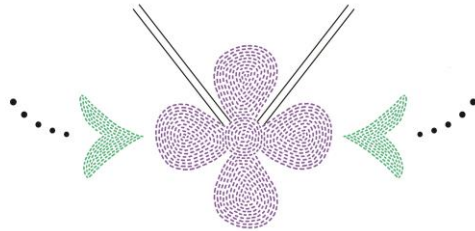


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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  
Siniktarvik Hotel & Conference Centre Salon A/B  
Rankin Inlet, Nunavut**



**PUBLIC**

**Thursday February 22, 2018**

**Public Volume 48(a)**

**Janet Brewster, Danielle Cormier, David Ritchie  
& Jayko Lyall, In relation to Sylvia Lyall;**

**Susan Aglukark**

**Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

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## II

### APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	No appearances
Government of Nunavut	Alexandre Blondin (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada	Anne McConville (Legal counsel) Jennifer Clarke (Legal counsel)
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, AnânuKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association Inc., Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, Manitoba Inuit Association	Beth Symes (Legal counsel) Rebecca Kudloo (Representative)

**Note:** For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel are considered present whether they attended one or all of the hearings held over the course of the day.

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**Hearing #1**

**Witnesses: Janet Brewster, Danielle Cormier, David Ritchie  
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**Hearing - Public** 1  
**Brewster, Cormier, Ritchie**  
**& Lyall (Sylvia Lyall)**

1 Rankin Inlet, Nunavut  
2 --- Upon commencing on Thursday, February 22, 2018,  
3 at 9:26 a.m.

4 **Hearing #1**

5 **Witnesses: Janet Brewster, Danielle Cormier, David Ritchie**  
6 **and Jayko Lyall**

7 **In relation to Sylvia Lyall**

8 **Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

9 **Commission Counsel: Lillian Lundrigan**

10

11 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Good morning to  
12 the final day of the community hearings here in Rankin  
13 Inlet, Nunavut.

14 Before we begin, before I introduce our  
15 family here, I will ask the registrar to affirm Janet and  
16 Danielle, David and Jayko.

17 AFFIRMED: JANET BREWSTER

18 AFFIRMED: DAVID RITCHIE

19 AFFIRMED: JAYKO LYALL

20 AFFIRMED: DANIELLE CORMIER

21 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Qujannamiik.  
22 Commissioner Robinson, I introduced Janet Brewster, who  
23 will be sharing her story this morning about her aunt,  
24 Sylvia Lyall.

25 Janet, can you -- you want to begin

1 telling this about your aunt?

2 MS. JANET BREWSTER: I just want to start  
3 by saying thank you to my family for being here and to  
4 thank the commission and Lillian and Joseph, who is not  
5 here anymore. They took my personal statements this summer  
6 and were very -- actually, the whole staff that reached out  
7 to me have been extremely kind and very helpful to help  
8 bring us here.

9 And I want to say to you, Qajaq, and all  
10 of the commissioners that I have deep love for you, and the  
11 work that you're doing is so important and means so much to  
12 so many people, and I think of you every day. And I wish  
13 you strength and courage and I value you and I'm really,  
14 really happy that you're here today, and I'm happy that you  
15 brought me here so that we could talk about Sylvia. Thank  
16 you.

17 So, we're here to talk about Sylvia Ann  
18 Lyall, who is the mother of these beautiful children  
19 sitting next to me and our auntie. She was the youngest in  
20 our family. She was actually the only child of Ernie and  
21 Nipisha Lyall, who didn't have an Inuktitut name and being  
22 the youngest in my family, Sylvia and I were always  
23 together. I guess I kind of got assigned to Sylvia in the  
24 way that Inuit families assigned children to aunties and  
25 uncles and cousins who are older to guide and take care of.

1                   And so, throughout my childhood, Sylvia  
2 was the auntie that was always responsible for getting me  
3 ready when we were going out if we were going out fishing,  
4 going out to Middle Lake or if we were going out boating or  
5 if we were going out flying anywhere. Sylvia had to take  
6 care of me and she did a really good job.

7                   I came here today actually without  
8 prepared remarks. I do have -- I did prepare one kind of  
9 opening statement that I have saved on my phone that I plan  
10 to read, but I just wanted to say that Sylvia was loved and  
11 valued by many people, not just in our family, but in our  
12 entire community and in the community as a whole in terms  
13 of her entire life, you know.

14                   Coming here today, we've introduced her  
15 children to many of her friends who went to school with her  
16 in Akaitcho Hall and who grew in life with her, so it's  
17 actually really good for us to be here to be able to do  
18 that.

19                   When I was considering what I would say, I  
20 felt that it's very important to open with a statement  
21 about the work that you're doing, and I feel that we must  
22 address the dehumanization of missing and murdered  
23 Indigenous people in Canada and globally.

24                   Sylvia Ann Lyle was a woman but  
25 Indigenous. Beaten but Indigenous. A Canadian but

1 Indigenous. Murdered but Indigenous. Gone but Indigenous.  
2 This "but" is the hidden murderer. This "but" is a serial  
3 killer.

4 I want everyone to think of missing and  
5 murdered Indigenous women as normal people who have their  
6 lives and lost them not because they wanted to run away and  
7 be lost or murdered, but because we can't fix the problem  
8 until we acknowledge it.

9 In this case, acknowledgement starts with  
10 those who are affected being heard, loud and clear and  
11 without distraction, without prejudice. Like all  
12 Canadians, we have dreams in our lives and we are entitled  
13 to live to see those dreams come true. We have families  
14 and communities. We are loved and valued for our deep and  
15 important contributions to the world around us. Those of  
16 us who have lost family friends and communities members, we  
17 live our losses each day as we are reminded of our own pain  
18 and fear as day after day, we hear of another woman lost or  
19 dead.

20 Fourteen years have passed since we found  
21 Sylvia and buried her. Her killer moves freely in this  
22 world. I imagine that there are thousands of men, women,  
23 and children in this country at this moment, perhaps even  
24 watching now, thinking of their lost loved ones, be they  
25 murdered or vanished.



1 I'm relieved and devastated that I'm not  
2 really so alone. It is really like looking at a star-  
3 filled sky trying to fathom how many families are moving  
4 through the world carrying their loss. It's a universal  
5 pain that spends all ethnicities and nationalities. I'm  
6 thinking of you now. You are not alone.

7 On the day that we discovered that Sylvia  
8 was missing, that we hadn't -- my mom hadn't heard from her  
9 for days which was unusual because my mom, Betty Novalinga,  
10 was in daily contact with Sylvia, her little sister -- her  
11 littlest sister.

