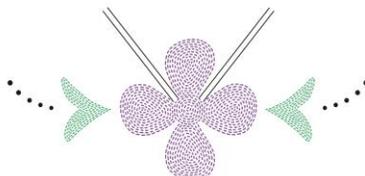


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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  
Riverlodge Place  
Thompson, Manitoba**



**PUBLIC**

**Tuesday March 20, 2018**

**Public Volume 72:**

**Hilda Anderson Pyrz, Dennis Anderson, Keith Anderson,  
Carol Wood, Lianna Anderson, Melvin Anderson,  
Minnie Anderson & Arla Tait, In relation to Dawn Anderson**

**Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

**Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

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## II

### APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Stuart Wuttke (Legal counsel) Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs	Non-appearance
Government of Canada	Lucy Bell (Legal Counsel)
Government of Manitoba	Samuel Thomson (Legal Counsel)
Manitoba Moon Voices Inc.	Non-appearance
MMIWG Coalition (Manitoba)	Non-appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Manitoba Inuit Association	Non-appearance
Winnipeg Police Service	Non-appearance
Women of the Metis Nation	Non-appearance

**III**  
**LIST OF EXHIBITS**

<b>NO.</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Witnesses: Hilda Anderson Pyrz, Dennis Anderson, Keith Anderson, Carol Wood, Lianna Anderson, Melvin Anderson, Minnie Anderson, Arla Tait Exhibits (code: P01P14P0101)</b>		
1	Folder of 20 images displayed during the public testimony of the family. P01P14P0101_Anderson_et_al_(Anderson)_Exh_1]	114
2	Family video of Dawn Anderson, 11.1 MB MP4 file, 3 minutes 36 seconds. [P01P14P0101_Anderson_family_video_Exh_2]	114
3	APTN report on Dawn Anderson, 34 MB MP4 file, 6 minutes 57 seconds. [P01P14P0101_Anderson_APTN_video_Exh_3]	114
4	***SEALED*** Autopsy report for Dawn Anderson ***SEALED***	114
5	Three letters i) Letter of Ms. Hilda Anderson to the Honourable Jennifer Howard dated December 5, 2011(two pages); ii) Letter of RCMP Sergeant Dave Porter to Ms. Hilda Anderson and the Anderson family dated January 25, 2012 (four pages); iii) Letter of Dennis Eidet, RCMP Inspector to Ms. Hilda Anderson dated August 9, 2012 (three pages).	115

IV

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>First hearing - Public Volume 72</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Witnesses: Hilda Anderson Pyrz, Dennis Anderson, Keith Anderson, Carol Wood, Lianna Anderson, Melvin Anderson, Minnie Anderson, Arla Tait In relation to Dawn Anderson</b>	
Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette	
Order: The contents of the Coroner's report (Exhibit 4) are to be sealed.	
Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Darlene Osborne (National Family Advisory Circle), Thelma Morrissette, Agnes Spence, Audrey Siegl, Bernie Poitras Williams, Isabelle Morris, Andy Daniels, Ovide Caribou, Florence Catchway	
Clerk: Maryiam Khoury	
Commissioner for Oaths: Christian Rock	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	

1 Hilda Anderson Pyrz, Dennis Anderson,  
Keith Anderson, Carol Wood,  
Lianna Anderson, Melvin Anderson,  
Minnie Anderson & Arla Taia  
In relation to Dawn Anderson

Thompson, Manitoba

2 --- Upon commencing on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 10:07  
3 a.m.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Good morning. Good  
5 morning, Commissioner Audette. This morning, it's my  
6 pleasure to introduce you to the Anderson family. First,  
7 I'd like to start by introducing -- it's Arla, and right  
8 beside me is Keith, and here on the other side of me is  
9 Dennis, and then we have Melvin, and then we have Hilda; we  
10 have Minnie, Lianna, and Carol. They have asked to please  
11 be promised in each on the feather, so if we could promise  
12 them in individually, that would be appreciated.

13 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Hi, everyone. My name's  
14 Christian Rock. I will be your registrar for today.

15 **ARLA TAIT, Affirmed:**

16 **KEITH ANDERSON, Affirmed:**

17 **DENNIS ANDERSON, Affirmed:**

18 **MELVIN ANDERSON, Affirmed:**

19 **HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ, Affirmed:**

20 **MINNIE ANDERSON, Affirmed:**

21 **LIANNA ANDERSON, Affirmed:**

22 **CAROL WOOD, Affirmed:**

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner  
24 Audette, today the family will be sharing the story of  
25 their sister, Dawn Anderson. What the family would like to

1 do is introduce themselves, and we'd like to start with  
2 Hilda.

3 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** My name is  
4 Hilda Anderson Pyrz. I'm the sister of -- of Dawn. I'm  
5 the second-youngest in the family. My sister Dawn was the  
6 youngest, and I just wanted to share a little bit of, like,  
7 who I am. I'm a very strong Indigenous woman, and I work  
8 hard at trying to change the pathway for us. I come from a  
9 very strong family who is deeply rooted in their culture  
10 and their language. It's very difficult for us to share  
11 our truth, but it's also important for us to share our  
12 truth. We come from a family of 11, and now we have 10  
13 after losing my sister. We're very protective of one  
14 another in our family, and we're also very supportive, and  
15 we grew up a lot -- we grew up most of our childhoods  
16 living off the land. My father was a commercial fisherman  
17 and a trapper, and I feel, you know, this has really  
18 grounded us in who we are as Indigenous people and as a  
19 family, and it has taught us survival, and I feel, you  
20 know, when we're gathered here today, we're gathered here  
21 in strength for one another, and also, you know, to create  
22 a pathway for change for Indigenous women and girls across  
23 this country who are experiencing high levels of violence,  
24 and I'm just going to share the mic with my mom now.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Hilda, can you also  
2 introduce your support person to us?

3 MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ: Pardon? Oh,  
4 sorry.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you introduce  
6 your support to us?

7 MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ: I have here today  
8 with me a grandmother who's very -- been very supportive of  
9 me and my journey and as well as many other MMIWG family  
10 members and survivors in Manitoba, and she continues to  
11 support me and give me strength to go forward in the  
12 important work that I do because I also -- in my role, I'm  
13 the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls liaison  
14 for the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, and I'm also the  
15 cochair of the Manitoba Missing and Murdered Indigenous  
16 Women and Girls Coalition, so usually I'm on the other side  
17 supporting, but it just -- you know, it's important for us  
18 to share our truth today, so it's difficult when -- for me  
19 to be sharing today, and I'm glad that Thelma's here.

20 MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU: *Bonjour.* (Speaking  
21 in Native language). I'm just really pleased and honoured  
22 to be here to support Hilda and her family to tell their  
23 story about their loved one. *Miigwetch.*

24 MS. MINNIE ANDERSON: Oh, this is very hard

1 for me. I'm Dawn's mom, and I miss my daughter so much. I  
2 think of her every day and just wish that wouldn't happen  
3 to so many -- so many young girls and women that are needed  
4 by their families, and it -- it's really hard especially  
5 when they have kids to look after and -- and then have to  
6 be left behind on account of somebody hurting their mother.  
7 It's so hard. I -- I can't say no more. I can't say no  
8 more.

9 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** *Tansi.* Dawn was my  
10 (indiscernible). She was my little sister. I'm the  
11 third-youngest of 11. My heart is broken. It aches. My  
12 baby sister's gone. I just want the ache to go away, but  
13 it doesn't. We need -- we want closure. I know nothing  
14 will bring back -- bring back Dawn. Without that closure,  
15 this will continue to happen to other families, other  
16 babies at 4 and 7 years old and younger who will lose their  
17 mothers. That closure has to come so it stops. These  
18 babies need their mothers. My mom needs her -- needed her  
19 baby. The heartache has to stop somewhere, sometime.  
20 (Speaking in Native language).

21 **MS. CAROL WOOD:** I'm the fourth-youngest  
22 daughter of the family out of 11, and losing my little  
23 sister was really hard. It still is hard today for our  
24 family because a part of each one of us is gone because she

1 was a part of every one of us, and that's the hardest  
2 thing, and my mom, I pray all the time -- because my mom's  
3 not getting any younger or anything like that. I pray to  
4 God that we find as to what happened to my little sister  
5 before anything happens to her, and I -- like, I pray for  
6 strength for my family always, and I really think this  
7 process that is happening now -- because people weren't  
8 able to speak before, and now they're able to. Somebody's  
9 listening. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here, and it -- like,  
10 it does give the family hope because they're able to tell  
11 their story, and it's just not amongst family anymore.  
12 You're telling other people, and I thank -- I thank you  
13 people for doing that. Thank you. (Speaking in Native  
14 language). Thank you.

15 **MS. ARLA TAIT:** *Tansi.* My name is Arla.  
16 I -- Dawn was my cousin, but I considered her my sister as  
17 well as I consider Keith and Melvin, Dennis, Lianna, Hilda,  
18 the family, my brothers and sisters, and Minnie, like a mom  
19 to me.

20 I was pretty close to Dawn when she moved  
21 back home to Leaf Rapids. You know, she'd often come over  
22 to my house with her girls, and, you know, we did a lot of  
23 things together, and I'm -- I'm thankful that I'm here and  
24 able to share some of the -- some of the things that

1 happened, and hopefully, we find some closure. I'm happy  
2 to be part of this family; very supportive, and they made  
3 me feel very loved and supported, and that's all I'm going  
4 to say for now. (Speaking in Native language).

5 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** I have my wife and my  
6 daughter here with me. I have Randy (ph) Anderson and  
7 Brit (ph) Anderson, and -- my name's Keith Anderson, and my  
8 spirit name's (indiscernible), White Wolf.

9 First and foremost, I'd like to sit there  
10 and acknowledge all of you people that sat there and, you  
11 know, brought what's happening today to this point and  
12 that, and -- and, you know, the hard work that's been put  
13 into it and that. I mean, now you've given us the  
14 opportunity to sit there and voice ourself and everything  
15 else, and -- and, you know, the wheels are turning, it's  
16 moving and everything else and that; so I'd like to sit  
17 there and say thank you to everybody for their support and  
18 everything else, and that, and then -- I mean, to me,  
19 acknowledgment is a -- is a great thing, and, you know, for  
20 all the people, you know, with their hard work and  
21 everything that's been put into this and that. You know,  
22 you've been across Canada and everything else.

23 But I'd like to sit there and go back.  
24 Like, with us, we're land people, our family, and then even

1 with the RTLs, like, registered trap line, our -- our  
2 territorial use and that, we're going on five generations  
3 on -- on the land that we used and that. We teach our  
4 children and then our grandchildren, you know, the  
5 grass roots and the -- and the way of life of our people  
6 and that, and then -- like, with -- with my sister and  
7 everybody, you know, we used to move from camp to camp,  
8 everything and that, and, you know, we've shared a lot of  
9 good times everything else, and with my late sister Dawn  
10 and that -- you know, me and my wife, we've been together,  
11 what, 38 years?

12 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Almost 35.

13 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** Okay, 35 years. I can  
14 only count to -- anyways, one of the greatest gifts that my  
15 sister gave us, and that, is that my wife couldn't have  
16 babies, so when she was 17, she approached me and my wife,  
17 she was pregnant, and asked us if we would take her baby,  
18 and that, so me and Brit accepted and that, and she came to  
19 the hospital here in Thomson with her, and went into  
20 that -- when she was in labour, went into that labour room,  
21 and that's where we ended up with Randy, and that's  
22 26 years ago. Randy just turned 26 on March 1st, and that,  
23 but -- I mean, you know, that's a blessing, as well, you  
24 know? Like, we endure hardships and everything else and

1 that, but, I mean, at the same time, you know, she gave us  
2 one of the precious things in life was that gift of life.  
3 Thank you very much.

4 **MR. DENNIS ANDERSON:** Good morning. I,  
5 also, would like to start by thanking everybody that's come  
6 here to show support and share their truth as well. My  
7 name is Dennis Anderson. Dawn Anderson was my sister.  
8 Like Keith -- Keith was mentioning, we all grew up, like,  
9 on the land, fishing, trapping, not so much the girls, but  
10 they were always around and they did come out, you know,  
11 to -- to the camp and stuff like that, and I think -- I  
12 think growing up in that fashion and just being Indigenous  
13 and anybody that is or is close to Indigenous people knows  
14 what family means.

15 And my sister Dawn, she was quite a girl,  
16 I'll tell you. She'd -- you know, like, she was one that  
17 cared about everybody and everything and shared -- you  
18 know, if she had something, if it was her last little bit,  
19 she was willing to share it. She would take in kids.  
20 There was always a ton of kids around her, and like, you  
21 know, she definitely danced to the beat of her own drum,  
22 you know, by the way she dressed and the people she knew.  
23 You know, like, she never -- she was one that had an open  
24 mind and an open soul.

1                   And I also would like to give thanks to this  
2 Inquiry because I do believe that there's going to be good  
3 and positive things come of it. In the very least, we're  
4 going to -- you know, we're -- we're not alone. We know  
5 that. There's many people with many, many stories that  
6 hurt every day like we do, and it's -- you know, like, it's  
7 really hard, and I understand other families, what they  
8 must go through because we go through it daily. You know,  
9 I watch my mother hurt, I watch my sisters hurt, and I  
10 watch my nieces hurt, but through all, that we've  
11 always -- like Keith says, we've always been a very strong  
12 family, and we do support each other, and I think through  
13 it all, we have stuck together, like, through thick and  
14 thin. I mean, like, we're -- we're pretty -- we're pretty  
15 powerful individuals, and we're more powerful as a unit,  
16 and we do get strength from each other, always. Like, we  
17 never turn our backs on each other, we support each other,  
18 and you know, like, that's important, and I think through  
19 this process, too, like, just supporting each other and  
20 hearing other people's stories and sharing our truth, you  
21 know, like, I -- I really believe that positive things is  
22 going to come of this, and, you know, like, I thank you all  
23 for giving us the voice and a place to voice our -- you  
24 know, our truths, and I -- you know, like, it's been a long

1 road, and maybe, you know, this is the light at the end of  
2 the tunnel where some people including myself and other  
3 families are going to gain some closure of some sort from  
4 this process.

5 So -- and I'd also like to introduce my  
6 support person here. That's my partner Lisa. And yeah, I  
7 thank you all for, you know, providing us, you know, like,  
8 not a -- only our -- our -- our own -- like, to share our  
9 story but to listen to others, as well, that go through  
10 this -- you know, that's been through the same thing, you  
11 know, and -- like Ms. Osborne. I mean, that's powerful,  
12 powerful thing you -- you've had to deal with, and  
13 listening to you, you know, like, you gain strength from  
14 stuff like that. I appreciate it. Yeah, so that's about  
15 it, guys. I'll pass the mic on here to my brother Melvin.

16 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Hi, my name is Melvin  
17 Anderson, and behind me is my honey, my support person,  
18 Myrna Spence (ph), and I was just telling my sister Hilda  
19 here, jeez, you know, everything you think of to say, seems  
20 like everybody that picks up the mic seems to take the  
21 words right out of your mouth, but -- and we can repeat it  
22 and -- like they said, like, we are glad we get this  
23 opportunity and the support that we have from the people  
24 that do come here and listen, and my sister Dawn, she's

1 quite the person. Like, we -- we loved her with all our  
2 hearts, even though a lot of times when she was a little  
3 younger and a little wilder, we liked to kick her butt  
4 sometimes, but, you know, like -- and I imagine it goes  
5 with pretty well, like, all the mission Indigenous women.

6 When this tragedy happened to us,  
7 we've -- we got so much support from other people that we  
8 barely knew, but my sister had touched their hearts, and  
9 they still -- they have a Facebook of my sister, and every  
10 day or something, there's always something new written that  
11 they used to do with each other, and -- and it's just the  
12 way she touched people's lives.

13 I'm her third -- her third-oldest brother.  
14 She used to really rattle my cage sometimes, just the way  
15 she was, but -- you know, she was her. She lived her own  
16 life the way she wanted to, you know, and we didn't  
17 criticize for her. Sure, we'd give her heck a lot of  
18 times, but, you know, she'd laugh and straighten out for a  
19 week and then back at her again, but -- and we do miss her.  
20 Every time we sit down, like, myself, Dennis, Keith, any  
21 one of my family members, there's not one set we don't sit  
22 down that her name doesn't touch our lips. Even just  
23 talking about some events that happen through life, it just  
24 still brings tears to your eyes because you can just

1 picture her doing that stuff, and that's the hardest part  
2 because, you know, those days are gone. If she was around,  
3 she'd probably still be pulling those pranks, but -- and we  
4 do miss you, my sister. We love you, and we always think  
5 about you.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So the family would  
7 like to share a video of Dawn. Maybe, Hilda, you can just  
8 explain a little bit about the video.

9 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** So this video was  
10 created at Myra's (ph) wedding and Kevin's wedding, who  
11 are -- I guess they're adopted into our family. It's a  
12 video of my sister Dawn, and Dawn really liked to cater and  
13 cook. She was always cooking up a storm and, like, feeding  
14 everybody in the neighbourhood, and you could always  
15 guarantee, like, to -- if you went to her house, she'd cook  
16 you a gourmet meal, and every -- she was really well known  
17 for her creativity as well as, you know, preparing all  
18 kinds of meals, and she was continuously hired on contracts  
19 to do catering and stuff like that, so before we lead into  
20 talking about, like, who she was, we wanted to share a  
21 video.

