a YouTube clip, but
19 it's a YouTube clip that anyone can actually look up and
20 access, if they put Amber's name in and the words, "Do you
21 recognize this voice?" Just with -- technology's an amazing
22 thing, but sometimes with streaming it's difficult -- to
23 put the videos up. But can you tell me a little bit about
24 the video and what the RCMP were trying to do by playing,
25 making this video public?

1 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, I think -- I think
2 they wanted to -- to get -- to get this person's voice out
3 there, to see if anybody recognized the voice. And -- and
4 with the hope that somebody would come forward and say,
5 "Yeah. You know what, we -- we know this person."
6 Whatever. And, yeah, even -- even now, like, it's a
7 little -- it's -- it's hard for -- it's hard for -- for the
8 family to -- to listen to it because, you know, that's the
9 last -- last actual recording of -- of my sister's -- my
10 sister's voice. And it's not -- it's not one that you want
11 to keep in your mind because all of a sudden, she's talking
12 and then the phone just goes -- goes dead. And you know, a
13 million thing go -- million things go through your mind.
14 And --

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I get you to
16 just read two quick things? So just because everyone else
17 doesn't have the benefit of this article in front of them,
18 read here in the paragraph, just that one paragraph. Can
19 you read that in?

20 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** This one?

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** That's right. This
22 one paragraph. So one of the paragraphs in the news
23 article actually is something that Amber's saying to
24 whoever the driver, the mysterious voice, is. What does it
25 say?

1 MR. PAUL TUCCARO:

2 "In 2012, the RCMP released a
3 disturbing audio recording, which
4 Tuccaro was heard talking to the
5 driver, saying, 'You better not be
6 taking me anywhere I don't want to
7 go.'"

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And then, the
9 recording actually, you know, you can hear the male's voice
10 saying, he's taking her one place. But the police indicate
11 that they believe he took her somewhere else. And -- just
12 a moment, please -- so this is a news article, but they
13 report when the police removed your sister's name from the
14 list --

15 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah. Yeah.

16 "Police also removed Tuccaro's name
17 from its list of missing person [sic],
18 and without informing her family,
19 destroyed her belongings, which had
20 been left at the motel in Nisku.
21 'Let's just say that -- Let's just say
22 that's not best practice and something
23 that shouldn't have happened but it
24 did,' says," I don't know, "Schlosser,"
25 whatever. "The RCMP later apologized

1 to Tuccaro's family."

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So -- so that was
3 reported, but do you ever recall the RCMP actually
4 apologizing to you, or your family?

5 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** No. They acknowledged
6 that, for the person that threw my sister's evidence in the
7 garbage, that shouldn't have happened. But I think it was
8 in 2013, we had a meeting with them up in Fort McMurray,
9 and we -- we're all sitting around in a room and they were
10 there and then we were talking about it. And we asked
11 them, "Well, how in this day and age, how does that happen
12 where you just take evidence and then you just, oh -- " And
13 then for -- it sat in that hotel for a couple months,
14 first, before it -- it went to the -- to the detachment.
15 And when it -- when it did go there, we -- it -- they just,
16 whoever was, we -- we don't know who, they didn't tell us
17 who destroyed it, but it was sitting there. And then they
18 said, "It got thrown out with the garbage." And we're
19 like, "Well, you -- you just don't do stuff like that."

20 Because we -- because we did talk a lot with
21 other people, and well, it's -- if -- evidence is evidence,
22 you -- you know. You -- you know, there's -- it gets --
23 that's -- that's pretty important because what's to say
24 that -- if there's any DNA, or any -- anything that's --
25 that was on it was there, but now it's -- it's gone. So

1 that part's gone. It's not even -- can't even go -- can't
2 even go down that road now.

3 And I only asked that person, the RCMP, to
4 say, well, you know what? Because we asked for a public
5 apology, and he said, "No. We're -- we're not going to
6 give it." And we're like, well, you just -- they said,
7 "Oh, yeah, but since then, our policies changed." So I
8 said, "Okay, well, if that's the case, then show us the
9 policy from when -- from before it happened -- and then it
10 got destroyed in the -- in the garbage, and then show me
11 the policy where you guys implemented after the fact."
12 Because they could just be telling me whatever they want.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Even you -- you make
14 a point about it being evidence. Even if it wasn't
15 evidence, would your family wanted your sister's property?

16 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. My mom -- my
17 mom -- just the other thing, like, we don't know, like,
18 we're not -- we don't know what the processes are. But
19 also, my mom got an email one day, and it was pictures of
20 the stuff that was in her suitcase, and they wanted my mom
21 to identify it -- those stuff, through the email. What's
22 kind of -- what's kind of, not right, I guess you'd say.
23 Not best practice, for sure. At least, you know, you would
24 of -- we thought you would -- you know what? Yeah, you
25 know what, come down to the station, we have her stuff, or

1 we'll get it sent up to -- to Fort McMurray, then you can
2 go pick it up. But, no. Just got an email. And you --
3 this is how you're going to identify it. I seen the
4 pictures. It -- it didn't -- I didn't -- I didn't -- even
5 I didn't like it.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So can you just
7 briefly tell me what has your family done in relation to
8 the police making, you know, destroying these properties,
9 and taking her off the list?

10 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Because we -- at that
11 time, you know, we did -- we did have support from -- from
12 my -- from my First Nation. And so they started to -- so
13 they wanted to meet us then, our Chief, he would be -- he
14 was a good support for our family for that. He was a good
15 advocator, and whatever resources that he had, he kind of
16 passed them onto us. And so then, even though less now, we
17 started to, like, we just didn't sit -- sit back and not --
18 not just sit idle and wait. Hope for the phone -- a phone
19 call comes from an RCMP.

20 Because, you know, if they're going to go
21 destroy evidence and stuff like that, then, you know, it's
22 like -- and even -- even it was a RCMP member that told my
23 mom that the evidence got destroyed. But we just think
24 now, if he didn't say nothing, we wouldn't have known.
25 Then it's like, you know, if you have policies and

1 procedures in place, that's to help all us Canadian
2 citizens. Then they should apply equally to everybody.
3 Just because if a person decides to his -- decides to live
4 his or her life, that doesn't mean anybody's lesser than
5 anybody because we're all equal, you know. And so if I
6 went into a detachment dressed like a homeless person, I
7 can almost guarantee if I went there the next day dressed
8 up in a suit, I'll get treated different.

9 But -- but what my family did, we filed a --
10 a complaint with the public -- I can't remember the exact
11 name, but it's a public commission of Canada [sic], I think
12 that's what it's called. And in there we put -- well, we
13 did get help from someone that worked in that department,
14 to file a complaint because we wanted to say, you know
15 what, this is -- all this stuff doesn't add up. And it's
16 not right, the way we're getting treated. So we did. And
17 then, she helped us fill it all out, and then we sent it
18 off. And in that, we wanted to say, like all -- like
19 all -- all the wrongdoings, like, I don't know how many
20 bullet points there are. But then now, they told us it was
21 going to take, maybe, it could take anywhere from six
22 months to two years to complete. And here we are three
23 years later, and still not done.

24 And we were told that it might be -- it
25 might not be done until after this whole inquiry thing's --

1 is -- is over. But that's upon deciding -- that's two --
2 totally two separate things. The inquiry wasn't -- wasn't
3 around back then. And because we made some good -- for our
4 family, like, when we talk about stuff, like, for the
5 complaints that we put forward, it's not just what we --
6 what we -- what we're saying. Like, we -- we have our
7 evidence to back our stuff up. And so now, we don't
8 know -- we don't know what's the hold up. Like, I know,
9 they -- they said last, it's now sitting with their -- with
10 the RCMP for them to do their thing. And then it's got to
11 go to the Commissioner now. But then, they said there's no
12 Commissioner for that, so I -- we -- we don't know how long
13 that's going to be done, or -- or what.

14 But I think with that, like, we want to --
15 because the end goal for that is, like, we want to help
16 other families too that are -- that are in the same boat as
17 us. Because there's no -- because we all -- we always,
18 like, we talk about it. And I think, well, imagine a lot
19 of these other small communities where families, they go to
20 the RCMP, and they say, "Oh, is there any updates or
21 anything?" And they say, "Oh, we're still working on it."
22 And that's it. So we're -- we're going to try and change
23 that. So there's accountability. And that's where I'll
24 say later on for some recommendations.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: (Indiscernible). So

1 that's the first page. So and again, Paul, the -- the --
2 you're -- you're not -- your family's making the complaint,
3 but I do know that it's stated in the -- the newspaper
4 article, it's the RCMP Civilian Review and Complaints
5 Commission. Is that what you believe the process you're
6 engaged in?

7 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. I -- I think
8 that -- I just know that it's a complaints commission. I
9 just don't know what exact -- what do you want me --

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so just to be
11 clear, there -- there hasn't been a finding to date from
12 that commission to your family?

13 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** No. And even with my
14 mom, my mom was the only one that signed it on -- on our
15 family's behalf. Because we were kind of warned, you know,
16 because it's -- it is the RCMP. So we're just told to be
17 careful, whatever that meant. When everything happens,
18 then that's another complaint.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So you had
20 mentioned -- you said, you know, I have some
21 recommendations. Did you want to talk about some
22 recommendations, or was there anything else you wanted to
23 discuss about when Amber went missing. And anything that
24 happened, or that the family recalls happening while --
25 while she was missing for some time before her body was

1 actually found, I understand.

2 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah. She was missing --
3 she went missing 2010, and I think, 2012 she was found.
4 And it's -- it's kind of funny because -- well, not funny,
5 but it's like, it -- she went -- on a Tuesday they did a --
6 the press conference there, where they released the audio
7 recording. And then that Saturday, she was found. And you
8 know, it's -- I don't know how it happened, or what, but --
9 but even when -- even with that -- and that's where the --
10 and that's where they just, like, I think they should just
11 be honest with us and -- and say, okay, you know what, just
12 because we come from a small town, a small community,
13 doesn't mean we have -- we don't have access to the
14 internet. Or we -- or we don't know, or we can't -- or we
15 don't know people, or we're just -- we're not just sitting
16 in -- in Fort Chip, sitting around not -- not knowing
17 nothing.

18 I think they should -- they should have been
19 honest with us and said -- because leading up to that, they
20 would -- they would tell my mom, "Okay, you know what,
21 Vivian (ph), if there's any -- if any -- if anything's
22 going to be found, any remains or anything, you'll be the
23 first to know." But if you -- if it is found -- the
24 remains are found, then there's a -- there's a process
25 where from when it gets reported to the RCMP and then it's

1 got to go through all these different -- it's got to go to
2 different -- it's got to go to the coroner, then there's --
3 he's got to go through all these other people. And that
4 could take anywhere from days to maybe weeks. And but now,
5 even -- but -- well, what we don't understand is, okay,
6 well, if that's -- if that's the case, and then we read
7 about it all the time in the news, it does takes days, and
8 it does take weeks.

9 But for my sister, that Saturday they found
10 her, that same night they identified her. And we're told,
11 yeah, she was identified there. They -- the dentist
12 identified her that same -- that same day. And we're like,
13 how is that possible. What -- how -- how fast could you
14 guys speed that process up? Because if it does take just
15 one day, then what about all these other people that go
16 missing. It should be one day for them too. Like, we were
17 told a lot of stuff, but it's like, we -- we, you know, we
18 just kind of like to just go with what's -- what's real,
19 and not buy into that -- what people tell us.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So if you can share,
21 when -- when they found your sister, what else did they
22 find?

23 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** There were, like -- well,
24 when they found her they said there was -- no, I'm just
25 thinking how -- how -- how to say it, because when I talk I

1 always think, okay, well, if it's going to help my sister's
2 case, and other families, then, you know, it's always -- I
3 think of the good, rather than the bad, or whatever. But
4 when they found my sister's remains, there was other
5 remains that were there too. But they -- they later said
6 it was animal remains. So right away, it makes you think,
7 you know. Like, it's like, okay, well, an animal's going
8 to be walking in a bush, and then all of a sudden you're
9 going to see human remains and say, oh, I'm just going to
10 die here. And I'm just going to -- it -- and then people
11 wonder why we got so many questions. It's like, yeah.
12 It's --

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So more than dental
14 records, what -- what would have -- what would you have
15 liked to have been done so that you had certainty it was
16 your sister?

17 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** DNA. Because you hear a
18 lot of other cases, and, you know, there's a lot -- there's
19 a lot of documentaries where they always -- you always run
20 DNA. Even if they're -- even if they say it's -- if
21 they're convinced it's through dental records, they
22 always -- they also run a DNA. But then, for my sister,
23 they -- they won't. Because they got DNA from her remains,
24 they got DNA from stuff when -- when they took stuff from
25 my mom's apartment. And they have DNA from -- from her

1 son. And they won't run DNA.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And you guys
3 actually asked for it, right?

4 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** We did, yeah. And that
5 was because we didn't know what was going on because where
6 there's so many unanswered questions, and everything
7 happened so fast, it's like, okay. And so what we started
8 to do was, as a family we -- like, we just talked amongst
9 each other. And then we -- we said we're going to -- well,
10 not -- not convince, but we're not sure. And so we said,
11 well, we're going to -- then we started talking about we're
12 going to do our own DNA testing. But then, we're like,
13 well, it's a tough thing to do, but then we got talking
14 about -- to exhume the remains.

15 So like, we know what the law says you got
16 to do about it. But then, in Fort Chip, in our culture,
17 it's never been done. So we just didn't want to go down
18 that road unless we -- we had a good plan in place because,
19 like, what do you do? Like, we didn't know. But that was
20 something we talked about. And it got -- it put a bug in
21 their ear, so what end up happening last December was
22 they -- they sent a medical examiner up to Fort Chip to
23 meet all our family. And then because -- to explain to us
24 why they're convinced that it -- it was my sister through
25 the dental records. And -- and we were told that's the

1 first time that they've ever done that, where they sent the
2 medical examiner outside of where they work.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I don't -- pardon
4 me, I don't want to jump around too much, but I do want to
5 take a quick step back because at one point, the KARE --
6 the RCM pair [sic] -- RCMP KARE, also put a bulletin board
7 up with your sister's picture, before she was found. Do
8 you recall that?

9 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And -- and what were
11 the family's feelings on that?

12 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** It was a good thing, but
13 at -- I didn't know if it was just something -- well, in --
14 any news my sister could get, it's better because her
15 name's out there. And they put the bill -- billboard up
16 for all -- they flew us down here. We went there and now
17 they did their -- they said why they're putting it up.
18 Then my mom did that, and then -- but, my mom couldn't --
19 couldn't really say what she wanted to say.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can you explain that
21 a little more?

22 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, she was kind of
23 more -- more or less told what to say.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So when you say
25 that, do you mean like at a -- when they revealed, or at a

1 press conference?

2 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: No. Yeah, right -- right
3 at the site.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Right where the
5 bulletin board was?

6 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So she -- she was
8 told what to say, as opposed to just saying what she felt?

9 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So it was good
11 that -- that was up there and that was obviously before
12 Amber's body was located. Do you think things like,
13 releasing the audio tape, or doing the -- the bulletin
14 boards sooner, is something that's important and should be
15 done for all families?

16 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: I think so. Why not?
17 Especially, if you got the -- the resources to do it.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Is now a good time
19 to turn to recommendations to start?

20 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: I don't know. How much
21 time I got left?

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. Just -- we're
23 just checking. I think --

24 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Eleven.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- don't want to

1 miss anything.

2 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: 11 o'clock.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. Okay, we got
4 lots of time here.

5 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. So again,
7 just making sure we're not -- we're not missing anything.
8 And I note the narrative, the time frame, you know, from
9 2010 to 2015, in terms of everything that the family's gone
10 through, there's a lot that happened in there. And I just
11 want to make sure we haven't missed anything, if you want
12 to add anything.

13 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Sorry. Just say --
14 say -- say that again?

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I just want to
16 make sure you get an opportunity, that we didn't miss
17 anything. I know that the family had done other things
18 too, like memorials and that. I just want to make sure you
19 get an opportunity because it was a long time frame. She
20 was missing for a couple of years, and your family's gone
21 through a lot trying to pursue complaints and other
22 processes. So before we turn to recommendations, I just
23 wanted to -- to give you a chance, if you wanted to add
24 anything else.

25 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah. Well, we just --

1 we -- we did a memorial around answers for my sister for
2 the past four years. And that was pretty good because,
3 like, when -- when we plan it, like, the family helps out,
4 and we have other people that supported us, which we're
5 grateful for. And it was about honouring my sister. And
6 then when we were there, they, you know, they had people
7 talk. We put up the -- her -- her posters, deal with
8 information.

9 Because being from a small town, the
10 awareness we need to -- well, what we -- what we -- our
11 intent was, like, we -- to -- and I remember we used to --
12 we used to talk about it years ago, like, before she went
13 missing, you know. You think we come from a small town,
14 you think, oh, yeah, you know what, we're from Fort Chip,
15 no one's going to go missing. Then my sister went missing.
16 And right now, we're thinking, you know what, we did the
17 four years, but I -- I don't think we're -- we're going to
18 stop there. We're going to -- I don't know if we're going
19 to do around us, but we're going to not just say four years
20 and we're done, you know. We're still going to continue to
21 do -- to do stuff for my sister and also for other -- other
22 women, men.

23 And we're going to be -- there's something
24 going to be going on here end of November in Fort McMurray
25 for -- BBC News did a documentary, Canada's -- I can't

1 remember, it's Canada's Lost Girls, or Stolen Girls [sic],
2 or something. And it's about -- and my sister's in it. So
3 we're going to show that.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So I'm -- I'm
5 handing you a -- an article called, "Fort Chip Community
6 Honours Amber Tuccaro's Life." And this talks a bit about
7 what your family did at the round dances, and I wanted to
8 ask you a couple questions about that; if that's okay? So
9 I understand that even at the first one, you guys decided
10 to have like an information table, so that you could give
11 out safety tips to women?

12 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** M'hm.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Why was that
14 important?

