

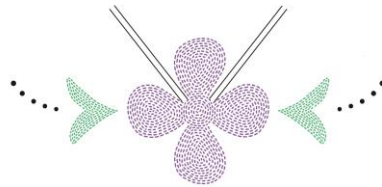
National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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  
Hotel North Two, Conference Room**

**Montreal, Quebec**



**PUBLIC**

**Monday, March 12, 2018**

**Public Volume 60:**

**Mary-Annie Blackned, Silas Blackned, Kirby Blackned  
& Bessie Cheezo Blackned, In relation to Rose-Ann Blackned**

**Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller and  
Commissioners Qajaq Robinson and Michèle Audette**

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## II

### APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Jeremy Kolodziej (Legal counsel)
Assembly of First Nations Quebec- Labrador	No Appearance
Concertation des Lutttes contre L'Exploitation Sexuelle	No Appearance
Conseil des Anicinabek de Kitcisakiki	No Appearance
Directeur des poursuites pénales et criminelles	Anny Bernier (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada	Sarah Churchill-Joly (Legal counsel)
Government of Quebec	André Fauteux (Legal counsel)
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami	No Appearance
Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani- Utenam	No Appearance
Naskapi Nation of Kawawachi- kamach	No Appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre	Beth Symes (Legal counsel) Mary Curley (Representative)
Quebec Native Women Association	Rainbow Miller (Legal counsel)
Regroupement Mamit Innuat Inc.	No Appearance
Les Résidences oblates du Québec	No Appearance

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Qajaq Robinson and Michèle Audette  
Orders: none.  
Public hearing Volume 60  
Commission Counsel: Fanny Wylde  
Language: English (Kirby Blackned spoke several minutes in Cree,  
then English)

Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Melanie Morrison  
(NFAC), Sarah Nowrakudluk (NFAC), Laurie Odjick (NFAC), Sedalia  
Fazio, Louise Haulli, Audrey Siegl, Pénélope Guay, Kathy Louis,  
Oscar Kistabish, Évelyne St. Onge, Bernie Poitras Williams,  
Laureen "Blu" Waters-Gaudio, Martha Greig, Patricia Kaniente  
Stacey, Michael Standup, Elaine Kicknosway, Edouard Chilton,  
Sharon Tardif-Shecanapish, Winnie Bosum, Priscilla Bosum

Clerk: Maryiam Khoury  
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

IV

LIST OF EXHIBITS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
<b>Witnesses: Mary-Annie Blackned, Silas Blackned, Kirby Blackned and Bessie Cheezo Blackned Exhibits (code: P01P13P0102)</b>		
1	Folder of five digital images displayed during the public testimony of the Blackned family.	73

1                    **Mary-Annie Blackned, Silas  
Blackned, Kirby Blackned and Bessie Cheezo Blackned  
In relation to Rose-Ann Blackned**

Montreal, Quebec

1  
2        --- Upon commencing on Monday, March 12, 2018 at 13:55

3                    **MS. KONWATSITSAWI M. MELOCHE:** Okay.

4        (Speaking in Mohawk language). Hello, everybody. Bonjour  
5        tout le monde. Nous recommence. Oui, je doit parle  
6        francais, (Speaking in Native language), so I must also  
7        speak French. I could speak a little bit of Cree, too.  
8        So, watch out. *Hay-hay*.

9                    So, I just want to welcome you all back, and  
10       we are here with the Blackned family, with L'avocat  
11       Fanny Wylde, with the lawyer, Fanny Wylde, who is going to  
12       introduce all the family. And, drink your water, take care  
13       of yourself, and we will have you all -- if you need  
14       anything at all, please let us know. (Speaking in  
15       Kanien'kéha language).

16                   **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Good afternoon,  
17       Commissioners. Bon après-midi. I would like to introduce  
18       you to our family, the Blackned family. We have here Mary-  
19       Annie Blackned, Silas Blackned and also Kirby Blackned.  
20       They are here to share the story of Rose Blackned, who  
21       disappeared in November 1991 and was later found dead on  
22       November 16, 1991 in the city of Val-d'Or.

23                   So, before I let them share the story I will  
24       ask Mr. Zandberg, the Registrar, to swear in the witnesses.  
25       And, they would like to provide all with the Bible.

1                    **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good afternoon. You  
2 can remain seated, it's okay. If you just want to take  
3 that in your hand? Mary-Annie, do you swear to tell the  
4 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help  
5 you God?

6                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Yes.

7                    **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay. Thank you. And,  
8 Silas, it's okay with the Bible? Is that -- we're good?  
9 Okay. Silas, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole  
10 truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

11                   **MR. SILAS ZANDBERG:** Yes.

12                   **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay, thank you.

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

14                   **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Oh, that's fine, yes.  
15 Silas, do you promise to tell your truth in a good way  
16 today? Oh, sorry, Kirby. Oops. Kirby? You do? Okay.  
17 Thank you. You can keep holding that or we can put it back  
18 on the blanket, if you'd like. Whatever you would like.

19                   **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So, as well, before we  
20 start I would like to point out that the family has  
21 supporters here. On the back we have Betsy, who is Rose's  
22 mother. We have Flori (phon), who is an aunt of the  
23 family. And, we have Cynthia, who is also Rose's sister.

24                   So, I will ask each and one of you to  
25 introduce yourself, and what is your relation to Rose.

3            **Mary-Annie Blackned, Silas  
Blackned, Kirby Blackned and Bessie Cheezo Blackned  
In relation to Rose-Ann Blackned**

1                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Okay. Good  
2            afternoon, everybody. My name is Mary-Annie Blackned.  
3            And, Rose was my sister.

4                    **MR. SILAS BLACKNED:** Hello, my name is Silas  
5            Blackned, and I'm the son of Rose. Rose was my mother.

6                    **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** Good afternoon,  
7            everyone. My name is Kirby, and I'm the middle child of  
8            the family. And, Rose was my late sister.

9                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So, Mary-Annie, maybe you  
10           can start by addressing the story of Rose?

11                   **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Okay. First, I'm  
12           going to talk about Rose. I'm going to -- who she was and  
13           what she meant to us. Our sister, Rose -- excuse me. Our  
14           sister's name was Rose-Ann Blackned. She was the eldest of  
15           our family of 10. She was born on May 13, 1968 in  
16           Waskaganish to Charlie and Bessie Blackned.

17                   Rose had two little boys. Our sister, Rose,  
18           was an amazing person. She wasn't just our sister, she was  
19           like our second mom, our friend. She took care of us, all  
20           of us, her brothers, sisters. Whenever we were sad, she  
21           would hug us. Or, whenever there was somebody's birthday,  
22           she would always make a cake. She always had a way of  
23           making you feel special. She always showed us how much she  
24           loved us. And, she was, basically, helping our parents  
25           raise us.

**4                    Mary-Annie Blackned, Silas  
Blackned, Kirby Blackned and Bessie Cheezo Blackned  
In relation to Rose-Ann Blackned**

1                    And, our sister, Rose, was found dead in  
2 Val-d'Or November 16, 1991. She was beaten, abandoned, and  
3 left in the cold, and she died. She was found dead. She  
4 went missing, I don't know how many days, but on the ninth  
5 day of her disappearance, that's when they found her.

6                    And, at the time of her death, I was just  
7 15. And, when the news was brought to us that she was  
8 found dead, it was one of the toughest times of our life,  
9 because she was like our second mom. It was really hard  
10 for me growing up, because I was just a young girl when she  
11 passed, and I felt like I had to grow up fast afterwards,  
12 because I had to help my parents take care of her two boys.  
13 Her boys, her oldest was only 4 at the time, and her baby  
14 boy was just 1. Her baby boy turned 2, three weeks after  
15 we buried her.

16                    And, for so many years we did not know what  
17 happened. We didn't have the police people that did the  
18 investigation never made an effort to contact us, to  
19 question us. They didn't even invite our parents to  
20 identify her body. Another person from our community, who  
21 was a police officer, identified her.

22                    For so long I always wondered what happened.  
23 Why did this happen? Why does violence exist? For so long  
24 I remained silent of her death. For so long I hid my  
25 tears. For so long I hid my anger. It's only, like, maybe



5                    **Mary-Annie Blackned, Silas  
Blackned, Kirby Blackned and Bessie Cheezo Blackned  
In relation to Rose-Ann Blackned**

1            two years ago when I first came to Montreal to share my  
2            story, the story of our late sister. It was really hard to  
3            learn that she wasn't part of the statistics, and that her  
4            death wasn't -- it's like nobody knew. She wasn't  
5            included. It was hard to accept that.

6                            When I learned the truth of what they did to  
7            her last year, January 28, 2017 is when I finally learned  
8            the truth, when we all finally learned the truth what  
9            happened to her, because I contacted this group of Missing  
10           and Murdered Women to help families find answers. They  
11           helped us. They found the truth for us, and brought the  
12           truth to us.

13                           I cannot say how my other family felt that  
14            day, when they found out the truth, but for me I was so  
15            overwhelmed with anger and hatred. And, simply that once I  
16            went on this journey to find out the truth of what happened  
17            to her, I believed that I could learn to let go of this  
18            anger, this hatred that I have towards these people that  
19            did this to her. But, it didn't turn out that way.  
20            Instead my anger and my hatred for them grew more, because  
21            I thought it was so unfair that they got to live life, they  
22            got a chance to fall in love, get married, have children,  
23            while they robbed my sister's life. I have always felt  
24            like these people that did this to her, they robbed me  
25            having a big sister, and they robbed my nephews of their

1        mother.

2                            Losing a loved one the way we lost our  
3        sister is wrong. It's not right. Most of all, it is  
4        painful living with these whys, what, not knowing, not  
5        having anything at all. And, only to learn the truth 25  
6        years later it hits you. It shatters your heart.

7                            My late sister's case was reopened last  
8        year, March 2017. And, the La Sûreté du Québec reopened  
9        her case. They invited me and my family to meet with them  
10       to tell us they are reopening the case. And, in the end of  
11       July of this year -- I mean, the end of July 2017, that's  
12       when they decided to close the case. And, in September  
13       2017, they invited us again, the Crown of Quebec, and the  
14       SQ, to have a meeting with us in Val-d'Or. They informed  
15       us that they are closing the case with no charges laid.

16                           They told us that there is nothing more we  
17       can do as a family. Do you know how much that hurt when  
18       they say there is nothing more you can do, when the thing  
19       you want the most is justice? That's all I ever wanted for  
20       my sister, is justice. And, every woman that went missing  
21       and murdered, they all deserve justice so that the families  
22       can have peace. I want justice so that I can have some  
23       closure for that part of my life, and learn to live in  
24       peace, not just in life but in my heart.

25                           Sometimes I'm going to talk in my language.

1                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** For your information,  
2                    there is a Cree interpreter, so if you need translation...