22 **(VIDEO PLAYED)**

23 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** So I'll start by  
24 sharing on who my sister was because I don't want people to

1 only remember her because she's gone. I want people to  
2 remember her because she lived. I always called her the  
3 Indigenous Lady Gaga because she was really open. Like,  
4 she had an open mind, an open heart, and an open spirit,  
5 and it didn't matter what walk of life you came from; she  
6 welcomed you, and she never judged you, and she loved you  
7 who you were.

8 And she was also very creative and very  
9 artistic, and she was an amazing mother. She really loved  
10 her children, and it's really important, you know, for  
11 us -- one of the biggest reasons is when her daughters get  
12 older, they're going to ask what happened to her, you know,  
13 and maybe someday we can tell her what really happened to  
14 her, but for now, we continue to search for that truth.

15 She was -- you know, I just wanted to share,  
16 like, even when she passed away, at her funeral, there was  
17 probably, like, 600 people who attended her funeral, and it  
18 was huge. It was probably one of the biggest funerals that  
19 I've ever been to, and that shows, you know, how many  
20 people's lives that she touched, and even though sometimes,  
21 like, she struggled in her own life, you know, financially,  
22 but that didn't matter to her. Whatever little that she  
23 had, she always shared with everybody. You know, it was  
24 her kind heart, and she was also very strong. Like, she

1 would, you know, challenge anybody to protect her family as  
2 well as her children and her friends. Everybody knew her,  
3 and she was very outspoken and -- but also kind. Like, she  
4 had -- you know, she was well rounded in her personality,  
5 and I feel that, you know, even with the LGBT -- like, the  
6 community, I felt that she raised a lot of awareness in the  
7 north because of all her friends who were, you know,  
8 struggling to come out for that acceptance, and she would  
9 just, like, say, just be who you are, you know, and really  
10 encourage and support them and, you know, build these  
11 circles of support for them in the north because it's very  
12 difficult, you know -- you know, when you're struggling in  
13 the north and to come out of who you really are, but I felt  
14 that she built a -- like, a -- a bridge for a lot of her  
15 friends who are 2-spirited to, you know, be proud and be  
16 who they really are and be comfortable with who they are,  
17 and I know a lot of her friends, like, are watching today  
18 and supporting who are 2-spirited, as well, and I know,  
19 like, with me, when I first moved to Winnipeg, I was, like,  
20 you know, just a northern girl from a small community, and  
21 I probably only went to the city maybe about four times  
22 prior to me moving there, and she was living there first.  
23 It was -- although she was my little sister, in many ways  
24 she was like my big sister. Like, she seemed to know more,

1 like, about life and just what it had to offer. You know,  
2 I was -- I found that maybe she was, you know -- it was  
3 like she was -- she guided me in a lot of ways, and she  
4 introduced me to a lot of really awesome people, you know,  
5 and -- and I continue to be friends with those people  
6 today, and -- and I value those friendships that she's left  
7 behind because they were a part of her, and even sometimes  
8 they say to me, it's really hard to see you because you  
9 remind me so much of your sister, and I feel that, you  
10 know, life is unfair to her to take her away so suddenly,  
11 and she had so much left to do, and she had children to  
12 raise, and she'll never get to see them grow up, to  
13 graduate, to get married, to experience, meet your  
14 grandmother. She'll never have those opportunities because  
15 they were taken away from her, and I know that she would  
16 have loved every part of that journey with her children and  
17 her life, and before she passed away suddenly, she was  
18 talking to me about relocating because she wanted to go  
19 into nursing. Now she can't do that, either, because that  
20 opportunity's been taken away from her, and you could  
21 always -- like, if there was -- she really loved the  
22 elderly community, too, and she would do anything and  
23 everything she could to help them out. Like, she would  
24 clean for them, cook for them. She did -- she was

1 just -- her heart was made of gold, and she had an amazing  
2 smile that would light up a room.

3 And she's left a big hole in our family, and  
4 it really difficult to heal when you don't have closure,  
5 but I know that her spirit continues to live on through her  
6 children, especially her youngest daughter, who's so much  
7 like her, Tamika (ph). She smiles like her mom. Her  
8 personality's like her mom. Every time I see my nieces, I  
9 still have a hard time, but I always maintain my composure  
10 because I don't want them to see my sadness and how much I  
11 miss their mom.

12 And she -- Dawn was always, like, game to  
13 try anything and everything too. Like, she just wanted to  
14 live her life to the fullest with no regrets, you know, and  
15 I think when -- if she was allowed to live her life, she  
16 would have lived her life like an old hippy.

17 I'm just going to pass the mic on to my mom.

18 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** I want to thank  
19 everybody that has been -- that came down to this -- this  
20 thing going for the missing and murdered girls because it's  
21 very hard for everybody that has lost a daughter or a  
22 mother or sister, the way they go missing and nobody knows  
23 what happened to them. It's very hard, and I want to thank  
24 everybody that has come.

1 I went to one in Winnipeg, and -- the one  
2 they had here for a week. I came to it, and it helps, you  
3 know, to let things out and talk about the person that  
4 you're lost. It's so hard, but I want to thank you people,  
5 all that have been -- come -- that has been here. I just  
6 thank you.

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Just say something  
8 about Dawn, about who she was, Mom, about her --

9 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** Okay.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** -- about her spirit,  
11 (indiscernible)

12 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** Yeah. My -- my  
13 daughter Dawn, the things she used to do sometimes when she  
14 was small is so -- I have to tell you this one. It was  
15 really funny. Her oldest sister Sandra and her were  
16 sitting by this eagle that the boys had brought home at the  
17 fish camp, and they were sitting there, her and  
18 Dawn -- Sandra and Dawn, and then that eagle, I guess, put  
19 his tail up, hey, and he squirted, and she got it on the  
20 side of her face and in her ear.

21 **(LAUGHTER)**

22 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** There was a lot of  
23 silly things that happened to her, and then one time, too,  
24 when she was small, Sandra took her uptown to the town

1 centre, and then they came home, and Dawn had a big black  
2 eye, and I said to Sandra, I said, what happened to your  
3 sister? She said, she fell down, she -- I wasn't watching  
4 her. She said she was running around, and her dad got  
5 upset with Sandra, eh?

6 (LAUGHTER)

7 MS. MINNIE ANDERSON: But didn't phase on  
8 Dawn. She was quite a lady, and she -- my daughter was  
9 such a kind person too. Like, there was always kids  
10 playing outside her place, and she'd cook up a big meal,  
11 and she'd call them in, and she'd feed those kids, and the  
12 kids would all go in, and after they finished eating and  
13 that, she'd turn on the TV, and she used have to this thing  
14 that played music, and she'd dance with the kids inside the  
15 house, just having fun with them. The kids used to love  
16 her so much.

17 Yeah, she was quite a girl, and I miss my  
18 daughter so much every day. I think about -- and I phone  
19 her little girls, there, with their dad in Winnipeg, and I  
20 talk to them and that all the time, and they're coming down  
21 for the spring break to visit, so -- see how things will  
22 turn out. Just hope -- I know they'll be happy to see  
23 everybody.

24 And -- I don't know. My daughter, we all

1 miss her so much, and it'll be so close -- good when we  
2 find out some things that we don't really know, and  
3 sometimes my family keeps a lot of things away from me.  
4 They don't let me know things, but I find out in the end.

5 (LAUGHTER)

6 MS. MINNIE ANDERSON: Yeah, it's -- I just  
7 want to thank you people again. Thank you very much.

8 MS. LIANNA ANDERSON: My baby sister Dawn,  
9 it's always -- they say -- they always say it's the  
10 youngest ones and the quiet ones that you always have to  
11 watch out for. She was -- the only way that I can describe  
12 her is the eternal light of our family. She was just an  
13 absolutely amazing individual. Everybody's already said it  
14 so far with people that have talked about my sister. She  
15 took anyone and everything in -- in, into her home. Stray  
16 animals, cats, dogs, wounded birds, mice, everything.  
17 Everything that she could find and -- you know, that she  
18 figured needed nurturing, she was there.

19 I always had her beside me as a little girl  
20 because we spent so much time out in the bush, out on the  
21 trap line and on the river and that for commercial fishing  
22 and trapping. She was seven years younger than me. She  
23 was almost like my real live baby, type of thing. I did a  
24 lot with her, and I remember spending so much time with her

1 by the water. I loved to swim, and so did she. She loved  
2 camping, canoeing, walking. She loved her nature walks,  
3 taking her kids and just going for hours in the bush. She  
4 found beauty in the simplest of little things and great  
5 things.

6 You know, what I wouldn't give to hear my  
7 baby sister say to me again: Hey, Li. That's what she  
8 used to always call me. Hearing her voice on that video  
9 that was shared, (speaking in Native language). Her  
10 laughter, just the things that she did because she just did  
11 them. The people she used to bring home from the city, it  
12 was always priceless to watch my mom's reaction depending  
13 on who Dawn brought home. Dawn brought home one of her  
14 girlfriends one time, one of her buddies, and the girl had  
15 her hair dyed fire-engine red. My mom when she -- when  
16 Dawn wasn't around: (Speaking in Native language), she  
17 says. Like, oh my God, do you see this person?

18 (LAUGHTER)

19 MS. LIANNA ANDERSON: But that's how Dawn  
20 was. She didn't do it intentionally. She just seen that  
21 person for the spirit that they had in them. Didn't matter  
22 how they looked, who they were, what they did.

23 I think when you -- when you talk about, you  
24 know, homosexuality, I think she's the one who really

1 brought my mom out of her shell with that, as well, because  
2 of all of her friends that she always bring home: Oh, come  
3 home, my mom will -- my mom -- doesn't matter to my mom.  
4 That stuff doesn't matter. Just come. And my mom would be  
5 (speaking in Native language) again.

6 (LAUGHTER)

7 MS. LIANNA ANDERSON: Like, oh, my God,  
8 again, eh? She opened my mom's heart and mine to a lot of  
9 things that my mom -- you just don't see up north. We were  
10 out in the bush by ourselves with our family. Dawn  
11 introduced my mom, as young as she was, to a lot of beauty  
12 and a lot of people despite what they been through, the  
13 choices that they made, because that's the way Dawn was. I  
14 just think about all the things that she did with my mom  
15 and -- you know, and my mom is (speaking in Native  
16 language), like, you know, all the time with everything  
17 that Dawn did. The animals, my mom would -- Dawn would  
18 take in, my mom would say (speaking in Native language),  
19 Dawn, that's enough, like, you know? The cats, the dogs,  
20 everything, the kids.

21 But I look at Dawn, and she's so much a part  
22 of my mom, so much a part of my dad. She was the way that  
23 she was because of them. She taught my mom. She taught  
24 us. She taught our siblings, our nieces, our nephews. My

1 dad called her (speaking in Native language), "Dawn" in  
2 Cree. My oldest daughter, I named her after my sister, my  
3 baby sister. Dawn was my first baby, and my oldest  
4 daughter was my second.

5 We were raised very, very close. Together,  
6 our family stands strong. There's 11 of us kids, and now  
7 one's gone. We still stand strong, but sometimes we  
8 falter. We feel weak. We feel broken. We get angry  
9 because one of us is not there. That's all we can do is  
10 ask why? Why Dawn? You know, when you look at -- when you  
11 try and justify people out there and what their purpose is  
12 in life, and you look at one of the greatest gems in our  
13 family and our community, and it was her that was taken.  
14 It -- sometimes, it just doesn't make sense.

15 I keep asking Creator why this happened. I  
16 keep praying for answers before Mom goes so she can rest in  
17 peace. I've had people tell us and tell me, Lianna, this  
18 is happening to the Andersons for a reason. Your family's  
19 so strong. You stand together. You are a force to be  
20 reckoned with. If anybody's going to bring out the truth,  
21 it'll be your family. It happened to you guys for that  
22 reason. I hold on to that. I hold on to that strength of  
23 my family, of who we are, of the way my mom raised us, my  
24 dad raised us, of how they kept us together. I know it's

1 going to be that strength. I know it's going to be our  
2 ability to be able to speak, to be able to still love  
3 despite what has happened, to know that love will guide us  
4 and not hate.

5 It's just so wrong. I look at my sister,  
6 her babies, her beautiful daughters. Her beauty lives on  
7 in them, but it doesn't take away the hurt. It doesn't  
8 take away the pain of losing her. I look at all the  
9 beautiful things that Dawn made, things she drew, the  
10 things that she put together with the simplest of things  
11 that other people would have thought of as maybe as garbage  
12 or not worthy as keeping because she was that type of  
13 person to find beauty in everything. She was our family  
14 gem. She's going to be our purpose, to find closure, to  
15 find truth, to ensure that there's processes put in place  
16 so other families don't have to go through this. That is  
17 Dawn's purpose. She has the strength in our family to get  
18 us through this.

19 I just look at her smile. All I see is her  
20 smile, her bright eyes. I sure miss that "hey, Li." It's  
21 hard when you have the rock of your family, my mom, the  
22 strength that she has, the things that she's endured, we go  
23 through life growing up, and she takes away all our hurts.  
24 This one time, all I pray for is that I can take away her

1 hurt of losing my baby sister because that's what my mom  
2 did for us. She looked after us. She cared for us,  
3 provided for us, and always took away the hurts. I want to  
4 be a part of taking away her hurt.

5 What do you tell kids when they ask where  
6 their mother is, when they wake up from dreams that are so  
7 vivid, expecting to go back where they were with their mom,  
8 knowing that their mom was there because their dreams are  
9 so real? How do you explain that? How do you explain  
10 death to a 4-year-old, to a 7-year-old, when all they've  
11 known is the life and the beauty of it through their  
12 mother?

13 We need answers. We need closure. We need  
14 to put processes in place so this doesn't happen to anybody  
15 else. My sister was a beautiful force of life. She was  
16 taken from us, I believe, way too soon, and I don't want  
17 that purpose to be in vain. It will not be in vain. I  
18 will find the strength in my mom, my brothers, my sisters,  
19 my family. We will stand together. This has to stop  
20 happening to people. A life is a life, regardless of what  
21 they've been through, where it's been, where it comes from.  
22 It's all sacred. My baby sister was sacred; her life was  
23 sacred; her purpose was sacred, and she's gone. It will  
24 not be in vain. I will not give up. My family will not

1 give up.

2 The gem in our family is gone. Her spirit  
3 remains strong in all of us, in her children. Her memory  
4 will live on, but I just miss her smile so much. I miss  
5 her cooking. I miss her laughter. I miss how she was able  
6 to bring everybody together, how she was able to open my  
7 mother's eyes to the most beautiful of things that were so  
8 foreign to my mom at one time. It was -- I miss being able  
9 to sit on the sidelines when Dawn would bring somebody else  
10 into the house that would shock my mother. It was always  
11 so cool to watch that because that's how Dawn was. She  
12 shocked everybody with her beauty, her spirit, her gift of  
13 life, her love of life. My heart just aches so much. I  
14 really want it to heal. (Speaking in Native language).

15 **MS. CAROL WOOD:** My sister -- my little  
16 sister Dawn, she was so unique. She was just so different  
17 from anybody, even growing up as a child. Like, all of us,  
18 we catered to her, like, to her every need, took her  
19 everywhere we went and everything like that, and one thing  
20 I have to say is as if she -- like, when we started having  
21 kids, as if she watched and catered our kids, and they  
22 looked -- like, my nieces, my nephews, they looked up to  
23 my -- even my kids, they looked up to Dawn, and every time  
24 there was a problem, it was Aunty Dawn that was able to fix

1 it, and I know at times, like, we have -- like, there are  
2 things that a parent can't do, that somebody else could do,  
3 and she was always the one that was able to do it. Like,  
4 the kids, they always went to her, and I think that's  
5 why -- even -- not -- like, with our family, that's why  
6 everybody came to her because she was approachable. She  
7 had a gentle touch for everyone, and, like, she knew how to  
8 talk. She knew how to listen. She knew what to say. At  
9 the times -- like, if -- like, what Lianna was saying,  
10 like, 2-spirited people, like, they didn't know who to talk  
11 to. Dawn was able to talk to people, like -- people, and  
12 with her, she just welcomed everybody with open arms, but  
13 with Dawn, too, she had an ear to listen to Elders and  
14 everybody -- like, she didn't turn away. Anybody'd say,  
15 no, I don't have time to listen to you, I don't have time  
16 to -- or just walk past them when they were trying to get  
17 to her attention. No. She took that time. Even if she  
18 was just -- like, she had to go right back home, no, she'd  
19 spend a little bit of time to talk to this person. She  
20 would never walk past anybody. She'd have to stop and talk  
21 to you, and even me, like, I live in South Indian, and at  
22 times when I used to go into the town centre, I see her.  
23 Man, she'd be coming out the Co-Op doors with her arms  
24 open, and she's so big -- like, she was my big little

1 sister, I called her, and then she just wrapped me up in  
2 her arms, and -- oh, it's -- miss that.

3 And -- yeah, in -- even with our girls and  
4 that, like, we see Dawn in -- like, in every one of them,  
5 they have a trait of Dawn, a look of Dawn, when you look at  
6 all of them, and it's just so hard sometimes, but I thank  
7 God, like, they're given that gift, my nieces, my nephews.  
8 Just -- thank you. Yeah.