15 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Because it's -- it's a --
16 I think it's just a reminder that you -- you need to --
17 that because it happened to my sister, that doesn't
18 mean -- or we hope and pray that it doesn't happen again.
19 But that's why we got -- need to keep the -- the awareness
20 going. Like, it -- it's a -- it's tough on a family, you
21 know. You -- you lose a -- in our case, my sister, you
22 know. Now, she has -- she has a son, and you know, she was
23 only 20 years-old, you know, just starting out in life.
24 And now, you know. I know she used -- used to talked to
25 Judy and -- and my kids, and -- and it's -- you know, she

1 wanted to do stuff and I'm sure if she was alive now, she,
2 you know, she'd be probably being staying with us.

3 And yeah, it just -- it's just unfortunate.
4 Like, I just don't know how -- how could something happen?
5 And then, the people that are supposed to help aren't --
6 aren't, or didn't do to their -- to their capacity. And
7 it's like, it -- it -- it's really frustrating because,
8 like, you know, this is all -- this is all about -- about
9 my sister, and -- yeah, there's just so many things that
10 went wrong in how everything got dealt with. If -- if
11 we're going through that, I can't imagine what other
12 families -- because we -- we did make some -- some progress
13 in some of the answers that we did get. But I can't
14 imagine how some families feel where they go -- just go to
15 RCMP and then they say, "Oh, we're working on it." And
16 that's it. And then they're -- then they're turned away.
17 And then they leave, and then maybe -- maybe some -- you
18 got to leave there with -- with the thoughts of, yeah,
19 maybe they are doing something. But really, how do you
20 know?

21 But then you see in the news, when it's a
22 non-Native woman, or other stuff, oh, it's plastered all
23 over. And you know, you can't tell us that, like, you --
24 nobody could tell us that my sister's not less important
25 than anybody, you know. Because it -- no. You try to

1 explain it -- that to her -- her son when he's older, and
2 he's going to have access to -- access to everything, you
3 know.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's true. In -- in
5 doing the gathering, in the community, part of it was a
6 healing ceremony.

7 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** M'hm.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And I know that
9 sounds funny, and that makes sense to us, but -- but
10 because there are so many people watching this, you know,
11 can we talk a little bit about why we need to do these
12 things? Why we need to heal our families and communities,
13 and have these events?

14 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** I think it's important
15 because it's about -- where families come together. And I
16 think -- does anyone here have a Kleenex? Families are
17 important and in my community, the only time families get
18 together is when somebody passes away. And it shouldn't
19 have to be like that -- or when something happens. And
20 it -- it's tough because it's like, well, with my own
21 family, like, we're trying to not go down that route.

22 We always keep reminding our kids, you know,
23 like, we -- we sit there. There -- there's always kids at
24 our -- at our house because we just -- because we do stuff
25 with the kids, and the kids, they -- they like coming to

1 our house because for whatever reason. You know, we -- we
2 have fun with the kids. We -- it's a safe place, you know.
3 We feed them, we do sports with them, we -- we talk to them
4 about their life. Well, I say, life, like, I mean, like,
5 what -- like, we try and encourage them. That's there's
6 more to -- more to life than just -- than Fort Chip. And
7 like, even with my own kids, we always remind them that.
8 You know, your brothers and sisters and -- don't grow up
9 and go on your own ways, and then forget about each other
10 because some families -- some families still don't
11 communicate with each other, and it -- it's no good.

12 It's not good for the family because I
13 always joke with my kids, like, right now they argue, they
14 fight, and you know, that's what they do. And sometimes we
15 just let them because you know what? I'd rather -- I'd
16 rather that go on and then -- and then -- then to have an
17 empty house and then, and I always tell them, don't -- when
18 you get older, don't forget what you guys are doing now.
19 Because, like, me and Judy always tell them we're not going
20 to be around forever, you know. So when -- when we are
21 gone, that they're able to pass on to their kids, like, how
22 important it is to -- to be a family.

23 Like, we're not perfect ourselves, you know.
24 We're -- it's always, like, Judy always says, it's always
25 been -- been us to -- to do everything. Wish we would have

1 more support and stuff like that, but you know, we try
2 to -- we don't just try and tell our kids what -- how --
3 how to do -- to live life, we kind of -- we got to practice
4 it too as parents. And, you know, we have our moments
5 where we struggle with our kids, but the communication
6 is -- we're able to have open, honest, sometimes too
7 honest, communication with our kids. But you know what?
8 It -- it's a good thing because when I grew up, it's like,
9 if my dad got mad at me, or my mom is, like, you know,
10 don't talk back, or -- but now my kids say, you know, when
11 we talk, we say, you know, we're able to -- we're able to
12 have a conversation saying, you know what, we talk about
13 it. And that's a good thing.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** You had said, we
15 want to do more. You said, we've done four of these and --
16 and we want to do bigger things. And you talked about
17 earlier, the fact that you and Judy both do sports with the
18 kids, but what else do you do in terms of sharing Amber's
19 story, or talking to kids about safety in communities?

20 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Going to school. I mean,
21 going to -- well, we only got one school in Chip, but my
22 goal is to go to other -- to other places and help -- help
23 other families. Let them be -- be a resource to them.
24 Because I think it's a -- a -- the more information
25 you're -- you have, and the more support you have, then I

1 think it is -- when you -- when you go -- give families
2 hope, you know, and say, you know what is -- it's like
3 you -- you can go to them and then you tell them, okay,
4 this is -- or talk to the kids. And tell them because, you
5 know. Same thing, we're not just about my sister, but talk
6 about, you know, just stuff that I went through, like, from
7 mom and dad divorcing and stuff like that because it does
8 affect everybody.

9 And I just think that's a good thing because
10 there needs to be more -- more awareness because, just
11 because what -- what gets me is these women, you know,
12 they're -- they're important, you know. It -- they're not
13 like what the media says what they are, or what the RCMP
14 tries to label them. And -- and they -- and that's
15 obviously, they know why -- they -- they can answer for
16 themselves, you know. I could say whatever I want, but
17 they know why they do. But you know what, there'll come a
18 day where that's why we're trying to go things the right
19 way, and with their -- file a proper, like, we with their
20 complaint, and -- because it's not right. It's just --
21 everybody -- everybody's equal, and got to be treated as
22 equals. Because, like I said before, these are -- nobody
23 has a right to judge anybody.

24 Just nobody knows what a person goes
25 through. Maybe a person is where they're at because what

1 went on -- when -- what went on in their life. It's a lot
2 easier to -- the only time you should look down, or look --
3 look back at anybody is when you're -- when you're putting
4 your hand out to help them up. That's how I like to think
5 of it.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So Paul, in terms of
7 some recommendations, I know you have some different areas
8 of recommendations you'd like to share with the
9 Commissioner, and the Commission in general. How about we
10 start with some -- some of -- some of this process. Not --
11 not the process you talked about, but your experience even
12 with the inquiry. I know that you raised some issues you
13 wanted to share so that you could suggest some improvements
14 for -- for the Commission.

15 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, I think a big one
16 should be more -- if you're going to talk to one person,
17 you should talk with that one person. Because I've talked
18 to -- I would -- I would need another hand to count how
19 many -- of the many people I've talked with. And I know
20 back in September, they said it's -- I was told that it's
21 up to the families to reach out. But even when I did come
22 down because I was told that my sister was going to be part
23 of the -- by something that was on the inquiries, to say,
24 oh, she's not -- we got to check with our legal team to see
25 if she could be included. I'm like, well, why -- why is

1 that? And she was like, well, it's an ongoing case. I'm
2 like, well, so are a lot of the other women. So why is my
3 sister different, if you want to talk about being equal.

4 So that's why when -- when we came down
5 here -- and the other thing is, like, as you see today,
6 there's just me -- me and Judy in here. I look at those
7 seats over there, it says, reserved for family. In
8 September, I -- I registered my family, but some way,
9 somehow along the lines, arrangements -- arrangements
10 weren't made for my other families to be here. And now
11 when that became -- I told them, like, last minute they
12 tried to arrange for people to come now. And, like,
13 especially my mom, she can't just get up and leave work,
14 you know.

15 And I just think a good recommendation for
16 that would be -- is, like, I'm big on -- on, like, on a
17 paper trail. So I kept all my emails and stuff like that,
18 dealing with the inquiries. But this is a big event in
19 itself, and you'd think you would want to get it right, you
20 know. This -- these hearings have been how many places
21 already, and just me and Judy here, and you know, my mom's
22 not here. My -- you know, the mom, you know. My dad, my
23 brothers. And even for myself, if I didn't keep phoning,
24 sending emails, I didn't believe I was going to be here
25 until yesterday, until I got on a plane.

1 Because I had to -- when I came here I told
2 my kids, you know what, this is -- this is a big -- like,
3 their kids are going to be reading about this. They'll be
4 talking about this in schools, you know. So is there going
5 to be -- going to be better -- better processes in place
6 because I would of loved for my mom -- my family to be here
7 today, you know. Because I'm -- I'm only one person, and I
8 can only speak for myself. And my mom wrote something,
9 which I'm going to read here later, and -- but it's -- it's
10 nothing -- it's short, but it's still, you know. But even
11 with my -- I just think every effort -- I'm a big believer
12 and you should try anything and everything. If it doesn't
13 work out, it doesn't work out. But you can't say you
14 didn't try. Because like -- like I said, this is -- this
15 is a big thing. And I think -- I hope for a lot of the --
16 the other families, I hope -- I hope they were able to
17 come.

18 Because even in September when I came down,
19 my First Nation had to -- to pay for us to come down. They
20 said you had to come down here to get registered, to meet
21 with them in order to come to here. But they'll pay for
22 you to come here. And then, I was thinking, well, why
23 is -- why is that? And it's up to the families to reach
24 out. There should have been financial support to help the
25 families come because I'm sure a lot of families would want

1 to come, or if they didn't know. And, like, even now, if
2 they showed up today, what -- I know there's all --
3 everything's all set in place. Like, even if families
4 showed up today, would they be allowed to testify, or you
5 know? Because who knows, maybe -- maybe they -- they might
6 have something to say that -- that could help other
7 families.

8 And -- but for my sister, it's like, you
9 just want to be able to see what we could do to help other
10 families. And you know, I know what my sister would say,
11 but I can't say it, you know. Because my sister's pretty,
12 you know, she was pretty -- she's pretty vocal too. And
13 she was -- and that's what I liked about her. She's in --
14 she had something to say, she'd say it. And she wasn't
15 shy, you know. She was always, you know. Like, I was just
16 reading it here, it says, you know, in the Shu (ph), every
17 time she would laugh, like, even with us, she would always
18 just, like, she would just hit her leg and then we'd laugh
19 at that. And then the way she laughs, and then
20 everybody -- everybody would be laughing.

21 Like, it's -- like, even -- like, they took
22 all the stats and stuff like that, what about -- I was
23 thinking last night, like, even with the stats, like,
24 who -- who's counting the tears for these girls for in
25 their last moments, you know? My mom says, you know, don't

1 go down that road, but it's just not right what people
2 could think. Oh, yeah, there's -- there's an Indian, let's
3 go -- let's go get her, and, you know, kill her or
4 whatever. And nobody's -- nobody's going to give a shit.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Paul.
6 If -- if you don't mind, I'm just going to ask you some
7 other questions about some of your other recommendations.
8 You've been talking about the process to make a complaint,
9 and -- and you don't have a lot of information on yourself
10 because you're not a lawyer. Are there recommendations
11 that would help families understand how they could make
12 complaints against various institutions, or police
13 services? What would help families be able to do that?
14 No, that's okay.

15 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** I think, I think a big
16 one, and an important one, is when you do go to the RCMP --
17 and I even mentioned in -- in that -- when -- when we
18 did -- when that guy came to Fort Chip for the public -- to
19 get our -- our complaint there, I said, okay, well, when
20 you go to fill out a missing person's report, you -- you
21 aren't given -- they take your information, right? You're
22 not given a -- an actual form. That's what -- that's what
23 my mom said.

24 So what we -- what we want to put forward as
25 a recommendation is that when families do go there, that

1 there's an actual form, like, you know where you get, like,
2 a -- like, a receipt or there's a carbon copy where there's
3 two -- where you write on it, and it writes on the back of
4 it. Where you fill it out, and it should be -- it should
5 be re-looked at with -- keeping in mind that, like, be --
6 be proactive and say, you know what? Okay, this has been
7 around for how many -- how many years now, like, people say
8 there's issues with it. Then what are we doing to correct
9 it? Sure a form is a form, but forms could be changed,
10 revised, you know, amended.

11 And I think a big -- big component in that
12 is -- what we're going to try and push forward is that you
13 do get a -- you -- you do get that missing person's report.
14 So this way, you know. You -- you know -- you know what
15 you filled out. The RCMP knows what you filled out, but
16 there should be -- the second page now. There's another
17 page, and what I think is good and we've been talking about
18 it is you -- you have a time line. And with that time line
19 is, like, okay, here's day one. And there's, like, a check
20 box. Okay. Has this been filled out? You initial it, the
21 RCMP initials it, and then now, you got, like, whatever it
22 may be, but I'm thinking, well, maybe, like, one month,
23 three months, six months, nine months, and then -- and in
24 those months, it says, okay, well, is there any updates?

25 And with -- with the time frame that you got

1 to stick to because day one is day one when you go there.
2 So already, you know what you're preset dates are. So in
3 this way, there's accountability on both parts. And then
4 now, when you -- you keep going back on day 30, day 60, day
5 90, whatever, and if there's anything to add, or whatever,
6 or to share, then you check that box, then there's room to
7 be -- for stuff to be written in. And then you also get
8 the -- you get the copy. So this way you know -- you know
9 that it's being done. Not just for my family's standpoint,
10 but the RCMP too.

11 Because now what if -- like, for my sister's
12 case, they -- that RCMP member may or may not be there, but
13 what if this person just came out of the Academy, or
14 whatever, and he or she didn't -- didn't know? And so it's
15 not fair to them -- put them in that situation, and so this
16 way you should have people that -- there should be training
17 on just filling out a missing person's report for a -- for
18 Aboriginals, or for anybody, really. Because like I said,
19 everybody's equal.

20 But then, with that form then, you have it.
21 So this way, they can't say, no. That if they don't want
22 to sign it, then they got to answer for it. And then,
23 there should be another box here saying, refused to sign,
24 or whatever. Then, you got to put the reason why. So this
25 way, the families know. You know what, yeah, I think

1 it's -- today is day 59, tomorrow we got to go to the RCMP.
2 And then, if there's any information, I'm going to share,
3 I'll put it in there. If there's nothing, at least it's
4 there, and it's in writing. I think that would be a good
5 useful tool.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** In terms of, like,
7 accessing complaints, systems, or stuff, do you think there
8 should be more information for families to understand how
9 to access if they want to make a complaint?

10 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. I -- I think so
11 because it's -- you -- you should be able to -- like, not
12 a -- not a lot of people have access to the internet.
13 Especially, like, small -- small towns, or small reserves,
14 or whatever. Or -- so this way, they should be -- you
15 would think they -- they would -- they would have this
16 stuff already. Because it's -- you can't just say it to
17 say it. You -- you got to kind of walk the walk, type of
18 thing. And in this day and age, with technology, you --
19 you know, there's ways to reach out. Like, you could --
20 you could mail stuff, there's a email. You got to think of
21 all the people. Now, what if somebody can't read and
22 write? There should be a process for that too. You know,
23 you got to think of, like, people with disabilities. You
24 got to think of -- you got to think of -- you got to sit
25 down and you got to think it through.

1 And -- but the first thing, when you go and
2 fill out a missing persons, you should be treated with
3 respect. And they should take the time. And you shouldn't
4 have to wait 24 hours. One second -- one second is one
5 second. That's one second less. I can't imagine if -- if
6 that happened to one of my kids, you know. It's like --
7 and if -- if these women are being made out to be, like,
8 they live all these high-risk lifestyles, like, what's --
9 like, different provinces, different police forces,
10 whatever they say it is, like, so where does -- where does
11 my girl fit in that? My girl's young, she's young, she's
12 innocent, she's beautiful, you know, what she has a -- she
13 has a strike against her already, just because she's
14 Native? Targeted? That's not -- that's not fair.

15 Like, we as parents, we shouldn't have to
16 think, okay, well, you know what, we're not -- I'm not
17 going to let you go any -- anywhere. Because I'm -- I'm
18 holding my girl back. My girl just went for a field trip
19 here to Calgary, that was hard. Like, we just really -- we
20 just made sure with the chaperones. Now, when she came back
21 and then got off the plane, we're, like, I think we went
22 overboard a little bit too much. But you know what? It --
23 it's hard. It's hard not to, especially when my sister
24 went missing. And that's -- in our family, it's the same
25 thing. My girl is -- she's the baby. Well, she's -- she's

1 my princess. And you know what, she's -- she's the boss,
2 you know.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask some more
4 questions?

5 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So in terms of, you
7 had talked about communications and earlier you talked
8 about the fact that an email was sent to your mother to
9 identify some property. So can we talk, or can you share
10 recommendations on what is good, or appropriate
11 communications or conversations? You've already told us
12 about the -- your idea of a best practice with the sheet,
13 but what about just verbal communication with family
14 members? What would help?

15 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, I think they
16 should -- this stuff should be made available to anybody at
17 any time. Like, even with the inquiries. I guess, there
18 should be, like -- a good recommendation is, okay, well,
19 there's a missing -- for each province, there should be
20 what the -- what the protocol is for that province, or how
21 you fill out a missing persons. So people do come to these
22 hearings, could read it to see what it's all about. And
23 then, like I said with my recommendations, we add that.
24 And then, they'll see the difference.

25 And all that awareness should -- should be

1 out there because it -- it's -- it's important because
2 it's, like, you -- you don't -- you don't know it, you
3 know, you -- you don't know what you're going to go through
4 until you have to deal with it. And I just think it's
5 important because there -- there should be every -- because
6 there's people that are hired to do just, specifically --
7 specifically these jobs. So I'm not saying they're not
8 doing their jobs, but there's -- there's always better ways
9 of doing things.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Paul, you've, kind
11 of, really talked about it a couple times, about the
12 difference of treatment between Indigenous and non-
13 Indigenous. And you've really been strong on saying
14 everyone should be equal. What -- what can be done about
15 some of the stereotypes, or the -- the stereotypes your
16 family experienced when Amber went missing, like, she's --
17 she's probably just out drinking. What can -- what -- what
18 can be done about those types of things?

