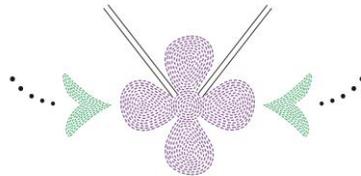


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 I
Public Hearings
Best Western Nor’wester Hotel
McGillivray & Kaministiquia Rooms
Thunder Bay, Ontario**



PUBLIC

Tuesday December 5, 2017

**Public Volume 38:
Lillian Southwind, Candice Panacheese & Ina Commanda,
In relation to Viola Isabel Panacheese;**

**Vicki Loon, Mary Skunk, Glenda Skunk, Melissa Skunk
& Chief Connie McKay, In relation to Sarah Skunk;**

**Charlotte Murray
In relation to Verna Patricia Sturgeon-Gliddy**

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II

APPEARANCES

Aboriginal Legal Services	Non-appearance
Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario	Sandra Montour (Representative)
Animakee Wazhing #37, Eagle Lake First Nation, ANAFN/Grassy Narrows First Nation, Obashkaanda-gaang, Ojibway Nation of Saugeen	Non-appearance
Assembly of First Nations	Non-appearance
Association of Native Child Family Services Association of Ontario (ANCFSAO)	Katherine Hensel (Counsel)
Government of Canada	Anne Turley, Sarah Churchill-Joly (Counsel), Jennifer Clarke (Paralegal)
Government of Ontario	Catherine Rhineland Emma Haydon (Counsel)
Independent First Nations	Katherine Hensel (Counsel) Deanna Keeshig (Representative)
London Abused Women's Centre	Non-appearance
Mishkeegogamaang First Nation	Non-appearance
Ontario Native Womens' Association	Robert C. Edwards, Christina Comacchio (Counsel) Courtney Skye (Representative)

III

APPEARANCES

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
Sioux Lookout Collective	Non-appearance
Thunder Bay Police Services	Tiffany O'Hearn Davies) Edward Marrocco (Counsel)
Toronto Police Services	Non-appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation	Non-appearance

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Best Western Nor'wester Hotel McGillivray & Kaministiquia rooms.

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1	Single digital image displayed during public testimony.	95
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1 Thunder Bay, Ontario

2 --- Upon commencing on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 9:00
3 a.m.

4 --- **OPENING CEREMONIES**

5 --- **OPENING SONG**

6 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** *Migwetch.* (Speaking in
7 Ojibway). Thank you for being here this week for the
8 Inquiry.

9 At this time I'd like to turn things over to
10 our Elder, Isabelle Mercier, to commence the opening
11 ceremony.

12 **ELDER ISABELLE MERCIER:** *Migwetch, migwetch.*

13 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** And Sam (ph), and Rita
14 (ph), and (indiscernible).

15 **ELDER ISABELLE MERCIER:** And I brought the
16 tribe with me. What I'm going to do is a traditional
17 opening. And as an Ojibway woman, I'm a water carrier. I
18 have offered tobacco to our brother to light the smudge and
19 invited three of the drummers from Fort William First
20 Nations to join.

21 So what I'm going to do is light the smudge.
22 Sam will smudge the room, and bring the -- the -- back. I
23 will do a prayer. And then we will be calling in the
24 grandfathers. And the reason we're calling in the grand --
25 we're doing the calling in the grandfather song is we have

1 people who have -- were not here at the opening.

2 And when we sing this song we're asking the
3 Creator to come and be with us, but also the ancestors of
4 the people to come and support them as they come and share
5 their voice, share their spirit, and share the journey.

6 So I will now go to our brother and we will
7 smudge -- excuse me, Brother, can we smudge the women and
8 the drums and the bundle first, please.

9 I'll ask you to stand if you can.

10 --- OPENING PRAYER

11 --- OPENING SONG

12 MR. RON KANUTSKI: Good morning, everybody.
13 I would like to encourage people that are just coming in to
14 join us to come on in and take a chair.

15 A gentle reminder, please, turn your ringers
16 off on your phones during the testimony. It can be very
17 distracting when the phone starts going off because we all
18 have that desire to want to answer the phone, and then
19 we're all trying to answer our phones, and everyone's
20 checking, and so if we could just shut them off, and put
21 them on mute at this time.

22 And I also was asked to mention these -- one
23 more time from the committee that -- for family members who
24 would like a sweat lodge ceremony, this evening, at Dilico
25 at 7:00 p.m. this evening, there will be one conducted

1 there. Please, sign up at the registration table. I
2 believe, for families that are here they will also provide
3 a taxi service to attend that ceremony.

4 We have craft activities happening in the
5 health -- in the health room, McKenzie "A" upstairs, with
6 Children's Centre Thunder Bay, they will be here. And the
7 Elders' room is in McKenzie "B" upstairs.

8 And also it says again, "Please, no film or
9 photography." I know it seems kind of weird because you
10 see a whole bunch of cameras here, and it is -- it is being
11 broadcasted out, but they don't want people taking pictures
12 and photos on the outside at the request of some of the
13 families as well, so please, no extra photography or
14 filming. And I believe that's all I have on that paper.

15 Again, we have a number of health support
16 here in the room, in purple shirts, some of them are
17 wearing sweaters, I think they're chilly still this
18 morning, and -- but they are around -- could I maybe just
19 bring my health support team up? Just so people can see
20 them. All the health support that are here this morning,
21 if you could just come on up and greet -- greet everybody.

22 Because these are a number of organizations
23 throughout the city that have joined us, and I have
24 actually a piece of paper with both sides -- double sided
25 with agencies that are supporting this conference, so first

1 and foremost we want to say thanks to everybody for being
2 here with us.

3 There's a lot -- okay, come on up every -- we
4 got -- some people are -- I have like, three or four rows
5 here. Okay, we're going -- okay, photograph.

6 She wants me to get out of the way. I'm
7 getting the get out of the way single. Look at her. I
8 know -- I know I'm gorgeous, but look at her. The ladies
9 were admiring my dandruff on my shirt. That's
10 (indiscernible). There's an abundance of dandruff. You
11 look so gorgeous with that.

12 If we could have a round of applause for all
13 our support who's come out to join us, thank you so much
14 ladies. I've noticed there's no gentlemen there. Health
15 support, just one -- just one.

16 So I will wait -- our Commissioners --
17 Commissioner, would you like to share anything this
18 morning?

19 Brian Eyolfson is here with us. I keep
20 saying that wrong probably, but Eyolfson?

21 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Yes -- yeah.

22 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Good, all right. Yeah.

23 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Just want to
24 say good morning, everybody, thank you for being here on
25 this snowy and windy morning.

1 I especially want to thank for firekeepers
2 out there for tending to the sacred fire for us while we're
3 here this week.

4 I want to acknowledge yesterday we heard a
5 lot of truths shared here. Was a -- a long day, and we
6 heard a lot of difficult things, but I think we also saw a
7 lot of strength and resilience from family members and
8 survivors, and I want to thank them for sharing their
9 truths, and for some of the -- the recommendations that
10 people shared with the Inquiry as well yesterday.

11 So I -- I also want to acknowledge the
12 drummers and -- the drum and our Elders and helpers for
13 helping us do this work in a good way, in guiding us.

14 And we also have a, a busy schedule today, so
15 I look forward to continuing to do this work with everybody
16 today, so I -- I thank everybody for coming here to share.
17 And I thank everybody who's here for support in whatever
18 capacity you're here to support the families and survivors
19 and the work of the Inquiry, *chi-migwetch*.

20 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Okay. Oh, great our
21 family has -- is here, and we're ready to commence.
22 They're waiting for one family member who is actually stuck
23 in Thunder Bay. I should have -- could are picked them up
24 with the four wheel drive this morning. But they'll be
25 joining us in a little bit.

1 I do -- I'm looking for a Dorothy Swift Wolf
2 (ph), if anybody knows who that is. And I believe we have
3 something that belongs to her. I thought I was getting a
4 beautiful presentation this morning. I was all excited, I
5 thought, "Wow, I haven't gotten an Eagle Feather in a long
6 time," but no, apparently it's not mine. We're just trying
7 to get this back to the rightful keeper. So if anybody
8 knows Dorothy, please, let her know that we have something
9 that's -- belongs to her.

10 Also, we have a session that was supposed to
11 be in-camera that it will be public, I believe, at 11:00
12 and upstairs, so we'll have two public sessions going on at
13 once, thank you.

14 I'm going to turn things over to the counsel
15 here.

16 **Hearing # 1**

17 **Witnesses: Lillian Southwind, Candice Panacheese**

18 **and Ina Commanda**

19 **In Relation to Viola Isabel Panacheese**

20 **Heard by Commissioner: Brian Eyolfson**

21 **Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox**

22
23 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Good morning, Mr.
24 Commissioner. I present to you the family of Viola Isabel
25 Panacheese. Today we have Bruce (ph) Panacheese on the

1 very right, Lily Panacheese, or Lillian, sorry, Southwind,
2 and in front of me is Candice Panacheese. The family would
3 like to do a promise to tell the truth on the feather.

4 So Mr. Registrar, if we could have...

5 And you can do it together.

6 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Good morning.

7 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Do it together, Bryan.

8 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Good morning.

9 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** All of them can hold it
10 together.

11 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Together?

12 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Yeah.

13 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Okay. Good morning,
14 everybody. Welcome.

15 **LILLIAN SOUTHWIND, Affirmed:**

16 **CANDICE PANACHEESE, Affirmed:**

17 **INA COMMANDA, Affirmed:**

18 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Here's your microphone.

19 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Oh, do I start
20 talking?

21 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So Mr. Commissioner, we're
22 going to start with Lily.

23 Lily, I'm wondering if you can tell the
24 Commissioner a little bit about who you are, where you're
25 from, and where you grew up.

1 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** My name is Lily
2 Southwind. I was -- I'm the oldest of seven. My parents
3 had five girls and two boys. This is my sister, Candy
4 (ph), and my brother, Bruce. He's baby brother. Candy is
5 like, right in the middle.

6 We are originally from Mishkeegogamang. My
7 mother was originally a Sachigo Lake Band member. My
8 father was from Mishkeegogamang. Currently I live in Lac
9 Seul. Lac Seul is about a 40 minute drive from Sioux
10 Lookout.

11 Sioux Lookout is where my mother went
12 missing, and I've kind of just stayed around there hoping
13 that some day she'll come back.

14 But it's been a -- a struggle for our family.
15 I'm just waiting for my auntie, who's supposed to be
16 sitting here with us, my mother's sister. She's taking
17 taxi, and she's probably shoveling -- I don't know.

18 **(LAUGHTER)**

19 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** But when -- when --
20 when we -- when I knew we were going to be coming here to
21 share our story again. I've shared it so many times over
22 the years and it's never gotten easier, but I was asked
23 write something, "You can give yourself notes." And I
24 said, "You know what? I'm not going to do that. I'm just
25 going to talk from my heart. Talk about my mom from my

1 heart. I don't need to write notes."

2 But -- like I said, it's been a struggle for
3 all of us. We've all hoped, and still hope today -- I do
4 anyway, that my mom will come back, or...

5 I want to acknowledge my former Chief,
6 she's sitting behind me, Connie Gray-McKay, she's been a
7 whole bunch of support in all these years, and my
8 community, who has been a bunch of support too, not only
9 for myself but for all my siblings, my -- my family.

10 I'm sure they would have all wanted to be
11 here too, but everybody's busy and -- well, not busy, but
12 such short notice to make plans because we all have
13 families.

14 So I'm the oldest of seven kids that my
15 parents had. My father went to residential school. He
16 went to Pelican Falls, not for very long, for three, four
17 years. My mother went to the residential school in Kenora.

18 Our -- my dad was a -- a miner. He always
19 worked in mines. He was a driller. So we grew up -- the
20 first ten years of their marriage we grew up in the Red
21 Lake area, and so we lived in towns. And I'm thankful for
22 that because during that time a lot of our people were --
23 like, the kids were sent to residential school, and we were
24 lucky that we didn't have to go. We went to public
25 schools.

1 My parents separated off and on from 1980.
2 They would get together, try their relationship. She'd
3 leave again. And it went on like that right until she went
4 missing.

5 My mother went missing in August of 1991,
6 from Sioux Lookout. I reported her missing. She was
7 living in Winnipeg at the time with my sisters. I was
8 going to school in Sioux Lookout, and my father had -- he
9 was working out at the mine and he came out to visit. He
10 was on his two week off shift, and he took my boys -- my
11 two older boys, Bruce and Brian (ph), for a taxi ride from
12 Sioux Lookout to Winnipeg to go visit their *Kookum*, my mom.

13 My parents got to see some of their
14 grandchildren; Bruce, Brian, Joey (ph), Ronnie (ph), and
15 Merissa (ph), and Chopper (ph) -- Candy's oldest. They got
16 to see those grandkids. Right now they have lots. I don't
17 -- I can't even -- I know I have nine.

18 But when my mom went missing she was bringing
19 my boys back. Both my parents were bringing my boys back.
20 And my dad was going back to work at the mine. At the time
21 it was called Bond Gold (ph).

22 But anyway they were bringing the boys back
23 from a visit and my dad told me -- actually my -- both my
24 parents, they told me, "Lily, we're going to try again."
25 And I thought, "No. Don't. I'm just tired of you guys

1 trying, break up, try again, break up." And my dad -- at
2 the time said, "This time -- this time it's going to be
3 good. We're going to do it this time." And so I wasn't
4 happy because I was tired of the hurt of going through that
5 break up all over again.

6 Even -- at the time -- I was 23 years old at
7 the time. I was an adult. I had my own kids. And for
8 them to tell me that again, I wasn't happy. I'm sure the
9 rest of my siblings probably would have been happy, but I
10 wasn't.

11 But anyways, my dad told me, "Keep mom here
12 until I come back out. I'll be back in two weeks. I'll be
13 back. Just keep her here and we'll go from there."
14 "Okay." Told him, "Okay."

15 And Sioux Lookout -- her brother came to
16 visit in Sioux -- her brother was Arthur Munro (ph), he
17 came to town from Sachigo, and they got together and she
18 started drinking, and she -- she was gone for like, I don't
19 know, two, three days already.

20 And the last time I saw her she was passed
21 out at -- at the time it was called the Welcome Hotel (ph).
22 And I tried to wake her up because I wanted to take her
23 home. Take her to my home, and, "That's enough, like,
24 don't drink no more." And she told me, "I'll be okay.
25 I'll be okay. No, just leave me here." And I told my

1 Uncle Arthur, "Keep an eye on her. I'm going to let her
2 sleep. I'll come back and I'll come and get her. Don't
3 let her go anywhere." He said, "Okay." I didn't go back,
4 like, right away that day.

5 I remember that day because it was such a
6 beautiful day. It was sunny, and it was such a nice day
7 that day. And I came out of that hotel and I thought,
8 "This day is beautiful. I have to come back and get mom
9 and take her home." I didn't go back right away. When I
10 did go back they had apparently been thrown out of the
11 hotel room. I don't know where they went, but I went
12 looking for her. I went to -- well, I asked people in
13 Sioux Lookout, and in town, "Like, where do people go?"
14 "Like, where do people go to drink?" "Where can I go
15 look?" Sioux Lookout's a small town. But I looked
16 everywhere where people said I should go look. "Go check
17 here." "Go check there." "Go check by the water." "They
18 usually hang around here." So that's what I did.

19 A few days later my Auntie Daisy Munro (ph)
20 came to town. And she asked me, "Where's -- where's your
21 mom?" And I said, "I don't know. I've been looking for
22 her." She told me right away, "Lily, go report her
23 missing. Come on, let's go report her." And I -- I told
24 her, "You know, I don't --"

25 There's my auntie. That's my mom's sister.

1 It's my Aunt Ina Commanda. My mom's second oldest sister,
2 because Mandy's (ph) older.

3 Seat between us, Ina. Tell Margo (ph) to
4 come and sit here.

5 **MS. INA COMMANDA:** I got pictures
6 (indiscernible).

7 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Come and sit here.

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Candy.

9 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** This is my Auntie
10 Margo Chum (ph).

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

12 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** She's a Chum now,
13 hey. She's my mother's sister, and my Auntie Ina Commanda.

14 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No, I'll sit here.

15 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Margo, sit down here
16 (speaking Ojibway language) sit down.

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Pardon?

18 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Sit down here.

19 **(LAUGHTER)**

20 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Silly auntie.

21 So we went to report her missing in August of
22 1991. It was the 13th or the 14th because I'm sure it was
23 a Wednesday. But we -- I -- my Auntie Daisy came with me
24 to report her missing. We continued to look for her over
25 the next few days, and the police became involved and they

1 had helicopters and police dogs search. They interviewed a
2 lot of people. People that she was with -- that we think
3 she was with before she went missing. My -- my Uncle
4 Arthur was one of them.

5 So for -- for maybe two, three weeks from the
6 time that I reported her missing she -- the police, to me
7 did what they could, like, after a few weeks they said,
8 "Okay, we -- we've -- we -- we have to pull the team that
9 came from the south. We have to -- there's just -- they --
10 they can't look anymore." So I said, "Okay, well, what --
11 what else can we do?" We're -- we were still looking.