9 And like I had said, again, thank you guys  
10 for listening. Thank you for listening to what we have to  
11 say when others did not listen. They just put it aside,  
12 but I think it's time for people to start listening to what  
13 people have to say because the people that we've lost means  
14 something to us. They didn't -- they're not just a piece  
15 of garbage or dirt that you sweep under something. No.  
16 You know what? They had the same blood that flows through  
17 their veins like we do, and everything. They had a heart,  
18 and that heart loved the people that miss them now, and I  
19 thank you guys again. Thank you very much.

20 **MS. ARLA TAIT:** I'm a very sensitive person,  
21 I guess you could say, and I knew Dawn as that also. I saw  
22 a very sensitive, kind, loving soul in -- in Dawn. I also  
23 saw some of the struggles that she had. She -- she  
24 shared -- you know, she shared a lot of things with me, and

1 I was honoured, I guess, to be able to be there to listen  
2 to, you know, some of the things that -- that she was  
3 struggling with and even a lot of things that she was happy  
4 about and looking forward to. Like, she was looking  
5 forward to going to school, and one thing that really  
6 sticks in my mind is her asking me if she was a -- like,  
7 she'd look at me, and I remember that moment, and she said,  
8 I'm a good mother, right? You know? You know, she was  
9 kind of looking for that acknowledgment, and I did tell  
10 her, yes, you're -- you're a good mother. You know, you're  
11 doing a great job with your girls.

12 She was very sharing. You know, anything  
13 she had, she'd -- she'd give. You know, it didn't matter,  
14 you know, how much she was struggling. She would always  
15 lend a helping hand whether it be, you know, something she  
16 had to eat or a piece of clothing, you know, even a  
17 listening ear, you know? Even cooking meals for people,  
18 you know? She loves -- she loved to cook, and she often  
19 came over to my place, you know, to cook a meal and share  
20 it with us, you know, whether it be at her place or at my  
21 place or Mom's, you know?

22 You know, I grew up with Dawn, also, you  
23 know, around -- in our community and at fish camps and trap  
24 line, we'd often see each other, and yes, she did always

1 have a smile on her face. You know, she could light  
2 up -- light up a room or wherever she was. You know, she  
3 was so special.

4 It is very hard on me, also, and I -- you  
5 know, I miss her dearly. I often think of her daughters.  
6 I'll cherish all the memories that I have of Dawn, and  
7 hopefully, we will find the truth that we need to be able  
8 to make it a little bit easier as time goes on. I hope and  
9 pray we find the answers that we need. (Speaking in Native  
10 language).

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sorry. When you're  
12 working with so many family members, you've got to check in  
13 with people just to make sure the order's good. I'm just  
14 going to actually ask a couple questions of Keith because  
15 Keith lived in the same community as Dawn when -- in  
16 November 18th, 2011, and so I was just going to ask Keith  
17 if you could just share a little bit of background with us,  
18 you know, about where you guys in Leaf Rapids, and before  
19 you get into full details of the incident, though, we will  
20 be showing the video, so what I'm really asking is if you  
21 could share with the Commissioner, you know, where Dawn was  
22 living and what it was like in Leaf Rapids leading up to  
23 the event, the circumstances of her death.

24 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** Okay. My sister was

1 living in the Kias Bay (ph) on Bay 6 and that, and she was  
2 there with her two little ones, and there were -- and -- in  
3 the community, so that following morning on my sister's  
4 passing, like -- you know, Leaf Rapids is not very big and  
5 that, and I tried to help with community involvement and  
6 everything else, and I'm usually involved with the youth  
7 and that. I usually put my name into the RCMP just in case  
8 somebody goes missing, anything like that, so they -- they  
9 know where I am.

10 So that morning, we got up, and then I took  
11 my wife to work. She works at the Co-Op and that, and  
12 then -- I'm usually in and out, in and out and that, and I  
13 have a lot of people that usually sit there and try and  
14 contact me and that, so I checked my voicemail, and this  
15 was after 9:30 and that, there. Dropped my wife off and  
16 that.

17 So I get a voicemail, and it's the RCMP, and  
18 they sat there and they said, well, Keith, could you come  
19 and see us at the cop shop, it's urgent and that, so okay.  
20 I go up there and that, and then they -- they take me into  
21 the room, and then with one breath, he sits there and they  
22 tell me they found my sister deceased and that, and then I  
23 didn't even get a chance to swallow that. The next minute,  
24 they sit there and they tell me, your nieces are home

1 alone, you know, we can get a babysitter.

2 So, I mean, I don't get a chance to absorb  
3 one thing, and -- and that, and it's bang, bang, bang.  
4 Okay, well, right away, like -- and that, my main concern's  
5 my nieces, right? So, you know, at no point in  
6 time -- and, like, I'm sharing my feelings and my thoughts  
7 and everything with the whole -- the way the whole process  
8 went and everything else and that.

9 So right away, I sit there and I take off,  
10 you know, to my sister's house. My nieces are there alone,  
11 you know, the house is kind of a mess, the phone's ripped  
12 off the hook, the TV's got a big crack in the side, and you  
13 know, my nieces sit there and said, you know, this person  
14 or whatever punched the TV or whatever and -- and -- and  
15 that, and -- you know, and then -- I'm the only one there,  
16 so, like, my head's full. I've got to find my mom in  
17 Winnipeg. I've got to find all my brothers and sisters. I  
18 mean, there's 11 of us and that, and then I have to sit  
19 there and, you know, go -- go home, phoning and everything  
20 else and all that.

21 So Arla lived on the same bay -- you know,  
22 Arla's my second cousin, but to me, you know, we spent to  
23 much time together, it was basically a sister to me and  
24 that, so I went and seeked her help to come and sit there

1 and help me with my nieces because, you know -- because I  
2 had to sit there and contact all family members and, you  
3 know, tell them what happened and everything else, and then  
4 I knew it was going to hit my mom and the girls and that,  
5 and it did all of us pretty heavy, but I know most of the  
6 impact was going to hit my mom and the girls, you know, so  
7 I wanted to sit there and, you know, get people in places,  
8 things in -- you know, for them when they're told and that.

9 And -- you know, my wife works at the Co-Op.  
10 I go see her and that, and you know, to me, I'm just  
11 thinking about families, the girls, everything else. I go  
12 tell my wife, you know, that my -- they found my sister  
13 deceased and that, and I didn't even wait for her. I just  
14 left her and that, and, like, she couldn't even go tell her  
15 boss, and she had to catch up to me because I was gone and  
16 that.

17 And that -- you know, I got Arla to help,  
18 and then as each one of us speak and that, you'll -- you'll  
19 sit there, and we all have parts of the story of where  
20 we're engaged and -- and that, but, like, with myself, you  
21 know, the after-thought of what happened and everything  
22 else and that, and it's just like -- you know, it didn't  
23 hit me until later on: Okay, where was my sister? You  
24 know, did they have her in the garage or anything like

1 that? It just seemed like to me -- everything was taken  
2 away from me. It almost seemed like, you know, that RCMP  
3 had total control of everything. You know, they  
4 had -- they identified her and everything else, and yet,  
5 you know, I'm a family member that's there. Where was my  
6 opportunity? You know? And then they sit there and -- you  
7 know, like I said, you know, I walk in the room and bang,  
8 bang, bang, bang. You know, they didn't sit there and say,  
9 you know, your sister's deceased and -- you know, could you  
10 identify her, we have her here. I don't know. Like, even  
11 with me, like, did the ambulance pick her up who identified  
12 her and all that and to find out that, you know, they were  
13 the ones that identified her, you know, and then, you know,  
14 who pronounced her dead, you know, and everything else?

15 But to me, it seemed like a family member  
16 with that happening and that -- like, I went outside, and I  
17 looked at where my sister was supposed to have -- you know,  
18 like I said, they -- they said frozen or whatever and that,  
19 but, like, you know, I used to drink and that. I used to  
20 watch people pass out. You didn't just go straight down,  
21 you know what I mean? Like, indentation on the snow. You  
22 know, there was no kicking around, no -- nothing, no  
23 movement and that. It just -- bang, and the -- the body  
24 heat and that melts in the snow, and I've trapped all my

1 life. You know, I sit there, I watch tracks, everything  
2 else and all that, you know what I mean, and that, but to  
3 me, you know, it's -- you know, it wasn't ribboned off,  
4 nothing. You know? The phone's off the hook, ripped off  
5 the hook, you know, the TV's got a crack in it. Well, I  
6 mean, you know, doesn't that say something?

7 But the -- one other thing that really  
8 impacted me and kind of hurt me was, you know, is  
9 how -- you know, me as a family member with my sister being  
10 found like that, deceased and that, that opportunity was  
11 taken away from me, even to sit there and identify my  
12 sister and that. You know what I mean? They didn't even  
13 tell me, like, whether they had her in the garage. I -- to  
14 this day, I still don't know what happened, you know what I  
15 mean, and that.

16 And -- like, you know, I'm just going to sit  
17 there, like -- you know, and the emotional aspect and that,  
18 just to sit there and kind of fill that in, to sit there  
19 and kind of let you know that -- you know, from my  
20 perspective, where I'm sitting at and how I feel. I mean,  
21 there'll be other parts of the story as we sit there where  
22 each one of our family members played a role in and that  
23 that -- you know, that you'll get the full story of, you  
24 know, what happened, and I'm just the starting point

1 because I was the only one at home.

2 But see, this is my fourth time in the ring,  
3 and what I mean by that is, you know, my sister's passing,  
4 we helped do a documentary with APTN, and then there was a  
5 young lady that sat there and was deceased a month ago at  
6 home, and she had an 8-year-old daughter and that, and she  
7 come to me, Uncle Keith, to sit there and help her go up  
8 when that viewing of her mother that they had and that, and  
9 when I stood there and that, you know, I was there for her  
10 and that, but I -- you know, at the same time, standing  
11 there and that, I got angry, you know, with this  
12 detachment. They sat there. They gave her the  
13 opportunity. You know, we done a drum song. You know, we  
14 were smoking in the garage, you know, and everything else,  
15 but where was my opportunity, you know, to sit there and be  
16 able to identify my sister?

17 And then today, the fourth time around for  
18 me and that. I guess fourth time in the ring, but it -- I  
19 mean, it mustn't be bad because, you know, with this  
20 traditioning (ph) and that, number 4's a good number and  
21 that, and -- you know, I sit there -- I try to let go and  
22 that. I'm a traditional and -- and spiritual person, and  
23 then, you know, I listen to gut feeling everything else.  
24 You know, I listen to the energy and being able to accept

1 it and being able to interpret it.

2 But from -- since day one when my sister  
3 was -- you know, when I was there and found deceased and  
4 that, nothing sits right with me on that. My gut feeling  
5 tells me, you know, there's nothing -- there's nothing that  
6 sits right, you know? The same night they found  
7 her -- like, the same day we found her, her garage burnt  
8 and that, and then from -- you know, I'll vocalize my  
9 emotions and that, because, I mean, a lot of times to me,  
10 it's a learning process, and it also helps other people to  
11 sit there and -- you know, understand emotion or whatever  
12 because a lot of times, it's a feeling, but sometimes when  
13 you can sit there and take that energy and interpret it  
14 into a -- a voice, you know what I mean? It helps and  
15 that, but to me, you know, I've always sat there and, you  
16 know, acknowledged things and that, and then with  
17 acknowledgment, there's acceptance, and then with  
18 acceptance, there's understanding. But see, I have  
19 acknowledge and I have acceptance, but I don't have no  
20 understanding of what happened. So at the same time, you  
21 know, I can't even cry to let go because to me, you know,  
22 I'm honest with myself, and I feel like with me, you know,  
23 as a traditional and spiritual person, to me, it seems  
24 like -- you know, I like to finish something, but at the

1 same time, I don't even have a starting point to complete  
2 it, and then, see, I have to take it, and I have to put it  
3 in that little box and put it beside my heart and keep it  
4 there, but at the same time, you know, what point in time  
5 and opportunity do I sit there and I have to sit there and  
6 let her go?

7 And then I think of all the other people  
8 that's going through the same thing. Maybe some of them  
9 don't understand their emotion or what they're -- what it  
10 is that they're going through. I don't know. I can only  
11 interpret mine, you know, and the impact that's sitting  
12 there and -- you know, that a lot of people face that are  
13 going through the same thing and that.

14 You know, I went through a lot of things,  
15 different things, even with my father, losing my father and  
16 that, but this one, like, you know, I don't have no closure  
17 to it or nothing and that, and then the way I feel with  
18 myself and that, you know, I don't even have a starting  
19 point. And then, you know, with what's happening today and  
20 that and what we're doing here, maybe that is my starting  
21 point. I don't know. But, I mean, a lot of times, we  
22 don't sit there and vocalize or communicate and that, and  
23 it's not just one person. It's all of us. You know? We  
24 all got to get in that same boat and all go the same way

1 for the same goals and that.

2 And then a lot of times, like -- you know?

3 We have family gatherings. You know, I learned a long time  
4 ago, like, you know, I went to ceremonies, I went to  
5 different things and that, and then I -- you know, I've  
6 learned about, you know, our different brothers and  
7 sisters, but to me, it always came to one thing. It was  
8 about family. Everything's family and that. You know, we  
9 have our -- our -- you know, our main family, but look how  
10 many people we adopt in that, you know, and our circle  
11 keeps on getting bigger, and us as Indigenous people, we're  
12 always adopting. We don't need a piece of paper.

13 And then, like, with me, that's -- that's  
14 what's happening, and that's how it's impacted me and  
15 everything else. At the same time, you know, how long do I  
16 carry it or whatever? And then, you know, at this point in  
17 time, I'd like to sit there and share a dream with you and  
18 that. I always knew I was going to be the one that was  
19 going to take my sister home, into the spirit world. I  
20 always knew that, and then, you know, when a year come or  
21 whatever and that, I sat there, you know, and I  
22 dreamt -- you know, I had her, she was all wrapped up in a  
23 pink sleeping bag, and I was taking her home. We stopped  
24 by. My nieces sat there and visited her mother for a

1 while, and then their grandfather came and he said, I'll  
2 help you, and then I sat there, and I took her home.  
3 (Indiscernible) with us as Indigenous people. You know, I  
4 sit there and I share that dream with -- with you's. It  
5 means a lot to me, and at the end of the day, you know,  
6 between us, you know, it doesn't matter to me who believes  
7 me or not, but it matters to me as an individual, and I can  
8 only speak for myself.

9 And I thank all of you. You know, you're  
10 beautiful people, and it's like this that we have to sit  
11 there and stick together and that. You know, you can't  
12 knock us down if we all get together. You can push one of  
13 us over and that, and -- it's such an impact, though, and  
14 that, and then to me, you know, given this opportunity, I  
15 would have never backed down or whatever and said no, you  
16 know, and I appreciate it that my family got this  
17 opportunity and that, and I'm not scared to be here or  
18 whatever and that to sit there and tell my story because to  
19 me, I think, you know, at the end of the day, we have to  
20 voice these things and that, and I'm not scared to be a  
21 warrior to sit here and tell my story, to support other  
22 people so that -- you know, a lot of these things have to  
23 stop. Thank you.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Keith.

1 Hilda, can I just ask a couple questions. I  
2 know Keith shared the -- the sort of beginning part of the  
3 story when he was called to the RCMP office and how he  
4 learned of Dawn's death, but I understand that the family  
5 believes that there might have been someone involved in  
6 harming Dawn. I understand the family doesn't want to name  
7 that person. Part of that is because it's the family's  
8 belief there was really no investigation done, right? We  
9 just heard from Keith that he got called to the RCMP office  
10 and then went straight to the house, and when he went to  
11 the house, there was no police tape. Is that true?

12 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes, there was no  
13 police tape because Keith was the first one on the scene,  
14 like, out of our family. We didn't arrive until -- because  
15 we had to travel from Winnipeg, but when Keith went there  
16 and other family members, like, that are related to us and  
17 my sister from South Indian Lake, as well, arrived there  
18 shortly, like, within hours after she was found, and there  
19 was no police tape securing the scene.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And there was  
21 nothing on the door sealing it?

22 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** No. It was open.  
23 Like, anybody could come in and out of there because they  
24 were able to go in, you know, to get, like, clothing for

1 her children and stuff like that. There was nobody  
2 securing the scene at all.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And we heard Keith  
4 say that Dawn's body was found outside in the snow.

5 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes, that's  
6 correct.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so the family  
8 was informed that she had died from exposure or something.

9 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Is that true?

11 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** And that's what I  
12 found so odd, like, because I've been an advocate for many  
13 years, and I understand investigations, and I also  
14 understand the court process, and I found it so odd that it  
15 was so cut and dry when it came to how my sister died, how  
16 she was found, because at the time that she was found, they  
17 didn't know how she died. They didn't secure the scene,  
18 and they didn't even, you know, give her the quality or  
19 quantity of an investigation, you know, that she deserved,  
20 and now we sit here today with so many unanswered  
21 questions, you know, wondering what really happened to her  
22 the night she died because a lot of the circumstances  
23 surrounding her death, like my brother Keith mentioned,  
24 like, you know, her phone was ripped off the wall, her TV

1 was smashed, her house was in a -- like, in complete  
2 disarray, and all those telltale signs to me say that  
3 something went wrong, you know, and I feel like when it  
4 comes to -- you know, I'm not going to get into full  
5 details yet, but, like, when it comes to policing, the RCMP  
6 in the north, that's a huge institutional failure on us as  
7 Indigenous people. You know, that has to improve, and it  
8 just boggles my mind.

