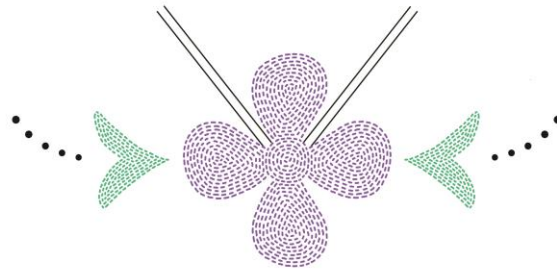


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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 Statement Gathering  
Edmonton, Alberta**



**PUBLIC**

**Monday November 19, 2018**

**Statement - Volume 593**

**Barb Dawson,  
In relation to Barbara Jack**

**Statement gathered by Daria Boyarchuk**

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November 19, 2018

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Documents provided with testimony: none.

Edmonton, Alberta

--- Upon commencing on Monday, November 19, 2018 at 9:50  
a.m.

**DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Hi, my name is Daria  
Boyarchuk and I am a statement gatherer with the National  
Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and  
Girls. And we're here in Edmonton, Alberta on November  
18th, 2018. It is 9:50 in the morning. And I am here  
honoured to -- to be surrounded by Barb Dawson from Lake  
Country and ---

**BARB DAWSON:** Originally Whitehorse, Yukon.

**DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Whitehorse, Yukon, thank  
you. And also accompanying her -- his mom is Barb's son  
[Barb's Son].

**BARB DAWSON:** From Kelowna, BC.

**DARIA BOYARCHUK:** From Kelowna, BC. Thank  
you. So, Barb, you wanted to start by talking a little bit  
about yourself and honouring your ancestors.

**BARB DAWSON:** I -- I would like to say that,  
first of all, I want to pay respect to the Treaty 6  
Territory of the Plains and Wood Cree Indians, and other  
tribes of Indians of the Fort Carlton -- Fort Pitt Battle  
River and with Ahesions (Ph.) people for being on their  
territory.

I'm (inaudible) from Atlin, BC, that's my

1 mother's side. And my mother is Loraine Dawson. That's  
2 her married name. Her family last name is Jack. And my  
3 mother is the oldest of her family. She's the matriarch at  
4 -- right now. And I had called her about this and so I'm  
5 giving my statement with the blessing of my mother's okay  
6 for my -- my -- with my mother's blessing, I should say.

7 So -- yeah, so I -- I just wanted to make  
8 sure that I -- I'm giving this statement with respect to  
9 everybody in my mother's family. And if my mother says  
10 it's okay, then it's okay. So nobody else can argue about  
11 it.

12 It's -- and I'm glad my son is here with me  
13 being supportive, very good. I -- I still remember my --  
14 my aunt -- my Aunt Barbara who is the reason I'm here.

15 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Was her last name?

16 **BARB DAWSON:** Barbara Jack. And I remember  
17 her when I was a child. And she was always really good to  
18 me, she was always -- made me happy because it wasn't a  
19 very good environment. It was a lot of residential school  
20 trauma that was being played out with alcoholism. And my  
21 mother's family had a very bad experience, and I guess  
22 everybody was drinking. So the environment that my aunt  
23 had -- was growing up in wasn't good. And the -- the --  
24 what I remember wasn't good but what I do remember is that  
25 my Aunt Barbara made me feel safe. And she would -- she

1 would play with me and my brother. And just -- she would  
2 comfort us. And I just really still think about her. Even  
3 though it's been more than half my lifetime.

4 Yeah, I've never got the chance to speak  
5 about her. Nobody speaks about her. But I do remember her  
6 and I remember being happy with her. And I'm still -- I'm  
7 still sad about the fact that she's gone. And nobody knows  
8 what happened, nobody -- what I heard was that she went  
9 missing and they found her remains up in Grey Mountain.  
10 And I was told that she was identified by her dental  
11 records. And this is all new information that I -- what I  
12 knew as a child is that she was -- her remains were found  
13 and that they found out who she was. And I don't think she  
14 was -- I didn't hear about a funeral, I didn't -- yeah,  
15 just -- nobody really spoke about it. And but I still  
16 think about -- I still carry her memory.

