

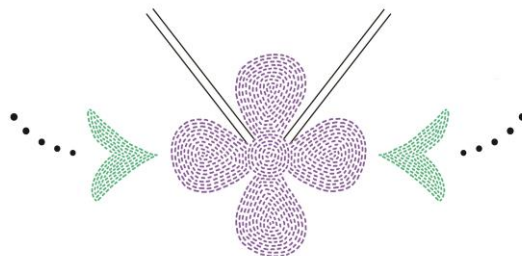
National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls  
Truth-Gathering Process – Part 1 Public Hearings  
Siniktarvik Hotel and Conference Centre - Salon A/B**

**Rankin Inlet, Nunavut**



**PUBLIC**

**Wednesday February 21, 2018**

**Public Volume 47(a):**

**Sophie Nashook, In relation to Della Ootoova**

**Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

**Commission Counsel: Shelby Thomas**

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**II**

**APPEARANCES**

Assembly of First Nations	Non-appearance
Government of Canada	Donna Keats (Legal Counsel)
Government of Canada	Anne McConville (Legal Counsel)
Government of Canada	Jennifer Clarke (Legal Counsel)
Government of Nunavut	Alexandre Blondin (Legal Counsel)
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	Beth Symes (Legal Counsel)
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	Rebecca Kudloo (Representative)

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>Public Volume 47a</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Witnesses: Sophie Nashook</b>	
<b>In relation to Della Ootoova</b>	
Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson	
Commission Counsel: Shelby Thomas	
Court Reporter: Trudy McKinnon	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	

IV

LIST OF EXHIBITS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
<b>Witnesses: Sophie Nashook</b>		
<b>Exhibits (code: P01P11P0201)</b>		
1	Folder of images displayed during the public hearing of Sophie Nashook.	10
2	**PUBLICATION BAN** Report of Post-mortem Examination of Jochebed Della Ootoova, Office of the Chief Coroner, Provincial Forensic Pathology Unit, Case #A-533-08, Date of autopsy June 9, 2008. Note: There is handwriting on the cover correcting the marital status of Della Nashook (21 pages including attachments).	10

1 Rankin Inlet, Nunavut

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 at 9:25  
3 a.m.

4 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Good morning  
5 Commissioner Robinson. I am Shelby Thomas, and I am a  
6 lawyer with the National Inquiry. I'm Métis from Manitoba  
7 and I wanted to take the time to thank the people of this  
8 community as welcoming me as a guest in their territory.

9 This morning we will be hearing from Sophie  
10 Nashook who will be sharing the story of Della Ootoova.  
11 Mr. Registrar, Sophie would like to swear on the bible.

12 **REGISTRAR:** Good morning Sophie.

13 **MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:** Hi.

14 **SOPHIE NASHOOK, Sworn:**

15 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Sophie, if you can start  
16 this morning by sharing with Commissioner Robinson and  
17 introducing yourself briefly and where you're from?

18 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:**

19 (*Speaking in Inuktitut*). My name is Sophie Nashook, I'm  
20 from Pond Inlet. We used to call Della Ootoova Jochebed in  
21 our community. She was my sister-in-law. Jochebed was  
22 from Pond Inlet. She died in 2008. She used to go to  
23 Arctic College. During her time at Arctic College she also  
24 worked part time as an interpreter at the Health Centre.

25 She had two children, a son and a daughter.

1 She had a husband, Amos Ootoova. Jochebed has many  
2 sisters, older sisters, siblings, brothers. Her brother,  
3 the oldest, died recently, a year and a half ago.

4 Elijah Nashook is my husband. My sister-in-  
5 law lived in Iqaluit and she worked at the Elder Centre.  
6 Her husband has passed away and my in-law also died  
7 recently. It's been four years now.

8 Jochebed died in 2008 during the springtime.  
9 It seems there was a drinking party whereby her husband  
10 beat her to death. As the sister-in-law I couldn't talk  
11 about it. My husband was mentally affected, he was in  
12 pain. So were my elderly in-laws.

13 Out of love and respect for them I could not  
14 speak to this issue for she was my friend, my sister-in-  
15 law. We used to joke around quite a bit, and we'd kid each  
16 other, and we'd stay together and keep each other company.  
17 I'm very close with my in-laws. We like to share jokes and  
18 laugh together.

19 Upon her death in 2008, a month later the  
20 husband returned to Pond Inlet with their children, their  
21 son and their daughter. However, I pursued the matter with  
22 the husband. I looked at him, I forced him to look at me,  
23 to face me. I wanted to know why he did what he did out of  
24 anger. I was angry.

