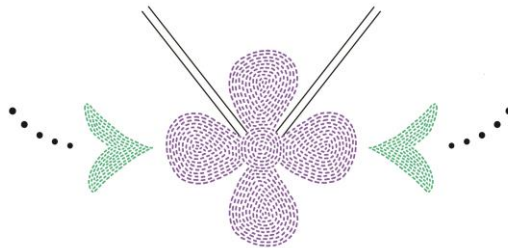


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Garden River First Nations Indian Reserve
Ontario**



PUBLIC

Wednesday October 17, 2018

Statement - Volume 555

**Lionel Desmoulin,
In relation to Shirley Darlene Taylor**

Statement gathered by Debbie Bodkin

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Statement Gatherer: Debbie Bodkin

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

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1 Garden River First Nations Indian Reserve
2 --- Upon commencing on Wednesday, October 17, 2018 at 10:31 a.m.

3 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay, we have the
4 equipment all back on again. It is now 10:31 a.m. on
5 Wednesday, October 17th. So as I mentioned Lionel, myself
6 Debbie Bodkin, Daria Boyarchuk, I'm going to basically hand
7 the room over to you to tell your truth, but maybe one
8 thing I should do before you get started is just have who
9 else is here introduce themselves. So I'm just going to
10 turn the camera around. Lizz, if you wouldn't mind just
11 introducing yourself?

12 **MS. LIZZ NOOTCHTAI BRIGGS:** Hello, *boozhoo*,
13 [speaking in Anishnaabe].

14 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And can you say your
15 full name too, Lizz, your surname?

16 **MS. LIZZ NOOTCHTAI BRIGGS:** My government
17 name is Lizz Nootchtai Briggs.

18 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Thank you, and Bill?

19 **MR. BILL GEORGE:** (Speaking in his native
20 language). I'm Bill George from Oneida.

21 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Thanks very much Bill.
22 And Lizz and Bill are both here for support for yourself,
23 right Lionel?

24 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Yeah.

25 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** So as Daria and I

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1 mentioned before, start wherever you feel comfortable, but
2 if you'll give your full name, address and then whatever
3 background you want to speak about, about yourself, and
4 then share with us whatever it is you're comfortable
5 sharing, okay?

6 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Alright. My name is
7 Lionel Desmoulin. My native name is (indiscernible). Well
8 --

9 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** What's your birth date
10 Lionel, if I may?

11 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** [Birthday], 1957.

12 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And what's the actual
13 address that we're at?

14 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** [Address].

15 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And is it Sault Ste.
16 Marie, Garden River, Sault Ste. Marie, is that the proper
17 address?

18 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Garden River.

19 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay perfect.

20 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** [Address].

21 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Thank you.

22 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Ontario.

23 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** All yours, sorry to
24 interrupt you.

25 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Well I don't really

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1 know where to start. When I got some calls from you guys I
2 started thinking and thinking. And I got a call yesterday
3 and I was thinking more, and my mind was all over the
4 place. I did go to one of the big gatherings up in Six
5 Nations. The very last day I was the only one that never
6 said anything at all for the first couple of days. And I
7 was the very last one that day anyways, and I really had a
8 hard time listening to other people's stories. And it's
9 very, very hard to hear that stuff that was told over
10 there.

11 Right now it's kind of hard for me to even,
12 even know where to begin to tell my story. It's kind of
13 making my mind go all over the place, trying to think what
14 happened. When I heard the news I tried to -- I tried to
15 focus on how I told my children that night. And you know
16 it wasn't a very, very good thing to wake them up in the
17 middle of the night and have to tell them that.

18 And for me when I heard that -- my children
19 were living at home with me, they were still young. I
20 heard a knock on the door probably about one o'clock in the
21 morning.

22 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Sorry Lionel, I'm just
23 going to ask you to speak up a little bit more because of
24 the plane going over, if you can?

25 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Probably around one

1 o'clock in the morning -- your guys' technology is shit.

2 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** I know.

3 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** But anyways, right
4 away I knew something was wrong when I seen someone was at
5 the door. I didn't know how bad it was but they told me.
6 And one of my kids happened to get up to see who was at the
7 door too, my oldest. My son, he started crying right away
8 when the cops told us what went down. I had to tell my
9 partner that I was with at the time to keep him quiet in
10 the living room there.

11 Then I started getting on the phone to make
12 some phone calls to get people over to my house to -- I
13 have three children. I had to get two sets of adults to
14 come in, one for each daughter, to let -- to be there when
15 we told them what happened that night. And it wasn't a
16 very pretty sight for them to wake up as, you know being
17 told what happened to their mom at that time.