3                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** When they closed  
4                    the case, it was really disappointing because I know who  
5                    those people are. I know those two women that did this to  
6                    her. They were my friends growing up. But, once I learned  
7                    it was them, I never made contact with them, I have never  
8                    seen them. It's like in a way I felt like they stabbed me,  
9                    my own friends stabbed me in the heart by taking the life  
10                    of my sister, beating her to a point where she was helpless  
11                    in the wintertime, and leaving her there, all alone in the  
12                    cold. Even though when she asked for help they just walked  
13                    away.

14                    Today I'm very disappointed in the justice  
15                    system. I have lost my faith in the justice system. I  
16                    have lost my faith in the police. But, I have not lost my  
17                    hope that justice can be still served one day. So, that's  
18                    all I want now, now that I know the truth to what happened  
19                    to her. All I now want is justice, because I believe  
20                    that's what she wants us to do for her, to get justice.

21                    In closing, I would like to say that if you  
22                    have a sister, a younger sister, a big sister, or a big  
23                    brother, or a younger brother, if you guys fight, argue,  
24                    like it all happens in every family, apologize to each  
25                    other every time, forgive each other every time, because I

1            can tell you from experience once you lose somebody so  
2            close to you, your life will never be the same. There is  
3            always this emptiness in your heart that nobody can ever  
4            replace. To this day, I still have my days where I wish  
5            she was still here. There are still days where I still  
6            long to have a big sister.

7                            A friend once told me, I was so tired and  
8            angry with everything that was going on with her case, and  
9            I just got tired of it, and I told my friend, "I'm sick and  
10           tired of everything. I'm sick and tired of this and that."  
11           And, my friend said, "Don't be tired, my friend, your job  
12           now is to be the big sister of the family. That's what she  
13           left you now, and that's something that you must carry on  
14           in her memory," she said.

15                           Our sister, Rose, had two little boys. On  
16           special occasions, that's when I had hard times the most  
17           growing up. So many times I felt like she should have been  
18           there. There were times where I felt like I was taking her  
19           place. Life is hard, but I've learned to live life to the  
20           fullest every day, knowing that her spirit is with me every  
21           day. But, I will be more at peace if we could just get  
22           justice, somehow, some way the National Inquiry could get  
23           all those closed cases reopened, get it all reinvestigated.

24                           Like, I have this whole little theory in my  
25           own little head where instead of hiring the SQ to do the

1            reinvestigation of the closed cases, I was thinking of  
2            maybe in each province they could select a person to sit  
3            and form an investigating team, instead of hiring the SQ,  
4            because I believe the SQ, if we hire them to do the  
5            reinvestigation, they are just going to cover up their  
6            form, the form of people's investigation. Like, I have --  
7            I still have a lot of hope. I'm not giving up, even though  
8            the Crown said it's closed. And, I have put my faith in  
9            the National Inquiry to make this happen for all the  
10           families, not just our family, because it's not easy living  
11           life not knowing what happened, not getting justice for  
12           your loved one.

13                            And, I hope that one day the leaders,  
14            everybody that plays a role in the leadership, that could  
15            make a lot of changes to the justice system. I'm really  
16            disappointed in the fact that, you know, when somebody  
17            assaults you, physically assaults you, you only have six  
18            months to press charges. After the 6-month period there is  
19            nothing you can do. That's one of the things that stopped  
20            us from taking my sister's case back to court, because of  
21            that 6-month time frame thing, because it happened 25 years  
22            ago. Twenty-five years ago we had nothing. We didn't know  
23            anything what happened. And, today, we know everything.  
24            Now, we want to fight for justice for her. I wish Justin  
25            Trudeau was here.

1 MS. FANNY WYLDE: I don't know, Mary-Annie,  
2 if I can ask you a few questions?

3 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: Okay.

4 MS. FANNY WYLDE: If we step back, can you  
5 give me details about how Rose was brought up, what was her  
6 childhood like? What were her challenges growing up?

7 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: That's something  
8 Kirby will be able to answer more, because that's the thing  
9 we gave him to talk about.

10 MS. FANNY WYLDE: Okay.

11 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: Well, I was hoping  
12 to see Justin Trudeau today, right in front of me. No, so  
13 that he could hear these families, the pain they carry, the  
14 hurt that is in their hearts. You know, to actually say  
15 you care about Aboriginal people, you want to help them,  
16 then where are you today? You know? How come you're not  
17 here today? How come he's not here today? You know? I  
18 would have really wanted him to be here, so that he could  
19 hear me, and all the rest of the families. So, maybe then  
20 he could put more of a -- I don't know how to say it.  
21 Maybe push him to work harder on the Inquiry, to make  
22 things happen for the families, because I was there when he  
23 spoke at the vigil in October.

24 I was there. I heard him say he stands with  
25 the families. And, that thing is stuck in my head, he

1 stands, he supports the families of the missing and  
2 murdered women. If he truly stands with us, then how come  
3 he doesn't make an effort to be here today, to sit with the  
4 Commissioners, to sit with the families, talk to the  
5 families, to have, like, a one-on-one session with them, so  
6 that he could have a better understanding of what we are  
7 going through as we are trying to fight for justice for our  
8 loved ones?

9 All right. That's it for now. I'm going to  
10 pass the mic to Silas. He is my late sister's oldest son.

11 **MR. SILAS BLACKNED:** First of all, I would  
12 like to say thank you to the National Inquiry to make this  
13 happen. It was a couple of years ago that I found out that  
14 it was launched, and it gave me hope and courage to fight  
15 for justice for my late mom.

16 It's been a rough ride. A lot of people  
17 questioning me, "How is it going with the case?" Media,  
18 travelling to pre-inquiries. I can't really share the  
19 story of my late mom because I was only 5-years-old when  
20 she passed away. I don't have much memories of her.

21 A few memories I have is she used to dress  
22 me up in a suit, I was only 4-years-old, to go to church,  
23 Sunday school church. I was the only kid that had a suit  
24 on. I also remember I didn't want her to smoke. I  
25 remember breaking her cigarettes.

1                    I have a lot of impacts of losing a mother  
2                    like that. What really hurts me is how she died. I only  
3                    found out in September the exact story of what happened,  
4                    her bruises, her found outside, yelling for help.

5                    Growing up, after a few months she died I  
6                    was in foster homes, a couple of foster homes. And, these  
7                    parents, foster parents, wanted to adopt me. But, they  
8                    didn't. My grandparents wanted to keep me, and my  
9                    grandparents adopted me.

10                    Growing up without a mother is really tough.  
11                    I would see my friends hug their mothers, and I would be  
12                    jealous, envious. Sometimes when I would have good grades  
13                    at school I was really hoping to tell her about it. Like,  
14                    when I catch a big fish, I wanted to tell her. When I  
15                    killed a moose, I thought about her. My first moose, I was  
16                    there, she would be so proud.

17                    I have a lot of questions regarding her  
18                    death. Why didn't they do a proper investigation back in  
19                    1991? Why didn't they lay different charges, instead of  
20                    just manslaughter charges? Why did the SQ reinvestigate  
21                    the case in March 2017 for criminal negligence, and then  
22                    close it in September? How come one of the suspects  
23                    apologized and admitted the assault through video? Isn't  
24                    that enough evidence?

25                    After the case was closed I asked the





1                    I want to say thank you to my aunt, my  
2                    uncle, and our support, my grandma, and my great aunt,  
3                    Flori, from Ontario, for coming for support. I'm really  
4                    happy that they are here sharing our story. And, what's  
5                    next? That's my question. Thank you.

6                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Commissioners, one of the  
7                    witnesses is asking for a short recess. So, if you could  
8                    allow us a recess of 5 minutes, please? We will take a  
9                    recess of 5 minutes. Thank you.

10                  --- Upon recessing at 14:30

11                  --- Upon resuming at 14:38

12                  **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So, we will continue with  
13                  Kirby Blackned.

14                  **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** I'm thankful to be  
15                  here. And, I'm glad that the Inquiry are here standing  
16                  with us, and all the people sitting around us. I'm very  
17                  thankful that they are here to stand with us, and I thank  
18                  God for everything.

19                  My name is Kirby Blackned, and I'm from  
20                  Nemaska. I was brought up in Nemaska, but I didn't live  
21                  there all the time. We were taken away at a young age. We  
22                  went to school in Waskaganish. But, after once Nemaska was  
23                  settled, then that's when we went back home, and we were  
24                  all brought home. But, a lot of people that went home, a  
25                  lot has changed. And, that's when I'm thinking of my late

1            sister, and how her life was in the past, where she came  
2            from. She came from a residential school.

3                            Okay, after this I'm going to be speaking in  
4            English. But, they keep reminding me to slow down. I'm a  
5            hyperactive person, so that's why I speak fast. But, if  
6            you see a little nudging, they're not hitting, they're  
7            reminding me. That's not a form of abuse. I even gave her  
8            permission to do it.

9                            The days, the past days, the past years,  
10           I've looked at part of my life, because I'm a recovering  
11           alcoholic and I'm a recovering drug addict. I've been  
12           sober for about 15 years now. Fifteen years of trying to  
13           better myself, my family. As I better myself, as an  
14           individual, I better my family. And, I've seen the great  
15           outcome of it. Even my wife says I'm different.

16                            But, this issue itself, it's 25-years-old.  
17           I looked at my history and my life, that's the way it was,  
18           the way it has become. But, part of my history is where I  
19           left some things, part of myself behind. I couldn't mourn,  
20           I couldn't grieve the way I needed to because part of my  
21           family wasn't there. Now, we all grieved in our different  
22           ways, but as a middle child I felt like I had to take over  
23           some things, to help and assist my father and my mother  
24           with this process. Because the act behind it, we weren't  
25           fully aware of all that had happened. So, my mom and my

1 dad shielded some of us from the information, from the act  
2 of violence, that consumed my sister's life, and that ended  
3 her life as well.

4 So, our answers were never met, so these two  
5 here started asking and digging around. But, like I said,  
6 our answers were never met, not until one of the  
7 investigation teams started asking and digging around. So,  
8 we finally got together about two years ago to discuss our  
9 family member, which is something that we have never really  
10 done. We did it individually, but never together as a  
11 family. The distance of this event, plus how the family  
12 was divided and separated over the years because we become  
13 to depend on our mother and our father, but also, we  
14 depended on our late sister, our mother as some of us  
15 identify her.

16 She was not just a provider, a caregiver.  
17 She was a friend, a dependent, and also, she provided us  
18 with safety. Because we are the Blackneds in our  
19 community. Back then I see myself, and some of our family  
20 members, as minorities in my own community. So, I'm going  
21 to go back to the time where we were discussing, but I'm  
22 going to start it off with my father.

