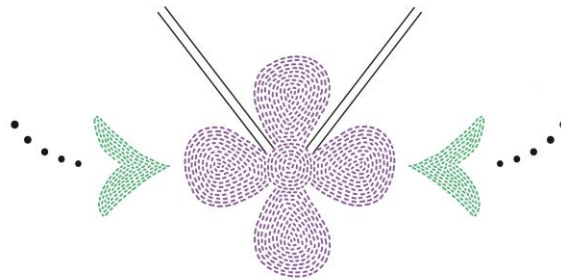


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
Rendezvous Room, Four Points Sheraton
Moncton, New Brunswick**



PUBLIC

Wednesday February 14, 2018

Public Volume 45(a)

**Barbara Bernard, Kindra Bernard & Deanna
Beaton, In relation to Mary Francis Paul**

**Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Thomas Barnett**

II
APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Julie McGregor (Legal Counsel), Stuart Wuttke (Legal Counsel)
Government of Canada	Marie-Eve Robillard (Legal Counsel), Tania Tooke (Paralegal)
Government of New Brunswick	Heather Hobart (Legal Counsel), Maya Hamou (Legal Counsel)
Eastern Door Indigenous Women's Association	(Non Appearance)
Gignoo Transition House Inc.	(Non Appearance)
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association, AnânuKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association and Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, as a collective single party	(Non Appearance)
Government of Prince Edward Island	Ruth M. DeMone (Legal Counsel)

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Commission Counsel: Thomas Barnett

Grandmothers, Elders: Bernie Poitras-Williams, Elder

Sarah Alana, Elder Mii gam'agan, Elder Imelda Perley

Opolahsomuwehs and Dr. Judy Clark

Clerk: Trudy McKinnon

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

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Hearing - Public
Bernard, Bernard & Beaton
(Mary Francis Paul)

1

1 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14th, 2018

(10:06 a.m.)

2

3

4 OPENING CEREMONY

5

6 PATTY MUSGRAVE: Good morning

7 everyone. Welcome to day two of the

8 National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered

9 Indigenous Women and Girls here in Moncton,

10 New Brunswick. Before I begin I'd like to

11 extend a welcome to this City of Moncton on

12 Mi'kmaq Territory from our Mayor, Dawn

13 Arnold, who could not be with us yesterday

14 or today. But she did message me this

15 morning to ask that I be sure to extend a

16 welcome to you all.

17

18 I'm going to invite our Elder, Pete

19 Jadis to come up and do our opening

20 prayer.

21

22 ELDER PETER JADIS: It's a great

23 honour to be here to help women and our

24 children and how they lost their

25 lives. And as we continue, as we

1 continue our road, red road, they call
2 it, to the healing of four directions.
3 It's like they say, four directions are
4 very strong. We all come from a four
5 direction in our families, of all
6 different kind of relations. We can be
7 white, can be yellow, can be black,
8 could be red. We're all happy we're
9 connected to Mother Earth.

10

11 And this is very - I'm very happy, you
12 know, to be - to honour these ways. I
13 had come from a long way to be who I am
14 as an Elder. To carry this
15 responsibility I carry for the healing,
16 the healing of man, of our Mi'kmaq
17 people. That's my gift and I'm going
18 to honour, I'm going to honour it too.
19 I'll sing two verses of the Mi'kmaq
20 Honour song, and it has been brought
21 through here in New Brunswick by the
22 Elders.

23 *ELDER PETER JADIS OPENING PRAYER AND SONG*

24 *PATTY MUSGRAVE SINGS AND DRUMS*

25

1 PATTY MUSGRAVE: I'm going to ask
2 our traditional Territory Chief,
3 William Nevin and Andrea Colfer if they
4 would like to come up and sing a song
5 for women.

6
7 CHIEF WILLIAM NEVIN: I'm a big guy so
8 I'm taking my coat off, doesn't mean
9 we're going to fight, cause usually
10 when guys take their coats off, action.
11 First of all I want to thank you.
12 We're going to sing a song, it's a very
13 old song. When we first started in our
14 ways this was a woman's song. It's a
15 story about this, this is not our first
16 rodeo, okay. We, as men, have made a
17 lot of mistakes, right. This is not
18 our first rodeo.

19
20 So there was a time a long time ago
21 that two young people were sent in the
22 woods because of the abuse of the men
23 towards the women. A lot of abuse. So
24 they lost their ways. They were sent
25 into this forest to find the true

1 meaning of what women offer and they
2 were given a song. But before they got
3 that song, as they were walking into
4 the woods the first older guy, he
5 didn't listen to the rules, he seen
6 women as an object not as a sacred
7 being. Not the giver of life but the
8 carrier of life, big difference. They
9 carry the life of our children.

10

11 So he lusted for this woman because she
12 was long braids, white buck skin. Her
13 name was Buffalo Calf Woman, okay.
14 That was her name. And he lusted for
15 her. He was turned into a rock. The
16 younger man bowed his head, I come to
17 honour you, you sacred being, the
18 carrier of life. And she said we'll
19 give you a song, and that song is the
20 one I'm going to sing. But, before I
21 do that, I want to tell my wife happy
22 Valentine's day.

23

24 She's right there. 30 years, I'll tell
25 you something, 30 years we've been

1 together and I always say this, and I
2 mean it, I'm not telling you crap,
3 every time I see her it's like meeting
4 her for the first time. That's my wife
5 and I'll not trade her for nothing,
6 because I made a lot of mistakes in my
7 life. I'm not perfect. Okay. So
8 we'll sing that song, you're going to
9 help me out right?

10 ANDREA COLFER: Yeah.

11

12 *CHIEF WILLIAM NEVIN AND ANDREA COLFER SING AND DRUM*

13

14 PATTY MUSGRAVE: That's a very
15 strong message for Valentine's day.
16 There's forgiveness everywhere. I
17 think the people that we have to
18 forgive the most is ourselves.

