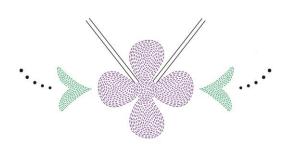
National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls



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

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Truth-Gathering Process Part 1 Statement Gathering Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Saskatoon Inn



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Statement - Volume 539

Jeanette Gamble, In relation to Marie Norma Mike

Statement gathered by Bonnie George

International Reporting Inc. 41 - 5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2 E-mail: info@irri.net - Phone: 613-748-6043 - Fax: 613-748-8246 II NOTE

Where not required by other statute, redactions to this public transcript have been made pursuant to Rule 55 of the Commission's Legal Path: Rules of Respectful Practice, which provides for "the discretion to redact private information of a sensitive nature where it is not material to the evidence to be given before distributing the information to the Parties. The National Inquiry will consider the public interest in releasing this type of information against the potential harmful impact on the individual whose personal information is at issue."

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Statement Gatherer: Bonnie George

Documents submitted with testimony: none.

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 1 --- Upon commencing on Saturday, October 20, 2018 at 4:12 p.m. 2 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay, we're at the 3 Saskatoon Inn in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, it's October 19th 4 -- October 20th, 2018, and it's 4:12 right now. My name is 5 Bonnie George and I'm with the Inquiry. 6 7 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: My name is Jeanette 8 Gamble. MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And you're here to? 9 10 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: And I'm here to share my story of the little that I know about my mom's missing, 11 and that's been 55 years. 12 13 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay, and your name? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Irene Wake, I'm just 14 here as support for Jeanette. 15 16 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Thank you. Okay. 17 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Do I start now? MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm. 18 19 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Okay, I didn't get prepared for this, it was last minute. I was 20 contacted yesterday by a Committee member, if I'd be 21 22 willing to share my story about my mom. I have shared my story a couple of times I guess, with -- with 23 people, with an audience. And it's not easy, it's not 24 25 easy because I've never had closure. I haven't had

closure, we have never found my mom's remains, and
 that's still hard for me today.

My mom disappeared, disappeared in 1964, 3 February 22nd. I don't know what time it was at 4 5 night. We were at a relative's place and the story I was told -- one of the stories I was told is that my 6 mom -- my mom and dad had come home to that place, and 7 my -- my late dad was not feeling good. And at that 8 time they only outhouses, and they say that she went 9 out to use the washroom, but we -- and that was the 10 11 last of it. The was the last of it according to the police files. 12

I had, I had a chance to look at them, there 13 14 wasn't very much in there. They said that they -that my late dad had, had reported her missing after a 15 week. And the night she went missing there was a 16 17 blizzard, there was a blizzard that night. So after my dad reported her missing they, they went searching 18 for her, because apparently my mom would leave him and 19 20 she would go to other community members that she, that she knew. My mother was not from Beardy's, my mother 21 was from Siksika, she was a Blackfoot. And she knew 22 23 a few people.

I just found out as an adult that she knew afew people that she adopted, she adopted as friends, I

quess sisters, that welcomed her and accepted her. 1 2 And just recently I found out that just a couple of years ago. At work I found out -- one of the ladies 3 approached me and she told me -- did you know she 4 5 said, that your mom was our sister? I said no, I said no one ever told me. And she said yeah, my mom and 6 dad adopted her. And she said my mom loved your mom 7 and my dad. She would come and visit us she said, and 8 9 my mom would get so happy. My mom would get so happy when she's here coming down the road. She'd be 10 11 telling us girls, here comes your sister. They were very excited. But I didn't know this throughout my 12 13 childhood.

14 Not having a mother all my life has made life difficult. I was not ever able to put anyone 15 else in her shoes. My late dad, my late dad didn't 16 17 find anyone until the year that he passed away. He had met another Blackfoot woman. I was sad to say 18 that he died, he died before that relationship could 19 20 continue. He left behind a little brother that was born a few months later. I had a younger sister, and 21 when she died I really felt alone. And I still do. 22

But going back, going back to that day, that
night, I was too young to remember. Too young to
remember anything going on. I was just a child that

was very lonely. I was looking out for her, always
looking out to see, you know, come and pick us up. I
was raised in a home, raised in a home with no love,
no nurturing, a lot of sexual abuse, physical abuse,
for many years. I was abused from age five when my
mom disappeared until age 11.