23 After a number of years, then recently with  
24 the events that my nephew came to ask me what is he going  
25 to do, how is he going to proceed, and the only thing that

1        came into mind is long ago I promised my sister, after, in  
2        death, that I would be there to try and support her sons  
3        when the time comes, when they need it, because these are  
4        part of the answers that I only found out two years after.  
5        I was about 17-years-old. I was an angry individual at  
6        that time already. And, two years after alcohol and  
7        addictions consumed me more as I became more aware of my  
8        sister's fate. I was left alone, unguarded, as a result.  
9        I felt vulnerable a lot because a lot of the times I had to  
10       depend on her, like I said.

11                    So, going back to just a few years, we were  
12        discussing, trying to revive and trying to look at  
13        honouring my sister's memory, but we had to go through some  
14        of the impacts first. Then, we started sharing at the  
15        (indiscernible) when were closing off, we were talking  
16        publicly about our late loved one, of her passing, and what  
17        we remembered of her, and how we felt after all those  
18        years.

19                    One of the memories of my father that came  
20        back were some of the things that triggered some of the  
21        impacts. He said that they, him and her late daughter,  
22        were in the kitchen. I forgot what the discussion was  
23        about, but she was basically kneading dough, and all of a  
24        sudden -- that's how our father, Charlie Blackned described  
25        when he was with his daughter, Rose-Ann Blackned, at the

1            time. Which she left with the police officers, and with  
2            her unfinished bannock laying on the counter. The last  
3            words he remembers hearing from his daughter saying to him  
4            was, "They've come to get me now." "They've come to get me  
5            now," and she walked out.

6                            I wasn't there at that time. I'm not  
7            entirely sure where I was during that time, but the memory  
8            itself, when they came to pick up my late sister, put her  
9            in handcuffs, one of her sons was in the house. One of the  
10           sons was so cared of what he had seen that he had crawled  
11           under the table seeing his mom being locked up, that they  
12           were taking her. But, we were informed of what else had  
13           happened. So, this is basically the first point of our  
14           lives where it had changed.

15                           This is where it had changed because of past  
16           incidences within the community. The past incidences has  
17           to involve with lateral violence, as we call it, as we see  
18           it. Some people look at it as bullying, sexual harassment,  
19           and so on and so forth. But, when we look at it, we label  
20           that on ourselves sometimes. But, when you look at it,  
21           sometimes the minority, they are impacted more, in a  
22           greater way than certain members.

23                           There are forms of favouritism in the  
24           community, which is some of the things I don't like. I  
25           kind of feel disgusted about certain things. It doesn't

1            matter if it is family, if it is political, or it is based  
2            on religion. Sometimes we look at some of these things,  
3            and they do impact us and how it is, and these are some of  
4            the decisions that were based on my sister's fate later on.

5                            But, some situations had come up with my  
6            later sister. But, the questions have still yet been  
7            answered by our own community as well, as the investigation  
8            had let on. Some things later on we are not going to stop  
9            to ask our community, our Chief in Council, because at one  
10           point she was under the influence on two occasions, where  
11           she was a victim of a sexual assault within the community,  
12           but nobody was there to help her, assist her in any way,  
13           even to be a witness.

14                           So, she couldn't go through that. So, she  
15           had to carry some of that shame, the humiliation, and  
16           degradation of her life. But, during that time she was  
17           also humiliated by our community members, because after  
18           that there were some forms of division within our  
19           community. And, this is where part of my anger comes from  
20           how they mistreated my sister. How this had happened, but  
21           we weren't made aware.

22                           There came a point where I ended up  
23           defending her sexual predator at that time, because I was  
24           not told it was him. These were some of the information  
25           that were shielded from me. And, when I found out later

1            on, I was very angry at myself. I was kind of angry at my  
2            brothers too. So, those are some of the differences, and  
3            the impact where it also left me vulnerable at some times.

4                            When it came concerning the police, abuse of  
5            power, favouritism, and so on and so forth, this had an  
6            impact of how the stigma and the image of my sister  
7            betrayed itself, because they also enforced some of the  
8            law, but they also abused the law. They violated the  
9            rights of many people, and also that was one of my late  
10           sister's.

11                           So, over the past several years we had asked  
12           repeatedly for some information, but never received it,  
13           like I said, only to be met with unanswered questions. So,  
14           it came down to some of the negligence performed by our own  
15           community police officers, some of the abuse of power that  
16           they had to do. So, they had to try and enforce some of  
17           the law, but they also performed acts of favouritism on  
18           their part. There are some issues within the community  
19           that portrayed other people violent, but they also  
20           portrayed my sister also in that sense.

21                           She, out of anger and aggression, which was  
22           how she felt later on with this unresolved trauma of being  
23           sexually abused, turned into rage during her alcoholism,  
24           during her addiction. She was angry at that point, where  
25           she wanted to cause harm to her sexual abuser, because



1            there was so much that she had to face through. The  
2            humiliation from the family that was divided, and the  
3            community that was divided.

4                            This division that was caused in the  
5            community, but also the church congregation was divided  
6            also. So, after trying to attack her sexual abuser at one  
7            point, violently trying to cause harm, she also, later on,  
8            while she was intoxicated, went to go confront the member  
9            of the congregation, to tell her to stop humiliating her,  
10           but also threatening in a way. She had a butter knife.  
11           She walked in intoxicated in that home, with a butter  
12           knife, not knowing what she was doing.

13                           So, these were the cause and some of the  
14            actions that were taken, because we know, no matter what,  
15            the community decided to get together, I guess, the Chief  
16            in Council, that from what we are told, and what some of  
17            the family members and the friends are saying that she was  
18            banished. Because at one point, when they asked her to try  
19            and bring her home, they said no. She didn't want to come  
20            home because she told them that they banned her from the  
21            community.

22                           So, with all of this, my sister wasn't just  
23            an alcoholic. She was a wonderful being, a caretaker. She  
24            provided for us. When there was not too much, she had to  
25            do what she could for our mom. Our mom used to work after

1            5:00. There was only a limited amount of things that were  
2            available within the community. I will never forget, or  
3            never going to stop eating bologna and mashed potatoes.  
4            Those are one of my fondest memories of my sister cooking  
5            for us, trying to stretch the budget, as they say. Even  
6            the joys of seeing cheese sticks sometimes. Showing the  
7            love to my sisters, my younger siblings, and also to her  
8            children. Providing a bag of cheese sticks for their  
9            enjoyment.

10                            I had shared a story of my late sister, but  
11            I honoured her in death, but not the life that she lived.  
12            That's where the dream of the cheese sticks came from, to  
13            remind me how beautiful her life was also. So, there was  
14            such great and big details of her life that have gone  
15            missing or are not even acknowledged at some points. This  
16            is what I reminded my sisters, my brothers, and my family.  
17            We try to honour her death and the impacts of her death,  
18            but let's not forget to honour the life that she lived,  
19            too.

20                            So, as I said, we are still requesting --  
21            we're not going to stop asking, like every other family.  
22            There are certain things that still undone and unfinished.  
23            This might have been a journey, but it has taken a tole on  
24            many of us family members. So, we put aside a few things  
25            so we don't get too overwhelmed. So, we're going to be

1            tackling some of these other issues later on.

2                    The question itself is where my sister came  
3            from. She said she came from and was born in Waskaganish.  
4            I remember parts of being on a boat. I don't know how old  
5            I was. Now, we were nomadic people, still, back then, very  
6            much. I grew up living off the land, paddling the rivers  
7            with my family, going up and down the river, because when  
8            they had to relocate old Nemaska, we had to go and move to  
9            Waskaganish. I remember parts of the journey when I was a  
10           young kid.

11                    My grandfather's boat, a 9.9, and also him  
12            tugging one or two canoes behind. We were in the canoes  
13            when we were kids. Now, we had to get one family after  
14            another from one location. But, the locations are always  
15            my fondest memories of my sister. We were never in  
16            quarrel. We were never fighting too much. It seems like  
17            we lived more happily outside the reserve than we did  
18            inside the reserve.

19                    The peace that we encountered just being  
20            together as a family, the joys, just picking out and  
21            helping out. Some of the best values that were instilled  
22            in us came from our parents, from our late sister, how she  
23            took care of us. My mother and my father did the best they  
24            could. They took care of not only us, but many of the  
25            children in our community, too.

1                    My mother was a Cree culture teacher back in  
2                    the day. My father worked at the school as a maintenance  
3                    man, but my father always took the time for the kids in the  
4                    community, so they can have their tournaments. The first  
5                    tournament I ever played was before I left for Waskaganish.  
6                    My first tournament, hockey tournament, outside, rather  
7                    than playing hockey with one little puck, and a whole bunch  
8                    of us chasing the puck around with no net. I wish I had a  
9                    video of that, how we played our first game. It was quite  
10                    fun. But, I remember my sister encouraging us to keep  
11                    playing. Now, when we were going outside, my mother, my  
12                    sister, my father would always tell us, "Bundle up, keep  
13                    warm, keep safe. And, no matter what, if anything happens,  
14                    come home".

15                    Some of my fondest memories is just helping  
16                    my mother and my late sister collect bells when I was a  
17                    kid. We would always collect bells. There was always a  
18                    certain way she would tell me, "This is how you break it,  
19                    don't break it the other way." She never told me the  
20                    meaning of why I had to do it that way, but there was a  
21                    teaching for women there, so we had to respect that. We  
22                    collected, and gathered, and harvested throughout the  
23                    seasons as much as we could before they left for school.

24                    My brothers, my eldest brothers, and my late  
25                    sister, were raised in the residential school at the

1            Residence of Mistassini. They were raised there, so part  
2            of the impacts of that trauma came from there. When they  
3            left that, one of my eldest brothers said, "I thought I'd  
4            leave behind what had happened. Part of the memory is  
5            okay. You might have grown up young to enjoy a life, but a  
6            certain part, you carry some of the trauma with you. You  
7            practically bring it home." So, this is part of what they  
8            carried with them.

9                            Many parts of my sister's story I don't  
10            know, but there are some people saying that something did  
11            happen to her. Now, that's another chapter that maybe I  
12            will -- I hope to hear.

13                            Now, when I looked at my sister, I didn't  
14            look at her as the person that lived a life outside the  
15            community. I didn't look at my sister as the person, the  
16            way she was living within the community. I looked at my  
17            sister the way she was, that lived her life with us.

18                            She was a very kind, generous and humble  
19            person. I don't remember or recall seeing her angry or  
20            being aggressive too much with us. Maybe a little tap on  
21            the head every now and then, to get me in line, but out of  
22            all she had done her part in this life, and she lived with  
23            us the best that she could, to assist my parents.

24                            When the day came when they took her, that's  
25            where I'm going to go back again, was probably -- the thing

1            I noticed was the Chief being outside while I was doing the  
2            dishes. The Chief never really comes around, didn't come  
3            around in our time, during his term, because he was too  
4            busy being a Chief, even though he was our uncle. He was  
5            our uncle, from what I am told later on, as the Chief. I  
6            don't remember anybody else coming around other than this  
7            stranger, and I never realized that he was a Council member  
8            at the time. So, they came to support our family, they  
9            came to tell us the news of what happened.