12 We all lived in Iqaluit, the three of us.  
13 I brought my children there to raise them with my mom. And  
14 Sylvia and Mom had a very close relationship and were very  
15 loving and even fought sometimes, like some of these guys  
16 do. All siblings do and it's normal.

17 And Sylvia had not been answering my  
18 mother's calls, and so, she was concerned and she called me  
19 at work and asked me to try to find Sylvia, so I called her  
20 workplace and was told that she hadn't come in and it was  
21 the second day that she hadn't come in, and so, I decided  
22 to phone the police.

23 And so, I phoned the police and I asked  
24 them to do a "well person check," and I was very diplomatic  
25 in the words that I used. I said that she was in a

1 difficult relationship. And one of the things that nobody  
2 tells you that we don't know is that everything that you  
3 say to the police is recorded and is of importance when  
4 somebody dies. They take everything that you say and they  
5 put a value on it.

6                   And I thought so many times that I should  
7 have -- that the words -- had I known that she had died,  
8 and had I known that I would learn about the court system,  
9 that I would have chosen different words. I would have  
10 called the police and said, "I think that my aunt has been  
11 murdered by Pat Anablak," because that would have  
12 established that he had threatened her and that it was a  
13 real possibility and that would have ensured that a first-  
14 degree murder charge would stick. If you can demonstrate  
15 that there's knowledge and history or threats, then it is  
16 an automatic first-degree charge.

17                   And so, I didn't use those words because I  
18 wanted to respect my auntie and in my heart, I really felt  
19 like, you know, I really hope that she was okay, that I was  
20 just phoning the police and they'd check up and find her at  
21 home and she'd send them away. But it turned out they went  
22 to her apartment and discovered that she was dead.

23                   And that was in the morning. And I went  
24 home at lunchtime -- as we do in Iqaluit and every  
25 community in Nunavut, people go home for lunch -- and I

1 made lunch for Sabrina, Ashevak, and Jayko, who had been  
2 living with me for just over a year, Sylvia had dropped him  
3 off at school one day and called social services and told  
4 them that she didn't feel that she had a safe enough  
5 environment for him. And so, Jayko was put into the foster  
6 care system and that's how he came to live with me. A day  
7 after he turned 8.

8                   And I went home, made lunch for the  
9 children, and then -- it was like an incredibly beautiful  
10 day in June, it was June 24th and it was sunny and  
11 beautiful and we ate and -- we lived right across from  
12 Joanie's school, but it had burnt down the summer before.  
13 And so, the kids were going to Nakasuk School, which was  
14 down the hill, and so, they asked me if we could walk and -  
15 - so we walked.

16                   I walked them to school and went back to  
17 work and eventually got a phone call from the police who  
18 then came to me and pulled up outside of my office building  
19 and asked me to enter a minivan. And when I got in, the  
20 driver and his companion turned and faced me and said that  
21 they were going to show me a picture and that I couldn't  
22 tell anybody what I saw in the picture, but they would like  
23 to know if I knew the person in the photograph. And so,  
24 this was right in front of my office, where I continued to  
25 work for 15 years.

1 I would often find myself walking through  
2 that space, where that car sat, and I would be hit by a  
3 well of emotion, and it took me a really long time to  
4 realize that I was being triggered, that it was the trauma  
5 of seeing Sylvia right there in front of my workplace. And  
6 I think that can be done better. That's something that can  
7 be done better -- that when a person dies, that the police  
8 should take a family member or somebody away from a place  
9 that you have to occupy on a daily basis to move through  
10 life and to be productive in life, that it should be, you  
11 know, even the police station, you know. I can have me say  
12 that I don't often go into police stations, and I'd rather  
13 have had gone there to identify Sylvia than to go somewhere  
14 that I had to be every day.

15 There is no handbook. There's nothing  
16 that tells families how to be and what to say, what to do  
17 when somebody is murdered. And so, we move through this  
18 process like we're toddlers learning how to walk, and we  
19 fall down and we make mistakes, and the thing is is that  
20 those mistakes have lasting impacts on how the crime is  
21 addressed.

22 So I identified Sylvia. And then I asked  
23 the police to take me to my mom because I didn't want to  
24 tell my mom. And then I went straight from there to social  
25 services to speak to the manager of social services to get

1 advice on how to tell Jayko because I didn't know how to  
2 tell a 9-year-old child that his mother was dead. And I  
3 looked to social services for advice because I assume that  
4 they would be experts in, you know, mental support and in  
5 crisis support, and the answer that I got was that they  
6 didn't know. They didn't have any advice for me.

7           And, you know, the same social worker that  
8 was assigned to Sylvia -- when you put your child into the  
9 social services system, you have to work with a social  
10 worker to get them back or to work on, you know, safety  
11 plans and that sort of thing. And the same social worker  
12 that was assigned to help Sylvia was also assigned to help  
13 Jayko and help him move through his life in the foster care  
14 system and to support him.

15           And Sylvia wanted Jayko back and she  
16 wanted to make changes in her life and have an opportunity  
17 to raise him. And so, there was a conflict because that  
18 social worker -- for Sylvia to tell that social worker  
19 exactly what was going on in her life and to seek the  
20 support and help that she needed to get out of the abusive  
21 relationship, she had to disclose that she was in danger.

22           And so, by disclosing that she was in  
23 danger, she was creating barriers to bringing Jayko back  
24 into her home. And so, it wasn't in her motherly best  
25 interest to be 100 per cent honest, right, because she just

1 wanted her kids back.

2 And so, that was a huge barrier to Sylvia  
3 and to Jayko. Following that, we had a funeral. We sent  
4 Sylvia home to Talurjuaq from Edmonton where an autopsy had  
5 been performed and -- I actually got billed for a number of  
6 years beginning just a couple of days before Christmas  
7 because I worked at Health and Social Services at the time.  
8 And because she was being repatriated to her community and  
9 not the community that she died in, to our community, the  
10 government wasn't paying for the repatriation.

11 And so, a few days before Christmas that  
12 year, I was at my desk and somebody from our desk and  
13 somebody from our finance department came over and handed  
14 me a sealed envelope with my name on it and she said, "Here  
15 Janet, we weren't sure who to make this out to, but we know  
16 she's your aunt, so here's the bill that you have to pay."

