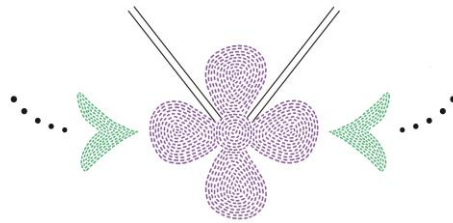


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Hilton Vancouver Airport Hotel
Metro Vancouver (Richmond)
British Columbia**



PUBLIC

Friday April 6, 2018

**Statement - Volume 362(a)
Archie Pootlass,
In relation to Donna Pootlass**

Statement gathered by Daria Boyarchuk

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NOTE 1

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."

NOTE 2

The use of square brackets [] in this transcript indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. The use of a strikethrough mark indicates where an error was found in the original transcription. Amendments to this transcript were made by Susan Grant, Legal Assistant with National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ on September 26, 2018 at Vancouver, British Columbia. Ms. Grant listened back to the source audio recording of the proceeding to make the amendments.

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Statement Gatherer: Daria Boyarchuk

Documents submitted with oral statement: none

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Archie Pootlass
(Donna Pootlass)

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1 Vancouver, British Columbia
2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, April 6, 2018
3 at 9:24 a.m.

4 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Hi, my name is Daria
5 Boyarchuk, and we're here, um, on April 6th, 2018. It is
6 9:24 in the morning, and as a statement gatherer for the
7 National Inquiry for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous
8 Women and Girls, I'm very honoured to have you here,
9 Archie, to, um, to be surrounded by you and your family.
10 Because I know, as you told me earlier, you have, you have
11 a lot to share and you have been holding it in your heart
12 for a very long time. And you have also been here to
13 support the statement that your wife has given. And so
14 you've already experienced, you've heard many stories of
15 other people, but you haven't had a chance to release your
16 own emotions and to honour your sister. So right now, this
17 is your moment to, um, to share your story and before we
18 begin, I would like to ask you to sign the consent form.

19 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Yes, before we
20 begin, could I, could we -- I like to request we open in
21 prayer.

22 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

23 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: It's in our, our --

24 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Sure.

25 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: -- (inaudible) we --

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1 whatever we do in life, we --

2 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Yes.

3 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: -- the first thing
4 we do is we open in prayer.

5 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Yes, let's do that.

6 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: Creator, thank you
7 for this beautiful day, and thank you for the people that
8 are helping us on our journey. I thank you for everything
9 that's going to happen here today, and I just pray that
10 you'll give Archie the strength that he needs to do his
11 statement. Thank you for the elder and the support worker
12 that's in the room with us, and our daughter Denise, and
13 the person that's taking the statement. Thank you for
14 everybody that's here. And we pray that you'll just be
15 with us and lead us and guide us in everything that we do
16 from this time on. (Speaking Nuxalk).

17 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you, very
18 much. If it, it's okay, I would ask, I would like to ask
19 everyone to introduce yourself, and, um, would you, would
20 you like to start?

21 MS. DENISE POOTLASS: I'm Denise Pootlass
22 Wilson. I'm, um, the daughter of Archie Pootlass.

23 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you.

24 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: I'm Dorothy
25 Pootlass, and I'm the wife of Archie Pootlass.

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1 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: I'm Archie Pootlass.
2 My given name, my Nuxalk name is Osenecreek (ph). It means,
3 um, power from the sun, from deep within. That's a
4 traditional Chief's name given to me by my, my oldest
5 brother who is the head Chief of our tribe. Um, I come
6 from Bella Coola, predominantly a First Nations community,
7 in the central coast of British Columbia. Um, population
8 is about right now close to 3,000 people, and, um, about
9 1,800 of those people are Nuxalk people, my family. And
10 I'm, um, myself, personally, I'm retired. Um, I was the,
11 um, the elected Chief. Probably the longest be serving
12 Chief of our, of our tribe. You know, Chief for 20 years.
13 So, and, um, I did a lot of things there to work with our -
14 - help our people. And an example is I put a healing plan
15 in place for us back in '90 -- '96. And prior to that I,
16 um, built a safe house for women and children. Built a
17 community hall. Sports and recreation activities in our
18 community. And um, I also built a, um, fairly large
19 school, where we offer our language, our culture and our
20 history. And, um, I also, um, added on to the, to the
21 school that, that we built with, um -- I put forward,
22 developed a college where we -- joint venture with other
23 post-secondary institutions like University of B.C. and
24 Simon Fraser and Thompson River University. We've
25 developed a good relationship there, and education is key

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1 for our healing. So that's just a very quick snap shot of
2 who I am.