10                            I remember that time when I was sitting  
11            there, when we were told, my mother couldn't say anything,  
12            she was crying. She was crying so much because she was in  
13            shock. And, I remember part of the history in our  
14            community was, you know, you honour the person that's  
15            within the community, you honour her or his life. Most of  
16            the time the community closes down when there is sad news  
17            of death, and so on and so forth.

18                            I couldn't be in my house because that's  
19            where I always saw her. That's where I wanted her to be.  
20            I walked out in the community, I walked around, to realize  
21            everything was open. The arcade was even open. People  
22            weren't informed, not like other families. It came to a  
23            great deal of respect and honour for some of the other  
24            families to be -- for this to happen for them. And then I  
25            realized this is no longer did she live in violence, but

1            they are also not honouring the life of my sister, and I  
2            was very disappointed that day. No tears came from me. No  
3            tears came from me because there were so many questions  
4            that I wanted...

5                            When I went back home, later on in the  
6            evening, so many people came into the house. I overheard  
7            my brothers talking about the humiliation that my sister  
8            had gone through, but I had seen these people from the  
9            church congregation come in, and I was very disappointed.  
10           I couldn't stay within my house, so I left. So, only bits  
11           and parts were coming to me, but not in the right times.

12                           My family was angry. They were angry  
13           because of what happened. They were angry because my  
14           eldest brothers, they helped protect my sister, over her  
15           time within the community, to try and spare her from the  
16           shame, to try and do what it is they can for her. So, what  
17           had happened, they felt really guilty over the years  
18           because they weren't there for my sister in her time of her  
19           greatest need.

20                           Now, when they came -- I'm kind of missing a  
21           part here. When they left -- so I'm going to have to go  
22           back. When they left with my sister after, there was a  
23           point where my mother was concerned. I remember seeing her  
24           call, looking for her, after one of the family members came  
25           back. She had asked for her cheques, but those cheques

1            were returned to us. So, when we were informed that they  
2            couldn't find her, but for us to continue to search. So,  
3            we informed the police department in Nemaska and also the  
4            District of Val-d'Or, they couldn't find her, too. So, I'm  
5            not sure if this is -- I'm not sure how many days after. I  
6            went with my mother and my father to Val-d'Or, to ask the  
7            landlord to go see. I was only there for part of the  
8            search, the search that I wasn't allowed to fully accompany  
9            my parents to, because they were still trying to shield me  
10           from what it is that -- if we did encounter something.  
11           But, I wasn't told the truth of what happened.

12                                So, we went there, and they left for a  
13           while. I think two to three days, I think we were gone.  
14           But, we didn't have enough financial means to stay there  
15           any longer, so we went home. Nobody could give us any  
16           answers, so we went home.

17                                And, that later time when we heard the news  
18           after from the Chief and Council, some of the members came,  
19           it was the beginning for me. It was a beginning on a part  
20           of my destructive patterns in life, my destructive  
21           behaviour, my addictions that consumed me. I have managed  
22           to live life to the best I could, to try and help and  
23           support my mom, but I also was an addict in the process.

24                                I did question some of these things. I was  
25           very angry with the Chief and Council. As I was told,



1            okay, later on, it was your uncle, I did something, in  
2            regret, in anger, in bitterness. So, I kind of focused  
3            negatively on some people within the community in my years  
4            of addiction, even partially, too, during my sobriety, too,  
5            because this was a heavy thing that I had to carry. I had  
6            to carry, helping carry, my mother and my father's load.

7                            It was not until recently where I realized  
8            when did I actually cry for my sister. When did I actually  
9            feel that actual grief hit me, and the shock. It wasn't  
10           when they told us. I walked away feeling normal. I walked  
11           away angry, but not in shock. It was just anger that took  
12           over me. It was when after when we had to lay my sister.

13                           Not in the church, because I was angry at  
14           God. I was angry at the people in the church. Where the  
15           grief really struck me was suddenly. It was not even a  
16           cry, but the overwhelming sensation of tears that came  
17           blinded me so much, I didn't want to let go of the rope.

18                           I didn't want to let go of the rope because  
19           I wanted my sister home. I wanted her to help take care of  
20           my other siblings. I wanted her, because she took care of  
21           us. She was there for the ones that were in need, during  
22           the times when we were being bullied or humiliated, she  
23           took her time. As much as my mom and dad did try to defend  
24           us, help console us, and so on and so forth, my sister was  
25           the next one.

1                    So, the difficulties that I had was the  
2                    letting go part. I went through a great big history of my  
3                    life, where I unloaded my garbage, as they say. But, there  
4                    is a portion of that, in that moment, in that time, where I  
5                    just pushed that aside. I realized after, when I took care  
6                    of myself, my impacts of what it is I had to suffer.  
7                    Because, not only do I relate to my sister as a residential  
8                    school survivor, but I am a descendant of residential  
9                    school also. I have been impacted in certain ways, because  
10                   I was not raised in the residential school system, but I  
11                   was raised in a boarding house school system, run by Cree  
12                   School Board. As my good friend had said when we did the  
13                   residential school gathering, "Your oppressors and everyone  
14                   else, you don't see them, but today we see ours walking  
15                   around." That's what he had to say, because he felt that  
16                   we were being left behind, we were being neglected.

17                   But, I kind of had to ask him -- all things  
18                   in due time. If they can have their time, maybe we can  
19                   have theirs. They can have theirs at this time, but we  
20                   will ask for something for us. We were told, we were  
21                   acknowledged, and they told us that they would go back for  
22                   us. But, that's another issue itself later on.

23                   And, as I grew up, when more and more  
24                   questions were followed through, the more people came  
25                   forward. The more people came forward, it gave us a clear

1            picture of what had happened. Not more the clear the  
2            picture was, but how it really happened was the question.  
3            The investigation came about, or had to look at, so the  
4            change in stories of that history was something that was --  
5            I don't know how to say it. But, it didn't match. But,  
6            there was change in stories of how they impacted my sister  
7            from the beginning, when they were repeatedly harassing,  
8            insulting, and attacking my sister. The many attempts that  
9            they tried to hurt her. For them to say, "We're going to  
10           get you, sooner or later."

11                    A man picked up my sister, later on, at the  
12                    closing hour. The man that picked up my late sister was an  
13                    immediate family of the women that assaulted my late  
14                    sister. In the first prior investigation there was a  
15                    different name attached to this, because the investigation  
16                    wasn't followed through. The majority of names that were  
17                    given, only a portion of them were interviewed.

18                    So, there was a big gap of information that  
19                    was lost over time. Because, how my sister ended up in  
20                    that hotel and the same family members of her -- they  
21                    attacked her in the hotel room. They beat her in the hotel  
22                    room. They removed her from the hotel room, and they beat  
23                    her up again. But, she managed to get up, as the report  
24                    said, to walk away. But, I don't think she realized how  
25                    much in pain she was. She only walked at a certain

1            distance, where she fell.

2                    The first report states that the women heard  
3            her scream for help, calling for help. That's what the  
4            first investigation reported, that they heard her, but they  
5            did nothing. After a number of days, when they found my  
6            sister, curled up in a fetal position trying to stay warm,  
7            being found frozen, near or beside the little stream, near  
8            a hotel where it was run by the biggest drug dealer in that  
9            town, it was difficult. Most of us never went back, went  
10           to that spot. It was only just until recently. Just last  
11           year we decided to go honour that area.

12                    The investigation -- when it was read to us  
13           before the reopening, so we read the report of the attack  
14           in question itself, and how the investigation proceeded.  
15           But, we were read the investigation on the time of the  
16           incident, when it happened, how it happened. So, those  
17           first details that I talked about, those were part of the  
18           investigation.

19                    There were forms of bruises on my late  
20           sister when she was found. The investigation team wanted  
21           manslaughter charges be brought up with these women. But,  
22           the investigation, there was something missing. The report  
23           itself did not follow with the body. The body that was  
24           sent to the morgue in Val-d'Or for autopsy, the mortician  
25           didn't do anything with it. So, they sent the body up to

1            Montreal. So, some of the reports that were supposed to be  
2            following with the body ended up where they are, but not  
3            with the body.

4                            When it was identified, when it was -- some  
5            of the things that they were talking about, bruised and  
6            fractured ribs, bruised and fractured vertebraes, lesions,  
7            lesions to the head, lesions and fractures to the head, but  
8            bleeding of a hematoma, that's within the frontal lobe, how  
9            these women described what it is that they did to my late  
10           sister, his mother, her daughter. She did not deserve  
11           that.

12                           Now, with all this cause and acts, I'm not  
13           angry at the police. I'm not angry anymore at these women.  
14           I'm angry at our community because we are the ones that  
15           continue this and allow this to go through. We see what we  
16           see, but we don't choose to speak up during the times.  
17           This has caused a great amount of depression in my life,  
18           hearing and understanding this, and seeing people being in  
19           this way, in this state.

20                           I know you all have a lot of work to do, but  
21           there are certain things in some cases that were closed,  
22           but there are certain issues within there that also were  
23           not looked at. When they had to reopen our case, our late  
24           sister's case, they only looked at the individuals. They  
25           did not want to look at what was on paper, the mistakes

1            that were made by Val-d'Or, the autopsy reports.

2                                Now, our sister was the one that was pushing  
3 for the investigation team to look at those parts, but they  
4 didn't want to. They didn't want to do that, but they were  
5 concentrating on these women to reopen the case, which was  
6 25-years-old. We were stuck again. Some answers were  
7 answered for us, but the justice that we had asked for  
8 didn't come the way we had hoped. Because, in a sense,  
9 there was a little bit of hope that shed light onto the  
10 investigation, but we were met at a stuck point again in  
11 this time.

12                                We were met with the Crown last year, as my  
13 sister described, where the Crown decided they can't do  
14 anything because of certain -- she pointed one out, with  
15 the 6-months clause where you can't charge anybody. But,  
16 there is also -- I forgot the term. There is another one  
17 there where you cannot file or press charges under a  
18 prescription that's after 10 years. So, our case was 10-  
19 years-old. We only found out some of these things later  
20 on.

21                                So, this was the mistake on our part. But,  
22 we wanted justice to be served, but also a correction to be  
23 done, to be made by the police. So, this was part of our  
24 mistake as a family. We tried to look for support in the  
25 best way we could. We were stuck sometimes where I had to

1            take on the load to try to find the means of direction.

2                    My nephew, for the past few years it has  
3            been heavy on him. My sisters, too. Now, we lived, many  
4            of us, the older ones, we lived in a state of regret, a  
5            time of guilt, because we lost someone. I tried to assist  
6            and help and guide my nephews and my family the best that I  
7            could. Over the stage of a few years, it has been very  
8            difficult understanding the case history, but the case to  
9            be closed for us. That was the biggest question.