I never felt -- I didn't ever feel, I didn't 7 ever feel welcome, I didn't ever feel accepted from my 8 dad's, my dad's family. But I found out later that he 9 wasn't my dad, that he was my stepdad. And that's 10 11 something that I had to work through too. Because that kind of gave me an understanding I guess, as to 12 the reason why I was just kept, I was just kept. It 13 14 was just like a dog to keep close by, just to feed. Sometimes I felt like a slave. 15

When I think back on my life there's a lot 16 of hurts and pains. I've tried, I've tried to better 17 my life. But what I, what I -- you know when I used 18 to -- when I'd look at other families I'd ask God why, 19 20 why, why don't I have that, why didn't I have that? I didn't get an answer for a long time, until I became 21 an adult I guess. I started trying to put the pieces, 22 23 the puzzle together of my life. And I know it's still not complete, but I try -- I've tried many things. 24 25 I've tried -- oh, I should say I've done many things

19

in my life to try and help myself. 1 2 I got married at a very young age, I had children, I had five children, I have 15 3 grandchildren. Because of the raising that I got, you 4 know I didn't know how to, how to love, I didn't know 5 how to nurture my kids. When they were small, when 6 they were small I could hold them and hug them. But 7 it seems when they became a certain age, I don't know, 8 maybe I was scared, I was scared to show that 9 affection. I think it kind of stems from the sexual 10 11 abuse. I really don't know. But now, you know, I'm trying, I'm trying. 12 13 It's so hard when you -- you're just flying by whim 14 here. What I can say you know, is through all my life's lessons it got me here. I didn't think my 15 mom's story was important. But I've said it myself, 16 17 you know everybody's story's important. Everybody, no matter, no matter who you are, you know, your story is 18

I just keep praying you know, that we'll find her remains. And the sad thing is -- you know rumours have it that her life was taken on my reserve. People were involved, people were involved, but I had no proof. They were just rumours, I had no proof. Family knew, that's the hard part. Family knew. And

important.

I think today still some people know, and that's what hurts. That's what hurts me, is the secrets. The secrets that people have held onto, and not allowing me -- not allowing me or my sister to be able to bury my mother by my dad, my stepdad.

Whatever's found out, whatever's found out, 6 that my mother wouldn't be coming home physically, I 7 cried. I think I cried for about a year. In 1994, 8 '95 is when I started following my traditional way. 9 It was my later mother-in-law that told me bring a 10 11 picture, bring a picture of your mom. I have two pictures of my mom. She said bring a picture to your 12 13 uncle, see what he'll say, see if he'll share with you 14 anything. So I did. And I was told in a sweat that, that her life was taken. 15

And that was one of the hardest things to 16 hear, because in my heart, in my heart, I would have 17 forgiven her, you know. I would have forgiven her all 18 those years of abandonment. I just wanted my mom, but 19 20 I was denied that. I was denied that because to this day I don't know where she's at. I pray that she's in 21 heaven, I pray that she's in heaven, she's doing well. 22 23 I want to believe that, I have to believe that. That 24 she's not a wandering spirit. But an elder made me understand that she didn't take her life, her life was 25

1 taken.

2 It's just, it's just so hard to go back, you know, to go back and remember. And that's the hardest 3 part, is you know the grieving, the grieving for her, 4 5 you know on special occasions. Mother's Day is the hardest for me. I keep praying. I try and follow my 6 tradition, I try and follow -- because I believe that 7 that is the way for me. I don't, I don't put down any 8 other ways of her. I believe that each and every one 9 of us have our own line to God, Creator, however you 10 11 may call.

But you know I remember when they opened the 12 13 cold case files. There was two, two guys that came 14 and seen me. They would come and see me often, asking me if I heard anything. And there was a man, 15 everybody said he knew something, everybody said he 16 knew something. And I asked, I asked them about that. 17 They said yeah, we have him, we have him. We are 18 going to guestion him. And they're going to find --19 20 they were going to find a way, they were going to find a way. But then something happened, something 21 happened. I don't know, they just quit coming. It 22 23 was like we fell through the cracks once again, you 24 know? And then that man passed away. So now what, 25 you know?

I still believe, I still believe though that 1 2 there's people on my res that know. Because how can you hold something like that? How can you hold 3 something like that, that was so damaging to me and my 4 5 little sister, that made or orphans, you know? It's sad to say, my little sister died as a result of 6 alcohol. She passed away five years ago. 7 I made a choice, I made a choice when I had 8 9 my daughter. She's my baby. I just about lost her as

10a result of alcohol. She was in the neonatal ward.11But before she was born, before she was born I had12asked the Creator to -- for my baby to be okay. I got13into a car accident because of alcohol. Back then we14didn't know anything about FAD, you know. Didn't know15that we could harm our child.