3 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Yeah. Thank you.
4 Thank you very much.

5 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Okay.

6 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: And could you please
7 introduce yourself?

8 MS. VERA JONES: Hi. My name is Vera
9 Jones. I'm a resolution health support worker for the
10 Indian Residential School Survivor Society.

11 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: The Indian
12 residential school?

13 MS. VERA JONES: Survivor Society.

14 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Survivor Society.

15 MS. VERA JONES: Thank you.

16 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you. Um,
17 Archie, um, I would like, um, for us to go over the consent
18 form.

19 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Yes.

20 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: And it is a consent
21 form, as I have mentioned earlier.

22 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Um hum.

23 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: That will either
24 authorize the inquiry to disclose your voice, your picture,
25 your image, your story, or it will not -- um, the second

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1 option, for example, you may not -- the inquiry may not
2 disclosure any information about you or your loved ones.
3 So, um, if, um, if you're comfortable at this point, if you
4 could, um, put your initials down here and in the box that
5 you think is most appropriate for you, and sign the name at
6 the bottom. Thank you. And Dorothy, if you can, if you
7 can sign as a witness as well. Thank you. And I can fill
8 out the rest, address and everything else. Thank you very
9 much.

10 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: Okay.

11 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So, Archie, we're
12 here, and we're here to hear your story. And, um, we're
13 here to learn and honour the story of your loved one.

14 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: All right. Okay.
15 So I'd like to thank you for, for help -- helping us with
16 this. You know, um, ~~(inaudible)~~ [certainly] we've, um, I
17 think we've, um -- well my sister Donna Pootlass, we've
18 been -- she's been missing since 1954, you know, and -- the
19 summer of 1954. And like it, um, she, um, when she went
20 missing, we, um -- either, I think I was about seven years
21 old then. And my dad, he -- we had -- he was married three
22 times. His first wife died of TB, and he had one child
23 with his first wife. And then, um, he was, he married
24 again and with his second wife, he had, um, six children.
25 You know, so that's where, where Donna was, um, from the

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1 second wife's family. So she was my half-sister.

2 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Um hum.

3 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: But Donna had a, a,
4 um, twin brother --

5 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Um hum.

6 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: -- and his name was
7 Donald (ph), Don (ph). And he passed away, I think it was
8 about 12 years ago. And um, and his -- my dad's third wife
9 was my mom, and here he had, um -- my mom and dad had ten,
10 ten children together. And when he passed away, my mom re-
11 married and she had four more children. Big family.

12 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Yeah. It is a big
13 family.

14 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Huge family. But,
15 um, now I would like to share with my -- back in 1954 I
16 was, in summer, I was seven years old. And Donna, I
17 believe, she would have been, um, 16, 15 -- yeah, 16 years
18 old, I think. And what, what happened here was, um, I
19 could remember, um, when, um, it was determined that she
20 was missing, I think it was after a couple of days from
21 when she went missing. I don't know the exact date, but it
22 was in the summer of '54, and (inaudible) were in the
23 commercial fishing season. There's a huge fleet of, um,
24 gillnetters in Bella Coola at the time. So, um, it was
25 determined that she, that she was missing and probably

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1 hadn't seen her for, for a few days and, um, my dad - who
2 was the elected, he was the hereditary Chief, the
3 traditional Chief, but he was also elected Chief counsel -
4 and I remember we, um, he had us help him look for her.