25 The Coroner kept the body under their

1 premises and then the body was sent out for an autopsy to  
2 be done.

3 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** (Indiscernible) the  
4 Coroner's Report. Would you take the time to explain to  
5 the Commissioner what -- what is in the Report? Just a  
6 point of clarification. There's writing, handwriting on  
7 top of this. Is this the writing of the author or -- there  
8 are some handwritten notes that I see in here, do you know  
9 who wrote those?

10 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:** My  
11 relative with the last name of Nashook/Ootoova wrote those  
12 handwritten notes. I have not see the report myself, you  
13 see. My in-law kept the report for a long time, but I did  
14 not look at it whenever I came to Iqaluit. My in-law saw  
15 them and read them. My older sister-in-law translated it  
16 for them so they could read what it -- what it says. So my  
17 elderly in-laws did see what the result was and how she  
18 died.

19 We waited for a full year for the report  
20 from the Coroner's offices. In the case of any murder, one  
21 should not have to wait for a year for an autopsy report.  
22 There has to be a faster way of delivering these things to  
23 the affected families. I know the Coroners are busy,  
24 that's obvious to us. But others have received reports  
25 much sooner than that timeframe that we dealt with. We

1 waited for a full year for the report. The body was buried  
2 in Iqaluit. It was never returned to Pond Inlet.

3 My in-law is also buried next to her body.  
4 Other relatives, her siblings who had died previous to her,  
5 are also buried in the same graveyard close to her. My  
6 husband went to see his mother's grave the following day,  
7 if not the same day. After his visit and five days later,  
8 I too went to see the grave of my mother-in-law, and I  
9 placed some floral wreaths on her grave while I was there.

10 Waiting for the Coroner's Report for a full  
11 year, my -- my in-laws would seek confirmation of its  
12 arrival and the answer was, "We're still working on it".  
13 We wanted to know what was done to her body, where the  
14 violence occurred on her body physically. We had an idea  
15 of what or how it happened, but we weren't all there during  
16 their drinking party you see.

17 Why is it that men hurt and beat women? I  
18 thought the point of our union was love and caring. We as  
19 women are happy when we are loved, it's a very joyous  
20 relationship. It's very, very fearful when we get beaten  
21 up in a drunken state. There is no place to go, there is  
22 no shelter, there is no one to talk to, and so we lose our  
23 strength and our train of thought as to plan some sort of  
24 escape.

25 I have a granddaughter, a little girl that



1 lives here in Rankin Inlet. With her brother they live  
2 with their father. The little girl is named Jochebed after  
3 Della, and my in-laws loved the little girl very, very much  
4 because they were still with us when the little girl was  
5 born. And she's named after my daughter. I too love her  
6 so very much, she's named after Jochebed. To other  
7 cultures it may mean just a name, but naming people in our  
8 culture is very important to us, especially when they've  
9 died unexpectedly.

10           Waiting for the report is very, very  
11 stressful for so long. As a recommendation I would suggest  
12 very strongly that they produce these Coroner's Reports to  
13 the ailing families much sooner than a year. That would be  
14 best for us.

15           After going through the trauma over the  
16 murder, having no one to talk to, to relate to. When you  
17 go and talk to the other cultures and their staff, we speak  
18 about information such as you will be here for six weeks  
19 and after that time you will feel better.

20           I have been angry about these sorts of  
21 conversations, Why did you just say that, that I will --  
22 we will be here for six weeks and once you get the help you  
23 need, once you have the counselling you require and it's  
24 all over with, I will have no one to continue the aftercare  
25 with. There's no other place for me to seek that kind of

1 help.

2 Twice I have walked out of the Mental Health  
3 Service offices and I was struggling. What we need are  
4 good -- is good mental health support in the communities  
5 where we don't have to get flown out every time there's a  
6 tragedy of some nature. You can then have access for  
7 health support, including mental health support, in the  
8 communities.

9 We are the true landowners of our  
10 communities. It would be ideal for those who suffer not to  
11 have to fly out for counselling every time there's a  
12 tragedy. Why can't we have them in our communities now?

13 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** Questions for Sophie?

14 **INTERPRETER FOR COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:**  
15 (*Speaking in Inuktitut*) Is it okay if I ask a few questions  
16 Sophie? Jochebed, you said husband. Was -- was he ever  
17 charged by the R.C.M.P.?

18 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:** I don't  
19 -- I haven't heard whether he was charged or not, but after  
20 two or three days -- he was in jail for two or three days  
21 in Iqaluit. That's where they lived at the time. And they  
22 released him because there was lack of evidence.

23 **INTERPRETER FOR COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:**  
24 Did they think that he murdered her?