19

20 *COMMISSIONER AUDETTE GIVES A GIFT TO*
21 *CHIEF WILLIAM NEVIN*

22

23 PATTY MUSGRAVE: That was really
24 beautiful and it's really beautiful
25 that you took the opportunity to wife

1 your wife a very happy Valentine's day,
2 on live television.

3
4 I also want to wish everyone a happy
5 love day cause that's what we're doing
6 here, sharing love with each other. No
7 matter where you come from we're all,
8 we're all sharing love and support and
9 respect with each other. So what
10 better day for day two than on February
11 14th. As well, across the country we,
12 we have the Women's March today and so
13 before we break for lunch we'll have a
14 moment of silence for the women that
15 are marching across the country today
16 for Missing and Murdered Indigenous
17 Women and Girls.

18
19 I'm going to invite Inuk Elder Sarah up
20 to, well she's going to light the
21 traditional qulliq behind us here.
22 Sarah's brought us the sacred fire from
23 her Territory and so I'm going to let
24 her speak.

25

1 ELDER SARAH ALANA: You don't have to
2 put it very far do you? I'm going to
3 do both. All right. Being Valentine's
4 day if you look under my boots they're
5 hearts.

6
7 Once again it's an honour to be with
8 you this morning. I really missed my,
9 my sisters in BNIWC for a long time now
10 and it's so good to be back in that
11 circle. You're all still very
12 recognizable and just as pretty as
13 ever. So I'm going to light the
14 qulliq. The qulliq I have is a
15 ceremonial one rather than a functional
16 one and it's made specifically for
17 opening ceremonies. It's not made to
18 be lit all day but we do have ones that
19 can be lit all day with those white
20 cotton things that blow in the wind or
21 heather or blackberry bush.

22
23 So the one I have with me is opening
24 ceremony one and the, the teaching of
25 the qulliq is that it gave us life

1 because in 60 below zero it heated up
2 our igluviyaq and also it dried our
3 clothing and our grandmothers cooked
4 over it. There's qulliqs that are
5 coming back. I want to mention this, a
6 very long time ago in the Kuluk Bay
7 region in north coast Nunavut, my
8 father was born 1888 and my mom was
9 born 1912.

10

11 And my dad was from the Okak Bay
12 region, there was a prophecy there many
13 many many years ago, we've been in
14 northern Labrador for about 6,000
15 years. And the prophecy was that the
16 social ills that were coming to our
17 society and to our culture will begin
18 to diminish when the drum came back.
19 The drum has come back but the, the
20 strongest force in bringing it back has
21 been the youth. That is deep and
22 they're also the ones who are bringing,
23 bringing back the throat singing.
24 Today the qulliq I have, like I said,
25 is for opening ceremonies but I have

1 with me a very much smaller one. I
2 want to share the story with that
3 because we are told that a gift can be
4 a story. I had done CPR and mouth to
5 mouth a co-worker about five years ago,
6 I suppose, and for his gratitude he had
7 this made for me. It's a man with a
8 moustache, because he had a moustache,
9 and he told me he's carrying the quillig
10 for me to ceremonies. And if you
11 wanted to touch, touch it after and get
12 the, the message from it because we're
13 all receptive to messages from, from
14 our ceremonial objects, you're welcome
15 to.

16
17 I have with me Labradorite, it's a semi
18 precious stone. The sun and the rain
19 seen the northern lights encased in, in
20 the rock so the shaman took his spear
21 and released the northern lights up
22 into the sky. But the sun and the rain
23 seen it and they wanted some to stay in
24 the rock, but with the release that is
25 why we have the northern lights. And

1 the gift of Labradorite is that it is a
2 protector and a shield. It protects
3 your aura and it protects you in, in,
4 when negativity comes around. That's
5 inevitable throughout life. There's
6 positive and negative always.

7
8 So thank you for allowing me to be part
9 of this. The word "allow" is the wrong
10 word, for including me. Yes. So I'm
11 going to light the qulliq now but after
12 that I have brought my Inuk drum with
13 me - Inuk is singular of Inuit, and I
14 will sing a song that I heard my mother
15 sing out on the land from the time I
16 was born until I started school. We
17 always went out on the land and then
18 she would always sing it in the morning
19 and it's the Morning song. But I'll
20 light the qulliq first. (Speaks in
21 Inuit language). And the long standing
22 message is, when you see the sacred
23 fire start think of something very very
24 deeply sacred and precious to you
25 inside your very pour.

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*ELDER SARAH ALANA LIGHTS THE QULLIQ AND
SINGS THE MORNING SONG*

PATTY MUSGRAVE: Before the day gets too much underway I'd like to acknowledge some really important people that are here. And they're important because they're here giving of themselves from their heart. First the Burnt Church First Nation Mental Health. Before I go any further I want to acknowledge why I have a passion for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

There was a little girl who called me to do this work, to ignite my passion, to ensure that I could protect any girl that came across my path and educate them how to protect themselves. And I do that every day and I'm honoured to do it every day. But I would like to acknowledge a little girl from Burnt Church First Nation who I'm honoured to

1 have spent time searching for. So I'd
2 like to honour Hillary Bonnell this
3 morning.

4
5 I'd also like to acknowledge the
6 Atlantic Policy Congress of First
7 Nations Chiefs Secretariat, the Family
8 Information Liaison Unit from PEI, the
9 Family Information Liaison Unit from
10 New Brunswick, Elsipogtog First Nation
11 Health and Wellness and all of the
12 Elders and traditional supports that
13 are here in the room helping us all,
14 debriefing us all, making sure that our
15 spirits are strong to keep going all
16 through the day. A special thank you
17 to all of you.

18
19 Now I would like to - I'd also like to
20 - they keep giving me notes, right, so.
21 I've got them everywhere. The Youth
22 Artistic Expression will take place at
23 lunch time in the Port Royal one and
24 two rooms. So you can get your lunch,
25 go up there at lunch and take part I

1 that, we invite everyone, particularly
2 the public to go up and take part.
3 And, and help contribute to that
4 artistic expression that the youth will
5 be running up there. And now I do
6 believe it's time to introduce our
7 Commissioner, Michele Audette, who
8 would like to say a few words.