17 And it's -- I keep thinking that whoever did  
18 this to her is probably dead by now. I don't know but, you  
19 know, I just think that, you know, that she -- I just wish  
20 she was still here.

21 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** When did it happen to her,  
22 do you know?

23 **BARB DAWSON:** I think about '75, '76.

24 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And you said her remains  
25 were found in Grey Mountains. Was it recent that they were

1 found there? Or ---

2 **BARB DAWSON:** No, it was in, I think, in '76  
3 that they found her.

4 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

5 **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah. My grandmother told me  
6 about that. My grandmother [Grandmother 1]. I mean, as a  
7 kid, you -- you really don't know how to react to something  
8 like that. And I just remember her telling me that and  
9 just feeling that -- a loss. Yeah, it -- yeah, it still  
10 affects me to this day.

11 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Do you ever talk about it  
12 with your son? Or is this the first time you hear this  
13 story?

14 **[BARB'S SON]:** She was mentioning her on the  
15 plane, on the trip here. And just, now and then, leading  
16 up to this moment.

17 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So this is really the  
18 first time when you're learning about your aunt?

19 **[BARB'S SON]:** Yes.

20 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

21 **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah, I actually never spoke  
22 with it about him -- about her to him. He -- he's -- I did  
23 tell him why we were coming here so -- and I told him about  
24 how she made me feel happy when we were kids because  
25 everybody was drinking. So, yeah, she was a huge loss to

1 me. And I always remember how, you know, people would be  
2 hard on her and not -- feeling sad that I wasn't able to,  
3 you know, protect her but I was a child myself. And so --  
4 but I do remember, you know, people not being good --  
5 yelling at her and -- and just -- I was -- I was -- I think  
6 I was, like, three or four and I wanted to speak up for her  
7 but I, you know ---

8 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And do you know -- you  
9 know, when her remains were found, do you know what  
10 actually happened? Does your family know what happened?

11 **BARB DAWSON:** No. According to my Uncle  
12 Bryan Jack, he spoke to the Missing and Murdered Women and  
13 they said that they -- due to the -- the condition of her  
14 remains that they don't know what happened to her.

15 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** They don't even know what  
16 happened?

17 **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah.

18 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And that's even more sad,  
19 you know, when you find out that your aunt was found  
20 somewhere up on the mountain, you know, it just -- it's  
21 just really sad. Just breaks my heart to think, you know,  
22 how -- how she must have gone. And the fact that nobody  
23 was found responsible and -- and the fact, you know, this  
24 is still happening. Yeah. It's ---

25 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So you were three, four

1 years old at the time.

2 **BARB DAWSON:** I'm -- of my memory of her,  
3 yeah. Maybe a little older, I'm not sure. I just remember  
4 this is -- my memory of her is in Atlin when my mother  
5 would bring us out to Atlin to visit my grandmother because  
6 we lived in Whitehorse with my grandparents. So my mother  
7 would take us to go visit and it'd be good for a few days  
8 and then things would get little crazy. So, yeah. And  
9 Barb was there and my Uncle [Uncle 2] was there, that's her  
10 brother. So, yeah, it was -- all my memories of her are in  
11 Atlin because that's where she lived at the time.

12 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And Atlin is -- where is  
13 it exactly? Which province?

14 **BARB DAWSON:** Atlin, BC is the most northern  
15 town. It's 50 miles south of the BC Yukon border.

16 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So did she live alone at  
17 that time, or was ---

18 **BARB DAWSON:** No. No, she was with her  
19 mother, my grandmother, [Grandmother 2] and my Uncle  
20 [Grandfather] -- or Grandpa [Grandfather]. And they --  
21 they all lived in a -- one house.

22 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And did your ---

23 **BARB DAWSON:** Excuse me.

24 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** --- your mother, did she  
25 ever talk about it, or ---



1                   **BARB DAWSON:** No. I -- I've asked my mother  
2                   about my auntie and she says, "We just don't talk about  
3                   it." And I'm, like, "Why?" You know? And maybe it's --  
4                   like, it's -- I don't know why but I always wonder, you  
5                   know, why nobody talks about how she died. Or how come  
6                   nobody was brought, you know, how come nobody was caught,  
7                   or nobody, you know, nothing, which is, you know, it's like  
8                   she never existed, that's the sad thing. And, you know,  
9                   for me to carry these memories all these years, I still  
10                  wonder, you know, where this person is that hurt her --  
11                  killed her. So it's -- it's -- you know, that's -- that's  
12                  how she affected me.