19 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, first of all, I
20 don't think they should be allowed to say stuff like that.
21 Just because they are who they are, that -- that doesn't
22 give them a right to -- but now, if we were to do the
23 opposite, it'll be different, you know. It -- they
24 shouldn't be -- they shouldn't be allowed. They should be
25 taking courses, programs and stuff like that. Not just go

1 in an office somewhere doing it with -- with their own
2 people. They should be doing it with Aboriginals, and
3 everything. To get a better understanding, you know.

4 There's a lot of good -- there's a lot of
5 good RCMP members out there, you know. I got friends that
6 are RCMP members, Native cops, and stuff like that, even
7 the non-Natives. But it's the ones that, for whatever
8 reason, choose to do what they do. Those are the ones that
9 should be, you know. There's all kind of-- there's all kind
10 of assessment test, or self-assessments, where they
11 could -- where they could even, like, questionnaires they
12 could fill out. If they could do it to tell me, okay,
13 well, what I'm going to be good at in life, why can't
14 they -- I'm pretty sure, there might be one, why can't
15 they -- people that go to the Academy, why can't they be
16 taken -- given something that -- to see, without them even
17 knowing, you know, what their -- what their viewpoints
18 are -- are on certain stuff? So if it does come out at the
19 end, if it gets printed out, say, you know what, this
20 person should take this.

21 Because the biggest thing is, the people
22 that are going to help you, those are the ones --
23 they're-- they're -- they're in control. You're not in
24 control. And you're only going to make whatever
25 progress is what they do with whatever they entered in, you

1 know.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So in terms of,
3 like, they shouldn't be allowed to do that, you think it's
4 fair to say that there should be discipline, or protocol in
5 place when people do do things like that?

6 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Of course. But then
7 that's -- that's a tough thing because you see it in the
8 news, or -- RCMP members, you know, they get -- they get
9 impaired. They do all that stuff, and there's -- there's
10 no reprimands. But there has to be. I think there needs
11 to be -- it's sad to say, but sometimes you -- you -- it'll
12 be unfortunate for that person, but sometimes you got to
13 make an example of somebody. To let them know, hey, you
14 know what, you can't be doing this. You can't be
15 treating -- you can't -- and that's why it's important with
16 that -- there's a process.

17 Like, even with that Alberta Missing Person
18 Act, like, we didn't know about it. I just Google it, and
19 I found it. And you know, there's information -- good
20 information on there. Even that should be given to the --
21 to the families when you go to the RCMP. Say, you know
22 what, oh, here's this Act.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And you just
24 discovered that yourself. And actually, when you said that
25 out loud, some families might not have even known that

1 exist here.

2 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So that type of
4 information, you -- you'd suggest is really important to be
5 available, readily available for any family?

6 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah. There's so much --
7 like, I'm always looking on the internet, I'm always trying
8 to find out stuff on my sister, to see if anybody says
9 anything, or you know, in all these pages and stuff like
10 that. Like, to see if -- because there's -- there's a lot
11 of tips out there and everything. But at the same time, I
12 always -- I'm trying to find legislation and stuff like
13 that, and -- to see -- to help our family. But in -- in
14 turn, make all this information available to other
15 families. And if they don't have access to the internet,
16 or whatever, then they can be sent to their communities, or
17 stuff like that. But awareness is a big -- is a big thing.
18 Don't just go to a community -- like, I'm not -- I'm not
19 saying (indiscernible), but I mean, like, for -- for
20 anything. Because even in my community, people come there,
21 Project KARE a couple -- came a couple times. And that's
22 it, they haven't been back.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Is there any other
24 recommendations you want to make before you read in your
25 mom's part?

1 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: I think -- that was --
2 that was the biggest one. And I think -- I'm just trying
3 to think here. Other than -- other -- I was thinking of --
4 going to type it all out, and bring it, but I thought, no.
5 I didn't do it, so no. That's --

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And that's okay,
7 actually, if you have more submissions, you can actually
8 send them to us. And we can include them.

9 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Yeah. I think I'll do
10 that because there's -- I know when I leave here, I'm going
11 to -- I know I'm going to say, "Oh, I should have said -- I
12 should have said that."

13 Well, I can read my mom's thing. It's
14 not -- she -- even though with me, she -- like, she doesn't
15 know what to write, so but then -- but she's wrote
16 something. And that's what I wish, like, that I'm -- I'm
17 only here -- I wish my other family was here because
18 they -- I had my own relationship with my sister, but she
19 also had relationships with my other brothers, and my mom,
20 and my dad, you know. Yeah. She didn't say too much
21 because she didn't want to -- she didn't want to go into
22 detail, and she didn't feel that it wasn't -- it wasn't
23 right that for something as important as this to, you know,
24 just to put it all on paper when she would of rather --
25 rather have been here in person. But she said:

1 "I'm very sad and sorry that I'm --
2 that I am unable to be here to speak on
3 behalf of my daughter, Amber. There
4 was miscommunication from the inquiry
5 people that prevents me from being
6 here. I'm hoping that families will
7 get some answers and to help the need
8 to find our missing loved ones. Also,
9 that there will be ongoing support
10 after this is over. The families will
11 be in my thoughts and prayers, as this
12 is going to be a difficult time for
13 all." She says, "God Bless."

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Some of the things
15 you had explained earlier about talking with your kids, and
16 the impacts. And so returning to, sort of, a place of your
17 sister's strength in Jacob, when we were talking about
18 Jacob, you were talking about the fact that he's growing up
19 without a mom. And you've -- I wanted to let you have an
20 opportunity to talk about some of those impacts, but also
21 to -- to share some more of Amber's strengths with us.

22 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Well, for Jacob, you
23 know, he's pretty -- we see -- everybody sees so many
24 things about my sister in -- in him, like, the way he acts.
25 Even the way he walks, you know. And we -- well, we -- we

1 did have a home video recording, but there's a lot of
2 family video on it, but it's more at the end. And I -- I
3 didn't -- I was going to bring it, but I didn't. But it
4 just -- it shows her -- like -- like, her, like -- and
5 there was just -- I was teasing her, as I've always done.
6 And -- and I'm doing that to her son now, I just bug him.
7 And sometimes he doesn't want to come visit because I bug
8 him too much. He always tells Judy if -- if I'm not home,
9 he'll come visit.

10 (LAUGHTER)

11 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Because I like, you know,
12 it's -- it's -- yeah. It -- it -- it's hard because, like,
13 he always
14 says -- he calls my mom his mama. And -- and it's like, I
15 don't know. I just don't know -- well, I know we're going
16 to be there for when -- when he gets older, that we're
17 going to be there for him because, like I said, you know
18 what, all this is going to be -- once he gets older, and
19 then he start asking, or whatever, and maybe we'll even be,
20 you know. He's going to be -- having access to -- to this
21 because he's a smart kid. And, you know, he, you know,
22 he -- he just -- he's going to grow up with -- without a
23 mom, you know. And that wasn't his choice.

24 Somebody -- somebody out there did what they
25 did without -- I don't know, it's -- you can't even -- you

1 can't even put it into words, you know. How somebody could
2 just do something like that, and it's been how long now.
3 And -- and it's -- it's still happening in -- I don't know,
4 I don't even -- in my -- in my -- in my train of thought,
5 I -- I can't even go there because it's, like, you get
6 frustrated. And, like, Jacob now, he's going to grow up
7 without a mom. Like, he's going to -- now, what if
8 something happens to my mom, you know? You know,
9 everybody -- he's going to miss out on having his mom do
10 all the stuff that mom's normally do for their kids. Like,
11 he's -- like, one, kids get hurt. You know, how moms could
12 just make things all of a sudden hurt -- not hurt, just by
13 doing what they do. And, like, when he cries, you know,
14 it's hard because if he's -- you know, he's crying for his
15 mom then. And then what, you know.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So in terms of
17 recommendations, for the childrens left -- left behind, you
18 know, in -- in the perfect world, what do you think Jacob
19 needs? What -- what is a recommendation that would help
20 him, as a child that had a missing and murdered Indigenous
21 woman as a mom?

22 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** I don't know, that's a --
23 that's a tough one to answer because, you know, we could
24 only speak on his behalf.

25 But another recommendation is, when you come

1 to inquires like this, there should be, like, even
2 somebody, or another department, or somebody hired just to
3 ask those questions to family members, to reach out to
4 them. And then, based on that, then they could come up
5 with something where they could help these -- help -- help
6 these kids. Because, you know, if you don't have your mom,
7 you don't have your mom, you know. I might as -- because
8 whatever, my mom -- my mom went through, I wish I'd have a
9 relationship with my mom, but I don't, you know. But you
10 know, we're trying to work on that.

11 And -- but for -- for Jacob, there should
12 be -- not just say -- anybody could say everything. They
13 could say, we're going to do this, we're going to do that,
14 but there's a big difference if -- and then you get right
15 people in it to do it. Because there's a big difference
16 for people that just do it for the job, and there's
17 difference for people that do it because they want to do
18 it. Like, they say, you never work a day in your life if
19 you enjoy what you do, you know. It's no different than
20 when you -- when you talk to a counsellor, or something.
21 It's a lot easier to talk to somebody that went through it,
22 then somebody that just reading from a book. Because
23 there's a difference between sympathy and empathy, you
24 know. Yeah.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So do you think --

1 if I'm hearing you correctly, there -- there should be more
2 health resources in place and --

3 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah. There's --

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- support
5 resources?

6 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** There's got to be --
7 like, mental -- mental health's a big thing. Like, I -- I
8 feel, kind of, guilty right now being here because I'm the
9 only one here, well, me -- me and Judy. But I'm going to
10 say it again, you know, my -- my other family should have
11 been here because I'm sure they -- they have -- they could
12 of contributed -- they could of said what they wanted to
13 say. Who knows, maybe, down the road, maybe, something --
14 there might be another opportunity where they can -- to
15 come to something similar to this. But at the same time,
16 if they say they're going to offer after care, there should
17 be after care. Not one or two calls say, "Oh, hi, how are
18 you doing?"

19 You know, there should be actual -- even if
20 you got to go into the community because where the
21 community that I come from, there's a lot of people --
22 there's a lot of women that went missing. And out of
23 respect for them, you know, they -- they deal with --
24 they -- you know, it -- they -- when they're ready, I
25 guess, they'll -- they'll deal with it in their own way.

1 So I got to respect that. That's why in all that --
2 whatever I say, you know, I don't say other names, about
3 other people. But it's -- mental health's a big thing.
4 Yeah. It's a big thing. It is. Now, lately, like,
5 mental -- like, there's a lot -- there's a lot of suicides
6 and stuff like that, you know. There's a lot of crises
7 [ph] all over the place.

8 This is -- this is a big deal. You know,
9 we're talking about, you know, someone's mom, auntie,
10 sister, you know, grannie. And they got their own
11 families. It's hard around holidays, and stuff like that.
12 Christmas is coming up here, you know. But I think there's
13 been more support for, like, mental health, and different
14 types of wellness, and more -- like, even those ceremonies,
15 and stuff like that. But if it's going to be made
16 available, it should be made easily available, not where
17 you got to fill out a ten-pager, or you got to prove to --
18 prove why you need it.

19 Because there's been cases -- like, we --
20 like, for us, our family, I know it's just not -- but a
21 good example is when we -- we were in the Fort McMurray
22 fire, we lost everything. They got -- Fort McMurray and
23 they got all this money and everything. They said, "Oh,
24 yeah, we're going to offer all these program and services,
25 even for my kids in school." We -- they -- they made it

1 sound good, you know. My -- my girl's traumatized just
2 from the fire. But then, they -- they make it sound good.
3 They get all this funding -- whoever, but they don't --
4 they don't -- there's -- there's no follow-through. And I
5 think that -- that would be an important thing here.

6 Yeah. Because, like, especially for the
7 kids, like, that -- like, Jacob, I know -- I -- I don't
8 know what the future is, but he's a good kid, and you know.
9 My mom even asked me, like, what if he starts asking
10 questions, like, what am -- what am I going to say? What
11 do you say, you know? For something that had -- that's got
12 to make people mad, like, I just can't imagine, like, you
13 just -- I know what we feel for my sister, but I can't
14 imagine how all of a sudden someone you love and
15 everything, and then all of a sudden just -- just to go
16 missing, like home. You know, it's like it -- it -- it's
17 tough.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Is there anything
19 else (indiscernible) family? Just again, just so we don't
20 miss anything, is there anything you want to add? Is there
21 anything you want to add, Judy?

22 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** No. Yes? I'd want to
23 just say, you know, but I am grateful for, you know, for
24 this opportunity to come here. You know, now that I'm
25 actually here, to be here. And I just think there

1 needs -- my message would be to -- to the families because,
2 you know, there's got to be a better way for the inquiry to
3 reach out to these families that -- in -- like, I -- like,
4 really, the isolated ones. Isolated communities where you
5 shouldn't have to -- there may be reasons why families --
6 it's up to the families to -- to reach out to the inquiry,
7 but at the same time, there should be -- I think there
8 would a lot -- you'd get a better response if people were
9 to go to the communities. Like, and I'm -- like, even if
10 you got to go door-to-door.

11 Because now, what if nobody reached out
12 to -- to the inquiry, and then what? Like, even now, with
13 all these inquiries, what if nobody reached out? So they
14 sit back and wait until somebody, you know. Because a lot
15 of families, you know, they -- they -- they need closure.
16 They -- they -- they need support, you know. Then they'll
17 deal with, you know, addictions and stuff like that, you
18 know, with their kids.

19 Like, it -- I -- I just can't imagine all of
20 a sudden one day everything's going good, then the next
21 day, someone's gone that you love. And you go to the cops,
22 "Oh, you got to wait 24 hours." That's unacceptable. And
23 now, even the families -- even for my sister, there's a lot
24 of stuff we wanted to do on our own, that we were told we
25 couldn't. And we don't know if that was true or if it's

1 not because the RCMP said, "Oh, you can't do that." And
2 I'm like, well, you -- you can't -- like, even with -- even
3 with the shirts and everything, we -- we couldn't do our
4 own shirts. We were told we couldn't.

5 Like, they said, oh, yeah, this person's
6 going to be -- last person seen with my sister wasn't -- is
7 not even the person of interest. Like, you know, like.
8 Come on, you know, like. This person was interviewed how
9 many times, she kept changing her story. You know, that's
10 going to raise -- raise flags for anybody. You know, but
11 because she's blonde haired, blue eyed, and she's white,
12 you know, she's -- they're going to let her go.

13 But I can -- I would bet anything, if the
14 roles were reversed, my sister would be in jail until they
15 got an answer out of her. Or -- I don't understand, like,
16 you -- you see documentaries, they just interview people
17 until they break. Like, you know what, you're not leaving
18 here until you give us an answer. But, you know, they
19 said, "Oh, yeah, she's -- she's -- that other girl,
20 she's -- yeah, she's -- we can't find her. She's here,
21 she's there. You know, she's on drugs, or whatever." And
22 then, now when they get her, she's clean, and now all of a
23 sudden, it's, like, her story's still changing.

24 But it's, like, there's no -- and she -- she
25 gets to continue on with her life, with her son, you know.

1 That's not fair. But I -- I think, they should of did
2 their -- they should of did their job. Like, why -- there
3 should have been more investigation into say, okay, well,
4 why -- why did Amber come over here with her? Like, what
5 really -- like, why were you guys going over there? For
6 what? You know, like, why you -- she had -- and she
7 brought Jacob, and why -- if you're going to Edmonton, why
8 would you stop in a -- in a hotel there outside the
9 airport, and stay there? You know.

10 And I just think they should -- it just --
11 it just doesn't make sense, you know. It's like if you --
12 she's a person of interest, she should still be a person of
13 interest. But then again, how do we really know they did
14 what they said they did, right? Maybe she know something.
15 Maybe she knew something at the time that could have -- we
16 could of knew where my sister went. Because she must know
17 because all of a sudden, my sister is not going to -- and
18 she loved her son so much, she's not going to just leave
19 her [sic] -- leave him with anybody. And then all of a
20 sudden, oh, I'm going to -- just going to go here, and I'm
21 going to and, I'm going to leave my son with you, and I'm
22 not going to come back. No. My sister wouldn't do that.
23 She's protective of her son. And that was -- that was her
24 life.

25 And even -- I think families should have

1 access to -- to all information, like, police files and
2 stuff like that. And not show you only what they want to
3 show you. Because when this is all said and done for my
4 sister, we're going to try to get the -- the police
5 records. Because there's -- there was a lot of tips that
6 came in. With that voice analysis, they said they send
7 them off, and they get analyzed. Even, like, even a couple
8 weeks ago, tips still keep coming in. Sometimes it's the
9 same guy over and over and over. But they say he's ruled
10 out, but you know. We can get mad all we want, but it's
11 like, we got to -- at the same time, we got to have faith
12 that they're doing their job. Because now that my
13 sister -- her name's in the -- out there, so you know,
14 there's people watching. And now, with -- with everything
15 that we're doing, you know, if there's something else that
16 goes on, for sure we're going to be on it.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Are we good?

18 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Huh?

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Are you good? Is
20 there anything else you wanted to add?

21 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** M'hm. No.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So if there's
23 nothing more to add, I just -- I wanted to offer
24 Commissioner Buller and opportunity to ask questions --

25 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Sure.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- or make comments.

2 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank
3 you. I just have a couple of questions, going back in time
4 a -- a bit. When Amber came to Edmonton, where -- where
5 was she and Jacob living?

6 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: She was staying with my
7 mom.

8 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: In?

9 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: Fort McMurray. But at
10 the same time -- she was living there, but then she -- she
11 was trying to get her own place. So she would -- she was
12 trying to go to -- because in Fort McMurray the way it
13 works is, it -- you get a place a lot faster if you -- if
14 you go to the Unity House. It's a place where they --
15 like, single mothers and -- like, a support. It's a
16 support for Fort McMurray. So if you go there, then they
17 kind of, it -- it kind of bumps you up the list. So she
18 was kind of back and forth there, but her main -- and she
19 just started doing like that at that time. But she was
20 most -- she was staying with my mom.

21 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Were you
22 living in Fort McMurray at that time too?

23 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: No. I was staying in
24 Fort Chip.