9
10 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Thank you very
11 much for taking the time and telling us
12 the passion that you have and we need
13 more people like you across this
14 beautiful land. My mom would say
15 what's left of this land. (Thanks
16 William, Peter and Sarah for their
17 prayer. Also thanks her parents, her
18 children, her partner and her family in
19 French).

20
21 I want to say thank you before we begin
22 to William and his wife, of course,
23 Peter and Sarah for the beautiful
24 prayers and song. It is our laws, our
25 protocol and tradition for many of us

1 across Canada and some of us lost that.
2 And each time we have an opportunity
3 where the Inuit or the Metis or the
4 First Nation will share to us or to me,
5 their knowledge, laws and protocol it's
6 very sacred and very very dear to me.

7
8 I want to say also, I have a special
9 thought and space in my heart and in my
10 spirit to the sisters in spirit, our
11 loved ones, our families and of course
12 the survivors and the children left
13 behind. So every day I wake up and I
14 always say, of course, thank you for
15 being on earth to my dad and my mom and
16 being a mom and a grandmother. But
17 every day I have that special thought
18 for our sisters in spirit. So thank
19 you so much. And quickly, yes, I'm one
20 of the Commissioners but I'm also a
21 mom, I'm also a partner but I'm also a
22 woman. I used to be a militant. I'll
23 be back militant after this beautiful
24 mandate.

1 One day my daughter said to me, you
2 know mom - she was mad. She was mad,
3 one of the twins, she said you're never
4 home so I hate your job. So she saw my
5 reaction and I tried to stay strong and
6 I remembered one of the teachings, we
7 have to accept the emotion and welcome
8 it and maybe share it. I didn't have
9 time to share it, she came back. She
10 jumped on the bed so she, she can be
11 taller than me. She loved to do that.
12 And she said, you know I'm sorry mom
13 that I said that, I know for you it's
14 very important so go share your love to
15 the rest of Canada.

16
17 So you'll see I give lots of hugs but
18 in those hugs there's my kids with you
19 and my family. So this morning they
20 were the first Valentine that I face
21 timed, thank you for the technology
22 because when I was young it was once a
23 month I was able to call my dad, after
24 six o'clock to save money. So today I
25 can face time them, some of you

1 understand I guess. I can face time my
2 kids when I'm with you so they're with
3 me. Sometimes they're even in the room
4 face time so, and of course, my virtual
5 partner, husband to be. So there's a
6 lot of people behind or surrounding us.
7 We call, we don't call it sacrifice
8 anymore. We call it we have to do it
9 and we do it for the family, the people
10 that we love but also people that we
11 meet every day. And to conclude, I
12 want to say that my feminism, my
13 feminist, the way I am, men are part of
14 the solution. I gave birth to three
15 beautiful boys and today one of them is
16 a parent and the other one very young
17 or still wandering, but beautiful boys.
18 Men, I have to say.

19
20 And with this journey I met Paul
21 Laseur, maybe some of you know him.
22 He's from B.C. and he went hunting with
23 his beautiful daughter Raven on the
24 Highway of Tears. First moose for her
25 but first teaching from her dad saying

1 this highway has a long long sad
2 history of the missing and murdered
3 Indigenous, Indigenous women and girls.
4 So he taught her, they exchanged
5 together and from that came an
6 initiative, the moose hide campaign.
7 So I'll ask my colleague to put the
8 logo of this important campaign where
9 men are involved. Where men are
10 responsible or where men are saying no
11 to violence. So Paul has a dream with
12 his daughter and the dream is that on
13 October 5th every year there's men
14 across Canada, Canadians, new
15 Canadians, Indigenous, that will do a
16 fast, is that what we say in English?
17 No food. Because for many of us it's
18 part of the healing where you can fast
19 one day, on that day and the goal is to
20 have one million men.

21
22 So you cannot pretend that you're not
23 aware about this campaign. You cannot
24 pretend that my neighbour will do it,
25 we have to do it. So my three boys

1 will be part of this initiative, but at
2 the end of the day why, it's to say no
3 to violence that women and girls are
4 facing. Indigenous women. So thank
5 you to Paul Laseur and I hope you will
6 spread that information and get
7 involved in, in our ceremony to remind
8 that men are part of the solution and
9 we need the men. And my mom always
10 taught me, our feminist, we have to
11 include them instead of blaming them or
12 punishing them. I said that is hard
13 mom but we have to, and she's a great
14 teacher. So Barbara, it's your time,
15 this moment is very sacred and you take
16 the time you need and you forget the
17 rest. Who's here, who's not here but
18 you do this to honour your loved one
19 and I'm humbled to be the one. Thank
20 you so much. Merci.

21
22 PATTY MUSGRAVE: We're going to
23 take a quick break, 15 minutes. Oh,
24 five. Five. That's just five minutes.
25 So you can run outside right quick.

1

2

R E C E S S

3

U P O N R E S U M I N G :

4

5

THOMAS BARNETT: Good morning

6

Commissioner Audette. I am Thomas

7

Barnett, I'm a lawyer with the National

8

Inquiry. I'm a member of the Letheron

9

Cree Nation, I'm currently living in

10

Prince Rupert, British Columbia in the

11

traditional Territory of the Senshean.

12

I would like to thank the people of

13

this Territory for letting us gather

14

here. I'm truly honoured to be here.

15

16

This morning we'll be hearing from the

17

family of Mary Frances Paul. We have

18

the granddaughter of Mary Francis Paul,

19

Kindra Bernard beside me. We have the

20

daughter, Barbara Bernard in the

21

middle. We have Barbara Bernard's

22

daughter, Deanna Beaton on the far end

23

and we also have a support person here

24

for the family as well. If you could

25

just introduce yourself please.

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25

DR. JUDY CLARK: Hello. Judy Clark from the Abegweit First Nation, I'm Barbara's sister in ceremonies.