13                  **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And it's even probably  
14                  harder because there is not much information that you can  
15                  find from your family members, right, because you were so  
16                  young.

17                  **BARB DAWSON:** No, even, you know, I went --  
18                  even went to the -- the graveyard in Atlin and I tried to  
19                  look for her grave. So that, you know, for me to do that  
20                  it just -- just tells me how much I still miss her.

21                  **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** But so there was -- there  
22                  was a funeral? Or -- because there is a graveyard, right?  
23                  You said ---

24                  **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah. They -- I don't know.  
25                  I asked -- I don't think -- I -- I don't know if there was

1 a funeral. I'm -- my -- my mother doesn't even know if  
2 there was a funeral, so -- she said she was at the Lower  
3 Post School (Ph.). I'm not sure, yeah, it's just --  
4 doesn't make sense.

5 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

6 **BARB DAWSON:** I never heard of a funeral.

7 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. Is it something  
8 that you would like to find out? Like, what happened to  
9 her today? Or how do you -- how do you feel about it?

10 **BARB DAWSON:** For sure. I would love if  
11 somebody was responsible, you know, to find the -- not -- I  
12 would love them to find the person that's responsible, you  
13 know. I mean, it should be -- if they can still find out  
14 who, or, you know -- if somebody ---

15 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** How.

16 **BARB DAWSON:** How. You know, if somebody  
17 came forward, that would be great. I mean, that would be  
18 really good because I just -- it -- it -- for me, it's --  
19 it's -- it's -- it's going -- I'm going to carry this  
20 memory on until -- until I'm gone because, you know, it's  
21 that -- I just want somebody to be held accountable for her  
22 missing, her death because it's -- it just -- I really wish  
23 she was still here. Yeah. You know.

24 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And I your opinion, what  
25 do you think -- what was the reason behind the -- this

1           silence about what happened to your aunt and ---

2                       **BARB DAWSON:** That, I'm not sure. I -- I'm  
3           just -- I'm not sure. I spoke with my mother and she's  
4           just -- she's, you know, I think it's just people not  
5           feeling comfortable talking about somebody who is not hear  
6           and -- maybe, I don't know.

7                       **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Are they still angry?

8                       **BARB DAWSON:** I think everybody's still very  
9           angry with, you know, authorities not doing more. Because  
10          it's still happening to other families. So, you know, it's  
11          -- I mean, yeah, I still -- you know, when I read in the  
12          newspaper, women still going missing, it -- I -- I think  
13          about my aunt still, you know.

14                      **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So is it something that  
15          still continues to happen in the -- in your region? Or in  
16          Atlin, in that area, or do you think it has gotten better  
17          over the years?

18                      **BARB DAWSON:** Well, there's been a couple of  
19          deaths up there that haven't been figured out. But not in  
20          Atlin. Atlin is -- I mean, it's on a healing journey. And  
21          but nobody's been missing or murdered thankfully. So it's,  
22          you know, I -- my aunt was not -- she went missing in  
23          Whitehorse and ---

24                      **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So it's not in Atlin? So  
25          it's ---

1                   **BARB DAWSON:** No. She went missing in  
2                   Whitehorse. I think she was trying to get away from the --  
3                   the alcoholism that was in Atlin at the time so ---

4                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So when this -- when you  
5                   said she was found in the -- or the remains were found in -  
6                   - on Grey Mountain, is it something, like, near the city  
7                   where she might have gone to? Or -- or, like ---

8                   **BARB DAWSON:** I -- you know, I -- where  
9                   she's -- I think she was staying at a foster home ---

10                  **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

11                  **BARB DAWSON:** --- because her ---

12                  **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And how old was she at the  
13                  time when she disappeared?

14                  **BARB DAWSON:** I think she was 15.

15                  **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Fifteen.

16                  **BARB DAWSON:** I thought 14 but I recently  
17                  looked at a obituary and it says she was 16. But she was  
18                  missing for a year and then when they found her she was  
19                  dead and ---

20                  **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So you think at this time  
21                  she was staying in a foster home?