9 We continuously hear stories of how policing  
10 is failing, not only us as missing and murdered Indigenous  
11 family members but as survivors, as other individuals who  
12 require that service in the north, that it's continuously  
13 failing, and we keep telling our stories, and we keep  
14 asking for that change, and it seems to be falling on deaf  
15 ears. It's like they would rather believe this institution  
16 that has failed miserably rather than several people from  
17 different communities, different families, different  
18 nations telling their stories, not only to this Inquiry,  
19 but other experiences like I mentioned previously. Like,  
20 something has to change. Our voices have to be heard when  
21 it comes to different institutions and service providers  
22 for us as -- as Indigenous people.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So I understand that  
24 there's a video. There was an actual documentary done on

1 your sister in relation to, like, all the flags you're  
2 talking about. Can you tell us just a little bit about  
3 this video before we watch it?

4 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** So my family was  
5 asked to participate in a video that was done nationally by  
6 the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and it was a  
7 video that was done with -- like, in different -- in  
8 Nova Scotia -- I'm sorry, I can't remember exactly the  
9 locations -- the other locations -- and in Manitoba, but  
10 the reality is we all have the same story to tell about  
11 questioning the police practices and how they investigate  
12 the death of Indigenous women and girls, so I just think  
13 it's kind of ironic regardless of your geographical  
14 location that we're experiencing the same things, and that  
15 should be sending a strong message to Canadian governments,  
16 that change has to happen and change has to happen now.

17 So it's just -- this video will show, like,  
18 kind of a summary of, you know, some of the key points that  
19 we're going to be speaking to in more context.

20 **(VIDEO PLAYED)**

21 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Can you turn it  
22 up, please? You can't hear it.

23 **(VIDEO PLAYED)**

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Maybe we can pause

1 it to do a volume check.

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

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And actually -- can  
4 we (indiscernible). Yeah. Can we -- we're actually just  
5 going to take a 5-minute break. That will give everyone an  
6 opportunity to stretch and stand up, as well, and we'll see  
7 if we can figure out the volume issue.

8 --- Upon recessing at 11:45 a.m.

9 --- Upon resuming at 12:00 p.m.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you for taking  
11 the break. Commissioner Audette, we're going to try  
12 playing the video again. Hilda will share some few words,  
13 and then we can have -- yeah. So go ahead.

14 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** So we're going to  
15 be showing a video that was done by the Aboriginal Peoples  
16 Television Network, and I just wanted to give, you know, a  
17 special thank you to Holly and Jared here who are, you  
18 know, really respectful and gentle when they did the  
19 documentary as well. The documentary shows, like,  
20 regardless of your geographical location on the policing  
21 efforts when it comes to missing or murdered Indigenous  
22 women and girls, and I think that it makes a powerful  
23 statement because we don't even live in the same provinces  
24 and we're experience the same things, and it will highlight

1 key points that we're going to be discussing in further  
2 context after we break for lunch and we come back. Thank  
3 you.

4 (VIDEO PLAYED)

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did you want to add  
6 anything else, Hilda?

7 MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ: I just think, you  
8 know, to call children, basically, liars, you know, when  
9 the children themselves emotionally shared that they  
10 witnessed, you know, basically my sister being removed in a  
11 body bag, to say that that didn't happen, just really  
12 demonstrates on how police protect their own. As well, you  
13 know, not linking the fire -- my sister was found 19 hours  
14 prior to that fire being deliberately set, and not linking  
15 the two together and she had been partying in the garage  
16 the night before clearly demonstrates, again, failure on  
17 how the RCMP investigated my sister's death. You know,  
18 it's just like saying -- and not calling the ambulance, it  
19 shows -- it clearly demonstrates that there's a two-tier  
20 system within policing when it comes to Indigenous people,  
21 you know, to basically put my sister in a body bag and  
22 throw her in the back of a truck, not give my family the  
23 dignity or honour of identifying her; allowing a police  
24 officer who was her neighbour and who was the one who found

1 her to identify her shows how broken the system is, and  
2 I'll just end there because we're breaking for lunch.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner  
4 Audette, if we could take a 30-minute lunch break, we will  
5 be recommencing with this family following the lunch break.  
6 Thank you.

7 --- Upon recessing at 12:10 p.m.

8 --- Upon resuming at 12:58 p.m.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So thank you,  
10 Commissioner Audette. The family would like to continue  
11 sort of where they left off, particularly now that we've  
12 seen the video and understand a bit more of the context of  
13 Dawn's death. Hilda will be sharing with you a document,  
14 and she'll be asking you questions, and she'll be -- sorry,  
15 she'll be sharing some questions the family asked.

16 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** So I'm just going  
17 to share a letter that I received from the Royal Canadian  
18 Mounted Police on December -- or sorry.

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** August 9th.

20 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** August 9th,  
21 2012 -- I don't know why I said December, sorry -- and  
22 (indiscernible) the public complaint I filed against the  
23 members of the RCMP. I won't share the entire letter, but  
24 I just wanted to highlight on two key areas on the nature

1 of the complaint.

2 So the allegation, it's alleged that -- I'm  
3 not going to name the officers -- that the two officers of  
4 Leaf Rapids Detachment did not properly conduct the  
5 investigation with respect to the death of Miss Dawn  
6 Anderson, which occurred on November 18th, 2011, and the  
7 category is neglect of duty.

8 So I'm just going to share the overall  
9 findings, the last paragraph of this 3-page letter that I  
10 received from the Public Complaints Commission. It says:

11 The overall findings of the review did  
12 not reveal any evidence suggesting  
13 neglect of duty was a contributing  
14 factor. The review revealed the  
15 investigation conducted by police  
16 officers at Leaf Rapids Detachment was  
17 within the scope of their duties in  
18 accordance to policies governing their  
19 actions with these investigations.  
20 Therefore, I am unable to support your  
21 allegation that the two officers of the  
22 Leaf Rapids Detachment did not properly  
23 conduct the investigation with a respect  
24 to the death of Miss Dawn Anderson which

1 occurred on November 18th, 2011.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So you're talking  
3 about the response of a complaint, but the first step of  
4 that was to make a complaint.

5 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yeah.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Right? So when did  
7 you make the complaint?

8 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I honestly can't  
9 remember the exact date off the top of my head, but it was  
10 shortly after my sister passed away because I felt that,  
11 you know, we had to do something because we couldn't just  
12 stand by and allow things just to go away because they  
13 wouldn't go away for us, so we had to, you know, access the  
14 mechanisms that were there for us to, you know, raise this  
15 issue to a higher level.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Before the  
17 complaint, did you -- did you write any concerns or other  
18 letters to the RCMP detachment commander in Manitoba?

19 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I actually -- not,  
20 like, myself, with my siblings, we compiled a whole bunch  
21 of questions, and we sent them to the Leaf Rapids  
22 Detachment directly, to the sergeant who was responsible  
23 for the RCMP detachment in Leaf Rapids at the time.

24 So I'm just going -- I'm not going to share

1 all the questions, but just a few key questions that I feel  
2 that really demonstrates institutional failures when it  
3 comes to, you know, the -- everything surrounding my late  
4 sister's passing. It says -- one of the questions we asked  
5 was why was the local doctor or the ambulance -- why wasn't  
6 the local doctor or the ambulance called to the scene upon  
7 the discovery of Dawn? Ambulance assistance was not -- was  
8 deemed not necessary, as Dawn was clearly deceased.

9 And I just also wanted to further mention  
10 that my sister was officially pronounced dead over the  
11 phone by the Medical Examiner's office in Winnipeg, and  
12 they were not on the scene. The police officers were on  
13 the scene. However, it was the Medical Examiner's office  
14 in Winnipeg who officially declared my sister dead and that  
15 the scene could be cleared, just so people understand that  
16 context as well.

17 And I feel that this is important to add  
18 into. When you take the core body temperature of somebody  
19 who's deceased, based on our research and what others have  
20 shared with us, it can determine at approximately what time  
21 that they died, so we asked, was Dawn's core body  
22 temperature taken; if not, why? And it says -- like, we  
23 know that the officers are not the ones who do this, and  
24 that's evident, but just even the way that they answer the

1 question, it says core body temperatures -- core body  
2 temperature was not taken by the officers on the scene, as  
3 this was not a common procedure for officers so undertake.  
4 We understand that, but even answering it in that context,  
5 like, we understand that it's somebody who's medically  
6 trained who -- who would have done this, if it was  
7 available.

8 And then another question we asked, which is  
9 kind of contradicting here, like, to what actually happened  
10 in their response, it says, why was the area not  
11 immediately taped off and secured where Dawn was found, as  
12 the cause of death was not determined upon her discovery?  
13 The security of the scene was maintained by the presence of  
14 the officers.

15 In this instance, the Medical  
16 Examiner's -- Medical Examiner's office authorized the  
17 release of the body and the scene. Therefore, further  
18 security of the area was not required.

19 So that was done, like, would you says,  
20 Keith, within, like, an hour.

21 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** Yeah. Probably. Yeah.

22 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Okay. I wasn't  
23 there, but I -- Keith was the first one on the scene, and  
24 it's -- we asked, why was Dawn's home not secured or taped

1 off? Why was Dawn's home not secured or taped off or  
2 secured where Dawn was found, as the cause of death was not  
3 determined upon her discovery.

4 The Medical Examiner's office authorized the  
5 release of the scene. Therefore, the further security of  
6 the area was not required.

7 And then I -- I asked the -- we asked the  
8 question too: Why was the forensic unit not called in? It  
9 says:

10 Calling in a forensic unit is not  
11 automatic in a fatality investigation.  
12 In this case, the officer's examination  
13 of the scene determined there was no  
14 need for forensic exam.

15 And we also asked the question, was there  
16 any fingerprints taken at the scene or in Dawn's home? No  
17 fingerprint exam was conducted.

18 And we asked, the scene -- was Dawn's hands  
19 bagged to preserve any evidence from under her fingernails?  
20 It says:

21 The investigators examined Dawn  
22 Anderson's hands at the scene and saw  
23 nothing of note, as a result, saw no  
24 need to bag her hands.

1           And we also asked, was there any castings or  
2 photographs taken of the footprints around Dawn? No  
3 footprint castings were taken. The only footprints  
4 observed near the body appeared to be those of Dawn  
5 Anderson, not including the footprints of the officers.

6           And we asked -- because at the time, like,  
7 they didn't know who was around. We said, why wasn't Child  
8 and Family Services called to remove the children from the  
9 scene immediately upon discovering they were alone? The  
10 officers believed it would be better if the children were  
11 in the care of family members at that time. The officers  
12 located Keith Anderson, who took over the care of the  
13 children. But we know, like -- and it really bothers me,  
14 too, watching the video prior to our lunch break when the  
15 officer basically calls my nieces a liar, you know, and  
16 saying that the children were not alone, and 4- and  
17 7 years-old don't lie. You know, they said they were  
18 alone, and they shared with my sister Lianna observing my  
19 sister being removed in a body bag in an RCMP truck.

20           And we just asked, who signed off the  
21 necessary proof of death documentation? It says:

22                   This is not a police responsibility.  
23                   The Medical Examiner's office should be  
24                   able to provide this information.

1 And this is key, too, because I feel it's  
2 taken a lot of dignity away from my sister and has been  
3 really, like, shameful and disrespectful to my family. It  
4 says:

5 Who provided the positive identification  
6 to confirm the deceased individual was  
7 indeed Dawn?

8 It was her neighbour who discovered her  
9 body. It says:

10 One of the investigating officers  
11 identified Dawn Anderson at the scene.  
12 He was known to her for nearly three  
13 years.

14 Who cares if he was known to her? You know,  
15 what about the family? We're the ones who lost a loved  
16 one, and I think that's so shameful of the RCMP to do that.

17 And how was Dawn's body transported from the  
18 scene? In a truck or in the back of a truck. It says:

19 Dawn Anderson's body was placed into a  
20 body bag and carried into the box of the  
21 marked RCMP patrol truck.

22 So she was basically bagged and put into the  
23 RCMP truck with no dignity where they could have called the  
24 ambulance and the local doctor to the scene. He was never

1 called, and he was actually shocked that he was never  
2 called to the scene, and he didn't find out till later that  
3 afternoon that my sister was deceased, and he had called,  
4 like, higher levels of authority to express his concern  
5 that he wasn't called to the scene.

6 And we also heard from several different  
7 people who have tried to share different things that  
8 they've heard or that they know firsthand with respect to  
9 the police investigation into my sister's death, and many  
10 of them told us that they weren't even given the  
11 opportunity to share their -- what they knew about Dawn, or  
12 it wasn't even officially recorded. It was so nonchalant,  
13 they said, when they went to try to share information.

14 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** And what did they say,  
15 Hilda, when you tried to set up that Crime Stoppers thing?

16 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** That wasn't me.  
17 We'll do that later.

18 And I asked -- because there was the fire  
19 19 hours after my sister was found deceased, I asked the  
20 following question: Was there photographs taken of the  
21 interior of Dawn's garage; if not, why? It says:

22 Photographs of the interior of the  
23 garage were not taken. The garage had  
24 been searched by two officers, and they

1 found nothing of any evidentiary value  
2 to be seized or to be photographed.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So you keep talking  
4 about the detachment, so is the Rapid Leafs  
5 detachment -- is the Rapid Leafs detachment --

6 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Leaf Rapids.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- Leaf Rapids  
8 Detachment, the officers that are stationed there, are they  
9 full RCMP officers? Are they special constables, or --

10 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** No. They're full  
11 RCMP officers. And then I also -- one of the things that I  
12 asked in my complaint to the RCMP with the Public  
13 Complaints Commission, they asked me what are the outcomes  
14 that I would like, and I asked if the individual who was in  
15 the home the night my sister died, who has a very violent  
16 history, if he could be subjected to a polygraph, and then  
17 they came back to me and said that they asked him if he  
18 would do a polygraph, and he refused because he has that  
19 right.

20 And I also asked, has the RCMP released any  
21 public written communications to announce the death of  
22 Dawn; if not, why? And I said, if so, can all copies of  
23 communications be provided to the next of kin on or  
24 before -- and I gave a specific timeline, because at the

1 time -- well, even still today, I was leading a lot of the  
2 stuff that we were doing with respect to my sister's  
3 passing and informing my family because we felt that that  
4 was an easier process rather than trying to communicate  
5 with everybody because we have such a large family, and it  
6 said:

7 A media release to local or provincial  
8 news outlets announcing a fatality in a  
9 community is not automatically completed  
10 in each case. If a news media outlet  
11 was to inquire about a fatality, the  
12 detachment may issue a brief media  
13 release but limit the information.  
14 Names would not be released without next  
15 of kin consent. Detachments can issue a  
16 media release requesting public  
17 assistance. The purpose of this type of  
18 release is to canvas the general public  
19 for anyone with information relating to  
20 a specific event. In this case, the  
21 detachment determined a request for  
22 public assistance has not been required  
23 at this time.

24 And again, that just shows, like, you know,

1 there was a fire, you know, and the disarray in her home,  
2 and to basically not even ask for any public assistance as  
3 to what happened that night, even leading up to her  
4 passing, you know, that clearly demonstrates another  
5 failure within the detachment by not requesting the  
6 public's assistance.

7 And I also -- because I felt it -- you know,  
8 why didn't the Fire Commissioner not come to Leaf Rapids?  
9 Because there was the fire, you know, 19 hours after  
10 somebody was found deceased, that was directly attached to  
11 her home, and it boggles my mind that -- you know, that  
12 there was no Fire Commissioner that came out to do an  
13 inspection, so at the time I wrote a letter on  
14 December 5th, 2011, to the Honourable Jennifer Howard, who  
15 was the minister responsible for the Office of the Fire  
16 Commissioner, and basically, I don't have the response here  
17 today because I just -- you know, it's a difficult process,  
18 and I couldn't pull everything together, but basically, the  
19 letter just offered their condolences and said it was a  
20 very difficult time for the family, and it was the RCMP who  
21 deemed it was not necessary for the Fire Commissioner to  
22 come out.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So it seems like,  
24 you know, you're -- when you're asking the RCMP questions,

1 they're turning to the Medical Examiner; when you're asking  
2 the Fire Commissioner questions, they're turning to the  
3 RCMP. It seems like a lot of people are happy to say it's  
4 someone else's responsibility.

5 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** And -- and that's  
6 what I felt. I felt like it was -- you know, every time we  
7 went to somebody, it was always somebody else's  
8 responsibility. It was like a big -- you know, it's almost  
9 like a game: Let's blame this -- this institution, let's  
10 blame that institution. It's like, well, what about us as  
11 family? You know, we -- we're looking for answers, you  
12 know, and all you're doing is creating this, like, circle  
13 that's continuously going, and we have no real answers, you  
14 know, and nobody's being accountable. It's, like, just  
15 shifting the blame. I think it's time for institutions to  
16 be accountable, you know, and to admit when they do wrong,  
17 and by doing that, they go forward in a different way, you  
18 know, in fixing their processes, you know, so  
19 in -- in -- ultimately, there's a better outcome for  
20 families as well as for the institutions, you know, if we  
21 go forward together and admit wrongs and fix these wrongs.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Now, I understand  
23 that you asked for and received a copy of the Chief Medical  
24 Examiner's autopsy report form.

1 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes, I did.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm going to pass  
3 this up to the Commissioner, but before I do, as I often do  
4 with any coroner's report, I request that it be sealed, and  
5 the purpose I'm making the request for it to be sealed is  
6 to maintain the dignity of Dawn because it does describe  
7 personal attributes and information about her death.

8 So may I have the sealing order?

9 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Oui.* Yes.