25 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Do you

1 know about how long it took for your mother to get custody
2 of Jacob, approximately?

3 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** I don't know the exact
4 date, but it might be around a month. And with that too,
5 that was hard on Jacob because he was a baby living in --
6 in a home where he didn't even know anybody. And that --
7 even that drove everybody crazy. Because she didn't even
8 know if she was going to get him back.

9 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Okay.
10 That's it, for my questions anyway. Thank you very much.
11 Anything further? Okay.

12 Paul, Judy, we're all very grateful that you
13 came today. We've learned a lot, and your recommendations
14 are very, very helpful to us. So I want to thank you for
15 that. I'll just organize my paperwork here a little bit
16 better. Awhile ago, the matriarchs in Haida Gwaii, which
17 is on the coast of British Columbia, heard about what we
18 were going to be doing all across Canada, and certainly
19 understood the tremendous strain this would be for family
20 members and survivors of violence to come forward. They
21 wanted to find a way to express their support and
22 encouragement for families everywhere, to come forward
23 and -- and hopefully to give some strength to families as
24 well who -- who do share with us. So the matriarchs
25 ordered that eagle feathers be harvested, and of course,

1 that happened. And so the matriarchs want us to give
2 families who come forward eagle feathers to lift them up,
3 to give them strength, and as a symbol to show how all
4 Indigenous people across Canada share this same burden. So
5 on behalf of the matriarchs on Haida Gwaii, we have
6 feathers for you. Thank you very much.

7 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Thank you.

8 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Judy,
9 thank you so much.

10 **MS. JUDY CARDINAL:** Okay. Thanks.

11 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Also, we
12 consider what you've told us today a sacred gift. And in
13 order to thank you and to recognize the -- the gift that
14 you've given us today, first of all, we have some tobacco
15 for you as -- as thanks. But also, we have seeds. We're
16 going to ask you to plant, take pictures, let us know what
17 grows, please. So thank you. On behalf of the
18 Commissioners, the staff, and our elders, thank you for
19 sharing your story of your sister, Amber. Your sister-in-
20 law, Amber. And we're truly very grateful, and very
21 honoured. So thank you. Thank you so much. And thank you
22 doesn't come close. Thank you Judy. A hug? Thank you.

23 **MR. PAUL TUCCARO:** Yeah.

24 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Please
25 stand. (Indiscernible). Let's give them a hug.

1 MR. PAUL TUCCARO: (Indiscernible).

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Love you. Got
3 to give you a hug. Thank you.

4 MS. DEBBIE REID: So as the family is -- is
5 ending their time here with us, telling their truth. It is
6 noon. Lunch will be ready in the -- in the other hall,
7 part of the ballroom. And we will reconvene here at 1:30.
8 So here and in the meeting room 2. The hearings will
9 reconvene at 1:30.

10 --- Exhibits (code: P1P020201)

11 **Exhibit 1:** Folder of six images of Amber Tuccaro
12 displayed on monitor during public hearing.

13 **Exhibit 2:** CBC News article, "Amber Tuccaro's unsolved
14 murder: Do you recognize this voice?"
15 written by Marnie Luke and Connie Walker,
16 posted June 8, 2015 11:00 a.m. ET; last
17 updated June 9, 2015 3:23 p.m.; and printed
18 11/7/2017; four pages one-sided.

19 **Exhibit 3:** CBC News article, "Fort Chip community
20 honours Amber Tuccaro's life" by Tiar
21 Wilson, posted January 17, 2015 5:00 a.m.
22 ET; last updated February 25, 2015 5:23 p.m.
23 ET; printed 11/7/2017; two pages single-
24 sided.

25 --- Upon recessing at 11:59 a.m.

1 **Hearing # 2**

2 **Witness: Carol Bear**

3 **In relation to Mary Emily Bear**

4 **Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

5 **Commission Counsel: Lillian Lundrigan**

6 **Elders, Knowledge-Keepers, Grandmothers: Bernie Skundaal**

7 **Williams, Florence Catcheway, Miyna Manniapik and Emily**

8 **Meshar**

9

10 --- Upon reconvening at 1:32 p.m.

11 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** (Speaking Native
12 language). Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner Robinson,
13 elders, (Speaking Native language). I would like to
14 present Carol Bear.

15 I -- I anticipate Carol will be sharing her
16 story of her mother, and her story of her survive --
17 survivor -- as a survivor. Thank you, Carol --

18 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yes.

19 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** -- for joining us
20 today, and for sharing your strength with us. I would like
21 to ask the Registrar to issue the -- the oath with Carol,
22 please?

23 **CAROL BEAR, Sworn**

24 **MR. JEFF WEIGL:** Thank you.

25 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** I don't think -- oh, never

1 mind.

2 MR. JEFF WEIGL: Now you're on.

3 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Thank you. (Speaking
4 Native language). So thank you again, Carol, for being
5 here with us and please share your story with us --

6 MS. CAROL BEAR: M'hm.

7 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: -- and with -- with
8 Commissioner --

9 MS. CAROL BEAR: Okay.

10 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: -- Robinson.

11 MS. CAROL BEAR: Okay. First of all, I just
12 want to say that I'm really nervous. I'm speaking on
13 behalf of my deceased mother, someone who I never got the
14 opportunity to meet. The only memento I have of her is
15 this picture, which was sent to me by one of my cousins who
16 I have yet to meet on the Ermineskin Maskwacis. To me, it
17 looks like she is in a hospital bed, in a residential
18 school, which is where she grew up.

19 I want to, first of all, say thank you to
20 all the volunteers that have offered their time. And to
21 everyone that's put their work into this process. I think
22 it's really -- this needs to happen. This open dialogue
23 needs to happen because if we hope to move forward with
24 change for this next generation coming up, this is the only
25 way we're going to do it, through open and honest dialogue.

1 So where to start? So I grew up in the
2 system, per se -- the child welfare system. I didn't have
3 access to my file until I turned 18. So basically, I
4 was -- my sister and I grew up in the same foster homes
5 together. I don't really recall too much of my early
6 childhood. And I think the Creator planned it that way. I
7 don't know what we experienced, but I'm grateful that I
8 don't recall anything of that earlier time.

9 So when I turned 18, I was already homeless,
10 living on the streets of Edmonton. So before I aged-out,
11 my social worker brought me to the office and he gave me my
12 file and just left. I'm sorry. It was there that I found
13 out that my mother had been murdered when I was four. In
14 the file, on the info of my natural mother, it said that
15 she had led a very high-risk lifestyle. So to me, I took
16 that to mean that she was a working girl on the street.
17 And she was murdered when she was 36, so I would have been
18 four at the time.

19 So to hear that when you're already in that
20 environment, it just -- just reinforced the fact that I
21 didn't feel valuable about myself. And then, to hear that
22 your natural mother died, you know, murdered when you're
23 young, it just reinforced that belief that you're
24 insignificant, and that you have no value, which is so far
25 from the truth.

1 And I'm really, really disappointed. I just
2 have to say that I don't know where are all the
3 Commissioners, representatives from the RCMP? Where are
4 the members of the EPS? They should be sitting in these
5 chairs listening to these families who have lost so much.
6 And I don't understand why one representative from either
7 of them could not be here to listen to our stories. And so
8 for me, it was really important for me to be here to speak
9 on my mother's behalf because to me, she was a woman of
10 value. It doesn't matter what kind of lifestyle she
11 led -- a high-risk lifestyle. She was still a beautiful
12 woman. She was valued, she was loved.

13 And I really feel that the inter-
14 generational trauma brought on by the residential schools
15 has really impacted our families in a negative way. How
16 can you possibly learn to love and value yourself when
17 you're told consistently -- daily, that you're of no value.
18 And that we need to take the Indian out of you. How could
19 you value or love yourself? And how could you expect to
20 love and value your children? And so for me, it was really
21 important that I speak on my mother's behalf because if she
22 were alive today, we would have a loving relationship. Or
23 she would love me the best day [sic] -- way that she knows
24 how, given the circumstances that she had to grow up in.

25 And I'm so tired of hearing that our women

1 are undervalued. And the fact of the matter is, that we
2 are beautiful, we're strong, and we're valued, and we are
3 loved. And so for me, it was just so important for me to
4 speak the words of -- my mother probably couldn't say
5 because she's no longer here. And my heart just goes out
6 to the families that have no closure. And I really believe
7 that the underlying issue is racism in this country. Our
8 women are not valued. And that needs to change. And I
9 think the only way that's going change is if we stand-up
10 and we say, no more. And I really don't know what else to
11 say. I didn't really come prepared. I thought I was, but
12 there's so many issues that our -- our people are facing at
13 this moment. And I just felt it was important I come out
14 and speak on my mother's behalf because she is no longer
15 here. And that's all I can say right now at the moment.

16 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Carol?

17 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

18 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Can I ask you, do
19 you know which residential school your mother attended?

20 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** I'm just assuming because
21 she was from Ermineskin, Maskwacis, so I -- from my -- what
22 I understand is there was Ermineskin residential schools.
23 I'm figuring that's where she -- that's where she went.

24 And you got to understand, this has been a
25 lifelong process. I mean, I grew up in the system. And at

1 that time, like, any time I would ask my foster parents any
2 information about my family, they would just say, you know,
3 well, that's in the past, you should be grateful that you
4 have a roof over your head. And the past needs to be left
5 behind. So not even having that information -- not
6 having -- not knowing where your roots are. It just makes
7 you feel that you don't know where you belong. Do I belong
8 in Native world? Do I belong in the non-Native? So you
9 grow up feeling confused. So I don't know exactly which
10 residential school she went to, but I'm just assuming it
11 was the Ermineskin one.

12 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** But you do know that
13 she went to residential school?

14 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yes. Because here's what
15 happened, I'm trying to get to that. So when I turned a
16 certain age, I went back for upgrading. I was on the
17 street for seven years, homeless, encountered a lot of
18 violence. And I'm just very thankful that Creator pulled
19 me out of that lifestyle. So I became -- began to come
20 curious about my family. Where -- where am I from? Who's
21 my family? So at the age of 40, I managed to obtain my
22 file through FOIP, the Freedom of Information and Privacy
23 Act. I was able to obtain my mother's death certificate,
24 and from that I understood that she was born in Ermineskin.

25 So I phoned the Ermineskin -- I managed to

1 speak -- I'm not going to mention names, I managed to speak
2 with one of the band council members, who said, "Oh, I know
3 your mom. I went to school with her." So I'm assuming
4 that was residential. And then I went back to school and
5 that's where I found out more about the residential school.

6 This is going back a few years. One of my
7 instructors at the time said that she had attended
8 residential school. I didn't know anything about
9 residential schools. It's not mentioned in the
10 curriculums, you know, which I think something -- it -- it
11 needs to be implemented. It needs to be mandatory that
12 children growing up find out about the residential school.
13 And find out it's ugly history. So that's where I
14 learned -- that -- that was -- that's like 15 years ago
15 that I started on this journey of healing and finding out
16 where my roots are, where I came from. So yeah, that's it
17 in a nutshell.

18 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Okay. And your
19 mother's name was Mary Emily?

20 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Oh, I'm sorry. I don't
21 know if it's on the screen there, but this is my -- the
22 only memento I have of my mother. I think I -- did I show
23 this already?

24 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** You did.

25 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yeah.

1 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** But you can show it
2 again.

3 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** I'm sorry. But this is all
4 that I have of her.

5 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Can you explain
6 this?

7 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Oh, this is a verse. I
8 have a very strong faith, and it just says: "To be strong
9 and courageous." Which I'm trying to be today.

10 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Thank you.

11 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** I don't really know what
12 else to say when it comes to residential school, except
13 that I know that my mother did attend it. And chances are
14 my grandparents and my great-grandparents, and the parents
15 for them attended them as well. So I don't see it having a
16 positive effect at all. I have yet to hear of one positive
17 experience coming out of that whole hellish existence.
18 I -- I honestly can't imagine what it's like to be
19 brutalized on a daily basis. Made to feel that you're
20 nothing. I -- and it hurts my heart.

21 And that's why I was able to forgive my
22 mother. You know, she did the best that she could with
23 what she had. And like I said earlier, I think it's
24 impossible to love if you have not felt love yourself. So,
25 yeah.

1 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Do you have
2 siblings, Carol?

3 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** I do. My sister and I were
4 fortunate enough to be raised in the same foster homes. I
5 have yet to meet my other families and siblings because we
6 were all split apart.

7 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Okay.

8 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** So I'm pretty certain that
9 they all grew up in the system as well.

10 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** And your -- your
11 sister lives in?

12 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** My sister lives in
13 Miramichi. That's in New Brunswick.

14 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** She was --

15 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yeah.

16 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** She moved there, or
17 was she ...

18 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Well, she moved there after
19 she -- yeah, she's been there about 13, 14 years, now.

20 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Okay.

21 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yeah.

22 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** And you still have a
23 relationship with your sister?

24 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yes. Yes, we do. We're
25 very close. I think considering everything that we went

1 through together. And I feel very fortunate that we grew
2 up in the same foster homes together. I think Creator kept
3 us together for a reason. And we're very close.

4 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Okay.

5 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** So ...

6 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Do you want to share
7 your story as a survivor?

8 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yeah. Like I mentioned
9 earlier, so when I turned -- just before I turned 18, I was
10 a ward of the system as I said. And so at that time, I was
11 already leading that high-risk lifestyle, as you put it --
12 as I put it. And so to read that, just reinforced
13 something. And, wow, my mother is -- did the same thing
14 that I'm doing. And it just really floored me. And I
15 continued that lifestyle for seven years. You know, being
16 brutalized, raped, beaten, whatever you want to call it.
17 It's a very tark [sic] -- dark time in my life. But there
18 again, the Creator has healed me in many areas regarding
19 that. And I'm just very thankful that I'm not one of the
20 missing women.

21 A lot of girls that I grew up with on the
22 street, they're either dead due to drug use, or they're
23 missing. So the fact that I can sit here and share my
24 story, to me that just speaks of the Creator's protection.
25 And I just can't imagine what it would be like to lose a

1 family member, not knowing what happened to them. I
2 just -- I honestly can't imagine.

3 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** When did you start
4 your healing journey?

5 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Well, I became pregnant
6 with my son, so that started me on the route to wanting to
7 do better. I didn't want him growing up in the system as I
8 did. I know the damage that it did cause me. But I was
9 still dealing with my addictions.

10 And so I struggled with IV drug use for a
11 very long time. And like I said, a lot of the girls I knew
12 on the street, they died from talc lung. Eventually, your
13 lungs just give out, and you end up on oxygen. So without
14 a transplant, you're going to die because your -- your
15 lungs give out. So there again, I feel blessed that the
16 Creator has kept me alive. I mean, I'm healthy otherwise.
17 It's not something I really like to talk about, being on
18 the street. I mean, like, because it's a very dark, lonely
19 place. A lot of my sisters didn't make it. They're gone.
20 For some reason I'm still here, and I just feel very
21 blessed for that.

22 And it hurts my heart to know that a lot of
23 our girls, a lot of our boys, a lot of our men, a lot of
24 women are out there on the streets. And to me it doesn't
25 matter whether you lead a high-risk lifestyle, your --

1 still should be valued. And your life shouldn't be under
2 minded. Your value is not in who you are, it's -- Creator
3 didn't create us to be this. He created us to be beautiful
4 people. And we are. We just got lost. And we need to
5 find our way back. And I think by doing this, by sharing
6 our stories, whatever that looks like, that's the only way
7 we're going to get there. Yeah, so like I said, I just
8 feel very blessed that I was able to come out of that
9 lifestyle.

10 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Are you okay with me
11 asking about your experience as a foster child? And your
12 experience with your foster family? How did --

13 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Well, that's something I
14 have yet to reconcile as well. Because there was a lot of
15 sexual abuse that took place in this one particular home.
16 I have yet to confront the abuse. And I will. I just
17 haven't come to that place yet, where I can confront that
18 person. As far as the abuse in the other homes, I don't
19 recall. And like I said earlier, I think the good Lord,
20 the Creator -- the Lord, has protected my memories.

21 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** You mentioned you --
22 you're not connected to your -- your Native culture --

23 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** No.

24 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** -- or Indigenous
25 culture?

1 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** No.

2 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: And that's a result
3 of growing up in a non-Indigenous family. Did -- did they
4 help you to learn your culture?

5 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** No. You -- you have to
6 understand in that time, it was the early '60s, and there
7 was no such thing as -- being Native, I don't think it
8 was -- it was -- it wasn't okay with society. I think we
9 were at the bottom of the totems poles, so to speak. And
10 don't mean that out of disrespect.

11 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** M'hm.

12 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** And the -- the home that I
13 grew up in, from the time was six until I turned 17, was a
14 German foster home, so very strict. And like I mentioned,
15 or I don't know if I mentioned this to someone, but it was
16 almost like the attitude, well, just be grateful that
17 you're here. Just be grateful that you're not in a
18 horrible foster home. So it was like I almost had to leave
19 my culture behind.

20 When we first came there, we did speak Cree,
21 I believe. Because they -- they spoke German, we spoke
22 Cree, so it was really interesting, that communication --
23 lack of. So not being -- not speaking your language, or
24 keeping it up, of course, we lost it. And we picked up
25 English, and we picked up German, which is ironic to me.

1 But -- and then growing up in schools. Going to non-Native
2 schools, where you're made to feel that being a Native is
3 dirty. Like, I got called all kinds of names because I
4 went to mainly non-Native schools. So I was picked on for
5 being Native, squaw, wagon-burner, and that was tolerated.
6 I mean, you're talking about the early '70s where racism
7 and things like that were basically tolerated. And I --
8 and I went to school in the -- the Edmonton Public School
9 System. Was it ever addressed? That's where I learned to
10 fight. Because I didn't think it was okay to be called
11 that. I knew it wasn't okay to be called that.

12 So I guess, I -- I -- one positive thing I
13 can take out is I -- I did grow up in a Christian foster
14 home, where I learned about the Creator. And many times in
15 my dark times, I would pray, and you know, just ask Him,
16 just take me out of this place because it was just so hard.
17 And He answered, so I'm grateful. I'm sorry, I'm just --

18 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Don't apologize.

19 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Okay. All right.

20 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** When we talked a few
21 weeks ago, you mentioned to me that you began to reclaim
22 your -- your Indigenous identity.