10                    Now, in the past, how I seen my mother, my  
11            father, how they were waiting for calls. My mother making  
12            these calls without any answers to these questions. Seeing  
13            my mother, late at night, crying away. Or, I would hear  
14            her from my room in the basement, in the middle of the  
15            night, crying away. These are some of the difficulties  
16            that my mother had to face.

17                    But, we didn't have any assistance, like so  
18            many of the families. We didn't have any services. Like,  
19            back then the community was only 15-years-old. We were  
20            just establishing. The services were there, but they were  
21            only minimal, like so many communities.

22                    But, like what my nephew had said and my  
23            sister, there was a great point where I missed being  
24            around, I missed seeing how she took care of my sisters, my  
25            younger brothers. I missed seeing -- I wanted to see her

1            live her life with her boys. I wanted to see her with her  
2            grandkids, holding her grandbabies. These were some of the  
3            things that I wanted to see her do.

4                            When I heard some of these people that  
5            attacked, assaulted and murdered my sister are still out  
6            there free and walking -- but, like I said, when I started  
7            questioning some of those things, the motives of the girls,  
8            the motives of the girls was because of a guy. And, that  
9            was -- you know. I can't go back, but sometimes I keep  
10           reliving it. I relive part of what it is I want in life  
11           for my sister. But, I also relive part of the life I live  
12           within my community, as I see. I used to be blind. I used  
13           to be an alcoholic and a drug addict, living a life where,  
14           okay, this is going to be me. When I set myself free of  
15           that, I saw part of a reality that was in our communities,  
16           in my community, how my life was, and how my family was  
17           being treated also.

18                            When I looked at this, and I looked at who  
19           these people were, I couldn't remember their names. I had  
20           forgotten the face of my late sister. I had forgotten some  
21           of the memories of my late sister. It wasn't until only a  
22           few years back where I started remembering. After I had  
23           shared her story about three weeks ago, it was finally  
24           (indiscernible). She came to me in my dream. I finally  
25           got to see my sister. Twenty-five years, she came to see



1            me, and I think she was happy.

2                            She was happy because I was starting to let  
3            go, but I was also worried that I was going to forget  
4            again, and this was the hardest thing. Not only did I lose  
5            just my sister, but many in my community that I loved  
6            dearly. She came, and I saw her, but she took me  
7            somewhere.

8                            She took me to the graveyard, where I last  
9            remembered, where I left off, where I wasn't able to cry.  
10           We had ended what was the funeral, and I can remember, I  
11           remember the people compacting the last part of the grave.  
12           There was no crosses there yet, but I've seen people doing  
13           the final touch ups. But, I saw this person being escorted  
14           with somebody, and looking towards the gravesite. She  
15           turned to me, and it was one of her best friends. I was  
16           eating something, in my dream I was eating something, and  
17           when she turned, she looked at me. She looked at me, her  
18           friend, and she came up. She picked up something from my  
19           neck. It was a necklace that I was wearing, and she lifted  
20           it up, and I was looking at her, just looking at her. And,  
21           I looked down. The necklace wasn't anything valuable, no  
22           gemstones. It was a cheese stick.

23                            Just the simple things in life that I used  
24            to enjoy I had forgotten, but she came to me in my dream,  
25            and she wanted to remind me how I should be living. So,

1            this cheese stick, I haven't had any yet, but I still  
2            remember the joys of eating those cheese sticks, sharing,  
3            sometimes even stealing a few.

4                    So, out of all the trauma is, where do I let  
5            go and move on has been the question of so many years, and  
6            the question that even my wife has been trying to direct me  
7            to. I have lived my whole life in anger, regret, misery  
8            was one of my best companies. I kept myself in there.  
9            But, after sobering up, I still have issues with detachment  
10           and some of these things, especially this one.

11                    So, the investigation itself, they say it's  
12           closed, but we still have issues with some of how they  
13           proceeded. There are some questions, some discrepancies  
14           inside this. We wanted the question of the autopsy itself  
15           to be looked at, but they said, "No, we're going to  
16           concentrate on the women again. We are going to reopen the  
17           case." We questioned. Okay, because it's an old case, we  
18           can't apply manslaughter charges. I think it was  
19           negligence, that's what they wanted to do.

20                    But, as I said, 25 years ago they heard her,  
21           they heard her cries for help. But, last year they don't  
22           hear her cries for help. So, under the section of the  
23           *Criminal Code*, 222.9(b), I think, (a) and (b) states that  
24           morally and ethically you are entitled, you are liable to  
25           go and help. But, there is something else that is

1            contradictory to it, as the Crown attorney proceeded to  
2            tell us, you are not ethically responsible. Like, where do  
3            we go from there? How does it say, if you hear her you are  
4            responsible, but then you don't have to? That's the part  
5            that still bothers me.

6                            Now, I'm going to be going back with my  
7            family. I don't know what it is, how I will proceed with  
8            this, but I'm going to do the best I can to keep supporting  
9            my nephew, my mom, because that's what I have done. That's  
10           what I know that she would want me to do. It's been very  
11           difficult carrying the history of trauma, something that is  
12           unresolved still on my part and theirs too.

13                           When we look at the case itself, and we are  
14           here with the Inquiry, what do you do with some of the  
15           cases that are still closed? What do you do with some of  
16           the families? How do you hear their pleas of wanting  
17           justice? How do you acknowledge? You are acknowledging,  
18           but there is a part of being left alone and abandoned when  
19           you say that you cannot proceed to help with the other  
20           cases that are closed.

21                           We can't afford a lawyer, because you know  
22           there are so many broke Indians around. We tried to do the  
23           best that we could. It's always the question of you guys,  
24           what do you do for the remainder of them? We know that  
25           there has been some division caused by some of the

1            questions. Now, I don't have much to say what it is that  
2            you can do better. I can't say much, because you've heard  
3            it all, probably, from so many.

4                            But, when we looked at the word -- this is  
5            the first word that was asked of us about two years ago,  
6            "How do we support you?" And, two days ago, when we were  
7            asked, "How do we support you," there wasn't too much  
8            support. There wasn't too much on the part of the Inquiry,  
9            because we also left, in a way, still angry, I guess, you  
10           could say, but we weren't followed up on, from what I can  
11           remember. But, my sister here and my nephew, did the best  
12           they could to do the research and to do what it is that  
13           they felt was right for the family, for this.

14                           Now, it's been difficult, like I said, but  
15           when you choose the word "support" as itself, you have been  
16           brought up in a certain way, I can see some of the people,  
17           the way you are dressed, you were brought up in an old way,  
18           how we are supposed to show love, compassion, caring, and  
19           sharing with all of this. Where has some of this gone?  
20           Some of the people have been left behind again. Some of  
21           the people have been denied. Where do you go back? What  
22           can you do?

23                           So, in ending, with everything that has  
24           happened, it's not the related issues that has killed my  
25           sister. It is the silence that has killed my sister

1 because we chose, the many people that were there, that  
2 witnessed certain things, in many other communities, it is  
3 the people that chose to remain silent that actually helped  
4 kill my sister. So, in remembrance, when you do see  
5 something, to whoever is watching this, when you see  
6 somebody in need, be there to assist, be there to help.  
7 Don't be afraid to talk. *Migwetch.*

8 **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Thank you, Kirby, Silas,  
9 and Mary-Annie. I have a few questions. The two of you  
10 mentioned that Rose was arrested. Was she arrested in  
11 Nemaska; am I correct?

12 **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** Well, you heard the  
13 story of how she was arrested.

14 **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** I did, but the  
15 Commissioners haven't, so that's why I'm asking.

16 **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** Yes, and these two  
17 incidences of her incarceration and the somewhat of a  
18 decision to banish her did happen in our own community, our  
19 own community of Nemaska. What happened there for two  
20 incidences was to harm other people, but there is a policy  
21 within the community that states we have to protect the  
22 majority of the community from individuals that are more  
23 harmful than others. But, we also know our history in our  
24 community where others were just as harmful towards the  
25 community itself, but nothing had happened to them.

1                    My sister was made a martyr, as I can say,  
2                    and she ended up being banished for some things. There's  
3                    other people that caused a great deal of harm, or even  
4                    caused some form of distress within the community as well,  
5                    but my sister was the one that was banished from our  
6                    community where the charges were laid.

7                    As you heard, from her attacking her sexual  
8                    assault victimizer and also from the humiliation she had to  
9                    endure and face from some of the members in our community,  
10                    where she walked into the home with a butter knife while  
11                    she was intoxicated. These are some of the charges, and  
12                    yes, she was banished from our community, and that's where  
13                    the charges were laid.

14                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Okay. So, she was  
15                    arrested because she attacked her sexual aggressor; am I  
16                    correct?

17                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** I just wanted to  
18                    add that she was arrested, but she wasn't arrested on the  
19                    day that she did those things. Only a couple of days  
20                    later. And, plus, I want to add that when they came to get  
21                    her, take her out of our home, they didn't even tell our  
22                    parents why. They just took her, like that, and no  
23                    information given to my parents.

24                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** And so, she was banned  
25                    from the community. Where was she sent out after?

1                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Val-d'Or. She  
2 stayed at the Val-d'Or Friendship Centre.

3                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** And, this happened when  
4 about?

5                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Early fall 1991.

6                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So, when she went missing,  
7 she went missing, and she was residing at the Friendship  
8 Centre in Val-d'Or?

9                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Yes, but nobody  
10 knew she was missing until my mom wanted to send cheques to  
11 her so that she could have some money. That's when we  
12 found -- the lady that my mom gave the cheques to couldn't  
13 find her anywhere. Then, we heard from other community  
14 members that they haven't seen her for days, too. That's  
15 when we found out she's missing. Then, a couple of days  
16 later they told us she was found.

17                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** What was your interaction  
18 with the police of Nemaska, and the police of SQ? Can you  
19 describe your experience?

20                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** What do you mean  
21 "interaction"?

22                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** You said that -- who gave  
23 you the information? Was it the police forces, and how can  
24 you describe your experience, how it was that you received  
25 enough information?

1                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** We received the  
2 news from our Chief in Council and the preacher, but no  
3 police ever came. No local, no SQ, ever came to my mom's  
4 home.

5                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So, I believe on the  
6 second investigation, the two women were investigated.  
7 Were they on the first one in 1991?

8                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Yes, both of them.

9                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So, that bylaw or that  
10 rule that following an arrest and people getting banned  
11 from the community, does it still exist in the community?

12                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Yes, I heard it  
13 still exists, but we don't really know who banned her.  
14 Like, who made the decision to ban her. And, we requested  
15 documents, too, from the Chief in Council, and the police,  
16 her file. They have nothing. So, I don't know, there is  
17 something still not quite right. Like, that tells me  
18 something is still not right.

19                    **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** I don't think I have any  
20 more questions. I will leave the Commissioners, if they  
21 have questions or comments, if you have nothing more to  
22 add, the family. Do you have anything else to add?

23                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** I'm going to ask  
24 my mom.