10 *Merci.*

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And I know that  
12 you're the one who received the -- the post-mortem.  
13 Essentially, it states that she died from exposure?

14 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yeah.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes?

16 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yeah, and even  
17 like, when, my sister was in her casket, like, she had this  
18 weird indentation above her -- her right eye, I believe,  
19 and she had, like, bruising on her chin, and even, like, on  
20 her arm like this that she had, like, finger markings on  
21 her arms, but none of that is noted in the autopsy. They  
22 just talk about, like, an injury on her nose and her hip.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So it's obvious the  
24 family took a number of steps that you guys have been

1 advocating --

2 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- quite a bit. I  
4 have a couple questions that maybe one of your brothers  
5 might want to answer simply because they were also in  
6 Leaf Rapids -- is that okay -- to Dennis or Melvin?

7 Okay. So the question I have, because we've  
8 heard, and I know we're not speaking about the individual  
9 the family suspects because there was never charges laid  
10 against him because there was no investigation, but can you  
11 just tell a little bit -- share a little bit with the  
12 commissioner sort of, like, a bit of background about him  
13 without naming him in terms of -- the family has said a  
14 couple times he was violent. It's known that he's violent  
15 in the community?

16 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, and -- like, many  
17 times even after my sister's passing that his name has been  
18 thrown around as the one doing harm to other people and  
19 nobody doing anything about it.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Do I understand that  
21 he -- he has been charged subsequently for abusing other  
22 people?

23 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** I don't really know,  
24 but I know he's -- like, he's not around in Leaf Rapids

1 right now. I presume he's incarcerated right now.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I also understand  
3 that from -- there's at least a couple stories where people  
4 have explained that this individual has actually talked  
5 about unintentionally killing your sister.

6 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, and we've talked  
7 to the individuals, and we've asked them to go to the RCMP  
8 and make statements and stuff like that, and they have gone  
9 there, but I -- I don't know if any investigation -- of any  
10 investigations that have gone any further from there, and  
11 it's -- there is a lot of people that -- that hear -- that  
12 hear him say these stories, and a lot of them are too  
13 frightened to go and make statements or just clam right up  
14 when you come up to them and confront them about what  
15 they -- what we've heard that they've heard, and they just  
16 don't say anything. They're just too, I guess, afraid of  
17 him.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And has the family  
19 continued to go back to the RCMP or touch base with the  
20 local detachment on any time they hear these things as  
21 well?

22 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, we have -- like,  
23 myself and my brother Dennis heard just recently, we've  
24 heard and we've gone to them, and then we've asked the

1 person to come forward and go to the RCMP and make a  
2 statement, and I'm not quite sure of what the response was.  
3 I think -- I'll give Dennis the mic here. He -- he's the  
4 one that really talked to the person.

5 **MR. DENNIS ANDERSON:** Yeah. On that point,  
6 I'll just go back to the beginning, Mel, if you don't  
7 mind --

8 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Yeah.

9 **MR. DENNIS ANDERSON:** -- as to how the  
10 information came about. I was walking uptown one day to go  
11 grab something from the grocery store, and I ran into a  
12 lady who -- who confront -- well, didn't confront me,  
13 but -- you know, like, I was joking around with her just  
14 like you do everybody else that you meet, like, from a  
15 small community, right? And then she -- she had a -- you  
16 know, like, a look about her like she was sad or something  
17 like that, right? And then I said, you okay? And she  
18 said, you know what? She said, Dennis, I'm really glad  
19 that I ran into you, and I said, well, yeah, okay,  
20 what -- what's bothering you? She said, actually, I was  
21 going to try to get a hold of all you guys because I got  
22 some -- some disturbing information -- or I find it  
23 disturbing, and it's been really bothering me, she said,  
24 that my daughter had come home and told me something about

1 what may have happened to your sister.

2 So I -- you know, like, it's -- it's like  
3 everything else. You're waiting for that certain little  
4 something, you know, to maybe -- okay, this is it. It's  
5 going to be -- you know, like, something's going to come of  
6 it, right? So my brother Melvin and I, we -- we went and  
7 we contacted the RCMP. We went down there, and we said,  
8 you know, like, this lady's got some information that might  
9 be vital to, you know, like, my -- my sister's death, so on  
10 and so forth. And they said, well, if she comes up, we'll  
11 definitely be, you know, talking to her.

12 So her mother and her had gone up, and  
13 during a party, he had admittedly said to a couple of  
14 people that were there that he -- he had a hand in my  
15 sister' demise, but he didn't really mean to, right? Now,  
16 whatever that means, it's irrelevant. I mean, like, his  
17 statement's irrelevant, and I -- you know.

18 And so the RCMP -- or she went and she  
19 talked to the RCMP and told them what she had heard  
20 and -- you know, like with the -- with her mother's help,  
21 you know, and there again, we were just stone-walled  
22 because the other people that were there were not going to  
23 say nothing, so even though she had made this report or  
24 statement, then it's a he-said-she-said kind of thing,

1 right, yet the other people that were there, they will  
2 not -- you know, like, if we just had a couple of people  
3 against him, you know, just the one time, if somebody would  
4 have said like, yeah, yeah, you know, like two or three of  
5 them, you know, that could have opened up something, right?

6 And -- but basically, that's what I was  
7 told, when the R -- and I -- and I had phoned the RCMP, and  
8 I said, you know, like, guys, I really want to hear back  
9 from you on this. You know, like, it's -- you know, like,  
10 I feel that it's vital information, and they -- they  
11 promised that they would get back to me, and they did.  
12 They actually come back to my house. I  
13 think -- they -- they had a call to go to South Indian that  
14 prior day, so the following day they had come to my house,  
15 and they -- what I had just shared with you about -- you  
16 know, like, the he-said-she-said kind of thing stopped.  
17 Like, that was it, you know?

18 And the one guy, actually, the one RCMP  
19 officer, he looked at me, and he said, you know what,  
20 Dennis -- like, after I explained to him, I said, I'm not  
21 going to stop that. You know, like, this is not the end of  
22 it. You know, like, this is -- this is not where this  
23 ends, you know? And I told him, I said, I'm going to  
24 continue fighting. And he looked at me, he says, you know

1 what, Dennis, if it were my sister, he says, there's not a  
2 chance that I'd be giving up either. You know? And  
3 through -- through it all, that was probably the only kind  
4 word or positive reaction that I personally have gotten  
5 from the RCMP of any sort.

6 And, you know, like, it's just -- like, the  
7 whole investigation is just all shot full of holes.  
8 Everything. Like, it's just -- like, they just -- like,  
9 let's get this done and over with, you know, like -- and,  
10 you know, like, just rush through it, it's all done. I  
11 mean, look at the questions that Hilda had asked them. You  
12 know, like, the investigating officer, the investigating  
13 officer, the investigating officer. You know, like, jeez.  
14 You're talking to a guy that's supposed to be, you know,  
15 their boss or their superior, and he can't answer questions  
16 on behalf of them, and he's just passing the buck back to  
17 the guy that was there, and I mean -- like, that doesn't  
18 excuse them, as well, but I mean, like, it's just -- like  
19 Hilda says, it's pass the buck, pass the buck, you know?  
20 And it's -- it's -- it's written, you know? Like, that's  
21 their answer. That's their answer to all our questions.  
22 We'll just pass the buck. You know? It's over with. Deal  
23 with it. Well, it's not over with, and yeah, we're still  
24 dealing with it, you know?

1                   And one thing I'd like to mention, you know,  
2                   about the officer that did give me that little bit of  
3                   positive feedback was he was not one of the original  
4                   investigating officers; and back to the individual who, you  
5                   know, may have had a hand in this, like Mel says, you know,  
6                   like, he walks around, people are frightened of him, yet  
7                   people come -- I bet you weekly, I hear it from somebody in  
8                   that community, and there's only 500, 600 of us that live  
9                   there. I bet you once a week, at least, once a week, I  
10                  hear somebody come tell me something, and I tell them, you  
11                  know, like, don't tell me because then -- it's just hearsay  
12                  if I go there. Go -- go to the police. Make a statement.  
13                  That's where it stops. You know, like, it's almost, like,  
14                  oh, I'll feel better if I go tell him. At least they know.  
15                  You know? Like, it's almost -- people look for excuses  
16                  within themselves to -- you know, somehow they feel that  
17                  they've done something right if they go and tell you, but  
18                  what are you going to do about it? You're just an  
19                  individual looking for answers, you know, looking for a bit  
20                  of justice, looking for a little relief, looking for some  
21                  closure, you know, and I appreciate that they tell me, but  
22                  it does me no good. It does nobody no good. Maybe it does  
23                  them some good to know that they're telling somebody, but  
24                  they're telling the wrong people, and I -- honest to God,

1 Commissioner, I bet you at least once a week, if not twice  
2 a month, I hear something. Somebody comes, tells me  
3 something pertaining to the death of my sister, and yet to  
4 this day, you know, it's never been investigated properly,  
5 and it continues, you know?

6 You know -- you know, like, and you hear  
7 about it all the time. You know, people are afraid of  
8 these people, or they're afraid of maybe the parent or  
9 where he stands in the community. You know, like, you hear  
10 all kinds of horror stories, you know, little -- you know,  
11 like Betty Osborne (ph). Perfect, you know, example. You  
12 know, like, everybody knew in that community or most people  
13 knew or have heard the stories, and for how many years did  
14 them sinning people walk the same ground that that poor  
15 girl did, and her family?

16 And in essence, what I'm saying is, pretty  
17 much, that's how we feel. Why do -- does he get to walk  
18 and enjoy the same things that I do, and then when he's  
19 under the influence of something, he's bragging? You know,  
20 I'm not afraid of this person at all or his family or any  
21 repercussions that may come my way because of what I'm  
22 saying here today. I'm not afraid, and I will continue to  
23 fight. Yeah, "we," and we're a strong unit, and -- you  
24 know, like, it's -- it's a very hurtful thing to have to

1 see and live through it, like, on a daily basis, and I kid  
2 you not, Commissioner, at least twice a month, I hear  
3 something out of people's mouths directly to me about what  
4 happened that night, and yet I -- my hands are tied. I  
5 can't do anything, and I can't get them to do anything  
6 because they're all afraid, and you know, like, this  
7 individual, I feel, he's got a very violent past, and I  
8 feel that he probably should have been incarcerated long  
9 ago as a dangerous offender, and it's my belief that that's  
10 where he belongs.

11 You know, and it's sad. You know, like, I'm  
12 sure -- I'm sure these investigating officers, whoever did  
13 this, I'm sure every time they hear about us or see us  
14 doing something, they're cringing, and they're -- I bet you  
15 they're -- in their minds, they're going, jeez, I should  
16 have, I should have, you know, but their superiors protect  
17 them too. You know?

18 And, yeah, like, you can see on the tape,  
19 you know, they blatantly lied, and they said my nieces  
20 lied. They got no reason to lie. Their mother was taken  
21 out of their yard in a bag, and they were alone, and they  
22 watched. Now, how is that proper investigation any of  
23 kind? How is that proper treatment of Indigenous people or  
24 anybody by people in authority? How could they have let

1 that happen? You know, it borderlines on disgusting is  
2 what it does.

3 And like I say, hopefully through voicing  
4 our opinions and telling our stories, like, everybody  
5 that's here, I pray to God that we all find some kind of  
6 answer in the end because that's what this is all about,  
7 you know, not only for our stories but each individual here  
8 that's going to testify or do their testimony, you know,  
9 they feel the way we do. They've been done wrong. They  
10 have not been handed a proper solution or an answer.  
11 They've been quite -- quite the opposite. They've been  
12 skirted around so they don't have to be provided with an  
13 answer, and it's time that this stuff ends, and, you know,  
14 like, it's just -- and it's Indigenous people, you know,  
15 that take the brunt of it. We have no trust with the RCMP.  
16 None of us do. Indigenous people -- you know, like, it's  
17 crazy. Like, you don't want to talk to police because  
18 we're -- you know, like, we're branded, man. You know,  
19 like, and it's a sad, sad thing to have to say in 2018, you  
20 know, like, and all this stuff, you know, like, that goes  
21 on in this -- in this country, and two cases in particular  
22 we've seen as of recent. Everybody's seen it on  
23 television, right? You know, like -- and it's the same  
24 thing. It just keeps happening. Why is that? And it's

1 not -- like my sister said, it -- it's a geographical  
2 problem. Like, it's across the country. Doesn't matter  
3 where in this country. It's happening everywhere. Why is  
4 that? You know, and that's what we're here to change or  
5 hopefully bring light to, find answers, you know, find  
6 closure. That's what this is about. For me, that's what  
7 it's about. This is not the end of my fight either. I  
8 will continue. I promise you, I'll -- thank you.

9 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I also wanted to  
10 share, my brother Dennis and Melvin and my brother  
11 Brunel (ph), and Dawn's -- the father of her children, we  
12 went to meet with the RCMP when this happened in  
13 Leaf Rapids, and one of the things -- I found it really  
14 kind of bizarre because at the time you're in shock, you  
15 know, because you just lost your loved one and you're not  
16 really thinking about everything and maybe not asking the  
17 right questions, but one thing I found interesting is, why  
18 was the officer who found my sister, who was her neighbour  
19 doing the investigation -- you know, because when we went  
20 there, they said, oh, he's on holidays for a couple of  
21 days, he has a couple of days off, and then the officer who  
22 was talking to us, he said to us, he said, oh, when  
23 we -- when the individual who was in your sister's home the  
24 night that she died was interviewed, he was visibly

1 distraught; and I'm thinking, like, who cares if he was  
2 distraught? What about us, you know? And then they said,  
3 oh, he even told us that he walked around her house looking  
4 for her, and I said to that officer, I said, that's a lie.  
5 I said, if he walked around the house looking for her, he  
6 would have saw where she was lying because, you know, in  
7 the wintertime, there's, like -- there was a bush there,  
8 but it was all bare. There was no leaves or anything on  
9 it. It was just, like, twigs sticking out, and they  
10 weren't very high, and you would be able to see clearly  
11 where she was lying, so I said to that officer, I said,  
12 he's lying.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Also, about  
14 footprints.

15 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Oh, yeah. And,  
16 like, even, you know, not -- basically saying that there  
17 was no footprints and no castings and stuff like that.  
18 Like, to me, that doesn't make sense. If you find  
19 somebody, you don't know what happened to them, you would  
20 think you would go into investigative mode, you know, but I  
21 think -- like, to me, I know so many families in northern  
22 Manitoba who have told me their same story, you know, that  
23 they believe that foul play was suspected in the -- in  
24 their loved one, but the RCMP and the Medical Examiner's

1 office continuously ruled their deaths as exposure due to  
2 intoxication where -- you know, even if they died of  
3 exposure due to intoxication, what about all those events  
4 that lead up to their death? You know, what about those  
5 individuals that were involved? You know, I feel -- I  
6 don't know. Like, it -- it really needs to change. We  
7 need to change. You know, there's a lot of good police  
8 officers. I'm not, like, saying they're all horrible.  
9 There's a lot of good people who are working in  
10 institutions who are really trying to create meaningful  
11 change, but we need to do better.

12 And I was actually going to pass the mic to  
13 my sister Lianna because she has some really key things,  
14 like, with my two little nieces that shared.

15 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** I guess this horror  
16 started for me just shortly after my brother Keith got the  
17 news and he -- and he went home because I had taken my mom  
18 with me to Winnipeg that time. We were going there -- we  
19 were going there for meetings, and I remember that morning  
20 when we were leaving, Dawn was outside the town centre.  
21 She was just -- she had one of her friends coming to the  
22 town centre there where it's the main street in Leaf Rapids  
23 to buy groceries, and she -- and my mom seen her, and my  
24 mom went and gave her a hug and told her to be good, and

1 that was the last time my mom seen her alive. It was few  
2 days after that, that's when we lost her.

3 But my brother Keith called me. He kept  
4 calling me. I was driving in Winnipeg, and I told -- and  
5 then my daughters said -- you know -- like, I was right in  
6 the heart of traffic, rush-hour, during lunch on a Friday  
7 afternoon, Winnipeg, and Keith says -- like, told him,  
8 phone me as soon as you pull over, and I did, and I -- and  
9 I phoned him, and then he says, Dawn's gone. I says, Dawn  
10 who? He says, our sister. I said, well, where did she go?  
11 He says, she's dead, and he hangs up on me, and I'm just,  
12 like, what? I phone him back, and the phone was busy, and  
13 then I phoned him back again, and I said, what happened?  
14 He says, they're telling me they found her outside her home  
15 this morning and that she froze to death, and I'm thinking,  
16 this is crazy. This can't be. I phoned the RCMP, and I  
17 asked them, like, what is going on? And I talked to one of  
18 the officers that was in the RCMP detachment, and he tells  
19 me that Dawn's neighbour, who is an RCMP officer, was  
20 leaving for work shortly -- 9 o'clock that morning, and he  
21 seen Dawn in between his house and her house, about  
22 30 -- 30 to 40 feet from her front door, they found her. I  
23 said, well, what happened to her? He says, Lianna, he  
24 says, we're pretty -- he says, we're pretty sure

1 that -- you know, that she was drinking and she froze to  
2 death outside, and I'm thinking, no, that's not Dawn.  
3 That's not my sister. My sister, doesn't matter what it is  
4 that she's doing or where she is, she always dressed for  
5 the weather, and if anything, she would bring a wagon full  
6 of extra clothes and always, always prepared for anything  
7 and everything. That's just the way that my mom made sure  
8 we were, and it just didn't make sense to me.