17 And so, I tried to address it by  
18 explaining that it should go to the public trustee, and the  
19 system is such that it takes a lot to correct a mistake.  
20 And so, for years -- for a number of years, I got that bill  
21 for the repatriation of Sylvia's remains to Talurjuaq  
22 probably once a quarter, so, four times a year which  
23 exacerbated my already difficult time even just walking  
24 into work.

25 So, when we discussed who went and how to

1 repatriate somebody who was lost to us, there should be a  
2 consideration that is a human consideration and one that  
3 understands that we don't come to this process fully  
4 equipped to know all the ins and outs of how to deal with  
5 these issues, so policies should be reflected of that  
6 reality and should be human enough that they don't actually  
7 inflict more trauma or trigger trauma.

8                   And when we got back to Iqaluit, I was  
9 notified that there was a hearing. They didn't tell me  
10 where it was or even the exact time, but there was a  
11 hearing to decide what would happen with Jayko, and you  
12 know, our family was still processing our grief and  
13 processing the discovery that while we were gone, Sylvia  
14 was in GN Housing and GN Housing had sent people in to  
15 clean out her apartment and box up all of her belongings  
16 and move them out, and thus began a number of rumours in  
17 the community that included things like there was blood  
18 everywhere and, you know, children were hearing this and  
19 people were, you know, saying this to our kids.

20                   And there were a lot of untruths in those  
21 rumours, you know, cleaning up a crime scene where the  
22 deceased person has had to be held for a number of days in  
23 order for the investigation to occur in the summer means  
24 that there's decomposition.

25                   And so, the crime scene then is obviously

1 a crime scene to whoever enters it for whatever reason  
2 afterwards and to send, you know, a bunch of, you know,  
3 movers in to deal with that isn't fair to them, and it  
4 definitely isn't fair to the family who is breathing and  
5 now has to sort through the boxes to separate Sylvia's  
6 belongings from her murderer's belongings.

7 In fact, a number of her belongings were  
8 stolen. And months later, I received a call from the  
9 women's shelter that they have received a donation of  
10 clothing and that Sylvia's ID was in that clothing, and I  
11 would often see a woman walking down the street wearing  
12 Sylvia's very distinctive jacket. She actually had a  
13 jacket that was made here in Rankin Inlet. It was a black  
14 jacket with a woman on the back of it, a white silhouette  
15 of a woman, and she was wearing that jacket the last time I  
16 saw her actually.

17 So this hearing took place without the --  
18 very quickly after Sylvia died and Jayko was made a ward of  
19 the state, though he was in foster care in a safe place  
20 with me, Sabrina,

21 Ashevak, my children, we weren't given the  
22 opportunity to decide as a family what was best for Jayko  
23 and where he should be and how that should happen.

24 And in the meantime -- Danielle has told  
25 me it's okay for me to talk about her experience --



1 Danielle was 14, and she was in foster care in Edmonton,  
2 and she was living in a group home. And I didn't know  
3 exactly where she was, but when I was interviewed by the  
4 police right after Sylvia was found, I sat with a police  
5 officer and answered a number of questions. And again, not  
6 using -- being very -- using very respectful language about  
7 my auntie and not -- you know, I was in shock and wish that  
8 I could have known that if I had just made a really strong  
9 statement and said yes, we knew that he was going to kill  
10 her, that he threatened her and that he had tried to kill  
11 her a number of times -- you know, I used soft language  
12 like she was in a difficult relationship. She was always  
13 struggling to move through that and I didn't use strong  
14 enough language.

15 But at a certain point, this officer got  
16 up and left the room, and I was still -- my head was still  
17 at home thinking about Jayko and thinking about Danielle  
18 and wondering how David and Amanda and Matthew were doing,  
19 Sylvia's other children, everybody in the family, and I was  
20 sitting there -- and I think a lot of mothers can relate to  
21 this, mothers who have breastfed -- I sat there and I was  
22 convinced that my milk was letting down, and my youngest  
23 child at the time was 7 years old, and I had no milk, and I  
24 literally reached in to check because as I was considering  
25 these children, my body was telling me that their mother



1 arms around these kids and not have to send e-mails and  
2 make phone calls and call MLAs and, you know, call people  
3 for help. We should just be able to help our kids.

4 And so, you know, I'm trying to move  
5 through our experience sort of as it unfolded. And, you  
6 know, the next big difficulty after trying to sort out the  
7 kids was having to go through the court system. And Qajaq,  
8 I know that you have so much experience with that having  
9 worked in the court system in Nunavut and the experience of  
10 people who -- I don't want to use the word victim, the  
11 people who are on the good side, I guess. I don't know.

12 You know, our experience is that we don't  
13 know how to move through the system. You know, like I  
14 said, there is no handbook. I think it's astounding to me  
15 that in a territory where there is such a high level of  
16 violence that there isn't a more organized approach  
17 supporting families that are moving through that system  
18 though the people that did work with us were really kind,  
19 they weren't necessarily -- they were there on the days  
20 that there were court proceedings, but there was nobody  
21 there to give us, like, advice about how to talk to the  
22 police, about how to talk to crown attorneys.

23 You know, I was chosen by our family as  
24 the spokesperson -- I guess is the only word I can think of  
25 right now -- as a point of contact, I guess, regarding the

1 trial and regarding Sylvia. And so, I actually -- and it  
2 was mainly because I was in Iqaluit and all the proceedings  
3 were taking place in Iqaluit -- it wasn't because I was,  
4 like, a real pro at this kind of stuff. And actually, that  
5 really changed the relationship that I had with my family.

6 I kind of always been -- I'm bigger than  
7 Danielle now, but I was always like the littlest, you know,  
8 that kind of got teased a lot, you know, in our family.  
9 Teasing is a -- being tested can be really frustration, but  
10 it's also a mark of great love. I don't need explain that  
11 here.

12 And so, I went from being little Johnny  
13 Oscarfret (ph), that's what my family calls me, to being  
14 the person whose voice on the other end of the phone  
15 signalled a difficult conversation because I had to keep  
16 everybody up to date about what was going on and had to  
17 essentially pull my mom and my aunts and uncles about  
18 decisions that needed to be made.

19 And so, that process, as I said, didn't  
20 come with any teachings but how to intact with the Crown  
21 and how to advocate for Sylvia because through the process,  
22 you know, I discovered a lot of information about what the  
23 police had and what they found and why they initially went  
24 with the first-degree murder charge.