22                  **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah.

23                  **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hmm.

24                  **BARB DAWSON:** I mean, she's 15 ---

25                  **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

1                   **BARB DAWSON:** --- so ---

2                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right. Do you know what  
3 kind of foster home it was? Do you know if she ever shared  
4 it with her sister or her mom about her experience there?

5                   **BARB DAWSON:** No, I don't. I -- my mother  
6 is -- she doesn't remember a whole lot right now about  
7 things. And she gets frustrated when she tries to think  
8 about something and she can't. So it's really hard to talk  
9 to her because she's -- yeah.

10                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** But when you say the --  
11 she was running away from -- from alcohol, is it something  
12 that was -- that she was, like, finding refuge in when it  
13 was -- when things got hard for her? Or ---

14                   **BARB DAWSON:** I don't think she was  
15 drinking, no. No. I remember her just dealing with the  
16 fact that she was in the situation. I remember her just,  
17 you know, always feeling -- I think she was, like,  
18 everybody focused their negative energy towards her and she  
19 felt it. And she wanted to get out of it.

20                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** To get out of there.

21                   **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah.

22                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** I understand.

23                   **BARB DAWSON:** And I think we found refuge in  
24 -- me and my brother [Brother], found refuge with her and  
25 she found refuge with us. And that's why we had a

1 connection. So -- because we were -- she was -- I just  
2 remember always being happy when she was there with me.  
3 And I don't remember anything -- that time, I don't  
4 remember being connected to anybody but her.

5 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

6 **BARB DAWSON:** So that's why it's such a huge  
7 loss.

8 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

9 **BARB DAWSON:** Huge loss to me. So, I mean,  
10 at the time I was more -- I was closer to her than I was to  
11 my mother, so, yeah.

12 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Do you have anything else  
13 to -- you would like to share?

14 **BARB DAWSON:** Well, I just -- you know, it's  
15 -- I still think, in my head, I still think of the what  
16 if's, you know, the what happened? You know, all those  
17 questions of that brought the end to her life. I still  
18 think about that. Even before this commission happened,  
19 you know. Throughout my whole I keep thinking about my  
20 Auntie Barb and what life would have been like if she was  
21 still around pretty much for some reason. Like, not one  
22 year has ever gone by where I didn't think about my Auntie  
23 Barb throughout the year. Just remember her long hair, her  
24 glasses and smiling, laughing with us. Yeah. So I  
25 remember her sleeping on the bed. There's a story one time

1           that made me feel that, you know, this is maybe why she --  
2           she left, I don't know, or -- there was this -- we were all  
3           sleeping in the living room of my grandmother [Grandmother  
4           2]'s house. And apparently there was a porcupine in a tree  
5           outside the house and everybody wanted to get up and go  
6           look at this porcupine in the tree. And I was woken up to  
7           go look at this porcupine in the tree. And they're, like,  
8           "Barb, Barb, get up. You got to look out at the  
9           porcupine." And I'm standing there looking at this  
10          porcupine in a tree but Barb kept on sleeping. So when  
11          everybody went back in the house, they got mad at Auntie  
12          Barb for -- because she was sleeping still. And I -- to  
13          this day, don't understand why it was very important to go  
14          look at this porcupine. I -- honestly, just -- it was a  
15          traumatic memory because I saw everybody yelling at my  
16          Auntie Barb and I didn't want them to. And some people  
17          might not like that story but that's how I remember it. I  
18          wanted to protect her at that moment but I was a kid.

19                         **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right. Yeah.

20                         **BARB DAWSON:** I think I remember saying,  
21                         "Don't yell at Auntie Barb."

22                         **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And you -- your Auntie  
23                         Barb mother and her family, were they residential school  
24                         survivors?

25                         **BARB DAWSON:** Yes. Yes. I think everybody,

1       yeah, in that family had gone to residential school in one  
2       form of another. And, you know, I'm suffering the effects  
3       of residential school. I've dealt with my issues -- I'm  
4       dealing with my issues. And thankfully, I understood, you  
5       know, my -- I understood what's going on and I didn't want  
6       that to affect my son so I removed myself from that  
7       environment. And my son has ---

8                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

9                   **BARB DAWSON:** --- graduated high school,  
10       scholarship.