9 And -- and then I called the RCMP back, and  
10 I says, like, you know, what's happening, like, you know,  
11 and then -- and then I asked, is there going to be an  
12 investigation, and then they said, like, well, right now,  
13 Lianna, he says -- he says, I think you guys need to get a  
14 hold of all of your family, and then -- and then called my  
15 brother-in-law, and he called -- and I guess I asked him,  
16 are you with Hilda, and I told him what happened, and I  
17 told him -- because we need -- I -- I was just trying to  
18 get to my mother before my mother got the phone call from  
19 somebody up north to tell her, and I trying to intervene so  
20 that she wouldn't get that call over the phone, so I had to  
21 get a hold of my sister Hilda.

22 And -- but -- you know, when -- in -- in  
23 those moments when this happened, and I'm thinking, Dawn's  
24 dead outside her home; my God, what happened to her? Who

1 did this? We need to find out. You know, there's going to  
2 be a big massive investigation, and my brother Melvin said,  
3 like, you know, Lianna, he said, like, Dawn's house is a  
4 wreck, he says, and -- and I says, well, don't touch  
5 anything. Get everybody out of there. You guys are  
6 contaminating the scene. There's going to be a big  
7 investigation. We're going to find out what happened to  
8 Dawn because something happened to her, and I says, get  
9 everybody to stop cleaning up, and just get everybody out  
10 of there. Don't let anybody in the house.

11 And that investigation never came. It  
12 didn't come. The RCMP never investigated anything. I was  
13 told through my conversations with them, when I asked them,  
14 I says, why didn't you guys call the ambulance? Why didn't  
15 you call the doctor? There's a doctor in Leaf Rapids  
16 that's there 24/7. The ambulance lives right across the  
17 street from where my sister lives. Why didn't you guys  
18 call the ambulance? Why didn't you call the doctor to the  
19 scene? And they said, well, Lianna, the Chief Medical  
20 Examiner pronounced her dead over the phone. Like, how the  
21 hell do you pronounce somebody dead over a phone? How can  
22 you as a person, as an RCMP officer, know what kind of  
23 vital signs that you have to look for, even that simple  
24 thing of holding a mirror to my sister's face, this close,

1 he could have seen if she was gasping for that last breath.  
2 Those RCMP officers didn't know anything about doing that.  
3 They pronounced her dead over the phone by the Chief  
4 Medical Examiner.

5 Right away, we started hearing, oh, she was  
6 partying the night before, she was drunk, she went outside.  
7 She passed out; and I'm thinking, wow, that's -- you know,  
8 this is -- like, it was almost a state of disbelief, and  
9 you almost have to kind of think, like, really?

10 Later on that day, the -- the doctor in the  
11 community, like, you know, he -- like, you know, when I got  
12 back home, he came to me, and he was really, really upset  
13 and disturbed, and he said, Lianna, he says, I'm so sorry.  
14 He says, you know -- he says, I'm the doctor in the  
15 community. I didn't even hear from the RCMP that there was  
16 a death in the community, that somebody froze to death  
17 outside. He says, I was in the clinic, and I seen how  
18 visibly upset the staff were, and I asked, like, you know,  
19 what is going on? He said, my staff told me because of how  
20 close they were to your sister, of the relationships they  
21 had with her, that she had passed away. He said, that's  
22 how I found out as a doctor in our community of not even 5,  
23 600 people that there was a death in the community, that  
24 the RCMP had picked up somebody deceased outside, and

1 that's how the doctor found out. The ambulance wasn't  
2 called.

3 And I'm thinking, like, how does this stuff  
4 happen? My brother, they call my brother to the RCMP  
5 station, Keith. He gets a message on his phone: Oh, can  
6 you call -- come by the RCMP detachment? We have a -- it's  
7 kind of urgent. So he goes there. Two minutes later, they  
8 tell him, we found your sister dead outside her place. Oh,  
9 by the way, your nieces, your 4-year-old and 7-year-old,  
10 are alone in the house. We have to go there and pick them  
11 up. Meanwhile, my sister's in the garage, in the back of a  
12 truck, in a body bag. My brother wasn't given the honour  
13 to be able to go and look at my baby sister's face once  
14 more and say, yes, that is our baby sister, that is our  
15 sister; to be able to touch her, to be able to call family,  
16 to be able to say prayers for her, to be able to see her  
17 before they took her away, but instead, she was just put in  
18 a body bag in the back of a truck, waiting for the  
19 Boardman's Funeral Home in Thompson to come pick her up.

20 When they came and -- when they picked up my  
21 sister, my nieces, they're 4 and 7 years old, they stayed  
22 with my mom for the first three months after my sister  
23 passed, and then they came and stayed with me. The tidbits  
24 that they started talking about and -- and the stuff that

1 they were saying, it's just -- it just haunts me because  
2 it's just not right, and the way that we are as a family,  
3 we censor what the kids watch on TV. Like, you know, we  
4 don't -- you know, they wouldn't have picked up this stuff  
5 from anywhere, and when my niece tells me, like, you know,  
6 that they were alone in the house, like, you know, that the  
7 police had come, they came inside, and the radio was really  
8 loud, and -- you know, then they left, and they went  
9 outside, and they said they seen the truck because -- and  
10 they said they noticed it because it -- it came and drove  
11 up on their yard, and they seen the cops put something --  
12 like, a long bag in the back of the truck, and they were  
13 alone in the house watching this. Then they left, and I  
14 said, well, who stayed with you, and they said nobody.  
15 They were alone in the house. The -- the cops came and  
16 picked up my sister and left. They came in the house.  
17 They seen my 4- and 7-year-old nieces alone in the house,  
18 left them alone, went outside, bagged up my sister like  
19 whatever, threw her in the back of a truck and then took  
20 off. She was not worthy of a call to the local doctor,  
21 the -- the local ambulance. My nieces were not worthy to  
22 immediately call somebody at CFS or something to console  
23 these children with what they just found outside. They are  
24 human beings. I look at these pictures. Look at them.

1 They're so beautiful, and what they seen, what they were  
2 left alone, we didn't -- like, we -- Hilda talks about, you  
3 know, like, the -- the -- the public -- the complaint that  
4 we made to the Public Complaints Commission about what they  
5 did, even with the sheer fact that they left my nieces  
6 alone in the house, 4 and 7 years old, the Commission  
7 didn't find any wrongdoing in that. Like, how is that  
8 possible?

9                   You know, my niece, my 7-year-old niece, one  
10 day, she's -- I had gotten her ready for bed, and -- you  
11 know, like -- and, like, they had mentioned that when my  
12 sister Dawn, at her funeral, like, she had a bruise on her  
13 chin. She had bruises here. She had bruises on her arms  
14 like this, and it's not our way to take pictures, but I  
15 wish that one time we would have, but we didn't, but  
16 everybody remembers that. Everybody remembers those  
17 bruises on her because she was so fair, and -- and you  
18 could see every little mark and everything on her.

19                   And my niece said one evening -- it was a  
20 couple of months after my sister's death. I put her to  
21 bed, and I was laying, and I was watching TV, and she came  
22 out. She says, Aunty, she says, I have a question, she  
23 says, and she was very articulate, very smart, brilliant  
24 young lady, and -- and then I said, what's up, my girl?

1 And I was laying on the couch, and she comes over, she  
2 said, how did they fix my mom's neck? And I says, what do  
3 you mean, my girl? And she said, well, her neck was going  
4 like this. It was, like -- and I says, where did you see  
5 that? And then she just kind of had this look come over  
6 her eyes, and she says, oh, she says; never mind, she says;  
7 I'm going bed.

8 And I was forever haunted with that  
9 conversation. I didn't have the means to know how to talk  
10 to her. I wanted to shake her: Tell me exactly what you  
11 seen. What happened? Where did you see this? Like, you  
12 know -- like, how -- how do you know this? But I didn't  
13 have the means to be able to do that without traumatizing  
14 her, and I couldn't, and it's been haunting me. It's been  
15 eating me up inside, that conversation I had with her.

16 And my -- my other niece, like, the  
17 4-year-old, she was in nursery, Kindergarten, and the  
18 Town Centre Mall in Leaf Rapids is our main street, and  
19 everybody goes there. That's where you go to school.  
20 That's where you get the groceries, the gas, the mail,  
21 and -- you know, that's where the final liquor store opens  
22 at 12 o'clock noon, and you have everybody lining up  
23 outside waiting for it to open, and I had to go and get my  
24 niece from school because she got out a half-hour before

1 lunch, and I went to get her, and we were walking, and  
2 then -- and I remember there was this group of people  
3 outside the pharmacy, and I was walking with her, and she  
4 just started crying, and she was just kind of pulling back,  
5 and I said, (speaking in Native language), like, you know,  
6 what's the matter? And then she just started crying, and  
7 she just -- digging my body into my legs, and she said,  
8 Aunty, she said, that's a bad man, and I said, where, I  
9 said? And all I could see was these -- group of guys  
10 standing outside the pharmacy, and -- and then she just  
11 started crying, and I picked her up, and she was just  
12 shaking and shivering: That's a bad man, Aunty, that's a  
13 bad man. And then, like, you know, as I walked in between  
14 where the pharmacy was and these guys standing, I had to  
15 walk past them to get to my office, she just started, like,  
16 crying out loud, and she was just -- terror, she was  
17 fearful, like, and I was just -- and I couldn't figure out  
18 what the hell was happening.

19 And -- but the one thing that intrigued me,  
20 as the stories started coming out, is the story of that one  
21 man, that man -- and I don't care if his family sees this.  
22 I'm not scared of him. I'm not scared of him and his  
23 family and what they've done to terrorize people in our  
24 community. I'm just so sick of it. I want it to stop. I

1 want to it stop in our community and other communities  
2 where you have those people terrorizing innocent people.  
3 I'm -- I'm done with it, and -- but, you know, like, that  
4 man that was standing there, that's the one, that's the  
5 name that keeps coming up. The one story that's consistent  
6 is that my sister was partying with these guys in her  
7 garage. Sometime during the night, she [sic] got into an  
8 argument with her. He punched her. He knocked her out.  
9 He put her outside. She froze to death. That's the one  
10 consistent thing that we're hearing all the time. We  
11 cannot get people to come forward and make those statements  
12 because they're scared of him and his family and what they  
13 do. They know the system all too well. The system is so  
14 messed. That man has done so much to people in our  
15 community, and nobody will stand up to him and make a  
16 statement and say the wrongdoing that he's done to them  
17 because when they make statements, they get terrorized by  
18 his family. Their -- his family will even make statements  
19 to say that he wasn't there, and the way our system is,  
20 well, if you've got ten statements saying an individual  
21 wasn't there, but the victim knows that that  
22 person -- exactly what it was that they did to them, who's  
23 the judges going to believe? That's how messed up our  
24 system is, and that's where my sister's caught in between.

1                   There was no investigation. There was  
2 nothing. We hear the stories about how one of the guards  
3 mentions that they had picked up this man later on the day  
4 that my sister was found. He was freaking out in the cell  
5 wanting to talk to one of his sisters, so they get his  
6 sisters there. They start talking Cree. After she leaves,  
7 the guy just totally calms down. He's reported as having  
8 all these scratches all over his chest, all over the -- his  
9 upper torso of his body. She leaves. Few hours later, you  
10 hear all these other rumors. She's running around town  
11 trying to get somebody to burn down my sister's garage. We  
12 hear that it was one of her brothers that eventually did  
13 it.

14                   Now, you know, it's -- it just seems like  
15 it's a story that's come together for us because -- like  
16 what my brothers have said, what my sister said. People  
17 are coming to us and telling us all these things all the  
18 time. Throughout that, this is what we've been able to put  
19 together, and I -- and in my brilliance, always wanting to  
20 believe in the good and that there's always a way  
21 and -- you know what, we're going to get to the end of  
22 this, we're going to find out what's going on, and when we  
23 went to the RCMP, no, we need those people to come and make  
24 statements. Lianna, we know your family's going through a

1 really hard time. I'm thinking, like, no, don't give me  
2 that. Don't do that to me. Don't do that to us.

3 And then so I called Crime Stoppers, you  
4 know, and I said, hey, you know what, if nobody wants to  
5 give statements, they can phone and give these tips and our  
6 family will give money, and, you know, somebody is going to  
7 eventually come clean and go -- they can -- they can give  
8 these statements and the tips and everything, and they  
9 don't ever have to give up their names so they're safe.  
10 It's going be okay. So I phoned Crime Stoppers, and I tell  
11 them what happened to my sister, and they said, well, you  
12 know, we don't really take that information from the  
13 public. We have to call the local police detachment and  
14 get the specifics to be able to print as a part of the  
15 Crime Stoppers report. I says, okay, great. I says, you  
16 know what, I says, and you let them know, I says, you know,  
17 our family's going put money towards, like, you know,  
18 trying to get to any kind of information forward on this.

19 They call me back. Well, you know what,  
20 Lianna, we're sorry, we can't do this because we talked to  
21 the RCMP detachment in Leaf Rapids. They don't suspect  
22 foul play. They know that your sister was partying and  
23 that she died of exposure, so there's no need to do a  
24 Crime Stoppers report, and I'm just like, what? Are you

1 kidding me? Really? And I'm thinking, like, well, what  
2 about her garage? Not even a few hours after they found  
3 her, her garage -- like, Leaf Rapids is known for violence,  
4 bootlegging, drug-dealing, all the domestic and sexual  
5 assaults that gone there. Like, that's the norm in our  
6 community. That's the norm in all of our communities  
7 because we don't have the programs and services. It's not  
8 known for arson. We worry about forest fires, but not  
9 arson. And you know what? When my sister's garage, they  
10 deemed it was arson, no investigation. I went to the  
11 deputy fire chief. I said, I want to know why you didn't  
12 call in the Fire Commissioner. He said, Lianna, he said  
13 the RCMP called it off. They deemed that it was arson,  
14 there was no need for the Fire Commissioner to come in.  
15 The RCMP over a telephone conversation with the Chief  
16 Medical Examiner's office when they had my sister laying on  
17 the ground told the Chief Medical Examiner's office  
18 that -- you know, the basic conversation that she likely  
19 froze to death. In those moments when they made that  
20 initial contact with the Chief Medical Examiner's office,  
21 they determined how the potential autopsy was going to go.

22 When Crime Stoppers contacted them, you  
23 know, to -- to get posters up, to get people -- to give  
24 them the freedom to be able to get out the information that

1 they knew about what happened with my sister, the RCMP  
2 stopped Crime Stoppers from getting involved. When the  
3 Fire Commissioner's office should have come in, the RCMP  
4 told them, no, we know it's arson. They didn't come in.  
5 The RCMP, when they found my 4- and 7-year-old nieces alone  
6 in that house, they could have called CFS. They could have  
7 called some kind of support. They did nothing. Who the  
8 hell gives the RCMP that much power? Who allows them to  
9 get away with what it is that they're doing? Who -- who  
10 gave them the -- the power to be the judge, the jury, the  
11 investigators or -- or lack of?

12 Now I'm angry. I didn't want to be angry  
13 doing this, but it angers me because there's something  
14 wrong with the system in the way that it works and what's  
15 not being done.

16 I look at my nieces, you know, and the  
17 long-term care for them, and -- you know, and how we  
18 approach it. How do we talk to them about what they seen  
19 that night, about what happened, about how we can draw that  
20 information out of them because to me, they are probably  
21 the prime witnesses of what potentially happened. Like,  
22 where did my niece see that her mother's neck was broken  
23 and it was going like this, and when she seen her mother in  
24 the coffin, that it appeared that her neck was fixed? My

1 nieces tell me that the man that everybody talks about,  
2 that he knocked my sister out and put her outside and she  
3 froze to death. My nieces tell me that earlier that  
4 morning, he cooked them breakfast, and then he left, and  
5 then the RCMP came.

6 My aunt who lives next door to my sister  
7 tells me, like, the night before my sister's passing that  
8 Dawn came over there twice because -- well, we find out now  
9 that her phone was ripped out of her wall, but she came  
10 over to their -- she came over to her place twice to use  
11 the phone to phone the police to -- she said that there was  
12 the devil. She wanted that man out of her house, and she  
13 said the police never came. It's a small town, you know.  
14 We're talking about 5, 600 people. Everybody watches what  
15 happens to -- as soon as you see lights at night, everybody  
16 jumps up at the window and looks out. Like, you know,  
17 it's -- that's how we are in small community, and my aunt  
18 said the police never came.

19 When you look at -- you know, even where  
20 we -- where we said about, you know -- it's always in the  
21 north. Like, you know, you always see those RCMP  
22 communications. Like, you know -- you know, man found  
23 deceased, frozen to death, like, you know, and this age or  
24 that age and everything else. You see those communications

1 coming out all the time in the north. Nothing, absolutely  
2 nothing came out about my sister Dawn. The only thing that  
3 ended up coming out after I believe some time after we had  
4 the report from the Commissioner's office is they said that  
5 there was a fire. They put that as an RCMP thing that they  
6 put out.

7 We put up posters, everything. We went all  
8 over social media asking anybody and everybody, like, to  
9 stop calling my mom, to come to me, to come to my sister,  
10 to my brothers and give us the information but not to go to  
11 my mom, and a lot of the stuff that we heard, we kept it  
12 from my mom, but my mom's very resourceful. She ended up  
13 finding out a lot of stuff on her own.