18 You know it was very, very hard for them to
19 hear that. They were in shock, especially when you wake
20 them up to tell them that. To them it was probably just a
21 bad dream. Anyway, when I did tell them that -- I didn't
22 want to wait until daylight. I gathered up all the people,
23 I gathered up some people to be there for the kids at the
24 time, and they did come over. I explained to them why I
25 want them over right now, not in the morning, so they said

1 yeah okay, we'll be right there, so they came.

2 After everybody got there, which was
3 probably around three o'clock already, that's when I said
4 okay, everybody's here now, light up a smudge and then tell
5 my daughters that. And you know it was very, very hard for
6 -- to hear the crying in each different room. It's a very
7 good thing I had those people come over to help me with
8 that, especially when the girls heard the news about their
9 mom. I don't think any kid should go through that at any
10 time or any place.

11 My kids were like -- they were just starting
12 teenage life around that time, around 10 and 11, and the
13 other one was 14, like that. And they were still young and
14 it really hit them hard that night.

15 And I kind of had to wait for daylight to
16 come, they started to settle down when daylight came. And
17 you know when daylight come the other people that heard
18 about it started coming to my house, and the people that
19 were there earlier that morning, they were going to go home
20 and get rest and then come back later on that day. Again I
21 started making phone calls again, how we were going to get
22 down to Sudbury, and when we're going to leave, and when
23 everything is supposed to happen.

24 And we finally got down there to Sudbury.
25 We got there a couple of days ahead of time, before the

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1 funeral and all that, you know, because there was family
2 members that lived down there, so we were at their place.

3 I don't know, there's a lot of mixed
4 feelings amongst the family members over there. They were
5 really having a hard time. The ones that were there were
6 trying -- they were trying their best to keep everybody
7 calm and controlled. You know let's just try to move on
8 and help each other and be there for each other.

9 So we had a couple of days to spare before
10 the funeral, and I was talking to one of the sisters of my
11 wife that got murdered. And I asked, I asked what about
12 her personal belongings, did anybody go and get the
13 personal belongings of hers? They all said -- everybody
14 said no. Because they lived in Sudbury and I didn't. I
15 lived down here with my children in Sault Ste. Marie area.

16 And for me this one sister, we were talking
17 amongst ourselves asking how do we go about getting her
18 personal belongings. And just the dad heard us talking and
19 he says phone this guy, phone this officer, this detective,
20 whatever, ask him about it. So we did that and they said
21 we could go there and pick up her stuff. We asked if the
22 door was locked and they said no, the door was unlocked.

23 I didn't know what I was going to walk into
24 at the time. I thought maybe they cleaned it up a little
25 bit or whatnot, eh. They didn't do that. It was like I

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1 walked into a like a little slaughterhouse. There was
2 blood all over the place. I got kind of weak at the knees
3 there, I was walking through the house really slow. Her
4 sister was with me, just the two of us. She was kind of
5 behind me holding my arm, and I was walking with her in
6 silence, just looking and looking.

7 We made our way to the bedroom, I believe
8 that's where everything happened, started. I don't know,
9 it was like upside down and a mess. You could tell a fight
10 started and where the guy started beating her up. You
11 could tell she must have been bleeding, I don't know, from
12 someplace. There was blood all along the wall, the way he
13 drug her, pushed her against the wall I guess.

14 All over the floor, up the hallway, and it
15 led into the kitchen. They say that's where they found her
16 on the chair, dead on the chair. I guess he slashed her
17 throat at some point. I don't know where, it could have
18 been in the bedroom and -- it could have been from the
19 bedroom or the living room, there was a whole lot of blood
20 all over the place. She actually made it as far as the
21 chair and that was it, or he took her towards the chair and
22 that was -- I don't know how it went down there.

23 But anyways, when I walked in there it -- I
24 don't think nobody should have to walk into that kind of
25 mess or be warned at least. Like warn the person that's

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1 going there. I think the cops should have warned us for
2 one thing. They should have told us that the place was not
3 cleaned up but still, still a big mess in there. I was
4 very, very shocked when I went in there. Why would the
5 cops not tell us that it's still a murder scene in there?
6 Why didn't they tell us that it wasn't cleaned up? You
7 know I think about that lots. I still have some pictures
8 right now how it was.

9 And we did manage to collect a few
10 belongings, although the investigation was over. We
11 managed to get a few of her personal belongings that meant
12 -- a lot of her stuff was given to her by her children, by
13 her daughter and that stuff was.