25                    **MS. BESSIE BLACKNED:** I don't have really



1            nothing to say. I think they all -- all the troubles we  
2            went through, the three of them. When we found out that --  
3            when my daughter was missing, it was a friend that came.  
4            First, she had called me, and she was asking for her  
5            cheques from the allowance. We don't know all the  
6            information what happened after the police took her. I  
7            believe the police took her to Amos first. And, I don't  
8            know if she had to go to court, and they let her out. And,  
9            she was saying at the Friendship Centre, and that's when  
10           she called me.

11                            She was asking for her cheques, her cheques  
12            for family allowance. And, the friend who came to pick up  
13            the cheques, I gave it to her. And then she came back to  
14            me, bringing the cheques back. That's when she told me,  
15            "There is nowhere we can find her. We've checked  
16            everywhere. We've been asking people if they had seen her,  
17            and nobody had seen her." And, the friend had told me,  
18            "Just keep searching for her." I know she was kind of  
19            worried, too, because she couldn't find her in Val-d'Or.  
20            But, her bag was in the centre where she stayed.

21                            So, that's when I started making calls.  
22            And, this, too, I wasn't much help from the police, too.  
23            It seemed like I was doing this myself, trying to find her.  
24            Where could she be? And, I don't know how the police  
25            contact the police in Val-d'Or, too.

1                    And, for those past days that she was  
2                    missing, I kept calling places, you know, hotels, if she  
3                    had checked in. There was no sign of her. And, when -- in  
4                    a couple of days, again, we tried. I don't know how many  
5                    calls we made. And, I didn't get any support from the  
6                    police, like, to come to us saying that they were working  
7                    on it, searching. That was the hardest part. Like, I was  
8                    just doing this on my own, trying to find my daughter.

9                    And, there was a couple of days that the  
10                    pastor came with the Chief to our home. And, I know right  
11                    away it wasn't going to be good news. And, I don't know,  
12                    something almost happened to me there, when they told me.  
13                    I was just about to -- I guess, faint out or something. I  
14                    just remember yelling for water because I know that my  
15                    daughter wasn't going to be home anymore. And then the  
16                    pastor told me that the body was sent to Montreal.

17                    And, the hardest part was seeing my --  
18                    leaving her two boys with us, we had the two boys with us  
19                    at that time because I had my own, too. Sometimes it is  
20                    still very hard, remembering her, the way she was treated.  
21                    Like, they said, it was only in November, after all these  
22                    years we had lost her, it was only in November that we got  
23                    all the information of what happened.

24                    When she was gone, when we lost her, we  
25                    asked the police to give us information of what happened in

1        Val-d'Or. So, finally, the police called us to his office  
2        one day, just me and my husband, and this is the time --  
3        and I don't even remember if he gave us the letter or just  
4        read the letter to us. And, he said, "This is the only  
5        information we have." So, he read the letter to us that my  
6        daughter was -- had been assaulted by two -- and these are  
7        two sisters. And, even he told us the names of the two  
8        sisters. And, he said in the letter -- I don't know how to  
9        say this.

10                    I remember him saying that there was nothing  
11        much done to these girls. And, these two girls, they only  
12        have to live the memory of what they did to my daughter.  
13        And, he said, "And, they're not allowed into the  
14        community," to come to the community. That was the only  
15        information we got from the police of what happened.

16                    And, just recently that we have received all  
17        the information, where they find her, and how long she had  
18        been there, just in November, of all these years. And,  
19        they took a picture of the place where they found her.  
20        They hang the picture. And, we put the flowers on the tree  
21        in Val-d'Or.

22                    And, I know it has been hard for our family,  
23        of what happened. And, one of the hardest things is to  
24        know these two ladies are free with never laid charges on  
25        them. And, I can't really remember the faces. I can't

1        imagine how these ladies looked like, but they are around  
2        with their families, living with their families, too. And,  
3        this -- one of the things that sometimes really bothered me  
4        is, I wonder how they feel sometimes in their own lives,  
5        knowing what they did to my daughter. Especially the two  
6        boys she left behind.

7                    When we were told that my daughter was gone,  
8        one of the things my husband said to me was, "We're not  
9        going to let these boys go. We're going to keep them, even  
10       though we have our other kids, the little bunch we have."  
11       So, that is what we did right away. We made the documents  
12       to adopt them right away when they lost their mom. We  
13       didn't want them to be pushed around from home to home. We  
14       wanted to take care of them. You can see this young man  
15       here in front, that's the oldest one. And, his brother was  
16       only two, and he was four when they lost their mom. We  
17       tried our best to look after them, take care of them, when  
18       their mom was gone.

19                    And, I'm glad I did this, just to share a  
20       little, because I thought I wouldn't be able to do it. So,  
21       I just wanted to do it for the people who are here, that  
22       are listening. You heard all the stories of my three here,  
23       and the others who were not able to come. One of my sons  
24       said, "I will share my story one day, too." I know they  
25       all have something to share.

1                    And, last night, when I went home, I was  
2                    looking at my daughter, what she wrote on her Facebook, my  
3                    youngest one. She was 8-years-old, that was our baby, when  
4                    we lost our daughter. And, it has not been easy for our  
5                    family. It has been a very hard journey for our family,  
6                    the ones that find it very hard to accept it. I know some  
7                    of them are still living in anger of what happened. Some  
8                    of them hadn't show up when we had our family gathering. I  
9                    know one of my boys said, "I can't go yet, I'm not ready  
10                    for this."

11                    So, in closing I just want to thank you all  
12                    for listening. I did this for you. But, I know I can't --  
13                    I'm not really into all, but we have a lot to share, and we  
14                    can't do it in one day. But, I'm glad I did part of it.  
15                    Thank you.

16                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** I'm going to add a  
17                    little something before I pass the mic. I would just like  
18                    to mention that I had -- you just heard my mom speak. And,  
19                    this is the first time she ever spoke of my late sister  
20                    ever since she passed. First time. And, I'm so proud of  
21                    her. It is a big step for her to do that. So, thank you,  
22                    Mom.

23                    **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** One of the things -- I  
24                    am very happy for my mom, to hear her speak, too. One of  
25                    the things that I've been asking my mom is for her vamps,

1            the front of the moccasin for her to make. I have asked  
2            her for quite a number of times. I know my mom still has  
3            difficulties in letting go. And, that's part of the thing  
4            that I wanted her to make, because it was her daughter.

5                            And, just a little recently she gave me  
6            permission to ask somebody else, a member of the family, to  
7            make them. So, when I was talking about that, somebody  
8            jumped to the idea that they were going to do it for us.  
9            So, this is one of the things that I would like her vamp to  
10           be part of the others that are going to be travelling all  
11           across Canada here.

12                           I went to the one in Sudbury about two  
13           months ago. I have heard about these. We were asked even  
14           for her picture. Her picture is there now, but the vamps  
15           are missing. I did the ceremony in Sudbury, but I felt at  
16           ease at that time. If it was two years ago it would have  
17           been totally different. I had a lot of great deal of with  
18           that I have done for myself over the past few years, so  
19           that is one thing that I wanted to go and put with the  
20           others, is the vamps, as soon as they are done. (Speaking  
21           in Indigenous language). Thank you.

22                           **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Thank you. So,  
23           Commissioners, if you have questions or comments? Thank  
24           you.

25                           **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank

1 you. I don't have any questions. I just want to thank you  
2 all very much for coming today. What you have told us is  
3 very important to us and very helpful to us as well. So, I  
4 want to thank you. I honour your courage. And -- I'm not  
5 often at a loss for words. But, thank you. I think that's  
6 all I can say.

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Merci,  
8 beaucoup, Marie-Annie. (Speaking in Indigenous language).  
9 Beaucoup de courage, a lot of courage. Even if it's nine  
10 months that we are honoured to receive the truth, it is  
11 always a big stress, I will speak for myself, I'm a human  
12 being, to make sure that I honour you, you, and you, and  
13 you, when you share and speak to us. But, you not only  
14 speak to us, but you speak to Rose, of course. But, to  
15 people who were there, I hope they heard you. If not,  
16 people who knows them, that heard your message, your  
17 powerful words.

18 And, also, my question for me, or comments  
19 -- more a question, and I need to understand, I hope your  
20 community heard you. It's the first time that, for myself,  
21 I've been witnessing family members that will come and say  
22 my daughter, or my sister, were banned. She weren't  
23 allowed to live in the community. And, did I understood  
24 well that when the community made that decision your mom  
25 weren't consulted or involved, or aware of that decision?

1 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: They made  
3 that decision without talking to you?

4 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: Well, I'm not sure  
5 who made that decision, but I was told that it is that  
6 Chief and Council that makes these decisions. So, I guess  
7 when they made that decision, and they went to pick up my  
8 sister at my mom's house, my parents' place, they just took  
9 her, without informing our parents, like, why they are  
10 taking her away, why they are arresting her.

11 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And, you said  
12 in your testimony, when you spoke to us, that you asked for  
13 files, you asked the community, "Do you have any  
14 information?" They have nothing, nothing or they don't  
15 want to give it to you?

16 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: Well, they don't  
17 -- they're kind of, like, just ignoring, not really  
18 responding. And, for the police, the EPPF, the police  
19 force, I requested for the local police file on my sister  
20 of, well, like, the banishment, what she was arrested for,  
21 and everything, I requested for that. They told me they  
22 don't have the file.

23 I even called the headquarters of EPPF  
24 requesting that file. I even emailed the Director. That's  
25 what they told me, that they don't have that file. And,



1 I'm quite surprised. In a way, I didn't believe them  
2 because the police officer in charge at the time was  
3 Anthony (indiscernible). And, I believe they are helping  
4 -- they are covering something up. They are hiding  
5 something from us on him. That's what I believe. Like,  
6 they're not being honest with us. They're covering his  
7 mistakes or something, but I'm not quite, too sure.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And,  
9 is it a written rule that we can exclude a member of the  
10 community?

11 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Well, I have  
12 studied -- well I did some research on our community bylaws  
13 and that. I've never seen a bylaw stating that you can ban  
14 a community member for doing wrong. I've never seen a  
15 bylaw in our bylaws that they could do that.

16 **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** If I may, Commissioner  
17 Audette, I was previously a Crown prosecutor working with  
18 Cree communities, and often what happens following an  
19 arrest, within the conditions, there it appears that the  
20 individual cannot stay in the community. That's how it  
21 happens often.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** It's written?

23 **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** It's in the conditions  
24 upon release of following an arrest. In that case, Rose  
25 was arrested, and then probably, we don't know, we don't

1 see the documents, but probably in her conditions she  
2 couldn't stay in Nemaska.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. They  
4 used the *Criminal Code* as the tool.

5 **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** One of the thing that  
6 we requested is the police files, but we couldn't get an  
7 accurate date on when the decision was made. So, when we  
8 asked for -- because the only way that somebody can be  
9 banished from the community or the territories is under a  
10 band resolution, or a special resolution. That's when it  
11 is applied. It also even states in the Northern Quebec  
12 Agreement that we have within our territory that no person  
13 should be banned if current situations do apply, but they  
14 have to be under some kind of -- these certain issues that  
15 have to come about. So, that's the only way.

