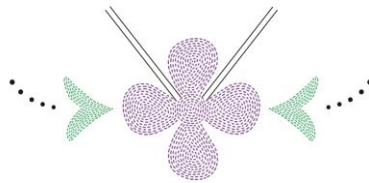


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-gathering process – Part I Public Hearings
Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel
Elmbridge Room
Metro Vancouver, British Columbia**



Public

Wednesday April 4, 2018

**Public Volume 84:
Joni Michele Guerin**

**Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Breen Ouellette**

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II

APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	No Appearance
Government of British Columbia	Leah Greathead (Legal Counsel)
Government of Canada	Anne McConville (Legal Counsel)
Heiltsuk First Nation	No Appearance
Northwest Indigenous Council Society	No Appearance
Our Place - Ray Cam Co-operative Centre	No Appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	No Appearance
Vancouver Sex Workers' Rights Collective	No Appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation	No Appearance

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Clerk: Bryana Bouchir and Maryiam Khoury	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	

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1 Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, April 4, 2018 at 1:48 a.m.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you,
4 Commissioner Audette.

5 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** I would like to
6 introduce Kim Barrett. Kim is probably well-known to many
7 people in the room. She is an amazing leader, an amazing
8 Coast Salish leader, a Coast Salish sister, and a very dear
9 friend and a warrior, and I'm very happy to have her
10 sitting beside me.

11 Leah Gazan is my sister in spirit, and she's
12 an amazing leader as well. She fights really hard for our
13 rights and for our women. She's Dakota, lives in Winnipeg,
14 which I'd say is the epicentre of where a lot of sadness
15 is.

16 So I'm very honoured to have both of them
17 here beside me to give me strength and support.

18 Thank you.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Michele has requested
20 to affirm using an eagle feather.

21 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Great. Good afternoon,
22 Michele. You can stay seated. It's fine.

23 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Oh, okay.

24 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** It's not that formal.

25 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Okay.

1 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** I'll pass you the eagle
2 feather though.

3 Michele, do you solemnly affirm to tell your
4 truth in a good way this afternoon?

5 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Yes, I do.

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

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Commissioner Audette,
8 Michele has prepared a statement which she would like to
9 present to you.

10 Would you please begin when you're ready.

11 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** (Speaking in
12 Musqueam language).

13 My name is Michele Guerin; my traditional
14 name is Skalusat (phonetic), and I'm from Musqueam and I'm
15 happy to be here today.

16 Today I am here to speak. I'm the proud
17 daughter of the late Beverly Guerin. And today I dedicate
18 my testimony to my mom and I will speak for both of us
19 about how the system stole our relationship.

20 The name Skalusat was given to me in a
21 naming ceremony held in our longhouse. My family elders
22 chose the name for me. I'm eligible to hold this name
23 because my grandmother Gertie Guerin was from Squamish
24 Nation and my grandfather Victor Guerin was from Musqueam.

25 According to our history Skaluse (phonetic)

1 was a warrior who guarded Howe Sound and was the first of
2 our people to learn how to write. My family chose this
3 name for me because I am the first lawyer in the Guerin
4 family. More importantly, in 2017 I incorporated as a
5 freelance writer so I'm also the first writer in our
6 family. And as I have prepared this testimony I realized -
7 - I came to the conclusion that I have to own all of my
8 name so that makes me a warrior as well, and I do share the
9 name Skaluse with my son Terry Sparrow Junior.

10 I don't like the spotlight, preferring to
11 let others do the talking, but this time it's different,
12 this is my story. And ever since the announcement of the
13 inquiry I felt deeply compared to share my story with the
14 Commission. And like others who've testified I've relived
15 a great deal of pain to stand here today, sit here today.

16 And an important part of the preparation was
17 that I ask some of the strongest leaders in my circle to
18 support me. They stand behind me today. Some are here in
19 persons others are here in spirit lifting me up in their
20 prayers, and I'm extremely grateful for their strength and
21 support because I know I'll need it.

22 Today I offer my testimony as a survivor. I
23 was apprehended in 1963 during the '60s scoop, taken from
24 my mother's arms right out of the hospital.

25 In 1979 my first son Keith Sparrow was

1 apprehended right out of the hospital out of my arms. He
2 remained in foster care for one month before he was
3 returned to his father and I. Then Keith died of crib
4 death two months later.

5 In 1985 my three children Victoria, Joanie
6 and Terry Sparrow were apprehended. It took me
7 approximately five days to get them back.

8 In 2012 they came for my granddaughter Tatum
9 Rain (phonetic). I was a lawyer by then and I said "Back
10 the fuck up".

11 This is part of my story I want to share
12 today. I was apprehended, my first baby was apprehended,
13 my three kids were apprehended, and then they threatened to
14 apprehend my granddaughter.

15 I should point out that I use the word
16 "fuck" a lot to express myself, a lot, and it bothers
17 people, a lot of people, and I know this because they tell
18 me. And when someone says to you "I don't like when you
19 swear or when you use the word fuck" it takes a great deal
20 of willpower not to say "Well fuck off then."

21 I even wrote an op-ed piece published in the
22 Vancouver Sun about the use of the word, and my wise friend
23 Rebecca reminded me just how I expressed myself. Sometimes
24 I've wondered if I express myself like that because of the
25 deep anger I have at a system that fucked with my life.

1 In the past I've tried using other words but
2 they didn't carry the same weight to convey my feelings,
3 that is until very recently. A few weeks ago my friend
4 used an expression that could possibly replace the word in
5 my vocabulary. I had just told him something incredible
6 and he simply said "Good Lord". Good Lord, so simple, and
7 I loved it.

8 So during my testimony today whenever I say
9 the phrase "Good Lord" you'll know what I really mean. So
10 thanks Sheldon.

11 So good Lord I've spent a lot of time
12 considering whether to testify or not. One reason I
13 hesitated is because I spent years putting all these
14 memories behind me. Testifying meant revisiting extremely
15 painful memories and then trying to find the right words to
16 be able to publicly share those experiences.

17 This past year I've spent many moments
18 doubled over in pain, sobbing, recalling these events,
19 reviewing my Ministry file, and challenging myself to
20 search for words to share with the Commission and the
21 public.

22 The foster care system failed to protect me,
23 worse nothing has changed since I was a 14 year old living
24 on the street. Forty (40) years later the system continues
25 to fail Indigenous girls and women.

1 I was absolutely outraged at the acquittal
2 of Tina Fontaine's murderer, but it did fuel my motivation.

3 I should also note that I tend to cry when I
4 speak from my heart. It's a condition I call I have a
5 pretty soft heart. Ask anybody who knows me. But my
6 friend Judge Harry Slade taught me a trick to stop tears
7 and I expect I'll use that trick a lot today. You see,
8 Judge Harry Slade is my mentor's mentor, and my mentor is
9 Gary Absley (phonetic). I'm always amazed to be blessed
10 with such amazing people in my life.

11 I also want to point out this necklace.
12 I've been wearing this necklace every day for at least 10
13 years. I had it custom made. It's engraved with the words
14 "Sometimes there's just not enough rocks". It's a line
15 from the movie Forrest Gump actually, and it's from the
16 scene when Forrest and Jenny return to the house where
17 Jenny grew up as a little girl where she was sexually
18 abused. In the scene Jenny picks up rock, after rock,
19 after rock crying angrily, and she's throwing them at the
20 house. She continues throwing rocks until she lays on the
21 ground sobbing. And Forrest sits beside her on the ground
22 and simply says "Sometimes there's just not enough rocks".
23 I cried, and I cried, and I cried the first time I watched
24 the scene because it was such a true statement.

25 It's also important to me that I clarify

1 terms that I'll use today. When I use the term "mom" I'm
2 referring to my biological mother Bev Guerin. When talking
3 about my foster mother I will call her Joyce. I want to
4 show mom, my mom, the most respect possible, and it is not
5 meant to disrespect my foster mother Joyce. I've called
6 Joyce mom all my life and Joyce won't mind at all.

7 And when talking about my foster father I
8 will call him dad because he's the only father I knew. My
9 biological father's name was Earl Miller. I never met him.
10 The only way I learned about him was through my Ministry
11 file after I did a *Freedom of Information Act* request, and
12 I suppose they expected that I knew his name so they didn't
13 redact it.

14 Earl was a bartender at the St. Alice Hotel
15 in North Vancouver, and I'm very proud of that fact because
16 North Van is my home now, plus my husband Gary and I are
17 confident our fathers knew each other very well.

18 I was apprehended during the '60s scoop
19 right out of the hospital at 10 days old. The first
20 document in my file is my apprehension order, and I believe
21 you have a copy of it. I believe I was apprehended for the
22 simple reason that mom was Indigenous. She was 25 years
23 old, she held a job, and she would have been a great single
24 mother. She was dating my biological dad at the time.
25 Forms attached to my apprehension order describe mom as a

1 25 year old Indigenous single female, a grade 12 graduate,
2 with additional training in a commercial course, employed
3 for three years as a typist with Sandwell Company, which
4 was an engineering firm. But the apprehension order states
5 that I was apprehended on the 29th of January 1963 as a
6 child in need of protection by reason of having no parent
7 capable of exercising proper parental control.

8 I also have prepared a chronology that you
9 have of my file that I just wanted to quickly walk through.
10 And I did this really to honour my mom. And so I'll just
11 quickly go through it.

12 And you can see on the first page there's a
13 number of letters -- well there's copies of the
14 apprehension order, the presentation order when I was
15 presented to court. There's letters that went to my mom
16 requesting visits in February of '63. All through the year
17 of '63 there was several letters and notifications that
18 went to my mom setting out that they were going to seek
19 apprehending me and asking for home visits and so forth.
20 Mom was served an affidavit on March 26th that there would
21 be an application by the Catholic Children's Aid to commit
22 me into the care and custody of the Society because I as in
23 need of protection. There the order of committal was April
24 23rd, '63, and that was when I became an official ward of
25 the government. And I just noted is that like a birthday

1 or something I should celebrate. I don't know. But then
2 just walk through the different letters that they continued
3 to send to her.

4 And they also include home visits they made
5 with my foster family. So, for example, in August 1963 --
6 I was born in January -- Joyce, my foster mom, was
7 expecting a baby within a month and the social worker asked
8 my foster family if they wanted to move me to another home
9 because she was going to have another baby and they
10 refused. There were several letters -- most of the letters
11 to my mom were asking have you made any decision now about
12 baby Joni and they just continued to give my age.

13 There's a note -- in March 1964 the report
14 says that it's still a temporary placement. The social
15 worker report notes that mom's plans to keep me didn't work
16 out and mom disappeared without signing consents. So I
17 don't know what my mom's plans were. There's nothing in
18 the file that indicates what those plans might have been.
19 They didn't make any notation of that.

20 In August and September of 1964 you'll have
21 copies of some ads that were placed in the Vancouver Sun
22 and Province and the ads said will anyone knowing the
23 whereabouts of Beverly Joan Guerin, mother of Joni Michele
24 Guerin contact a certain box office number -- a box number.

25 The first ad resulted with nobody responding

1 but the second ad they placed they had three replies, one
2 was anonymous. I think it was my grandpa, if I could tell
3 by his writing. It's so cute. The other one was my
4 grandma Gertie. And then they had a phone call from John
5 Edwards, who my mom was now in a relationship with.

6 So they found she was living in a house in
7 North Vancouver. They asked for meetings. In September it
8 states that after meeting with my mom she stated her desire
9 that she wanted me returned and it says that they advised
10 mom who to contact at family court; it includes that court
11 will require a home visit with mom and John Edwards, who
12 she was living with, and that the judge will decide based
13 on evidence.

14 September '64 they did a home visit to my
15 foster family and the note just says "Michele is of good
16 strong build". I thought that was funny. Like it looks
17 like she'll be able to haul a lot of fish. Like strong
18 build, what does that mean?

19 In December '64 my mom asked for me to visit
20 at Christmas. The social worker advised her that that was
21 impossible. Again my mom stated that she wants me back.
22 They note that there was a planning conference with five
23 social workers that day. And then the rest of the report
24 is redacted.

25 In January '65 my mom made an application

1 again for my return. She was now living common law with
2 John Edwards in North Van and had a three month old baby
3 boy Leslie.

4 There's a letter in January '65 that the
5 Catholic Children's Aid sent to the Northbound Social
6 Welfare Department requesting a social worker to do a home
7 visit. And you have a copy of that. It's numbered 3A.
8 But the letter states that mom disappeared until the ads
9 were run in the paper, and one of the responses was from my
10 grandmother Guerin asking specifically to be contacted
11 because she said she had concerns over my mom's desire to
12 have me back. The rest of the paragraph there is redacted
13 and I expect that the rest of that paragraph probably
14 outlined my grandmother's concerns.

15 The social worker notes that in view of Ms.
16 Guerin's -- my mom -- limited involvement over the past two
17 years were naturally dependent on your assessment -- the
18 social worker's assessment -- of her capacity to provide a
19 good home for the child. And I just thought that sounded
20 fishy.

21 So they came -- the social workers that came
22 to the foster family and noted that Michele is so much a
23 part of the family it will be difficult for them to give
24 her up. The report notes there's a definite possibility I
25 may be returned as mom made the application in court and a

1 court date was set for March 30th. The social worker did do
2 the home visit in North Van and the entire letter is
3 redacted.