25 I think I want to just make a really,

1 really important point here. You know, I've talked about  
2 that, I've talked about but not knowing the words to use  
3 and not knowing how to make that first-degree murder charge  
4 stick because we all knew. You know, he had been charged  
5 so many times for beating Sylvia nearly to death. He had  
6 choked her. He had -- she told me one time about feeling  
7 her life leaving her and that she was giving up to that in  
8 that moment. That was on September 12th, 2003.

9                   And what we knew was that he had beat her  
10 and beat her and beat her so many times for so many years,  
11 and I think it's really -- you know, one thing that this  
12 inquiry can do, a recommendation that this inquiry can  
13 make, a law that I think is not just impactful for  
14 Indigenous women, who we are here to talk about, but to  
15 impact any Canadian who is suffering from abuse and who  
16 loses their life because of ongoing abuse.

17                   When somebody kills their spouse or ex-  
18 spouse or partner or anybody that they're involved with in  
19 their life, if they have ever been convicted of abusing  
20 them or harming them in any way, that if they kill that  
21 person, it should be an automatic first-degree murder  
22 charge. I feel -- we all felt that there was intent behind  
23 what Pat Anablak did to Sylvia Ann Lyall.

24                   And if there's a past history of that  
25 abuse, it should be first-degree murder charge and there

1 should -- families should not have to go through trying to  
2 convince the Crown, the prosecutors, to keep that charge up  
3 because what happened with Sylvia is they just kept  
4 dropping the level of the charges from first degree to  
5 second degree, eventually pleaded for manslaughter, but  
6 that was after he made us wait and wait and wait after  
7 delays in the court system.

8                   And I think that any Canadian who has lost  
9 a loved one to murder, especially to spousal abuse, would  
10 probably agree with me that that should be the law.

11 QUESTIONS BY MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN:

12                   MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: If we go a little  
13 bit back into -- what led Sylvia into that relationship,  
14 into that abusive relationship?

15                   MS. JANET BREWSTER: Sylvia and I and  
16 other members of our family were shared a common experience  
17 of sexual abuse, childhood sexual abuse by the same person.  
18 And the impact of that childhood sexual abuse changes the  
19 way a child moves through the world and grows through the  
20 world and actually creates that little child in everything  
21 that you do and say, you know, that sexually abused child  
22 has the experience of carrying that abuse into every  
23 relationship that we have.

24                   I used to be really ashamed of that little  
25 child until I explained that I didn't invite that. That

1 shame isn't mine. That's the abuser's shame. And what we  
2 know about and what you've heard this week is that so many  
3 Inuit -- that's a common experience for so many Inuit, and  
4 knowing that, we have an opportunity to address that by  
5 creating an education system that guides children through  
6 that experience that assumes that -- actually, not assumes  
7 -- that is informed that our children are experiencing  
8 these high rates of sexual abuse and trauma and -- not just  
9 by sexualized violence, but also, you know, violence in the  
10 home in general.

11                   And when we consider our education system,  
12 helping -- the education system is an opportunity to help  
13 children move through that and grow and flourish despite  
14 that experience because, you know, we're okay, we can do  
15 it. We can grow into loving and forgiving human beings  
16 that are effective and the earlier that we intervene in  
17 that common experience, that is a result of colonization  
18 and, you know, generations of children going through  
19 residential school.

20                   You know, Danielle is making a very strong  
21 statement today. I'm just so happy for her, you know, with  
22 her t-shirt, "Every Child Does Matter," and as we grow  
23 through the world, we are talking about this more and more,  
24 and we are giving people the opportunity to address those  
25 traumas and an education system that envelopes children in

1 that right to move through and be supported through their  
2 very real lived lives and experience, I think can have an  
3 incredible impact on breaking the cycle of violence and  
4 abuse.

5 Another way that we should be having an  
6 impact through this inquiry is by involving Inuit men, and  
7 I'm talking about specifically the experience of Inuit  
8 women that for the majority, especially in the North of  
9 those who have lost their lives, they were killed by Inuit  
10 men. Inuit men are killing Inuit women.

11 And I know a lot of people probably might  
12 be uncomfortable with me saying that out loud, but I'm  
13 going to say it again. Inuit men are killing Inuit women.  
14 And the reason that is happening is because we're not  
15 supporting these Inuit men. We're not learning from these  
16 Inuit men, and I feel that we should be talking to you.  
17 You should be talking to and hearing from those men who are  
18 up on charges, who have been convicted, who have served  
19 their time. Ask them to participate and make an effort to  
20 find out from them and their families what trauma led them  
21 to that abuse.

22 You know, it's like I said earlier that we  
23 can't solve a problem until we fully acknowledge it, and we  
24 have to acknowledge everybody who has a role in that, and,  
25 you know, we also have to acknowledge that when these



1 abuses happen and these murders happen, what happens is  
2 people became isolated, families become isolated, we become  
3 isolated from each other as family members because our  
4 grief is such that it creates barriers to love and to  
5 acceptance and understanding because we're not fully  
6 supported through that grief, so that creates more cycles  
7 for our families where people who grew up in childhood  
8 experiencing that abuse, you know, become angry and  
9 triggered. And the cycle continues and involving those  
10 people who are abusive in the solution is, I think, a key  
11 to success.

12                   You know, I'm here to talk about Sylvia  
13 and our family's experiences that the man who killed Sylvia  
14 had a brother who also killed one of my uncle's sister-in-  
15 laws. So, two members of this family murdered women in  
16 this family, for some of our family members, and  
17 understanding those men and their relationships and their  
18 communities, I think, is really important to making  
19 changes.

20                   I think I only got as far as the trial and  
21 that sort of stuff but, you know, I really feel that it's  
22 important to talk about the impact on the families and the  
23 impact of what occurs when we lose somebody. There's a lot  
24 of anger and isolation that happens, right. And so, we see  
25 that in communities where people get targeted and accused

1 of sleeping around or sleeping with family members or  
2 friends or cousins, and that lateral violence has a very  
3 deep effect on the person that's targeted.

4 And especially in a smaller community, you  
5 can become labelled at a young age and then you have to go  
6 through your entire life carrying that label, and often, it  
7 comes from people who are hurt themselves and the impact of  
8 that bullying is that people are anger -- they're leading  
9 with anger and fear in their lives, and that's a very  
10 difficult thing to live through to be accused, you know.  
11 To carry that is really difficult and can often then carry  
12 onto the children that people have.