23 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm. Yeah.

24 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** In your forties and
25 you have a son.

1 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm. Yeah.

2 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Can you share that
3 with your son?

4 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** So like I said, growing up
5 in the '70s, you know, being made to feel that you're less-
6 than because you're Native. It's only been in the past few
7 years that I've actually began to reclaim my Native
8 culture, and being proud of who I am. I'm very proud of
9 who I am now. And I've taught my son, you know what,
10 don't -- if -- I mean because he doesn't look First Nations
11 at all. So when people ask him, what are you? First
12 Nations. And he's very proud to say that.

13 And I -- like I said earlier, I think it's
14 going to be this upcoming generation that's going to
15 reclaim our heritage. And I'm very proud to say now that
16 I'm First Nations. I wasn't when I was younger because it
17 was something that you just didn't do, you know. I'm still
18 learning more about my culture as I go, but I'm very proud
19 of who I am as a First Nations woman. So, yeah. M'hm.

20 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** That's -- that's
21 wonderful.

22 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Thank you.

23 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** So unless you want
24 to -- to add anything and share anything else, I -- I was
25 wondering if maybe you can share with the Commissioner if

1 you have any recommendations?

2 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** I've got a list. I've got
3 a list. First of all, like I said earlier, we need to make
4 it mandatory for the Canadian-wide curriculums, schools,
5 for the young people coming up in the schools, to learn
6 about the residential schools, and what actually took
7 place. We need to have more open dialogue when it comes to
8 Native -- Native communities, and the non-Native
9 communities. Because I really believe that racism --
10 children are -- aren't born to hate. You learn that. You
11 learned that from your school, you learned that from your
12 peers, or you learn it right in the home. So we need to
13 start teaching our children that God doesn't see colour.
14 He doesn't see race. He doesn't see religion. He -- He
15 only sees us the way he created us to be equal. We're
16 taught that one classes, or one socio-economic class is
17 better than another. And that's not true. And we got to
18 start teaching our children that. And I think it should be
19 mandatory that the -- what happened in the residential
20 schools needs to be taught to our children.

21 Another thing, like I said earlier, is I'm
22 just wondering where the EPS is, and where all the RCMP
23 are? Why are they not here? And there needs to be that
24 open dialogue between our community and the policing forces
25 across Canada. Otherwise, nothing is going to change. And

1 why is it that when a Native woman goes missing, the first
2 thing that they say, "Oh, she must be out partying." Do
3 they say that to every non-Native family that comes through
4 the door? I don't think so. That needs to change.

5 The fact that we have another residential
6 school system starting with child welfare. How many
7 children do we have in care right now? Our children are
8 maybe not being taken away and put in schools, but they're
9 put -- being put in foster homes. Is it that -- that -- is
10 that not the same? I mean, we just got our children back.
11 And now, they're being taken away again to be raised by --
12 and I'm sorry to say, non-Native families, they need to be
13 placed with Native families. Native foster homes. Once
14 again, we're being stripped away of our culture, our
15 language, our family, our roots. They're doing it to us
16 all over again, but in a different way. And that needs to
17 change.

18 And I -- I think there needs to be more
19 community dialogues, like this. It shouldn't have to take
20 almost 2,000 missing women for this to happen. That
21 shouldn't -- that's not acceptable. And why is it that
22 when a non-Native person, woman, goes missing, there's
23 media coverage. When -- when a family -- one Native family
24 go -- their children, or families go missing, it takes up
25 to a week before the police take action. Otherwise, it's

1 just, "Oh, she was a woman at risk, so who cares." That's
2 not right. That needs to change.

3 There's a whole lot in this country that
4 needs to change by -- we -- we got to start taking personal
5 responsibility as well. And I don't want to offend anyone,
6 but I think that we have to start taking personal
7 responsibility. I need to take personal responsibility for
8 my actions, and from the way I treat people, and vice-
9 versa. We got to start treating each other better. And we
10 got to start loving ourselves, and being proud of who we
11 are because we come very strong, strong culture.

12 And I also think that issues on the reserve
13 need to be addressed. Sexual, physical, emotional, all
14 that is taking place on our reserves as well. That's not
15 being talked about. That needs to be addressed.

16 As for me, I take responsibility for all the
17 actions I've done in my life. I've chosen to forgive the
18 people that have hurt me and my family. I've chose to
19 forgive the person that murdered my mother. But it's an
20 individual process. It -- it's an individual journey.
21 And -- and sometimes that takes years, so we got to start
22 taking personal responsibility as well. Other than that, I
23 don't really have too much more to say.

24 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Thank you, Carol.

25 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yeah.

1 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Thank you for your
2 strength.

3 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

4 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Commissioner
5 Robinson this concludes Carol's story, unless you have some
6 questions to ask.

7 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I want to
8 first thank you --

9 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Thank you.

10 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** -- for sharing
11 with us --

12 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

13 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** -- about your
14 mother, Mary Emily, right?

15 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yes.

16 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah.

17 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Mary. Yeah, Mary Emilia
18 [sic], sorry.

19 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Emilia?

20 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

21 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** And for
22 bringing the photo of her. And -- and sharing with us
23 your -- your one memento. I've heard your recommendations,
24 and, you know, our need to take collective responsibility
25 as well as --

1 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

2 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** -- as
3 personal, I think is a really powerful message. And thank
4 you for that. We all play a role in -- in this, and -- and
5 making our communities safer. I do have a question, you
6 talked about, you know, your sisters in the street. And --

7 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

8 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** -- so many of
9 them -- and you -- you speak for them. You -- you are here
10 giving them voice too, and I want to thank you for that.

11 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

12 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** How -- I'd
13 like to -- you -- to know what you think about what we as a
14 society can do better to help -- help women and girls, and
15 boys --

16 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yeah.

17 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** -- who are
18 street involved, make that move away from that lifestyle?
19 Do you have some thoughts on what can be done there?

20 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** There again, like, quit
21 taking our children away. You know, if a family is
22 struggling with addictions, or whatever issues, help that
23 family. Because I bet you it costs less to actually put
24 supports in the home, or have that person work one-on-one
25 with the resource worker than it is to actually put that

1 child into the system. Help that family. Don't just take
2 that child away.

3 If that child is in danger, of course. But
4 it -- before it gets to that point, before it reaches that
5 point where you have to physically remove that child, there
6 has to be -- there has to be another way. Like, work with
7 the mom, work with the father. Get them the help that they
8 need before it even gets to that point. Because we're
9 talking about inter-generational trauma. What do you
10 expect when a parent has grown up seeing alcohol in the
11 home, or they've grown up seeing physical abuse. What else
12 is that child going to learn? So you need to help that
13 family before it gets to that point. And quit taking our
14 children away.

15 Like, they have to start helping these
16 families before it gets to that crisis point. Help the
17 children that are struggling in school because the
18 government is making money off our children. Putting them
19 in foster care is not the answer. That's just perpetuating
20 it. In other words, those children are going to grow up
21 unloved. They're going to feel that they lack the
22 parenting skills. And they're going to do exactly what
23 they learned because I did it myself to my son. So help
24 those families. Help those children. That's what I would
25 say.

1 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you. I
2 don't have any other questions. I just want to thank you,
3 and --

4 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

5 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** -- and commend
6 you, and raise my hands for your courage for coming and
7 sharing with me, and deciding to do it publicly this way.

8 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Yeah. Thank you.

9 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** It's -- it's a
10 very important dialogue, and I thank you. Thank you so
11 much.

12 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** You're welcome.

13 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** (Speaking Native
14 language). Thank you. Thank you very much, Carol.

15 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

16 **MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:** Thank you,
17 Commissioner Robinson for the time. (Indiscernible).

18 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** Thank you.

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** It was right there.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible).

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah. And there.

22 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** So they're going to explain
23 this to other people, and I'm (indiscernible).

24 **MS. CAROL BEAR:** M'hm.

25 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** But first, I want to offer

1 (indiscernible).

2 MS. CAROL BEAR: Okay.

3 MS. DEBBIE REID: For those of you who may
4 not have been in the room this morning, what we do as the
5 commission is -- the matriarchs of the Haida Gwaii. When
6 we were firth [sic] -- first in Smithers, had a call out to
7 the gathering, the harvesting of eagle feathers to provide
8 to the families. And they've continued that process for us
9 as we do our hearings across -- across Canada.

10 So each of the family members, or people who
11 tell their truth, are given gifts of thanks from us, for
12 giving their gift of truth. We recognize and thank them
13 for that. Both with a feather, and we also provide a seed
14 packet. You may see in the banners, it's called gifts of
15 reciprocity. So we have different types of seeds that are
16 used across the country that we ask the families to plant,
17 and to take pictures because we'd like to symbol a new
18 life, a new growth. So we will continue to keep track of
19 these plants if they are planted. And we also, of course,
20 offer tobacco in thanks for -- for the truths. So that's
21 what the Commissioner was talking to the -- to -- I can't
22 even remember her name -- Karen [sic], sorry. Caro (ph)?
23 Carol, sorry.

24 MS. CAROL BEAR: M'hm.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

1 in Edmonton. Stephanie has brought someone in support, who
2 I will ask her to introduce.

3 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** This is my -- my aunt,
4 Cecilia Fitzpatrick, who is my mother's sister. And who
5 took care of my mother for me at a time in my life where
6 I -- I needed it most.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Mr. Registrar,
8 Stephanie has requested to affirm using an eagle feather.

9 **MR. JEFF WEIGL:** (Indiscernible).

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Please. Thank you.

11 **STEPHANIE HARPE, Affirmed**

12 **MR. JEFF WEIGL:** Thank you.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Stephanie, I want to
14 offer you this tobacco tie in support of your testimony
15 today.

16 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Thank you.

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** You're welcome. Would
18 you start by telling us about your occupation and your
19 achievements?

20 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I am a singer and song
21 writer. I have albums out. I've opened for some of the
22 biggest acts in the world. And I also get musical
23 festivals together and talent. I'm an actress from the
24 awarding-winning T.V. show, Blackstone. I play Rita on the
25 show, a fictional character of a -- of a - a band

1 councillor that wants better for her community. I played
2 many different kinds of roles. Some -- some good, some
3 bad. I'm sharing stories, and I'm pretending to be a
4 character to share other people's stories. And I've been
5 very influenced by my cousin, Tantoo Cardinal, another
6 activist. And very influenced by, also, my talented
7 family.

8 I'm an ex-casting agent for movies and
9 television. And I've put people in all kinds of Hollywood
10 to local productions. And I'm retired from that now. It
11 was a bit too much. I casted my baby cousin from Lac La
12 Biche, in Blackstone. She won best actress in the province
13 for portraying the role of a -- of a raped, and almost
14 murdered Indigenous woman in a -- in a frightening scene on
15 Blackstone. So I've done things like that.

16 And I have a movie coming out here soon,
17 where I play a very struggling, broken addict. And it was
18 a -- a role for one of our greatest actresses, Michelle
19 Thrush, and I had gotten that. I went to Mexico and took
20 an amazing opportunity, that will probably change my -- my
21 life. And my music is, first of all, very important to me
22 because I've written songs about murdered and missing
23 Indigenous women as well. And that got us nominated in New
24 York City. Years and years back, maybe 2007, when it
25 wasn't being on the forefront at the time, we had reached

1 the world through song about this. And when I was asked to
2 do that, it took me 15 minutes to write the song. It just
3 poured out of me. So they asked me to write another song.
4 And that just poured out of me.

5 So yeah, those are things that I do, but now
6 a lot of my -- my work seems to be -- I'm an inspirational
7 speaker. I share my story. That's all I've been doing, in
8 sharing my life story to inspire and help others. And I
9 will be speaking at the National Models United Nations
10 Conference 2017. I am keynote speaker for Tuesday, so I
11 will be addressing the world here, again. And that's what
12 I do. I'm also a mother, and a wife. And the mothering
13 part is something I extremely strive for. Because of the
14 way I grew up.

15 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Would you please tell
16 us the full name of the person you've come to speak about
17 today?

18 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Her name was Ruby Anne
19 McDonald. And she was my mother, and her sister.

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I have four photos
21 that you have provided to me today that you have asked that
22 we display, so that you can describe them. Our A.V. crew
23 are going to bring them up on the screen. This is the
24 first photo. Could you tell us about it, please?

25 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** She -- you were there.

1 My parents' wedding day, downtown off Jasper Avenue, one of
2 the most beautiful churches in Edmonton. All the family
3 was there. And that's one of the happiest I've ever seen
4 my mother, ever.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And now, I'll ask for
6 the second one to be brought up. It just takes a moment.

7 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Sure. It's my
8 baptism. I'm not quite sure what church this is. I do
9 know that this is in --

10 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** It's in Edmonton.

11 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** It's in Edmonton,
12 right?

13 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** M'hm.

14 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yeah. It's in
15 Edmonton. And do you know that Father?

16 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** (Indiscernible).

17 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** No? But, yeah, I
18 guess, the -- this Father was my -- very close to my dad
19 and -- yeah, that's when they baptised me in 1976. And
20 that's my mother, and my father, and me.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And the third one will
22 come up momentarily.

23 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** That's my mom and my
24 dad. This looks like -- more like the, you know, going
25 towards the early '80s now. And I believe this is in

1 Castle Downs, where we used to live in a -- in a townhouse
2 there. And I -- I do kind of remember this. I was really,
3 really small, in elementary school. And, yeah, I do
4 believe too, this is right before my dad quit drinking,
5 quit smoking, and changed himself totally around. This is
6 about the time when my mother started to change.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And I'll ask for the
8 last photo, please.

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** This is a new photo I
10 just received. I'm very thankful for it. I don't have
11 anything of my mother's. And so thank you for sending that
12 to me. And this is a -- more of a close-up photo, but
13 the -- the whole photo was all of the sisters.

14 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** And your
15 grandmother.

16 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** And -- and their --
17 and their mother, my -- my grandmother, Victoria (ph), and
18 all the sisters.

19 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** (Indiscernible).

20 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** And -- and the other
21 people that I want to mention there, I have wonderful
22 aunts, but Chief -- historical Chief Dorothy McDonald is
23 their sister, who changed the -- the protective laws for
24 the Indigenous communities, and took on the government and
25 the oil companies with just her, and her assistant, and her

1 family. And they won. They won protective rights for this
2 country and our communities.

3 And Margaret McDonald, who worked very hard
4 in creating the Alberta Indigenous health care that we use
5 to this day in Iinik (ph), and I'm very proud of them.
6 Proud of my mother, and proud of my family, and their --
7 their history that they've had in -- in the community. And
8 their father was also Chief for a long time. So it's a --
9 it's a whole legacy.

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you have any
11 siblings?

12 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I have -- I have --
13 my -- my little brother, Eddie (ph). We grew up together.
14 He's two years younger than me. I'm 40 years-old, he's 38.
15 And we don't have that much contact. He's still suffering.
16 He's still in very, very, like, a lot of pain. He didn't
17 come out of it okay. He lives here in Edmonton. We're
18 still trying to reach him. Still, you know, when we --
19 when we can, when he's reachable.

20 My dad had -- I have half siblings, and
21 Simone Antoine (ph) from Fort Chip is here. And her, my
22 other brother, Shaun (ph), we don't see him very much.
23 He's very broken, and needs a lot of help as well. And
24 those are my siblings. Oh --

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can --

1 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Oh, and I have one
2 more that I was recently told about, Troy (ph). Can't
3 forget about Troy. So Troy Antoine (ph), and -- and these
4 are my half siblings, Antonies from Fort Chip. And just
5 didn't want to forget anybody.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell us about
7 your family life growing up?

8 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** We -- I didn't need
9 for anything. I was a spoiled little brat. She'll vouch
10 for that. But the reason for that was because my mom had
11 felt guilt because she would use and make our home unsafe
12 at times. When my dad had changed his life because they --
13 he would hurt her, and then he stopped. Then the hurt
14 began on him. She was very hurt, and angry, and broken.
15 And she tried to do her best. She really, really tried.
16 Because you know, the way she grew up and everything that
17 had happened to her. I knew she was, at an early age, I
18 knew, you know, things were different. My neighbours sure
19 knew that my household was different than other peoples'.

20 And sometimes it was scary, but I'd -- I'd
21 say, you know, the majority of the time it was pretty
22 loving. I got to do a lot of things. I had a lot of
23 things. Yeah, but I knew something was wrong.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And how did your
25 parents' relationship progress as you got older?

1 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** It just got worse, and
2 worse. They had decided to go see a doctor, and -- to get
3 her some help. And once the pills, and then the shock
4 treatment came in, my mom was never the same after that,
5 ever. It got worse, and worse, and worse. And we were
6 dragged around to different doctors' offices because it was
7 easy for my mom to get those pills. They made it very
8 accessible to her, but the shock treatment, that ruined --
9 that ruined our lives. And we were depending on these
10 people who were supposed to help us, to help us, and it
11 didn't help because one prescription turned into more, and
12 more. And they -- my -- I slowly watched my mom turn into
13 an addict over time. And, yeah, things just kind of got
14 worse from there.

15 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What is your opinion
16 of how the medical establishment treats Indigenous women
17 and girls?

18 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I think we're a
19 resource, you know, there are profits made. So we're not
20 looked at as very valued. There are dangers known, that we
21 are not told of, and it's wrong. And I seen this at a --
22 I'm just a little kid, and I knew. I was just a child, and
23 I knew this is wrong. And I just -- I didn't understand.
24 So, you know, when you're eight or nine and you can see it,
25 I think everyone else can see it too. I think it's wrong.

1 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell us about
2 your dad's decision in the end?

3 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** My dad's decision was
4 to -- to finally leave. I think I was -- I was in junior
5 high, I had just tried to go back to school after, you
6 know, using and being an addict at a young age. I think it
7 was about 15 years-old, I think Eddie was about 13. We had
8 came home. Our home was destroyed and there was blood
9 everywhere. And we walked in, and we didn't know what
10 happened. We didn't know if she was okay. And my dad just
11 says, "I -- I can't do this anymore. I've tried. I love
12 her." And he loved her.