16 So, we don't have a time, a date, when the  
17 court granted the permission and the date of the  
18 banishment. So, by then, when we asked, we asked, "Okay,  
19 can you give us an accurate date?" And, when I saw the  
20 secretary and I asked her, "How do I give you an exact date  
21 when your police force can't even give me an exact date  
22 also? Give us the information. What do we need? We can't  
23 follow through with this.

24 One of the things that the corporate  
25 secretary said, "If you give me a date and a time, I can do

1 my research and back trace from when." But, she said,  
2 that's going to take a long time. So, I'm currently -- the  
3 month that I gave her was about November of 1990. So,  
4 that's the month I gave her from last time, but I have not  
5 sent her a letter stating our reasons why we were asking  
6 for it, but it was just mostly verbal. So, she is aware of  
7 that, the corporate secretary, so they're doing what it is  
8 they can, but they haven't given us any answers.

9 As for the files itself, one of the things  
10 that I didn't mention it, some files within the police  
11 department burned. There was a fire within the police  
12 station, but with the fire that was in the police station  
13 only some files burned. And, one of those files was my  
14 sister's because there was history of how the police  
15 proceeded, violated rights of the community members. And,  
16 this is where some documents were lost. I think this is  
17 part of that history that they are trying to cover up.  
18 But, if there was a fire in the police station, how come  
19 only a few files burned? That is the question that we  
20 wanted to ask, but we are not getting any answers.

21 So, that's -- this is, like I said, we are  
22 at a stuck point again, and we're going to have to review  
23 it. When the time came when I asked a certain document  
24 from the EPPF to follow through, that's the answer that I  
25 received later on, "There was a fire in the police

1 station."

2 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Could you  
3 name exactly EPPF?

4 MS. FANNY WYLDE: EPPF stands for Eeyou  
5 Eenou Police Force.

6 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay, Eeyou  
7 Eenou.

8 MS. FANNY WYLDE: And, the headquarters is  
9 in Chisasibi.

10 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: A couple  
11 questions to all of you, of course. When you said that the  
12 case was reopened, it was reopened last year because of a  
13 journalist?

14 MR. KIRBY BLACKNED: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Even you,  
16 before the journalist, did you request it to be reopened?

17 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: No.

18 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. And,  
19 the journalist, she got in touch to you, to your mom?

20 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: I reached out to  
21 them first.

22 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

23 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: I'm the one that  
24 -- because that was during -- well I guess I got a little  
25 impatient with things going to a slow pace; you know? So,

1 I did a lot of research on the internet, trying to find  
2 ways to make a push, to make something happen. So, I found  
3 this group on Facebook. They're called CBC Missing and  
4 Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. They are there for  
5 families, to help them, like, to get down to the truth. If  
6 you never knew what happened to your loved one, they can  
7 give you the answers.

8 So, I contacted them. First, I emailed  
9 them, what they were for, and -- because I wasn't too sure  
10 if they were, like, real. So, when she emailed me, and she  
11 called me, that's when I knew. Then, I told her about our  
12 sister's story. So, I gave them all the information I had,  
13 because I have my own information. As you can see, I have  
14 this red little thing here, I carry it almost everywhere I  
15 go. That all has to do with my late sister. So, I gave  
16 them all the information as I could, and right away they  
17 started digging. And, I think it was in October 2017 that  
18 I contacted them, when I first emailed them. Oh, yeah,  
19 2016.

20 And then in January they got back to me  
21 saying they have the truth, they have all the documents  
22 about my sister, and I wanted to see for myself. So, they  
23 sent them to me, and I forwarded it all to my siblings so  
24 that we could all have the same information.

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Did you have,

1 like, a lawyer or a former cop, or somebody to go through  
2 those documents so you understand that language or what it  
3 means? Or, you were on your own?

4 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** No. But, when we  
5 received those documents, I was -- I presently live in  
6 Oujé-Bougoumou. So, that's where I found out the truth  
7 what happened, and my family was back home.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** In Nemaska?

9 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Yeah. But, what I  
10 did was I contacted -- I didn't contact, she offered me  
11 that she could help me go through with the documents,  
12 because she's trained for these kinds of things and that  
13 she's able to help me deal with my emotions, too, that she  
14 could help me with these things. So, I had this one  
15 support. But, she wasn't a lawyer. She was like a  
16 frontline worker, or something. But, no, we never had no  
17 lawyers go over the documents with us.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** That's my  
19 last comment/question, about the health support, in 1991  
20 when you lost your sister, your daughter; is the community,  
21 or Val-d'Or, or the police was there to support there  
22 spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally?

23 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** No.

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Is it  
25 something it would have -- (French 4:13:43), it would have

1 been important and good for you?

2 **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** With those services  
3 that you're asking and wondering about, there was very  
4 limited workers back in the day. I think there was about  
5 two workers in the community of ---

6 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** In Val-d'Or  
7 or...

8 **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** No, not within Val-  
9 d'Or, but within our community itself.

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

11 **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** We had social workers  
12 that were working, but there weren't too many. I don't  
13 remember the social worker coming in and asking --  
14 providing us support, or giving us direction for our  
15 grieving process, or asking us if we needed help, a healing  
16 plan, or any path that we need to take. We were basically  
17 left alone.

18 As for the police out of Val-d'Or, we never  
19 really got any news or any follow-up from them after that,  
20 once they told us that the case was closed on our late  
21 sister. The police force in Nemaska, they didn't intervene  
22 or have any contact with us afterwards, once they left it.  
23 But, there were altercations between my brothers and the  
24 police. That's the only thing I can think about, because  
25 my brothers -- my eldest brothers were angry at the police.

1 So, there were altercations and some incidences had  
2 happened between them and the police, because they held  
3 them liable for what had happened, for sending my sister  
4 out, for enforcing some of the polices and the laws to be  
5 applied by Chief in Council. Like I said, the favouritism  
6 part has a great deal of impact in our life, in some  
7 minorities within our community. So, we didn't have or  
8 receive any help from the health department, wellness or  
9 police force.

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And, 2016 and  
11 2017? Same thing? No help?

12 **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** Well, 2016/2017, they  
13 did their research and wanted to join the Inquiry. They  
14 went at their own expense to Montreal. Okay, that part --  
15 there was another Inquiry where some of the other family  
16 members were asked to join or sit in the provincial inquiry  
17 in Ottawa. I was one of them. Oh, sorry. Pardon me. The  
18 prehearings in Ottawa.

19 I went. My wife sat with me and supported  
20 me. Some of the friends in the area came as well. My  
21 sister, Mary-Annie, was there. And, we sat and we talked  
22 about it. I think this is the first time I actually talked  
23 about my late sister that long, in that process. But, I  
24 honoured her, not with the information about the impacts of  
25 the attack itself, but the issues of lateral violence that



1 she had to face. So, I went there. We had very limited  
2 support from the Inquiry. We had very limited support from  
3 our community itself. When we would ask that, okay, they  
4 would provide a little bit of funding if we needed to go  
5 somewhere else.

6 But, with the Cree Regional Authority, they  
7 mandated the health department, the wellness department and  
8 also the Social Services of James Bay, they mandated them  
9 to assist families. So, this is some of the things that I  
10 had to prepare and develop a plan for my family to have  
11 elders, to have counsellors, to have psychologists, even  
12 any form of therapy that we can find that are available as  
13 resources to be available to my family. These are some of  
14 the things I had to do myself.

15 Even the ones that are based out of Wemindji  
16 that were mandated to do this weren't -- they didn't even  
17 follow through. They did not follow-up on us. No, I had  
18 to -- when the time came for us to get together, I had this  
19 in place for them. When certain discussions came about,  
20 when psychologists came to visit, I had to have these in  
21 place to remind the workers, "Okay, follow through with my  
22 family," because I didn't want to leave my family behind  
23 the way that we were left behind back in the day. I wanted  
24 some things to be available for us. And, especially for  
25 me, too, because I had somebody from the spiritual

1 community come in to do ceremonies, especially sweat lodge  
2 ceremonies.

3 So, this is part of my journey that healed  
4 me. As you can see, I'm wearing this. I'm wearing this  
5 buffalo because I had to carry the buffalo skulls around  
6 the ceremony. A ceremonial lodge, which is a sun dance  
7 lodge, this is part of where my healing came about. I had  
8 to follow through on myself. I had to find my way. This  
9 is part of re-growing and reconnecting to my identity.

10 Even though some people feel that it's not  
11 my appropriate journey or my lifestyle, but it's my choice,  
12 like so many. I was questioned. No, I just love being  
13 around it. It gives me a sense of peace, and that's how it  
14 is that I wanted to live my life. And, my mother got to  
15 respect that choice later on more and more, because she's  
16 seen my growth, my development and me becoming a better  
17 individual.

18 I am happy for now for the outcome of my  
19 life and how I proceeded. It gave me the honour and  
20 respect to walk my life, to live my life, and I am happy  
21 that they see me get to grow today.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** I'm not  
23 supposed to say that. It's just between you and me. What  
24 they say, it doesn't belong to you. So, you found your  
25 path, your walk, your right path, and it belongs to you.

1            And, that's a good example. We are imposed so many times  
2            religions, or ways, or the way we should talk, and role  
3            models like you that choose and stand, I commend you.  
4            Merci beaucoup. My colleague have some question also.

5                            **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Excuse me. Mary-Annie has  
6            a question.

7                            **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** I have a question  
8            to the Commissioners. What is your plan after all these  
9            hearings for the families? What do you plan to do with  
10           their stories? How do you plan to work forward and move  
11           forward in working with them with one's case?

12                           **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay, I'll  
13           say it in my words. And, of course, I'm well surrounded by  
14           people who their English is perfect, and know exactly the  
15           terminology. This Inquiry, we were tasked by the federal  
16           government and each province and territory to prove. We're  
17           in a world that we have to prove, but you and I know that  
18           discrimination has been there for too long. Racism,  
19           marginalization, and so on. But, we have to prove to  
20           Canada, to Quebec government and the other provinces and  
21           territories, that there is probably a trend, probably a  
22           culture in the judicial system, or with the police, or with  
23           the health system, and so on, that Indigenous people are  
24           treated differently because they are women and Indigenous.  
25           We live that every day. But, by receiving your truth, and

1            my pair of moccasins, and I have some today, I want to make  
2            sure that we are building that proof; okay? We are, every  
3            day. We are honouring that.

4                    Then the next phase, we will be sitting with  
5            the provincial government, or federal government,  
6            institutions, our Indigenous government, and ask those hard  
7            questions, how come the service wasn't provided? Do you  
8            have the reason why or an answer for that? Do you want to  
9            come and whisper in my ear that day?

10                    **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Can I join those  
11            sessions?