25 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:** They

1 never -- they never even considered that. They just  
2 arrested him after she had been -- when she passed away.  
3 Then they moved back to Pond Inlet with his children.

4 **INTERPRETER FOR COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:**

5 This paper that was just given to me, have you see it?  
6 Would you -- do you want to comment on it, or is it too  
7 heavy for you?

8 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:** It's

9 too heavy, it's too hard, and I don't want to talk about  
10 it.

11 **INTERPRETER FOR COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:**

12 I'll -- I'll read it. I want to say thank you to you,  
13 because even though it's a really hard, heavy thing to talk  
14 about and you were able to. Jochebed, when she passed  
15 away, would you want to expound on that, so we could  
16 remember her as well? Your memories, your fond memories,  
17 if you would -- if you would like to talk about her a bit?

18 **INTERPRETER FOR MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:** I can

19 remember her. We used to laugh together, we would visit  
20 together, visit each other. And she worked in Pond Inlet.  
21 She was a recreation coordinator, an employer researcher,  
22 Human Resources. She was an outreach worker with the  
23 Hamlet. Oh, Business Development Officer for people who  
24 were applying for employment insurance, and she would go on  
25 local radio and announce the jobs that were available.

1                   There were a lot of people that got gainful  
2 employment because of her, and some of them are still  
3 working. One of them is an interpreter in Health Centre.  
4 Jochebed helped her get the job because she was -- that was  
5 what she did.

6                   Jochebed had curly hair, she was smiling all  
7 the time, and she would always joke around and make us  
8 laugh when they were living in Iqaluit. When there was no  
9 place for people to stay, when the boarding home was too  
10 full, she would get phone calls and she would welcome them  
11 into her home. And when people stayed over they would  
12 always joke around and tell funny stories. You could  
13 remember her fondly.

14                   **INTERPRETER FOR COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:**  
15 The pictures on the monitor, would you like to talk about  
16 those pictures?

17                   **INTERPRETER FOR MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:** That  
18 picture was taken in a church just before New Year's. We  
19 took that picture. She wanted her picture taken so she  
20 would be seen, and that's why she had her head up. She's  
21 saying I'm here when she was taking -- her picture taken.

22                   This one, I got this picture from her  
23 daughter, it's black and white. Her daughter had that  
24 picture. I don't know where that picture was taken, but I  
25 could recognize the background as Pond Inlet.

1           This picture, there was a person who owned a  
2 Pool Hall business, she would go and play pool, play with  
3 other people. She had lots of male friends as a young  
4 adult. This was taken in the Pool Hall, this picture.

5           I loved her, she was my friend. I have  
6 forgiven her even though she treated me not as well as she  
7 could have. We were good to each other. I know -- we all  
8 know that all our family hated all this. You can't always  
9 be happy together, you fight every now and again, and then  
10 forgive each other again. Be mad for awhile and then you  
11 forgive them and then would be friends again. I loved  
12 Jochebed.

13                           **INTERPRETER FOR COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:**

14 I don't have any more questions. If you have any more  
15 comments, and if not, I'd like to ---

16                           **INTERPRETER FOR MS. SOPHIE NASHOOK:**

17 I have  
18 no -- no big things to say anymore. However when people  
19 pass away we think that as long as they don't take forever  
20 to let the family know what the cause of death was. When  
21 they want to hear they start worrying, and then they turn  
22 towards alcohol. All of us do that waiting from the  
23 results from the Coroner.

24           And then we need more mental health workers  
25 in our communities that come from the community. I know  
everybody can speak English now, and in Inuktitut as well

1 they speak both languages. If we have a mental health  
2 worker in our community -- from our community. Thank you.

3 **INTERPRETER FOR COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:**

4 Thank you as well.

5 **MS. SHELBY THOMAS:** We won't be back here  
6 for another public session until -- until after lunch,  
7 which I believe is one. So we'll stop for now, thank you.

8 --- Exhibits (code: P01P11P0201)

9 **Exhibit 1:** Folder of images displayed during the public  
10 testimony of Sophie Nashook.

11 **Exhibit 2:** \*\*PUBLICATION BAN\*\* Report of Post-mortem  
12 Examination of Jochebed Della Ootoova,  
13 Office of the Chief Coroner, Provincial  
14 Forensic Pathology Unit, Case #A-533-08,  
15 Date of autopsy June 9, 2008. Note: There  
16 is handwriting on the cover correcting the  
17 marital status of Della Nashook (21 pages  
18 including attachments).

19 --- Upon adjourning at 9:53 a.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Sherry Hobe, 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.



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Sherry Hobe

May 8, 2018