14 So we packed up some of her stuff and we got
15 out of there. There was a group standing outside of that
16 place where she was murdered. They were standing outside
17 having a smoke and kind shaking, shaking their heads, you
18 know in disbelief I guess. I'm not one for words either,
19 but I supposed it's the right, right word. You know why
20 would somebody let somebody walk into that kind of mess,
21 you know why didn't they let us know? That's -- like
22 that's what makes me mad about the Sudbury police.

23 They should at least let people know what
24 they're going to walk into, not say go right ahead, you're
25 allowed to go in there. And that's, that still bothers me

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1 about that. You know they should have warned people
2 instead of saying go right ahead and go in there, you know?

3 So anyways, we were done with that and we
4 left there to get ready for the wake and all that. They
5 had a fire going for her. I had to ladies do a fire, a
6 mother and daughter. They wanted to build a fire for my
7 wife, so I said go ahead. They built the fire outside of
8 my father-in-law's place in Sudbury. And then we -- the
9 day for the funeral finally arrived and we all started
10 going down there.

11 You know how funerals are, especially -- you
12 know a lot of people they cry and then they stop, they cry
13 and then they stop. There's always a process when you go
14 to funerals, you know, when you open the casket, and when
15 they bring the body in. There's always somebody crying.
16 The first time I ever seen her since she got murdered was
17 in her casket.

18 I had my children all at the funeral home.
19 You know they didn't want to come up to the casket. And I
20 went up to stand by the casket, beside it. I stand beside
21 the casket there, my hand was like that, extended.
22 Everybody was coming up, they were talking while I was
23 still standing there, talking and praying to her.

24 Rubbing her -- I rubbed her hair like that.
25 And it was almost every spot on her skull there was a cut,

1 some sort of a cut. She must have been banged around
2 pretty good before he slashed her throat. On the back of
3 her head she had a big gash back there, cut here, cut
4 there, you good feel it underneath there. I don't recall
5 seeing any, any cuts around the face or bruises. I guess
6 if she probably would have lived, I guess he didn't want
7 her to have any physical evidence on her face, marks. He
8 did all -- he hit her where it couldn't be seen, on the
9 head and the hair.

10 I remember she used to come and visit us,
11 visit the kids. She always wore this big long nightgown
12 here covering her arms. I always wondered. Around the
13 second or third night one of my girls came to see me. I
14 guess she walked in -- they walked in on her mom changing
15 her clothes. The reason why she wore that kind of
16 nightgown, because all -- both of her legs and her arms
17 were always bruised, always bruised. Her body was full of
18 bruises.

19 And the kids are like how come my mom's like
20 that, what's wrong with her, they said she's all full of
21 bruises. I said oh, that's why she's probably wearing that
22 big long nightgown, I said hiding all them bruises. I mean
23 you just happened to walk in on her when she was changing,
24 to check to see whether her mom was in the bedroom or not I
25 guess. She was changing in the bedroom when she was

1 visiting. One of the girls walked in on her and saw all
2 the bruises. The guy would never make no marks around the
3 neck or the face, only where you can't see it. She always
4 wore long sleeves. And I didn't want to tell my kids at
5 the time when they saw their mom like that, when she came
6 down for a visit. We tried to get her -- get to see her as
7 much as possible because I knew -- I know that she was in a
8 real bad relationship.

9 I don't know why women leave their partners
10 a lot of times, I know why she left me, or part of it why
11 she left me. Because I had worked out of town all the time
12 so -- all the jobs I had were out of town. I was going --
13 cutting line, cutting line for the hydro company. Ten days
14 on, four days off, like that, those kind of jobs. I always
15 had to leave the city. So that's why, one of the reasons
16 why, I wasn't at home a lot of the time.

17 So I think that's one of the reasons why she
18 left me, because I wasn't home. She felt alone a lot of
19 times because I was only home for four days at a time, or
20 five days. That's where everything started going downhill.
21 She left me for that guy, because that guy basically had
22 some kind of a job where he came home every eight days or
23 something like that, back home for five.

24 I kind of knew something was not right a lot
25 of the times when I came home. I think there was a lot of

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1 drinking involved too. She drank, I drank. But there was
2 no violence between me and her. A lot of arguments but no
3 violence. No hitting or slapping or anything like that.
4 So that's how that became -- that's how she ended up not
5 being here today, ending up with that guy. He had -- you
6 know I think they only stayed together -- I think it was
7 only maybe three or four years, and after that she was
8 gone, she was dead.