11                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Wow. Congratulations.

12                   **BARB DAWSON:** Forty-thousand-dollar entrance  
13       scholarship. And he doesn't drink, smoke, or do drugs.  
14       And so, you know, I was able to do that. I wanted to do  
15       for him what I wish was done for me.

16                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

17                   **BARB DAWSON:** And, you know, it's -- my  
18       Auntie Barb didn't get to live her life, which is very,  
19       very sad for me because she wasn't there for me. She  
20       couldn't be there for me because -- it's -- yeah, so -- so  
21       it's -- that's why I'm very glad I'm here to -- to let  
22       people know that, you know, this is something that needs to  
23       stop. It needs to be made, you know, it's -- I mean, I'm  
24       still affected by it.

25                   **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right. Is there anything



1 else you would like to share [Barb's Son]? No?

2 **[BARB'S SON]:** No.

3 **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah, so it's -- it's -- I'm  
4 just, you know, just glad that my story can be heard  
5 because I kept it to myself all these years.

6 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Something that I wanted to  
7 ask you. You said that you moved yourself away, you -- you  
8 found a way to separate yourself to heal from all the --  
9 the pain and the -- and intergenerational violence and  
10 effects of residential schools. Is there, like, a healing  
11 practice that you engaged in? Or what helped you the most  
12 for your, yourself, personally?

13 **BARB DAWSON:** I just didn't want my son to  
14 go through what I went through.

15 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

16 **BARB DAWSON:** And I -- I know that I still -  
17 - I know my weaknesses and I know that if I'm surrounded by  
18 -- if I'm in that environment -- that unhealthy environment  
19 that I will practice it as well. So I took myself away  
20 from it and I tried to nurture him the way I wish I was  
21 taken care of. And I think in doing that, you know, I was  
22 able to take care of me and him at the same time. So it  
23 was a very good -- it was very good thing that I did. You  
24 know, I -- I -- I wasn't close with the -- I wasn't --  
25 we're not close to our family in the sense of distance but

1 I -- I needed to do that to make sure that he was brought  
2 up in a environment where I felt was safe. I wanted ---

3 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Safe, yeah.

4 **BARB DAWSON:** --- yeah. Like, I wanted  
5 stability, I wanted ---

6 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

7 **BARB DAWSON:** --- you know, to -- him to  
8 feel safe.

9 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

10 **BARB DAWSON:** So I managed to do that for  
11 him, which is -- which, you know, is -- I hope that, you  
12 know, every -- my efforts would give him a better life than  
13 what I had to experience. So ---

14 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. You're a very  
15 strong woman, like, to have the strength to just uproot  
16 yourself from this environment and to have enough strength  
17 to give this love to your son, that's -- that's incredible.

18 **BARB DAWSON:** I -- I just, you know, it's --  
19 it's that -- I'm just really glad that I did that because --  
20 --

21 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. Of course.

22 **BARB DAWSON:** --- I just -- it's -- you  
23 know, and I -- I thought -- I thought of the life that my  
24 Auntie Barb, you know, what -- what her life might have  
25 been like. You know, how -- how would I have interacted

1 with her now as an adult, you know? You know, how -- how  
2 would my life have been changed if she was still around?  
3 And, you know, it's -- so -- I have managed to keep her  
4 alive in my head.

5 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** I think by you coming here  
6 today, together with your son and you giving voice to the -  
7 --

8 **BARB DAWSON:** Exactly.

9 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** --- [inaudible response]

10 **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah. That's what I wanted to  
11 do. I -- I dressed up for her. Yes, I loved her very  
12 much. I didn't know her very long but I loved her very  
13 much. And that's the sad thing. I didn't know her very  
14 long.

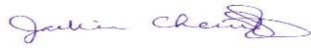
15 **DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. It's okay. It is  
16 10:20 in the morning and I will go over the consent form  
17 that I mentioned to you earlier.

18 **BARB DAWSON:** Yeah.

19 --- Upon adjourning at 10:20 a.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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



---

Jackie Chernoff

January 9, 2019