THOMAS BARNETT: And Registrar, I've confirmed with the family that they would like to be sworn in promising on the eagle feather.

BARBARA BERNARD PROMISES ON THE FEATHER

KINDRA BERNARD PROMISES ON THE FEATHER

DEANNA BEATON PROMISES ON THE FEATHER

THOMAS BARNETT: So Barbara, if we could begin. If you could just tell the Commissioner a bit about yourself, about where you're from.

BARBARA BERNARD: Okay. Again, my name is Barbara Bernard. I come from the Abegweit First Nation Mi'kmaq First Nation in Scotchfort PEI. I work as a CHR. I have three children, 10

1 grandchildren and that's all I want to
2 tell about myself.

3

4 THOMAS BARNETT: Can you tell us a
5 bit about your community, where you're
6 from?

7

8 BARBARA BERNARD: My community is
9 in PEI in Scotchfort. It's, it's a
10 small community so we know pretty much
11 everybody in our community. It's a
12 strong community. Our community is, I
13 guess just like every other community.
14 They have grown and come a long way and
15 I know, I probably never got to tell
16 everybody about me coming here telling
17 my story and I know when my community
18 sees this they'll, I know they'll be
19 keeping me in their prayers because
20 they, they're, they're supportive in
21 that way.

22

23 THOMAS BARNETT: Can you tell us a
24 bit about your family?

25

1 EXHIBIT NUMBER 1: A copy of an
2 image of Mary Francis Paul

3

4 BARBARA BERNARD: Well I'll start
5 with my, my own, my mom and siblings.
6 I think I'll start right from where my
7 - I'll just talk about my mom first.

8

9 My mom didn't really get to see her mom
10 because her mom passed away when,
11 before, when she was born. So my mom
12 didn't get to be a part of a loving mom
13 because she was always put in different
14 homes and I think she was raised by her
15 aunt and I, I feel sad that I can't
16 really tell you a lot about all that
17 because I've never really received a
18 lot of that information. Only bits and
19 pieces from her friends or a few, few
20 of the family members that, that were
21 alive back in the day I guess.

22

23 So I, I know a lot of my mom's growing
24 up I really feel that she didn't have
25 that, what we have - were not grounded

1 as, as I am today with my, my culture
2 and my, my traditions and how I feel.
3 Like my strength inside, I don't think
4 my mom had that because of being
5 exposed to alcohol. And it took a long
6 time for me to understand all that but
7 before I get into that I wanted to
8 share that she did have a few children
9 before, before me and they were - well
10 my oldest brother stayed in our
11 community and my two older sisters,
12 they were adopted earlier on because my
13 mom really never had a stable place.

14
15 She, she was living with the Knockwood
16 family who I'm grateful that they, that
17 Aunt Libbie and Uncle Teddie took her
18 in and I know Aunt Libbie because she's
19 probably the most kindest person I've
20 ever met. So I know my mom got some of
21 her, her motherly teachings from maybe
22 the Elders in the community. Because
23 that's where I got my teachings. Just
24 give me a minute. They have made me
25 stronger and the woman that I am today.

1 And so knowing and kind of
2 understanding my mom's past, I
3 understand why alcohol was in her life.

4
5 So she had me and she had my younger
6 brother. They tell me that because I
7 was a little older that they wanted to
8 keep me and, because my mom was living
9 with Aunt Libbie and Uncle Teddy and
10 they already had a, a large family of
11 their own and so they couldn't take in
12 another child, which was my younger
13 brother. And so when my mom, my mom
14 had a few suitors, I guess, and so she
15 had to make a decision that she wanted
16 to get married I guess and she told the
17 men that were interested in her that if
18 they came sober the next day and asked
19 her to marry, to marry her that they
20 would, that she would marry the one
21 that would come that next day.

22
23 And so my, my step father, who I take
24 as my dad, was the lucky man that
25 married my mom. With that they had

1 nine children, I think. I don't want
2 to go through the list but anyway, I'll
3 be counting all day. There was, like I
4 said, 14 of us so I think she had nine.
5 But they used to live in Lennox Island
6 and then they moved to Scotchfort and
7 as time went on I think the alcohol
8 really took a toll on my mom and my
9 dad. And during that time Social
10 Services were involved and at one point
11 we were taken to foster care. Some of
12 us came back and then my, my, my step
13 father died in a boating accident and I
14 think that was really hard on my mom.

15
16 When I think of them together now, like
17 I see how much that he loved her and,
18 and I knew that it must have been
19 really hard for her to lose that
20 person, that rock in her life. And
21 when he died we were all taken out of
22 the home and I don't think it was much
23 longer than that and I was in foster
24 care for awhile, a couple of years and
25 then I came back when I was around 15,

1 I think. I just had enough. I got
2 back to my community, I stayed in a few
3 homes in my community and then I was
4 like no, I want to go home with my mom
5 and I stayed with my mom for that year.

6
7 And so - and, and she started to stay
8 sober, like during that time but then
9 they, she found out that if she stayed
10 sober she could get her kids back so
11 she worked at that and she did stay
12 sober. Cause I would get my friends to
13 go and keep an eye on her on the
14 weekends when I - during the week when
15 I wasn't there, but I'd come home on
16 the weekends to visit and I would ask
17 them, well was she drinking. They're
18 like no no no she did really good.
19 And so that was my, my way of finding
20 out if she was doing what she was
21 supposed to do so that we could come
22 home.

23
24 And then I found out, because we're all
25 together in town with the social

1 workers and they were like buying us
2 clothes and stuff and my younger
3 brother told me, oh we're, we're going
4 to get adopted. And I'm like what,
5 that's not right. I said we're, we're
6 - we should be going home and it was
7 funny because the, the two older ones
8 locked me in the elevator to tell me
9 this and we went upstairs and went
10 downstairs and then when I got home I
11 told my mom. I said mom I think my, my
12 brothers and sisters are going to be
13 adopted.