13 I think I made some of that main points  
14 that I was considering making and, you know, I just want  
15 to, I guess, give the opportunity to talk and discuss and,  
16 you know, I just want to explain that my cousins all  
17 decided that they wanted to have private sessions, and when  
18 we got here and we spent time together, we agreed that they  
19 would come with me and that if they felt moved, that they  
20 would also contribute. And so, I just want to give --

21 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: At this time would  
22 you like to share anything Danielle, David, or Jayko?  
23 Impact of losing your mother?

24 MR. JAYKO LYALL: Yeah. I hope you guys  
25 don't mind, but I'm a very slouchy, very kind of down-low

1 person, so I'd much rather stand to say this.

2 I spent over half my life without my birth  
3 mother and moving around with many different families and  
4 many different mother figures, and I guess the main thing  
5 that I want to say is: No matter who you are or what  
6 you're doing, this type of thing always has a negative  
7 impact on everybody surrounded by it.

8 This is a big thing for me to come out to  
9 say is something that I've been hiding for quite a little  
10 while, but what Patrick Anablak has did to my mother has,  
11 in fact, impacted me in the worst way because for a little  
12 while, I became that type of person. I was not full-on  
13 physically abusive, but every time we got into a fight,  
14 there were times where I ended up leaving a mark and  
15 leaving her hurt, and it was -- I actually do have a  
16 charge.

17 I've been charged for assault towards my  
18 ex-fiancé, and I sat in that cell for 23 hours thinking  
19 everything that has happened and everything that's running  
20 through my mind. No matter who you are or what you're  
21 doing, where you come from, these type of things have the  
22 worst impact on people.

23 I thought about it for days and months --  
24 this is a very hard thing for me to do, but I feel like  
25 it's something that I need to say. Not a day goes by where

1 I -- every day goes by when I'm missing my mother. Every  
2 day goes by, I think about the things I have done.

3 I guess, all I really have to say is --  
4 this is for all the women out there going through hardship  
5 and hard times and abuse -- the worst thing that you can do  
6 is to stay quiet. The best thing to do is have absolutely  
7 no shame in what's going on. Speak out, reach out, and all  
8 in all, just don't ever be afraid. Thank you.

9 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Thank you, Jayko.  
10 I would just like to ask just a quick question, Sylvia.  
11 You mentioned that your Aunt Sylvia -- your aunt -- did I  
12 just call you Sylvia?

13 MS. JANET BREWSTER: Thank you for calling  
14 me Sylvia. Lots of people say that. It's nice, actually.

15 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Janet. I'm sorry.

16 MS. JANET BREWSTER: Don't be sorry.  
17 There was a girl who worked Arctic Ventures in Iqaluit who  
18 would see me with Jayko and I guess knew Sylvia when she  
19 was little, so for years, she would say, "Hi, Sylvia,"  
20 every time she saw me, and I never got upset because when  
21 people say her name, it just makes me feel so good to  
22 remember her and to think that when somebody says her name  
23 accidentally, calling me Sylvia, it's like saying she's  
24 still alive.

25 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Janet, you

1 mentioned that your Aunt Sylvia was in a difficult  
2 relationship with Pat and that she made a decision to bring  
3 Jayko to a different home and be in a safer environment.  
4 Were any resources available to Sylvia to leave that  
5 abusive relationship?

6 MS. JANET BREWSTER: So one of the things  
7 that -- so, a coordinated effort to help Sylvia was made  
8 kind of through her workplace in that they knew that she  
9 was living with Pat in his apartment, and so, she was  
10 working at the legislative assembly at the time, and  
11 basically, she got fast tracked for GN Housing, so that was  
12 a really important resource for her to get her own  
13 apartment so that she could be independent and, you know,  
14 honestly, though that happened, he had such control over  
15 her that he didn't allow her to have that space, so that  
16 resource was there.

17 And like I said, there was, you know, she  
18 was assigned this social worker who was a really nice lady  
19 but who actually wasn't a trained social worker. There are  
20 many -- and there still are many GN employees who kind of  
21 get jobs through nutrition, you know, they get a casual  
22 position and they get, like, more and more experience and  
23 then eventually, even though they're not educated nor are  
24 they Indigenous, they manage to build up enough experience  
25 to be kind of considered eligible for a job, but they don't

1 necessarily have the skills.

2                   So, there wasn't that -- there was no --  
3 you know, our experience was that even after she died, that  
4 no organization reached out to us. We didn't hear from the  
5 Qulliiit Status of Women, we didn't hear from Pauktuutit, we  
6 didn't hear from, like, NTI or any of the birthright  
7 organizations that receive all this funding to support  
8 Inuit, but there's no concentration on addressing the  
9 social determinants of health and the real lives of Inuit  
10 in terms of people's real needs that way.

11                   MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Thank you, Janet.  
12 Qujannamiik. I'm going to ask Qajaq, Commissioner  
13 Robinson, if she has any questions for you.

14 QUESTIONS BY COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

15                   COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you.  
16 Danielle, David, and Jayko, I just want to -- tusaniktup  
17 (ph). Qujannamiik.

18                   I do have some questions and a lot of -- I  
19 write questions and then you answer them, so I go back and  
20 put a little checkmark.

21                   We haven't gotten into the court process  
22 or the sentencing, but I understand that Lillian has polled  
23 at least what was publicly available on the decision, and  
24 I'm familiar from my all knowledge of the process. I  
25 wasn't involved in that prosecution, but I'm very familiar

1 with the case, so I don't know if you want to talk about  
2 those details or if you're just content with us reading  
3 what's available publicly.

4 MS. JANET BREWSTER: I think what's most  
5 important about the final outcome is that -- going back to  
6 that, you know, lack of knowledge of how to manoeuvre  
7 through the court system meant that advocating for Sylvia  
8 was very difficult, and you know, I know the autopsy  
9 results. I know that the investigation actually had --  
10 there was evidence of things done to her body postmortem  
11 that the Crown prosecutors unilaterally decided not to  
12 pursue in terms of additional charges and what they said to  
13 me when I questioned them about was that they didn't want  
14 to put the family through anything embarrassing or  
15 uncomfortable. We were dealing our murdered aunt and there  
16 really wasn't much more that could have harmed us, and that  
17 choice was taken away from us, not given to us, was very  
18 difficult and wrong, and it could have impacted the  
19 sentencing. It could have been a longer term sentence.

20 I know now with, you know, truth and  
21 sentencing with the introduction of that bill which came  
22 after our experience, I can say that my feeling is that I  
23 don't believe that people should be given so much time  
24 served yet -- and they shouldn't get time knocked off, so  
25 much time knocked off, especially if they're part of the

1 delay process, right?