It was that day that I chose that I wouldn't 16 take another drop of alcohol, and I haven't. I 17 haven't. I've had sobriety now. September 30th I had 18 34 years sobriety. My late husband, my late husband 19 20 also quit that day. I lost him 12 years ago. And when I lost him, you know I lost my rock. Because I 21 was sure he'd be standing with me when we find her. 22 23 Because I set all my hopes. I don't know, you know, 24 if they would find anything in 55 years, you know. I 25 really don't know.

My late grandmother, she told me she had her 1 2 wedding band on, she didn't ever take it off. She had rubber boots on. So I'm thinking okay, you know, 3 those won't disintegrate, that'll take a long time. 4 5 Even if they find that, then I know. Then I know that we -- I can have some peace. Because I know she has 6 her peace. She's over there with my ancestors, my 7 little brother and my little sister. It's down here 8 on Earth that it's so difficult at times. 9

I try my best, I've been trying my best to 10 11 be a mom, a dad, grandfather, grandmother, dealing with my community. I try my best to be that better 12 13 person. But it's so hard, the world is so ugly. And 14 I think it's only been in the past couple of years that I realized that, you know, and more so now with 15 Facebook, you know you see all those missing people. 16 Every day, every day, and I can do is sharing, hoping 17 and praying that these people find, you know, their 18 19 loved ones, and happy when they do, you know. Because 20 in my situation I have not gotten that prayer answered of finding her, and I don't know if I ever will. 21

22 But like I said, I've got to keep up that 23 hope in my heart, you know, to have that. This is, 24 this is so difficult not to have the I guess support, 25 because people don't understand. People don't

understand what you're going through, you know.
 People don't -- a lot of people that know, you know.
 A lot of people put it aside.

I remember they had a powwow to -- on my 4 5 reserve they had a powwow a couple of years ago, and they had something on the murdered and missing women. 6 And this young lady, she's from my reserve, she was 7 handing out these things. And I said can I have one? 8 9 Oh, these aren't -- this is just for people that lost their loved ones. And I looked at her, I looked at 10 11 her, and I kind of got angry at her. And I told her I'd like to have one please. And she just looked at 12 me. She didn't know I guess, that my mom was one of 13 14 the missing persons.

So I guess that's one of the reasons why I 15 wanted to do this, to honour my mom. Because it seems 16 17 like everyone has forgotten about the lady that went missing in year 1964, February 22nd. I'd like the 18 people to understand instead of shunning me because 19 20 I'm Blackfoot. Shunning me because they judge me. Shunning me because they think that they're better 21 than I am. 22

I'm not saying that my life would have been
better, because I don't know that. But I do know that
when I lost her, when I lost my mother, I lost a lot.

I lost a lot. I lost my language. Because when I was 1 2 young my uncle told me that I was speaking Blackfoot fluently. And I lost that. I lost my traditions, my 3 mom's traditions, Blackfoot. I lost the love, the 4 5 nurturing, I lost my protector. I lost all that. I lost my role model, you know. I'm not saying she 6 would be the best mother because she had an alcohol 7 problem, both her and my stepdad. But you know people 8 don't see that. 9

People are so uqly. That's my new word, 10 11 people are uqly. You know they, they show this one side, but on the inside they're ugly, they're phoney. 12 And I can't stand that. I don't know, maybe because 13 14 I'm older I know I don't need to deal with that. So many times I slayed myself. I have a very small 15 circle of friends, very small. I tend to try to be 16 with my family, I tend to try to be with my family. 17

Right now, right now I'm fostering my 18 grandchildren. My late sister's to young ones. And 19 20 the only reason I did it was for her son, and also for her. And so I have them right now. I don't know how 21 long I'll have them, but I'm grateful that they're 22 23 with me. I wasn't in the beginning because I had an actual room in my house for a long time, and they're 24 teenagers, but they're settling in. I give thanks for 25

1 that.

25

2 You know we talk about their *#2 0:23:15.5, you know, every now and then it comes up, and then 3 their grandmother. And I try and be open, be open 4 5 with my children and grandchildren, and with people I have in my circle. And I think one of the reasons why 6 I have such a small circle is I've been hurt so many 7 8 times by the community, you know. And I'm tired of 9 rejection, I'm tired of rejection from people. I'm tired of the hurt, the pain. I'm tired of going home 10 crying, you know, because you heard this rumour, I 11 hear this rumour about me. How do you know, you're 12 13 not even a part of my life. If you want to know, come 14 and ask me, you know?

I hated the rumours that were going around 15 about my mom. It came up, I was going to school. I 16 17 was at a workshop and here it was in the newspaper. What the heck? And this guy asked me is this you? 18 And he, he showed it to me. And they said in that, in 19 20 that newspaper, they said that remains were found, and they were thinking it was my mom's remains. That's 21 what that so-called elder said at that time. I just 22 23 don't understand how come they didn't approach us 24 before they put it in the newspaper.