13 My mom wasn't the only one that suffered,
14 you know. So he's, like, "I have to leave. And you guys
15 have to come with me." And I didn't want to leave her at
16 first. I didn't leave at first, I waited. And then, I had
17 found a -- a really nice guy for the first time in my life,
18 so he knew what was going on. He saw what was happening,
19 and he's like, "Just let me take you away from this." And
20 he did. And we gave my mom rent money, and -- to make sure
21 she was okay.

22 And we hadn't seen her for a little while
23 after that. And we had become estranged because of the way
24 we lived for so long. And just -- you know how horrible,
25 horrible it was at times, my, you know, my dad just wanted

1 us not to be in that environment anymore. And -- and he
2 saw what road I was going down. And I think -- I think in
3 a -- in a very sad way, he made the right decision. And,
4 you know, I think my mom had snapped out of it for a while,
5 knowing that she had just lost her family. So she was
6 doing good there for a little while after we left.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I've had the honour of
8 talking with you before this hearing, and I've heard you
9 use the words, "abused" and "broken", before to describe
10 your mother. Do you know why she was that way?

11 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Well, they grew up --
12 they grew up really hard. Like, I -- I can't, like, my --
13 my childhood doesn't -- I can't imagine. And I -- I seen
14 it in my aunties, and I -- I seen it in them too, that, you
15 know, it was tough for them to grow up. They were -- they
16 were poor. Sometimes they went really, really hungry. You
17 know, a parent would come home intoxicated, and things
18 would happen. And, you know, there was different abuses,
19 different kinds of abuses. And one of the worst ones was
20 favouritism. Because that -- that kind of hurt each child
21 in different ways. And when you're growing up, and only
22 the fittest are going to survive, well, you damn well bet
23 they tried everything to survive.

24 And, you know, I -- I seen it growing up. I
25 seen how hurt they were. I seen how, you know, how angry

1 they were, but all these feelings as they grew up I
2 understood. And I know they had every right to feel the
3 way that they felt. And trying to -- to get through all
4 that with a big family was really, really tough. Because
5 there were how many brothers and sisters?

6 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** I think it was 14.

7 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Fourteen. And then on
8 my dad's side, there was about that too. And when their
9 father and their family are being looked at in the north as
10 this strength, well, it's even tougher. And same with my
11 dad's side of the family, the Harpe family, where they
12 helped build Fort McMurray. And they have, you know, a
13 valley and a crescent named after them. And they were a
14 huge family, and they were poor, and they had their
15 challenges too. And, you know, I -- I didn't -- I didn't
16 know about that until I was older.

17 And my mother, you know, she -- she was very
18 beautiful, and spunky, and talented, and -- and, you know,
19 that gave her just the -- more of the negative attention.
20 And she didn't talk a lot about her abuse, but just this
21 year I had received an Esquao Award and I found out all
22 these things about my mother I didn't even know anything
23 about. I had no idea. I -- I didn't know she went to
24 residential school, and that he went to residential school.
25 And -- and that Amma (ph) did too? Amma did too. My

1 grandmother did too. I didn't know, you know, until I was
2 older. This doesn't -- been talked about. It's not, you
3 know what, I was hoping to, you know, I -- I grew up. Now,
4 I was, like, why didn't I learn about this stuff in school?
5 It would of gave a lot of us kids so many more questions --
6 questions would be answered. We'd have more of an
7 understanding of why our parent can't love us properly, you
8 know.

9 But -- and then, I also found out too, my
10 mother was a go-go dancer for the Alberta bands. And that
11 makes so much sense to me, and it makes -- and that just
12 made me -- I never -- I had another joy attached to her.
13 And that was very, very special. Makes so much sense to
14 me. I get it. That's why I am the way I am. That's why
15 she put me in ballet when I was that big.

16 So, yeah, it's not -- my mother's not far --
17 far fetched from a lot of other women's stories. And,
18 yeah, she was severely abused. So --

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Stephanie, are you
20 here today because your mother is missing, or because she
21 was murdered?

22 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I'm here today because
23 she was murdered.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell me when
25 she was murdered?

1 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** In 1999. In -- yeah,
2 1999.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** November 6th, 1999?

4 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** M'hm.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Does that sound right?

6 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** M'hm.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** How old was she when
8 she was murdered?

9 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** Forty-nine.

10 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Forty-nine.

11 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What was your life
12 like at that time?

13 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** At that time I had
14 been working at a pawn shop with my -- my boyfriend, Brian
15 (ph). We had just had a separation recently. So I was
16 back at home at my dad's as well. I wasn't -- I was -- I
17 was an addict, and alcoholic. Didn't really care. I was
18 just working and trying to survive. I was -- I was a binge
19 user like my mother. I wasn't a full-fledged, every day,
20 waking-up-kind-of-thing. It was -- I would have some good
21 time, then I would use. I'd have some good time, then I
22 would use. Like, it was so funny how I fell into so -- so
23 many of her patterns.

24 So, yeah, I was just really trying to shake
25 and survive my hurt, my pain. I would be so angry, and

1 sometimes, like, so angry I don't know where it would come
2 from. And then I would just cry for no reason, and just
3 cry out of nowhere. And so I didn't -- I put that -- I put
4 that pain into using, and, yeah, I was just trying to
5 survive at the time.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So you -- you
7 described it as so much like your mother. Were you trying
8 to escape a childhood trauma as well?

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** M'hm. Yeah, I've had
10 many. I've had a lot of trauma. Every statistic out
11 there, if you -- you name it, I've survived it. All of it.
12 By the time I was 24. And even child -- childhood suicide.
13 I was 11 years-old, playing with Barbies, and I decided to
14 put a plastic bag over my head. And I just didn't want to
15 be here anymore. And the sexual abuse, and then the
16 emotional abuse, and me and my mother. As soon as I
17 started getting older, we started fist-fighting. And it
18 was just -- it was really bad.

19 You know, residential school, I was taken
20 away when I was ten. They waited for my dad to go to work.
21 And then in Castle Downs, here, when that -- that one
22 picture I was talking about. They would wait for my dad to
23 go to work, and they came and took me and my brother out
24 that morning, and took us away from my mother. And put us
25 into the Atonement Home. And that is one of the most

1 traumatic experiences in my life. Because growing up with
2 my little brother, I always protected him. And no abuse
3 came to that kid because I took it. And when we got there,
4 it was boys on one side, and the girls on one -- the other
5 side. And it took a nun and -- two nuns, and one priest to
6 pry my brother out of my arms. And I couldn't -- I didn't
7 know what was going to happen to him, and that killed me.
8 It absolutely killed me because I did it for so long.

9 And -- and -- a lot of things in my life,
10 and one of the reasons why I'm -- I speak and I share, I've
11 blocked out a lot of trauma. And -- and I think that's one
12 of the main reasons why I'm able to do what I do. So I
13 blocked a lot of that abuse. And I just remember because I
14 was, you know, a spoiled little brat, I didn't want to eat
15 certain vegetables, but I just remember them shoving them
16 down my throat, and I couldn't breathe. And I thought they
17 were going to kill me. And I thought they were going kill
18 me. And I didn't even think about anybody, but my brother,
19 and dad, and my mom. I didn't really anybody else. I --
20 but -- yeah, I was joking and I -- and I just remembered
21 that. Everything else I blocked out. But I remember other
22 kids waking up in the morning, they'd pee themselves from
23 fear. And that's all I remember. And then if you peed the
24 bed, it was -- you're going to have a bad day.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** How long were you

1 there?

2 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** There was no snow on
3 the ground, it was summer. So when we got -- my mom and
4 dad had to go to court to get their own kids back, right?
5 To, you know -- it took them awhile. I just remember
6 spending Christmas there, and I believe we got out after
7 winter time. I think we were there for about a year --
8 about a year.

9 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** How long did it feel
10 like?

11 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Oh, it felt way
12 longer. It felt like a long time for a child. That's a
13 long time. That's a long time. It felt for -- like
14 forever, when you're young like that. And you can't
15 comprehend what's going on, you know. And it's Christmas
16 time, when you're wondering where your family is. But
17 every moment of every second, I worried about my brother.
18 And it just made it that much harder.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** How old are you now?

20 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I'm 40.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so if I've done
22 the math right in my head, you experienced your trauma in
23 residential school in the 1980's?

24 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yes. Yeah. People
25 look at me and they say, "You're too young to know what

1 it -- it's like." And it's like, "No, I know exactly what
2 it's like. I know exactly what it's like." And I got to
3 drive past -- past that place all the time when I go to
4 concerts because I get invited to a lot of concerts. I got
5 to drive by that place all the time. And every time I
6 drive by it, doesn't get any easier, so.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What city were you
8 living in when -- at the time that your mother was
9 murdered?

10 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Here. I was living
11 here in Edmonton.

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And was this also
13 where your mother was living?

14 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yeah. M'hm.

15 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you remember the
16 last time you saw her alive?

17 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** M'hm.

18 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Okay.

19 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Like it was yesterday.
20 Just that -- but just that because it was crucial to the
21 case. A lot of other things I had to block out because if
22 I didn't, I would not -- I don't know how mentally well I
23 would be.

24 Just like I -- I had told my auntie, I went
25 to my mother's place, I had just been using, and I was

1 tired. I just had this -- something came over me, just go
2 see your mom. So I went and saw her, and there was this
3 man there I never seen before, and introduced himself to
4 me. But there was something about his eyes. His eyes
5 disturbed me. I can't explain it. His eyes disturbed me.
6 I looked in his eyes and there was something that was just
7 not there, or not -- or just, like a -- like a deadness.
8 Like a -- his eyes were just -- that's all I -- I just
9 remember that a lot.

10 So I was, like, you know, I kind of had this
11 feeling, like, okay, you know? And I knew my mom had an
12 abusive ex that she had escaped before. And never seen
13 this guy before. At the time, she was living in the
14 apartment with her boyfriend, kind of. But he wasn't
15 there, it was a weekend. He was doing weekends in jail for
16 some kind of stupid charge. So they were there, she was
17 really, really intoxicated. She was intoxicated. She was,
18 you know, but when you drink that -- like that, it's hard
19 to -- to tell what level of -- so they were standing there,
20 and she was talking to me, and, you know, saying some
21 really sweet things. I remember one of the last things she
22 said to me, as she just laid there and she said, "Look at
23 her. Look at my beautiful daughter."

24 And then I went into the living room. They
25 were in the bedroom just laying there, drinking. I went

1 into the living room, they came out, and they said, "We're
2 going to the liquor store to get some more booze, we'll be
3 right back." I didn't want my mom to go, but we've had so
4 many fights, and fist-fights, and I didn't know -- I didn't
5 want to fight, I didn't know, sometimes her reaction. I
6 was like, "I think you guys are good. You guys got some
7 Budweisers. I think you guys are good." And he says, "No.
8 We're going." And the liquor store was right around the
9 corner. I waited there for hours. I can't tell you how
10 many hours. I just know it was -- how many -- just, I
11 don't know how many, maybe, two, three hours. And I went,
12 "What the hell's -- what's going on here?" He comes back
13 alone. Tells me, my mom had to go to the court house
14 because my little brother was in trouble. And I knew he
15 was lying because my little brother was never in trouble.

16 Something was telling me there's something
17 wrong here, something going on here. This is not right.
18 This is not right. I had been up for days, and I said,
19 "Okay. I -- I'm going to wait for her here." And he says,
20 "Yeah, me too." And he went into the bedroom, had a beer.
21 And I'm sitting there, sitting there, and I fell asleep.
22 And I fell asleep. I can't believe it. I -- I fell
23 asleep, and I woke up, he was gone. And my mom still
24 wasn't home. I stayed there for days, until food ran out.
25 And she's still not home. And it was by the end of the

1 weekend, so by the end of the weekend then I left before
2 her boyfriend probably -- because I didn't see Andre (ph).
3 So it's by the end of the weekend, and I left. I never got
4 to see or talk to Andre, and I left.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell us the
6 name of the man with the unsettling eyes?

7 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** His name was Arnold
8 (ph), but my mom was calling him Arnie (ph).

9 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I understand that much
10 later, you learned that your mother and Arnie ended up in
11 her apartment by design. Can you tell me what happened
12 before you showed up that day?

13 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I was told by
14 someone -- someone mutually, that we knew, that they saw
15 her in the bar and she was getting drinks from the
16 bartender and the waitress saying that the, "Oh, we have
17 someone buying these drinks for you." And they just kept
18 sending her the drinks. And she accepted the drinks, and
19 didn't say who from. And it was -- it was him buying her
20 the drinks. And then he waited until she was intoxicated.
21 Then he went and approached her. And then they left the
22 York Hotel, and then they went to her apartment.

23 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And I understand you
24 also know that they weren't new to each other at that
25 point. Can you tell us what you know about their -- their

1 previous relationship?

2 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** My mom had left after
3 we had left her. I don't know how long after the split.
4 She had left and went to Ontario, right? Ontario. And she
5 had met Arnold there. And she came -- she came back.
6 She -- I don't know how long exactly she was there. It
7 wasn't very long -- wasn't very long. And she came back
8 and she had told us that her ex-boyfriend had held her
9 captive, tied her up to a chair in a hotel room, and beat
10 her for three days, and she thought she was going to die.
11 And she escaped, right? So she escaped the first time.
12 She escaped the first time. And then she came -- she came
13 back here. And she thought, you know, I think I'm going to
14 be safe. I think I'm going to be okay.

15 She got away from him there. And he turned
16 out to -- didn't want to let her go. He stalked her. He
17 left that side of the country, came over here looking for
18 her. I don't know how long after that. I don't know
19 how -- how long he was looking for her. I just know that
20 he found her. Thanks.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What happened after
22 you ran out of food and left your mother's apartment?

23 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I was downtown, and I
24 was overcome with feeling, and I was very sick, and I was
25 very -- just wanted to numb myself. So I was looking to

1 use. I was trying to find someone. And this car pulled
2 up, and it was my ex-boyfriend from the pawn shop, Brian.
3 He says, "Get in the car right now. Your mother's in the
4 hospital. It doesn't look good. We got to go." So that's
5 where I came and seen you. And -- and thank you for
6 everything you did for mom.

7 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** (Indiscernible).

8 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Even -- she took care
9 of everything. She took care of everything. And -- and it
10 was good that you didn't want me and Eddie to see her like
11 that. Eddie didn't see her, did he? Did he see her? No.
12 So I'm glad my brother didn't see her. I seen her briefly.
13 And I just -- my -- she -- she said, "We need you to leave.
14 You can't -- you shouldn't see her." And that was so
15 awful. That's something I had -- I blocked out in my mind.
16 And -- and they haven't. They have it. They -- they carry
17 that. And so I'm -- I'm forever thankful for you guys for
18 doing that because that would have made it so much worse.
19 I'm sorry, I -- I strayed off. What were we saying?

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** That's fine. I have
21 another question for you. Do you remember interactions
22 between the medical staff and the police while you were at
23 the hospital?

24 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yeah. And -- and
25 she -- well, she was there most of the time, but the

1 medical staff was asking about where she was found. The
2 steps. How many steps were there, hey?

3 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** (Indiscernible).

4 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** And it was really
5 weird because they seemed more concerned than the police
6 officers, hey?

7 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** M'hm.

8 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** And that sparked up --
9 that sparked our whole suspicion. That sparked up our
10 whole -- just suspicion. And, you know, for me, one and
11 one equals two. And for them, two and two equalled six.
12 So we were very unsettled, and it just made everything just
13 more hurtful and worse. And then we found out that he --
14 that Arnie had showed up to the hospital acting concerned.
15 But he was just waiting for her to die. And we didn't know
16 at this time that -- that he was, you know. And so that
17 hurt them even more that they sat in a room with him.

18 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** He didn't stay
19 long.

20 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** He didn't stay long,
21 no. He didn't stay long at all. But that, you know,
22 that -- that's horrible for -- for us, that he did that,
23 yeah.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** You -- you talked
25 about stairs. So at the hospital did you learn how your

1 mother was found so badly injured?

2 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** They -- they know more
3 information on that because what they did was protect me.
4 So they just, you know, they let me know what I need --
5 just needed to know. And that she was just found at the
6 bottom of a stairwell with blunt trauma to her head.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did the police ever
8 approach you to talk about what had happened?

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yeah. And they came
10 to my dad's apartment. I can't remember if this was first
11 or second visit, but we had a horrible incident happen.
12 The detective seemed pretty good, he did. He seemed pretty
13 good. I got a lot of phone calls, a lot of questions, I
14 got a lot of contact. The city police were not as
15 attentive. And then there were two officers in the kitchen
16 just, kind of, off to the side, and I heard one whisper to
17 the other was -- said to the other one under their breaths,
18 "Another drunken Indian just fell down the stairs." And I,
19 like, all the colour and all everything just left me --
20 my -- my blood. Everything left me. I didn't want to
21 react because I was scared I wouldn't get help. This made
22 it so much harder because, oh, my God, do I have a chance?
23 Does my mother have a chance? Just -- does she have a
24 chance here? I don't even know if she has a chance.

25 I -- I was so outraged. I was so hurt. I

1 was -- I was disgusted. I was in mourning, and that ripped
2 my heart out. And so I just tried to stay calm, and then
3 it's -- and try to carry on, and work that detective -- I
4 gave everything to that detective. I gave him my all, I
5 gave him everything I had. I -- all my energy, all my life
6 force, every fibre of my being went into that case. And
7 they had to bury my mother without me because I wanted to
8 catch this guy. I knew what happened. I knew what he
9 looked like. I was -- I had to -- I had to make sure that
10 this guy was held accountable. I knew what happened. I
11 figured it out. We figured it out. And police didn't
12 believe me. Even though in -- they knew, like, there was
13 other people telling them that my mother was in danger from
14 a stalker. There had been a report at the police station.

15 I -- I found this out just recently. I
16 called you, I told you, that someone said that they had
17 went to the police station to warn them that my mother was
18 in danger before she had passed. Yeah.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** When did you learn
20 that your mother had passed away?

21 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** She had -- she fought
22 to stay alive for how many?

23 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** Three days.