2                                Though at the same time, I feel -- you  
3 know, I had a great deal of respect for all of the lawyers  
4 that defended him because -- you know, at first, I kind of  
5 wanted to really dislike them and hate them for being  
6 defence attorneys until a family member told me about -- he  
7 first came to Nunavut and was a defence lawyer and he  
8 explained to me that when you have a good defence lawyer,  
9 then you have a good process, and that ensuring that that  
10 legal process is not untouchable but that mistakes aren't  
11 made is really important to ensuring that somebody gets a  
12 conviction.

13                                And so, I have so much respect for the  
14 work that these people do even though sometimes I really  
15 want to not like them. They're very important people as  
16 well and should be included in this process as well.

17                                COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Can you talk  
18 about the delays, the cause of the delays, the impacts of  
19 the delays?

20                                MS. JANET BREWSTER: Yup.

21                                So, often, I found myself going to those  
22 hearings on my own. I remember, you know, the first time I  
23 went was at the old courthouse and Pat claimed that he  
24 couldn't hear what was going on, so the court proceedings  
25 started and it had to stop. And for me, that was -- I felt



1 that that was very manipulative because from when I knew in  
2 my life of being around him, he could always hear what we  
3 were saying, right, and actually, in fact, could hear when  
4 we were whispering to Sylvia.

5                   So that began a series of delays where he  
6 would, you know, get so far into the trial, we got through  
7 all the way through up until the defence was to give their  
8 side, and he fired his lawyer. So then, we had to wait for  
9 him -- we had a couple more appearances which are spaced,  
10 long, far apart because the Nunavut Court of Justice is so  
11 backed up, and there isn't a specific court for abuse or  
12 for murders, you know.

13                   I think in Ontario there's a specific  
14 court that deals with family violence and though they're  
15 supposed to be, you know, a concentration on traditional  
16 justice, and using a different court system for certain  
17 things, I don't think that that's working in Nunavut. And  
18 so, what happened was he delayed by firing his lawyer and  
19 then we had months and months where it was -- where he  
20 would show up, there would be an appearance, but he  
21 wouldn't have hired a lawyer yet.

22                   So basically, he just kind of used that  
23 system sort of just to the point of, you know, when you're  
24 walking on really thin ice and you can kind of hear it  
25 cracking and so, you kind of just change direction a little



1 were put below the statement that this one family member  
2 made. And so then, he got quite a light sentence, you  
3 know. It was -- he's out now. Sorry, my mind -- I'm  
4 imagining him walking down the street in Ottawa and getting  
5 hit by a bus right now -- not that I would want that to  
6 happen to him -- but he is free and we actually got a  
7 letter from Corrections Canada, and I think February 27th  
8 is the date.

9 As of February 27th, he will no longer  
10 even be on parole or anything like that. He will be free  
11 and clear of the charges. He will have to give a DNA  
12 sample, not own firearms for ten years, anything like that,  
13 but -- yeah. He's done.

14 So if he rejoins the court system in  
15 anything that gives him a conviction, they would then  
16 advise those of us who registered with Corrections Canada.

17 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And those  
18 delays of him firing his lawyers, did he have to hire his  
19 own lawyers or were those legal aid lawyers?

20 MS. JANET BREWSTER: He got legal aid  
21 through the whole process, and I believe he used legal aid  
22 every time that he was charged. And he wasn't just charged  
23 for abusing Sylvia, like this was a lifetime of abuse that  
24 he inflicted on people.

25 You know, one of my uncles was an RCMP

1 officer. And on the night of Pat's wedding to somebody  
2 else, he beat her so badly that when my uncle went to  
3 respond to the call, he couldn't even recognize the woman  
4 and that was her wedding night. And so, he has kind of  
5 sucked on, you know, the public system for a number -- for  
6 decades and decades, and, you know, I just want to --

7                   We brought some photos and there are a lot  
8 of photos of Sylvia really as a young girl. There's a  
9 photo of her standing in the doorway of the bathroom at  
10 Akaitcho Hall, where she was staying in Yellowknife, and  
11 that is when Sylvia met Pat.

12                   Sylvia, on a hot day, went to go and get  
13 ice cream, and he was literally the monster that offered  
14 the child ice cream, and that was actually the same summer  
15 that my friend Andrea and I were hitchhiking to Long Lake  
16 on a regular basis and, you know, we would take off and  
17 sometimes -- I remember one time her mom, Hilda's friend  
18 picked us up and drove us back to Hilda's, and I think we  
19 were 8 and 9, and it was the seventies, and kids got in  
20 cars with strangers in Yellowknife. They went for rides on  
21 a hot day and they were okay, you know, we were okay. We  
22 were not harmed, and he targeted Sylvia and took her, you  
23 know, for a ride and why wouldn't she say yes, you know?  
24 Everybody wants to go for swim on a hot day in Yellowknife.

25                   And so, that began, years and years of

1 stalking and of manipulating Sylvia, and she would -- you  
2 know, she got away long enough to have other relationships  
3 and to have these beautiful children and a marriage to, you  
4 know, a really incredible guy, Dave, and he would always  
5 find his way back into her life. And part of the reason is  
6 it goes back to what I was talking about earlier about  
7 childhood sexual abuse, you know, when children are abused,  
8 what happens is you set up a lifetime of being targeted.

9 I remember when I was 16 walking home  
10 during rush hour from a summer job that I had, and over 120  
11 people honked, rolled down their windows, yelled  
12 obscenities at me. I was a 16-year-old child walking home  
13 from my summer job and these men saw me as a potential  
14 target. That summer, I went door-to-door for a company and  
15 so many times, I would hear a whistle and I would turn and  
16 look, and there would be a man exposing himself to me or I  
17 would hear a whistle and there would be a man who would be  
18 following me.

19 That happens to -- my friends, all of my  
20 Indigenous friends, have that common experience as well in  
21 that, you know, in that setting down south. We were prey.  
22 And Sylvia's experience was that she fell into this cycle  
23 with Pat, who murdered her, and though we had her --  
24 sometimes it kind of shocks me to think that I'm older than  
25 Sylvia.

1           She never got a chance to, you know, grow  
2 into her forties and get chubby as women in their forties  
3 do often. And it was because he saw her on that -- he saw  
4 that beautiful child on that day, and, you know, what if  
5 the universe had put somebody else in his vision? I  
6 wouldn't even want that because there would be another  
7 family sitting here.

8           COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I have one  
9 more question about the court process. I just wanted to  
10 understand and make sure this was clearly understood. The  
11 Crown proceeded with a trial and called evidence for a  
12 second-degree murder charge ultimately; is that correct?