12 They wanted the most current pictures of her.
13 I had some. When -- the first time they asked me for those
14 pictures I had this gut feeling -- like, just feeling --
15 don't give it to them, and I wish I followed my gut.

16 Like, my parents -- my mother especially, she
17 was -- she -- she was a gambler like, she'd always say,
18 "Just always follow your gut, Lily. Follow your gut. You
19 know, there's -- there's a reason to go with your gut --
20 gut instinct." She always told us too, to share. "If
21 somebody's hungry, feed them. If they're cold, bring --
22 bring them in your home, let them be warm. And to feed
23 them."

24 My dad on the other hand was -- I think he
25 was cheap.

1 (LAUGHTER)

2 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: He -- he'd always
3 say, "You know I work hard and I work for my family. I --
4 I work to feed them, to clothe them, to keep them warm. I
5 don't work to -- for you, Viola, to bring all your friends
6 into our house. You know, I -- I -- I don't work for them.
7 I work for you, and you, and you, and you."

8 And that day when the police asked me for
9 those pictures I -- I gave them reluctantly, because we
10 didn't have -- they didn't have current -- like, a current
11 picture of her to post -- like, to share in hopes of
12 finding her, so I gave it to them. They said -- I told
13 them when I did give it to them, I said, "I want these
14 back. I want them back right away." And they said, "Yeah,
15 we'll give them back. We're just going to make copies.
16 You can come and get them." Okay, so I gave it to them.

17 And every now and then a police officer would
18 come and see me, give me an update, and, "This is what
19 we're doing now. This is who we've been talking to."
20 They'd come ask me again and again, "Is there anybody else
21 that you think she would go see or who she might be with?"

22 At the time when my mother went missing she
23 had cancer. She was taking -- I think she was on chemo
24 therapy, right, Donna (ph)?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

1 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** But she had to be
2 near a doctor. And her being in Sioux Lookout at that
3 time, away from her doctor, she shouldn't have been away
4 too long because she had regular appointments and she
5 needed to see her doctor.

6 At that time -- I knew in the days that she
7 was -- hadn't returned I knew something was wrong because I
8 had her medication. She had a bag, and all her medication
9 was in that bag. And I thought, some -- something's wrong
10 because she wouldn't -- she wouldn't stop taking her
11 medication.

12 I -- so I reported her in 1991. I didn't
13 hear from the police after a while for -- I don't know how
14 many -- maybe a couple of years -- two or three years
15 after. There were different officers that went through her
16 file. They're -- it would change over. A new officer
17 would come in and then another officer would take over,
18 another officer. I think I went through -- I don't know,
19 three or four different officers that I spoke with.

20 But anyway, during that time -- during those
21 years I hadn't received my mom's pictures back. I gave
22 them three of them. And they didn't give them back. I'd
23 go to the Sioux Lookout detachment and I'd ask for them and
24 they'd say -- the first time they told me, "You can't get
25 them back until the case is closed." Like, and I said,

1 "Well, you -- you told me you were just going to make a
2 copy." Like, "You said you were just going to make a copy
3 and give me my originals back." I walked away upset.

4 And again my gut instinct told me, go back,
5 go back. So I went back again and again and again. I
6 don't know how many times I went back to that detachment.
7 And I don't even remember over what period of time I -- it
8 was at least a couple of years, at least. And finally one
9 day I just said, "Okay. I'm going there and I'm just going
10 to stay there. They're going to have to drag me out of
11 that building. I'm just going to stay there and get my
12 pictures back. I'm not going to let them tell me that the
13 case has to be closed," or I don't know how many different
14 things -- what kind of different things they told me. They
15 told me many things. But that one day I went there. I was
16 determined to get them back.

17 I wanted them for my siblings, myself, my
18 kids. I sat there. I went there that day, in the morning,
19 and I -- the lady came to the -- the window -- was a glass
20 window and, "You're sitting here for nothing. You're not
21 going to be getting anything today." I said, "I don't
22 care. I'm just going to sit here. You guys keep telling
23 me that you -- you said you were going to give them back.
24 You -- that's -- that's what you said." I sat there all
25 afternoon.

18 Lillian Southwind, Candice
 Panacheese & Ina Commanda
In relation to Viola Isabel Panacheese

1 My husband -- he wasn't my husband at the
2 time. He was my partner. But he came in that afternoon
3 and said, "Lily, we got to go. Our ride is ready to go, so
4 we got to go." And I said, "No." So he left -- I don't
5 know. Then he came back again. And I'm glad he came back
6 when he did because at that time the lady came to the
7 window and said, "The sergeant would like to talk to you."
8 Okay. Finally, I thought, I'm getting my pictures. All it
9 took was for me to sit here all day.

10 I went into that office. He took -- he took
11 us into -- myself and my husband, into that office, and he
12 said, "We don't have your mother's pictures." I said,
13 "What do you mean?" "We don't have them. Her file was
14 lost." I said, "Well, what do you mean lost? How can a
15 file go lost?"

16 And at the time the Sioux Lookout detachment
17 was in an older building and they were moving into a newer
18 building. They hadn't moved yet. But they were in the
19 process of gradually moving into the new building. And
20 that officer -- that sergeant told me, "Her file may have
21 gone into the burn pile." And I just sat there and I was
22 in shock. My first thought was, "So when was it lost?"
23 "How long has it been lost?"

24 All that time when things could have been
25 done, or people could have been interviewed again, all that

1 time it's -- it's gone. Like, when did they realize that
2 it was lost? Was it every time I came to the police
3 station to go try and get my mom's pictures back? Like, I
4 don't know that. I'd like to know that. What if I wasn't
5 persistent and determined to get my mom's pictures back?
6 Would her file still be gone today?

7 Over the years -- that was 1991, all the
8 people -- the first year or two, I -- I would -- I saw the
9 file. I saw all the statements that people made and
10 signed. There was many statements in there. I was --
11 because I'd go check every now and then, like, I'd go --
12 I'd ask, "So what's going on with the file now?" "What's
13 going on with my mom's case?" "Is there anything new?"
14 I'd go ask that, and I saw it -- I saw the file a couple of
15 times.

16 I was allowed to look at it and -- because
17 they'd ask me, "Is there anybody else that we could
18 interview?" And I saw those people that signed their names
19 on -- on those statements that they made. And now -- that
20 day when I was told that her file was lost and it may have
21 gone in the burn pile. I'd asked that officer, "So now
22 what?" And he told me, "We're rebuilding it. We're
23 rebuilding the file on officer notes. We're working on it.
24 Those officers have moved to different places, but we're
25 going to rebuild it with their notes."

1 And I thought, "With their notes?" What
2 about all those statements that people made? Like, they're
3 -- a lot of those people that she was with -- today they're
4 -- they are -- they'll all gone. Like, they've all passed,
5 and you can't even go ask them anything now. They probably
6 could have, like, in the first few years, but they're all
7 gone.

8 My Uncle Arthur passed away a year after my
9 mother went missing. My father died not even a year after
10 we reported my mother missing. August is not a good month.

11 But you know, in all of this -- in all of --
12 all this -- with my mom being missing and -- she -- she
13 taught me a lot of good things, and she -- her and I
14 were -- I was close with her. And when -- when I think
15 about all this of her being missing, and I often think,
16 "Why?" Like, "Creator, why -- why are you putting me and
17 my siblings, my family -- like, through this?" "Why is it
18 -- why does it have to be like this?" "Why can't we just
19 find our mom, bring her home?"

20 When she told me she had -- she had cancer.
21 She sat me down at my kitchen table and she said, "I want
22 to ask you two things, Lily." And I knew it was something
23 serious because she -- she never sat me at the kitchen
24 table. Like, she never -- so when -- she sat down first
25 and I sat down and I knew she was -- it was serious,

1 whatever she was going to say. She said, "I'm not well.
2 We know -- we -- I have cancer. I want you to do two
3 things for me."

4 "The first thing I want you to do is bury me
5 -- bury me beside my brother. I'm not going to live
6 forever. But bury me beside my brother, my brother Henry
7 (ph)." I said, "Okay." "And the second thing I want you
8 to do is take care of the girls." Meaning my younger
9 sisters. "Take care of the kids." My first thought after
10 she told me that -- I didn't say, "Okay." My first thought
11 was, "Well, what about me?" "Who's going to take care of
12 me?" But I told her, "Okay, Mom, I'll try to do what you
13 want me to do."

14 And when she went missing I still have
15 that -- you know, I -- I told her I would take her home and
16 put her beside her brother. I think -- today I -- I really
17 believe that if she knew my dad wasn't -- if she knew my
18 dad was gone I think she'd want to be with -- beside my
19 dad. And my dad and my uncle are buried in different
20 places. But I do want to find her. I do want to take her
21 home. I do want to do what I told her I would do for her.

22 I also think that in all of this -- over the
23 years, and why we haven't found her, and I really believe
24 the Creator -- at the time I probably would have died too.
25 I think He's just had mercy on maybe me. I don't know.

1 Maybe my siblings. And -- and I want -- I want to find
2 her.

3 But I also think of other families that have
4 gone through what we went through. You know, the OPP
5 losing her file -- for how long? Like, what if I didn't go
6 ask for my pictures all the time? Would they have even
7 known? Like, it could have been still missing. Somebody
8 made a boo-boo somewhere along the way. And from all of
9 this I want something good to come out of it. I want --
10 for one thing I -- I don't want any other family to ever go
11 through that frustration. That anger. That anguish. That
12 -- there's so many emotions still today. I get angry
13 because I feel my family was wronged. You're supposed to
14 help people. You didn't help.

15 I -- today my mother's file is not even in
16 Sioux Lookout. It's in a vault in Orilla. What if
17 somebody had something to say? They would go to the Sioux
18 Lookout OPP detachment, "I have something I think you
19 should know." Like, the file's not even there. I asked
20 why it was in a vault. They couldn't even tell me why it
21 was in a vault.

22 My daughter happened to be going to school in
23 Kitchener, and when I was told that my mom's file was in a
24 -- in -- in Orilla I thought, "Hey, Orilla around here." I
25 was visiting her at the time. Maybe I could go there.

1 Like, from Kitchener to Orilla, like it's -- it's around
2 here somewhere. Maybe I could go there and check. I
3 called that officer, and he said he'd need time to get it,
4 but for me I was just nearing the end of my visit with my
5 daughter and we had to go back home. So I didn't get the
6 chance to go look.

7 I've prayed -- I was told one time to --
8 like, I really want my mom. I want to take her home. And
9 this Elder told me, "You know what, pray to the water
10 spirit, to the forest spirit. Pray to them. Ask them to
11 release her. Let her go." I did that years ago and
12 they're not releasing her.

13 I don't know where she is and I wish I did.
14 It would be good if we had closure. Like, she would never
15 ever leave her kids or her -- like, her grandkids. She
16 loved the grandkids that she did get to meet. She would
17 never leave them. I need a minute.

18 Ina. (Speaking Ojibway language).

19 **MS. INA COMMANDA:** Yes, that's my beautiful
20 sister up there sitting on that film. And doing what she
21 always liked to do. She liked to play cards. And it is
22 true what Lily says, that she'd never leave on her own and
23 leave her kids and her grandchildren. She was so proud of
24 her grandchildren.

25 But I'm going to say this in -- in my

1 language because I don't know how to say it in -- say it
2 properly in English language. When they did that
3 investigation (speaking Ojibway language). As if -- it is
4 how I still feel too, like, as if she's -- you know, when
5 you ask the police something they say -- as if you're
6 bothering them. "I don't have time for this." But to us
7 this goes on and on. I hear about the other families and I
8 just cry for them too. Evil has touched us.

9 I remember when I lived in the bush with my
10 grandmother, and my grandmother never seen a white person
11 until I was taken away to school. And she used to hide me
12 under her skirts. Calling my dad not for me -- not -- for
13 me to take -- be taken away. And we -- we used to live in
14 the bush in a tent, even in the wintertime. I remember
15 that. And I was always so warm. Never hungry. Just me
16 and grandma.

17 And then my dad took us to Pickle Crow Mine,
18 where he was a miner, and that's where things changed. And
19 they learned about booze. They learned how to fight their
20 women. Things like that. It was never like that before.
21 I don't even remember ever getting hit by my parents or
22 even from my grandma. I have really good memories of that,
23 and I -- I just long for that. Where we loved each other.
24 I would never, ever think of hurting another person. And
25 yet we still get hurt by force and -- and it goes into

1 murder.

2 I have a niece too, that was brutally
3 murdered in Winnipeg. It's going to be two years in
4 February. Still there -- there's no answer there either.
5 And the police -- one of the detectives was talking to us
6 last year. He -- my -- my niece is the spokesperson for
7 that -- for Marilyn (ph), and she lives in Big Told Lake.
8 And she told me, she says, "I'm so upset." She says, "I
9 can't talk to that detective."

10 So we had a memorial in Winnipeg for her last
11 year, and she -- I talked to that detective, and told him I
12 was really -- I couldn't understand what he meant. He
13 said, "It was her lifestyle." And I said, "Does that mean
14 because she didn't live up to like, some people's standards
15 that they wouldn't bother doing anything about it?" But he
16 did apologize and he said that, "I'm sorry that there was
17 miscommunication there." But we still haven't heard
18 anything.

19 But anyway, I pray for all of us, every one
20 of us who has gone through this. It never leaves. And
21 I -- I just love my sister's kids so much, and even when --
22 they're -- they're really something. They made it on their
23 own. Their father was looking for my sister. And he
24 hopped a train trying to get to Winnipeg to look for her
25 there. He fell off the train and my sister had to go and

1 identify him. My sister called me that morning and she
2 says, "Ina, what am I going to do?" And I says, "Well, you
3 have to go." I was already living here in Thunder Bay at
4 that time. So they -- and you know, these -- these
5 children -- somebody was looking for them. Looking for --
6 looking after them, I mean, and that person is God.

7 And I thank every one of you for -- for
8 letting me share this. It's hard, as you all know. Every
9 -- every one of you that are here you have gone through the
10 same thing, and I am glad for -- for those you who can bury
11 your loved one.

12 For these kids -- their mom is still out
13 there. My -- my mother died believing that she was taken
14 by Rapture. Yes. Thank you very much.

15 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Ina, there was an article
16 -- a newspaper article that you brought with you this
17 morning. I'm wondering if we could get that up on the
18 screen.

19 **MS. INA COMMANDA:** Oh, yeah. I've got it
20 right here.

21 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** No, no, the one that you
22 gave me. There was a short little clip.

23 There, on the screen you can see the article
24 that I'm talking about.

25 **MS. INA COMMANDA:** This -- this one here --

1 this police -- this -- this one I saved from Sioux Lookout
2 paper at the time it came out. That's the only -- that's
3 the only newspaper printing that -- to my knowledge, that
4 was ever done. There was no other...

5 Was there, Lily? Or is that -- that's the
6 only time, hey? Just a little article like that; that's
7 it.

8 And I took my parents there too. I was
9 working here for -- for the lodge, and I took time off for
10 two weeks to take my mom and dad to Sioux Lookout. And we
11 drove through every bush road that I could point my truck
12 into. And my dad would not give up. We used to come out
13 of there dark.

14 Hey, Margo?

15 Yeah. Took my sister, Margo, too. And that
16 is the only thing that was ever written about her. That's
17 26 years ago.

18 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** (Indiscernible) Bruce?
19 Lily? Anybody else wants to speak?

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You were asking for
21 this one too?

22 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** I was asked if I had
23 any recommendations, or -- and I thought about it. I don't
24 think -- I -- I wouldn't want any family ever to go through
25 dealing with all of this, like we have. Well -- and I know

1 there's many -- many different stories, and some -- you
2 know I came here to -- to Thunder Bay last year and the
3 first time I couldn't even tell my mother's story because I
4 was listening to all these other people's stories and I
5 thought, "Oh, my gosh, they have it a whole lot worse than
6 we do." We are -- we have it bad too, but there's other
7 people that have it a lot worse.

8 And in thinking about -- I think about my mom
9 all the time. And I remember things that she taught me,
10 and one thing is to -- if you can make something good come
11 out of something bad, then do it.

12 And I would like to see -- I don't know --
13 you know, the -- the police force anywhere probably have so
14 many different -- so -- so many different cases to deal
15 with and there's just not enough time or people. I would
16 like to see maybe the government -- I don't know. If we
17 have OPP, why can't we have a task force just for missing
18 people? Doesn't have to just be women, but men too, you
19 know we have missing men. Can we have one task force
20 everywhere for those people? OP -- like the police can do
21 so much, but there's -- I know there's not enough manpower.
22 Not enough whatever.

23 I'd also like to see some -- like a VIP
24 protocol, that's my mother's initials, Viola Isabelle
25 Panacheese, VIP protocol for -- they have to do this as

1 soon as somebody's reported missing. They have to follow
2 these procedures right away. Do that -- that VIP protocol,
3 or -- you know.