24 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Three days. Three
25 days she fought. And I was at the pawn shop. Brian had

1 picked me up, I was at the pawn shop. And we were on our
2 way to the hospital to see you guys. And then I got the
3 phone call from my dad and my brother, and they said, "Mom
4 just passed. We're so sorry." And all I remember was
5 dropping to the floor, and I stayed there. I just stayed
6 there on the floor, just crying. And I just stayed there.
7 I couldn't even get up. I just stayed there. I just
8 stayed on the floor. (Indiscernible). And Brian's trying
9 to -- trying to help me and get me up. I can't. Just
10 leave me here, just leave me here. Don't -- just leave me
11 alone. Just leave me here. I don't know how long I was on
12 that floor.

13 And so after I got up, I just wanted to -- I
14 just -- I had -- didn't know if I wanted to go to the
15 hospital, or not. I didn't want to risk seeing her. I
16 didn't want to -- like, I didn't want to see her like that,
17 what had -- what had happened to her. I didn't want to see
18 her like that, didn't want my last memory of her to be like
19 that. So I just went off and used. And I -- I O.D.'d, and
20 I almost died. I came out of it, and yeah. And then as
21 soon as I came out of my seizure, I went right back to it
22 because I -- I thinks -- I didn't want to -- I think -- I
23 don't think I wanted -- I don't know what was going on in
24 my own head. I don't know if I even wanted to be here. I
25 think I wanted to be with her. And so -- but I -- I

1 survived that.

2 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell us what
3 happened at your mother's apartment after she passed away?

4 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Oh, my God. So one of
5 the most tough things about this whole case is that when
6 the apartment manager found out my mother had passed away,
7 I don't know what happened with my -- my mom's boyfriend,
8 or what happened, maybe he had packed up and left. I don't
9 know, but they -- I thought the apartment was closed area
10 in investigation. And I thought this was a closed area,
11 and it wasn't. And the police knew that he was there, last
12 person there. He was the last person to be seen with her
13 alive, right. Okay. They didn't lock up that place. They
14 didn't notify the manager. They didn't say, "This is a
15 crime scene."

16 The manager threw out all my mother's
17 belongings in the garbage. We have nothing of hers,
18 absolutely nothing. I was disgusted, I was hurt. I told
19 the police and the detectives, "How dare you. What is
20 going on here?" And they also cleaned out the whole place
21 with bleach, and everything, so all his fingerprints and
22 everything is -- it's gone. It's all gone. It was all
23 gone. And I thought -- you thought I was angry before.
24 Well, I went into a deep, dark spiral after that. And I
25 can't believe that. I just -- I can't believe it that that

1 was not considered. That it was not considered, you know.
2 They know what was going on. They knew.

3 But it was really weird that detective was
4 very, very (indiscernible). The only -- the only effort I
5 saw was on the behalf of the detective I saw. No other
6 efforts anywhere. But that time in my life as an addict, I
7 knew good cops, and I knew bad cops. I had some cops try
8 to scare the shit out of me from using, and being around
9 those people. Then I had other cops that were hurting me
10 when they'd arrest me and try to break my arm. That
11 actually did happen, so yeah.

12 And to not have anything of my mother's,
13 slap in the face. I had to go to a relative in my family
14 to -- for these photos. And I had a relative give me one
15 vase -- a vase. But I take comfort in -- in that vase.
16 And that's -- that's what happened.

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So despite all your
18 experiences with the police, including the failure to
19 secure your mother's apartment, did you continue to work
20 with the detective?

21 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I did, as best as I
22 could because I was on a -- I was -- I was on a mission.
23 Like, I wasn't using, I wasn't doing anything, I was just
24 so focused and just obsessed with getting this guy
25 convicted because I was the one to let her go out of that

1 door. And that's something that I have to carry every day.
2 I let her go out the door.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you remember,
4 approximately, how long you worked with the detective?

5 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Geez, months.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And while this
7 investigation was ongoing, did you have any interactions
8 with Arnie?

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** M'hm. I had one. I
10 had one brief before that, but it was just -- it was just
11 skid by. But this, I had just left the York Hotel. I was
12 looking to use. And I couldn't find anyone, so I left.
13 And I walk out, Arnie's across the street. He walks right
14 passed me. In front of the damn cop shop. I'm like,
15 "What?" Yeah, and I lost it. I absolutely lost my mind.
16 I ran across the street, I mean, like, and I was screaming,
17 and I was crying, "You killed my mother." And I'm using
18 all kinds of profanities, I'm losing my mind. I lost my --
19 myself there. I lost myself.

20 Two police officers, you know, hear -- they
21 can hear me screaming. And they come out of the police
22 station, and they say, "What's going on here? What's going
23 on here?" And they're looking at me, like this. Like,
24 I'm, you know, look at this, you know. And I said, "This
25 man killed my mother. I want him brought back in there for

1 questioning. I want him held until this investigation is
2 done. I don't want him -- he should not be roaming the
3 streets. He needs to be held. Why is he even out here?"
4 And they said, "We have no reports of any ongoing
5 investigation for a murder. Sir, you can go." And I
6 watched him walk away. And they said, "Be on your way."

7 Because to them, it wasn't considered, you
8 know. I was, like, "Are you kidding me? Her ex-boyfriend
9 just about killed her, and he was the last one with her
10 alive, and -- and it's not considered a murder?" Another
11 big slap in the face.

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** How did those police
13 officers leave you? You said they walked away. Where were
14 they?

15 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** They left me with
16 no -- like I said, they looked at me in disgust, they left
17 in disgust. Plain and simple. Not a care, not a concern,
18 didn't even look into it. Didn't even say, "Okay, let's --
19 let's everyone go inside. Let's go, you know, let's go see
20 about this." No. No concern. I am not a valued citizen.
21 I'm -- they look at me and they see a -- a Native woman
22 who's -- who's an addict, or they -- or just a Native
23 woman, right. It's -- doesn't -- an Indigenous woman,
24 sorry. Doesn't matter. Seen that a lot, it's not the
25 first time. Doesn't surprise me.

1 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Was Arnie ever
2 charged?

3 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** No. Never charged.
4 Not enough evidence to convict. And again, we hear the
5 word, exhausted our resources.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Who -- who told you
7 that?

8 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I believe it was
9 the -- the detective that -- when he had to break that news
10 to me. But, yeah, and it was always different police
11 officers. I don't think that helps. I think it -- it
12 should always be the same officer from the beginning to the
13 end. That -- that's a really big deal. And, yeah, I -- I
14 wish I would of had an Indigenous representation, or
15 Indigenous person that I could have, you know, talked to
16 you, and looked into, and just someone that could of went
17 behind the scenes to tell me they were doing their job. To
18 tell me that, you know, things were exhausted. That we
19 can't -- we really can't convict this man. I don't know
20 that to be true to this day. I don't know that -- that
21 they did everything because to them it's still not
22 considered a murder. And myself, my family, my community,
23 and the public won't understand, and will never understand.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you believe that
25 the landlord, being able to clean out her apartment,

1 contributed to the lack of evidence that --

2 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yes. Yes. Oh, yes.
3 Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah, I think about that all the
4 time. Yeah, there should be a lot more protection for us
5 while we're going through this, and there isn't.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so after all of
7 this happened, what impact did this have on you?

8 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Well, they watched me
9 turn into what I had become. And then after that, I think
10 I O.D.'d two more times. And then I had got into a really,
11 really bad relationship, to where it was another Arnie.
12 And I endured severe abuse for about a year and a half.
13 And I was -- I was almost killed as well. My -- you
14 wouldn't tell, but my nose was touching my face, and I have
15 broken ribs, and I'm a singer, still scars and -- and
16 nightmares. And -- and, yeah, I -- I went into this
17 destructive path of where I don't think I really cared, or
18 valued myself because I was seen as disposable. I was
19 seen -- I was -- that I -- I saw myself, that to them I was
20 not valued. To them, my mother was not valued.

21 And, you know, after hearing this most of
22 your life, and going through that stuff and, you know, it's
23 sad to say, you almost start to believe it. And -- but
24 with all of that pain, I just didn't want it -- feel it, or
25 deal with it. And when I was beat up really, really bad

1 one time, really, really bad, I told the police, "Just like
2 my mother's case, if you find my body, that's the guy that
3 killed me." So I was too scared to charge him, so they --
4 they charged him. And then, that was good because when he
5 went away, I escaped. And I survived -- I survived that.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So how did you go from
7 that point in your life, to becoming an inspirational
8 speaker?

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I met my -- my
10 wonderful husband, Jeff (ph). He's my -- he's my -- my
11 knight in shining armour, in the fairy tale that it was
12 about to become. Then he took me back home to see my
13 family, and that was really amazing to see everyone again
14 because they were really worried about me. My grandmother
15 used to have nightmares about me. And one of my closest
16 cousins, Dana (ph) was -- we -- we were so, like, just so
17 happy to see each other. But going back home was really
18 important to me.

19 So after that, I went back to the city. And
20 I said, "Okay." I got home, I -- me and my husband
21 decided -- because he was an alcoholic at the time, I was
22 an addict at the time, he had two children. They weren't
23 being looked after properly, and we said on New Year's Eve,
24 he came to me and he said, "If you and I change our lives."
25 He said, "Stephanie, I'll love you and take care of you for

1 the rest of your life. And I'll give you everything you
2 ever wanted." And I'm like, "Yes, deal. Let's do it."

3 And so we got sober. And I did it on my
4 own. I did it on my own. It's really hard to do. And
5 then, we got the house. And once we were both sober, we
6 brought the children in. They were four and seven. I --
7 and I raised Samantha (ph) and Joshua (ph). And that kind
8 of love in that kind of environment, you'd be surprised
9 what you could do. I had changed my whole environment. I
10 had changed all of my friends. I chose to be responsible
11 for what energy, and what people I let in my circle, and
12 around my house, and my family, and my children. Because
13 of what I went through, I protected those children. And it
14 was, like, taking the role for Eddie all over again. That
15 made me happy.

16 And we started a band, me and my brother.
17 Unfortunately -- we actually went places, and we were
18 opening up for all these big people, and we were on T.V.
19 and doing these wonderful, big things really quickly. And
20 he -- well, he couldn't stop drinking. I just -- I feel so
21 bad for him because he's still in such a rut, and such in
22 pain. So I had to let him go and I created this band, and
23 after that, recorded a first album. Went all over the
24 world. Had six time Juno Award winner on it, Bill Borne
25 (ph), things took off.

1 Then Blackstone T.V. series, started in
2 Edmonton. And that got put right in my lap. And that was
3 an opportunity I took, and I -- I ran with it. I -- I went
4 from -- in five years, on that T.V. show, I went from the
5 lowly extra, to casting agent, to full cast member. I
6 worked really, really hard. I gave Indigenous people in
7 Edmonton, surrounding communities, opportunities that they
8 would never get. And I got to work with some of the best
9 of -- in the business. And Tantoo Cardinal and I were
10 working on that show, and we -- and we realized we were
11 related. It was amazing. It -- it was quite amazing.
12 That show -- that show and my music changed my whole life.
13 And made my -- every dream that I wanted to -- to do.
14 Because I knew all my life what I would do. I -- I knew I
15 was going to be in music, I knew I was going to be in
16 radio, I knew I was going to be on T.V. I knew it all my
17 life.

18 And my husband made -- and my children made
19 sure that they took care of each other so I could do that.
20 And that was beautiful in itself. And so I'm doing all
21 these wonderful, successful, things. Then, Spirit of Our
22 Sisters Conference came to Edmonton. And Wab Kinew, and
23 Tantoo, and Michelle Thrush, and Rinelle Harper, and Dr.
24 Gabor Maté. And I had to -- I had to follow the doctor at
25 this convention speaking to -- about this, our women and

1 girls. So, I'm like, oh, my God, he's the best. So that
2 was my first -- one of my first really big speaking gigs.
3 And I had written everything down, and they said, "Well, we
4 got to cut your time short." I was like, "Okay." And I
5 just thought, before I went up to speak, I said, "Put this
6 away, speak from your heart." I put it away, I put every
7 single one of those words away, and I spoke from my heart,
8 and -- after the doctor. And then, I -- I did that. I got
9 up, and I was walking away, every woman touched my hand as
10 I walked past. Every woman touched my hand as I walked
11 past.

12 I went, stood by the organizer, and
13 Michelle, and Tantoo, and we're talking. All the women
14 left their seats and got up in a line to hug me. I've
15 never seen that before, ever, at any circle, at any
16 convention, at anything. And I don't know how long I stood
17 there, and I just got these hugs, one after another, one
18 after another. And I knew, right then and there, I needed
19 to share my story. And I just continued with that. And
20 then all of a sudden, things just got -- snowballed from
21 there. I was being called unbelievable words, words that I
22 don't want to share because I -- I don't think I'm worthy
23 of them. But I've had people come up to me, after hearing
24 my story, and saying, "I know -- I didn't know what to do,
25 now I know what to do. I didn't want to stay on this earth

1 anymore, now I want to stay. You've inspired me to do
2 something with myself. You inspired me to love my children
3 better. You inspired me to leave my spouse." And so
4 that's why I'm -- continue to do what I'm doing.

5 But also, my son had been diagnosed, and
6 some things I did -- didn't really agree with. So I went
7 and got testing. So, yeah, after thoroughly seeing some
8 doctors, I have severe PTSD, severe anxiety, and ADHD. And
9 I told him, "Can you explain to me more why I have these
10 things?" And he says, "I'm going to explain it to you like
11 this, it's like a soldier went off to war. Shell-
12 shocked --you're shell-shocked. You know, you're just one
13 of -- like, one of those soldiers." And I said, "Okay.
14 That -- that does makes sense." And I seen all these
15 things all over his office, and I read all these lists, I
16 was like, "Oh, my God, that's me. Oh, my God, I do that.
17 Wow, this makes all this sense." So I did it for my child.

18 Jessie (ph) was a miracle child that I had
19 in 2006, he's 11 now. Because of all the abuse I've had
20 throughout my whole life, I could never have children. I
21 was so abused, and sexually abused. I was just -- I could
22 not have children. That kid is a miracle. And so I went
23 to make sure everything was good with me. I found out
24 everything. But I'm doing this at, I don't know, you know,
25 half way in my life already. I don't want that for him.

1 So I went and got all of that figured out, and went and got
2 counselling. And that made me strong, and more healed. To
3 keep talking, and to do what I'm doing now, and I'm
4 thankful for that. Not -- not everyone gets that chance
5 that I've gotten. And trust me, I will share
6 this -- these tools that I have. I will share this
7 information.

8 And I had just recently got hired by the
9 Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women. So
10 they -- they recognize that in me as well. So I'm really
11 proud to be working with them as well. We're going to help
12 a lot of people.

13 And I am thankful for this healing, and the
14 strength, and the willpower that I seem to have gotten.
15 I -- I really think that Dorothy's the wind at my back, and
16 my mom as my protector. And I'm -- I'm a story that needs
17 to inspire and share because there's too much negative
18 light on us. This needs to stop. And, you know, I tend to
19 want to be more positive, and be a light in -- in this
20 darkness. But I've been on this roller coaster ride with
21 you, with you all. And, you know, this needs to be shared.
22 So we're filming a documentary called, Colours of My Life.
23 And has the blessing of Senator Murray Sinclair. And my
24 story's going to go everywhere, and then I'll be speaking
25 to the United Nations on the 21st. And I'm going to

1 continue to just share my life, and my truth, and I hope
2 that helps.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Given all of that, I
4 suppose you've had a lot of interaction with the media?

5 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Oh, yes. My God, a
6 lot, but I learnt early who to talk to. I can't just talk
7 to everyone. There's -- there's people with an agenda,
8 there's people with genuine care. I've learnt that. So
9 I'm, you know, I'm careful who I -- I share with. I don't
10 want to disrespect or upset anybody, or have anybody
11 disrespect memories, or stories, or take advantage of --
12 take advantage of us families. So deep care there.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I understand you gave
14 a notable interview after this commission was empanelled.
15 Can you tell us about that?

16 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** At CBC?

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** It -- it was about the
18 National, you told me.

19 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Oh, yes. Yeah, the --
20 the -- when the panel was first -- yes. When the panel was
21 first assembled, I was -- I had the National, and -- and
22 CBC come to my home, and the Globe and Mail. They came all
23 the way from Toronto, and -- the Globe and Mail did anyway.
24 And I shared with them what was going on. I got to see a
25 little bit of the database because I had other friends that

1 had been missing. I have -- I have other five friends that
2 were found dead as well. And these are my associates from,
3 you know, pawn shop, and on the street, and in the bars.
4 Really sad. And so -- can you repeat the question again,
5 sorry?

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I -- what was notable
7 about that interview with the National? What was
8 different?

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** They were asking the
10 right questions because I went through a lot of media.
11 They were asking the right questions. The questions that
12 needed to be heard, with the answers following. That
13 interests me. And then, they asked about the racism, and
14 you know, at -- in -- what was going on, people wanted to
15 be careful, right? But I had to -- I just -- I was just
16 sharing my story is -- is all. And they knew.

17 Then, I don't know how long after, but I got
18 a phone call from a detective, and they said, "Yeah. We
19 saw you on the National. We seen this -- we seen this
20 interview, and you were everywhere." I said, "Yeah." And
21 he says, "Well, here in our file here, it doesn't -- we
22 don't consider this a murder." I said, "Yeah. I know."
23 And I lost it. I was so upset, angry, I said, "Really?
24 We're doing this again? Are you kidding me?" I just -- I
25 lost it. I absolutely lost it. And I say, "You tell me in

1 that file, does it say anything about stalking? And you
2 know damn well, he's the last one seen with her alive." He
3 took her from point "A" to point "B". And I said the same
4 thing, "What? Two and two equals six to you guys?" I was
5 just -- "Don't make me," I said. I said, "If -- if you
6 know who I am, then -- then you'll know I'm in the public
7 eye." I said, "Please, don't make me. Don't make, you
8 know, re-open this case. And -- and, you know, make you
9 guys look like you didn't do your job. You didn't." I was
10 really upset. I was just -- I was -- I can't remember
11 everything I said. I was really upset. I was -- I was
12 fuming, I was outraged, I was just -- just -- then the hurt
13 came in after the outrage.