They called my husband, the newspaper, after

the fact called my husband and wanted to do an 1 2 interview with me. And my husband said no. MS. BONNIE GEORGE: What year was this? 3 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: That --4 5 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Approximately. Just so we can have it for the record. 6 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: I would say -- because 7 I went back to school in 2001. In that area, 2001, 2000. 8 In 2001 was when I went to school for addictions. 9 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And which newspaper was 10 11 that? 12 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: This one here, the Saskatoon --13 14 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: The Saskatoon News? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: -- Phoenix, Star 15 Phoenix. Yeah, because we were doing our workshop here in 16 Saskatoon at the Ramada Inn. And this guy asked me, is 17 that you? And that kind of shocked me. And then they 18 called my late husband, and my late husband told them no. 19 Whatever that elder said, there's no truth in that, and I 20 don't want you talking to my wife because she goes through 21 enough as it is. Then they wanted to know how to contact 22 23 my little sister, and he stood up for her also and told her 24 no. No, you leave them alone, you leave them alone. If you had wanted to know the truth, you would have come and 25

22

seen them first, before you put it in the newspaper, and 1 2 giving us hope, you know? No. So yeah, there's been -- there's been a lot 3 that has happened. 4 5 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: M'hmm. MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: About my life. I 6 quess I can call myself a survivor. And as I said, you 7 8 know I didn't realize the importance of telling my, telling my mom's story of what little I know, you know? I know 9 they had went and seen my real father, my biological 10 11 father, they went and questioned him in Montana, thinking that she might have went over there. My, my late dad was a 12 suspect, a grandfather was a suspect, they had questioned 13 14 him. Rumours was that it was a community member, and my other grandfather was a part of it. I don't know if he was 15 a part of taking her life, but there's another story there 16 17 too. My auntie said, my auntie said you know ask 18 him. But somehow I couldn't bring myself to do that, I 19 20 couldn't bring myself to do that. Because the story, the story that shared with me is he walked to a place up south, 21

said wintertime. They heard a knock, he came in. They
said he was all bloody, he was all bloody. And the sad
thing is --

he walked to this house. And they heard a knock -- like I

MS. BONNIE GEORGE: The person you're 1 2 referring to walked up to the house that was all bloody was 3 your stepdad? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: No, my grandfather. 4 5 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Your grandfather? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yeah, yeah. And the 6 sad thing is I don't know what he told them, I don't know 7 what he said to them, but the man and woman told their 8 kids, because they knew their kids were listening, this 9 doesn't ever leave here, this doesn't ever leave here. 10 11 What you heard doesn't leave here. MS. BONNIE GEORGE: But they deliberately 12 spoke aloud so the kids could hear? 13 14 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: I don't know, I really don't know. Because back then, like there was small houses 15 and they were listening upstairs, over the chimney or 16 17 whatever. It was my friend that was telling me this. But they got together -- their dad passed away. But their 18 mother, their mother -- like she used to be kind of like 19 20 hostile towards me, you know. And I didn't know what it was. Her and her daughter were hostile towards me. 21 When people started investigating, some of 22 23 my community members, especially the family whose name I 24 will not give, would shun me or they'd give me these dirty 25 looks, you know. They would walk past me and not even say

1	hi, and and that hurt. Because I was a daughter, I was
2	a little girl wanting my mom. And I'd get angry and I'd
3	say like what would you do if this was your mom, what would
4	you do? So my friend said that they her siblings all
5	sat with her and they told their mom, you tell them, you
6	tell them what happened that day, that morning. If that
7	was you mom, we'd be doing the same as her. Do that for
8	her. But nothing ever came of it.
9	I guess it's dead end, after dead end, after
10	dead end, like a secret, you know? Nobody cares about me,
11	my family. That's a sad thing. I wanted to leave after my
12	husband left. I wanted to go back to Siksika. I don't
13	know if it would have made a difference, but I felt more
14	love over there than I have ever felt with my community
15	here. It's just one thing after another.
16	You know even job wise, even job wise. I'd
17	lose a job because they'd lie, there was no money. The
18	counsellor in charge wanted to put somebody else in there.
19	I believe he wanted to put his girlfriend which wasn't from
20	the community. I lost my job because of jealousy and
21	vindictiveness. I didn't even get a chance to defend
22	myself, and this is [Employer], you know?
23	MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And [Employer] is?
24	MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: [Employment]. And my
25	job was going good, my job was going good. It was just

because of that one woman, or the other maybe too, I don't know.