5 Some of us went door-to-door and
6 throughout the village, and it wasn't very big at that
7 time. So we couldn't -- nobody found her. It didn't take
8 us very long to do that, pass to see if anybody's seen her.
9 No results. So he started looking throughout the mountain
10 native communities. There's two communities there: Bella
11 Coola and Hagensborg. So that was about 20 kilometers
12 away. And (inaudible) from, from Bella Coola. And we --
13 he looked around there as well. Yeah, he looked there as
14 well, and, um, we had, um -- he organized a -- the
15 community started looking, helping us at that point, and I
16 think he reported to the RCMP, and the RCMP did a little of
17 a search with us, but...

18 And then I remember him going to the, the
19 dock, the government dock, where all the, um, all the
20 vessels, the commercial vessels were, you know, located
21 there, eh? So I know he went boat to boat. There where --
22 I remember being with my dad. I can remember walking along
23 the, um, the docs there, looking under the, the big, large
24 dock where we received passenger and freight boats from
25 Vancouver. We looked -- I looked, I remember, with him. I,

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1 there was a, a fuel station there, and I remember walking
2 with him towards the fuel station, and I remember him and I
3 looking under the dock and under this huge building and my,
4 all my family was there. I remember my older brother,
5 Darryl (ph), was there. He's the oldest one of us.

6 ~~(Inaudible)~~ [There was no luck,] we couldn't find her. We
7 looked along the docs and we looked everywhere, you know.

8 And, um, then we went across the inlet --
9 he went over there, and started looking at the, there's a
10 fishing company across the bay, called Tallheo Cannery, and
11 he went there and he, he -- there was a big fishing fleet
12 there as well at the time. And he -- we had a lot of
13 family there and he, and he went door-to-door there, again,
14 asking if they had seen. No, nobody had seen her. So we
15 went back to the -- probably he was there for a good half
16 day looking, looking at the grounds all around the area and
17 that fishing camp. To me, it was a fishing camp. Canadian
18 Fish Company (ph).

19 I think, um, after we searched a little,
20 and I could also remember us going to a freight boat that
21 brought freight in from Vancouver. Um, so the roads
22 weren't very good to ~~(inaudible)~~ [out of Bella Coola yet]
23 and, um, they were just recently being built back in 1954,
24 so, Bella's not -- we -- the only route out was by, by air
25 at Bella Coola or, or by boat. And, um, there was a Road

1 there that within the -- out of Bella Coola Valley, but it
2 wasn't a very good road. But still freight trucks didn't
3 use that, that road, yet. So only, trucks and, and, you
4 know vehicles. But, um, we looked in that -- we made some
5 inquiries at the, with the freight company. I think the
6 name of that that vessel that came into Bella Coola was
7 called the Canadian Prince (ph).

8 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Canadian what?

9 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Prince (ph). I
10 think that's what -- I remember that's one the vessels that
11 came in. And probably -- then probably the freight -- had
12 a freight of passengers, primarily freight, but it had a
13 few rooms for passengers leaving Bella Coola -- lower
14 mainland. And that was the, um, the best mode of
15 ~~(inaudible)~~ [transportation] basically at the time in Bella
16 Coola.

17 And, um, he made some inquiries and he
18 talked to the, to the, um, the staff there, the captain
19 and, um, and they, there was never a passenger named Donna.
20 And they asked if there was a possibility that she could
21 hide in that, that, that -- but, it is. ~~(Inaudible)~~ [It
22 is]. She could have hidden ~~(inaudible)~~ [that boat deck].
23 He said,

24 "It's a two-day trip to Vancouver."

25 I remember, he said,

1 "No, we -- he doesn't recall."

2 He would -- they normally would get
3 reports of people, if they had a stowaway, I guess.
4 Nothing happened like that. So... anyway.

5 Probably a week or so the search was
6 called off. But people still looked for her, thinking that
7 she might - if she drowned - that she may come to the
8 surface because you know that's what happens; she would
9 come to the surface, eventually. And there was a large
10 fishing fleet out there at the time, and ~~(inaudible)~~ [if
11 she did float to the surface,] she drowned, there would
12 have been, um, somebody would have found her. That fleet
13 was huge and the inlet isn't that big. So that -- he, he
14 came to the conclusion that she didn't drown in the inlet.