4 April 7th social worker visited the foster
5 family and advised that the hearing has been adjourned
6 because of mom's current situation. I don't know what the
7 situation would have been. And notes my foster parents
8 were anxious about my status.

9 April 12th 1965 again mom applies for my
10 return; a hearing was set for May. Again the judge
11 requested detailed information on the physical aspects of
12 mom's home in North Van. So there was a home visit.

13 You have in number five is a May 27th letter
14 from the social worker to Catholic Children's Aid reporting
15 on the home visit. It says the home was owned by my mom's
16 uncle, occupied by mom, John Edwards, and baby Leslie,
17 who's my brother. And then there's another paragraph
18 redacted. And then it describes the furnishings, the heat
19 source, lighting, ventilation, and then a backroom that was
20 used for storage would be a bedroom for Joni, which is what
21 my name was, if I was returned, but there was no
22 recommendation included. And then the court was adjourned
23 to June 1st, 1965.

24 The next court order I see -- I saw was June
25 14th, '65, which was my mom's complaint, and again an

1 application for my return, and she was seeking temporary or
2 permanent return, and the court order hearing was set for
3 June 29th, 1965.

4 And then this is where absolutely everything
5 just disappears. In -- there's -- after this two year
6 build up to this hearing and all these letters that had
7 gone to her, and all these home visits that she, you know,
8 accommodated, the file has absolutely zero information on
9 the result of that court hearing. It has -- there's
10 nothing reported on the social worker -- you know, there's
11 regular updates by the social workers all through the file
12 and there's absolutely nothing about this outcome. So
13 between June 14th and November 1st, 1965 I have no idea what
14 happened.

15 Then the next report on November 1st, '65 is
16 just the standard fluff that they reported, but these
17 quotes were in the report. It says "Michele was first
18 temporarily placed in this home but then the situation was
19 worked out and Michele is now on a long-term plan in this
20 home. The mother doesn't want to sign adoption consent."
21 And then in brackets "Seem mother's file closed. The
22 adoption could be difficult to plan because of the above
23 mentioned problems" and then it's competition between Rose
24 and I, who was my little foster sister, "and it might be a
25 good idea to place Michele in another foster home where

1 foster parents have adoption in view."

2 So my questions were how was the situation
3 worked out and when and why and when was my mom's file
4 closed. Like there's no information about this.

5 And then even more ludicrous I thought was
6 that they note what a loving foster family I'm in but then
7 they propose to move me because a couple two year olds are
8 competing for attention.

9 And the last page of this summary that I'm
10 just going to walk through is the annual reports that --
11 the annual visits I had from social workers that met with
12 me once a year throughout the years of 1966 to 1976 and
13 most of these visits, from my recollection, were about five
14 minutes long. They may have talked to my foster parents
15 longer but in terms of contact with me.

16 So highlights from the annual visits by the
17 social worker to Michele, and I just -- these are all in
18 bullet form; Grammy Gertie Guerin is chief of Musqueam and
19 she was on TV; Joyce tells Michele that is her grandma;
20 foster home is a long-term warm home; another paragraph
21 redacted. The report notes her mother did not ask for
22 Michele and should never be encouraged. The next one is
23 Michele is of at least average intelligence. That cracked
24 me up, hashtag at least. Michele starts grade one at age
25 five so not as in the same class as sister Rose. My first

1 report card was straight A's. Sixty-eight (68) to 73 --
2 during the years '68 to '73 it says I continued to excel in
3 education. In 1973 Joyce very much at ease with Michele's
4 history, able to answer questions with assurance and calm.
5 Michele asked if she could meet real mother. Joyce replied
6 when she was older. By virtue of the fact Michele almost
7 returned home three times, Joyce has a lot of information
8 on Michele's mother and is able to give her the background
9 material she needs when she asks for it. And this wasn't
10 true at all. This just wasn't true. I did ask if I could
11 meet my real mother and she did say when I'm older, but as
12 far as I knew she knew nothing about my biological family
13 other than what was read in the papers. So I don't know
14 where they came up with this. And I certainly wasn't
15 getting background material provided to me as I needed it.
16 But it did say this was a good secure placement, one of the
17 better foster homes. In '73 impresses a secure well-
18 adjusted child, family would like to adopt. Social worker
19 suggests not to approach mom to seek her adoption consent
20 before the Supreme Court of Canada deals with status issues
21 for adopted Indian kids as it might encourage mom to apply
22 for my return. In 1974 attractive 11 year old girl.
23 Certainly this is a well-adjusted child; 1975, happy secure
24 child grown tall and quite attractive; grade 7 excellent
25 school work; is well aware of her family background and has

1 good feelings about her culture; 76, now 13, very secure
2 and happy child; the Supreme Court of Canada decision,
3 adopted kids keep status; should transfer file to adoption
4 worker; talked to Joyce and Michele and they are willing to
5 go through process of adoption; family feels she is now
6 their own daughter and they don't care if they get paid or
7 not. And then in November 22nd, 1976 there was a letter
8 that my mom's sister Beryl Guerin sent to the Ministry
9 asking to meet Michele. And I'll speak to that later.
10 There was also four pages of my file redacted. I have no
11 idea where within the file the four pages should -- where
12 they belonged or what information they contained. But it's
13 those kinds of things that I found quite disturbing.

14 So as you can see the letters, forms, and
15 interdepartmental memos that I've reviewed contain a lot of
16 information I previously didn't know, such as at the time
17 of my birth Earl Miller, my biological father, was 36 years
18 old and employed as a waiter at the St. Alice Hotel in
19 North Van where my mom lived for many, many years, and mom
20 was a typist at an engineering firm, and Earl had offered
21 to marry her. A note in the file said mom would consider
22 marriage if his attitude changed. I thought that was
23 pretty funny. Yet still the hospital discharge summary
24 form when I was discharged recommended adoptable. Good
25 Lord, like not temporary ward, not support the mom to

1 develop a plan to keep her daughter. I don't know how they
2 came to that conclusion in 10 days. There's simply no
3 evidence in the file, and I've read every line a million
4 times. And the simple answer is they automatically deemed
5 her incapable of being a good parent simply because she was
6 Indigenous, and I became just another '60 scoop baby stat.

7 And I want to be clear about my thoughts
8 about the '60s scoop. Maybe the government was beginning
9 the process to close residential schools down, but the '60s
10 scoop policy was the replacement. In other words, they
11 continued coming onto our reserve taking us children. The
12 only thing that had changed was that they sent us to middle
13 class white families across the country. Some of those
14 families were good, some bad, and some were horrific. And
15 I was the lucky one I think.

16 On January 22nd, 1963 mom signed a consent to
17 non-ward care form giving permission for two things, for me
18 to receive any necessary medical care, and for me to be
19 baptized Roman Catholic.

20 A bit of back history. Mom had already had
21 one baby out of wedlock. Exactly two years earlier,
22 January 20th, 1961 my older brother Daryl was born.
23 However, my grandmother Gertie Guerin was the first woman
24 elected chief in Musqueam and one of the first women
25 elected chief in Canada. They called her the Old War

1 Horse. But she was also a devout Catholic and didn't want
2 her unwed daughter raising a baby so she legally adopted
3 Daryl as her son.

4 Then I was born in 1963. So Grandma Guerin
5 didn't want to help mom make a plan to keep me, at least
6 that's my assumption. She was embarrassed her daughter was
7 pregnant out of wedlock, and that's my view, and I'll come
8 back to that later in my testimony.

9 So at 10 days old I arrived at my foster
10 parents' home in New Westminster. Joyce and dad had been
11 emergency foster parents for several years. Their job was
12 to take in children, usually babies, on an emergency basis
13 and until an adopting family was found for the child. So
14 there was always a crib in the dining room for years for
15 that reason.

16 Joyce and dad had four boys and one girl of
17 their own then decided they wanted a girl playmate for my
18 foster sister. They notified the Ministry they wanted to
19 adopt the next babygirl who came into their care, also
20 noting that nationality was not an issue. I arrived at 10
21 days old. Then Joyce found out that she was three months
22 pregnant with my sister Rose but they kept me anyway. So I
23 grew up with four foster brothers and two foster sisters.
24 Joyce and dad also decided to call me by my middle name
25 Michele and I used their surname for 14 years -- the 14

1 years I lived with them.

2 As far back as I can remember I understood I
3 was their foster child. I was told my legal name was Joni
4 Guerin, I was Indian, and one day I might be returned to my
5 mom in Musqueam. My foster parents had to tell me because
6 mom wouldn't sign the adoption papers. The Ministry had to
7 do some work to find her, and this is where that ad was
8 placed in the Vancouver Sun in the province in 1964. And
9 it's at number two in your papers.

10 One of my first memories as a child was
11 being sexually abused by a next door neighbour.

12 And you can put that photo up. There's a
13 photo of myself and my sister. There you go.

14 So one of my first memories as a child was
15 being sexually abused by a next door neighbour. His name
16 was Eric Lada. He also received a New Westminster Citizen
17 of the Year Award one year. Daily he would expose himself
18 to my sisters and I from the back porch. We were like two,
19 three, and four years old.

20 I do want to take a moment to honour my
21 sister Rose and my other estranged sister, who I won't
22 mention her name because I don't have her permission, but
23 together we shared this horrible experience together and
24 sadly I know it happens to all girls everywhere.

25 Mr. Lada had the most beautiful garden.

1 Kids and neighbours loved walking through his garden path.
2 It was amazing, huge dahlias, roses, everything. I believe
3 it was the tool he used to gain the trust of our parents
4 and to lure kids in.

5 Mr. Lada took this picture of Rose and I.
6 He had just abused us that day. I don't recall if it was
7 the first time but we both remember the day vividly,
8 including him taking the picture. He took us inside his
9 basement while his wife quietly went upstairs and closed
10 the kitchen door. Then he would put a hard candy on his
11 penis and have me suck his penis until the candy was gone.
12 Sometimes he put his finger just barely inside me or licked
13 my vagina. What sickens me about the picture is I imagine
14 him watching us grow up and just waiting and abiding his
15 time to abuse us. He was a disgusting human being.

16 Joyce kept meticulous baby books of each of
17 her children. One entry in my baby book at age three says
18 "Michele has started screaming for no reason." Around the
19 same time Rose's baby book notes that "Rose has stopped
20 talking." And Rose stopped talking until grade seven.

21 It's painfully sad to think of how he took
22 our innocence and our early childhood, and our different
23 reactions make me think of the flight or fight response. I
24 screamed she retreated.

25 This abuse went on until we were about 10

1 years old. It went on until I told my parents -- well, I
2 told Joyce. She overheard me referring to Mr. Lada as the
3 wiener man and asked me why I called him that. I said
4 "Because he always shows us his wiener and makes us do
5 stuff." She said she would talk to dad. She came back
6 later and hugged us and told us we were not to go over
7 there anymore and dad built a visual screen at the end of
8 our sundeck so we could no longer see into his yard. But
9 our parents didn't ask us questions about what things he
10 did, they simply didn't ask, and they didn't report it to
11 the police, and they didn't tell my social worker. Mind
12 you my social worker only visited once a year. I was about
13 nine or 10 years old when I told her -- when I told Joyce.

14 I've given a lot of thought as to why they
15 didn't take any steps to alert authorities. That lack of
16 action caused a lot of work that we discussed later as
17 young women, my sisters and I. My take is that first Joyce
18 and dad are famous for sticking their head in the sand and
19 pretending everything is fine. That's consistent with
20 their approach all their lives. Second, there wasn't a lot
21 of public dialogue about reporting sexual abuse in those
22 days so that may be a reason. Third, my parents were
23 respectful of authority and perhaps Mr. Lada's higher
24 position in the community intimidated them somehow.
25 Although I have no clue what he did for a living I just

1 know he was awarded New Westminster Citizen of the Year one
2 year. And lastly, maybe they were afraid if my social
3 worker found out that they would lose me. I don't know.
4 I'll never know.

5 When I was about 11 a new friend moved into
6 the neighbourhood with far more street smarts than my
7 sisters and I. Actually she was Heiltsuk -- she was part
8 Heiltsuk, which is so cool. So we went to Lada's house
9 with this friend and we had an intention to get him back
10 somehow, so Lada did his usual and took us into the
11 basement and removed his pants and our friend stole money
12 out of Lada's wallet. I believe it was a couple hundred
13 bucks. He noticed immediately, got extremely angry, and
14 threatened to call the police. Our friend said "Go ahead
15 and call the police, we'll wait." He kicked us out with
16 the money and we all went down to Shakey's Pizza down the
17 road and had a feast, and that's what I call 10 year old
18 vigilante justice.

19 There was also a used car lot at the end of
20 our street. I lived off Kingsway in New West in Burnaby
21 and Kingsway is full of used car lots. A salesman there
22 sexually abused me from about the age of six to 10 years
23 old. It happened a couple of times a week. I don't
24 remember how it happened the first time but it was a
25 regular occurrence. He was probably about 35 years old.

1 He would call me into his office, close the blinds, lock
2 his door, make me take my clothes off, and touch my body
3 all over, and put his finger on my vagina rubbing it.