4 I don't want her -- I don't want her story of
5 being missing for nothing. You know, there's a reason --
6 that's another thing, that's another thing my mom always
7 told me, there's a reason for everything. There's a reason
8 -- every day we go through things every day for something.
9 Sometimes it may not be good and sometimes you're happy and
10 you do good things.

11 And I want my mom to -- just to be for
12 something for her. I also want to find her and take her
13 home. Haven't found her yet. She's somewhere.

14 That picture on the screen right now, that's
15 my mom and my sister Cookie (ph), my baby sister, it was
16 her birthday yesterday, and she messaged me on Facebook and
17 she asked me, "Lily, what time did I hatch?" And I said,
18 "I don't know, but I know you hatched in Sioux Lookout."

19 (LAUGHTER)

20 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: So in looking at that
21 picture I can't even tell if it's daylight or nighttime,
22 because that's what she asked, "Was it daytime or
23 nighttime?" I don't know. But (indiscernible).

24 *Migwetch* (speaking Ojibway language). That's
25 all I want to say. (Indiscernible).

1 MS. JENNIFER COX: So Mr. Commissioner, I
2 have no more questions.

3 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.
4 Thank you very much.

5 Lily, I just might have a couple of follow up
6 questions for you, if you don't mind.

7 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Okay. So in
9 talking about dealing with the police and when your mother
10 was reported missing, which police force were you dealing
11 with?

12 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: It was the Sioux
13 Lookout detachment.

14 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: The ...

15 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: Sioux Lookout OPP.

16 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Okay, and
17 that's who you dealt with throughout?

18 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: Yeah.

19 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Okay. And when
20 was it that you were told that your mother's file was lost?

21 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: You know I tried to
22 think of the year because I knew -- I know that's -- that's
23 important. I married my husband in 1997, and we weren't
24 married yet, so it was in between 1991 and 1997. I know
25 the detachment was in the process of moving to -- from the

1 old building to the new building. They were moving -- they
2 moved in 2003, so before 1997, the file would have been
3 missing -- I don't know -- who knows? I don't.

4 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** And then you
5 said later that the file was in Orilla.

6 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** M'hm, the rebuilt
7 one.

8 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Yeah. And with
9 respect to it being rebuilt, do you have any knowledge?
10 Were you given any information on how successful they were
11 in rebuilding the file?

12 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** He did say there were
13 police office notes. That's all it is, just copies of
14 their notes from their little black book, or whatever they
15 write their notes in. That's all that's in there now. I
16 don't even know if they would have all the officer notes.
17 They -- they -- they should know. They would have to have
18 made a record somewhere. I saw it one time. I -- I was
19 allowed to look at it after because I wanted them to show
20 me something, and that's what I saw was just copies of
21 officer notes.

22 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Okay, thank
23 you. Those are all the follow up questions I had. So I
24 just want to thank you very much for coming and sharing
25 your truth, and what happened --

1 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: M'hm.

2 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: -- and telling
3 us about your mother.

4 I also want to thank you for the
5 recommendations that you've made to the Inquiry, and I want
6 to thank your whole family for being here.

7 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: M'hm.

8 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: *Migwetch.*

9 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: And before
11 we -- we close we just have some gifts of appreciation for
12 you being here to share. And I'll get the Elders to assist
13 with that.

14 ELDER LAUREEN BLU WATER: There's just
15 five --

16 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Do you want --
17 do you want speak to...

18 ELDER LAUREEN BLU WATER: Yeah, yeah. So on
19 behalf of the Commission we'd really like to thank you for
20 coming and sharing your truth. Sharing a story that's very
21 hard and remains open, and that's even harder because
22 you're not sure of anything, and to share your information
23 so that hopefully things can change with your
24 recommendations and listening to your stories.

25 That the Commissioners can compile that

1 information at the end and put out recommendations that you
2 know, maybe one day will still help you, and hopefully help
3 other families who are going through the same things.

4 But we want to offer you these little tokens,
5 one are seeds, and those seeds you can plant for your
6 family member, and you can look at them when they bloom and
7 hopefully they give you a little bit of hope. A little bit
8 of comfort.

9 The second thing will be some of the red
10 dresses that were made to bring acknowledgment and to bring
11 knowledge about our murdered and missing Indigenous women
12 that were made by the hands of women and the hands of
13 children all over.

14 And as well, we're going to offer you an
15 Eagle Feather each. So that you can continue your journey
16 and use this to help you with your prayers and help you
17 with your daily tasks because you are going through a lot.

18 So we want to just offer these to you and
19 I'll ask the other Grandmother if she wants to say
20 something as well for you.

21 **MS. MARLENE PIERRE:** (Speaking Ojibway
22 language). Your journey's is not over. You will come with
23 -- or you will leave with these items and they will be
24 reminders that we have listened, that other families have
25 listened, the people of Canada will listen to all of your

1 stories, and from that we will gain some peace within.

2 Our stories may never be resolved and yet
3 they may be and that is our hope for every -- each and
4 every one of you in your family and all the other families.
5 So we say, go -- go forward with that great hope, *Migwetch*.

6 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** At this time I'd like to
7 thank the family for coming forward today, and -- and your
8 courage in sharing your -- your truths with the Commission,
9 and we appreciate your -- all the time the energy that
10 you've brought forward to be here. It takes a lot of
11 courage to do what you've done today.

12 To honour yous this morning, we were going to
13 ask the Kookumus (ph) drum to sing a -- a healing song for
14 you and your family and -- and also for your deceased
15 relative as well.

16 I'm not sure if you're huggers or not,
17 sometimes people like to come and share their love, if you
18 want that, we can do that. If you're kind of not into that
19 just give me the one way or the other and I will -- and we
20 can bring huggers out, and whoever wants to hide can hide
21 if you don't want to do that. It's -- it's up to you.
22 It's a -- if you're okay with people coming to greet you.
23 Yes? Okay.

24 All right, at this time during the healing
25 song, for those of you that want to share your love and

1 strength with this family, please, come forward and -- and
2 bring that forward in a handshake or a -- a hug, however it
3 will be accepted by the family, and we'll do that at this
4 time do give them some support -- assist them with their
5 healing. Thank you.

6 --- CLOSING SONG

7 --- Exhibits (code: P01P08P0201)

8 **Exhibit 1:** Digital folder of nine images displayed
9 during public testimony.

10 --- Upon recessing at 10:40 a.m.

11 **Hearing # 2**

12 **Witness: Vicki Loon, Mary Skunk, Glenda Skunk, Melissa**
13 **Skunk, and Chief Connie McKay**

14 **In relation to Sarah Skunk**

15 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

16 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

17 --- Upon resuming at 11:26 a.m.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** (Indiscernible)
19 because you're right beside me. Okay. Good morning,
20 Commissioner Audette. I'd like to introduce the next
21 family that will be sharing a story. And then I'll ask for
22 them to be sworn and promised in. So right beside me is
23 Glenda Skunk, and beside her is Mary Skunk, and beside her
24 is Vicki Loon in the middle, and then we have Melissa Skunk

1 in the red shirt. And providing and assisting us with
2 Ojibwe translation today, is Connie Gray McKay. At this
3 point I would ask the Registrar to please -- there -- I
4 will -- we'll walk through each one as there are some
5 different preferences.

6 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Okay. I guess we'll start,
7 right?

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can we please swear
9 in on the Bible, Glenda.

10 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Hi, Glenda.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** You can sit.

12 **MR. REGISTRAR:** You can sit.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** You can sit
14 (indiscernible).

15 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Good morning.

16 **GLEND A SKUNK, Sworn:**

17 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can -- yes. To
19 Mary. And Mary wants to be sworn as well, please.

20 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Both? Okay.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah.

22 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Morning, Mary. I'll pass
23 you the eagle feather.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And the Bible.

1 **MR. REGISTRAR:** And the Bible as well.

2 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Oh --

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** That's right. This
4 one.

5 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Sorry.

6 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Just -- just the Bible is
7 okay?

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah.

9 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Good morning, Mary.

10 **MARY SKUNK, Sworn:**

11 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And then, Vicki.

13 **MS. VICKI LOON:** (Indiscernible).

14 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Here you go, Vicki. Good
15 morning, Vicki.

16 **MS. VICKI LOON:** Morning.

17 **VICKI LOON, Sworn:**

18 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Thank you. I'll pass both
19 the Bible and the microphone. Good morning. Did you want
20 the eagle feather?

21 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** (Indiscernible).

22 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Okay. Would you like the
23 Bible as well?

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's affirm.

1 Affirm.

2 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Affirm? I forgot your name
3 already.

4 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Melissa.

5 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Melissa. Okay. Good
6 morning, Melissa.

7 **MELISSA SKUNK, Affirmed:**

8 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Okay. Thank you. I'll put
9 that down. Will Melissa be holding the eagle feather the
10 entire time?

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

12 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Yeah. You can hold the
13 eagle feather for -- as you're speaking.

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

15 I'll just go like that. (Indiscernible).

16 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Okay. Great. Microphone,
17 okay.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

19 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So today the family
21 will be sharing the story of their sister and aunt -- will
22 be sharing the story of their sister and aunt, who went
23 missing in 1995. And so what -- what we -- because we
24 have -- because we have four witnesses here, what we just

1 wanted to explain is a number of them speak English, but
2 Connie will be assisting us if there is a misunderstanding,
3 or an interpretation that's not working. She'll be able to
4 then re-ask the question if one of the family members
5 indicates that they need that assistance. So actually, we
6 just like to start with some background. And I'm not sure
7 if Mary -- if you wanted to start. And if you could tell
8 us about who's in your family in terms of sisters and
9 brothers? Who your siblings are?

10 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** There's about -- there was
11 seven sisters, and I'm the oldest. And this is Vicki,
12 she's third -- third oldest. And Glenda is the second
13 youngest.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Did you guys have
15 any brothers as well?

16 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Three, and one passed away
17 on 1995.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And --

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** There's seven.
20 Number seven.

21 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Who?

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

23 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Well, we lost -- it's
24 between the -- 1996, that's when my -- my oldest brother

1 passed away. M'hm.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And where did Sarah
3 fit in the order of age, or the oldest you were telling us?

4 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Between me and Vicki.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. One of
6 the things, is can you guys share and whoever wants to
7 share first, share a little bit about Sarah. And Sarah's
8 strengths, or maybe growing up, or what you recall about
9 Sarah?

10 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** I guess I'll start first.
11 Well, Sarah -- we were -- we were just young. We didn't
12 really have that -- that teenage life together. We didn't
13 really had that. And as far as I can remember -- I guess I
14 can't really say -- all that I know that Sarah was around
15 when we're small. And we used -- we used to live in Pickle
16 Lake, in the bush. We didn't really have no house. It was
17 just a tent. And there was a log around it that -- I think
18 that was our home. And -- and we -- I think I -- I can't
19 really remember was -- what -- if I was five years-old or
20 six, they -- they were ready about -- I guess, about to go,
21 I guess, to -- to residential school, but -- but there was
22 no room over there. So they didn't bother with us.

23 As far as I can remember was Sarah was next
24 to me. And then we went to -- we went to school, public

1 school in Sunderpat (ph). And we stayed a couple -- I
2 don't even -- a couple years anyways. And then -- then
3 we -- then we moved back to Mishkeegogamang. And I think
4 that's where -- I think she was 12 years-old, and I was
5 about 13 [sic], no -- I mean 14 because I'm older -- two
6 years older than her. And from there, it's just that
7 our -- our family, like, my dad and -- my late dad and my
8 mom, that's -- things didn't work out for them, like. And
9 I can't really remember about Sarah. I know she was always
10 out, and -- well, she just had a difficult times, I guess,
11 raising up our family. And my mom and dad were, like, they
12 were always fighting, argue. And I -- and that's where I
13 decided to -- to try to get into trouble, so I could leave.
14 And that's exactly what I did because I just want to get
15 away from my -- from -- from all, I guess.

16 And I think I was 14 -- I was very young
17 when -- when I got sent away by -- by law. I -- I did B &
18 E, drinking underage. It's just that one night I drank and
19 I don't really recall if, like, I don't know how many break
20 and enters I did -- I can't really remember that. And
21 Sarah was around that time, and when I left they -- they
22 sent me to reform school. In a -- in Galt, Ontario. And
23 then they just kept on moving me to another -- another one.
24 I think it went by about one -- a year, I think, when I try

1 to remember. And then -- then they moved me to another
2 form school in Fort Poster (ph). And then, I think, I was
3 there for a year. That's when Sarah came over there.
4 It's just that we weren't really connected there. There
5 was just -- I know my sister's there when I was there.
6 Those are -- those are just my memories of her, when we
7 were young.

8 And then I -- then I ran away from that --
9 that -- where I was. But she was there the next day. They
10 put me back into Galt again. And it was -- I don't know
11 how long I was there, then -- then she came over there too.
12 And I don't know why she was -- came, well, maybe she did
13 something too, I don't know. And from there, we didn't --
14 it seems like just the one night we were in that same
15 house. And then they have to move me to another house, so
16 I couldn't really see her. The only time I could see her
17 for a while was just when we were outside just walking
18 around in circles with the -- with our staff there, and the
19 other girls. That's the only time I can remember.

20 And then they -- then they placed me in
21 a -- well, I had been in the homes, well, like, three --
22 three of them. In the last one they -- they put me was in
23 a -- in Downsview, in Toronto area. But -- but Sarah was
24 in that Galt -- that reform school. That's the only time I

1 could remember when we were just, like, very young. And
2 then from Downsview I ran away from there with another --
3 with another girl. Took us about a week to get to Thunder
4 Bay, then we got caught in Thunder Bay. And then they put
5 us in jail for two days. And then someone else came --
6 take us out, then -- then they sent me home. But Sarah was
7 still out there. And that's -- because we never really got
8 to know each other as teenagers. We didn't do anything
9 together. And there was just nothing really to -- to
10 cherish about our young lifes (ph). We didn't have that.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask you a
12 question? When -- so you were in reform school before
13 Sarah got sent to reform school, did you ever learn why she
14 got sent to school?

15 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** No.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And after you were
17 teenagers, did you ever get a chance to see each other
18 again?

19 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Only one hour at the -- in
20 Winnipeg. I happened to be there in Winnipeg, and then I
21 ran into her in the street. And -- well, she -- she ask us
22 to go to a restaurant with her. And I was with a -- a
23 friend. And the -- so we went with her because I didn't
24 really know -- know anything about Winnipeg. I think I was

1 about 17 that time. Somewhere there, anyways. And just
2 one hour. Because I don't really have anything.

3 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Did you want some
4 water?

5 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** I think next -- next, I
6 think it was 19 -- it was 1985 because our dad was sick
7 that time, and then she -- she came over there. I only --
8 I only saw her -- not even seem, like, only half hour. To
9 me it seems like half -- only half hour after that. That's
10 the only -- the last time I saw her again. But I did see
11 her. Well, she came home for a while in -- I think it was
12 in 1973. She came to our home for a while. I think she
13 only stayed a -- a week, or five days. I'm not really
14 sure. And that was the last time I ever saw her, in
15 Thunder Bay, 1985.

16 We -- we didn't even -- we didn't even say
17 anything to each other, or talk to each other. She just
18 came in where our -- our dad was. And I heard her say,
19 "Feels like as if she's -- he's not my dad." It's what she
20 said. Then she -- then that's when she walked out. All I
21 know is that, I have -- I have a sister. Not knowing --
22 that's just a big blank and -- big blank.

23 After that I used to think she was in
24 Thunder Bay. All those years before she was reported

1 missing. All those years, that's all I used to think, she
2 might be in Thunder Bay, or somewhere. And then my two
3 younger sisters, I don't know really which one that
4 finally -- she -- last question she -- maybe she'll tell
5 you after. And I don't really -- how that went. And all I
6 know is that there's just nothing in me. But deep down, I
7 feel like a -- I know she -- she's been missing. And I
8 would tell my mom, if she's still out there, she could have
9 contact us, or something, or letter, or whatever. Then --
10 then when -- then when we do that walk, we just wanted
11 to -- for me anyways, I just want her -- if she's still out
12 there, at least they'll see it. Or maybe she will come
13 out, or come see us, or -- that was my hope when we did
14 that walk. She was -- she was on my mind. That walk we
15 did. Hoping somewhere she's watching. But it didn't.

16 But our sister is missing. It's pretty hard
17 to -- (indiscernible) think like that. And after that walk
18 we did, I kept hoping that I wish she would come home
19 wherever she is. Then again, I would think, maybe she
20 should not even -- the world anymore. If she did, she
21 would come home, or at least see -- see us on --
22 (indiscernible) so. There's sometimes I would just say, if
23 I just ask myself sometimes, or just say out loud, or write
24 on the note, not -- like, Sarah, where are you? Where is

1 she? What happened to her?