9 My children really had a hard time on her
10 death. My oldest daughter, she went into real bad
11 depression. I couldn't go one room to another room, she'd
12 be right behind me. And when I went to bed she was crying
13 and all that, so I said okay then, you sleep on the cot,
14 I'll sleep on the floor. I'll make a floor bed. Because
15 that's the only way she felt safe.

16 My other daughter barely -- locked herself
17 in our home every day for about a year. She went to
18 school, did her school work, had supper, straight to her
19 room. I didn't see her until she came home the next day
20 from school. She got up in the morning and left. She did
21 that for about a year.

22 And I had -- I always had a real hard time
23 doing all this by myself. My son turned to street drugs.
24 Today he's still out there. I see him every now and then.
25 Sometimes he looks good, sometimes you can tell he was into

1 the drugs.

2 Since then I have six grandchildren though,
3 since then. And I'm -- I raised three of my grandchildren,
4 which I'm talking about my son's kids. He ended up with a
5 messed up partner also. They couldn't watch their kids so
6 I had to step in. I'm still watching kids. You know --
7 like I love my grandchildren dearly. I have a little brand
8 new grandchild, his name is [Grandchild]. He's a handful,
9 but he's healthy, his parents are healthy. My daughter's a
10 drummer now, she sings in sweat lodges. She'll sing -- if
11 we ask her to sing she'll sing.

12 And I know my children are scared to lose
13 their father, I'm the only parent left. So we all have to
14 go sometime I tell them, and you're going to have to live
15 on whether you like it or not. You've got to raise your
16 kids, you've got to raise your grandchildren.

17 To me how do you feel normal each and every
18 day, how do you feel normal, you know? This is my normal
19 in here. This is what makes me feel normal, building this
20 fire. People ask me about fire. I build fires for them.
21 I try to help as many people as I can. I honour my partner
22 that passed away with that murdered and missing sign out
23 there, the red dress. And I do have another dress that I
24 carry to workshops but right now I can't find it. I wanted
25 to bring it in here but it'll probably show up after you

1 guys leave.

2 So it's a very, very hard road to walk on.
3 The past life I had there, I was drinking and driving. But
4 after me and my partner went different ways I sobered up.
5 I started walking the red road, our traditional way. This
6 is how I think I keep myself from not losing it at times.
7 A lot of times I feel all alone even though there's a lot
8 of people that I could turn to. It's very hard some days.
9 I do a lot of smudging.

10 I try to explain to my grandchildren because
11 I'm raising them, how there grandma was or is. I show them
12 pictures. I say this is your grandma right here. She's
13 not here with us now, she's gone. Gone in the spirit
14 world, she's in a good place. So now you've got your
15 grandpa looking after you. I wouldn't give that up for
16 anything. Just help would probably slow me down but it's
17 not the only thing.

18 I still have to try to get my daughters to
19 talk about what happened. It's very hard for them also.
20 They went to the very first workshop in Timmins. This one
21 coordinator that was running the show, she was a very rude
22 person, very bossy, and she's the one that kept on phoning.
23 Are you guys coming, are you guys coming? And she got
24 pretty ignorant and smart with my daughter. And I told her
25 let me know when you run into her again, next time I'll go

1 right up to her and tell her where to go. She's the one
2 that asked to call. Let us -- we didn't ask to get called
3 or whatever, get bullied by her or get smart -- for her to
4 act smart with us over here. Some of the people sitting in
5 here, they know who I'm talking about.

6 I believe she actually lost one of her
7 siblings too, but that doesn't give her the right to get
8 smart with us guys here. It should be a healing time, not
9 where you get picked on.

10 And I hope -- I said what I have to say.
11 And if you guys use this little piece you got on me, I hope
12 that helps other families. I do want to the public -- I do
13 want it to be seen wherever they can use it.

14 No woman should go through any kind of
15 abuse. If a man hits a woman, he's just a coward, he's
16 just a bully. That means he can't go, he can't go against
17 a man because he's just a little girl himself. Probably
18 screams like one too if you slap him. To all you men out
19 there who think about beating your woman you know what, I
20 think you'd better give yourself a good look in the mirror.
21 And you know what, you're not any better than any other man
22 that hits their woman. Women are not made to hit, they're
23 made to love, cherish and be cared for. The women will
24 give you kids, that's your kids.

25 Today I don't even know where that man is.

1 He's probably out on parole or -- I don't really know where
2 he is today. And I'd like to find out where he is, not to
3 go and hunt him, just so I don't go in the same area he is.
4 If I ran into him some place down the road, I'll probably
5 make him cry. I don't think I wouldn't hit him, but I'll
6 make him -- ask him why he did that to my wife, hurt my
7 kids. My kids are still suffering today. They still think
8 about their mom, they still cry about their mom. All those
9 -- that man stole 18 years from them. It's still fresh in
10 my mind.