14
15 And so I think she may have went into
16 town to find out and - but I think by
17 that time they were already, they were
18 already adopted. And I think that,
19 during that year before she died was
20 when she was starting to drink a lot
21 heavier. She got back into drinking
22 and it was, it was a lot heavier than
23 what I've seen her do in the past.

1 So for some reason in all that, all
2 that, what I was going through with my
3 life, I was still able to go to school.
4 I don't know why that was so important
5 to me but no matter how bad it was at
6 home I would still get on the bus, I
7 would still get as many siblings as I
8 could get to school and that was almost
9 like my, my safety net or something.
10 Cause when you grow up in a family of
11 alcoholism and you - there's times you
12 just want something that's not as
13 chaotic and school, for me, was that.

14
15 And so I guess now my mom - there are a
16 lot of memories but I kind of, kind of
17 closed that door. So I really - once I
18 had to move on without her I think I
19 just shut that door, I never really
20 looked back. And it's sad because my
21 kids didn't get to know their
22 grandmother or even hear stories of
23 her. This is probably going to be the
24 first time they've ever heard me really
25 speak a lot about my mom and it seems

1 so unfair, and I apologize for that.
2 Sometimes when you love someone so much
3 it's hard to really, to talk about
4 things.

5
6 There are so many stories about her
7 that - one of the things I love about
8 my mom is her sense of humour. She
9 always laughed and she was - I think a
10 lot of people that knew her know her
11 from her laughter. And her - no matter
12 what she was going through in life you
13 wouldn't know it, you know what I mean.
14 Cause she enjoyed love and and and
15 laughter and I find like I'm a lot like
16 my mom in a way because I'd rather look
17 at life and love and the beauty around
18 me and I have my, my beautiful children
19 and my grandchildren, that I think
20 being able to close those doors off of
21 losing my mom was my way of coping. My
22 way of staying strong for my family.

23
24 I think one of the stories I, I
25 remember my mom and my brothers and

1 sisters were around and she was going
2 on about how much she would love to
3 have corn. And we had an Elder on the
4 other side of the Reserve that had a
5 little garden and she was probably the
6 only one, her name is Auntie, we called
7 her Auntie Agnes. And she had a garden
8 of corn and vegetables and my siblings
9 are probably as young as my daughters'
10 children now, and they heard mom saying
11 this. They're like okay, you know, you
12 know when you're kid you always want to
13 do the best for your mom.

14
15 The next thing I know I come home and I
16 see there's corn and vegetables and
17 potatoes and I'm like, where did this
18 all come from. And my poor mom thought
19 it was Auntie Agnes giving it to her.
20 So mom was like cooking it up and the
21 next thing I know there's a knock on
22 the door, Auntie Agnes was not very
23 happy. Oh my goodness. So my mom
24 invited her to eat. But anyway. Those
25 are little stories.

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And another time the frogs, we lived by a little gully and the frogs, the frogs were croaking, you know, pretty much all night long and my mom got up and she goes oh my God, she says I wish those frogs would just stop, you know, get rid of the frogs. So the next thing I know, the next morning or whatever, I heard my mom screaming Barbara Barbara get out here. I'm like what what and I seen all these frogs hopping all over the place and see kids with buckets going across into the field on the other side of the road and I'm like, what are you guys doing. And they're like well mom don't like the frogs so we're taking them out into the field. And they're like jumping and I'm screaming because I don't like jumpy little things. And I'm like put them back in the the the water, they're going to die.

1 I hear my mom's like panicking in
2 there. But it was just those funny
3 little things, my siblings always
4 trying to make her happy I think.
5 Other times I remember sitting on the
6 steps with her and I'd be looking at
7 her and then I grabbed her cheek and I
8 told her, I said mom, I said, I just
9 love you so much. And she looked at me
10 and she said I love you too and I love
11 you so much. And I've never heard that
12 from my mom and, of course, a lot of us
13 could probably relate to that because
14 that was never really spoken because it
15 was, I think it was known more than
16 spoken. Nowadays we, we say it and
17 we're not afraid to say it.

18
19 But I always felt that from her, was
20 her love. And I too, kind of got on
21 the path of, of drinking and partying
22 and I remember, with my mom, having a
23 few drinks. I hate to say that but we
24 did and we used to have these
25 cigarettes and I had put one of those,

1 what do you call those trick
2 cigarettes, those little things you put
3 in and it blows up. So - and I kept
4 telling, it was Deanna's dad at the
5 time, I was telling him, make sure you,
6 you you don't forget that this is on
7 the side of the thing I said, because
8 like I don't want us to, I don't want
9 us to be tricked.

10

11 So of course when you're drinking a few
12 you kind of forget those things and my
13 poor mother's in the back, give me a
14 smoke, give me a smoke. All right.
15 And he gives her that cigarette and me
16 not knowing, the next thing you know we
17 look back and her eyebrows and
18 everything were all black. Let's just
19 say she wasn't very happy. But anyway,
20 we didn't - that was the only couple of
21 times that her and I did that. But
22 anyway.

23

24 Another time was when the lobsters.
25 Her dad used to bring her crates of

1 lobsters and I remember her sitting in
2 the back of the step, nobody could
3 touch the lobsters, right. She was
4 back there in her glory, she had her
5 beer and her lobsters and she'd sit
6 back there for hours just eating her
7 lobsters and drinking her beer and she
8 was happy. But it's, it's how like her
9 dad made me see her in a different way.
10 Like not just somebody passed out in
11 the room and I used say, oh just leave
12 her there, she's just, she was
13 drinking. He goes no, we're going to
14 take her with us and we're going to
15 tidy her up and you're going to help
16 me. And I'm like okay.

17
18 But he really made me see my mom in a
19 different way because I only seen the
20 negative way. And it took me a long
21 time to, to feel her in my heart again
22 and remember all the good times,
23 changing the pictures in my head, that
24 they weren't all negative. That we had
25 some really good moments and that I was

1 able to remember them now as I got a
2 little older. But I wasn't ready to
3 share them with my, my kids. Yeah.