4 When I was about 10 and 11 years old in
5 grade six and seven I was a crossing guard at our school,
6 Our Lady of Mercy Elementary School. There were three
7 crossing guards assigned to the intersection of 10th Avenue
8 and Kingsway, which is an extremely busy intersection, a
9 trucking route. A business owner on one of the corners
10 would call me into his store and sexually abuse me during
11 my tour of duty. His name was Jack. I can never get over
12 why the teachers and supervisors never noticed a kid
13 missing off one of the corners during our tour of duty that
14 we took so seriously.

15 I also look at my granddaughter Tatum who is
16 now 10 years old and I can't even imagine if these things
17 had happened to her by this age. Sadly I'm never shocked
18 to learn about predators who prey on young children because
19 I know they're on every single corner in our
20 neighbourhoods. They're out there, because I've meet them.

21 I think of our parents saying "Just go
22 outside and play" but this is what was happening when we
23 were outside -- or when I was outside.

24 And Joyce was not an emotional mother, or
25 rarely showed emotion, and that's not meant as a criticism,

1 it was just my reality.

2 Our lives were very regimented. Dad had
3 been a gunner in a tank in World War II, had been
4 previously married to a woman who didn't want kids and
5 wouldn't give him a divorce. When Joyce became pregnant,
6 unable to get married, they left North Battleford and moved
7 to B.C., then went on to have us seven kids. Our lives
8 were extremely regimented, all about strict routine.

9 We lived very frugally. Meal planning
10 adhered to Joyce's strict budget, therefore the weekly menu
11 never changed.

12 We were all taught from a young age to work
13 very hard. We went with dad when he felled trees, helped
14 as he split and chopped wood, and we stacked cord after
15 cord of wood, it seemed never ending, but it was our
16 primary source of heat in the winter.

17 We had regular chores. Joyce helped us with
18 our homework. Dad had three jobs, one at Woodland School,
19 he did maintenance at a trailer court in Langley, and he
20 was a grave digger.

21 We all children had a paper route. In fact,
22 the same paper route was handed down from my oldest foster
23 brother, who's 10 years my senior, to each kid in the
24 family. Only two of us had more than one paper route. I
25 had two paper routes because I'm a clothes horse. My

1 brother Eric had three.

2 Our allowance was 10 cents a week and we had
3 to use the money we earned to contribute towards paying for
4 our tuition at the private Catholic school that none of us
5 wanted to attend.

6 But they also took us skiing every Friday
7 night at Mount Seymour in the winter. We went for hikes
8 like the Squamish chief or the black tusk or picnics in the
9 summer on weekends. We also went camping for three weeks
10 every summer.

11 In fairness, they had seven kids, often
12 taking in an extra teen who needed temporary housing for
13 one reason or another, but they didn't invest time into our
14 emotional needs. They thought by feeding us, housing us,
15 and teaching us life skills that was the extent of their
16 duty.

17 And then there was me with a lot of
18 questions about my identity that were weighted with
19 emotions. I had been sexually abused for so long, I felt
20 so confused about my identity, and neither my parents or
21 social worker spoke to me about my feelings ever.

22 As I said, from as far back as I can
23 remember I was told my name was Joni Guerin and one day I
24 might go back to my mom in Musqueam. For years I looked
25 out the window wondering why my mom gave me up. And I

1 asked myself the same question a billion times, what does
2 it mean to be an Indian, and I was fortunate, my foster
3 parents made effort to teach me what they could.

4 Dad had grown up in North Battleford and
5 most of his friends were Cree. I'm sure dad was mistaken
6 as Cree many times. He was born in Belgium, had dark skin,
7 with jet black hair, and had arrived in North Battleford as
8 an immigrant family when he was two years old. I don't
9 think he was treated well at school. His father was a
10 horticulturalist and got a job as the gardener for the
11 North Battleford Saskatchewan Psychiatric Hospital so they
12 lived on the hospital grounds. So dad grew up surrounded
13 by kids and adults under psychiatric care.

14 He joined the army and served as a gunner in
15 a tank primarily in Holland and Italy during World War II.
16 When he returned to North Battleford he graduated as a
17 psychiatric nurse. He was tough as shit.

18 Another example, we took camping vacations
19 every summer and stopped at every point of interest. If
20 there was anything even remotely connected to Indian
21 Nations dad always took me aside from the other kids and
22 would talk to me about the history of the place in depth.
23 He would hammer it in my head over and over you have to be
24 very proud you're an Indian. I was extremely lucky to have
25 him as a dad.

1 Once on a Sunday drive dad drove the family
2 van through Musqueam, both the reserve -- by UVC and the
3 reserve in Ladner. He explained this is the Nation where
4 you're from. He explained these are your people, your
5 family. I just remember looking out the window wondering
6 who I was related to. I also remember being out on our
7 Ladner reserve and there was a chain link fence around the
8 reserve with a sign on it that said "No trespassing.
9 Trespassers will be prosecuted", but as a child I thought
10 prosecuted meant executed so I was really impressed with
11 how tough Musqueam people were.

12 My grandmother Gertie Guerin was chief of
13 Musqueam and my Uncle Delbert became chief later, which
14 meant that they were often in the newspaper. Joyce
15 religiously cut out any article to do with Guerin, any
16 article about Musqueam. Every one of those articles went
17 into the family albums because they were my family.

18 This is another example of how they tried to
19 keep me connected to Musqueam, which I know is so much more
20 than most foster kids get. I know this. And I'm also
21 cognizant that they were preparing me for a possible
22 eventual return to Musqueam, but in my view they went about
23 it in a very thoughtful way.

24 And I remember there was one clipping of my
25 -- he was an uncle -- Bob Guerin -- and he had been

1 appointed to some board, and it was just a small article in
2 The Sun and I remember I stared at that for so long
3 wondering who this guy was, you know, like how am I related
4 to him. And now as I look back he's the cultural leader
5 who chose my name for me. He became someone very important
6 in my life. And as a child all I had was this little clip
7 that I would look at wondering who is this guy.

8 So although I could never have emotional
9 discussions with Joyce she did this incredible thing for
10 me, and I read those newspaper clippings over and over with
11 my imagination running wild about what these people were
12 really like, what was Musqueam like, and what did it mean
13 to be an Indian.

14 So dad was an extremely strong man, and yes
15 I always wanted to be like him, but him and I argued a lot.
16 It was even noted in my file that I began to be
17 argumentative. My foster parents attributed it to being
18 the middle girl, comparing me to their argumentative middle
19 son, my foster brother Dave, who argued with dad just as
20 much as I did. It always seemed the two of us were arguing
21 with dad. We didn't argue with Joyce because she didn't
22 engage on issues or discussions, always referring me to
23 dad, the authoritarian in the family.

24 In grade nine I was still maintaining good
25 marks, attending an all-girls Catholic school. And you may

1 think no boys were around at our school but at lunch time
2 our parking lot filled with carloads full of boys from St.
3 Thomas More, the all-boys Catholic high school and the
4 public high school. Our school also had no gym so for PE
5 we were bussed to the YMCA for swimming, and a lot of the
6 public school boys our age regularly sat in the viewing
7 area to watch our swimming classes. We also had school
8 dances in grade eight and nine and boys started asking me
9 out on dates.

10 A nice boy from STM asked me out, asked if
11 he could meet my parents so he could take me on a date.
12 Mom outright refused and dad lost his shit. Over the
13 course of a few months it became a bigger issue. Naturally
14 I was still seeing this young man behind their back. We
15 weren't doing anything sinister or bad we just hung out and
16 drove around in his car but it became a massive issue with
17 my dad.

18 Dad and I began to argue and fight a lot
19 during that time. I felt it was unjust, there were
20 different rules in our house for boys and girls and
21 different rules for my older and sister and I that I didn't
22 feel that they could justify. I spent a lot of time
23 grounded in those weeks, worked alongside dad on a lot of
24 projects around the house and generally feeling unhappy.

25 Then in February 1976 I was 13, the social

1 worker came and met with Joyce and I to discuss whether I
2 wanted to be adopted by my foster family, and I agreed.
3 The social worker offered family counselling to try to deal
4 with the tension between dad and I but Joyce and dad felt
5 that they could compromise with me without a need for
6 counselling.

7 Then in November '76 my mom's sister Beryl
8 Guerin sent a letter to my social worker offering -- the
9 states "If Joni especially needs to get closer to family
10 ties, which kids her age are usually concerned about, I'm
11 here for her." I also have to note that years later Beryl
12 told me she had worked for the Vancouver Resources Board,
13 which was a department of social services, and that she had
14 pulled my file. I assume she saw that I was about to begin
15 adoption proceedings so she sent this letter. My social
16 worker then noticed me the Guerin family had made contact
17 wanting to meet me.

18 I admit I've always had extremely mixed
19 feelings about Beryl taking this action. First of all, she
20 wasn't my mother. I also believe mom was hurt that Beryl
21 had reached out to me because from what I understand mom
22 and Beryl did not discuss her taking this action
23 beforehand. Now I realize what I felt was anger, and I'm
24 still angry. I'm angry because I wonder why Beryl's
25 letter carried so much weight with the Ministry. In my

1 view, the answer lies in the handwritten note beside
2 Beryl's work number that she provided in the letter. The
3 handwritten note says "Accounting Section VRB". So to my
4 social worker that says oh, she's one of us, she works for
5 the Ministry. And whenever I read Beryl's letter I make a
6 direct connection from her letter to the note in my file
7 earlier when the Ministry notes "Do not approach mom to
8 seek adoption content before the Supreme Court of Canada
9 deals with this data as it might encourage mom to apply for
10 my return."

11 So the Ministry boldly states do not
12 encourage my mom to apply for my return or to make contact
13 with me but a letter from an aunt, who's not my mother,
14 caused them to immediately come back to me with a new
15 choice from a year ago that they had proposed when I had
16 already agreed to be adopted. And of course I wanted
17 contact with my biological family, with my mom.

18 The Ministry met with dad and Joyce
19 regarding the adoption, then they conducted a home visit
20 with me, and I was now 14, and they state in the report
21 that they tried to help me feel positively about my aunt's
22 intervention, but most importantly they presented me with a
23 new choice, do you want to be adopted or do you want to
24 meet the Guerin family. Good Lord.

25 And again much is redacted from this report,

1 but other notes do say "Michele states her wishes; she
2 wants to be a police woman; wants to meet her biological
3 family; will consider adoption after that meeting, and
4 wants a copy of her own birth certificate". The final note
5 in the report says "We will not consider adoption at this
6 time."

7 At the time I remember feeling very
8 confused, extremely emotional, with no one to talk to about
9 these feelings of immense confusion. That is the social
10 workers didn't offer me any counselling. I had no youth
11 worker, no private meeting with my social worker.
12 Absolutely no resources were extended to me to help me sort
13 through my feelings to help me make sense of what was
14 happening. Where was the protection? Where was the best
15 interest of the child? They had one job.

16 On top of that I had parents who never
17 talked about emotions. I was literally given this
18 monumental decision and my parents and social worker patted
19 me on the head said "Good luck with your decision" and
20 literally abandoned me emotionally, oh, except for one
21 thing, then they made me part of a social experiment.

22 So in Tab 9, or whatever you want to call
23 it, you'll see there's a report. In my file suddenly there
24 appears a one page report dated May 6th, 1977 by a Brian
25 McFarland. It's the first time his name appears in my

1 file. Every entry of a report, or summary, or form, is
2 signed by the social worker. That makes it easy for me to
3 track their names throughout my file. This new name was
4 the anomaly, Brian McFarland.

5 Now I understand that this is when I became
6 part of a social experiment by the Ministry, or, as Mr.
7 McFarland refers to it, a demonstration project. The
8 project was to reunite 49 children with their biological
9 families and then see what happens.

10 The one page summary sets out that I was
11 placed in my present foster home after birth; natural
12 father's whereabouts are unknown; major barrier is Mrs.
13 Edwards -- my mom -- current situation. She has had no
14 contact with her daughter over years. It goes on to say
15 "There is reason to believe mom is doing well and
16 interested in re-establishing contact with her daughter
17 with the eventual goal of having her return home."

18 Most notable to me is the following quote.
19 "There is also every indication that Michele is interested
20 in her roots, her natural mother, and her heritage and
21 culture, native. Since talk of her natural family began
22 she has been acting out and making life very difficult for
23 her foster family and herself. However, this is viewed as
24 a manifestation of her ambivalence, fears, and insecurities
25 about meeting her mother, which is made especially

1 difficult by the close psychological ties she has with her
2 foster family. Michele has a strong need to develop her
3 own sense of identity and will continue acting out until
4 these issues are dealt with. This suggests contact with
5 her natural family be made as soon as possible in the hopes
6 that she may establish regular contact and a relationship
7 with them. From this a permanent placement plan can be
8 established, either return to natural family or continued
9 long-term foster care until she's independent, whichever
10 represents her best interests." Then at the bottom of the
11 page there's a rating that's noted number two minor,
12 whatever that means.

13 So this is when I became part of the 49
14 children project. Once I received this file from the
15 Ministry, my file, I made a subsequent *Freedom of*
16 *Information Act* request for a copy of the 49 children
17 project report but what they sent me was the 49 children
18 project one year later report.