15 So, but he was pretty stressed out and
16 that. And he was helping our leader, he liked the leader
17 and he took this pretty hard. He just couldn't find her.
18 And I remember that. And I remember us, um - as a family -
19 we came together, and there was a lot of tears that day,
20 especially from my, my older sister, my ~~(inaudible)~~ [lost]
21 older sister. She was the second oldest in our family, my
22 mom's family. She took it really hard because her and
23 Donna were pretty close, and I shared with my family that I
24 was going to make the statement today and she said to me --
25 which was kind of revealed to us what Donna did. She said -

1 this is her conversation with, with my sister Lorraine (ph)
2 - she says,

3 "I'm going to leave you. I'm leaving
4 now."

5 And Lorraine (ph), Lorraine (ph) was 12
6 years old at the time.

7 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: How old? 12?

8 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Twelve, thirteen
9 years old. Maybe 13 years old, I think. And she said,
10 "I'm leaving. ~~(Inaudible)~~ [I'm going
11 to leave you now]."

12 But Lorraine didn't understand what that
13 was all about (inaudible) physically leave Bella Coola
14 ~~(inaudible)~~ [but she did]. So when it was determined that
15 she was missing, lost, and ~~(inaudible)~~ [Lorraine] took it
16 really hard, her and my dad. ~~(Inaudible)~~ [Bawled their
17 eyes out]. I, I remember that. And so did my older
18 brother. He was pretty close to her, too. The oldest in
19 our family. And her twin brother, her twin brother, he
20 took it really hard as well. And her biological brothers,
21 the same mother. I, I can remember the pain that was
22 resonating in our family, you know, and, um, but I kept, I
23 kind of still visualize what her twin brother was doing.
24 He just couldn't believe it. She did not share with any of
25 her biological family members what she was doing, only to

1 my sister, who was her half-sister. ~~(Inaudible)~~ [Told her
2 that she was going to] come back and ~~(inaudible)~~ [that she
3 was going to get her, pick her up and] leave together. So
4 I don't recall -- I was pretty young then, too.

5 But I don't recall any, too much support
6 from the ~~(inaudible)~~ [, on the] investigation from the
7 RCMP. And I asked my older brother and my sister who, who
8 was really close to Donna. She said, she said, she said,
9 um -- or, um, I asked if the RCMP helped with the search
10 and I remember they did have a few conversations with my
11 dad, like, they did look, but it wasn't a very strong
12 effort, I think - in my opinion. I was pretty young then.
13 And I asked my brother this morning if he remembers, if he
14 recalls the search. He said,

15 "Only what we did."

16 And I said,

17 "What about the RCMP?"

18 And he said,

19 "Well, maybe they were there, but
20 maybe."

21 But he doesn't remember ~~(inaudible)~~
22 [anything] too (inaudible) was, at the time, in those years
23 there were, relationships were very poor. There was no
24 relationship at all with our community, not like today.
25 But, um, even today, we really need to work at the

1 his grave. So, you know, I, I feel that the only other
2 person that he would know that come to show respects to him
3 would have been his, his twin sister. We know this, our
4 family ~~(inaudible)~~ [where] this was reported to us.

5 I called a couple of friends up in a
6 neighbouring village, Algatcha (ph), to see if they know of
7 anybody passing through that looked like my brother, like
8 her twin brother, and no one, no, nobody's seen anything.
9 That's an example that -- but we know that she's still her
10 with us. Yeah.

11 And when my brother, my brother -- her
12 oldest biological brother now, he was the Chief, head
13 Chief, traditional Chief -- he, when he passed, the same
14 scenario. This time, my wife seen a vehicle in front of
15 our house, our house -- or a truck, a pick-up truck. It
16 went slowly past, stopped, paused in front of our place.
17 So, I mean -- she told me -- she said,

18 "There's a vehicle, there's a vehicle
19 outside."