14 Like, the system is so, so, so broken. When  
15 I have the doctor that was in our community, and he tells  
16 me that he was so disturbed that he never heard from the  
17 RCMP that somebody was found outside supposedly froze to  
18 death, you know, that they didn't contact him, they didn't  
19 tell him anything, that he was so disturbed with that that  
20 he ended up getting a hold of the Burntwood Regional Health  
21 Authority at the time -- that's what it was called, but now  
22 it's the Northern Regional Health Authority -- getting hold  
23 of the supervisor there, and -- like, you know, and telling  
24 him what happened in the community because he was so

1 disturbed with it that it was not normal, that it wasn't  
2 right what happened.

3 And, you know, I see that family. They  
4 cannot look me in the eye. You know, I see that man daily,  
5 like, you know, when I'm at home, and I'm thinking, like,  
6 what gives you that right, you know? The system gives him  
7 that right. That man has a track record like you wouldn't  
8 believe. He's very well known for always wearing  
9 steel-toed boots. Like, how the hell does our system allow  
10 for somebody like that who's so violent in knowing how they  
11 are towards other people to continuously wear steel-toed  
12 boots? We always have people who come forward and tell us,  
13 oh, did you hear he beat up this person? Oh, did you hear  
14 what he did to this person? Oh, did you hear what he did  
15 over here in threatening somebody else? And I'm thinking,  
16 yeah, I've heard it all. I've been through it. My  
17 family's been through it. My mom lives it because the  
18 system allows for it.

19 You know, recently, my -- one of my cousins  
20 passed away in Leaf Rapids. When they found my sister  
21 Dawn, within the hour after finding her, they bagged her  
22 up, put her in the back of the truck, put her in the  
23 garage, called Boardman Funeral Home, they came and picked  
24 her and up called my brother to the RCMP station, told him

1 that she had passed, didn't give him the opportunity to go  
2 and honour her, to see her.

3 A month ago, my sister passed away in  
4 Leaf -- my cousin passed away in Leaf Rapids, and I was so  
5 touched and so, you know, in awe with the respect that my  
6 late cousin was given. When they found her, immediately  
7 the RCMP went and picked up her oldest daughter and brought  
8 her to the scene and got her to identify her mom. You  
9 know, the ambulance was called, and she was taken, and from  
10 what I understand, they took -- they eventually took her to  
11 the RCMP station because they don't have a morgue or a cold  
12 room or anything like that at the clinic in Leaf, and the  
13 family was called. They had prayers. They had song. They  
14 smudged my cousin. They were able to see her, to touch  
15 her. They were able to see her go. This is the same  
16 detachment that I just described that treated my sister the  
17 same way, although there's different officers there now and  
18 stuff like that. This is an institution, for God's sakes.  
19 Do they not have rules, regulations, processes that they  
20 all follow? Apparently not.

21 Like, you know, I -- I look at the -- the  
22 RCMP officer who found my sister. You know, he  
23 eventually -- from the time that they found her, he ended  
24 up taking some time off, stress leave. He ended up taking

1 vacation leave and within months was transferred outside  
2 the community. Hm. I wonder why? Could it be when he  
3 found her, he boggled up the whole situation and should  
4 have did something differently? Could it be from that  
5 point that they messed up royally by not calling the  
6 ambulance, the doctor, and by doing some of the stuff that  
7 they did, that they ended up a major cover-up in acting  
8 like it was nothing and that it was going to go away?  
9 Well, they obviously do not know my family. They do not  
10 know the children that my mother raised. We're not going  
11 to give up. We're not letting this go. There is major,  
12 major red flags going up all around with this. This is the  
13 story that we've been able to put up with -- put together  
14 with the information that we've received from people coming  
15 to us in the community, and all I have to ask myself is how  
16 in this day and age does stuff like this happen?

17 My sister was partying with somebody. She  
18 has a big heart. She lets anybody in. That night,  
19 unfortunately, she let the wrong person into her home. As  
20 story would have it, he knocked her out, put her outside,  
21 and she froze to death, but as the system would have it,  
22 she was drunk, she passed out, and she froze to death. How  
23 does that happen? And how is it that nobody else seems to  
24 think that the way the RCMP shut down the investigation

1 from the very moments that they found my sister,  
2 influencing the Chief Medical Examiner to be able to make a  
3 decision on the phone, influencing the -- the -- what do  
4 you call it -- Fire Commissioner's office, Crime Stoppers?  
5 The RCMP did all that. Who -- who gave them that much  
6 power? I'd like to know. It's wrong, and it has to stop.

7           You know, I look at this, and I look at what  
8 happened with my sister. I said it before, and I'll say it  
9 again. I know this happened to my family for a reason. We  
10 are strong. We work together. We stick together. And as  
11 you can see, we pulled out all stops. When the RCMP  
12 wouldn't do their investigation, we started our own. We  
13 started collecting information from people, the stories, to  
14 be able to put together the story the way that we have it  
15 because nothing else is telling us that anything else  
16 happened. When the RCMP wouldn't do their job, we tried  
17 holding them accountable. We went to the Public Complaints  
18 Commission. They stood up for them. They backed them up.  
19 No wrongdoing. I went to Crime Stoppers to try and engage  
20 a different process. The RCMP shut that down.

21           We tried. We've pulled out a lot of stops,  
22 and even up to a couple months ago, you heard my  
23 brother -- Melvin and Dennis talk about an individual even  
24 still coming forward to this day about stories about what

1 happened to my sister that night, and still, nothing. No  
2 investigation, nothing.

3 Like, what does it take? I don't  
4 understand. I need to understand. When you're hearing  
5 these stories -- we're not making them up. This is not  
6 Hollywood. We're not doing any kind of major film  
7 production here. This is real life. This is what we face  
8 in the north in our communities.

9 I look at my two nieces. They were 4 and 7  
10 at the time, you know, and what they were able to put  
11 together and how they look at this and -- you know, and all  
12 they remember is -- and what I remember is the dreams and  
13 the memories that they had of their mother; you know, how  
14 they would wake up, like I said, you know, and I'd hear  
15 them crying, and I'd go to their bed, and they would start  
16 fighting me, like, why are you here? I want to go back  
17 know mom's. I just seen her. She's at home. I don't want  
18 to be here. I want to go home to my mom. That's what  
19 their dreams tell them because they don't understand death  
20 at that time, and our system just doesn't seem to care  
21 about 4- and 7-year-old little girls.

22 Like, even in the sheer moments that my  
23 nieces were found alone in that house, the RCMP -- you  
24 would think such a mega corporation in this country would

1 somehow find the resources to say, you know what, those  
2 little girls, something must -- they must have seen  
3 something, they were traumatized, you know, whatever might  
4 have happened, and say, you know what, here, Anderson  
5 family, look, we -- there's these services, here's these  
6 outlets, you know, you guys, you -- you can use all of  
7 these to help with your family to get through this.  
8 Absolutely nothing. Nothing like that at all. It's wrong.  
9 It's wrong. Thank you.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hilda.

11 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I just --

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hilda. Sorry.

13 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** I just want to add  
14 something there to Lianna's talking about, like, with my  
15 nieces. Okay, they're getting up in age and everything  
16 else. What's going to happen when the light bulb goes on  
17 with these little girls and they recall what happened? You  
18 know, it might not right now, but what happens in the  
19 future when that light bulb goes on? And then -- and if  
20 they want to sit there and say something or whatever it is,  
21 pertaining to my sister's death, what are they going to  
22 tell her? It's not legit? You were a little kid? What?  
23 I just wanted to add that. Something to think about.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hilda, I believe

1 you're going to turn to some recommendations?

2 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** But one -- okay.

3 One thing I just wanted to share is there's major impacts  
4 to us as family members, as well, on what happened the  
5 night my sister died. Like, a prime example, my mom's  
6 health has really deteriorated since losing my sister, you  
7 know, dealing with all the stress, and my older sister who  
8 couldn't be here, she suffered a breakdown as a result of  
9 my sister dying, but she's recovering now, and she's doing  
10 a lot better; and my two nieces, I was the one who told  
11 them that their mom was gone, and I see my oldest niece.  
12 She's socially awkward. She suffers from depression.  
13 She's trying to find her way because she remembers the most  
14 about her mother. We've gotten my nieces a lot of  
15 counseling and therapy, but nothing will ever replace their  
16 mother.

17 And I find, like, far too often -- like, I'm  
18 going to go into some recommendations as well -- when it  
19 comes to our missing and murdered Indigenous women and  
20 girls that children are often left behind. They're  
21 forgotten. There's no real resources in place for them.

22 And I also wanted to share one important  
23 thing. The night that -- I can't remember exactly if it  
24 was the night before or the day of, my younger sister

1 called my oldest sister, and I think that was a big  
2 contributing factor to her breakdown. She told her, if  
3 anything ever happens to me, don't ever let it go. She  
4 says, look to that family, and my sister always felt so  
5 responsible because she couldn't reach anybody to check on  
6 my sister because everybody was out of town or -- and my  
7 brother was out on the lake or the river during the  
8 wintertime doing his trapping.

9 It's -- there's devastating impacts to each  
10 and every one of us. I suffered a long time from anxiety  
11 after my sister died. I still do sometimes.

12 And I feel that's why it's so important that  
13 we go into recommendations as to what can be done better  
14 for Indigenous women and girls and Indigenous people in  
15 general, so I feel that, you know, one of the key things,  
16 as soon as something happens, there needs to be mental  
17 health supports for MMIWG family members and survivors who  
18 are traumatized and that are in crisis that is culturally  
19 appropriate, safe, and includes both short-term and  
20 long-term care.

21 Wrap-around support services such as mental  
22 health education and mentoring for children of MMIWG  
23 families that is culturally appropriate, safe, and includes  
24 both short-term and long-term care.

1 Create opportunities for Indigenous men to  
2 reclaim the roles and responsibilities as protectors of the  
3 family. Start the teachings when children are young in  
4 their home and at school. This will provide them with the  
5 opportunity to understand their roles as men and as  
6 life-givers.

7 Create healing circles for men and boys that  
8 includes healthy masculinity.

9 Create 24/7 safe spaces for Indigenous women  
10 and girls in urban and rural and in First Nation  
11 communities.

12 Strengthening and empowering programs for  
13 Indigenous women and girls in our First Nation rural and  
14 urban centres.

15 Reclaiming Indigenous languages and  
16 identity; knowing who you are, your culture, and your  
17 language.

18 Healing centres in all First Nation  
19 communities, healing from intergenerational trauma and  
20 addictions.

21 Parent parenting programs that are  
22 culturally appropriate.

23 Awareness campaigns on sexual abuse and  
24 sexual violence.

1 Awareness campaigns on domestic violence.

2 Antiracism campaigns specific Indigenous  
3 women and girls.

4 Safety training and school curriculum for  
5 First Nations in rural areas and areas such as internet  
6 safety in an urban area, safe relationships, predator  
7 behaviors, gang awareness, drug awareness,  
8 human-trafficking and sexual exploitation.

9 Access to affordable safe housing in First  
10 Nation in urban areas and rural areas.

11 Opportunities for employment and training  
12 for Indigenous women and girls.

13 Access to quality education in our First  
14 Nation communities for Grades K to 12; also opportunities  
15 in our First Nation communities for post-secondary  
16 education.

17 Access to child care.

18 Culturally appropriate training for media,  
19 and I just wanted to elaborate more on media. Media can be  
20 really instrumental in changing the views on how Canada  
21 views Indigenous women and girls. They could show, you  
22 know, how gifted we are, how loved we are, that we're  
23 mother, daughter, sisters, aunties. You know, I feel that  
24 they can create a lot of social change on how we're

1 perceived because we are worthy. You know, we're loved,  
2 we're valued, we're respected, and I feel that media can  
3 play a big part in that instead of, you know, headlines  
4 that label us and that makes society say it's okay, you  
5 know, to kill us or to kidnap us.

6 Family resource centres in all First Nation  
7 communities.

8 Women shelters and second-stage housing  
9 available in First Nation communes, because we know in  
10 Manitoba that there's only four shelters in the 63 First  
11 Nations here, and there's no second-stage housing, so that  
12 really needs to be addressed because a lot of our women and  
13 girls are experiencing violence.

14 Tool kits for Indigenous women and girls on  
15 various subjects that impact Indigenous women and girls.

16 And this is key too: Changing government  
17 policies and legislation that discriminates against  
18 Indigenous women and girls, and creating and enacting  
19 legislation that protects Indigenous women and girls  
20 against discrimination and violence.

21 National public awareness campaigns that  
22 showcase the strengths, gifts, and the beauty of Indigenous  
23 women and girls.

24 Reclaiming balance in our communities,

1 bringing birthing back to our communities, educating on the  
2 sacredness of pregnancy and celebrating the gift of life.

3 Mentorship programs between Indigenous women  
4 for Indigenous girls.

5 Review of police practices and the justice  
6 system and the impacts both have had on MMIWG families and  
7 survivors.

8 Culturally appropriate victim service  
9 programs for First Nations.

10 Access to legal representation for  
11 Indigenous women and girls and families, as well, because I  
12 find it's hard to, you know, go against a system if you're  
13 living in extreme poverty yourself. How are you going to  
14 find the means to fight such a huge machine?

15 And funding and resources dedicated to  
16 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and  
17 especially with our women who have gone missing. You know,  
18 families are struggling to find the resources to search for  
19 that missing loved one. I see it, and I know families  
20 personally who are impacted by this, and I see their  
21 struggles, and my heart breaks for them. You know, we need  
22 to have -- sadly, because it's so common that we have so  
23 many missing Indigenous girls here in Canada. Why has  
24 there been no mechanism developed specifically, you know,

1 to address this, to ensure that those resources are  
2 immediately on the ground for those family members and for  
3 those searches? Because time is critical, you know, when  
4 we have a missing Indigenous woman or girl. You know, that  
5 could potentially find her and save her life.

6 And I also wanted to share, like, you know,  
7 it just boggles my mind that we live in this country called  
8 Canada, even my own relatives who live in South Indian Lake  
9 in Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, my own family members,  
10 they're living in third-world conditions. They're  
11 struggling to survive. They're not even having their basic  
12 human rights met. You know, I'm ashamed of Canada. You  
13 know, like, why is this happening? But yet, we're on an  
14 international stage showcasing that we're such a good  
15 country? If we're such a good country, then governments  
16 need to step up to the plate and ensure that those basic  
17 means of survival are provided to our First Nation  
18 communities.

19 And I also wanted to say that, you know,  
20 it's important for -- like one of the grandmothers said,  
21 and she's actually sitting right behind me, she said, you  
22 know, this National Inquiry is our one opportunity to tell  
23 our stories and to create that change, and many of us in  
24 the Indigenous community or even our nonIndigenous friends

1 feel that we'll never have another opportunity like this  
2 again, so it needs to be done right, and it needs to be  
3 meaningful to families and survivors, you know, and I  
4 commend Commissioner Audette for the work that she's doing,  
5 and -- like, the process has been a struggle, but it's very  
6 difficult, you know, to make a machine this huge, you know,  
7 flourish with a 2-year mandate, to ensure that people who  
8 matter the most are included and their voices are heard, so  
9 I think if an extension is granted, it has to be granted on  
10 the basis of, like, hearing the voices of MMIWG family  
11 members and survivors on what the process should look like,  
12 and then acting on those recommendations as well.

13 I don't think I have any other things to  
14 add.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask one  
16 question?

17 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Sure.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I -- I notice you're  
19 reading this off of something -- I notice that you're  
20 reading off of a paper, but it's something you prepared for  
21 something else. Is it possible for to you -- to send us  
22 the --

23 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes, yes.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- the written one?

1                   **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Definitely. Like,  
2                   sharing all these recommendations -- these are not my  
3                   recommendations. I work with MMIWG families and survivors.  
4                   These are things I've heard them say repeatedly to  
5                   governments, you know, to different circles that they're  
6                   in, that these are changes that they want to see, but what  
7                   I think is so sad is we don't see a lot of these things  
8                   being implemented, even though they're -- they've been  
9                   repeatedly shared by MMIWG family members and survivors.  
10                  It doesn't take, like, you know, a lot to implement some of  
11                  these things. Some of them are very basic, and it just  
12                  boggles my mind as to why, you know, provincial and federal  
13                  governments have not acted on this, these recommendations,  
14                  that have been shared repeatedly, not only by me but by,  
15                  like, several other MMIWG family members and survivors  
16                  across the country.

17                  **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's -- thank you,  
18                  everyone in the family, for sharing today, and -- I mean,  
19                  you just exemplify what a strong family unit is, the way  
20                  you comfort each other, the way you're finishing each  
21                  other's sentences. I wanted to offer Commissioner Audette  
22                  an opportunity to ask questions or make comments.

23                  **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** (Speaking in  
24                  native language). This is where I wish my English would be

1 very, very at the same as your second language, I guess,  
2 English, where everything was there. Everything in your  
3 message, your words. It was very obvious that Canada  
4 failed on your family and your sister, the system, starting  
5 when your sister called for help, and to the -- it's sad  
6 you have to be here. You have to be here.

7 So -- and I'll do my best. You know, my  
8 English, Hilda, so it'll come from the heart, and we have  
9 so many --

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'll translate for  
11 her.