13           MS. JANET BREWSTER: Yes.

14           COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And it was  
15 after the Crown called all their evidence and he fired his  
16 lawyer and it was before the defence called any evidence  
17 that the guilty plea for manslaughter was accepted?

18           MS. JANET BREWSTER: So, he never had to  
19 testify. He never had to answer any questions about what  
20 he did to Sylvia for, you know, close to 30 years. 25  
21 years -- 26 years, I guess. So he never had to be  
22 accountable, and in fact, what he did was -- you know, when  
23 we made our victim impact statements, they went away and  
24 came back and basically, he used our victim impact  
25 statements to kind of paint like a, you know, this lifelong

1 love affair between them that was, you know, like a  
2 complete lie, and that was -- his lawyer read that out. I  
3 think he may have had minored in English. He wrote it  
4 pretty well.

5                               And so, we never had that opportunity of  
6 having a dialogue with him, of holding him accountable, and  
7 that's a really -- that's an intrinsic part of our  
8 Inukness, right, is being able to talk to somebody who has  
9 done something wrong and being able to share how that  
10 impacts the people around them and having them respond to  
11 that, you know, giving an opportunity to reconcile.

12                              We all, for a really, really long time and  
13 some still do, carry a very deep and unresolved anger  
14 towards him. I just commanded him being hit by a bus which  
15 is totally out of the realm of who I am. And that -- you  
16 can taste that, you know. When you think about it, you can  
17 taste what that anger does, and what that trauma does is it  
18 changes the way you think and move through the world and  
19 through relationships.

20                              And it goes onto other relationships or  
21 other perceived hurts or a small statement or argument  
22 suddenly blows up into something huge because you have this  
23 unresolved hurt and anger towards something that somebody -  
24 - that he did.

25                              That comes out and, you know, Jayko was --

1 I'm really proud that Jayko stood up today and talked about  
2 how he has become abusive and how he has been charged  
3 because what he's demonstrating to me is that he's taking  
4 responsibility for his actions and trying to understand and  
5 having a good understanding, a better understanding, of  
6 where those actions come from, and that tells me that he  
7 can move through this, and he has my support; he has our  
8 support.

9 And I think today, he gained the support  
10 of our community, and that is what we are raised to do.  
11 He's an Inuk man who stood up like an Inuk man should.

12 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: You've  
13 actually -- another question. Was that ever explained to  
14 you? I mean, the Crown proceeded with second-degree murder  
15 charges so I can conclude that there was a belief that  
16 there was enough evidence to show that he intended to kill  
17 her. What was the change and why -- was it ever explained  
18 to you why then, a manslaughter was accepted because a  
19 manslaughter legally means that there wasn't an intent to  
20 kill, but death occurred whereas second-degree murder  
21 wasn't planned or premeditated, but there was an intent to  
22 kill or recklessness there. Was that ever explained to you  
23 how that was legally justified or how the evidence  
24 supported that?

25 MS. JANET BREWSTER: Okay, so what we know



1 is that Pat applied a long and sustained pressure on  
2 Sylvia's neck, possibly from behind, and the reason that  
3 they knew it was long and sustained is because there was a  
4 number of fractures that occurred, and the bruising that  
5 was on her neck showed that he had switched positions.

6                   And the way that the coroner explained is  
7 that when somebody is squeezing and -- if we all do that  
8 right now, like if you squeeze your fist as hard as you  
9 can, that you're exerting that pressure and your muscles  
10 become feeding fatigued and pressure points on your hands  
11 become fatigued, so to release -- to relieve that fatigue,  
12 you will change positions and squeeze again, right?

13                   And so, that's how it was explained that  
14 he took Sylvia's life, that it was not -- that it didn't  
15 just take 30 seconds, and I feel like it was like seven  
16 minutes or something like that, but the amount of time --  
17 it might have been three, actually -- but the amount of  
18 time kind of escapes me right now.

19                   And so, we know that there was intent,  
20 right? Pat's claim was that he doesn't recall, so what he  
21 said was that -- so he didn't make any admission of guilt.  
22 What he said was that as far as he knew, they were the only  
23 people there, that he was blacked out drunk, and that he  
24 doesn't recall Sylvia dying, but because they were the only  
25 people there, that he was probably the one who did it.

1 And so, I think that that's how the  
2 prosecutors were able to, like, shift down to manslaughter  
3 from second-degree murder even though it showed, that the  
4 evidence showed, that he made a long and, you know, very  
5 strong effort to take Sylvia's breath away from her. He  
6 stopped her breath. He stopped her blood flow to her  
7 brain. He did that. And his claim of being blacked out  
8 drunk allowed them to do that.

9 And I guess, also, from what I recall,  
10 there was a concern the Crown, the prosecutors, had major  
11 concerns about how much time had lapsed between the charge,  
12 the initial charge, and they felt that they needed to  
13 proceed as quickly as possible in order to ensure a  
14 conviction so -- you know, that also really truly  
15 demonstrates his manipulation of -- Pat, I hope you're  
16 listening or watching because I just want to let you know  
17 that we know what you did. I know what you did.

18 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: We saw some  
19 photos and I would really -- I don't have any more  
20 questions. Thank you for answering the questions. Unless  
21 there's other things you want to add, it would be really  
22 wonderful if you could walk us through the photos.

23 MS. JANET BREWSTER: Okay. Yeah, I'd be  
24 happy to.

25 So that's Sylvia at Akaitcho Hall,

1 sometimes known as "Akaitcho Hell."

2 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Which was a  
3 residential --

4 MS. JANET BREWSTER: Yeah, it was where  
5 the children in Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and some Western  
6 Arctic would go to school in Yellowknife, and they stay in  
7 Akaitcho Hall. And yeah. That's her there.

8 This is Jayko crouched down and Ashevak.  
9 I included these photos because I just wanted to show you  
10 this child, these children, who had to hear about Sylvia  
11 dying, and maybe why my milk let down that day that -- you  
12 know, these beautiful children who should be outside  
13 playing and having fun were -- this was, I think, a week  
14 after we got back from Sylvia's funeral, so these are  
15 children who are now carrying the trauma of losing Sylvia.

16 They're having qunguliits there. Those  
17 are really sour leaves that you pick on the land, and I  
18 think that's in July, so they're like at the peak of sour  
19 there. So, I always use to make them try them and take  
20 pictures. Jayko and Ashevak.