4
5 And I remember she used to always make
6 bread and for, like holidays, like home
7 made bread and my dad was a chef so
8 Christmas time was a time that they
9 would kind of be present and they would
10 have lemon meringue pies. I remember
11 them so much piled up on the counter
12 and home made bread and we'd eat
13 together as a family. And those are
14 the kind of memories that I, I
15 remember.

16
17 THOMAS BARNETT: Thank you for
18 sharing those stories. If you could
19 tell the Commissioner a bit about the
20 circumstances surrounding your mother.

21
22 BARBARA BERNARD: Okay. Like I
23 said, mom looked frustrated or fidgety
24 or something the night before she, well
25 before she was gone for a few days or a

1 week and before her death she was very,
2 I don't know, nervous and talking about
3 having to talk to somebody. And, and,
4 and I know it had something to do with
5 the Social Services and I know she was
6 upset about it. And I told her, mom
7 don't do anything, I'll go into town
8 with you tomorrow. And she goes no no
9 no, I'm - cause she was also drinking
10 so I knew whatever she was saying
11 wasn't really, she wasn't making sense
12 to me but in my heart I knew something
13 was wrong that's why I told her, just
14 go to bed. When I get home from school
15 we'll go, I'll go with you and she said
16 all right.

17
18 And so - and my mom, from time to time,
19 went out drinking and sometimes she
20 would be with her friends that were on
21 the streets and - but she would come
22 home. Like I, I knew she would come
23 home and I was never really worried
24 about her. But this time I was
25 worried. It's almost like you, you

1 have a sense something's wrong. And I,
2 I asked a couple of my friends if
3 they'd help me go into town and, and
4 find my mom and they said sure. And we
5 went and looked different places and we
6 couldn't find her.

7
8 And then I'd go home and I'd go to
9 school and then a few, a few days went
10 by and I, I always talked to Uncle
11 Albert Knockwood. He, I think he was
12 my, my, my replacement for my dad, my
13 brother, my - he was my male role model
14 and I always talked to him about
15 everything. And then one day I was
16 telling him about my mom and I was
17 worried about her and he said all
18 right, he said I'll, I'll look around
19 and I said all right. And so a couple
20 of days went by and she still wasn't
21 home and then we used to have this
22 little store, it was run by Lucy
23 Knockwood. And I went there and I was
24 getting some bread, milk and stuff and
25 I was - we were, I was talking to a few

1 of my friends and another elderly man
2 come in. Another elderly man come in
3 and he said we, we found somebody. (a
4 phone rings) It's probably my mom, I'm
5 here. It's okay.

6
7 So they said they found somebody on the
8 waterfront and I just looked at him and
9 I just took my bag and I walked out and
10 I could hear Auntie Lucy tell him,
11 don't say that don't say that, Barb's
12 been looking for her mom for a few
13 days, you know. You don't even know
14 who it is, just don't say anything.
15 He's like oh okay and then I just
16 walked past and I went home. I started
17 cooking something and Uncle Albert come
18 in and he just looked at me. He didn't
19 even say anything and I just started
20 bawling.

21
22 I really don't remember much after
23 that, I just knew I was at the hospital
24 and that, I remember, I remember being,
25 I remember being at the graveyard. I

1 don't remember the ceremony, I don't
2 remember anything but I remember a
3 social worker coming up to me right at
4 the graveyard asking me what am I going
5 to do with my baby. It hurt so bad
6 because I had her, she - they already
7 took my brothers and sisters and I went
8 to go confront her and my brother was
9 like no, this is not the time, you
10 know. And I kept telling her I'm going
11 to keep my baby.

12
13 And so I always heard that she fell and
14 got a broken neck so being the age that
15 I was I really never thought nothing of
16 it. And then when the missing and
17 murdered people started gathering
18 together Judy, she used to live in our
19 community too, Judy Clark, she kept
20 telling me, Barbara you've got to share
21 your story. You've got to speak for
22 your mom and I'm like I don't fit in
23 that category my mom, I know where my
24 mom is. And she goes no Barbara, you,

1 this is where you have to speak for
2 your mom.

3
4 And I never really got it, like I
5 didn't understand because - so when I
6 was 28 I think somebody else asked me
7 to, to, you can find out what happened
8 to your mom and I said really. So I
9 went and I talked to a police officer
10 and they were talking about the files
11 and he said, you need to remember your
12 mom for your happy memories he said.
13 You don't want to remember your mom
14 stuffed in one of those drum cans. And
15 that kind of like stuck with me. And I
16 was like that's, that's not what they
17 told me when I was younger.

18
19 And so I was just like, I was kind of a
20 little shocked by all that but the
21 police officer, I think he was friends
22 with the Constables in Scotchfort and
23 they never really, like nobody really
24 ever told me anything that happened

1 with my mom and I think that's one of
2 the things that bothers me today.

3

4 So I never really connected this to
5 mom, like these things that my mom
6 could've been murdered or it was a
7 suspicious death or anything like that.

8 So when I started this process I still
9 didn't kind of understand where I fit.

10 But when I did the interview and I was
11 telling my story and the lady said that
12 it almost looked like it was a
13 suspicious death and that it wasn't, it
14 wasn't, like, kind of like worth
15 investigating.

16

17 That my mom's death didn't matter to
18 them and that stuck in my head. When I
19 left there I cried that whole week
20 because I couldn't believe that they
21 wouldn't have done something because
22 they didn't, it felt like they didn't
23 think my mom's life was worth anything
24 and that hurt.

25

1 And I think that's what made me decide
2 to come here and tell my story for my
3 mom because my mom matters. My mom is
4 a human being. And I just need to
5 know, and I just need to be able to
6 tell and to support the rest of my
7 sisters that told their stories to be
8 able to support that our First Nation
9 women matter. We're human beings. Our
10 children matter. I think that's why I
11 was able to come here and be able to,
12 to voice this. I look to poor Tom here
13 to ground me.