2 I was talking to my mom a couple days ago.
3 I ask her questions, which I don't even -- I didn't know.
4 I ask her, what -- what year did she leave? Then she told
5 me, 19 -- 1966. That's when she -- she got sent away too.
6 Just for breaking the windows. There was no -- nobody
7 tried to help us. I was just telling my -- asking my mom
8 that. I wanted to know about who was the Chief that year.
9 Who was the councillors? Then she told me who they were,
10 how they -- how they agree to be sent away. I was a little
11 bit angry because of that. Then she said to me, "You
12 weren't the only ones that" -- they wanted to be -- to be
13 out, I guess, and to be sent away, but the other ones
14 didn't. That's when she -- that's what she said to me.
15 All those years I didn't know. I thought -- I thought I --
16 I know I did -- I did something wrong. I know that.
17 That's why they sent me to reform school.

18 I was in Galt for two years and a half. And
19 I was -- I finally -- finally made it home because --
20 because I ran away from -- from there. We -- I know that
21 we -- me and this girl I was with when we took off from
22 Downsview. I know we endanger our lives, I know that. We
23 have -- we had to -- we had to run away from that -- the
24 transfer truck. Well, see that guy told us there's a dead

1 body under where you're sitting. That's what he told me.
2 I was 15, not time then. When I think about that, ahh,
3 that struggle.

4 The last time when I saw Sarah, 1985, oh,
5 how I wish -- I wish I could just talk to her that time.
6 But I could never have that now. I guess, that one was
7 just hopeful that there was really (indiscernible) for me.
8 And we don't really have -- I don't really have anything.
9 All those years she's been missing, and she still is today.
10 There's a lot of times I ask God, "Where is she? Help me.
11 Somehow, someday." I used to be peace with myself. Look
12 how the closure would -- that's my desires. That -- to
13 bring her home. Every day I think about that. At least I
14 would know if she's out -- if she's gone already. There's
15 always hope when you -- you know, when -- when you hear
16 about the news, they found some -- some bones. I always --
17 I always think maybe it's her. It's just that deep down,
18 as if she's gone already. That's just the way I feel, for
19 me anyways. She's no longer around. She's out there
20 somewhere.

21 I don't think she was happy either. Wonder
22 if she was -- you had to anyways. She was 12 years-old
23 when she got sent away. I -- I was -- I was 13 when I got
24 sent away. She -- because she came right -- she came --

1 I'm not really -- a year, or more than a year after me.
2 And it just -- there's just nothing in me. There's just
3 nothing. I just want her to be home. At least I'll know.
4 That's all I think because -- I just want her -- whatever
5 just to -- I don't know.

6 After, when she was reported missing, I -- I
7 start having hopes. And I just -- I just thank my sisters,
8 they did that. And when them NAPS officers came to see me
9 when I was living in Thunder Bay, they -- they want to take
10 some blood from me. And -- and I went to that -- I went to
11 their office. They try to take the blood from me and then
12 they couldn't do it. They -- I don't want to say that,
13 what I said. So they -- they went -- they already went
14 home. That's when they took a DNA from my mom. Ever since
15 that time, I think it was 2014 when they took our things.
16 They took DNA from my mom. Ever since from there, that's
17 when things came to rise up in my mind. All kinds of
18 things. But just -- I mean, not -- there's just nothing.
19 Until I see the day to bring us whatever the news will be.
20 I'm just waiting for that day.

21 And it's hard. Sometimes I just cry. Cry
22 to my -- to my God. I just want to know. It's -- it's
23 really holding me up, every time. Every time -- Every time
24 I pray for her, or pray to the winds, it's -- I guess, made

1 us strength sometimes. Sometimes I just break down. But I
2 feel okay after knowing that there is God up there
3 watching -- watching over me, seeing when I struggle.
4 Seeing what's on my mind. This is where I always run to.
5 That's about all I'll say because there is really nothing I
6 can say because I didn't have that.

7 What -- what saddens me is she wasn't happy
8 either. The way I was. That's -- maybe she did try and
9 get out too. Just because of my parents' break-up. When I
10 think about it, I kind of -- that's why they split us up
11 because of my parents, that's what I always think. It
12 really damage a child's life when you see your parents like
13 that. It hurts. But there is nothing you can do. I kind
14 of blame them in a way. That's why -- that's why my sister
15 is no longer here. (Indiscernible) I don't know, that's
16 the reason why. God. Everybody has a different ways of
17 living. I had mine. I only -- I have to saying this,
18 that's what's in my heart. I only had the ones -- things
19 only I -- I know are the truth. The true feelings. And I
20 want my sister to -- the regret is that I really never get
21 to hang around with her. Not like the way I hang around
22 with my sisters now. I'll never have that with her.

23 I know there's a lot of times I feel so
24 angry. But I just have to know, a couple days ago, why --

1 I just want to know what year. I don't know why I ask my
2 mom that, I don't know. I just wanted to know. That's the
3 most regretful thing you could face is, not really knowing
4 your sister. All you know is she's missing. That's all
5 you know. There is nothing to hold onto. Just that
6 someday, somebody will come. Yeah, that's all I want to
7 say.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Mary.
9 I -- can I see if Glenda can answer some questions before
10 we go to you, Vicki; is that okay?

11 **MS. VICKI LOON:** Yes.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask a couple
13 questions, just to get some clarification?
14 (Indiscernible). Thank you. So your sister has told us
15 that she refers to her younger sisters starting to initiate
16 her to -- to report Sarah missing. Can you tell us a
17 little bit about some of the things that you did to find
18 out more information, or to get her reported missing?

19 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** Me and my younger sister
20 were talking about our sisters here. And then we started
21 talking about Sarah. And that was about 2001. And I asked
22 her, I wonder why they never looked for her. And she says,
23 "I don't know." So I started to asking -- ask my mother,
24 "How come they never tried to find her, or try to locate

1 her so that she can come home?" I started phoning around
2 in the places they told me that she was -- she was at last.
3 And I thought it would be easy to -- finding her. And then
4 that's when I approached Jackie George, the NAPS officer
5 who started it. I asked her, "What can I do to find my
6 sister?" Then she asked me, what sister I was talking
7 about. And I told her, Sarah Skunk. And she -- I can't
8 remember the questions she asked me. Then she told me
9 that -- that she's going to do a missing persons. But on
10 my own time I did phone around the places I was told where
11 she used to hang out, but they never have a record of her.

12 Then when I -- when my younger sister, her
13 name is Elizabeth, when I told her, and she -- so she
14 started helping me. We went online -- internet, try to
15 find where -- where to begin. I remember that day, I
16 marked it on my wall, on my calendar, November 2, 2001, I
17 started. I didn't think it was going to take that long,
18 and still I -- I -- today I still hope that she's out there
19 somewhere. Maybe she just doesn't want to be found.
20 Just -- what my sister's been saying. I asked them,
21 "Why -- how come she left?" I even asked my mother that.
22 But one of my sisters said because of marriage. My sister,
23 Mary-Ann (ph) said that. And I was really hurt when --
24 when she said that to me.

1 And then I turned to my younger sister, and
2 I told her, "First, I want to say to Sarah if we see her, I
3 want to tell her I'm sorry." Because I don't have the same
4 dad as them. When I think about my step-dad, maybe she
5 was -- he was replacing me of Sarah because he used to buy
6 me a lot of things. Every time he seen me in broken shoe,
7 he would go and measure my shoe size, and he'll go to store
8 and bring me shoes. Maybe that's -- maybe he was replacing
9 me because she never came home. I often to think about
10 that. I would get a new jacket too. And I was really
11 thankful, but I didn't know that the reason why he did
12 that. And -- and today, I still wait for Jackie George
13 to -- to email me. Every time I see something on the news
14 that there's bones found, or -- "Can you check if that's
15 her?" Sometimes I would email to her, to ask her that.

16 My sister, Mary-Ann, too, she would phone me
17 and -- and I'm hoping that one day we'll see her. And then
18 I begin to think, "Why is it taking so long for officers --
19 are they doing something?" I started questioning that.
20 Because I asked her again that time, "Why is it taking so
21 long?" Because -- and she -- Jackie George turned around
22 and told me because she went with ten different names.
23 Then I asked her, "How many names does she go by? And what
24 names?" And she never told me. It hurts me when I think

1 about it.

2 Sometimes -- should I ask my mother, "Do you
3 still feel her?" Every mom should feel their kids. And I
4 always tell her that because I can feel my -- my -- one of
5 my boys get hurt. I asked her that one time that, but she
6 didn't answer me. And still today, I'm still waiting for
7 her to -- police to -- or NAPS officers to -- "Yes, we
8 found her alive." I'm really hoping that she's still
9 alive, out there.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask a
11 question? Mary was talking about both her and your mother,
12 Eva, who was originally going to come today, but wasn't
13 able to make it, getting DNA. Can you tell us a little bit
14 about what was happening there? Why there was blood
15 samples, or collection of DNA?

16 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** They found some in -- in
17 D.C. area, a woman was found. And -- and my nephew, he's a
18 NAPS officer, he thought that was Sarah. And that's why
19 they took my mom's DNA to check if that's her. But we
20 didn't get report right away. It took some time. I don't
21 know how long. And -- but that wasn't her there we were
22 told. And the officers said that her DNA's all over now,
23 worldwide, they told us. Then if they have that, how come
24 it's still taking so long?

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm sorry, when you
2 say, officers, were there more than one -- is there more
3 than one police service that's looking into --

4 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** That Jackie George and my
5 nephew, Merlin (ph). But that's what he thought -- that
6 was my sister when they -- when the -- when the picture was
7 sent to them.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Do you know if
9 there's other police services that might be -- that it was
10 reported to as well?

11 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** I tried OPP one -- at the
12 beginning, but I didn't get nowhere. They just told me
13 that we had officers too in the reserve when I started.
14 That's really -- it's really painful everyday when you
15 think about it. When I think about my sister. I tried
16 locating her -- her kids too. They say that she had three
17 out there. I don't even know their names. Maybe, if we
18 find the kids, we'll find the mother. Those were my --
19 that's what I thought. I had nowhere to look after that.
20 Then, my sister Mary-Ann started -- she updates me
21 sometimes.

22 I thought I was going -- it was going to be
23 easy talking about her. And knowing that -- why she left
24 and -- I seen her once, must have been 8 years-old, she --

1 she was a nice woman. She was really -- at the time, my
2 sister was just -- she must have been one -- one or two.
3 She would hold her, and just let my sister -- our sister
4 fall asleep on her lap. And one of my sisters told me that
5 was my other sister, her name was Sarah. That's the first
6 time I met her.

7 I remember that day when she left. It was a
8 nice, sunny day. She said that -- that she's leaving. And
9 I was looking at her, leaving, and getting on a car. And
10 she turned around and says, "I'll come back for you. I'll
11 go get settled, and I'll come back for you." Those are my
12 last -- her last words with me. And someday I hope -- I'm
13 just hoping that she'll come home. Because I -- I asked
14 around, is that the -- really the year that she's missing,
15 1995? But nobody ever answered me about that. I ask --
16 I -- I ask my mom sometimes. I feel like we're in a
17 problem because there's me and my -- my brother. We don't
18 have the same dad as them. But we're still, we're -- we're
19 still family, doesn't matter where I came from. And she's
20 always going to be my sister.

21 I almost didn't come here too. And I told
22 my husband when I left, I got to continue looking for my
23 sister. And so I came out. And I keep thinking, those
24 officers are not even looking in the right place too. When

1 I -- when I think about it because there's a hole there
2 that -- and there's six of us standing, one sister is -- is
3 gone. I don't know where she's at, and I hope she's okay
4 where ever -- maybe she just doesn't want to be found too.
5 Those are my thoughts, what my sisters say about her. Is
6 that it?

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's okay. I'm
8 going to ask Vicki some questions, and you can talk again
9 if you want.

10 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** Okay.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So, Vicki,
12 can I get you to -- to also share with us, what you know
13 about -- if -- you're welcome to share. If you want to
14 talk about -- anything about Sarah, and what -- what part
15 you've had in looking for her, letting people know she's
16 missing?

17 **MS. VICKI LOON:** Oh, okay. I don't know how
18 many times my story will be heard. But I think this is
19 about the fourth time, I think. And to me, it's just like
20 a continuing my search, or an answer. But as far as I
21 remember, my sister, Sarah, we haven't really -- we didn't
22 really have that -- that contact, like, through our --
23 through our teenage years. I barely remember when we were
24 just kids. Parts of it I -- I remember.

1 But the day that really -- really is clear
2 to me, is the day that he [sic] left on the cruiser. And
3 just because of all the broken (ph) windows. I was with
4 my -- my two younger sisters there with me, and we watched
5 her leave. And I must have been 10 years-old. And she was
6 12 when she left. And then the following year -- and that
7 was where I was sent to residential school. And my other
8 two younger siblings, and my younger brother -- we left to
9 residential school too, I guess, because it was just a
10 system. I guess, my -- my mom had to let them go. She had
11 a choice.

12 And to me, sometimes, like, thinking about
13 it -- about my younger siblings, I wonder if they would
14 have been in that '60s scoop, (indiscernible), no it -- it
15 would have been. Because it's the way that they were --
16 they came to my mom. To let -- letting us go. And I
17 guess, she choose residential school, for that. She didn't
18 know the system. How the system was. It was her choice by
19 this -- those government, or -- that came by to her to ask
20 her. Her choice is that they wanted to take us.

21 And I was in Kenora for three and a half
22 years. And that -- that last year when I was in Kenora,
23 the school where I was going to in that town, Cecilia
24 Jeffrey School, it was a residential school in Kenora. And

1 they told me to come to the office, that -- that after
2 Christmas holidays -- I never did see my siblings all that
3 time. Only the summer -- summer holidays for three months,
4 I guess, and they were back to residential school again.
5 So we barely did really see each other. And already Sarah
6 wasn't there.

7 And -- and they send me down to -- to
8 Brantford just to go take care of my -- my sisters and my
9 little brother. And I was -- I think it was the last year
10 and then it went -- that Brantford school was opened. And
11 then when I got back from the residential school, from
12 Brantford, and then that's where I ended up into reforming
13 school. The same place they went. And I was pretty --
14 pretty much of a sad story for me, anyway. Why, and not
15 knowing why. But in all these years, when I was out there,
16 I used to hope I would run into Sarah because that's where
17 she was too. By then she would have been already 16, or
18 almost 17. And we were supposed to be -- I mean, they only
19 had the 15 year-olds, I guess so, I mean, going up to 15
20 years-old just to be in that school. Once you're 16, then
21 you can't go back there. So I was hoping and wishing that
22 I would see Sarah there that time. But knowing then, I
23 guess, she would have been 16 or 17 at that time that she
24 was no longer there.

1 In all these years -- in all this years, I
2 used to always hope that I would see her again. But then,
3 at last she came for a visit. My younger sister, Ruth,
4 brought her home from here -- Thunder Bay. And she stayed
5 with me for five -- five days. And we did -- we didn't
6 really have very much to say, like, our memories as a
7 child. I think what really we talk about is that school,
8 where they sent us when we got into trouble. And that's
9 the only thing we could talk about that time. I talked to
10 her about the times when I used to take off from there too
11 in that reforming school I was going to.

12 I took off there about five times. I always
13 ended up in Toronto with just white girls. And then they
14 send me this way. I thought they were going to send me
15 home, but I guess not. Okay. I'm here in Thunder Bay.
16 Didn't stay around that long, and they send me back. While
17 I was down here when I was -- I looked for my sister, but I
18 heard about her, but never ran into her. Because I know
19 there was some people that used to know her that time, but
20 never really met her. Because I guess she was just -- kind
21 of just going back and forth to Winnipeg or to B.C.

22 And -- and then when I got sent back to same
23 place where I -- where I was, that's when I kind of took
24 off again. And I did come all the way to Thunder Bay. And

1 I was hiding out for seven months before I turned 16. And
2 she came for a visit at home for five days. Knowing -- not
3 knowing what really to talk about, but just those bad
4 memories in the -- that school, I guess, she -- she went to
5 and myself. And to me, like, you know, I know just
6 families have gone through a lot, like, break-ups and
7 everything in their family. And that time that she -- she
8 talked to me about it. And then -- then I told her, you
9 know, it's been happening -- this -- ever since, like, you
10 know. Not to really, like, put down my sisters, or either.
11 (Indiscernible) it just happened. And it seemed kind of
12 funny to her, seeing her dad living alone in the house.
13 And -- and then, kind of, I -- I told her that time, you
14 should go and just visit other people, go visit the family.
15 Because I couldn't always go anywhere with her because of
16 my younger kids I had.

17 But she was always close to my daughter,
18 Melissa, when she was there. She would always hold her.
19 And she asked me once, how old she was. And I told her
20 Melissa's age at that time. And then she said that she
21 only mentioned one daughter that time that she -- she had a
22 daughter in B.C. And that she wasn't allowed to see her.
23 And this thing that keeps bothering me is, like -- we like
24 to, like, you know, if she ever had that visit with her

1 daughter, or maybe not because I know for a fact she
2 wasn't -- never allowed to see her daughter all those times
3 when she tried.