20 I thought maybe a friend from up country.
21 So I immediately went out the door and by the time I got
22 out there, the vehicle was gone, the vehicle had left. I
23 just went to get a jacket and put my shoes on, and
24 ~~(inaudible)~~ [it was leaving]. So I followed it, and I
25 missed it. (Inaudible). That was after my brother -- the

1 oldest brother, half-brother -- he passed away. That was,
2 that would have been her biological brother. His name is
3 Lawrence (ph). He was our Chief. But we didn't see that
4 vehicle around there long. Knew, knew the valley, knew how
5 to get around. So...

6 And a relative of mine, he's, um, his wife
7 is from Mount Currie, and she knew, she knows that we are
8 looking for, for our sister. And we thought maybe Mount
9 Currie, and ~~(inaudible)~~ [it's known] to that. Her uncle,
10 his name is [Uncle 1]. He left Bella Coola, I think it was
11 just before Donna. Everybody thought he drowned.

12 ~~(Inaudible)~~ [He drowned.] It was about, um, I think about
13 20 years ago. ~~He's still inaudible)~~ [He showed up, in]
14 Mount Currie. His, um -- they contacted his daughter. Her
15 name is [Uncle 1's Daughter]. And some of our (inaudible)
16 [, word] back to ask if that [Uncle 1], if [Uncle 1] is
17 still alive and that he had a relationship -- that was a,
18 his, um, my dad's second wife was [Uncle 1]'s sister. So
19 [Uncle 1] was an uncle to Donna. So they had a good, they
20 had a very good relationship. He went missing shortly
21 after Donna. And it was -- we were told that Donna and
22 [Uncle 1], her uncle [Uncle 1], connected ~~(inaudible)~~ [with
23 each other]. And now his membership, he transferred his
24 membership to Mount Currie. He's now with Mount Currie
25 First Nation. And the, the -- somehow his daughter

1 connected with him. Her name was [Uncle 1's Daughter]],
2 and they, they got together and she went to visit him, and
3 she didn't -- she ~~(inaudible)~~ [over]looked at Donna there.
4 He probably wouldn't have shared anything. There's
5 confidentiality and they had that kind of relationship.
6 So, um, we believe that our sister is still alive.

7 And there's a few other stories that I
8 could share, but I think, um, my, um, my mom may have had -
9 - she may have, um, traveled to Vancouver. She may have
10 had her room paid by Donna at a hotel, (inaudible). And,
11 um, her breakfast. The story is she went to pay her
12 breakfast and this is what she shared with us, she said
13 somebody paid about her breakfast, but there was nobody
14 there in the restaurant. Somebody paid for her breakfast.
15 You know, and then, um, she went to check-out and her room
16 was paid for. You know, and she said,

17 "Well, I didn't pay for my room.
18 ~~(Inaudible)~~ [I'm going to pay for it
19 right now]."

20 And the desk clerk told her,

21 "No, your room is paid for."

22 And she says,

23 "~~(inaudible)~~." [No I don't -]

24 She says,

25 "I don't know nobody here in

1 ~~(inaudible)~~ [Boston Bar]. I have no
2 friends here. I have no family here.
3 So who would have paid my room? And
4 there's nobody else traveling with
5 us."

6 So my brother said to me that it's
7 probably my sister. I believe it's my sister.

8 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: When did your mother
9 go to Vancouver?

10 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: You had -- it was
11 about 25 years ago, 20-25 years ago. She'd travel,
12 frequently travel to Vancouver. And that was the only time
13 that she ever had her room paid for, and breakfast. She
14 never experienced that. It's the one and only time she,
15 she did.

16 And she has -- she stopped there a few
17 times, and went to that same restaurant, but they did look
18 at the kitchen, they looked at the kitchen to see who was
19 there, after she left. After breakfast, she looked at the
20 kitchen. There's people in the background, but she, she
21 glanced, eh? She said she glanced there. Then she left
22 and she went to, she went to the kitchen -- or the
23 restaurant again to see if there was anybody there she
24 recognized. ~~(Inaudible)~~ [Nobody.] ~~‡~~[T]hey were native
25 people there in that kitchen, but was it Donna? May have -

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18

1 - Donna may have left just briefly. So that's what she
2 thinks. You know, personally, my daughter in 1973, or no -
3 - 19 --

4 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: '89.