12                    **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** It is public;  
13            okay? It's going to be public. So, we are making sure  
14            that when we will sit with them, we ask the right  
15            questions. Meanwhile, we have bees, passionate people,  
16            that are working on the report. The small report you see  
17            here, it is the interim. So, that team is listening every  
18            words, is following every action of the Inquiry across  
19            Canada, where we went and where we are going to go.  
20            Families, institutions and people who are the keepers of  
21            the knowledge. Some people call them experts, some people  
22            say keepers of the knowledge.

23                    Them, too, will tell us what's good, what's  
24            wrong. What's working well, what's not working well,  
25            because they know, everywhere. And, we're building that

1 report, and say, "Hey, Canada, this is those facts that we  
2 found across Canada and those are the recommendations that  
3 came from the people." You. That would be my answer.

4 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I think  
5 she did an excellent job. Just a couple of things to add.  
6 All of the stories, the truths, that we hear from families,  
7 will be collected and saved. They will not be destroyed.  
8 And so, if there is a Commissioner who isn't here today,  
9 Commissioner Eyolfson is listening to people in private, he  
10 will be able to follow your story as well. And, we will be  
11 able to follow the stories of the people he hears from.

12 So, we all know what is being said by  
13 families, even though we might not be in the room with them  
14 at the time. And, all of the records will be kept. They  
15 won't be destroyed. And, they will go to archives and be  
16 kept there for researchers, for other people, who will want  
17 to do further studies. So, not only will we hear from you,  
18 we will do our homework and we will keep the stories to  
19 honour the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.  
20 Their stories are a legacy.

21 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Just to add a  
22 little bit about the powers that we have been given in the  
23 Inquiry. We can make requests of government agencies for  
24 documents. Which leads to one of my questions.

25 The two police forces that were involved

1 were the Val-d'Or municipal police?

2 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Yes. At the  
3 beginning, the investigation was handled by the  
4 Municipalité de Val-d'Or. But, I'm not sure which year,  
5 but in 2008 or 2007, her file was transferred to La Sûreté  
6 du Québec.

7 **COMMISSINOER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay. And  
8 then for the banishment and the things that happened in  
9 your community, that was the local Eeyou police?

10 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Back then the EEPF  
11 did not exist, just local police officers, run through the  
12 Chief in Councils.

13 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay. So, it  
14 wasn't RCMP, it was -- okay. And so, local police officers  
15 as well?

16 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Yes.

17 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay.

18 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** There was only one  
19 police officer at that time.

20 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay. That  
21 was the question. I had a lot of the same questions as  
22 her, so that was one of the questions that I had that she  
23 didn't ask. So, we can request documents that are  
24 relevant, and how police handle cases is relevant to our  
25 work, because it's how they address violence.

1 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: Okay. If you can  
2 make those requests, and let's say you guys have those  
3 documents, when you make these requests can you, like, cc  
4 it to family members?

5 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Do you want to  
6 answer that?

7 MS. FANNY WYLDE: I can confirm that  
8 subpoenas have been sent in order to get the files. And, I  
9 know that the SQ has been very collaborative, and they have  
10 sent the files. They are currently onto Ringtail. So,  
11 when we will be able to look at them, it takes time to  
12 process it on Ringtail, then we can look at the file and  
13 analyze them.

14 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Fanny, did  
15 you subpoena also the Eeyou Eenou Police Force?

16 MS. FANNY WYLDE: No, we only subpoenaed the  
17 Sûreté du Val-d'Or and also the SQ.

18 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: I want you to  
19 subpoena them too.

20 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Empowerment.

21 MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED: And, our Chief in  
22 Council.

23 MS. FANNY WYLDE: Well, following the  
24 testimony of the families, we can always request the new  
25 information that was brought into the hearing.

1                   **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** And, when we  
2 receive those files, we have also been given power under  
3 our terms of reference that there is information that could  
4 lead to criminal prosecution, we cannot charge people. We  
5 can't do the civil or criminal, but we can refer to  
6 authorities, and send it back and say, "Reinvestigate  
7 this."

8                   **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** One of the questions  
9 that -- after their part of doing their history and  
10 research with trying to get information, one of the things  
11 that I was -- the legal aspect of it is what I was looking  
12 at. One of the things, who was helping me most was my  
13 wife. She is in college right now. She is doing some  
14 studies. And, one of the things that I had to go over  
15 there and talk about the missing and murdered women at one  
16 point. So, they invited me to the class. So, one of the  
17 professors was listening, but then again, he was providing  
18 information and feedback to how we should handle the case  
19 also, to be diligent. But, sometimes we lost track.

20                   But, at one point I asked my nephew here,  
21 once the case was closed there is a certain amount of  
22 period where we have to make an appeal. The appeal is to  
23 hire a lawyer, which was costly. And, where I said, okay,  
24 you have to get the Inquiry to make the appeal before 30  
25 days. I had asked him that, but I think he was talking to



1 the Inquiry team on the Ontario side. I'm not sure if the  
2 request was transferred early enough or was it ever  
3 received.

4 After the decision was made by the Crown  
5 attorney not to pursue the charges and the case to be  
6 closed, there was a 30-day period where we had to make the  
7 appeal, and my nephew was keeping in contact with -- I'm  
8 not sure if it was the legal team on this Inquiry or the  
9 one from Ontario, that's what he can't remember. And, what  
10 we were told -- what I was told by the professor is you  
11 have to make the appeal before 30 days. And, we wanted to  
12 do that. But, then again, he said that he was going to go  
13 directly to the Missing and Murdered legal team. I wonder  
14 if there was anything received on that part of it.

15 **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Since I've been working  
16 with this family in preparation for Montreal, I never  
17 received such indications or instructions.

18 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** One final  
19 question. Back in the 1990's were the women ever charged  
20 with anything? No? I was just trying to understand, you  
21 said that there was -- originally, they were looking at it  
22 as manslaughter, and then negligence, and I was wondering  
23 about that process.

24 **MR. KIRBY BLACKNED:** In the beginning, back  
25 in 1991, after the investigation, the chief leading

1 investigator, which was -- what was his name again? He  
2 said that these women that were -- they were at the scene,  
3 that caused bodily harm, and that caused death later on to  
4 my sister, my late sister, Rose-Ann, should be charged for  
5 manslaughter. But, like I said, some of the documents did  
6 not follow through or ended up where they should have been.  
7 But, the autopsy report wasn't done within the territory,  
8 within the region. She was sent out somewhere else.

9 So, when the body was being done, when it  
10 was finished, the case in question, even though with all  
11 these lesions, these bruises, these fractures, even within  
12 the frontal lobe, the damage and the internal bleeding in  
13 the frontal lobe, led this mortician to believe this woman  
14 that's laying here passed away due to hyperthermia. That's  
15 what he wrote down on his report. So, the other side of  
16 the legal team, when there were supposed to be charges  
17 pressed, he used those words from the mortician, but not  
18 the attack in question itself.

19 There was reports where they admitted  
20 certain things in the first previous investigation, they  
21 assaulted her, they beated her with their hands, and at one  
22 point one person mentioned that she kicked her in the head  
23 several times repeatedly, even though she was already down.  
24 Repeatedly. But, the new investigation says, "No, she  
25 didn't do that. No, we only attacked her in a certain

1 part. No, we did not hear her now, but we heard her back  
2 then." So, everything is contradictory in the new  
3 investigation. So, that's why we had the Crown decide that  
4 it should be closed.

5 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Mary-Annie,  
6 you were looking through your papers, is there something  
7 you want to add?

8 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** When you said the  
9 manslaughter, I was just trying to remember. I know that  
10 the lead investigator of the first investigation, he  
11 recommended that charges be laid, but the Crown never --  
12 how do you say that? Acknowledged his recommendation.

13 **COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Okay. Those  
14 are my questions. Thank you all for coming and thank you  
15 to your mom. Thank you.

16 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Merci  
17 beaucoup. Mary-Annie, love you. But, you, merci beaucoup,  
18 beaucoup. And, I hope I answered your question about what  
19 do we do. But, you do more than what we're doing. Now,  
20 Canada cannot pretend that it didn't exist because of your  
21 words, your tears and your message, but also what you want.  
22 Quebec cannot pretend it didn't exist. And, same for all  
23 the families that have the courage to come here, so that  
24 education is very important. So, thank you. Would you  
25 accept a gift on our behalf, for you from us? You do.

1 Okay.

2 **MS. MARY-ANNIE BLACKNED:** Yes.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. I'll  
4 keep it. I would like to ask our grandmothers, in plural,  
5 to come here and explain the gift. It's not (speaking in  
6 Indigenous language). Who wants to explain? You'll see  
7 they're all cute.

8 **GRANDMOTHER LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS-GAUDIO:**

9 Family, we want to give to you a little sign of  
10 appreciation for you coming and telling your truths, and  
11 telling us your histories. We have here for you some  
12 seeds. Now, these seeds can be planted to remember your  
13 loved ones, and when you see them flower and you see them  
14 blooming, know that they are always with you. Even when  
15 you don't see them, they are there; right? And, they are  
16 there to help comfort you, and to help you with your  
17 journey, and to help you bring the words that are needed to  
18 be heard by the rest of Canada.

19 And, as well, we have some eagle feathers to  
20 help you with your journeys, to take your prayers, to take  
21 your request to that creator, to that one that hears all,  
22 that *Gitche Manitou* to comfort you in the times when we  
23 feel sad and we feel alone. We know that when we trust,  
24 and we put our faith to that one that knows all, that helps  
25 us. And, when we get to sit and share, like you have

1            today, and to bring those words, that's part of our  
2            healing. And, we just want to give back to you for  
3            enriching and telling your truths.

4                            So, we're going to come around and offer you  
5            these gifts.

6                            **MS. BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:** I would like  
7            to introduce my niece here to explain the song here.  
8            Audrey Seigl.

9                            **MS. AUDREY SEIGL:** (Speaking in Indigenous  
10            language). To the ancestors, to the land, to all the  
11            people that are here supporting, to the families, we would  
12            like to share a song that comes from the west coast as  
13            medicine.

14                            It is the Women's Warrior Song. A song that  
15            came to Martina Pierre of the Lillooet Nation in a sweat  
16            about 30 years ago. It's a song to be sung for strength,  
17            never to be sung in anger, and we wanted to finish the day  
18            with this song so that we all leave remembering that we are  
19            warriors.

20                            **MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So, before we do the song,  
21            I just would like to ask the Commissioners if we can  
22            adjourn this hearing? Thank you.

23            **--- Exhibits (code: P01P13P0102)**

24            **Exhibit 1:**            Folder of five digital images displayed  
25                            during the public testimony of the Blackned

1 family.

2 --- Upon adjourning at 16:42

3  
4 LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

5  
6 I, Shirley Chang, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I  
7 have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and  
8 accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this  
9 matter.

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13 Shirley Chang

14 March 28, 2018

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