4 But then, all these years, I guess we kind
5 of had that -- well, with me anyways, I denied that she was
6 missing. I know -- and with me, I thought she was out
7 there because I know I used to hear that she went there to
8 Winnipeg, she went to B.C. And all the time I used to
9 think that she went to B.C. to try to see her daughter
10 again. And it -- to me, it was just kind of -- how hurting
11 it is. Why we were torn apart from there, just because of
12 the residential school system and the court system. And I
13 just don't know why they couldn't try to help us -- us
14 families. And now -- just that now, what's happening with
15 my sister out there? Or if she's gone. And I usually talk
16 about this with my sister, Mary-Ann. You know, with me, I
17 know it's pretty hard, but you know there's -- one day at a
18 time. And I am tired of waiting sometimes. No matter
19 how -- how many times I come to these kind of inquiries,
20 and nothing has ever really -- never find answer, with me
21 anyways.

22 And -- and not -- not, I'm just standing.
23 And I know there's -- hear a lot of people do their -- the
24 way they're going through it too with their families that

1 have been murdered. And the fellows that have still been
2 missing, as we don't know where they are, or we will ever
3 see them. But our hope is that we will. And to lay them
4 to rest in their home. How many times I think -- I wonder
5 if I'll be -- still around if they ever find my sister. I
6 always think. But I think about my mom sometimes, how much
7 she's going through too, all her life. And I can't blame
8 her for everything because it's just the way life is. And
9 she's getting old. She always remembers about our sister's
10 birthday. Like, for us too, we don't know where we are,
11 where we stand. I respect my mom, and, like, I could ask
12 her a lot of questions, but I don't want her to hurt more.
13 I know we want find answers, the dates, and everything, but
14 no that's -- sometimes she can't really recall herself.
15 Maybe, she's just wondering the way we wonder too. Like,
16 where she could be, or is she still alive, or gone?

17 And -- and I -- the thing -- other thing
18 too, when I think about it, is things about the systems and
19 everything. I don't think a government can't really unfold
20 everything for us, for our healing. Because when I had at
21 residential school payout, it didn't help me at all. And
22 it -- the things that the -- I heard people went through, I
23 don't think -- money can't really make you happy. That's
24 just my thought. And -- and so from here, I don't know,

1 what I -- to expect. I appreciate and acknowledge for
2 everyone that's doing their best to find answers and find
3 our missing and murdered woman. I'm not only thinking
4 about my sister, but others as well. Because every time
5 there's -- we hear these remains found, and this makes me
6 (indiscernible), it brings back memories, you know. I even
7 pray about it, you know, some day we will hear if it's the
8 remains of my missing sister, you know. And if not, you
9 know, I don't know how long we're going to still wait. But
10 now, we -- but now, today, I'm thinking about -- with our
11 own -- our own daughters and sons today, that make sure
12 that doesn't happen to them.

13 There's so much now that we are -- our girls
14 are murdered today. And it just seems like, you know, all
15 these reports that police are doing, and I think it's just
16 continues ever -- every day, every year. But really, me, I
17 don't really know very much about politics and everything,
18 but I just know what's in my heart, what to -- what to
19 understand and deal with. But you know, in this walk we
20 did, you know, I was -- I was happy that we're going to do
21 that walk. I know my sister, Mary-Ann, and my daughter,
22 Melissa, we did that walk. They planned that walk. And my
23 hopes were if my sister was still out there, that she would
24 see us. That we are looking for her. But if not, I don't

1 know, just -- I hope, I guess, one day we'll find -- find
2 out what really happened. And I guess, that's all I need
3 to say.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Vicki.
5 Melissa, can I ask you some questions? Can I start with
6 just a couple clarification questions, and then let you --
7 first of all, you're Vicki's daughter, right?

8 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Yes, I am.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so Sarah was
10 your aunt?

11 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Yeah.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And your aunt, Mary-
13 Ann, was originally supposed to come in today, but she's
14 been weathered out in another community.

15 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Yeah.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah. You've been
17 very helpful in helping because there are some language
18 issues and everyone, obviously, did a really good job in
19 English without assistance. But if there was anything they
20 want to say further, and we can do that for sure. But I
21 wanted to ask you a couple of questions because we've heard
22 about the walk a few times now. So I was wondering if you
23 could start with that because I know that you were an
24 important part of planning the walk with your aunt, Mary-

1 Ann, who's not here today. So if -- can you?

2 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I can do that. We were
3 just having a table discussion one day, my aunt Mary-Ann
4 and I, and we were talking about my aunt Sarah. You know,
5 wondering where she was. Is she still out there? You
6 know, does anybody -- anybody out there know anything about
7 Sarah? So I said, well -- my aunt said, let's do a walk.
8 So we -- we picked Mother's Day weekend to start our -- our
9 walk just to acknowledge that she was a mom, a woman. So
10 while we were in the planning stages, and we're, like,
11 "Holy crap, man." Like, we -- we have Rena Fox, we have
12 Viola, you know. I said, "We got to do a walk for them as
13 well." So we contacted the families, and let them know
14 what we were doing. We wanted to make sure that it was
15 okay with them. And -- and it was. So rather from
16 walking -- instead of walking from Mishkeegogamang to
17 Thunder Bay, like we had originally planned, we -- we
18 walked to Sioux Lookout in honour of Viola Panacheese
19 because that's where she went missing. And from there we
20 walked to Kakabeka Falls, where Rena Fox was found
21 murdered, in honour of her memory. And we ended the walk
22 in Thunder Bay on Agnes Street where my aunt's last known
23 residence was.

24 And when we planned this walk, it was --

1 we -- we didn't expect it to get as huge as it did, but we
2 had grandmas, we had moms, we had dads, we had
3 grandchildren, we had great-grandchildren. It was -- it
4 was bringing families together in memory of three beautiful
5 women that's missing, one murdered from our community. And
6 those are just three -- just, I mean, there's others as
7 well. But when we first started that was what we were
8 hoping for, is that somebody would see us walking there
9 that would have some information on Sarah. And that they
10 would come forward so that, you know, we'd have something
11 new to go on.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, like, a big part
13 of it wasn't just commemorating the beautiful women because
14 that was part of it, but part of it was to raise awareness
15 to let people know --

16 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Raise, yeah.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** How important was it
18 to have other community members, not just Indigenous
19 community members, know about this issue?

20 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Because it -- it's
21 reality. That's what it is. That's what's happening in
22 our communities. And, you know what? Honestly, I sit here
23 and I'm going to be honest, but when we were planning that,
24 it really hit me. Right then and there. I was like, "Holy

1 shit." Like, this is what's going on. It was right at
2 that very moment when we -- I'm sorry for my language by
3 the way. I tend to swear every now and then. Like, this
4 is real. This is what's going on. And something needs to
5 be done about it.

6 We had planned to do a walk again the
7 following year, from Thunder Bay to Mishkeegogamang, to
8 symbolize that we wanted to bring our women home. But at
9 that time, we -- we couldn't do our walk because our -- our
10 community was in the middle of our -- our own search for a
11 missing young woman at the time. Where we searched for 60
12 days, every day, looking for her. So we had postponed that
13 walk.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm just going to
15 actually pass this to you to look at. This was an article
16 on the walk. And it's just titled, "Mishkeegogamang First
17 Nation Walks to remember the murdered, missing." You might
18 recall if a reporter talked to the family. I'd just like
19 to hand it to the Commissioner, if you can just take a
20 quick peek at it. You don't have to read it.

21 (Indiscernible). I can't even read it without my glasses.
22 It's just (indiscernible) story that talks about the three
23 women who (indiscernible).

24 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** (Indiscernible), yeah.

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm just going to
2 pass this up to the Commissioner, and -- thank you. I
3 am -- was also -- Melissa, you've been very helpful in
4 assisting, getting the family to come down here. And it
5 made me think about a question I think is really important
6 about when we're trying to involve people and include
7 people to make sure we have resources and people that can
8 speak the language, or ensure that people get to a place.
9 Can you tell -- talk a little bit about that?

10 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Definitely more notice,
11 for sure. I didn't -- I had families messaging me, and
12 honestly, I didn't know what to say. Because I didn't even
13 know what was going on, what were the arrangements, where
14 was things -- definitely more notice, and more proper
15 planning. Proper planning. Due to the sensitivity of the
16 issue, the funding, like, I mean, I'm sure Connie can say a
17 whole bunch more, she's -- but at the same time, like, I
18 understand it involves a lot of work. I understand that.
19 And it's dealing with a lot of families. I guess, with
20 that being said, it -- it just goes to say, that it's so
21 important that these issues get treated with -- with heart,
22 right. Rather than just emailing back and forth, trying to
23 make arrangements; that kind of stuff. Because it is -- it
24 is -- it just seems, I don't know what the word is,

1 (Speaking Native Language). That -- that's the only thing
2 I can -- I don't know how to say that in English.

3 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Carelessly done.

4 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Carelessly done. I'm
5 sorry, but that's -- that's just my -- my thoughts on that.
6 But at the same time, I'm grateful for this -- this chance.
7 For all the families' stories to be told, and you know, and
8 I'm -- I'm really hoping that some good things can come out
9 of this. We heard Lillian Southwind earlier. I hope some
10 good can come out of all this bad. Yeah.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** On that note, what
12 are some of the ideas? I know you talked about awareness
13 with the walk, but what are some ideas or recommendations
14 that could make change? And I know you got a -- a lot,
15 probably. But because you've -- you've been trying to
16 raise awareness and do this work for some time. But if you
17 could give the commission some recommendations about -- or
18 ideas about what needs to change. What needs to be done in
19 terms of the recommendations they'll be making, that would
20 be helpful too.

21 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I guess the big and
22 most -- for most right now -- and this is, like, such a big
23 piss-off for me, is the police system. That they need to
24 be educated on the whole intergenerational trauma stemming

1 from residential schools, the '60s scoop. Right from
2 addictions. And how to respond to calls when somebody is
3 calling to report that their daughter, or their sister, or
4 whoever is missing.

5 And I don't know if this is appropriate, I
6 just want to share a story of why I feel so strongly about
7 that. My own daughter, whom I know very well, she's my
8 daughter, I raised her. She's part of my heart beat. I
9 knew her to be a really good mom, took care of her kids.
10 All of a sudden, I started noticing changes in her. She
11 got into addictions so fast, like, made my head spin.
12 Because I know my daughter, and this is not her. I -- we
13 didn't know where she was for a couple days. Me and my
14 friend, we drove around looking everywhere for her in
15 Thunder Bay. By this time we had information that drug
16 dealers had her vehicle.

17 And I didn't know where she was. We located
18 her. I asked the police for help. And I gave them some
19 information. I told them -- they asked me what her
20 background, and I told them she was Native. A whole
21 different attitude after that. And when -- all, you know.
22 I say, "Okay. Well, can you please, at least, go check
23 where I believe she is?" They did -- "Oh, we can't do
24 nothing. She's an adult." You guys don't know her. You

1 don't know the situation. You guys are not listening to
2 me. They drove away.

3 I got in shit for this later, but I sat by
4 her vehicle and waited for those drug dealers to come out.
5 And I, myself, took those keys off them. And I had to do
6 whatever I could to protect my daughter. I sat outside her
7 house while these drug dealers are going -- driving back
8 and forth from her place. And again, I phoned the police.
9 This is what's going on, right in front of my eyes right
10 now. Still nothing. And I finally told the supervisor I
11 was talking to at the time, I said, "When you guys going to
12 help me? When she's finally in a body bag? Is that when
13 you guys are going to finally respond?" I gave them the
14 licence plate number, everything.

15 And you know what? I managed to bring her
16 home for Christmas, and then she went missing for about a
17 month and a half. I didn't know where she was. And I
18 couldn't get no response from the police. She finally got
19 arrested in Winnipeg. And you know what? I'm not saying
20 that all police officers are like this because I -- if I
21 could meet this police officer in Winnipeg that arrested my
22 daughter, and looked at her and said, "This is not who you
23 are. I'll take you to a place where people that get in --
24 caught in this life -- lifestyle end up." He scared the

1 crap out of her, and made her come home. So I'm not saying
2 all police officers are like that. They're not.

3 But there definitely needs to be -- they
4 definitely need to be educated on how to respond to calls
5 like that. Because when you're getting a call from a
6 mother regarding your child, and you know your child, it
7 deserves to be listened to. I shouldn't have had to take
8 matters into my own hands like that. So this is definitely
9 one of the most important things to be real -- like, really
10 looked. Because that's where it stems from. Like, they
11 have this view that if a Native woman, or any Native goes
12 missing, it's because they're -- "Oh, they're just drunk."
13 You know, "They're in a -- a drug addiction." There's a
14 reason for that.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Does it matter, even
16 if they are? Should it matter, even if they are in
17 addictions or in a state?

18 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** What do you mean?

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Well, like, it
20 should -- should it matter whether they're drinking or not?
21 That -- that they respond, or that you're getting --

22 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** No, it shouldn't matter.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- spoken to the way
24 that you should as a mother?

1 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** It shouldn't matter.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Were your -- do you
3 have any other ideas or recommendations? I know you
4 probably have a -- a few.

5 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I -- you know, I keep
6 thinking about my aunt Sarah as you're asking me that
7 question. I hope one of the other recommendations that
8 come out of this is funding for after care programs --
9 definitely after care programs. You know, we can -- we can
10 do program, after program, or get people to go on their
11 healing journey, right. But when they come home, there's
12 nothing. So we definitely, definitely need more after care
13 programs. You know, what if, you know, they had that when
14 my aunt Sarah came home for that one week. What if there
15 was there -- that support there?

16 I have one memory of Sarah that I hold close
17 to my heart. And I think that's the one.

18 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** It's (indiscernible).

19 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Four -- I was 4 years-
20 old. I always -- in my mind, I always thought it was,
21 like, maybe six, seven because I remember it clearly as
22 day. And I know we're out of -- we're all at a place in
23 our healing journeys, I know. I guess, the reason why I
24 hold this close to my heart is because of -- this is the

1 one time that I remember as a child receiving affection.
2 And it was from Sarah. And I remember it because we were
3 walking on the road and she was holding my hand. She
4 was -- this was somebody that was walking with me, holding
5 my hand. And we were walking to this big church we -- I --
6 I think -- I thought it was big from -- probably because I
7 was a kid. We were walking to this church, her and I. And
8 I remember her telling me that she had a daughter that
9 looked like me.

10 And, you know, so what if there was stuff in
11 the community at the time. I know at -- today, we do. You
12 know, we have -- you know, we're starting to get resources
13 and that, but we need more funding for, like, after care
14 programs for families that are hurting, you know. They --
15 I know I tend to lose train of thought, and I go everywhere
16 because I can say a bunch of things about what I would like
17 to come see out of this. Because this is what's happening.
18 This is what's real.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And that's okay if
20 you're wandering a little, like, in terms of sharing your
21 family's lived experience. And even the experience you
22 have helping others, is helpful for us when you have ideas.
23 And I'm sure the Commissioner doesn't care either if you're
24 a little all over the place because we value your ideas.

1 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** You know, I listened to
2 my auntie's stories, and I really, really wish my auntie
3 Mary-Ann and my kokom were here. I was listening to my
4 aunt Glenda when she said that when they came to get my
5 kokom's DNA, they -- when they found the body in Seattle,
6 they did a face composite on her. And each and every time
7 something like this happens, they -- they brought that --
8 that sketch of what this person would have looked like, and
9 every single one of us that was there, the resemblance and
10 everything, everyone said, "Holy shit. That's Sarah.
11 Like, it has to be." Right to the scar that this person
12 probably had. They said that they would have something for
13 us. I think it was like six weeks or something like that.
14 We waited six whole friggin' months. And my kokom would
15 sit outside the window wondering was it her. Six friggin'
16 months from what. They -- on three months, four months
17 after -- more than what they told us we'd hear something
18 back.

19 And then all my aunties, you know said to
20 me, when there's something on the news about a body being
21 found, especially Mary-Ann, she goes, "Can you look into
22 this? Can you look into this?" And I do my best. But
23 each and every time it's, like, starting all over again.
24 And it's hard because you -- you -- I want -- I feel

1 helpless. And this is, like, starting, like, and it's
2 not -- the family's always searched for her for as long as
3 I can remember.

4 I remember when I was 15, I was going to
5 high school here, and I was at a friend's place. And my
6 friend's uncle came in, and he asked me what my last name
7 was, and I told him. Asked me where I was from, what my
8 last name was. So I told him, Skunk. He said, "Oh, do you
9 know Sarah Skunk?" And right away, he got my attention. I
10 said, "Do you know her?" You know, do -- and he says,
11 he -- he would run into her sometimes at the -- what do you
12 call those places where people go -- shelters. And right
13 away, I would look into -- but there was no -- ever known
14 record. And then me and my uncle Georgie (ph), this was
15 when I was in high school again, we found a last known
16 address, which was Angus Street. We went there, but by the
17 time she had -- already been gone.

18 So this is in '86. So we've always
19 searched for her. When I was living out in B.C. I did what
20 I can. And my auntie Glenda and them messaged me, can you
21 look into this? Can you look into this? This could
22 possibly be Sarah's daughter, you know. We -- we've always
23 searched for her.