19 And I think I gave it to Breen, didn't I.
20 Did I give it to you? Yeah. So I gave -- I only had one
21 copy and because of the size I didn't copy it but you have
22 it.

23 But one thing that was notable to me was
24 that on the cover page the author is Brian McFarland and
25 then it says Masters Social Work. And I can't help but

1 wonder did I become part of Mr. McFarland's Master's
2 thesis. Was like the 49 children project his thesis
3 project? I suspect it was, and if so I get very angry at
4 that proposition.

5 So as a result of this confusion on June 6th,
6 1977 I ran away from home, rather, I didn't return home
7 after school one Friday. I was picked up by the Surrey
8 RCMP on June 24th and returned home. The report says I was
9 picked up drunk and with a boyfriend. I was not drunk. I
10 was in my boyfriend's home in Surrey, the nice STM boy,
11 sitting in his room listening to music. I hid in his
12 closet when his parents and the police arrived at his
13 bedroom door. My boyfriend encouraged me to go home. He
14 was a nice boy.

15 The report then says I caused a commotion in
16 the police station and kicked the police officer, and I
17 don't remember any of that. It doesn't sound like me.

18 I was taken home and had a huge blowout with
19 dad. I then overheard dad saying to the social worker "The
20 little bitch is no longer welcome in our home." I remember
21 that moment vividly and how extremely painful that was to
22 hear. I was sent upstairs to my room. Within an hour or
23 two I tied sheets together, lashed them to the window post
24 on the third floor, shimmied down the sheets and left for
25 good. I remember feeling determined that I would never

1 return to that house.

2 I spent my first days as a runaway in New
3 West, but then I spent most of my time in Surrey or
4 Queensborough because I figured my family would never find
5 me out there. I also set myself a goal. I've always been
6 goal orientated. My goal was to panhandle \$1 a day so that
7 I could eat. So every day I would ask four people for 25
8 cents each, always using the excuse that I was 25 cents
9 short for bus money. A dollar a day allowed me to buy a
10 Pirate Pak from Whit Spot. They cost 99 cents back then.
11 And every year White Spot celebrates Pirate Pak day and I
12 always want to tell them hey thanks for keeping me alive.

13 There were a few times I slept in a
14 scoreboard of a baseball diamond, and that was pretty
15 peaceful. I could look out the slots and I could see the
16 baseball diamond at night. I remember how pretty it looked
17 and how peaceful, how safe I felt in there.

18 Most often I walked and walked all night
19 until I was tired enough to go to sleep on the floor of a
20 bathroom in a gas station, and I had my favourites,
21 sometimes on the floor of public park washrooms. They
22 never used to lock those up in those days.

23 Once I remember being cold so I climbed in
24 the back seat of someone's car to sleep and scared the crap
25 out of the poor guy when he got in his car in the morning,

1 but I just bolted.

2 Lots of nights I just walked around all
3 night because it made me feel more in control. I never
4 drank by myself. I was straight all the time except when I
5 interacted with others. I never panhandled for money to
6 drink or do drugs. I panhandled to eat. And as I walked
7 at night I could always tell when a creep had spotted me
8 because they would start circling the block in their car
9 trying to find where I went, and every time I'd just find
10 somewhere to hide until they left the area. I could sit
11 and hide for hours at a time, no problem. And I always
12 remember the one prevailing thought I always carried was
13 does anybody care.

14 Once I was hitchhiking. I was trying to get
15 from Langley to Surrey. It was evening or dusk. A man
16 pulled over to offer me a ride. Within minutes of getting
17 into his car I could tell he seemed really dangerous and
18 that he planned to attack me. He took a turn down an
19 extremely dark dead end road and then began punching me in
20 the head demanding a blowjob. He continued to punch me in
21 the head the entire time I performed oral sex, the entire
22 time. I was extremely afraid for my life. The incident
23 lasted about five to 10 minutes. He then dropped me off on
24 the highway and drove away. I walked for miles that night
25 and I felt very alone, and again the prevailing thought I

1 always had was does anybody care.

2 Another day I was hitchhiking in Surrey and
3 was picked up by a guy and told him where I was going.
4 Then the guy took a turn in the wrong direction. I knew he
5 was heading toward the U.S. border so I started freaking
6 out and demanded he let me out. He refused and kept
7 telling me to just calm down. I had my hand on the handle
8 of the passenger door and told him if he didn't stop the
9 car I would jump. Again he kept saying "Calm down, calm
10 down" but he wouldn't slow the car down. So I opened the
11 car door and I jumped out of a moving car.

12 I remember rolling over, and over, and over
13 when I hit the ground, but he didn't stop he just drove off
14 fast. I was bruised, and shaken, and terrified, but again
15 I just walked and walked until I felt I was in a safer open
16 area and began hitchhiking again.

17 Another night during that period of time a
18 young man befriended me to have a couple beer. We went to
19 a nearby park to talk and to drink beer. The next thing I
20 remember a bunch of other guys showed up. They were a team
21 of some kind. And they stood in a circle demanding blow
22 jobs, and I did what they asked. I was scared. I was
23 humiliated. I remember them laughing. I remember the
24 derogatory names I was called. And then they were gone.

25 Over the years I've looked back and wondered

1 is group sexual assault a norm, or is it part of hazing for
2 teams, or is it an actual team sport; how did these
3 athletes -- and I expect most of them come from good
4 families -- how do they simply set aside the values that
5 they must have been taught by their parents about obtaining
6 consent, and do police ever check these teams when they're
7 out wandering the street carousing to see what they up to,
8 or are they just given a free pass because they're jocks.
9 I don't know, but these are the thoughts that go through my
10 head.

11 I believe that specific incident coincides
12 with the notation in my file that says on July 1st, '77 I
13 phoned Joyce drunk and crying. I told her I didn't want to
14 go home I just needed to talk to her. Someone in the house
15 I was in gave the address where I was. A social worker
16 arrived. The report says the home was full of teenagers
17 drinking beer. I don't recall any of this. But these
18 people had put me in the bathtub because I stank.

19 The report says I agreed to meet with Joyce
20 a few blocks from her home to talk inside the social
21 worker's car. The report says they couldn't find a
22 suitable resource or a group home and that quote, "Michele
23 couldn't be reasoned with rationally." They made an
24 agreement I could stay in my bedroom over the weekend with
25 no questions asked. "Joyce appears overwhelmed and feels

1 Michele needs therapeutic resources as she will run again.
2 Michele appears totally confused and bewildered. She is
3 very antagonistic towards her foster father who called her
4 a slut. Her position in this family has been badly
5 shaken."

6 My question is why didn't the social workers
7 ask more questions? I had just been sexually assaulted by
8 a group of athletes. These athletes were probably the
9 pride of their families. And since then, like I said, I've
10 often wondered how does that conversation even go among a
11 team or group of athletes, how do they come to this group
12 decision. It's one thing to go hire someone in the sex
13 trade industry for this purpose but how do they reconcile
14 finding a 14 year old run away living on the street and
15 doing this. Like what is that conversation like? And it's
16 vulnerable girls who are put in that position, Indigenous
17 girls being the most vulnerable in this country. The stats
18 show it. And this kind of assault happens over, and over,
19 and over. I was 14 years old.

20 And now this was added to my sexual abuse
21 timeline. Sexual abuse was a norm for me. Plus now I had
22 been called a slut by my own dad, my dad who I had grown up
23 wanting to be just like him.

24 It was after that incident that I placed in
25 the Gullivan foster group home in Richmond kind of on the

1 Delta/Richmond border. Richard Gullivan was a fire captain
2 in the Richmond Fire Department. His group home had
3 actually been recommended to me by a guy friend I had met
4 on the streets who said it was a really good group home.
5 So I asked my social worker to be sent there and the social
6 worker was relieved that there was somewhere I was willing
7 to go.

8 It was during the time I was living at
9 Gullivan's that I was hitchhiking on Southwest Marine Drive
10 in Burnaby and was picked up by a group of young men.
11 There were as few of us riding in the back of a pickup
12 truck. I had been carrying a knapsack that held my few
13 possessions, some clothing, et cetera. One of the boys
14 started pulling each item out and throwing it on the side
15 of the highway as we drove along. It was so humiliating.

16 We went to a park and started drinking. My
17 next memory was that it was dark outside and I was in the
18 loft of some kind of a barn and a guy was on top of me
19 raping me. I kept trying to get up but I couldn't lift
20 myself up. He climbed off and yelled next. I don't know
21 how long it went on. I only remember feeling humiliated
22 and helpless.

23 This incident coincides with the note in my
24 file that states "Michele was returned one night at 2:00
25 a.m. by three boys. She was drunk and hysterical screaming

1 and calling herself a slut. She was crying and had grass
2 over her hair and clothes. Worker visited the next day and
3 discussed related incident, was non-judgmental, wanting to
4 know whether Michele felt the need for a change or not.
5 Michele did not admit promiscuous behavior. Birth control
6 was discussed with Michele and the need for a general
7 examination. The doctor's examination summarizes, drinks a
8 lot for her age, smokes grass, emotionally unstable." Good
9 Lord.

10 It's the emotionally unstable note that gets
11 me the most. What would have happened if I was a little
12 white girl? Would she have been labeled a victim? It
13 didn't matter I was Indigenous. So they labeled me
14 promiscuous at 14 years old.

15 And I was thinking of the Parkland Stoneman
16 Douglas student march for our lives protest the other day.
17 Some of the students wore big labels around their wrists
18 that said -- I think it said \$1.04, and they wore this
19 price tag connecting it to a political message they were
20 sending to the NRA.

21 And ever since I saw that it struck me that
22 this is how Indigenous girls like me were labeled in the
23 Ministry. They'd pass this info onto the justice system,
24 the education system, to anyone who'd listen. In fact, I
25 might as well have worn a giant label around my wrist that

1 said promiscuous because that was the label they gave me
2 for the rest of my file.

3 During this period of time was when I met
4 mom. It was during July or August 1977. Of course the
5 file doesn't even give me the exact date for such an
6 important event in my life, and I don't recall it. Mom and
7 I met in a small café right off Fraser and 57th Avenue in
8 Vancouver. She worked in the area and we met during her
9 lunch hour. It was a very quiet reunion. The social
10 worker talked. Mom and I spoke very little. But I know we
11 were both happy to have finally met. I remember being
12 surprised at how short she was, she was five foot two, and
13 she was surprised how tall I was.

14 I remember phoning Joyce that night to tell
15 her I met my mom, and it was one of the few times in my
16 life I ever heard Joyce shed tears, but she kept saying how
17 happy she was for me.

18 Within a couple weeks the Guerin family
19 arranged a dinner at my grandpa Victor and grandma Gertie's
20 house. It was at this visit that I met my brothers,
21 grandparents, and other relatives. The first place I went
22 on the reserve was to my mom's where I met my younger
23 brothers Leslie and Dwayne.

24 Leslie's reaction to me was negative. He
25 made it clear that he didn't consider me his sister because

1 I had grown up with another family. I was okay with that.

2 On the other hand, my other younger brother
3 Dwayne was excited and elated to meet me. I always
4 remember his huge smile and how we clicked so well and he
5 asked me to go stand in front of the front window to wave
6 to his friends. I believe my cousins Arnold and Wayne were
7 among those outside and they were so welcoming to me.

8 I also remember being at grandma's and Aunt
9 Beryl asked me to go outside on the porch to talk. Then
10 she said to me "Your Uncle Daryl isn't really your uncle
11 he's your brother. He was your mom's first child that
12 grandma legally adopted." Good Lord.

13 So I was still living at Gullivan's when I
14 met my biological family, but from the very start I
15 recognized something was off with Mr. Gullivan. I shared a
16 room with another teenage foster girl, and I don't remember
17 her name, but Gullivan was constantly accidentally opening
18 the door whenever we were changing. He also had a pool in
19 his backyard and we were encouraged to swim a lot, which we
20 did.

21 I remember once he asked if I wanted to go
22 see his fire hall and I agreed. Why not? I remember
23 feeling then like I was being presented like a fresh piece
24 of meat. He stood me up in front of these firefighters and
25 was like "See". And then they got a call and we left --

1 and they left and then we went home.

2 Very shortly after that he took his family
3 and myself for a weekend boating trip on his yacht. He had
4 a big beautiful boat with a bridge deck with all the bells
5 and whistles. We cruised all day in the sun among the
6 small beautiful islands. I lay on the deck of his yacht
7 sunbathing the whole day in a bathing suit, diving in and
8 out of the water.

9 Then I awoke in the middle of the night. I
10 was sleeping on a really skinny bench of a bed, but he was
11 on top of me, with alcohol on his breath, and he had his
12 hands down my pants and put his finger inside me.
13 Gullivan's wife then came up, and I remember it was so
14 quiet on the boat and I was holding my breath because his
15 kids were on the boat, and she smacked her husband in the
16 head and told him to go back to bed. Mrs. Gullivan then
17 whispered in my ear telling me I was a little slut and to
18 leave her husband alone.

19 As soon as we got back to their home I
20 packed my stuff and left. It is here in my file notes.
21 "For the month of August we have no contact with Michele."