5 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: ~~(Inaudible)~~ [When
6 you went through].

7 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: 1989.

8 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: 1989 through,
9 through -- little waitress there spoke to her, little
10 waitress. (Inaudible).

11 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: We were just, um,
12 going through to, um, to Mount Currie and Pemberton to go
13 pick some pine mushrooms, and, um, and this was, um, I
14 think it was around the end of September or -- no, or maybe
15 beginning of October. Um, we stayed in Cache Creek the
16 night, and then we carried on with our trip, and we stopped
17 at the restaurant there. And, um, and, um, there was four
18 of us there, and I was looking at my, looking at the menu,
19 and we were going to have breakfast at the restaurant.

20 And, and then the waitress - I didn't notice - but my
21 partner at the time, he was kind of nudging me and he said,

22 "I think she's talking to you."

23 And I said,

24 "Oh."

25 But he goes, but she's calling you

1 "Val".

2 And I said,

3 "Oh."

4 And I looked up at her and I said -- and
5 she goes,

6 "How are you Val?"

7 And I said,

8 "I don't even -- I'm not Val."

9 And she goes,

10 "Come on, Val, seriously. How are you
11 doing?"

12 And I said,

13 "I'm not Val. My name's Denise."

14 And then I, I looked at, at my, at all
15 the people that I was with, and I said,

16 "What's my name?"

17 And they said,

18 "Denise."

19 And she, she says,

20 "Oh, my gosh. I can't believe this. "

21 And she goes, um,

22 "Val's up at the hall right now or
23 someplace doing a workshop."

24 And we were traveling with other people
25 and they, they wouldn't take me there, because I got

1 curious after. And I called my dad right away and told him
2 what happened. The lady said I looked just exactly like
3 Val, everything about me. So...

4 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you.

5 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: -- and, oh, and it
6 also happened, um -- maybe about years later -- I moved to
7 Vancouver with my brother and, um, and we - at different
8 times - went, um, to the corner store - and that was Mac's
9 store - and, um, there were new, um, owners or management
10 there and they, they sort of looked at me when I walked in
11 that they were, like,

12 "Hi. How are you doing?"

13 And they're smiling, and I just thought,

14 "Oh, they're friendly people."

15 And I smiled back, and I said,

16 "I'm good."

17 And, and they said

18 "So when did you move here from

19 Lillooet?"

20 So I kind of, like, you know, what's this

21 -- this is like years after. And then my brother had the
22 same situation. He went in there and they said,

23 "So you and your sister moved here

24 from Lillooet? "

25 And we just -- so the story, it happened

1 a few times, and that's close, very close to Mount Currie.

2 So, yeah. Right away, we thought of my auntie Donna.

3 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you.

4 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: So we, we feel that,
5 that, um, Donna has a family, you know, ~~(inaudible)~~ [Denise
6 is Pootlass,] her brother is Pootlass. So two having the
7 same experience with, um, people who moved to Vancouver
8 from, from Lillooet, you know, so it's -- Lillooet is
9 pretty close to Boston Flats --

10 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Um hum.

11 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: -- probably an hour
12 apart.

13 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: Um, we were down --
14 I believe it was, um, there's a store down on Hastings. I
15 believe it was the, um, Army and Navy, or somewhere down in
16 that area, and we had his niece Donna with us. And there
17 was a lady that was walking and I -- I didn't see the
18 little girl, and so I started yelling her name. There was
19 this elderly lady that was walking in the area as well, and
20 I started saying, yelling Donna's name, and I said,

21 "Donna, where are you, Donna?"

22 And I said,

23 "You can't run off, you got to stay
24 close."

25 And then this elderly lady heard me

1 yelling for Donna, and as soon as she heard me, she started
2 getting really antsy, and she started running towards the
3 door, and she was gone. But, yeah. I was saying,

4 "Donna Pootlass, where are you?"