24 And so when you're living this, you're

1 wondering where your loved one is, you're always going to
2 hold that fear, like I did when I couldn't get no help with
3 my daughter. That's the biggest fear. Is that the same
4 things going to happen to her. Why? Is it because she's
5 Native? I should -- I always try to deal with things with
6 love and compassion, but do I get angry? And this -- it
7 pisses me off. It does. I hear about my aunt Sarah
8 getting sent far away because she broke a friggin' window
9 at 12 years-old. Why? I listen to my mom and them
10 stories. Like, no child should ever have to go through
11 that. And that's what everybody, like, with all these
12 recommendations, like, I hope part of that recommendations
13 too, is to educate all these different services; child
14 welfare, police, whatever. Like, the impacts that carry
15 forth from all this stuff that happened.

16 You know, I don't think my mom meant it, but
17 I was in residential school for three years. I may look
18 white, but just so everybody knows here, I'm Native -- full
19 Native. And -- but just to touch a little bit on that, it
20 was hard going to a residential school. A white kid, but I
21 didn't know how to speak in English by the way. But that
22 was the system. And it breaks my heart when I listen to my
23 kokom talk about this stuff when she was given a choice,
24 either her kids got caught up in this whole child welfare

1 system, where she was not going to see her kids again, or
2 residential school. What would you guys choose? Where you
3 can see your kids again, or not see your kids again. Why
4 did she have to make a choice like that? Look what
5 happened, my aunt Sarah's missing.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just want to make
7 sure I give you a chance to, if you want to add anything
8 before I also ask your aunts if there's anything else they
9 want to add?

10 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I would actually really
11 like Connie because me and Connie work together, and
12 something I let anger get the best of me, and -- and I -- I
13 would really like for her to share because like I said, our
14 community, we have three women that are MMIW. And I would
15 really like for her to share also; if that's okay?

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Certainly.

17 **CHIEF CONNIE MCKAY:** *Miigwetch.* (Speaking
18 Ojibway). Just first of all, I would like to say honour to
19 the Mish members. It doesn't matter how many times we hear
20 their story, our story, that the pain and the hurt is still
21 there and it's very, you know, hard to listen to.

22 What I'm really hoping comes out of this
23 inquiry is that history is taught in schools. Is it the
24 real history? Is it the history of what's happened to our

1 people on this -- on this land? It has to be the true
2 history, the true reflection because a true reflection
3 comes accountability. Once you start to integrate that --
4 that history in the -- in the schools, you will get a
5 different outcome. You know, history is taught to -- to
6 teach us so we don't do it again. But if we're not
7 teaching that true history now, it will continue to happen
8 because I want to see my grandchildren learn that they were
9 not Indians lurking in the bush. That they were not bad
10 people. I want them to learn that they were strong people
11 because strong people persevere against such atrocities.

12 Canada has a really dark history. And if
13 they want to see something different in the future, they're
14 going to have to change how that history is taught. It has
15 to be the truth. I don't know how many times this morning
16 I heard the word, truth. Truth means facing what really
17 happened. Acknowledging, yes. There were apologies made,
18 but they were -- were they really sincere apologies? I
19 mean, that only can come from the people that -- that they
20 received that apology. So I think we need to teach that --
21 that truth in the schools.

22 And the other truth that we really need to
23 look at is, looking at our communities. I'm sure
24 throughout this whole commission, you're going to find

1 common denominators. Common factors that affect the well-
2 being of families in our communities. You heard my
3 families here. And I call them my families because I was
4 their -- their Chief for many years. What is in the
5 communities? What factors affected the families to be in a
6 health -- unhealthy position? You got to look at things
7 like housing. How can families be happy and -- and well,
8 if they don't even have a house to live in? How does a
9 hierarchy of child welfare affect? We have to start -- we
10 have to quit looking at intervention, and start looking at
11 prevention.

12 How do we acknowledge our history, our way
13 of doing things? We had our own government systems. So
14 it's really important that we acknowledge those. How did
15 we do things in our communities to support our families?
16 It's too much -- these programs come into our communities,
17 and they become the boss. It shouldn't be like that. And
18 we have to equip our leaders. You know, I was in that
19 role. I know what it's like to be the punching bag from
20 both -- both sides. Your people are mad at you because
21 they have displaced anger. You're trying to do the best
22 you can to support your people, but you're not given the
23 resources. So you're set up for failure. The government
24 knows that. They know that.

1 You know, a few years ago, I think it was in
2 2007, \$9.1 billion supposedly went to First Nations
3 communities. Guess where 4.1 billion of that went? The
4 bureaucracy of Indian Affairs. Can you imagine what impact
5 that would have if more of that money went to communities?
6 Those are the issues. We have to have more programs in our
7 communities for women. We have to support our -- the
8 teaching of our traditional roles. And a real heavy focus
9 on men because, you know, when you look at history, men are
10 forced to live on reserve. They are stripped of their
11 feathers, their warriorship. We have to focus on those.
12 Those are really important. And once -- because they
13 represent the outer circle, the protection circle. And if
14 that is not being nurtured as men, the warriors of our
15 communities, that is not going to filter down to the hub of
16 that, and that's the children.

17 So those are my recommendations, is to
18 support communities. Not just to throw money, but that
19 money has to be in programming. It has to support the rise
20 of our culture because our language is part of that. Our
21 language is -- teaches. Our elders, so many -- so many
22 wounds in our communities. And the voices that you heard
23 here, those were the hearts of the people. Those voices
24 need to have -- let Viola be heard through the voices of

1 her children. Let Sarah be heard through the voices of her
2 sisters and her nieces. And let the other many voices that
3 were heard here, and honour those women. Something has to
4 change. And Canada has a responsibility. It has a
5 responsibility because they acknowledged us First Nations
6 people, us equal, treaty partners. And they have a moral
7 responsibility. And until that responsibility's fulfilled,
8 Canada will not prosper because its first relationship, its
9 foundational principles have not been honoured through the
10 treaty process. *Miigwetch.*

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

12 **CHIEF CONNIE MCKAY:** Thank you.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just want to make
14 sure that any of the family members, if they have anything
15 else they want to add, or that you didn't get a chance to
16 discuss, that you have that opportunity to do so.

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

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. You want to
19 do that?

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible). No.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So Commissioner
22 Audette, the family is done presenting what they'd like to
23 present. So I was just wondering if you had any questions
24 or comments for the family members? Commissioner Audette,

1 can you go (indiscernible)?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: We're getting you
6 something prepared, but we just wanted to make sure you
7 have something.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you so much.

9 Except I can't use (indiscernible). Okay.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you so much.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I need strength.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

15 That's what my habit (indiscernible).

16 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. *Merci*.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Speaking Native
18 Language).

19 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: *Merci*
20 *beaucoup*. (Speaking Native Language). Thank you. And
21 this journey triggers a lot. Anger. We're -- we are asked
22 to be strong as mother and women. I know it's a title,
23 Commissioner, also, and grandmother, but I try each time
24 when I listen and receive this truth, your truth, our

1 truth, my own truth, to -- with the strength of our
2 grandmothers, and ceremonies, and teaching, to change that
3 in a positive and strong -- I don't know in English,
4 reaction, or -- that will help us, help me to fulfill this
5 mandate. And we started in August, a year and a half ago.
6 We're still there, four of us. We're still there
7 surrounded by -- by you, by many people. We fall. And I'm
8 falling today.

9 And I'm not ashamed of that because we
10 represent an institution, a national, public inquiry that
11 is supposed -- and I believe, to be one of a kind tools to
12 say, Canada, something is wrong. And don't pretend that
13 it's just happening in -- at the Wepaskat (ph) or in
14 Kenora, or Downtown Eastside Vancouver, but it's happening
15 across Canada. Not only in 18-something-hundred, but also
16 in 2017. And I agree -- I agree we can do more. And we
17 have to do more, we have to do more for our children, for
18 our grandchildren, but also for your sister, for your
19 auntie. And we will fight because we're already fighting.
20 We're already fighting. And we've been receiving that
21 anger since the moment that it was announced. Legitimate
22 anger because the system failed, and it's still failing
23 today.

24 Am I going to lose my job because I say

1 that, maybe. But I'll sleep well because I have to say it.
2 And I said it before, and I will continue. And first of
3 all, for me, it's not a job. It's something that I dear,
4 sincerely. Sincerely. I wish we were able, when they gave
5 us that mandate a year and a half ago, to re-open all
6 cases. All cases. My niece, my auntie who got killed,
7 your auntie. All cases across Canada. That why, why are
8 we keep -- or, still keep in the dark. But we -- we didn't
9 have that mandate, so we're pushing, pushing and pushing
10 for what leaders ask way before us, that we can re-open
11 those cases with this national task force. That's one
12 thing.

13 The other thing also, we know the system
14 failed. But we know there's people in that system,
15 Indigenous people, Canadian people, or people from Quebec,
16 that are not Native who wants to change. But I guess, it's
17 too big. And I know there is some good people. My niece
18 was found because the police in Quebec was very kind, and
19 did everything to find her. But what about the rest? The
20 rest of many stolen sisters. And I had question, you know,
21 I had question but as a human being, I have emotions also.
22 And Connie, your recommendation, or your message, or your
23 words, triggered the anger that I'm trying to put aside.
24 This is why I love sweat lodge, where I can waahoo, but now

1 it's public. And this is why I love the grandmothers
2 because your recommendation pointed. We can blame our own
3 systems, you know. Maybe the province doesn't have enough
4 resource.

5 I'm anxious to hear that in the second
6 stage, which is the hearing with the institutions. I'm
7 anxious to hear because you help us to build those question
8 to the police, to the coroners, to the health and social
9 services, to child protection, to the justice system. What
10 happened here, or there, or everywhere? You are helping me
11 as a mother and as a commissioner to build those question.
12 That's -- that's for sure. This is why I have a special
13 book, the red one, just for hearings. So it's easy to find
14 in our big shelf because we have so many notes. And I want
15 to make sure they're not dying on the shelf, of course.

16 We know for many, many years, we're not the
17 first inquiry, but I hope we're the last one. We know
18 what's missing. We know what's lacking. We know what went
19 wrong. We're the expert, we know that. But it seemed that
20 the system need to have another kind of expertise,
21 university, to prove with data, with statistics, analysis.
22 Or a justice system will tell them, like, this inquiry it's
23 a creation under the Inquiries Act, so it's involves lots
24 of legalistic aspect, which I will defend, okay. Don't get

1 me wrong because Canada needs to be accountable. They --
2 they agreed to put this inquiry, but I hope they hear from
3 the heart of all of you, and us. Us as a mom from inside,
4 staying here, regardless what happened, or still happening.

5 That extension is needed, even if it's not
6 me, the next commissioner. The cause is way more important
7 than a person, that's what I think. So we can do it --
8 things correctly. How do we say in English, in a good way,
9 or that we take the time to bring the families in that
10 circle. And we have the time to go across Canada. It's
11 nice to go in the cities, very nice, very important, very
12 powerful.

13 But I still believe coming from a First
14 Nation community, I live, you know, I'm still connected to
15 my (Speaking Native Language), my home. We were there all
16 week. Where we brought women who never spoke. We saw,
17 yesterday, a woman that -- a woman that never spoke about
18 her rape. So my heart is suffering because of the timing,
19 the resource, the financial resource, humans resource
20 capacity, to go in the north where voices been kept in
21 silence for many, many, many, many -- for -- for too long.
22 So I agree. You have me on that. And empowerment, if we
23 need to be better, I'm in. I want to better in this
24 journey. For all of us. And we've been hearing -- I take

1 the criticism. I take the love also. I will continue
2 until somebody else decide that my time is over, but
3 believe me, when I'll be free moccasin because I'm not that
4 free anymore. I have to respect -- I'll be -- even if you
5 don't see me walking behind you, or with you, or beside
6 you. And we don't want to be kept in the dark.

7 And of course, my question was very, very,
8 very, maybe, naïve, or when did you start that search
9 officially? Who was there to walk with you when you called
10 the police and say, "We want to know what happened?" Who
11 was there to emotionally, mentally, physically, spiritually
12 to support you in that tragedy? That -- those -- those
13 was, and will be always my question when a family are -- or
14 survivor come here. And it is hard, and I'll say it, what
15 about for those who cannot drive, fly because it's
16 expensive, don't have internet, or the technology, or the
17 financial capacity to come and share their truth. They are
18 in our prayers. How do we reach to them? I know there's
19 an organization that exists. So for me, in the extension,
20 that role, that relationship needs to be stronger. And
21 that has to come from us because we -- we didn't do it
22 enough. Everything went fast, everything goes fast. Even
23 me, I don't know where I go first thing in the morning.
24 I've learnt to give up and say, I believe something will

1 happen. And I'll sit somewhere. So that -- no more
2 frustration, or anxious. And I'm calm when I'm listening a
3 family.

4 But we need to take the time to do it right
5 because the cause, we don't -- we -- we're not going to
6 have another inquiry like this. And we need to educate
7 also. That it is a tool to educate the Canadian. Like, I
8 think you said it, Melissa, it's -- it's still happening
9 across Canada. It's -- and it is. It's not acceptable.
10 That's my English. So it came from the heart, but very
11 dedicated and if you have other question, other comment, to
12 all of you here because I know when we come here, we're
13 nervous. I said it, and I'll repeat it, and it's -- when
14 we leave the room, I should have said that, I should have
15 mentioned this, or I forgot this. The circle is still
16 there, the door is still open. Do not hesitate to contact
17 us and say, I want to add this to my truth. *Merci*
18 *beaucoup*. Thank you very much. (Speaking Native
19 Language).

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Did any of you have
21 any questions in relation to that because I know that would
22 be a lot to translate, or take in. Did you guys need
23 anything clarified? Maybe, Connie, you can just -- yeah.

24 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I just want to say

1 something.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Oh, here. It's on
3 this one.

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** We can go first, then
5 we (indiscernible) --

6 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Okay.

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** -- travel.

8 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I just wanted to say
9 something really quick. Back to when I was saying about
10 how -- how this whole inquiry is to me -- like, seems so
11 (Speaking Native Language).

12 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Look like
13 what? (Speaking Native Language).

14 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I didn't mean it to
15 sound so rude as it, like, when -- when I say (Speaking
16 Native Language) in Ojibwe, it doesn't sound as rude as
17 when you translate it into English, okay. But, like, I
18 understand the workload. I understand all the families and
19 all the stories that you guys hear. And, you know, and --
20 and I go through Facebook, or, you know, newspapers and I
21 hear and see all the stuff about -- and my -- that would be
22 like the issues that families do have. And I can say that
23 it is creating division. It is. And, you know, sometimes,
24 yeah, I get a little pissed at -- here and there and

1 whatever. But at the same time, I do understand.

2 And -- and just like you said, you know,
3 like, this is our one shot to honour all our family members
4 that are missing. And those that have been murdered. This
5 is our one shot, and we have to go with it and try to make
6 it work in honour of them. And it's really sad for me to
7 see the fighting with words and all -- because I know as my
8 Aunt Sarah's niece, her story, my mom and aunties' stories,
9 my kokom. (Speaking Native Language). And my kokom. You
10 know, that if there's -- if there could be good out of bad,
11 then that -- even though we don't have all the answers, and
12 we're somehow making it work.

13 **CHIEF CONNIE MCKAY:** Can I? Because I just
14 wanted to say that I know this -- what -- what's going to
15 happen is that once this inquiry's done, it's mandate.
16 There are people -- they're going to -- they're going to
17 want to say something, they're going to want to talk.
18 They're going to have -- it'll be almost like a missed
19 opportunity. So in our communities, I think there has to
20 be resources given to keep that opportunity open for
21 families to want to continue, like, mental health people,
22 elders that can be supported to support people as they talk
23 about their journeys of missing and murdered women.

24 And when I was talking about my community,

1 there are communities who have higher numbers of murders
2 and missing women. We have two missing women, a missing
3 young man, and many murdered individuals. And if you look
4 at the history of Mishkeegogamang, you'll see a history of
5 trauma. Where resource companies have come in and they're
6 taken, and taken, and taken, and never left anything.
7 Those impacts, the historical impacts of -- of those on our
8 community have made our community at a -- at a higher risk.
9 The fact that we're road access. Those are the things that
10 are -- that are causing those risks to be higher for our
11 members. So I think, if something can come out, you know,
12 it would be to provide those individuals to work --
13 continue that work of healing.

14 Since 1981, my community has lost over 300
15 people. That's a lot of people. That's a lot of grief.
16 And a lot of loss. And a lot of it is related to --
17 they're all connected. All these things are connected,
18 spiritually connected. And so when this inquiry's
19 finished, you're going to have people back home in the
20 communities. We're all spiritual beings. There's sadness,
21 it connects to other people's sadness. Everything's
22 connected. And if you don't provide an opportunity for
23 that sadness to leave, that tragedy to leave that story to
24 be told, it's going to continue. We're going to continue

1 to lose people to addictions. We're going to continue to
2 lose people -- children to the child welfare system. It's
3 going to continue.