22 Sometime during this period of time a friend
23 took me to his friend's house in Queensborough. He was
24 older than us. A guy named Mark. We began to drink with
25 them. When I woke up I was in bed with Mark raping me then

1 climbing off and directing men as to whose turn it was
2 next.

3 When I woke the next day I took my things
4 left and never saw any of them again.

5 So I kept walking, and walking, and walking.
6 Like I said, I was walking around sober all the time. And
7 it was one of these days when I was walking around when a
8 seemingly friendly man in a truck offered me a ride. The
9 man was much older, old enough to be my dad. I thought he
10 was just a nice man. He stopped at a hotel, checked in,
11 took me into a room, raped me, and then dropped money on
12 the table and left. I just remember thinking what the fuck
13 just happened. I'm not that person.

14 When I look back on it I believe this is one
15 way it happens, you're alone and vulnerable on the street,
16 you've been sexually abused all your life, conditioned
17 since the age of three to think that sexual abuse is
18 normalized. One assault, one rape at a time, and then
19 someone gives you money for something that has been
20 happening to you your whole life, and there is a transition
21 into the sex trade, and the money dropped on the table
22 allows you to eat.

23 I feel absolutely no judgment towards women
24 that get drawn into the sex trade or get drawn into sexual
25 exploitation because I understand how it happens and I

1 think the government needs to legalize it to protect women.
2 It's that simple, protect our women.

3 Once my file was transferred to Point Grey
4 because I had moved in with my mom in Musqueam I told my
5 new social worker about Gullivan's sexual assault. I
6 remember specifically saying to her "You really should stop
7 putting girls in that group home because Gullivan sexually
8 abused me." I advised her of the incident, advised her of
9 Gullivan's wife's reaction, advised her of Gullivan's
10 consistent behaviour of walking in while the teen girls who
11 were put in his care for protection were changing clothes.
12 The social worker replied "Well the boys really like it in
13 there." My social worker didn't make a note of the sexual
14 assault, made no notation of any of our conversation in my
15 file, and nothing was done. I didn't like this social
16 worker and I know she didn't like me. Her initials were
17 SA, and although I can say her name, her name was Sheila
18 Anderson, I call her SA bitch.

19 The thing that pisses me off the most is
20 that he continued to sexually assault girls in his own
21 home. I know this because in the early '90s an RCMP
22 knocked on my door in Musqueam. I was renting a house on
23 the reserve with my kids. I invited the Mountie inside to
24 talk. My boyfriend Gary was there. The Mounty asked me if
25 anything unusual had ever happened to me while I lived at

1 Gullivan's. I told him about the incident on the yacht.
2 He asked if I had told anyone. I replied I told my social
3 worker and my brother Kirk who was a Burnaby firefighter.

4 I learned that eight girls who had lived in
5 the home had criminally charged Richard Gullivan with
6 sexual assault but somehow he had been acquitted on all
7 charges. The Mouny noted one of the challenges they faced
8 in the criminal case was the credibility of some of the
9 witnesses, as it sounded like some of these survivors,
10 these girls, were now living hard lives. But now one of
11 these girls was suing Gullivan in a civil trial. I agreed
12 to be a witness in the civil trial and I agreed to share
13 the sexual assault that happened on his yacht. I was also
14 told by the Mouny that because I couldn't say if we had
15 boated in Canada or crossed into U.S. waters that weekend.
16 They couldn't establish jurisdiction therefore they
17 couldn't lay criminal charges in my case.

18 Once in court, because I had reported it to
19 my social worker, all the lawyers wanted to see my Ministry
20 file to see if my social worker had made a report. I stood
21 beside four lawyers at the bench and said to the judge I
22 didn't feel it was fair that all these strangers would get
23 access to my file, my entire life, without me seeing it.
24 The judge ruled that I could make my FOI request and
25 receive and review my file first before the other lawyers,

1 and that's how I came to obtain my file.

2 When it arrived by registered mail it was a
3 jumbled mess in no order stacked in piles. I sat down to
4 start reading it and read the whole thing in one night, and
5 I cried, and I cried, and cried. There are a lot of
6 painful memories in this file, and worse, there are a lot
7 of opinions given about me in the file by tonnes of
8 professionals, my grandmother Gertie, and others.

9 But back to Gullivan and me reporting it to
10 the social worker, of course she hadn't noted it. But I
11 did testify at the civil trial and the girl won her civil
12 case. They considered me a very credible witness. I was
13 very, very happy for her.

14 She had been about six or seven years old
15 when she arrived in Gullivan's home and I believe she
16 remained there until she was 19. And I think I remember
17 her. There was a little girl who arrived when I was there,
18 and because she was younger than us teens she had her own
19 room.

20 So I was extremely pissed off and so angry
21 that I had tried to protect her and I did what I was
22 supposed to do and I reported this predator to the
23 Ministry, whose job it was to protect us, but of course
24 they did nothing. And I know why. First of all, they
25 didn't want to lose this group home. After reviewing my

1 file I can see the number of foster homes and group homes
2 the Ministry have available to them in the lower mainland,
3 and Gullivan's was a valuable resource to them. So they
4 had to sacrifice a few girls to be subjected to sexual
5 abuse, big deal.

6 Secondly, my social worker never liked me,
7 and I could tell that from the moment I met her. I was a
8 headache to her probably already overloaded case file and I
9 was just an Indigenous girl.

10 Interestingly, years later there was an
11 investigation into a Richmond fire hall sexual exploitation
12 ring in the late 1990s that was reopened in 2006. As many
13 as 30 firefighters were involved. The story sets out the
14 RCMP have reopened their investigation into allegations
15 that dozens of Richmond firefighters sexually assaulted
16 three teenage girls in the Vancouver suburb area in the
17 1970s. The girls were between 14 and 16 years old at the
18 time of the alleged assaults.

19 It reminded me of when I was taken to the
20 Richmond fire hall with Gullivan and I felt like I was on
21 display like a fresh piece of meat.

22 So let me summarize where we're at up to
23 this point. They ripped me out of my mother's arms to put
24 me into a system to protect me. But where was the
25 protection. I had been sexually abused in every single

1 home they put me in up to that point. I did what I thought
2 was right. I reported the sexual abuse to my parents.
3 Nothing happened. I reported sexual abuse to my social
4 worker. Nothing happened. I had been examined by Ministry
5 doctors to put me on birth control. I had been picked up by
6 the police a few times. Yet no one, no one asked if I had
7 ever been sexually abused. The first one to ask was the
8 Mounty who showed up at my door in Musqueam when I was 30
9 years old.

10 So as part of the 49 children project I was
11 returned to mom and moved into her home in Musqueam where
12 she lived with my brothers Leslie and Dwayne.

13 Leslie made it clear from day one that he
14 didn't consider me his sister because I was raised by a
15 white family. I completely accepted that.

16 Dwayne and I clicked from the moment we met.
17 With Dwayne it feels like we started laughing together the
18 moment we met and we're still laughing. Dwayne was so
19 proud. Man we had a lot of laughs when we lived together.
20 We still have a lot of laughs together. My kids always say
21 all the two of us ever do when we're together is laugh.
22 He's my rock.

23 And lots and lots of nights we went out
24 together to eat supper with grandpa Vic, corn beef hash or
25 fish hash for supper. My grandpa Vic was awesome. The

1 kindest man you'd ever meet. And he was married to my
2 grandma Gertie, who was such a hard ass, but they made it
3 work for 60 years or something.

4 And at first it went well with mom, however,
5 it didn't take long before there was tension. One day I
6 was sincerely asking her if she minded if I called her Bev,
7 because frankly we barely knew each other. Her response
8 was "You can call me anything you want as long as you don't
9 call me shithead." In my view, we were both damaged and
10 hurt individuals now living together without any basis of a
11 relationship being developed beforehand, absolutely none.
12 I guess that was part of the experiment, let's just put
13 them together and see what happens.

14 I don't recall exactly how long I lived with
15 mom. I believe it lasted a month. During that period of
16 time we had some good times and some tough times. I'm sure
17 I drove her nuts.

18 I started school at Point Grey Secondary
19 School but wasn't comfortable, such a large school,
20 expected to act like a normal kid, and disappointed when I
21 was assigned to sit in a room to watch videos with other
22 kids from the reserve. Good Lord.

23 I didn't stay at Point Grey, but my best
24 memories of Point Grey were taking the bus to school with
25 my cousin Bert and Ozzie Stolgun (phonetic).

1 When I moved in with mom Joyce lovingly
2 packed up all the special things I had collected since
3 childhood. She had not done this for any of the group
4 homes I had been in but I guess she thought this was going
5 to be my final move. This included my skates, skis, a
6 favourite bow for coat from my sister-in-law, a daughter
7 ring I received on my 13th birthday, my favourite book, a
8 hardcover edition of the book Kidnapped by Robert Louis
9 Stevenson, and other jewelry made by my foster grandfather.

10 I came home to my room one day and all those
11 personal items were gone. When I asked where they were mom
12 replied that she had thrown them away because I didn't need
13 them anymore because I was no longer part of that family.
14 I was so hurt, absolutely devastated. Words can't convey
15 how hurt I was and so confused. It was one of the issues
16 that really put a wedge between us at the time because I
17 didn't understand it.

18 But looking back as I wrote the testimony I
19 now wonder if she was trying to cover up for someone else
20 who might have done it, like a brother who didn't accept
21 me. It seems more logical to me.

22 It was around 1981 when I sat in a courtroom
23 and watched mom get sentenced to Oakalla for writing bad
24 checks. I remember her turning around in the courtroom to
25 see if there was anyone in the family there and I saw her

1 relief that I was there but I also saw her shame, the
2 daughter that she had given up was sitting there looking at
3 her. I visited her in Oakalla and I was fortunate enough
4 that the guards let me hug her while we were there.

5 But during that time the band social worker
6 -- while she was serving her time the band social worker
7 approached me and said that they were in a position where
8 they may have to condemn mom's home because she was a
9 hoarder and they asked if I would clean it. They didn't
10 think anyone else could take the job on. And so I did.
11 And although this allowed her to remain in her house it was
12 the final wedge between her and I before she died.

13 And I don't want to make it sound like these
14 kinds of situations only happen on reserves, because I had
15 to move in with my foster mother a year ago and I had to do
16 the same thing for her home, which was condemned, and I
17 spent a lot of time doing much of the same thing.

18 The night I left mom's I came home one night
19 stood at the back door, it was locked, so I knocked, and
20 she stood looking at me through the window of the door but
21 she wouldn't open it. We stood looking at each other a
22 long time. I kept asking "Are you going to let me in."
23 She didn't say a word. I ended up going across the street
24 and knocking on the door of a neighbour I had just met that
25 day, June Sparrow, and she let me stay the night.

1 When I first moved to the reserve I remember
2 going to language lessons with the late Arnold Guerin. I
3 was the only student. I would go sit in his office on the
4 51st hall and sit with this amazing elder trying so hard to
5 learn our language. I also took a job delivering band
6 notices door to door. And I had a couple nice boyfriends
7 during that time. But sadly I also experienced more sexual
8 abuse.

9 I had an uncle, mom's youngest brother. His
10 name was Glen. When I first moved there at 14, having just
11 arrived on the reserve, he invited me to a friend's house
12 where we drank some beer, and then he raped me. Then he
13 graciously offered to be my pimp. He explained to me that
14 I -- or we I guess -- could make a tonne of money. I
15 absolutely despised the guy. I hated him. And I don't
16 like to carry hate in my heart. It's almost impossible to
17 get me to hate someone. But I hated him because I had
18 grown up as a child wanting so badly to meet my family and
19 here was my own uncle offering to be my pimp.

20 I do admit that I did take some revenge on
21 him when I broke into his house and stole cases, and cases
22 of beer that he had gone and bought in Point Roberts during
23 a beer strike. He was supposed to take it to some sports
24 team of his and he was livid. I was 14. He chased me
25 through grandma's house. I ran downstairs into my bedroom

1 in the basement, slid a dresser in front of the door, and
2 then climbed out the bedroom window. I'm still pretty
3 proud of myself for that.

4 But that wasn't the only encounter with him.
5 Years later when I was a single mother living in my house
6 with my three kids she showed up drunk at my back door. No
7 one used my back door as it backed on to the Musqueam golf
8 course. He asked for sex. I kept telling him to leave and
9 threatened to call the police. He then advised me laughing
10 that there was several men who went into the golf course at
11 night to watch me workout through the window. I used to do
12 Jane Fonda's video every night after I put my kids to bed.
13 It freaked me out.

14 I tried very hard over the years to have
15 nothing to do with him. One of my last encounters with him
16 was in 1995. He was the housing manager for Musqueam. I
17 was renting a house on Humlesum (phonetic) Drive. The
18 owners, three young adults over 19, wanted to sell the
19 house and we agreed I would buy it. I went to talk to
20 Glen. He said it was impossible to buy the house on the
21 reserve even though many others had already done so. I
22 will never forget his smug face rejecting me. So I moved
23 my kids off reserve and we bought a house in Garibaldi
24 Highlands in Squamish. One week later he sold that house
25 to another lady on the reserve. I don't begrudge the other

1 woman her home because I love her to pieces, but in my view
2 he was a sleaze ball.

3 And I want to make a note here that it's
4 really hard for me to hurt people. It's hard for me to
5 name people because I don't want to hurt anybody. But it's
6 also important that I just say who hurt me and that's what
7 I'm doing.