11 I'd been with her for 18 years before this
12 happened. I thought she would be my lifelong partner
13 until, you know. I couldn't help it, I had to go to work
14 to try to support the family. That's how, that's how my
15 relationship ended with her.

16 I still think about her every other day. I
17 know she's around to talk to her. I won't go say that to
18 the doctors at the hospital I talk to my wife, she's dead.
19 Right away they think you're crazy. You tell the white
20 doctors, you tell them that you're talking to a spirit they
21 think you're crazy. They don't understand our native way,
22 our traditional way. We feel that connection for the ones
23 who've passed on, we do have that connection. That's how
24 we got our fire. We pray with our tobacco, we put our
25 prayers in that fire and move up to the thunderbirds, take

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1 it to the grave. Our prayers get taken up. So we do have
2 our ways to connect with the creator in our spirit, our
3 ancestors who have passed away.

4 I hope you guys get your, get your whole
5 story and people get some answers. I know I'm all over the
6 page, but whatever comes to my mind I say at that time. I
7 like to have it in order, but that's now how I did it.
8 That's how the (indiscernible) might do it.

9 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Do you mind if I ask you
10 just to clarify a few things Lionel, if you're comfortable.
11 Mostly was names of people just to make the story more
12 understandable for the Commissioners.

13 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Names.

14 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** The name of your wife?

15 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Shirley Darlene
16 Taylor.

17 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Alright. And the name
18 of the man I presume was arrested for her murder?

19 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Don -- I don't know
20 if you'd say Don Saunders or Donald Saunders. Just use
21 both names I guess.

22 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay. And I know you
23 said it was 18 years ago, and maybe at the beginning you
24 said the date but I missed it. The date of her murder?

25 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** February 1999.

1 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay.

2 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** I don't know the
3 exact day on February.

4 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And this Donald guy was
5 charged with her murder? You said he was in jail.

6 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Well I believe when I
7 first heard about it they said first degree. They went
8 down to second degree, and by the time it reached court
9 time, trial time, it went down to manslaughter.

10 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Okay.

11 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Now how the hell you
12 get manslaughter when you beat the crap out of a woman,
13 cuts all over her head. I know there were cuts and slashed
14 the jugular vein.

15 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** And it was Sudbury
16 Police you said, and were there any police officers' names
17 that you know of?

18 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** I don't remember.

19 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** You don't know, okay.

20 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** You now it's just --

21 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** It's okay.

22 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** It's 18 years ago.

23 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Yeah exactly.

24 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** The guy seemed like a
25 nice cop, that we went and spoke to. But I don't -- I

1 don't think it wasn't sinking at the time, maybe he should
2 have told us, you know? Maybe he thinks everybody's okay
3 to walk into a murder scene not cleaned up, it's all
4 bloodied. You know it's awful.

5 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** M'hmm.

6 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** All the cops see the
7 little pieces, make sure -- you know tell the people, warn
8 them ahead of time what they're going to walk into. If you
9 want to go in it's up to you. Leave it at that after that.

10 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** M'hmm. Well thank you
11 very much for sharing a very difficult story, and you
12 weren't all over the place, you were very easily
13 understood. You laid it out very well, as horrible as it
14 was.

15 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Well I used my level
16 of language.

17 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** That's fine.

18 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** I don't use your
19 guys' level of language because you know why? I don't know
20 how to talk like you guys.

21 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** I don't think I have any
22 different levels either.

23 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Well you usually tell
24 people why don't you come down to our level, speak our
25 level, never mind all those fancy words, you know. We

1 don't know half of their words.

2 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** Is there anything else
3 you -- you did a wonderful job at the end of saying what
4 you hope comes out of the Inquiry. Any other last comments
5 you want to make, or suggestions, or questions?

6 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Well I don't know,
7 maybe -- I don't know if I'm going to put myself in a --
8 say something I shouldn't say, but you know maybe if
9 somebody sees this and he wants me to come and tell my
10 story at their community, or at their gathering, or
11 whatever. I'll probably make it a little shorter, but I'll
12 tell it how it is, you know.

13 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** That's wonderful, thank
14 you.

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah, thank you.

16 **MR. LIONEL DESMOULIN:** Yeah, thanks.

17 **MS. DEBBIE BODKIN:** So thank you again
18 Lionel, and we will shut the camera equipment off now, and
19 it's 13 minutes after 11.

20 --- Upon adjourning at 11:13 a.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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



Sherry Hobe

January 10, 2019