14 The hurt came in. Oh, my God. I just --
15 oh, no. And I started crying, and then he says, "Okay,
16 okay. Well, wait, wait, wait. You know, we just --
17 let's -- let's come back full circle here, and just try to,
18 you know, we're going to -- anyone wants to come forward
19 with any information there's --" We've already been
20 through this. What -- what now? What can you possibly do
21 now? What -- what are you -- what else are you going to
22 put me through? What else are you going to put me through?
23 So I believe I hung up. And then after that I had
24 called -- I called Muriel (ph), I called the ladies at the
25 Institute, and I phoned my lawyer. And -- and then they

1 let an Aboriginal liaison police officer know.

2 So after that phone call I thought, okay,
3 now that I had some time. I'm going to be the bigger,
4 better professional here, and I'm going to walk into that
5 station, and I'm going to talk to that detective. So I
6 went down there. And I said, "Anyway you want to look at
7 it -- anyway you want to look at it. You can look at
8 through whatever your eyes are. But realistically, I have
9 truth. So you're not going to stop me from telling it.
10 And, you know, I don't know what's going to happen in the
11 future with this Inquiry. You know, we'll have to see what
12 goes on, what's in that file. I said, "I just don't -- I
13 don't -- I didn't -- I -- I just told him I'm not going to
14 take that phone call very well, and that's exactly why I'm
15 here. And I'm not going to -- not going to run and hide,
16 I'm not going to be prevented in anything." So they said,
17 "Okay. We -- if anyone has any information, they can come
18 forward." And I said, "Yeah, thanks. Thanks." And that
19 was it.

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Just for
21 clarification, where did that detective work? Which --
22 which police service?

23 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Oh, downtown Edmonton.
24 Yeah. Yeah. That's where I went to -- to see him.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Could you share with

1 us your mother's gifts and strengths?

2 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** My mother was -- was
3 funny and goofy, and she was spunky. She wasn't shy, and
4 she loved dance. I -- I kept wondering why, I kept get put
5 in dance all the time. And I found out, okay, she's a
6 dancer. That's wonderful. She -- she did hair and makeup.
7 She did very well. She was a hairdresser for a little
8 while too, hey?

9 And oh, my God, she was an amazing cook.
10 Oh, oh, my goodness. That's what I mean, spoiled little
11 brat, wouldn't eat her vegetables, you -- you know. She's
12 feeding me too well. Amazing cook, and she -- she had this
13 really great laugh. I have a little witchy laugh, I --
14 that's -- that's kind of like her laugh, hey? I'm thankful
15 for that. She -- she saw at a early age what I wanted to
16 do. And she made sure that I was groomed and that I went
17 out and -- and got these classes. And she put me in
18 modelling, and she put me in -- in choir. And, you know,
19 she -- I was on television and on stage since I was ten,
20 right? So she -- she knew it. She knew it, and she made
21 sure I had all the records in music, and all the movies and
22 television I wanted. And, you know, listen to the radio,
23 she knew. She knew I was all -- so much like her.

24 And so they made sure I, you know, take the
25 good with the bad. I -- I still, you know, in those -- I

1 would -- out of those times of darkness were wonderful. It
2 was really, really wonderful. I was a very lucky girl. I
3 didn't have just the Barbie, I had the mansion, and the
4 car, and the camper, and, you know. But I know that that
5 was from guilt, and that was a distraction. But it was
6 still love. And the last time I seen her -- and to see
7 her, and to hear her say that to me, and I remember the --
8 the love, and the look on her face that, you know, because
9 she knew I was in pain. And at that time I was using, but
10 she knew I was going to do something. And -- and the look
11 in her eyes was love and pride. And that's the last memory
12 of my mother that I remember.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What do you hope will
14 happen as a result of your testimony today?

15 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** There's more of a
16 understanding. There's -- our outrage is directed in the
17 places where there should be outrage. I don't want to
18 fight something that we've been fighting for. And I'm
19 tired of the anger in the way we treat each other. We are
20 not -- we need to come together. At this point in time in
21 history, we need each other more than ever. You guys see
22 what's going on in the world. We're not blind. We're not
23 stupid. All this between us has to stop. And it ends
24 here. If we don't unite, we have no solid foundation to
25 build from. Never mind this and reconciliation and sexy-

1 scoop. Where's the foundation if we're not together. We
2 need to still come together. That's what I hope for this
3 is us to unite, and stop with the nonsense, and the
4 unnecessary anger, even though, it's in -- been embedded
5 in -- into our DNA, the hurt, the anger. If we can just
6 get -- somehow get past that, and have some self-
7 realization, that if we think another way, maybe another
8 solution will come, okay. We've been in the dark too long,
9 okay. It's time to go another way, into another route,
10 into another frame of mind.

11 I also was a part of and attended the
12 Indigenous Women's Justice Forum. And I learned so much.
13 I met those people who were the ones knocking at the door,
14 trying to get us the answers, trying to get us the help in
15 all these certain areas. And they were telling us, in
16 explaining to Muriel and the ladies, that they can't get in
17 through the door. They can't get through the door. They
18 can knock on that -- we can knock that door all day long.
19 Until we have Indigenous representation behind that door of
20 power, I don't see how we're going to get heard. I don't
21 see how that door's going to open. I don't see how we're
22 going to get answers. I see more Indigenous lawyers, I see
23 more Indigenous judges, which is lovely, and officers, and
24 RCMP. It's great. But that's still that majority is
25 unsympathetic, and it's unfortunate.

1 Federal governments -- the governments, all
2 kinds, the institutions -- there are no healing -- there's
3 no healing. It -- what happened to us historically, we are
4 owed some kind of healing. And my problem is, money
5 doesn't solve it. And when you do give someone money to
6 better their lives, the first thing that should be attached
7 to that, is counselling first before you get your money to
8 change your life so you can do good with that money. And
9 these are just common, human, mental health things that a
10 human being would really think about first, if they
11 genuinely cared, okay.

12 If we don't have -- yeah, if we don't have
13 that representation, I don't -- I don't see how it's going
14 to work. I also want a -- some kind of an Indigenous group
15 that looks into the cases to make sure those that have --
16 keep failing us are held accountable because this isn't
17 going anywhere. We're spinning our wheels here. It's
18 frustrating. It's not getting anywhere.

19 And that not only Indigenous people are
20 outraged, but Canadians, all of us. Sure, what happened to
21 us didn't happen to you, but we're still all people. This
22 is something we all should genuinely care about because --
23 this is something else that's not talked about enough as
24 well, is human trafficking.

25 We're not the only ones in danger. You are.

1 It's doesn't -- they're -- they're not looking at the
2 colour of our skin when they're trying to kidnap us, or
3 steal us, or kill us. We're just -- happen to be at a
4 higher ratio. But you're in danger too. Your daughter's
5 in danger too. Your grand-daughter's in danger too. Our
6 men, our boys, they're disappearing. They've been sexually
7 abused. They've been killed too.

8 So I -- and I'm hoping too, that more
9 awareness, and more education of where we've come from,
10 where this -- where all this hurt and pain came from, that
11 these kids learn it in school. But, you know, I'm thankful
12 to Gord Downie for what he did. But we need someone like
13 Murray Sinclair, and Muriel, and -- and Chief Little Willie
14 Child [sic] to be the ones to get that curriculum in the
15 schools, and not someone outside of that, who hasn't lived
16 it, and hasn't worked for it their whole life, okay. Let's
17 be careful of who we let do that, okay. Let's be careful
18 of who we let do that. It's sacred, it's very sacred. But
19 I'm thankful that other people that are not -- that are
20 outside of the community, have taken the time and energy to
21 educate Canadians, and people all over the world because
22 that's some -- some of the reach that we needed as well.

23 And what I'm hoping as well for the -- for
24 this is, I want a families database created. We need to
25 have -- if -- if we need to reach out to you guys, it's --

1 it's hard -- it's hard because not everybody can, not
2 everybody is, maybe, mentally well enough to, you know.
3 We -- there needs to be a database of all the registered
4 families, not only for the Inquiry, but for ourselves as
5 families to have more communication. To see what they've
6 been going through, and if we could comfort each other as
7 well.

8 Oh, there was another one. Human
9 trafficking, and child sexual exploitation is at an all
10 time high. It's not talked about enough. Now, if there
11 are not parents that are going to prepare these children, I
12 think there's just -- somewhere these children should be
13 prepared and aware in some certain healthy way, okay. Not
14 everyone's strong, or educated, or you know, have the right
15 words to do so. I have a speaker who went through human
16 trafficking who was tagged at Joline Hardisty. I've been
17 bringing her out with me -- speaking, to circulate this.
18 It's not in the movies, people. This is actually happening
19 at a very alarming rate. And once they leave soil, they're
20 never take -- they're never seen of again. So that does
21 not discriminate.

22 And what I'm also hoping for, also, is
23 counselling for some of us families. As the healing part
24 of it should be number 1, counselling, number 1. And,
25 yeah, we need -- us families need to have more contact,

1 and -- and together. We need to be more together. And if
2 a database can be created, that's going to help a lot, both
3 on your end, and both on our end. And I think that's about
4 it. I think that's -- that's what I want. That's what I
5 want. And I want firm action, and clear action, and more
6 communication -- very, very important. You know, that's a
7 slack that needs to be picked up severely. Yeah, that's --
8 that's what I would like.

9 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I'd like to ask a few
10 clarifying questions, if that's okay.

11 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yeah.

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** For this database, are
13 you -- I -- I want to be clear, are you asking then for
14 this database to be in the hands of a group that's
15 independent of the federal or provincial governments?

16 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** M'hm. Yes. Yes,
17 independent. And then also, to have whatever Indigenous
18 group that is going to be, you know -- you know, there's --
19 there's a taskforce being built so, like, I would like them
20 to be a part of it. Have an Inquiry representative, but
21 also have a family representative because, you know, there
22 just needs to be a representative from each crucial part.
23 And I think that would really help a lot, you know, yeah.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Okay.

25 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yeah.

1 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And then, when you
2 spoke to the idea of an Indigenous group that could
3 investigate these files, you said. Are you talking about
4 old cases, or new cases, or are you talking about both?
5 Are you talking about those instances where people are
6 going to their local police and nothing is happening? And
7 there needs to be a group that has the actual power to come
8 in and do something?

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yes. Yes. Yeah,
10 absolutely. But see, on the other hands, we have to be
11 respectful of the family. So we have to know what they
12 want to do first. And just, kind of, you know, go from
13 there. See how their case was handled, and if this is
14 something that they want to go through again. Because, you
15 know, we go through it all over again, and over again, and
16 over again. Some are not able to do that, and some are.
17 So it would just have to be -- we'd have to be very careful
18 in handling that. And just being respectful of the family,
19 and what they are strong enough to do, or what they
20 request -- they would want as their wishes to see what's --
21 how, you know, how they want to move forward.

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you for that
23 wisdom. I will now ask the Commissioner if she has any
24 questions for Stephanie.

25 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I -- I don't

1 have a lot of questions. Thank you for -- you've given me
2 a lot to think about. And -- and what I do want some
3 clarification about was the -- well, two points, you said
4 that there was a report to the police about Arnie stalking
5 your mother prior --

6 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** M'hm.

7 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** -- what was
8 done?

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Right.

10 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah. What
11 was done about that at the time of the report?

12 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** There was -- there was
13 nothing done. And the family wasn't notified. I was just
14 notified about this -- when did I call you?

15 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** (Indiscernible).

16 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Was it earlier this
17 year, or last year?

18 **MS. CECILIA FITZPATRICK:** (Indiscernible).

19 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I think it was earlier
20 this year when we had a family member tell us that. That
21 her sister had went down to the station, and had warned
22 them that my mother was in danger. And we -- we lost it.
23 I didn't know what to -- what to say, what to think. I --
24 we never heard anything -- nothing about it. But they said
25 that they'll -- they'll probably go back down there again

1 to talk to that detective.

2 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay. After
3 you did the media, and they called you. What was the
4 purpose of that call, I wasn't too sure. Like, was --

5 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Purposes -- purposes
6 of the call was to tell me it's not a murder.

7 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** So
8 basically --

9 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** The purpose of the
10 call was to basically tell me to --

11 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Stop talking
12 about this --

13 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** -- stop talking.

14 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** -- because
15 your mother was not murdered.

16 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yeah.

17 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** M'hm.

18 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** That's -- that's what
19 it was. And that's so insulting because I was there.

20 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah. I -- I
21 don't have any questions. I -- I want to thank you for --
22 for what you've gifted me and us with today, and what you
23 continue to do, your fight, in -- an inspiration. What are
24 the names of your songs?

25 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Oh, the -- the album

1 is called, Colours of My Life, and that was the first song
2 that I -- I had -- I had written, that they asked me to
3 write. It -- it was a song dedicated to all the women and
4 girls. At this time, I was working with the Institute, and
5 Peacha Atkinson. And I had dedicated that song to Anita
6 Courtepatte (ph), and her mother and -- and their family.
7 So that's actually on the C.D. And then, the second song I
8 wrote is called, Angel on My Shoulder. And that one was
9 dedicated to my mother. And then, it's a song -- the first
10 one is more of an upbeat, kind of, thing, where it's
11 talking about media injustice. How they were ignored, how,
12 you know, these women are of value, how they should be
13 proud of who they are. And then the other one, was, like,
14 a comfort -- to comfort people in mourning. To comfort
15 them, give them some comfort. This song was a little bit
16 slower. And, yeah, our -- our first -- when I first met
17 Breen, I had given him a C.D. So he has it.

18 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I hope he's
19 sharing it. Are you sharing it?

20 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** He will be sharing
21 with all of you.

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** That's exactly what I
23 was thinking.

24 **(LAUGHTER)**

25 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Good answer,

1 good answer.

2 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** So, yeah. So --

3 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Awesome.

4 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** We have that out
5 there, and I gave it to him so he would share with you
6 guys. So it's a -- a song that I send out to other
7 families through email. I -- I just give the song away to
8 people that need it. Yeah.

9 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Awesome.

10 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yeah.

11 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** And that same
12 title, Colours of My Life, will be the documentary?

13 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Yes.

14 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay.

15 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Stephanie Harpe,
16 Colours of My Life. We have a page on Facebook, and we're
17 visit -- working with Visual Dialect right now. And, yeah,
18 we're just going to try and cover as much as we can. And
19 like I said, bring something more inspirational and
20 positive, and -- and proud in saying, if I can do it, so
21 can you. You know, all we're trying to get through is the
22 trauma first.

23 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah.

24 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Get through the
25 trauma, heal yourself, self realization, then, you know --

1 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** And -- and --

2 I --

3 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** -- the only person
4 stopping you is you --

5 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yeah.

6 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** -- to make your dreams
7 come true. I believe in -- everyone can do as what I have
8 done. And I'll continue to -- to spread that around.

9 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Awesome.
10 Thank you for sharing and letting us get to know Ruby a
11 little bit more in life, and her beauty, and her life, and
12 her joys. Thank you for that. Thank you, Cecilia. Thank
13 you, Stephanie.

14 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Thank you so much.

15 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** M'hm.

16 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Thanks. Thank you,
17 Auntie.

18 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Thank you.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Stephanie, is there
20 anything else you'd like to say today?

21 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I want to say that,
22 be -- be proud. Be proud of who we are. I mean, this has
23 been happening forever, and we're still here. Take pride
24 in that. Take strength in that because there -- there is
25 some. It's not just darkness, and despair, and humiliation

1 all the time. It's not -- it's not always about that if we
2 look at it in a different way.

3 And also, I am a -- at the last march I -- I
4 made an announcement to City Hall, that I'm working on a
5 buddy system. And this is something I'm working on. We
6 can use modern technology to protect ourselves, we can.
7 The stupid selfies, those can come in handy. That's
8 evidence. The cell phone you want to get your daughter to
9 get it -- off of? She could be texting throughout the
10 whole night. Telling you where she is. Selfie
11 everybody -- this is who we're with. So if anything does
12 happen, someone has pictures, someone has the location,
13 someone has -- knows where you are. And if you're leaving
14 someplace to go to point "A" to point "B", that's really
15 important. You need to track that. You need someone sober
16 and responsible at home to track where you are because we
17 can't stop our people from going out. We can't stop our
18 users from using, but we can use ways to protect them, and
19 to notify them how to protect themselves, okay.

20 So this is something I am -- I am working
21 on, and I have the interest of everyone on this. And I am
22 going to -- to do something further -- more, you know.
23 There's more that can be done. So it takes strength in
24 that we're still here, and let's not forget about our men
25 and boys, as well. They need us too, okay. And don't

1 forget this point in time, in the world right now, and in
2 history, we need each other. We need each other. Get
3 through your own stuff, and change the way you think. Get
4 educated, be aware. And I always end all my talks with
5 this, after this I won't say no more, we all have a raging
6 fire burning within us. Share your warmth, and watch
7 everything beautiful in the world thrive. Thank you.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Commissioner, those
9 are all the questions I have for Stephanie. I request that
10 you adjourn this examination at your pleasure. At your
11 pleasure.

12 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I plan to.

13 **(LAUGHTER)**

14 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** I want to -- hold on,
15 I want to thank Breen, okay? I met this man first, and --
16 and he was not cold, and not distant, and made it easier
17 for this to happen, and for me to get through this. So
18 thank you, Breen. I appreciate that very much because you
19 do not have the energy of a typical lawyer.

20 **(LAUGHTER)**

21 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** So thank you.

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** It's been my pleasure.

23 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

24 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** ... seeds of
25 (indiscernible)

1 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Thank you so much.

2 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Perfect.

3 Thank you.

4 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Thank you. And I just
5 wanted everyone to know, we are having a gathering for the
6 families in Enoch Reserve, Thursday evening. We will get
7 together at the Enoch Recreational Centre.

8 (Indiscernible), thank you very much. Love you too. Thank
9 you. Thank you.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible).

11 **MS. STEPHANIE HARPE:** Thank you. Thank you.
12 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much.

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you.

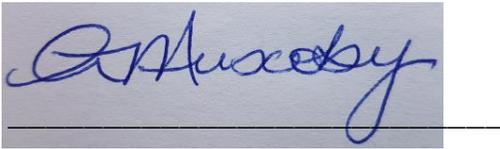
14 --- Exhibits (code: P1P05P0103)

15 **Exhibit 1:** Electronic folder of four digital colour
16 images on shown monitors during public
17 hearing.

18 --- Upon adjourning at 5:14 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Amanda Muscoby, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.



Amanda Muscoby

February 8, 2018