8 I used to hear rumours that the joke on the
9 reserve was you should take Michele in because you get paid
10 a lot of money because she's a high risk youth and she's a
11 great housekeeper, but I knew this wasn't true because many
12 loving families took me in. Even those with small homes
13 made a place for me. These included Mary Charles, Grace
14 Mearns, Margaret and Dave Lewis, and June Sparrow. Muggy,
15 who was Margaret Lewis, let me clean out her attic space to
16 make a room for myself there. These loving families
17 extended all they had to me purely out of love and
18 compassion.

19 During that time I learned different rules
20 in each house, such as each kid could only use four squares
21 of toilet paper, or how to eat ketchup on a grilled cheese
22 sandwich, how to use a ringer washer machine, and I had a
23 lot of laughs with June, who was a young single mother.
24 Their attitude was loving and comfortable and their
25 attitude seemed to be that having me there just meant one

1 more can of beans in the soup or one more cup of rice in
2 the cooker. I felt welcomed in their homes.

3 These families didn't have special training
4 to deal with high risk youths, they had culture, they had
5 love and compassion. I felt surrounded with a great deal
6 of love during some really tumultuous years. That's why I
7 believe our Nations can do better. Our culture, our
8 teachings, being surrounded by large extended families full
9 of love is what our kids thrive on, and we should be in
10 charge of our own children's care.

11 Eventually I ended up at grandpa Vic and
12 grandma Gertie's house for quite a few months.

13 Being part of the 49 children project meant
14 they monitored and reported my reactions to being reunited
15 with my family. In addition to the social worker, I had
16 two youth workers who took me on outings once a week to
17 talk.

18 There are pages and pages of reports but
19 some of the highlights from those reports include April 78,
20 background on file I suppose, brought up by a white
21 Catholic family, been on the reserve a short time in
22 different homes. She talked quite a bit about home life in
23 New Westminster, which she seems to miss a great deal.
24 Said she doesn't like indoor activities, wanted to go to
25 the park because she was used to picnics and hikes. She

1 talked about becoming Indian, eating Indian food, et
2 cetera, why there seemed to be such division between white
3 people and Indians.

4 May 78, basically Michele talks about her
5 family in New Westminster and her own identity. She has a
6 lot to sort out in this last area, who Michele is, what she
7 is, and where she belongs. She feels caught in the middle,
8 neither Indian or white. Culturally it is difficult for
9 her. She has decided that the band is capable of accepting
10 her as they did her brothers and that she doesn't have to
11 have only Indian friends. When something is on her mind
12 she has a tendency to field an item, drop it, and come back
13 to it later after she has digested your response.

14 Other worker May 1978; this period in
15 Michele's life is one of tremendous adjustment problems.
16 She is quite simply learning to tie together her strict but
17 loving Catholic upbringing with the rather chaotic the
18 rules aren't very clear life on the reserve with her blood
19 relations. She wants quite consciously through this
20 process to find out who she is and how she wants to be in
21 life. She's very insightful, and emotionally sensitive
22 girl who really struggles actively to make sense of things.
23 She uses me in our relationship very well in the process.
24 Michele believes she is not well liked by most of her
25 relatives and indeed in practical terms they have not been

1 in a position to extend themselves to her very much and
2 this has fueled her feelings of rejection. Nevertheless,
3 she wants to stay on the reserve. Overall Michele has
4 shown a lot of growth over these last four months and
5 basically stopped running and is using people to help her
6 deal head on with her life. Right now the main work for
7 Michele is this figuring out process. She is a courageous
8 girl who is not afraid to take emotional risks.

9 July '78; since last report Michele has had
10 a placement breakdown at the Lewis'. We had a short flurry
11 of activity trying to find her a place off reserve where
12 she would be able to live her rather grown up lifestyle.
13 And this is when they put an ad in the paper, which is at
14 number 10. I should read it. Here it is.

15 So in May of '78 my social worker put this
16 ad in The Sun and Province and it ran on Saturday, Monday
17 and Tuesday May 27th, 29th, and 30th, and the ad says "Do you
18 have space to share your home with a pretty independent
19 teenage girl. Absolutely no parenting required. Dunbar
20 area preferred. Please call Sheila Anderson, Point Grey
21 team." Whatever.

22 And, you know, I can't help but think of
23 Tina Fontaine and all these kids who are housed in hotels.
24 And they didn't house me in a hotel but they put an ad like
25 that in the paper. I just found it despicable. The only

1 thing I was shocked at was they didn't put the work
2 promiscuous in there. A pretty teenage girl looking for a
3 home. Like, I mean...

4 We had a short flurry of activity trying to
5 find a place off reserve where she would be able to live
6 her rather grown up lifestyle. This was superseded by
7 Michele placing herself at her grandfather's where she has
8 remained. This period of transition indicated to me the
9 kind of growth Michele has made. She showed a great deal
10 of autonomy in her decision about where to move than she
11 has in previous moves and a greater ability to accept
12 responsibility and the consequences of her decision. At
13 this time Michele is in a period of acting out, borrowing
14 money from her relatives, and she even stole beer from her
15 uncle. Her grandmother is saying she has reached her limit
16 with her. I strongly suspect Michele is pushing to get
17 thrown off the reserve.

18 September '78; arranged meeting with social
19 workers and youth workers. Grandmother, grandpa Delbert
20 Guerin, the chief, accompanied a very sullen Michele to the
21 meeting. They had employed the services of the police to
22 bring her. Grandmother Guerin suggested they put Michele
23 in the residential school at Mission. The Ministry file
24 notes Michele was very determined however to make a place
25 for herself on the Musqueam reserve, and while refusing

1 placement elsewhere bounced from home to home on the
2 reserve. Finally when her family told her she would have
3 to leave the reserve she ran away and surfaced with a job
4 as a housekeeper and baby sitter. Four redacted. But that
5 was Terry Sparrow.

6 One of the homes I lived in was with June
7 Sparrow. June had two children and her brother Terry lived
8 in her basement suite. He was a divorced single dad with
9 three children. The youngest of his children was eight
10 months old. Terry worked two jobs, one as a foreman for
11 construction on the reserve, and nightshift at Canon
12 Steel. He was also a tradesman, a drywaller, and a
13 commercial fisherman. He is so intelligent and one of the
14 funniest guys I've ever known.

15 I began to work for him as his live in
16 babysitter. He was rarely home because at the time on his
17 rare days off he was also building his own new house on the
18 reserve. I was 15 years old. He was 26. When I met him
19 he didn't know my history, thought I was his sister June's
20 friend, assuming I was older than I was. We eventually
21 started a relationship. When he moved into his new house I
22 continued babysitting for him. His kids were wonderful.
23 And since I had basically just finished growing up I
24 figured I could raise kids so I became a stepmother to
25 three young kids at the age of 15.

1 One season he came home with a fishing
2 partner, a relative from the reserve. They had been
3 drinking heavily before they arrived and I had a few beer
4 and we all went to sleep. I woke up on the floor and his
5 fishing partner was trying to wake me up and was holding
6 the middle of my bra and slamming my body down on the
7 floor. It was extremely painful. My head was being
8 slammed on the floor and I had deep cuts on both sides of
9 my body from my bra. He then dragged me into a room and
10 raped me. I ran out of the house as soon as I could and
11 slept at my grandpa's house that night.

12 I went back the next day and told Terry what
13 happened and after he saw my injuries he dropped me off at
14 Oakridge Police Station and I filed charges. This brought
15 hell to my life. My grandmother Gertie insisted I not lay
16 charges because it would cause problems for the Guerin
17 clan. My social worker avoided me for as long as she could
18 and then eventually I was given a lawyer. I was terrified
19 of the individual and was constantly being threatened and I
20 spent much of those weeks and months terrified. And it was
21 for that reason the Ministry says in my file that they
22 assigned me a lawyer.

23 However, before the trial the wife of the
24 man who had assaulted me came and sat at my kitchen table
25 pregnant and asked me to drop the charges and so I did.

1 Months and months later I was in -- oh, no,
2 sorry. My sister-in-law June was a member of the
3 Pentecostal church and I became a member as well. I quit
4 drinking. My life became raising kids and going to church.
5 I read the bible almost completely through a couple times.

6 I often think that Terry probably saved my
7 life. At a point in my life when I was so vulnerable and
8 in need of protection he took me in and he let me love his
9 little family, our little family. We lived off the land in
10 the middle of the City of Vancouver, fish, deer, duck. And
11 like I always say, I'd rather clean 500 fish than pluck and
12 clean one duck, but I plucked a lot of ducks. Him and his
13 brothers were great hunters. For food fishing him and I
14 fished in a little 12-foot boat, and then we would clean
15 them and sell them illegally to all our regular buyers. We
16 had Asian families, Italian families, tonnes of regulars
17 who each year would buy fish from us. And he was a
18 commercial fisherman.

19 And I want to say this, months and months
20 later I was inside the little church in Musqueam with our
21 little congregation praying and the man who had raped me,
22 the man I had charged, approached me and apologized. He
23 was just sobbing and repeatedly saying he was sorry. And
24 that means the world to me, because after a lifetime of
25 sexual abuse and extreme sexual violence he has been the

1 only one to apologize, and of course I accepted it.

2 Then I became pregnant with my first son
3 Keith Sparrow. He was born in June 1979. I was still a
4 ward of the government. The Ministry apprehended him as a
5 non-ward because he was born premature and they said they
6 were worried I wouldn't know how to care for him. They
7 gave me taxi vouchers to visit him in his foster home every
8 day.

9 One month later Keith came home to us. Two
10 months later Keith died of crib death. It was one of the
11 hardest days of my life, of our lives, of our children's
12 lives, and it changed me forever. It made me realize never
13 to take my life, or anyone's life for granted, because we
14 never know how long we have on this earth.

15 I always took comfort that Keith died on the
16 same weekend that Musqueam lost our oldest member grandpa
17 James Point, who was over 100 years old.

18 An ironic thing is that right after Keith's
19 funeral, while I was still a ward of the government, my
20 social worker asked me if I would be an emergency foster
21 mother for a little toddler they had apprehended who had
22 been living with her parents in a tent on the beach at
23 Spanish Banks. She was Caucasian. Her name was Sandy
24 Laughingriver. I agreed. I always thought it was so
25 ironic at 16 years old I still had a youth worker assigned

1 to me and now I was a foster mother.

2 But Terry was also a victim of
3 intergenerational trauma. This meant that I was subjected
4 to a lot of domestic violence. Usually the violence was
5 the worst when he was drinking but not always. I became
6 accustomed to being ready to run out the door if he came
7 home in a violent mood, which was often in those days.

8 After one beating -- it was the only time I
9 did this -- I returned to my home in New West, explained to
10 Joyce what had happened, and asked if I could sleep in my old
11 bed. Joyce agreed.

12 After a woman has been beaten one of the
13 best feelings in the world is to be in a warm bed in a safe
14 house. I slept so well. But Joyce woke me up early, sat
15 me at the kitchen table, and asked me what my plans were.
16 No sleeping in allowed there boy. So I suggested maybe I
17 should come back and go back to school at Marian High,
18 graduate, et cetera. This woman who had never offered me
19 advice my whole life, looked at me for a long time, and
20 simply said "Who's going to look after those kids".

21 So I left, got back on the bus to Musqueam,
22 and went back to take care of Jodie, Julie, and Mack, and I
23 don't regret it one bit. It was the best advice she ever
24 gave me.

25 Then I became pregnant again, although I

1 miscarried that baby. So I applied to the Ministry to be
2 married -- and you have that application in Tab 11 -- and
3 they granted permission. We were married December 15th,
4 1979. I was 16. He was 27. We went on to have three more
5 kids together, Victoria, Joni, and Terry.

6 There was one time Terry beat me when I was
7 eight months pregnant. I had just asked his drinking
8 buddies to leave because it was very late and the kids had
9 to get up for school. I was thrown to the ground and then
10 he smashed my head against the stove repeatedly. The men
11 that were sitting there just sat and watched.

12 In the beginning I used to call the police
13 but then didn't bother anymore. It didn't seem to serve
14 any purpose. Except once when he broke my nose they made
15 him leave. Usually they said I had to leave with my six
16 kids, which was so frustrating. Good Lord.

17 After Musqueam won the Supreme Court of
18 Canada Guerin case Musqueam band distributed \$9,000 to each
19 member of the reserve over the age of 19 years old. I
20 bought a station wagon and Terry bought a truck.

21 When I knew I was going to get beat up I
22 would leave. One night he came home and he was getting
23 violent because I hadn't returned the videos. I couldn't
24 get my car started so I ran down the street. As I stood in
25 someone else's yard I watched Terry get into his truck,

1 drive to the end of the block, turn around, floor it, and
2 ram his truck right into the front of my station wagon.
3 Then he backed up his truck into the neighbour's driveway
4 and rammed into my car a second time from another angle. I
5 called the police. They arrived and said it was Terry's
6 property and he could do what he wanted with it and they
7 left. Terry stayed in the house playing the guitar.