5 I was mentioning her name, and this
6 elderly lady looked really nervous about me yelling the
7 name Donna Pootlass, and as soon as she just kind of looked
8 back at me. And then I mentioned it to my husband, and this
9 lady thought I was talking to her. And he said,

10 "Where did she go?"

11 I said,

12 "She ran out the door as soon as I
13 started yelling Donna's name."

14 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Um hum.

15 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: Yeah, we tried to
16 go -- I tried to go out and see where she went, but she was
17 gone. But she was an older lady. So we've had --

18 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: So those are, those
19 are some of the stories that we have and, um, then my --
20 our aunt, [Aunt 1] was her name, her married name, they
21 were best friends. And she, she --

22 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: (Inaudible).

23 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: -- she seen her at
24 bingo. I think it was at, um, it's the main bingo
25 (inaudible).

1 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: (Inaudible) bingo
2 hall, but she said that she spotted [Aunt 1] (inaudible).

3 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Yeah. They were
4 best friends, but [Aunt 1] was in a residential school, and
5 in the summer [Aunt 1] would be home in Bella Coola. And
6 her and Donna would connect up and they were so close, best
7 friends, eh? And [Aunt 1] and my mother are sisters. So
8 Donna was a real, real good friend of [Aunt 1]. But [Aunt
9 1] seen her at a bingo game and she seen, ~~(inaudible)~~
10 [[Aunt 1]] there and she up and left]. [Aunt 1] knows her
11 well. There was, they were the same age, I believe. Maybe
12 [Aunt 1] is just a year or two older. So we would -- we
13 thought we better get out there with this. We want to make
14 this statement.

15 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: (Inaudible).

16 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: There's one other
17 incident -- or a story. Recently, one of our therapists
18 came into Bella Coola and his name -- he's from Chilliwack
19 -- [Therapist]. [Therapist], um, said he may know Donna.
20 He said that she lives in Chilliwack. So he, um, he shared
21 with us, and gave us some information about, about this
22 lady who was not originally from Chilliwack, ~~and~~
23 ~~(inaudible)~~ [Sto:lo nation] that's married into his family.
24 He, he was a caregiver. He works in our community quite
25 often with the young people, eh? With the youth? I think

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24

1 it was about three years ago. He met with our family and
2 he said he was going back, and I gave him some information
3 -- he was asking us -- he knew that we were looking for our
4 sister, now, and he started helping us, looked in the
5 Sto:lo area, a huge, huge tribal territory ~~(inaudible)~~ [it
6 is]. And then he came back and then he -- we gave him
7 information and he went back to Chilliwack, and when we got
8 that information from him we -- he said he was going back
9 to Chilliwack, and then we told him we were going to hook
10 up with him right away, we're coming down. So we sent my
11 oldest brother, um - his name is Darryl - drove our oldest
12 ~~(inaudible)~~ [half] brother with him, Donna's biological
13 brother, his name is Arthur (ph). So they left Bella Coola
14 right now, the day after, um, [Therapist] was -- he had
15 time now to, to look and research to see if that was our
16 sister. And so our family left the next morning early. We
17 were going to hook up with him in Chilliwack, and then he
18 called back and, and he told us,

19 "No. It's not the same person."

20 He gave us -- I think he gave us her
21 birthday - that lady - and it wasn't, it wasn't our sister.
22 So then I called ~~(inaudible)~~ contacted my brother Darryl
23 (ph), and they turned around a came back from Williams
24 Lake. You see that just tells you we are still looking,
25 we're actively looking. So we think that she's still here.

1 Then --

2 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: How recent was this
3 when the therapist told you that?

4 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Three years ago.

5 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Three years ago.