14
15 THOMAS BARNETT: Barbara, are
16 there some recommendations that you
17 have to say to the Commissioner about
18 what could've been done better and what
19 should happen in the future?

20
21 BARBARA BERNARD: The one that
22 comes to my mind right now is to, is to
23 realize our First Nations people
24 matter, we're human beings and when we
25 lose loved ones it's just as important

1 to us as it is to other community
2 members, other non native members.
3 We're human beings and I think we need
4 to start being treated as human beings
5 and I think that's one of the things
6 that I want as a recommendation, is
7 that we are taken seriously and that
8 our voice is just as important, and our
9 children and our grandchildren are just
10 as important.

11

12

13 And I think that - and to have better
14 communication with the justice that
15 surrounds all this. To be treated as
16 human beings is so important and I
17 think, I don't know, you guys do I need
18 to say any more?

19

20 THOMAS BARNETT: Just one thing I
21 wanted to clarify, you had mentioned
22 that you were 28 when you found out
23 about some of the circumstances
24 surrounding your mother, how old were
25 you when your mother was found?

1

2

BARBARA BERNARD: I was probably, I was just turning 17 so I would've been 16 when my mom passed away. And and I believe during that time too that it was probably my Uncle Albert that kind of stood up for me and took all that information that may have been relayed to me, that he may have, you know, got that information because that's what the older people would do for me. You know when I was, when I was younger cause I would do it for someone else, not to protect me but just to be that, that adult to talk all this adult information and, and - but the RCMP at that time, never really told me anything other than, you know, my mom was found and and that her neck was broken and that was the cause of her death. And that was all that I knew.

22

23

THOMAS BARNETT: Since you talked to that Officer back when you were 28 years old.....

24

25

1

2

BARBARA BERNARD: Umm-hmm.

3

4

THOMAS BARNETT:has there been
follow up?

5

6

7

BARBARA BERNARD: Ah, no. I think
I, I trusted him enough to, to realize
that I didn't want to see any of that
information about my mom. I just
wanted to remember her the way she was.
But doing this, I think this is
probably where I'll get all my answers
and I think I'm at a good place to be
able to receive those answers now. And
I know it's important and I need that.
That's where I'm at right now.

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19

THOMAS BARNETT: Thank you for
your strength and coming to share your
story. I think the Commissioner might
have some questions for you Barbara.

20

21

22

23

24

BARBARA BERNARD: Okay.

25

1 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Does your
2 daughter want to speak?

3
4 KINDRA BERNARD: I'm Barbara's
5 granddaughter and I just want to say
6 that coming here today and for my
7 grandmother to have the courage to tell
8 her story to a group of people that she
9 doesn't know is so encouraging, is that
10 we're moving in the right direction and
11 that every life matters no matter your
12 skin colour. My great grandmother's
13 life mattered and it still matters
14 today.

15
16 I grew up, my mother grew up not
17 knowing her grandmother which hurts me
18 so badly because I got to grow up with
19 my grandmother. I got to learn lessons
20 from her and to watch her grow as a
21 person too and to live - I got to know
22 her mother through the actions that she
23 has done, that she has taught me. I've
24 got to see glimpses of her mother
25 through her laughter and her humour

1 that she admired so badly in her
2 mother. And it's, it's so frustrating
3 to know that there was no justice for
4 her. Why wasn't there justice for her?
5 Why wasn't her case looked into
6 further? You know, why didn't we have
7 answers?

8
9 You know, and that goes back to the
10 lack of communication. But even just
11 the symbolic, the symbolic - her just
12 being the way that she was found in
13 this bin, basically, symbolized being
14 disposable and she wasn't disposable.
15 She was a human being that had children
16 that had a family who had loved ones
17 who cared about her and yet that's how
18 she was found, that's how she was
19 treated. But she was a beautiful
20 person and I am so disappointed in our
21 justice system and I am so disappointed
22 in our community members. And I'm so
23 disappointed that my grandmother has
24 not had the answers that she deserves
25 and that she had to grow up and raise a

1 beautiful family without the support of
2 her mother.

3
4 Nobody deserves to grow up without a
5 mother. I had the privilege of growing
6 up with these beautiful women here
7 today who have raised me to be the best
8 person that I can be. Even though
9 she's been through so much in her life,
10 she represents hope and strength. And
11 there may be three generations sitting
12 here today but there's four because she
13 is watching down on us and she is
14 leading us in the right direction. And
15 she would be so proud of you for
16 sitting here today and telling your
17 story.

18
19 THOMAS BARNETT: Thank you Kindra.
20 Commissioner, if you have any
21 questions.

22
23 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup,
24 meegwetch. It is true, we are blessed
25 to grow up with our mothers and

1 grandmothers when we have that
2 opportunity. And - but for so many of
3 us it was taken away and that is why
4 many women for many decades, and Judy
5 is one of them, and you too, many women
6 and men over the time, they joined our
7 leaders to say that justice needs to
8 happen.

9
10 I believe, Kindra, Barbara this Inquiry
11 is one of the tools or momentum that
12 can bring many things to the Federal
13 Government, to the Provincial and, of
14 course, to the Territorial Government.
15 But I also am not afraid to say I, I
16 come from Meleuxtenna, my First Nation
17 community. Our own Government, the
18 Indigenous Government, Metis, Inuit,
19 First Nations, that if we, if we are
20 able, because of your fight and your
21 movement and your dedication that there
22 is an Inquiry today, that will make
23 sure that we bring recommendations to
24 all the Governments that I mentioned

1 and also Band Council. That fight will
2 have to continue.

3
4 We have a beginning and an end, this
5 Inquiry, hoping that we will see a
6 change because we're not the first
7 Inquiry also, we had the Truth and
8 Reconciliation and, before that, RCAP
9 and the list is long. Many
10 recommendations so the justice should
11 be changed and has to change. So I
12 hope this one, but it's a hope. We
13 pray for that, we push for that and it
14 will be, in the end, our leaders after.
15 Leaders could be - and it's you. It's
16 also people that are the members of
17 Parliament, Ottawa or New Brunswick and
18 so on.