4 So what I'm saying is that opportunity needs
5 to be made available to our people to be able to speak
6 because for far too long, and you said it yourself, we've
7 been silenced. History has silenced us. It has been a
8 genocidal policy, terminal instruments to keep us quiet.
9 And that has to change. And the voice of the people needs
10 to return. *Miigwetch.*

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* We
12 have so many -- you so right, even now, there is so many
13 demands, and it's a good sign. It's a healing process.
14 But we have to make sure that we have the capacity to
15 welcome them in a safe place. And that, I worry. And
16 we -- we have to be ready for that. But it's the first
17 time. I have to say thank you, that I -- maybe my other
18 colleagues heard it before in another place, but it's the
19 first -- first time that -- as a recommendation, that this
20 healing process on missing and murdered Indigenous women
21 and girls, is still happening for sharing our truth.
22 *Merci. Merci, Maître Big Canoe.* I think I'm going to
23 switch in French for thirty seconds. *Merci, Merci, merci*
24 *du fond du coeur.* Thank you so much. And we have a gift --

1 gift for -- for you. It came from amazing women. There
2 she is. You want to explain it? She's so cute.

3 **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** First, I'll introduce
4 myself. (Speaking Native Language). I'm grateful,
5 honoured, thankful to be able to be here on -- on the land
6 of the people that are in this land. That are in these
7 trees, these waters. I -- I thank all of them for
8 welcoming us and caring for us the way that they have. And
9 the feathers that are wrapped in the yellow are -- this
10 community has been extremely generous with feathers. We've
11 been gifted more feathers to pass onto the families here
12 than we have in all the other cities put together, so we'll
13 share the ones in the yellow. And they are from -- they're
14 from here. And some may have -- there's a boy who took his
15 regalia apart to give the feathers to the families. There
16 are elders who have taken apart their fans because it's
17 what they have to offer. And it is what we do. It's how
18 we take care of each other, so I raise my hands and say,
19 (Speaking Native Language) to each of you, to all of the
20 staff, to everybody who's making this work. To our
21 beautiful elders who take care of us, so (Speaking Native
22 Language).

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

24 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Ask the elder to give

1 it to you.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I should do it.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I want to say thank
5 you so much. Thank you for that.

6 MR. RON KANUTSKI: Connie, are you's -- are
7 you's all okay with people coming up and greeting you's?
8 Okay. Are you okay with people coming up and visiting with
9 you? Okay. Well, he can -- we can sneak you in.

10 (Indiscernible). All right. At this time, as they're
11 passing out gifts to the family, we're going to call on a
12 healing song for the -- the people of Mishkeegogamang
13 and -- that are here today, and for this family. As per
14 request, we are asking that we just, kind of, honour their
15 space at this time. And they are going to, kind of, just
16 go out with the song. And we're not going to do our -- the
17 way we were hugging and that. We're just going to, kind
18 of, hold back from that. Thank you.

19

20 --- Exhibits (code: P01P08P0202)

21 **Exhibit 1:** Single digital image displayed during public
22 testimony

23

24 --- Upon recessing at 1:44 p.m.

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Hearing # 3
Witness: Charlotte Murray
In relation to Verna Patricia Sturgeon-Gliddy
Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox

--- Upon resuming at 3:16 p.m.

MS JENNIFER COX: Madame Commissioner, I present to you Charlotte Murray. She's here to speak about her cousin Verna. Verna is essentially a sister to Charlotte, and with her are her support folks. I'll just get you to identify your name for the record.

MS. CHARLOTTE TWANKWIT NACASSE: Bonjour.
Charlotte Twankin Nacasse (phonetic).

MS. SHARON JOHNSON: Sharon Johnson.

MS. MARILYN PIONIN: Hello. Marilyn Pionin (phonetic).

MS. JENNIFER COX: And before we start, Madam Commissioner, if we could have a promise to tell the truth on the feather, which Charlotte has with her?

She would like to do it on the Bible. I'm sorry.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Charlotte, do you swear

1 to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
2 truth, so help you God?

3 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** I swear.

4 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Thank you.

5 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Charlotte, I'm
6 wondering if you can start by telling the Commissioner a
7 little bit about who you are, where you're from and where
8 you grew up?

9 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** All right. Hello.
10 Bonjour. My name is Charlotte Murray. I belong to the KI
11 Band, which is Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, also known as
12 Big Trout Lake. That's what it was known for before. I
13 recently got my indigenous name back in September, and the
14 name I was blessed with is Kitika Goonts (phonetic), which
15 means "little fawn".

16 I'm here today to speak to you about my
17 sister. The lawyer, Jen, Jennifer, introduced her as
18 Verna. Growing up, her name was Patricia. So her actual
19 name is Patricia Verna Sturgeon Gliddy. Sturgeon was her
20 maiden name and Gliddy was her married name.

21 Just to clarify something, Patricia is and
22 will always be my sister in my heart. She was actually my
23 cousin biologically if you wanted to get technical. So by
24 Western standards, she was my cousin, but by Aboriginal and
25 Indigenous standards, she is my cousin -- my sister.

1 Patricia's family, as broad as it was, her
2 immediate family consisted of her mother, Dina Sturgeon,
3 who is -- was my auntie. Her and my mom are sisters --
4 were sisters, and her dad Simeon Sturgeon is still living.
5 Patricia left behind four siblings, four blood siblings:
6 her oldest brother Levis (phonetic), her oldest sister
7 Loretta and her younger siblings William and Samantha.

8 I would just like to take this time to say
9 that you will notice me wiping off sweat off my face every
10 once in a while. Please don't take it as my being shy or
11 that in some way I'm uncomfortable being up here, because
12 I'm not. I think this is my body's way of telling me that
13 I'm going to soon be going through the change.

14 (LAUGHTER)

15 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** And now with that out
16 of the way, I would like to say that my own family, my
17 biological blood family consisted of my mom and dad,
18 Stephen and Peggy Gliddy, and my biological siblings,
19 Marsha Tate - she recently got married - and my younger
20 brother Andrew Gliddy. And in our family, we also had two
21 of my cousins living with us. One of them later became an
22 adopted sister, but really she was my - she is my sister,
23 and her name is Danielle. She too also married a Tate. So
24 my female siblings both married Sachigo men, so more power
25 to them.

1 Growing up, our home was the place to hang
2 out, not only for my immediate family but for all my
3 cousins, my sisters, my brothers, all of them. We always
4 took care of each other, but we also fought. I'm not going
5 to sugarcoat anything.

6 I just want to share with you a little bit
7 about my sister Patricia because I want to give you guys an
8 idea of who she was, especially you, Michele.

9 So my sister Patricia was a beautiful
10 Indigenous woman who always kept her hair around shoulder
11 length, and she stood - and I'm being very generous here -
12 she stood maybe 5'1. Patricia, she loved to laugh and she
13 loved to help people that needed help, not just in the
14 community but if she left the reserve and came to where I
15 live in Sioux Lookout. So on the streets we have people
16 that are stuck. And very often Patricia would take the
17 time to help these people in any way she could by either
18 giving them a few dollars, enough to go buy coffee, or give
19 them her own lunch. And that was the way that she was.
20 And I remember quite clearly, us being in Sioux, this was
21 before I moved there, this was when we still in our teens.
22 We were walking down the main drag in Sioux Lookout, which
23 is known as Front Street, and there were so many people
24 that
25 were -- for lack of a better term, less fortunate than we

1 were. And so my sister, Patricia -- we were with our other
2 sister, Marsha (ph), and the three of us, we were walking
3 and everybody that we walked by, she gave them money out of
4 her pocket. To the point where, by the time we made it to
5 our destination, she had none. And yet, there were maybe
6 ten more people lining up for money from her. So in an
7 overwhelmed kind of voice she said, "Charlotte, Marsha, I
8 need money." So Marsha and I, we dug into our pockets and
9 we gave her the money and she passed it on.

10 Patricia, she was a sensitive soul. And by
11 that I mean, she could cry over anything. I've got to
12 admit that she and I were known as the saps in our family
13 because she and I -- we're both so sensitive that we can
14 find a reason to cry even during a horror movie. I mean,
15 who does that? But I clearly remember a time that we were
16 watching Stephen King's 'Sometimes They Come Back'. For
17 those of you that aren't familiar with the movie, it's
18 about a boy. And his brother dies, but then we fast
19 forwarded to the end, his brother comes back in the form of
20 a ghost or however. And he never aged, but the little boy
21 had aged. And so that just killed Patricia and I. We just
22 sat there and we cried. And our family, they sat around
23 and they were just laughing at us. But the more -- the
24 harder they laughed, the more we cried. We just couldn't
25 understand why they couldn't see what we were seeing. But,

1 yeah, it's one of my most fondest memories of her. Oh, I
2 could tell you so many other times that she and I cried
3 together, but that's not why I'm here.

4 So our families resided in
5 Kitchenuhmaykoosib, which is a reserve north of here, about
6 500 kilometres. And it's a fly-in community only, so it's
7 very isolated. So back during the time before my sister
8 Patricia was murdered, there really wasn't much in place on
9 the reserve, as far as supports. For example, there was no
10 family drop-in places where she could take her kids. At
11 the time, there was no sexual assault workers. They had no
12 advocates to go with them during meetings with Child and
13 Family Services, which in our area is Tikinagan. And --
14 and so I've always believed that if we had more services,
15 like those in place, that the circumstances leading to my
16 sister's death, her murder, may not have happened.

17 So my sister, Patricia, she had four
18 children. So those children are now 19, 17, 15, and 9. So
19 seven -- if you do the math, and subtract seven years from
20 their current age, that's how old they were when their
21 mother was taken from them. Her two older boys -- the
22 oldest is Donovan; and her next one is Vincent; and her
23 daughter, her little girl, who is a spitting image of my
24 sister, is Madison; and the baby, his name is Demetri, and
25 he's just as cute today as in that photo. So -- but

1 Patricia got married in February of 2000 to a man named,
2 Chris. And that's who's in the photo with her. I remember
3 the year, 2000, because that's the same year I met my
4 husband. Well, actually, I'd met him the year before
5 and -- but it was Patricia's wedding day that brought my
6 husband and I together. So her wedding day was always
7 special to me.

8 Okay. So sometime after Patricia's fourth
9 child, her children went into care with Tikinagan. The
10 younger two were lucky enough to find a loving foster home.
11 And they live here in Thunder Bay, with a lady named Ruth.
12 And in my family, she's known as Auntie Ruth. But her two
13 older boys weren't quite as lucky. They ended up in
14 different foster homes. They're now back in the reserve,
15 so they now live with their dad. So -- and each child has
16 different struggles that I will go into later on.

17 When my sister, Patricia, had her babies
18 taken, she became without hope. Without her babies to keep
19 her grounded, her life got harder. She drank, and lived on
20 the streets here in "T" Bay for a couple of years. And
21 during those years -- during the -- the couple years, I
22 lost touch with her. Simply because I didn't know where to
23 call. I didn't know where she was residing, I didn't know
24 with who, but our prayers were answered.

25 The last six months to nine months of her

1 life, she was working on getting better. She was in the
2 process of bettering herself in the hopes to one day get
3 her children back. She had gone back home to Big Trout to
4 patch things up with her husband, Chris. And so for nine
5 months she lived like a person with a new lease on life.
6 She could envision that one day she would get her children
7 back.

8 On September 2nd, 2010, Patricia, my sister,
9 had to fly back to Thunder Bay -- here, to testify in a
10 criminal hearing. Prior to coming out, Patricia had asked
11 for support in the form of an escort. She had wanted to go
12 with her husband, as she had been anxious. Patricia's
13 request was denied. So that day, Patricia left K.I. to
14 travel here to testify against a man who had hurt her. To
15 this day, I never understood why they sent a woman that was
16 already vulnerable to have to come here to face something
17 so stressful as court, and to have to face the person who
18 victimized her, alone.

19 So it was at court that she later went out
20 for a break to have a cigarette. And it was while she was
21 outside on the court steps that she met up with Joanne
22 Vivier, who would later plead guilty to first degree
23 murder. When she met up with Joanne, they left the court
24 grounds. They went to a -- from -- they went and indulged
25 in some alcohol. And while they were indulging, they

1 bumped into another person -- another woman, an -- an
2 Indigenous woman named, Michelle Morris, who also later
3 pled guilty to first degree murder for my sister.

4 So sometime during that night, after they'd
5 been indulging, they had gone back to my sister's room.
6 And my sister, Patricia, was staying at the Airlane Hotel
7 because that's where they had put her up. By, they, I mean
8 the people that she'd come out with to testify. So whether
9 that'd be the police she travelled with, or the lawyers
10 that she travelled with that day, but that's where she --
11 that's where she died. She died at the Airlane Hotel by
12 the hands of Joanne Vivier and Michelle Morris. And she
13 died because she'd taken a beating from them. The two
14 murdered my sister, and it just seemed so surreal.

15 You know, I was at home that day, September
16 2. I'd gone to the grocery store, and I had bought
17 supplies that I would need the next day to properly
18 celebrate my daughter's third birthday. So that brings me
19 to September 3rd. I woke up. I started cooking for the
20 birthday dinner that we were having later on that
21 afternoon. As I mentioned, my daughter, Erin (ph), had
22 turned three, September 3rd, 2010. So it was a day that
23 was supposed to be filled with celebration. Not only for
24 my daughter, but for my nephew Markus (ph) as well, who had
25 turned seven just a day before. So on September 2, my

1 nephew, Markus, had turned seven. So we were having a
2 double birthday that day.

3 So I was in the room and I was doing last
4 minute things. I was wrapping birthday presents for my
5 daughter, Erin. She's here in Thunder Bay with me today,
6 but due to the nature of this hearing, I did not feel it
7 would be proper for me to have her sit up here with me.
8 But I brought her with me because she's my snuggle buddy,
9 and she gives the best hugs. So I was in my room wrapping
10 their presents. Presents for my daughter, and presents for
11 my nephew. As I happily came out of my room, I went to the
12 kitchen, which was where I'd prepared all the food and all
13 the guests were there.

14 And I walked into the kitchen as my mother
15 was hanging up the phone. As she turned around to face me,
16 the look on her face informed me that something awful,
17 awful had happened. And she broke the news to me. I
18 remember her saying, "Charlotte, you need to sit down."
19 And I looked right at my mom, and I said, "Mom, I'll take
20 it standing." And she told me that my sister, Patricia,
21 was gone.

22 September 3rd was supposed to be a day of
23 celebration. I woke up that morning not knowing the news
24 that was going to hit me that evening. I asked her, "How?"
25 Because I'd known she'd had -- she'd gone to Thunder Bay

1 with police. How could someone who'd been flown up on a
2 plane with police and a bunch of lawyers be dead the next
3 day? And at the time we didn't have any details, other
4 than that her body had been found in the hotel. And that
5 they had confirmed that it was my sister. They were just
6 trying to notify everyone before Facebook could break the
7 news to family.

8 So my mother -- I remember her asking me, do
9 you just want to -- oh, forget the birthday party. And I
10 told her -- I said, "We can't do anything tonight. The
11 kids are depending on this day of seeing the cake." So I
12 did what I could. I swallowed my pain. I swallowed my
13 hurt. And I went through the motions of throwing my
14 daughter and my nephew a birthday celebration that they
15 deserved. And when the dinner was over, I remember walking
16 back to my bedroom where I had just wrapped presents
17 earlier, and these racking sobs broke through my body. I
18 can remember how -- how powerful my sobs felt.

19 I -- the next few days, my sister was on the
20 phone with our Chief and Council. And I remember getting a
21 call saying to pack my bags and come down to the airport
22 right away because my flight had been paid for to go up to
23 my reserve and wait for the coroner to release our baby
24 sister. And if memory serves, the council member of my
25 band that went above and beyond that day, that got my

1 sister and I our flights up to Big Trout, was Jackie McKay.
2 I don't recall if I ever thanked him. So, Jackie, if
3 you're listening, I just want to say that I thank you from
4 the bottom of my heart for making sure that my sisters and
5 I went home, so that we could be there for when our baby
6 sister was brought home.

7 When I -- all through the police
8 investigation, or what there was of the investigations, I
9 personally, was never spoken to, or contacted. I never
10 have personally spoken to the coroner, but that's in the
11 works right now. I will get to speak with the coroner,
12 eventually. But during the time, I did ask my sisters --
13 the ones who did -- the two that were our go-to because in
14 our family, the ones that they spoke with were the sisters,
15 the biological sisters, Loretta Ash (ph) and Samantha
16 Sturgeon (ph). So they were our go-to. They were the ones
17 that informed the rest of the family. And so the coroner
18 had shared with my cousins that our sister had died from
19 blunt force trauma.

20 I sit here and I think, blunt force trauma.
21 That's such a broad term. When I personally saw the damage
22 caused to my baby sister, the damage that was done to her
23 body, that was more than blunt force trauma. The way they
24 left her -- her body, they tried to annihilate her. Joanne
25 Vivier and Michelle Morris will always be the monsters in

1 my nightmares. They broke my little sister in several
2 places. When we saw her in her casket when she was brought
3 home, she was almost unrecognizable. The funeral home did
4 the best they could to fix her up. But the damage was
5 evident.