6 Okay.

7 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Try after that, I,
8 um, we've been searching, we've left messages at Mount
9 Currie, and Lillooet, and, um, I had a couple contact me
10 and they were looking for family in Bella Coola. They were
11 originally from -- it was a lady who was married to a
12 fellow from, from Lillooet, or near Lillooet. I think it's
13 Fountain First Nation, just a few miles from Lillooet, and;
14 but her parents are -- her family is from Mount Currie.
15 And I went to do -- I went and spoke to her and I made a
16 trip down there, just, just to be with her, with them. And
17 she mentioned that her uncle was [Uncle 1]. He had a -- he
18 changed his name, but we knew him as [Uncle's last name].
19 Oh no, sorry. [Uncle 1]. And she said that was his uncle.
20 And she says,

21 "I understand that you're looking for
22 your sister who is [Uncle 1]'s
23 niece."

24 So we know that (inaudible) we wanted
25 some more details. So I gave her that information and, and

1 she took me to her -- my wife and I, we went to visit her
2 mother. And, um, um, who was also related to [Uncle 1],
3 [Uncle 1]. I think, um, that was, um, his -- her mother
4 was [Uncle 1]'s niece. So [Uncle 1] was her great-uncle.
5 So, but I -- what I, I tried to do here with I, I spoke in
6 our language just a little, I said,

7 "(speaking Nuxalk),"

8 and she responded, she smiled, she said,

9 "(speaking Nuxalk)."

10 I said,

11 "It's a pleasure to meet you. You're
12 Vera's mother."

13 And I said,

14 "Do you know [Uncle 1]?"

15 And she pointed at a picture on the wall.

16 ~~(Inaudible)~~ [She said, "]That's my uncle.["] Then I asked
17 her about Donna, but she couldn't answer. Then I tested
18 her out. I asked her, I told her, I said,

19 "Do you know (speaking Nuxalk)?"

20 That's Donna's Nuxalk name, (speaking
21 Nuxalk). And she looked at me and she said,

22 "(speaking Nuxalk)."

23 And I said,

24 "(speaking Nuxalk) was raised by our
25 aunt (speaking Nuxalk), and I was

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27

1 there too.

2 And she said,

3 "(speaking Nuxalk)."

4 So you could -- I could clearly feel that she had some
5 blood ties with Nuxalk tribe. (Inaudible) she could speak
6 -- when I said a word to her, she spoke it clearly. Do you
7 remember that?

8 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: ~~(Inaudible)~~.

9 [Um' hmm]

10 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: So I said we're
11 looking for our sister. And I said to her she may have the
12 name Pootlass. My grandfather, our grandfather changed our
13 name, his name from Samuel King back in 1948, and he took
14 his name, his traditional name back in a ~~(inaudible)~~
15 [Potlatch] ceremony and changed his name from King to
16 Pootlass. Pootlass is the Chief's name. So, so then, um,
17 the -- that she may be going with the name King, K-I-N-G.

18 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: K-I-N-G. Okay.

19 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: So I -- but now
20 she's, she may have used that name, reverted back -- you
21 see her name was King, Donna King, from 1938 to 1948,
22 changed to Pootlass.

23 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: 1938 to 1940?

24 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Um, '48. She was a
25 King. Her maiden name was King.

1 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So until 1948, she
2 was King?

3 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Yeah. And, um, '48
4 onwards, she was Pootlass.

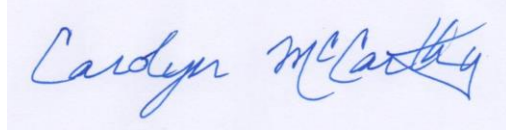
5 MS. DOROTHY POOTLASS: (Inaudible).

6 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: So she may, um, she
7 could have used her -- the old name, King. Um, so that's
8 basically our story. And we are looking for her. We
9 really hope that we could find her. So...

10 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you. Thank
11 you. It is, um, 10:19 in the morning on April 6th, and
12 we're about to conclude our testimony with Archie Pootlass.
13 Thank you.

14 MR. ARCHIE POOTLASS: Now, is there a --
15 does this inquiry have any support --
16 --- Whereupon the statement concluded at 10:19 a.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best
of my skill and ability,
accurately transcribed from a pre-existing recording
the foregoing proceeding.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carolyn McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light blue rectangular box.

Carolyn McCarthy, Court Reporter