8 In 1985 I got permission from my husband to
9 travel to a church gathering in the States. It was the
10 first time I had ever taken a break from our family. He
11 was to pick me up on a certain day in Lynnwood, Washington.
12 When I phoned from Lynnwood our oldest son, who was in his
13 teens at the time, said that dad was arrested for drunk
14 driving at the U.S. border. He was in jail in Blaine,
15 Washington. My stepson advised me the kids were in bed,
16 everything was fine, and I said I have a ride home in the
17 morning.

18 I arrived home the next morning to an empty
19 house and a business card from a VPD sergeant. The
20 sergeant advised me my three children had been apprehended
21 by the Ministry. When I asked what had happened to my
22 three stepchildren I was advised the band social worker
23 made arrangements for them to stay with family on the
24 reserve.

25 So once again I felt rejected and angry. I

1 was terrified that I would lose my kids to the system. I
2 went to court the next day to identify them. It was the
3 most painful moment in my life. They were like two, three,
4 and four years old. As I stood in front of the judge the
5 first question he asked me was what are you going to do
6 about your drinking problem Mrs. Sparrow? I proudly
7 replied "I don't drink, Your Honour." He mumbled an
8 apology and opened the file. It took me three days to get
9 my kids back and I thought I was going to lose my mind.

10 But the Ministry was back in my life and I
11 was determined to get them out. They ordered my husband to
12 domestic violence counselling, ordered both of us to take
13 parenting/life skills classes, and I had to go on an outing
14 once a week with a social worker who would show me how to
15 parent, a worker who had no kids. But I was determined to
16 do everything they asked to get them out of our lives, and
17 a year later they were gone.

18 Soon we decided to separate and divorce and
19 it became a fight for who would get the marital home on the
20 reserve that was in both our names. Because you can't sell
21 the land on reserve -- it's Crown land -- you have to
22 revert to band policy. I remained living in the house with
23 my three kids and I became subjected to violence by some
24 members of his family who didn't want me in there.

25 One day I had 100 rotten fish dumped on my

1 yard and a bicycle thrown through the front window. I
2 wasn't home but my six kids were and they phoned 911 and
3 hid in an upstairs closet terrified, but the police didn't
4 attend. When I got home I was livid. Talked to some
5 sergeant in VPD who apologized and said they thought it was
6 a prank.

7 I went to Chief in Council about the lack of
8 policy to protect women from being shoved out of homes on
9 the reserve to go live in poverty in the east end. They
10 had no answer for me. I left the reserve at that time.

11 I want to say this; about one year ago Terry
12 apologized for everything he did to me. He had carried a
13 huge weight for years. I explained to him that he suffered
14 from intergenerational trauma. I also thanked him because
15 I said he probably saved my life and he gave me all our
16 beautiful kids. Today he is my favourite elder, a dear
17 friend, and still one of the funniest guys I know. He's
18 been sober for years and years and I'm very proud of him
19 for the example he is to our children and the happy life
20 that he has with his wife.

21 In 1985 I was determined it was my kids and
22 I against the world and I got my first job as a file clerk.
23 I was so shy and so afraid to make eye contact with people.
24 When I took the bus to work I didn't want to draw any
25 attention to myself by ringing the bell on the bus so I

1 would wait till someone else did it, even if it meant I had
2 to walk back three or four blocks.

3 This is where I know the Creator has a sense
4 of humour, because he made me secretary to Chief Joe
5 Mathias, George Watts, Simon Lucas, and Gerald Amos. I was
6 the shyest person and these are some of the strongest
7 leaders and best orators in the history of Indigenous
8 politics, all of them with an incredible sense of humour,
9 all of them staunch fighters for our rights, all of them
10 warriors. My job was to take minutes at their meetings,
11 chief's assemblies, strategy meetings, caucus sessions.
12 What a learning ground.

13 I decided to go back and get my grade 12 at
14 night through a GED. When I was successful I phoned George
15 Watts and said "I'm so happy I got my GED today." He
16 growled and said "I thought you said you had your grade 12
17 when I hired you" and I said "Well, I lied, but I have it
18 now."

19 During that time I met my husband Gary.
20 He's now a retired VPD police officer. He worked with a
21 lot of native youth in the east end and came to a meeting
22 to ask us if there was a list of band office phone numbers
23 he could get because he wanted to find a way to connect
24 kids on the street with their people back home in the
25 communities. That question made me turn my head right

1 around to look at who is this guy, and the rest is history.
2 We've been together 30 years now.

3 He was on the SWAT Team. I consider myself
4 part of the police community as much as I do part of the
5 Indigenous community. At one time I was hired to travel
6 throughout B.C. to educate British Columbians on Aboriginal
7 rights, Indigenous case law, and the modern treaty process.
8 The chief of VPD had me present to ever team training day.
9 I don't know how many police officers I spoke to but it was
10 the majority of their members. I did about 21
11 presentations over a period of 10 months.

12 I also during that time spoke to regional
13 districts, and mayors, and union groups, and rotaries, and
14 everything, and what I learned then was that British
15 Columbians really care and they want to reconcile with
16 Indigenous people but they don't know how to do it, and I
17 hope that we get there.

18 I worked for the tribes in B.C. and Canada
19 for 30 years in various capacities. I owned and operated
20 by own gill netter I called Fisher Chick for years on the
21 Fraser River and I sold it when I decided to go to law
22 school.

23 I worked as a 911 operator in the Town of
24 Squamish. It was there one night in a radio room that I
25 heard a Mountie behind me say "I don't arrest Indians I

1 shoot Indians."

2 I want to speak about my daughter Victoria
3 and my granddaughter Tatum Rain. Victoria with her long-
4 term secure relationship with a man 18 years older than her
5 -- he is exactly my age. He had been my friend when we
6 were young. She was 24 I think when their relationship
7 started and he had three kids, and she was a great
8 stepmother to those kids, and they had Tatum Rain together,
9 but over time they grew apart and split up.

10 And it was while Vic was on the rebound she
11 got into a relationship with a white guy her own age who
12 was living on the reserve. There was a whirlwind wedding
13 in Vegas. They came back. And then he began beating her,
14 viscous beatings. One day I got a call from the Native
15 police liaison in Musqueam Steve Anoose (phonetic) to
16 advise me that she was at VGH. I raced over there to find
17 my baby girl lying on a gurney in the lobby with a police
18 officer sitting beside her. She was covered in bruises
19 from head to toe. I stood and held her, wiped her tears.
20 And after the doctor cleared her to leave I was shocked
21 that the police said that they were arresting her. I
22 watched as my bruised and battered baby girl was put in the
23 back of a paddy wagon. And my question to the Commission
24 is how many white girls are arrested after they're beaten
25 up? You guys have researchers. I'd like to know the

1 answer to that question.

2 I was very afraid for Vic's life while she
3 was with this man, and I had tried to reach out to him. I
4 had tried to show him love, extended forgiveness. One way
5 was I arranged for all our children as a family and their
6 partners to attend the UBC ropes course for one day to do
7 team building. I extended an invitation to him to come if
8 he wanted to remain as part of our family but he never
9 showed.

10 Social workers got involved. Because of the
11 severity of the beating they advised my daughter Tatum Rain
12 could be apprehended because her safety was at risk and her
13 mom lived with this man. My daughter and he separated,
14 although I wasn't sure.

15 I supported Vic as much as I could. I sent
16 her and Tatum to Disneyland over Christmas. I took a six
17 month leave from work because I wanted to become her safety
18 plan.

19 On New Year's Eve I had traditionally
20 babysat Tatum Rain so Vic could be free to enjoy the night.
21 I had done that every year for years and years. So I
22 arrived on New Year's Eve at her basement suite to pick up
23 Tatum and I came around a corner and I saw her ex Jeremy's
24 truck parked down the block. It was obvious he was waiting
25 for me to pick up Tatum and leave. I had a new car so he

1 didn't recognize me. I sat in her back driveway for a long
2 time thinking. Then I made my decision that I felt would
3 save my daughter's life. I called the non-emergency police
4 line. I explained the situation. I explained he had a no-
5 go to her premises. I explained there was an outstanding
6 warrant for his arrest. I told them I knew now my daughter
7 was lying to me about not seeing him anymore. I said I
8 will leave it to you to decide if you have time to deal
9 with this tonight. I only asked that they gave me time to
10 go inside and pick up my granddaughter Tatum and leave.

11 I went inside and picked up Tatum who was
12 dressed like Princess Belle from Disneyland. She fell
13 asleep in the car on the drive back to my house in North
14 Van. During that time VPD phoned me a couple times asking
15 me to describe his truck, whether he had a dog, how many
16 entrances there were to the suite, and I took Princess
17 Belle home and put her to bed. About an hour later my
18 daughter Joni phoned to tell me Jeremy had been arrested.
19 Today is the first time Vic has learned that I was the one
20 who called the police. But I did it to save her life, and
21 I'm proud of my actions.

22 My daughter Joni had an experience with her
23 boyfriend, a nice hardworking Indigenous man. They were
24 living in North Van a couple of years ago and they got in
25 to a verbal argument. The police were called and they were

1 both arrested. She's a professional woman, as is Victoria.
2 They're both professional women. And they were arrested
3 for the night. When Joni appeared before a judge in the
4 morning he shook his head at the absurdity of the arrest.
5 And again my question is how many white girls get arrested
6 who have been victims of abuse?

7 I've had the honour of sitting in treaty
8 negotiations with tribes in Canada and B.C., and you may
9 think that the talk is all about land, and cash, and
10 resources, but I always think of one beautiful grandma who
11 sat at the main table sessions angry every time, so angry,
12 as she addressed Canada and B.C. negotiators angry about
13 her grandchildren being taken away by the Ministry,
14 insisting that it's the hereditary chiefs of our Nations
15 who have authority over our children not the province. I
16 watched Canada and B.C.'s negotiators respond with high
17 respect, enormous empathy, and a willingness to find
18 solution, and I think of that warrior woman often.

19 So what's my main message? My main message
20 is our people I think could do a better job caring for our
21 children than the current system. And it would especially
22 be the case if you funded services for family support
23 services and give our kids the same level of service as
24 non-Indigenous kids have access to. I don't understand why
25 you don't run courses, why courses aren't run in adult ed

1 and training at night schools for kids on the street. Give
2 them shelter and educate them at the same time.

3 To kids in care I want to say don't give up.
4 If you want to make your social worker accountable let them
5 know you will file an FOI request as soon as you're old
6 enough. I think every former child in care should do an
7 FOI on their file and let's see what they say about it.

8 The kids in care I also think should found
9 out who your MP and MLA is in your area. Email them when
10 you aren't receiving support and/or services from the
11 Ministry and let your voices be heard.

12 I'm here because I'm a survivor. I don't
13 want sympathy. I don't need it. I'm strong. But nothing
14 has changed in the system since I was in it. That became
15 clear with Tina Fontaine and all the others you have heard
16 about during these hearings. My story is still relevant
17 because there are hundreds of our girls still living these
18 stories, hundreds of our kids.

19 I'm almost done.

20 I met Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond when she gave
21 a lecture to our first year law class and I acted like a
22 groupie because she's one of my heroes. Collectively
23 Indigenous female lawyers across the country hold her in
24 the highest regard. I was elated when she was appointed as
25 B.C.'s representative for children and youth. I wanted to

1 write her a letter to thank her.

2 Apprehending children separates them from
3 family, community, and cultures, and results in emotional
4 trauma and loss of identity. Many become victims of sexual
5 assaults. So how does this differ from residential schools
6 again? For example, the representative recently reported
7 that 121 children and youth were victims of sexual assault
8 while in government care between 2011 and '14. Of those
9 109 were girls, 74 Aboriginal. The reality of sexual
10 violence is a regular occurrence for young women on the
11 street. I know this. I experienced this. And do you know
12 what a high risk youth thinks about as they walk the
13 streets day and night, we simply wonder does anyone care at
14 all.

15 I talked in my letter to her about Gullivan,
16 and I finished with this week retired judge Ted Hughes,
17 said a representative of Turpel-Lafond, the job was carried
18 out in a confrontational manner sometimes. Could the job
19 be done without that? It's an open question. Undoubtedly
20 the job requires someone who's not afraid to stand up to
21 government.

22 I want to thank Ms. Turpel-Lafond for your
23 toughness, hard work, and dedicated service. It was
24 comforting to have such a powerful advocate for our
25 children and youth. Most of all thank you for caring.

1 Trust me, we noticed.

2 When Tina Fontaine's murder was acquitted I
3 publicly posted the article about his acquittal and wrote
4 "Fuck you you fucking fucks" on my Facebook page. And I
5 appealed and asked our Justice Minister Jody Wilson-
6 Raybould where is the justice. It was an honest appeal to
7 a sister that I hold in the highest respect. Good Lord, we
8 watched her grow in her career. As an Indigenous female
9 lawyer of course I respect her but we need action, and I
10 hope that she's leading that conversation in Ottawa.

11 And that question I had what does it mean to
12 be Indian, trust me, now I know. People who know me know
13 that I tend to shed tears when I stand up in front of a
14 nation of people. I'm reminded of that question I always
15 had. And then I find myself standing in front of and I'm
16 facing a powerful tribe -- another powerful tribe, and a
17 vibrant culture with traditional institutions that are
18 still intact, and I feel like it hits me like a wave. I
19 feel like I shed tears and say okay Creator I've got it, I
20 know what it's like to be an Indian because you just --
21 these nations are so beautiful and amazing.