3 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And this is Duck Lake?
4 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yeah Beardy's.
5 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Okay.

MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: But there's been so 6 much going on, like people telling me to sue [Employer]. 7 And I'm thinking you know, I'm done with that. I don't 8 need to do that, I have enough in my life. I have enough 9 in my life with what's going on, you know. Trying to help 10 11 my children, my grandchildren. It's not easy, especially when you get into fights with your sons, you know. And 12 they're bickering, you know. Becoming a referee and you're 13 14 standing in the middle. It's just hurt and pain. Like I said, you know I just keep trying, keep trying, that's all 15 I can do. I can just hear my uncle's words, just do your 16 17 best my girl, just do your best. That's all I do every day, I do my best. 18

19 I don't know what else to share, I just know
20 that, you know, I keep praying, praying for --

21 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And by the feelings that
22 you shared earlier -- and I was taking notes of that.

23 MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yeah.
24 MS. BONNIE GEORGE: By the feelings that you
25 shared of the sense of abandonment, the sense of not being

1	able to have closure, or not even having answers of what
2	happened with your mother that night, has caused a lot of
3	grief throughout your entire life, no matter how hard you
4	try to better yourself, and build your skills and coping
5	skills. And it's all the exterior how can I say it?
6	Level of violence within the community, and the favouritism
7	and the dishonesty, and the self how do you say it?
8	Self people looking after themselves than others, even
9	though they're in the helping field. Because you feel the
10	sense of being sabotaged.
11	MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes.
12	MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And your jobs.
13	MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes.
14	MS. BONNIE GEORGE: And also in the
15	community and trying to because you're the five year old
10	
16	daughter that was left behind, of this big secret that
16	daughter that was left behind, of this big secret that everybody seems to know about but they don't want to share.
17	everybody seems to know about but they don't want to share.
17 18	everybody seems to know about but they don't want to share. I sense that you feel somewhat ostracized?
17 18 19	everybody seems to know about but they don't want to share. I sense that you feel somewhat ostracized? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes.
17 18 19 20	everybody seems to know about but they don't want to share. I sense that you feel somewhat ostracized? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes. MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Why?
17 18 19 20 21	<pre>everybody seems to know about but they don't want to share. I sense that you feel somewhat ostracized? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes. MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Why? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Exactly, exactly. And</pre>
17 18 19 20 21 22	<pre>everybody seems to know about but they don't want to share. I sense that you feel somewhat ostracized? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Yes. MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Why? MS. JEANETTE GAMBLE: Exactly, exactly. And it's I felt like that from the day, the day that she</pre>

my little sister. And I can remember she had washed the 1 2 floor, and not knowing any better I walked on her floor. And I remember she gave me a licking, she give me a 3 licking, you know. And she must have really scared me or 4 5 hurt me, because I held that memory for a long time. I held that memory for a long time. To this day I don't 6 trust her. But really I don't trust anybody, I don't trust 7 anybody. I trust Irene because she -- I share a lot, I 8 share a lot with her. 9

One of my aunties, my friend Rose, and my 10 friend Minn (ph), and I have another friend who's come into 11 my life. I share everything with him also, and my kids. 12 I'm trying to better my family by not having no secrets, no 13 14 elephants in the room. And by trying to be in a better place of happiness, you know. I know I'm not the perfect 15 person, I will not ever be the perfect person, but at least 16 I can say I tried. And this is, this is my story, you know 17 throughout these years. I just keep trying, keep trying to 18 put that foot forward, and sometimes an obstacle, you know. 19

It's rough, like I used to make sweats for my mom on the day she disappeared or her birthday. But because of judgment and jealousy, I couldn't go into that sweat. I didn't want to live with that negativity. But them it seems like they turned it around on me. It seems they're always turning it around on me, making me look like

a bad person you know, when really it's theirs, it's theirs 1 2 to deal with. But in the end I'm the one that gets hurt you know, and things change. And it hurts, it hurts. 3 Walking away hurts. But I made that choice, I made that 4 5 choice, and I know I'm the only one who can make my choices, good or bad. But I find that if I do that, there 6 are some good people out there. There are some people that 7 are loving, but not too many. And I give thanks to those 8 people, I'm grateful. I try to be grateful every day, and 9 put one foot in front of the other, right? I think that's 10 11 about all I have to say. Thank you. MS. BONNIE GEORGE: Thank you for sharing 12

13 your truth. It's 4:51, I'm turning the audio and the video 14 off now.

15 --- Upon adjourning at 4:51 p.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 Heke

Sherry Hobe November 22, 2018