6 At the time that this was all going on with
7 my sister's murder, her biological brother, William, was
8 incarcerated right here in the Thunder Bay D.J., District
9 Jail. And on the day of our sister's funeral, my brother
10 had one more day left in his sentence. And whoever
11 controls the jails didn't have any compassion -- enough
12 compassion in their hearts to let him put on a suit to come
13 to his sister's funeral. Oh, they said, "Yes, you can
14 attend her funeral." But under their terms. They wanted
15 him in his jumpsuit, they wanted him shackled, they wanted
16 him paraded, like he was some kind of vicious animal. So
17 my brother, he opted against it because he didn't want the
18 memory of his -- our sister's funeral to be made into a
19 circus. So he stayed.

20 I didn't personally participate in any of
21 the court proceedings. I mentioned earlier that my cousin,
22 Loretta -- well, my sisters, Loretta and Samantha, along
23 with Patricia's biological dad, Phillip (ph), were the ones
24 the services were open to. By, services, I mean their
25 travel to court from the res to Thunder Bay was covered.

1 And they were the ones that were notified of upcoming court
2 dates, but very often those changed without notice. Mike
3 [sic] -- my sisters, did -- shared the info that they were
4 privileged to with the rest of us the best that they could.
5 And they tried to keep everyone in the loop, but it's hard.
6 It's hard when you have one family member living in Round
7 Lake, another -- majority of the family living in Big
8 Trout, some living in Sandy Lake, and then us living in
9 Sioux Lookout, and some in Thunder Bay. It's hard to keep
10 everyone in the loop. So they did the best that they could
11 to share the emails that they had, and contact info of
12 everyone with the proper authorities.

13 They didn't get much help from victim
14 [sic] -- Victim Services that I knew of. We, as a family,
15 and not even my sisters, Loretta and Patricia [sic], were
16 informed of the value of providing a victim impact
17 statement. Nor were we even made aware that it was an
18 option. And that's when a victim liaison advocate would've
19 come in handy. Had we known about the victim impact
20 statement ahead of time, I personally would have provided
21 one. Even if I couldn't be present. I would have had one
22 of my sisters read it for me. It was very challenging to
23 get info about any kind of court dates, and reaching family
24 was harder. I was going to try and be present to one of
25 the court dates, and I tried asking for the actual date.

1 And it kept getting changed on me. So I lost my nerve.

2 I was never -- never able to bring myself to
3 attending, or even admitting that my sister had been
4 murdered. The idea of someone murdering such an amazing
5 soul was just so over my head I could not believe that
6 somebody actually hurt her that way. I just want to say
7 that for five years I pretended like my sister was still
8 around. It was how I coped. So for five years my sister,
9 Patricia, was on one grand adventure after another. You
10 know, I pictured her on top of the Eiffel Tower, taking
11 selfies. I pictured her riding those gondolas on the
12 rivers of Venice in Italy. I pictured her sunbathing on
13 the wonderful sandy beaches of Malibu. I pictured her
14 rubbing elbows with the stars in Hollywood. So for five
15 years that's what I took comfort in.

16 Then two years ago, the Friendship
17 Centre in Sioux Lookout offered a sharing circle in part of
18 the MMIW inquiry. And I went. I sat in the circle, and I
19 listened. And I remember thinking to myself when the
20 feather gets to me, I'll just say, *Miigwech*, and pass it
21 along. Well, that day, in that circle, the feather came
22 close to me. And each time it got closer and closer, I
23 felt drawn to it. And I remember reaching out to take it
24 from a good friend, and that was still my plan. I was
25 going to say, *Miigwech*, and keep passing it. When I got

1 hold of it, it was like something powerful came over me.
2 It was like an electric charge that went from my hand to my
3 elbow, and then to my shoulder, and then -- and then all of
4 a sudden, I could hear somebody talking. And I thought to
5 myself, "God, she's strong." She's saying exactly the
6 stuff I need to say. It was me. I was sharing. And so
7 five years of pretending came out. In one fast, powerful
8 share. My heart and my brain were ready, by my body
9 wasn't. My body didn't know what hit it.

10 I remember shaking, and I remember feeling
11 the room close around me. I remember getting up, and I
12 remember turning to my left, and giving the feather to the
13 lady on my right -- on my left. And I remember looking at
14 my good friend -- my good friend, Candy. And I said, "I
15 can't do this." I said, "I'm sorry, but you're going to
16 have to excuse me." And I left. When I got out into the
17 hallway of our Friendship Centre in Sioux Lookout, I cried
18 like I'd never cried before. I cried so much, that I swear
19 to God, people at Front Street probably heard me crying.
20 And I remember people around me, and I remember focusing on
21 one face. And I remember telling that face, "I need to go
22 home. I need to go home." So my friend, she drove me
23 home.

24 And then we got word that the healer wanted
25 me to come back so that he could talk to me some more. So

1 I waited until I made sure that most of the people in the
2 room had already cleared out, and I went back and I spoke
3 with the healer. And we had a good chat. I told him stuff
4 about my sister I'd never told anyone. And he listened.
5 He was exactly what I needed at that moment. And I wish
6 that other people that were hurting had people like him to
7 help them. And so that was how my name got shared with the
8 inquiry. And now I'm here.

9 And it brings me to my recommendations. I
10 believe escorts are needed for victims, or witnesses when
11 leaving their home reserve to go testify. Whether it'd be
12 for them, or whether they're testifying for somebody else.
13 I believe, wholeheartedly, that had they granted my sister,
14 Patricia, an escort and had allowed for her to be
15 accompanied by her husband, I believe that she would have
16 been a -- alive today. I believe that Joanne Vivier and
17 Michelle Morris never would have murdered her.

18 My other recommendation is that more effort
19 needs to be put into -- reach out to family members with
20 updates on court dates so that they're given time to make
21 arrangements to be there, if they should choose to be
22 there. In our case, it would have been helpful to know
23 that we could have shared a victim impact statement, or
24 statements. I've often wondered how is sentencing
25 determined when a loved one is murdered. And I often

1 wondered would our victim impact statements have made a
2 difference in the sentencing. The time Joanne Vivier and
3 Michelle Morris spent in jail for their crime of eight
4 years, just doesn't seem sufficient enough for me. Eight
5 years on a life that was so loved. How were they able to
6 determine the sentence that they got?

7 Another recommendation that I have, Michèle,
8 is families need to be notified of upcoming parole
9 hearings, probation, and release dates. And I will tell
10 you why. No one in my family was notified. Not Loretta,
11 not Samantha, who would have shared with the rest of us
12 that they were getting out. We found out -- I woke up one
13 morning, and I fired up the old computer. Turned on
14 Facebook, and as soon as it loaded, the first picture I saw
15 was of Michelle Morris's face. And I felt like somebody
16 kicked me in the gut. The wind was knocked right out of
17 me. I can't remember the exact head -- heading --
18 headline, but it was something to the effect of 'Police are
19 Requesting Information on the Whereabouts of Michelle
20 Morris Who is in Breach of Probation.' So that was why I'm
21 making that recommendation.

22 Here is a big one. Someone is needed within
23 the communities to provide information about the rights of
24 surviving family members. A liaison, or an advocate to
25 help explain what to expect in court proceedings. It is my

1 belief that the Crown attorneys who overlooked my sister's
2 trial, or court, however you want to word it, they need to
3 be held accountable to the families before they begin the
4 talk of plea bargaining. They need to make families aware
5 of their plan for a plea bargain. They need to explain why
6 they feel a plea bargain is needed. The Crown attorneys
7 also need to be held accountable to the community of -- the
8 communities of the families about negotiations for plea
9 bargains. In my sister's case, Joanne Vivier and Michelle
10 Morris were originally charged with first degree murder,
11 and they pled guilty to first degree murder. But it was
12 later pled down to manslaughter. Sitting here now
13 reflecting, it just doesn't make any sense to me. Why they
14 would have done so. If they already had the guilty plea,
15 why knock it down?

16 At this time, I would like to say thank you,
17 Michèle, for listening. I would like to thank the media
18 for the coverage that they're doing today, and days before,
19 and tomorrow and whatever. I would like to say a big thank
20 you to my two supporters, Marilyn (ph) and Shawna (ph).
21 And the elders, and my friend, Sharon (ph). The previous
22 family had mentioned how they felt. It could have been
23 better organized. And I was sitting back there thinking,
24 that's exactly what I said to my friend. And so that would
25 be my recommendation to the inquiry is I felt like I was

1 forgotten about. I didn't get my travel arrangements to
2 come here until the night before I was supposed to come
3 here. And then there was miscommunication. One of the
4 ladies I spoke with had promised us flights, and another
5 lady had said -- talked about buses. And it was my
6 understanding that if we had gone with the bus, we would
7 have been here Saturday night. So when Saturday rolled
8 around and I hadn't heard from anyone, it was my assumption
9 that we were flying out the next day. And then I didn't
10 hear from anybody until Saturday night. Yeah, and the plan
11 was that I was supposed to catch a bus, which was
12 contradictory to what I had been promised. So I ended up
13 hitching a ride with Shawna Fyloo (ph). And my daughter
14 came with me, and for my return portion, I wasn't sure if I
15 was suppose to use the bus ticket. And then I -- and then
16 I was told that I was going to be flown home, and I was
17 like, "Yeah." And I asked which day, and I had been told
18 that it would be booked for Thursday morning --

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Tomorrow
20 (indiscernible).

21 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** A -- two days.

22 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Two days.

23 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** Yeah. So Tuesday
24 morning. So I thought, okay, that's great. I'll have an
25 extra day where I could meet with and plan to meet with my

1 niece and my nephew who live here, who are Patricia's
2 youngest two. And then this afternoon I found out I'm
3 leaving tomorrow morning. So I won't get to see them. I
4 almost had second thoughts about sharing publicly, and it
5 was just because I was feeling stressed and -- and I wasn't
6 sure how my family was going to take it. And -- and after
7 I spoke with Patricia's daughter, she said, "I'm glad. I'm
8 glad you're doing it. Then at least she has a voice." So
9 that's why I'm here today. And I just want to thank
10 everyone that's here, and everyone that's out there in
11 cyber-world. Thank you for taking the time to listen.

12 And Michèle, I have one last thing to say to
13 you. I heard that you can get -- that you can apply for
14 standing, if you're a family member. Because I would like
15 to stay involved with the inquiry after this day. So if
16 it's possible, I would like to apply for standing. A
17 special shout-out to my other lawyer, Susan (ph). Thank
18 you.

19 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Madam Commissioner, I
20 don't have any more questions. So I'm wondering if you
21 have any questions or comments?

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci, Maître*
23 *Cox.* It's more comment -- it was so -- so, how do we say
24 in English? You're powerful and the question, poof, you
25 answer it. They're wondering, poof, you answer it. So the

1 comment will -- I would start this comment by -- for you
2 and all the families that are here, and who were in
3 Whitehorse, Smithers, Membertou, Maliotenam,
4 Saskatchewan -- in Saskatoon, sorry, Edmonton, Winnipeg,
5 even for the hearing for the -- in Winnipeg, the first one
6 we did in the wrong place also because family didn't feel
7 safe in that space we went for the expert panel. And he
8 even by calling it, expert panel, like, as if family are
9 not expert. On -- on behalf of myself, it was a real
10 nightmare to see even the adfac (ph), your friend behind
11 can say -- testify about that, and you too as a -- an --
12 former enfac (ph) member, how hard it was to inform the
13 victims and families. And this is our responsibility. I
14 don't make the calls, but I represent those calls, so I --
15 I am so sorry.

16 Am I happy with that? No. So for all
17 families and survivors who are listening, you didn't
18 deserve that stress at all. So is it going to repair, I
19 don't think so. But I don't think it was right and still
20 right today that you're not the only one here who doesn't
21 know when they're leaving. So it is a big concern. It --
22 and I know, our new executive director will have to find
23 solutions. We'll have to find solutions, and the
24 commissioners, myself, don't like that -- to hear that.
25 And -- and I'm not asking you to accept my apology, but

1 deep inside I know that it's unacceptable. So I am very
2 sorry.

3 And not only on the travel, but the
4 miscommunication, all that process, was and still very
5 something. So I accept -- I accept what you -- you say,
6 and the -- the family before you also. And for the next
7 hearing that we will do in the winter and the spring,
8 hopefully we have that extension. I hope the people that
9 works for the inquiry will make sure that there's no more
10 accidents, or mistake, or that type of organize -- how do
11 we say? Our -- the way we're organizing. Yeah. Because
12 it hurts me. Thank you for your strength. And your
13 recommendation was -- not was, they are very powerful and
14 the one that very -- I was like, "Yeah, I did most of
15 them." Only one I couldn't attend. My girls wanted to see
16 me, so I -- I'm sad to say, I didn't go to Edmonton.

17 But the -- the one you say about
18 sentences -- *les sentences*, even myself, I'm scratching.
19 How do we -- how come that sentence was that, and this and
20 that. So we have that concern, and we -- I want to
21 understand. And I'm not from that world, but I'm in the
22 position now that I'm able to ask those question from
23 inside. So I'll advocate for that one for sure, but for
24 the rest also. So I have to say thank you so much, and
25 thank you for your supporter, and FILU for helping

1 beautiful woman here. And all the other women also -- to
2 come here or to -- to be prepare.

3 Thank you also for the Friendship Centres
4 across Canada, and the one in Sioux Lookout. Many of them
5 are making miracles, or helping, or trying to save, or to
6 walk beside many people, so I -- I acknowledge their work
7 and -- and there's never nothing for nothing. That day you
8 went there, you passed that feather, somebody heard you,
9 asked you to come back. And look where you are today.
10 Look where you are today. Opening that path, or helping,
11 or telling the truth, but also to have the courage to say,
12 "Hey, Michèle, there's something wrong the way things are
13 happening." And that, I admire that. Your voice is
14 important to me. And the love that we have for women, that
15 makes us strong, so I want to say thank you and if it's
16 okay for you and other women, let's pray that the next
17 hearings are way, way, way more -- how do we say?

18 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Structured.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Structured
20 for the women and the men that will come to us. *Merci*
21 *beaucoup*. With that, would you accept a beautiful eagle
22 feather from us?

23 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** Yes.

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Oui?* We have
25 -- we -- we have five of them (indiscernible) English. I

1 just added one. I'm not going to give myself an eagle
2 feather, so -- *oui*. My grandmother, Bernie, can explain.

3 **MS. BERNIE SKUNDAAL WILLIAMS:** I just want
4 to explain this -- these -- these eagle feathers started
5 their journey from Haida Gwaii, that's on the west coast of
6 the mainland in B.C. And my understanding now is that
7 these feathers are from this territory now. Yesterday,
8 they were given out from Sechelt and the last community was
9 Haida Gwaii and from Sechelt. So now, the feathers have
10 been donated from this community now. So -- and it just
11 keeps going to other places now. So I want to say
12 (Speaking Native Language) to you.

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Some were from my
14 community who spoke French. But they're all gone. They
15 have one last shuttle left. *Merci beaucoup*.

16 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you so much
17 (indiscernible). I think it's white sage.
18 (Indiscernible).

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I didn't get your
20 name?

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Shawna.

22 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Shawna? *Merci*.
23 Thank you so much. Thank you.

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

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*

1 *beaucoup*. The sage and (indiscernible).

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

3 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Sorry, I said white
4 sage.

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

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible) for
8 the support. (Indiscernible).

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You've got national
10 media (indiscernible).

11 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Yes. For the purposes
12 of the record, if we could adjourn or conclude this matter.
13 You want to say more?

14 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Ladies and gentlemen,
15 this is our last public session, part of the MMI -- IW, so
16 I've -- the family is willing to accept any visitors. I
17 have to -- I have to look at -- and if you'll accept the
18 love from the guests in the audience that are with us.

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

20 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** All right. I -- I get
21 to -- I get to go first. Sorry. *Excusez-moi, excusez-moi.*
22 I -- I go again. Hey.

23 **(LAUGHTER)**

24 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Okay, thank you for your
25 strength. And we invite those who wish to come up and pass

1 their love and -- encouragement and strength on to this
2 young lady. And give her ongoing support for her -- for
3 her tomorrows. And at this time we'll also be going to the
4 drum to -- for the adjournment and the closing of these
5 public sessions. And we would like to thank all of you's
6 for coming out and being a support to these families for
7 the last three days. Tomorrow will be a continuation.
8 However, they'll be closed -- they'll be closed sessions.
9 They will not be open to the public. Close it up.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Close it up song?

11 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Well, yeah. Healing
12 song. Healing song and then, yeah, for the -- yeah. Do
13 the healing song for her, and then close it up. This is
14 adjourned.

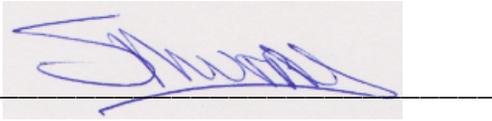
15 **--- Exhibits (code: P01P08P0203)**

16 **Exhibit 1:** Digital folder of six images displayed
17 during public testimony

18 **---** Upon adjourning at 5:02 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shannon Munro, 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.



Shannon Munro

February 24, 2017