19
20 And you say, Barbara, that you trusted
21 that person when you were 28 years old
22 when he, it's a man I guess? When he
23 shared to you what happened, but you
24 have questions today and you have to
25 have answers. I want to make sure I

1 get it right and it's well written
2 because we share this to my dear
3 colleagues Qajaq, Brian and Marion
4 because they have to read your
5 testimony. And from that we have to
6 build recommendations or questions when
7 we will sit with the institutions.
8 What are your questions that you need
9 to have answered? I want to make sure
10 that it's public and heard from, from
11 us.

12
13 BARBARA BERNARD: I want to know, I
14 want to know if they investigated my
15 mom's death. I want to know if, if
16 they thought that it was a suspicious
17 death. I want to know why it wasn't,
18 if it wasn't investigated, then why
19 wasn't it. And why didn't they come
20 and talk to me. And, like I said, I
21 was young, maybe they did, I don't
22 remember but I would like to know those
23 unanswered questions.

24

1 And maybe they did investigate it,
2 maybe they didn't but I think I would
3 like to know that for sure. And the
4 main thing is to, to find out if it was
5 a suspicious death, was she murdered.
6 And again, why she wasn't investigated
7 is, is something that's really -
8 because I feel like, like I mentioned
9 earlier, that she wasn't worth the
10 investigation because she was First
11 Nation and that really doesn't sit well
12 with me. And I think that's why I want
13 to be here today to be able to find out
14 those answers for her.

15
16 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup.
17 Merci beaucoup. Same for you, the same
18 question. Merci. And I would like to
19 ask you if it's okay for you, we, we
20 say in our vision statement or mission
21 statement, I hate the word "mission"
22 because of some of our history. So
23 help me to find something better in our
24 passion. I'll say our women and girls

1 are sacred and I would like to add
2 also, that the women and girls matter.

3
4 So I'm asking you if we could add this
5 officially.

6
7 BARBARA BERNARD: Yes.

8
9 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: And I know I've
10 heard it before but I'm asking you.

11
12 BARBARA BERNARD: Yes. I, I do
13 agree with that and I do want that
14 added. Yes. Cause it's even hard for
15 - my granddaughter likes to travel and
16 I worry so much for her that I made her
17 promise me that when she's going
18 anywhere, the minute she lays down in
19 her bed that she has to call me because
20 I won't sleep. She's pretty good at
21 it. I guess she knows I like my sleep.

22
23 And that goes for my daughters when
24 they travel I, I worry so much and, I
25 don't know I just, I just want you to

1 know that, that I worry. It's probably
2 a worry I shouldn't have but I do and
3 that's, that's what I want to say.

4
5 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Well thank, thank
6 you for sharing that and I hope you
7 don't feel bad or you don't have to
8 feel bad because yes, we do worry. We
9 do worry. Either because we, we went
10 through that trauma and, and I hope you
11 don't miss that night if you forget to
12 text her.

13
14 BARBARA BERNARD: Or I call her.

15
16 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Yeah, it is true,
17 it's so important and I'll tell you
18 after, how much I understand how you
19 feel. So I thank you so much and would
20 you accept a gift, the three of you,
21 the three beautiful generations, a gift
22 from us. And there's a beautiful
23 history, maybe you heard it yesterday,
24 but it's special, it's to you so I

1 would like you to understand where this
2 gift is coming from.

3
4 It's from our bundle, one of the
5 bundles is travelling to Rankin Inlet
6 and we have a blanket that my mom did,
7 by the way, just between you and me.
8 So I'll ask my grandmother to explain
9 and share to you where this gift is
10 coming from.

11
12 BERNIE POITRAS-WILLIAMS: I just want
13 to say Haw'aa to you Barbara and to
14 your beautiful family here. I just
15 want to give a little history of these
16 eagle feathers. They started their
17 journey from my village if Haida Gwaii
18 on the - I come from the rainforest on
19 the Pacific Ocean. It started there
20 and along for months and that, through
21 the provinces, family members, Sun
22 dancers, Elders have, have donated all
23 these eagle feathers that has made its
24 way out this way now.

25

1 And this lot comes from Sechelt from
2 the Sunshine Coast between Vancouver
3 Island and Vancouver and that so. And
4 these are the gifts that have traveled
5 here. So I want to say Haw'aa and our
6 beautiful grandmother Elder here too,
7 is the one that made these beautiful
8 casings for it, our beautiful Andrea,
9 her family so. I'm going to say Haw'aa
10 to you again.

11
12 BARBARA BERNARD: I just, I just
13 wanted to also let you know that my
14 daughter Sheena is with me and she's
15 really emotional and - but I want you
16 to know that she's here supporting me
17 too. Okay.

18
19 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: I come to you or
20 you come to me.

21
22 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE AND BERNIE
23 POITRAS-WILLIAMS PRESENT GIFTS TO THE
24 FAMILY

25

1 THOMAS BARNETT: Commissioner, if
2 we could adjourn this session.

3

4 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Yes.

5

6 Hearing Concluded 12:00 p.m.

7

8 BERNIE POITRAS-WILLIAMS: I would like
9 to announce too that it's been a
10 request to do the Strong Women's song
11 for the family here. For Barb and her
12 daughter and her granddaughter.

13

14 *CROWD GATHERS AROUND FAMILY FOR THE*
15 *STRONG WOMEN'S SONG*

16

17

* * * * *

18

FORM 2

Certificate of Transcript (Subsection 5(2))
Evidence Act

I, we Trudy L. McKinnon, certify that this document is a true and accurate transcript of the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls held at the Rendezvous Room, Four Points Sheraton, Moncton, New Brunswick on the 14th day of February, 2018 taken from recording NIMNB20180214.

DATE: MON., Feb. 26TH, 2018

Trudy L. Mckinnon