12 **(LAUGHTER)**

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* I  
14 have to say thank you for all of you. I didn't know you.  
15 I had the privilege to meet your sister in another  
16 capacity, in another life, but always because we lost a  
17 loved one or we have a survivor in our family, and not long  
18 ago, she was in New York. Your voice resonate at the U.N.  
19 about what's going on here in 2018 here in Canada, so you  
20 have quite a leader in your family, but I see that you're  
21 not alone. Very articulate, very passionate, very  
22 dedicated, very -- something needs to change, and  
23 Lillian -- you talk -- Lillian?

24 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** Lianna.

1                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Lianna.

2           Lianna, sorry, you talk about I didn't want to come here  
3           with anger or I didn't want to -- well, I don't think you  
4           need -- I don't know how you can come here without that  
5           anger. After all what you explained to us, describe and  
6           teach us, us here in this room but also across Canada;  
7           people are watching, people are listening, not only our  
8           families and survivors or friends, but we have some allies,  
9           you know that, but also we have government people following  
10          the work of this Inquiry, watching or listening. It depend  
11          how we want to see it. So we cannot say everywhere we go  
12          that it -- it's not happening or it was an isolated case.  
13          You're right. It's -- this -- there's something wrong.  
14          The system is wrong. You mention it, and all your  
15          recommendation, it's something we need to honour. This  
16          Inquiry, we will receive that. I will fight, and I know my  
17          colleagues will support this, that very clear, very -- very  
18          specific and targeted for real good reason or sad reason,  
19          but your recommendation are based on, you said it, too many  
20          meetings that you attend, circle, event, or gathering, so  
21          there it is, for me, it's powerful, very, very powerful,  
22          and I will do everything to make sure that in our report,  
23          our report, we like it or not, there's a possibility here  
24          to create that chapter that needs to happen where Manitoba

1 government is also accountable, where a municipality is  
2 also accountable, our own Indigenous government is also  
3 accountable, our people, but citizen of Canada, huh, you  
4 mention about this country, they have the power to change,  
5 also.

6 So I hope your voice was heard in those  
7 kitchen, houses, offices, people that are listening right  
8 now, your message, that they cannot deny anymore. They  
9 can't. They can be part, though, of that change that we  
10 need to have, we need to see and witness. So this is what  
11 I -- I -- me, for me, now, I will do to make sure that  
12 those recommendation are part of that report, calls for  
13 action.

14 I am shocked to hear that in your territory  
15 here up north -- I'm from the north. I don't know. My  
16 trees are smaller than yours, but it's the same cold.

17 **(LAUGHTER)**

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Where there's  
19 only three shelter -- four, sorry -- to protect the women  
20 and the children.

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And all three of them  
22 (indiscernible) Manitoba.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yeah.

24 All -- all Manitoba?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

2 (Indiscernible).

3 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yeah, yeah,  
4 yeah. In Quebec, we have 14 on 58 First  
5 Nations -- Indigenous communities, and it's not enough.  
6 Four, it's unacceptable. It's -- I mean, I am shocked to  
7 hear that, so I hope I'm not the only one shocked to hear  
8 that, but it hope it doesn't stay there.

9 I still, again, going to repeat what I said  
10 this morning: Any government who is listening right now,  
11 we don't need to have the report of this important Inquiry  
12 to do some action that you mentioned now, so I hope they  
13 listen.

14 The other thing, also, I did receive all  
15 your evidence. For me, this is evidence, and this is  
16 truth; this is fact. I will carefully read it. I know my  
17 colleagues will do it because we have to read all the  
18 testimonies that families share to us or give us, and if we  
19 have question, and I'm sure we'll do, we have an  
20 opportunity in this journey, also, to show -- *comment on*  
21 *dit en anglais* -- what Wendy is doing, the work of Wendy,  
22 forensic review -- see, English -- and what went wrong and  
23 why. Canada needs to know what went wrong and why. They  
24 need to know, also, did we do the same thing to a Canadian

1 woman? Did we treat her family the same way that we  
2 treated our Indigenous women? Canada needs to know that,  
3 so we have that responsibility. That's how I see my role  
4 as a Commissioner, *so merci beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup,*  
5 and I'm learning from you how the resilience and the  
6 strength but how you cope with that anger, and you're so  
7 united, and you have a strong sister, but I see you're not  
8 alone.

9 And your mom, to have all your children  
10 supporting you, being there with you, it's -- so many moms  
11 don't have that, or too many mothers and fathers don't have  
12 that, so I hope that people see that it's important to be  
13 surrounded by love and by families, and, also, you  
14 mentioned how important that people are there to support  
15 the families, and this is what saved us. We got lost when  
16 we lost somebody. Who was the best person to support  
17 it -- us was the family or a survivor. I want to say thank  
18 you. (speaking in native language).

19 *Oui.* There is something we do everywhere we  
20 go across Canada. We ask the family first if you would  
21 accept on behalf of the National Inquiry a gift, a gift,  
22 and this gift, there is a history, where it came and why it  
23 came, and it became a beautiful tradition.

24 We follow protocols everywhere we go. I

1 even learn each time I go to a place, some went to a lodge,  
2 a sweat lodge, or they were (indiscernible) with sage, and  
3 we have our grandmother Bernie, usually, who explain this  
4 beautiful gift, and I'll ask --

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** She asked me to, if  
6 it's okay.

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** She asked you  
8 to do it? Okay. Can you do it?

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. The  
10 matriarchs from Haida Gwaii, so one of the grandmothers,  
11 Bernie, is from Haida Gwaii, and the matriarchs from her  
12 region -- oh, actually, she is coming out.

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Thank you,  
14 *Maître* Big Canoe.

15 **MS. BERNIE WILLIAMS POITRAS:** Sorry. I'm  
16 busy tying eagle feathers in there.

17 I just want to -- first, we were listening  
18 to you and to your family, just my, you know,  
19 heartfelt -- you know, for your family. I don't know what  
20 it feels like. I fully agree with you, though,  
21 that -- that the system has to change, and it's very  
22 one-sided.

23 I want to also share about the feathers,  
24 that these feathers started its journey from my home in

1 Haida Gwaii, and the families across -- across this  
2 beautiful land of ours here, and the people in this  
3 territory, the spiritual people who have so kindly donated  
4 these eagle feathers for the families. Families have also  
5 donated all across Canada, and we're just really honoured  
6 to give this to you as a gift on behalf of the  
7 Commissioners, the Grandmothers, the Elders. I want to say  
8 *haw'aa* to you again. *Haw'aa*.

9 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*

10 Another thing I forgot to say, Hilda, about having more  
11 voices from families and survivors in this journey, you're  
12 right. You're right, and everywhere I go, it is important  
13 that the people from your land welcome us and help me in  
14 this journey, but, also, the families. You know, some  
15 people will say "expert." For me, you're the expert, so  
16 yes, from inside, you have an allies who says we have to  
17 have more families that help us and guide us in this  
18 important and unique journey, so you have my support for  
19 that. I forgot to mention that. Thank you.

20 So I would to ask our sister if she has few  
21 words for you. Darlene.

22 **MS. DARLENE OSBORNE:** (Speaking in Native  
23 language). I thank you, the Anderson family, and I admire  
24 your mom. She's so lucky to still have her daughters and

1 her sons, and that was missing in our -- in our family  
2 circle. I come from a big family, my husband's family, the  
3 Osborne family, and that was missing, and it had to be me  
4 and my husband to lead the circle, and we had to take care  
5 of our grandchildren.

6 As one of you mention, what's going to  
7 happen with the -- when they grow up, and that was our  
8 first question when -- when Felicia -- when we lost  
9 Felicia. You know, Renata is going to be a teenager, you  
10 know. They were just small kids when we lost Felicia.  
11 Today, we are struggling. Still, we are struggling because  
12 they turn to heavy drugs, and that's what's controlling  
13 their lives, but we're not going to give up. We are a  
14 strong family, and from my family to yours, we'll continue  
15 supporting our families and our -- and our loved ones, our  
16 children, especially our grandkids. Those are the ones  
17 that we have to take care of. You just mentioned, they  
18 were 4 and 7. Ours were about the same age, 2 and 3, and  
19 today we see them wasting their lives with drugs and  
20 alcohol, and most -- most of our adults are my brothers and  
21 my sisters and my sister-in-law, brother-in-laws,  
22 they -- they live a sober life, but they don't live a happy  
23 life because they're still struggling because we haven't  
24 had any closure, but we will. I'm so happy that we had

1 this Inquiry in the north because we all felt that we were  
2 the forgotten people of the north, so let's stick together  
3 and support each other. (Speaking in Native language).

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* Thank  
5 you. *Merci.*

6 **(GIVING OF GIFTS)**

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I think it's on,  
8 yeah. Can we get the witness mic on, please?

9 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** Hello?

10 **(LAUGHTER)**

11 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** I want to -- I want to  
12 thank everybody for this meeting that we've had, and it's a  
13 good thing that it -- that we had it because it'll help out  
14 a lot of people with the missing women and girls and for  
15 the children that have lost their mothers. I want to thank  
16 you all. Thank you very much.

17 **MS. SHEILA NORTH:** *Tansi.* Sheila North,  
18 (speaking in Native language).

19 Thank you for -- for coming here and, you  
20 know, being with our families here in the north. My name  
21 is Sheila North. I'm the Grand Chief of Manitoba  
22 Keewatinowi Okimakanak, and I'm also from the Bunibonibee  
23 Cree Nation just over there.

24 **(LAUGHTER)**

1                   **MS. SHEILA NORTH:** Not that far. It's an  
2 honour and a privilege for me to be here this morning, and  
3 I know it's a -- a very sacred but also sad time to be with  
4 the families. I wanted to bring you greetings on behalf of  
5 all of our Chiefs and councils that we work with in the  
6 north, the 30 communities that I represent, and about  
7 72,000 people in this region. It's a beautiful area, and  
8 I'm always happy and glad to be coming home when I come  
9 this way. I don't come home enough, but when I do, it's a  
10 peaceful place, and I'm -- I'm glad that you're here to  
11 experience the beauty and the love that we have, despite  
12 the challenges that -- that we carry and -- and have  
13 to -- to deal with. You can see the strength and the  
14 resilience of our families who just carry the pain, and  
15 you'll hear more of them from different stories, and it's  
16 too bad that we have to bring them out this way.

17                   I -- I'm very grateful, though, that the  
18 Inquiry has made it up here. I -- I don't want to get too  
19 political because this is a time and place for families to  
20 share their stories and a time for some of the -- you know,  
21 the concerns that I hear from families will be dealt with  
22 in a different way, but I thank you for coming.

23                   I -- I do have a sense -- you know, we hear  
24 a lot about closure, closure, people want closure, and I

1 hear all the time from families, too, and I can understand  
2 that more now in my -- my father, Gilbert North, Gilbert  
3 Street North, he's from Cross Lake, but he raised us in  
4 Oxford House, and I was telling Counsellor Osborne about  
5 it, and her sister, about my -- my grandmother, my dad's  
6 mom. She was taken to a TB asylum when my dad was a  
7 teenager because she had TB, and so they took her away  
8 to -- to OC -- or The Pas, and then my -- my dad and his  
9 grandparents lost track of her, and the family never knew  
10 where she was, and what happened was she was taken to  
11 Birtle, just near Brandon, and then after that, she was  
12 taken to Brandon where she died, but she delivered a baby  
13 at that time, and that baby was taken by a family in  
14 Minnedosa.

15 But my dad was 75 this past fall. All those  
16 years when he was a teenager -- think he said he was  
17 15 -- to 75 years old, he never heard or found out what  
18 happened to his mother. He never knew where she was.  
19 Nobody knew where she was. The Government knew because  
20 they put her in a grave in Brandon, but we had no idea, and  
21 my cousins and my aunties who are very relentless, like  
22 this family, they -- they kept digging, and they kept  
23 asking questions, and they put it on Facebook, and someone  
24 finally -- a volunteer researcher from near Brandon found

1 records of -- of grave sites, and they found my  
2 grandmother, and they just found her this fall -- this past  
3 fall, so in September, October, around then. That's when  
4 we knew where she was, and we went to have -- my parents  
5 and my family went to have a little ceremony at the grave  
6 site, and somebody donated a headstone, and that was the  
7 first time my dad said he had any sense of closure, all  
8 those years, not knowing where his mother was, and yet he  
9 hid that pain from his family and raised a good family and  
10 always treated my mom with respect.

11 And that's the beauty and resilience, but  
12 also, that's the pain and reality our people face. They  
13 carry a lot of pain, and it -- it's not right in this  
14 country that it happens because we -- we have a persona  
15 that Canada's so wonderful and peaceful and -- and kind,  
16 and yet we hear about these stories, and we hear about what  
17 happened to others.

18 I had a chance to -- to reflect on that when  
19 we went to New York to talk about this issue just last  
20 week, and I was encouraged to know that we are leaders in  
21 this topic in the world, and that's one thing I took away  
22 and I feel encouraged by, but it doesn't take away the  
23 pain.

24 And when you talk about closure, my

1 dad -- he passed away in October, and I think when we talk  
2 about it now, my sisters and my mom and I and our family,  
3 we think that he was waiting for that closure. He wanted  
4 to find out where his mother was, and all -- a lot of times  
5 he carried the pain and also talked about how angry he was,  
6 but he never told us. It was my mom who told us later, and  
7 he didn't -- it doesn't seem like he was ready -- ready to  
8 leave this world until he had some closure, and when he  
9 finally got it, he felt at peace to go, and he -- he left  
10 in October, and when I say that, it doesn't sound real  
11 because I feel like I could still call him, but -- but I'm  
12 grateful that we're having this opportunity because it's  
13 important. It's all the families ever wanted was to be  
14 validated, to be heard and to be listened to, but we have  
15 to go beyond that. We know the stories, we know the  
16 struggles, and it's upon all of us and the Inquiry to start  
17 identifying the reasons why this thing -- these things keep  
18 happening; the systems, all of the systems, policing, CFS,  
19 health, government systems, policies and all that are  
20 hurting and hindering the lives of our people, and that has  
21 to stop, and I hope, that -- you know, that -- that the  
22 leadership at the Inquiry will -- will see -- will have a  
23 really clear picture so you can relay it to -- relay it to  
24 Canada and the world of where the problems are and then,

1 you know, talk about the solutions that you're hearing from  
2 the families because we know the solutions. We want to  
3 take care of ourselves. We have the right to take care of  
4 ourselves, and we -- we want to do that, and it's high  
5 time.

6 So that's where I'll leave it. I want to  
7 encourage everyone that's here to be brave. I know you are  
8 already. I'm hearing that there's different people here  
9 from different parts of Canada that are here to tell their  
10 stories, too, so I'm really surprised and -- you know, it's  
11 very -- it's encouraging to see so many people coming  
12 together to -- to share their grief, but I wish the rest of  
13 the Inquiry well and the rest of the families well, and  
14 thank you, and -- and Hilda for sharing your story, as  
15 well, and the whole story and Minnie. Thank you. It was  
16 very nice to meet you.

17 Yeah, and that's it. Thank you very much to  
18 all of your staff that are here and all the support staff  
19 from the region, as well, and all the Elders.

20 (Speaking in Native language). Thank you.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner  
23 Audette, before we actually have an adjournment, before  
24 the -- before the next family -- or survivors before us, I

1 notice that some of the health support staff and others are  
2 standing there with drums, and usually what that means is  
3 they want to circle the family with love and drum, and so  
4 if the family could sit here. I don't know if Jade (ph) or  
5 someone wants to -- Bernie? Sorry. Warrior Women.  
6 Warrior Women. Did you have a microphone? I'm actually  
7 going to join them, guys, too, so -- I'm going to grab my  
8 drum there (indiscernible).

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** All right. This is a  
10 song that we sing for strength. It's a song to remind us  
11 that especially as Indigenous women that we are warriors.  
12 It's a song that came to Martina Pierre from the  
13 Lilloet Nation in B.C. in a sweat about 30 years ago. It's  
14 never to be sung in anger, and we sing it to cleanse you.  
15 We sing it not just to shower you with love and strength  
16 but with comfort and peace because you've done some good  
17 hard work here today, and we choose to honour you with one  
18 of -- with one of our treasures, with one of our songs, to  
19 raise our hands and to say *hiatchka* (ph) for leading the  
20 way for so many other families to be brave.

21 **(SINGING AND DRUMMING)**

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just ask that we  
23 have a 10-minute break before the -- 10 or 15? What's your  
24 preference? Ten or 15?

1                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** No, I don't  
2 make that call.

3                   **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Ten. So a 10-minute  
4 break before we have the next witness up.

5                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*

6 --- Exhibits (code: P01P14P0101)

7 **Exhibit 1:** Folder of 20 images displayed during the  
8 public testimony of the family.

9 [P01P14P0101\_Anderson\_et\_al\_(Anderson)\_  
10 Exh\_1]

11 **Exhibit 2:** Family video of Dawn Anderson, 11.1 MB MP4  
12 file, 3 minutes 36 seconds.

13 [P01P14P0101\_Anderson\_family\_video\_Exh\_2]

14 **Exhibit 3:** Folder of 20 images displayed during the  
15 public testimony of the family.

16 [P01P14P0101\_Anderson\_et\_al\_(Anderson)\_  
17 Exh\_1]

18 **Exhibit 4:** Family video of Dawn Anderson, 11.1 MB MP4  
19 file, 3 minutes 36 seconds.

20 [P01P14P0101\_Anderson\_family\_video\_Exh\_2]

21 --- Upon adjourning at 2:53 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jenessa Leriger", written in blue ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Jenessa Leriger

May 10, 2018