22 As I wrote this testimony I thought of all
23 the powerful leaders I know, so many of my friends on
24 Facebook even, Miles Richardson, my nickname for him is
25 1.6, Gudjo (phonetic), who's pure warrior, Francis Frank,

1 Judy Sayers, Gerald Amos, all these warriors who stood up,
2 put blockades in front of their forests and their sacred
3 lands to protect them, and they succeeded. And today I
4 feel like I'm willing to put a blockade in front of our
5 children to say no more, you don't protect us so we will
6 protect our own children. I'll stand with Cindy Blackstock
7 or anyone who asks to find solution. And why, because it's
8 2018, we need political will.

9 Lastly, I just want to say I saw a meme the
10 other day that said you're going to have a happy life but
11 first I'll make you strong. And I do have a happy life.
12 And I thank you for listening.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I will now ask if the
14 Commissioner has any questions for Michele.

15 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Merci beaucoup,
16 Maître Ouellette.

17 Everything was said, everything. I cannot
18 add more or ask questions. Everything was in your message,
19 your ton témoignage -- that three generation where -- I'll
20 get the English version -- where it's more common than
21 question. Like I said this morning, there's always a
22 reason why it was meant to be or our paths cross. And
23 you're very powerful, very powerful. And I'm not there to
24 give you sympathy but just to say that I'm very proud to be
25 the one sitting here and receiving every word that you say

1 and you're sharing.

2 Not only that, but this momentum it's also
3 to tell Canada what's still wrong today in 2018. And many
4 of us are ostriches, you know, that bird, pretending it
5 doesn't exist, or it used to be, or it's something
6 happening just over there, where your experience is telling
7 us that the moment you were born until your granddaughter
8 still today.

9 Here the right word I want to say, the
10 failure of the foster care system and the social worker to
11 protect Indigenous girls from violence they weren't there
12 for you. And the sad part, with this inquiry I've heard it
13 before, we all did, but now Canada does, that it's
14 happening in my community, in my (inaudible). It's
15 happening in Rankin Inlet, Goosebay, Yellowknife,
16 Whitehorse, everywhere. We know that. But what I don't
17 understand it's still happening.

18 So your message, powerful it is, very, very
19 powerful, they cannot pretend that it's an isolated
20 situation. Thank God that we have -- I'm swearing like
21 you. My God -- what did you say -- Good Lord. Good Lord
22 we have strong advocate, and I know for sure you are one of
23 them.

24 And it's the first time I hear about the 49
25 project -- 49 children project. Can you tell me a little

1 bit more about this?

2 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** I don't know much
3 more than what's in the file.

4 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Okay.

5 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** I just know that
6 they selected 49 children. I've read the one year later
7 report that they sent me but it references so much in the
8 original report that it's hard to make sense of it.

9 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Okay.

10 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** It's something
11 that I'm very interested in getting a copy of because I'd
12 like to know what their objective was.

13 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Did you request that
14 copy?

15 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** I did, and they
16 sent me the one year later report.

17 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Okay. The one you
18 have.

19 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Yeah.

20 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** And we have it now?

21 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** You have the --
22 they didn't send me the original 49 children project report
23 they sent me the 49 children project one year later update.

24 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Oh, one year later.
25 Okay. Merci.

1 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** And so there's a
2 lot of references in that report that says see page 40 of
3 the original report, blah, blah, blah. So I haven't seen
4 that report, and I'd like to see that report.

5 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** One of the -- there's
6 many priorities. We all know that. And because of the
7 time we're having, policing, the relationship with the
8 police, or in general it's a priority for the four
9 Commissioners and the national inquiry, but also the child
10 welfare system with the Ministry, very, very important.

11 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** M'hm.

12 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** So there will be a
13 second phase. And I call for me an expert -- it's a family
14 member or a survivor, a person who went through that
15 experience or trauma, for me those are the experts. Is it
16 possible that we stay in touch when we will sit with those
17 ministries across Canada or the federal one and say bon we
18 have some experts who know exactly what happened? And I'm
19 not a lawyer, but I try to be very comfortable in that
20 world, but sometimes when I'm not I ask people who has that
21 expertise what are the questions, the tough questions that
22 we need to ask ---

23 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** M'hm.

24 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** --- and what are the
25 solutions.

1 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** M'hm.

2 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** We know the solution,
3 but Canada needs to hear. There's that tool, this inquiry.

4 And I hope the door is open that we can
5 connect with you and your part of an expert, a knowledge
6 keeper, and it would be very important for me.

7 And I believe we should be in charge big
8 time for our children.

9 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** M'hm.

10 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Being a mom of five
11 beautiful children we do everything to protect them but
12 sometimes the system is not there to support us.

13 So is it something I can count on you?

14 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Absolutely.

15 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Merci beaucoup.

16 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Absolutely.

17 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Merci beaucoup.

18 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** And I've seen
19 examples of self-governing tribes now who have jurisdiction
20 over childcare and child welfare in their communities, and
21 I see the successes. And Huu-ay-aht has just declared a
22 state of emergency over their own children. And people
23 taking control, and now they have the authority to do it,
24 and this is what I am a big advocate for, because I do
25 believe that our children thrive the most in our own

1 communities around our culture.

2 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Yes.

3 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** And I tried -- you
4 know, the chart that may have been boring that I walked
5 through in the beginning, where I kept trying to emphasize
6 how, you know, this child is well-adjusted, blah, blah,
7 blah, you know, it was to demonstrate that all the sexual
8 abuse is going on in my life but they're calling me a well-
9 adjusted child. Like they had no -- I don't even think
10 they had interest in knowing what was really happening
11 because as long as the case file's going along and doesn't
12 have to interfere with my workload it's -- you know.

13 So I would be honoured to have anything to
14 do with follow-up. And, like I said, I'll -- I'm very
15 motivated.

16 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** And also where it's
17 more personal, where did you get that strength, that
18 resilience, and that empowerment to stay alive?

19 Many of us decided to end our life because
20 it was too much.

21 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** M'hm.

22 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** And you're still here
23 today. And everywhere we go the families that we hear of
24 the survivors -- I will say sorry -- that went through the
25 trauma that you went, the solution was that they want to

1 end their life. And still today the mental health so
2 fragile.

3 What keeps you here today?

4 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** What keeps me here
5 today?

6 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Only if you want to
7 answer.

8 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Well, you know,
9 I've always thought I got a lot of strength from my dad,
10 and I think rooted in that was how he drilled it in me to
11 be proud of my culture. But underlying it I didn't know
12 what my culture was so I had this absolute intense interest
13 in finding my tribe, and finding my people, and learning
14 all of that.

15 And, you know, I just think I'm -- I have a
16 thing that hangs in my garage that says "Believe there is
17 good in the world" and the words "Be the good" is
18 highlighted. And I always feel like that's how I approach
19 life. I just -- I know that you've got to keep fighting
20 every day and you've just got to -- and this is where it
21 hurts me to see kids who are suffering in care who should
22 be being cared for, and loved, and they need that, someone
23 to give them that strength to say go on, don't give up, you
24 know, just don't give up. Like don't think that this is
25 going to be your entire life because it isn't. You'll get

1 out of it and you can become a lawyer one day. I never
2 thought I'd be a -- you know, get to this position, but it
3 was one step at a time, you know, and one goal at a time.

4 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Did you ever hear
5 about that I was in a hearing and most of the families who
6 spoke -- no, all of them who spoke in private or in public
7 we always heard about their children being apprehended, or
8 they were the one apprehended, so always related to the
9 child welfare system, always.

10 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** M'hm.

11 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** And at the end one
12 man off camera outside after the ceremony just grabbed me,
13 never met that man before, said "Did you know this is an
14 industry here in Canada" and I was like whoa, and that was
15 the last hearing we went in Manitoba.

16 Did you hear that before?

17 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** I have heard that,
18 yeah.

19 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Okay.

20 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** You know, I don't
21 really have a -- I don't know enough about it, you know, to
22 know whether I could form an opinion on it. But, you know,
23 I do see -- like I said, based on the homes that I've been
24 in and the way that I experienced group homes and foster
25 homes, and then in non-Indigenous homes and then in

1 Indigenous homes, it's entirely different, and you're --
2 you know, it's why I advocate for it, because I think that
3 there's so much love and support and culture around a child
4 and that is what they need the most. The industry, I don't
5 know. I don't know.

6 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Okay.

7 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Yeah.

8 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** I'll find out. I
9 really need to know, because it's -- what do we say in
10 English? It struck me. I was like h'm I hear -- pardon me
11 -- yeah, shocked me.

12 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** M'hm.

13 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** We have, only if you
14 want, something for you, for your courage, your resilience,
15 but also I don't think Canada will forget your message. I
16 won't.

17 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Thank you.

18 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** It was very, very
19 powerful. And I still say I'm blessed, I'm glad I was the
20 one. Very, very powerful.

21 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Thank you.

22 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** And I want to say
23 thank you to the elders who come.

24 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Yes.

25 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Everywhere I go I ask

1 women from the land to support.

2 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** M'hm.

3 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** And merci beaucoup.
4 And we have something for you if you accept
5 it.

6 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Yes. Thank you,
7 yes. Of course.

8 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Bernie, do you want
9 to explain.

10 **MS. BERNIE POITRAS:** I just want to say Howa
11 to you, Michele. Not too often I cry. Your message is
12 very powerful. I work on the frontlines right downtown
13 east side, and the question that you asked does anybody
14 care, we spend a lot of times in those allies with the kids
15 now, and I just wanted to say how much I really honour you.
16 It's a very powerful message. And I'm so glad you're here.
17 I really am. And your message is very powerful, and I know
18 they're listening.

19 And also Gudjo Heckenwells (phonetic) are
20 from my home territory too.

21 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Oh, are they.

22 **MS. BERNIE POITRAS:** So I want to say Howa
23 to you again. And these eagle feathers they started their
24 journey -- not these ones, but I believe these eagle
25 feathers come from Manitoba. Every place that we were

1 going sometimes we ran out, we do a call out, but the
2 journey started in Haida Gwaii, my home territory, with the
3 matriarchs, over 400 eagle feathers made their way. But
4 these ones now come from Manitoba, I believe from Thompson,
5 Manitoba.

6 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Wow.

7 **MS. BERNIE POITRAS:** So the families, the
8 spiritual people, Sechelt, you know, sent, like the whole
9 wings of the eagles and that ---

10 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Right on.

11 **MS. BERNIE POITRAS:** -- on this journey.
12 But this is a gift from the families all across Canada to
13 you for sharing your story.

14 **MS. JONI MICHELE GUERIN:** Thank you very
15 much.

16 (SHORT PAUSE)

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Commissioner, I am
18 asking if you would like to adjourn the hearing.

19 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Translation, he wants
20 to adjourn.

21 (LAUGHTER)

22 **COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:** Usually what we do in
23 Quebec, in Thompson, if people want to come and give love
24 to the family or the survivor it's always a beautiful
25 gesture.

1 --- Exhibits (code: P01P15P0107)

2 **Exhibit 1:** Province of British Columbia child protection
3 order for Joni Michele Guerin made April 23,
4 1963 by Judge W. Murphy.

5 **Exhibit 2:** Appendix / Chronology prepared by Ms. Joni
6 Michele Guerin, dated April 4, 2018.

7 **Exhibit 3:** Folder containing two digital images provided
8 by the witness, one of which was displayed
9 during the public testimony of Michele Joni
10 Guerin.

11 **Exhibit 4:** Report entitled: "49 Children, One Year
12 Later" by Brian McPharland, M.S.W. dated
13 February 1979 (46 pages).

14 **Exhibit 5:** One-page advertisement placed in Vancouver
15 Sun and Province newspapers September 4-8,
16 1964 regarding the whereabouts of Beverley
17 Joan Guerin.

18 **Exhibit 6:** Letter from Mrs. Ralph Harris (Beryl) to Mr.
19 Tom Mountenay, dated November 18, 1976 and
20 reply from Irene Falk, social worker, dated
21 December 8, 1976.

22 **Exhibit 7:** Foster home placement advertisement request
23 dated May 26, 1978.

24 **Exhibit 8:** Letter to Reverend J.E. Reiter from W.E.
25 Keeling dated May 27, 1965.

- 1 **Exhibit 9:** Letter to Reverend J.E. Reiter from W.E.
- 2 Keeling dated March 16, 1965.
- 3 **Exhibit 10:** Request for permission for Joni Michele
- 4 Guerin to marry, dated November 9, 1979.
- 5 **Exhibit 11:** Letter to Mr. Kelling regarding Beverley Joan
- 6 Guerin dated January 15, 1965 (sender's name
- 7 redacted).
- 8 **Exhibit 12:** Ministry of Social Services severance notice
- 9 (one page).

10 --- Upon adjourning at 4:10 p.m.

11

12 LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

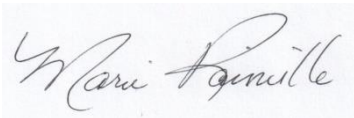
13

14 I, Marie Rainville, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that
15 I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and
16 accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this
17 matter.

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Marie Rainville

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April 10, 2018

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