21 So, Ashevak is my -- I call him middle son  
22 now. He was my baby then. Now we have Miles, who is 12,  
23 older than these boys are now, but also, my youngest son is  
24 actually named Angutti, after Aya's (ph) brother.

25 And you know, our names are so important

1 to us in our relationships in our lives, our Inuktitut  
2 names, and they're an important way to create lifelong  
3 connections and life experiences and expectations. Above  
4 all, we are always expected to be of good behaviour so that  
5 we can honour the name that we are carrying.

6                   That's Sylvia. That was at -- and my  
7 grandmother, Nipisha, is cut out of that picture  
8 unfortunately, but that was a picture of my little auntie  
9 Sylvia with my grandmother at her cabin at Middle Lake in  
10 Taloyoak. And there's Sylvia in probably at Akaitcho Hall.  
11 I took this from -- Bernadette is looking at me going, I  
12 know where that came from -- I got this from Bernadette's  
13 Facebook page, actually.

14                   The day after Sylvia passed away, I woke  
15 up having dreamt of my grandfather, Ernie, known as  
16 Tusaaji. My grandparents, Ernie and Nipisha, in my dream  
17 were walking over a hill, and it was a hill on the way to  
18 Middle Lake, and as they got -- they were walking away from  
19 me and as they got to the top, Sylvia came up the hill from  
20 the other direction and they each took her by the hand and  
21 continued walking over the hill.

22                   And so, that's my grandfather with his  
23 baby, Sylvia. Sylvia and Josie. She had some good hair  
24 going in the seventies. She was such a beautiful, funny  
25 and loud laughter and, you know, if she made her laugh, she

1 would -- the next time, she saw you, she would say "jitha  
2 aya (ph)," and then, just remembering whatever it was that  
3 made her laugh and she would make you laugh and relive it  
4 all over again.

5                   For a long time when we were kids, we  
6 would not necessarily have access to a vehicle. And so, we  
7 would find ourselves walking from our community to where  
8 our family camps, a place called Middle Lake that I  
9 mentioned, and though I took this also from Bernie's  
10 Facebook, this looks like a photo of Sylvia on a walk to  
11 Middle Lake. And again, this is about the age where she  
12 first met the man who murdered her, this child.

13                   Sylvia and Danielle. Danielle was a  
14 feisty little kid and still is just tiny like her mom.  
15 That little kid has so much facial hair now. That's David  
16 and Sylvia and they look to be in the tent at Middle Lake.  
17 She was a really good and loving, caring mother. She, you  
18 know -- it would be funny seeing her carrying her kids  
19 around because she was so tiny, and they all seemed so big  
20 next to her, but she could sure pack them for miles.

21                   This is Sylvia, David, Amanda. Yeah, the  
22 baby is Danielle, and Amanda, who -- we love you Amanda.  
23 Amanda couldn't come. She really wanted to. And, you  
24 know, we've all been in constant contact for the last  
25 couple of weeks leading up to coming here, and Amanda is at

1 home with -- she's taking care of -- actually, Dave's son,  
2 Grey, and her own son and daughter right now.

3 MR. DAVID RITCHIE: Funny story, my dad  
4 still has that cooler.

5 MS. JANET BREWSTER: David just said his  
6 dad still has that cooler. So this Jayko and Danielle and  
7 Sylvia at Anaanak's place, at our -- so, some of our family  
8 really grew up closely with our grandparents who are -- as  
9 most people know, grandparents are "anaanatsiaq" and  
10 "ataatasiaq," but we're -- some of us are lucky enough that  
11 we grew so closely with them that we call them anaanak and  
12 ataatak.

13 That's it. We love Sylvia very much, and  
14 we love her every day, and we just want to thank you for  
15 loving her enough to have us here. Thank you.

16 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Thank you, Janet,  
17 Danielle, David, Jayko. Qujannamiik. This concludes  
18 Janet's story of her Aunt Sylvia. Qujannamiik.

19 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I just want  
20 to thank you guys all so much. I'm going to adjourn for 15  
21 minutes, and I have some gifts for you guys. I'm going to  
22 put down the mic.

23 --- Recess at 11:16 a.m.

24 --- Upon resuming at 1:34 p.m.

25 --- Exhibits (code: P01P11P0301)

1 Exhibit 1: Folder of 13 digital  
2 images displayed during the public  
3 testimony of the witness  
4 Exhibit 2: *Reasons for Sentence*, R.  
5 v. Anablak, 2008 NUCJ 09

6 **Hearing #3**

7 **Witness: Susan Aglukark**

8 **Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

9 **Commission Counsel: Fanny Wylde**

10 MS. FANNY WYLDE: Good afternoon,  
12 Commissioner Robinson, I would like to introduce you to our  
13 next witness, Susan Aglukark, who is here to share her  
14 story as a survivor of violence. Before I do let her share  
15 her story, I would like to ask Mr. Registrar to proceed to  
16 the swearing of the witness. She would like to give oath  
17 with a Bible.

18 SWORN: SUSAN AGLUKARK

19 MS. SUSAN AGLUKARK: Thank you. Mr.  
20 Zandberg.

21 MS. FANNY WYLDE: So Susan, maybe we could  
22 introduce your support system, so I will give the mic to  
23 each and every one of them so they can introduce  
24 themselves.

25 MS. ESTHER POWELL: Esther Powell.

26 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Lillian Lundrigan.

1 MS. BARBARA TUKTUK: Barbara Tuktuk (ph).

2 MS. MONICA UGJUK: Monica Ugjuk.

3 MS. HANNAH BINO: Hannah Bino (ph).

4 MS. FANNY WYLDE: Thank you to all of you.

5 So, Susan, you can introduce yourself to Commissioner  
6 Robinson and just share what you have to share today with  
7 the commissioner.

8 MS. SUSAN AGLUKARK: I'm going to share in  
9 English, but acknowledge my Inuktitut. (Speaking in  
10 Inuktitut).

11 STATEMENT BY MS. SUSAN AGLUKARK:

12 MS. SUSAN AGLUKARK: This is the first  
13 time since the last time, and the last time was the only  
14 time that I shared. I thought in detail that when you put  
15 it away, you put it away and you move on with your life.  
16 And you do.

17 I believe in the work you are doing,  
18 Commissioner Qajaq Robinson, and all of you.

19 (Speaking in Inuktitut) because child sex  
20 abuse is an island, and I want to share the story from the  
21 very beginning, and I'm going to share it as a narrative  
22 because I don't want to miss any details, the details I  
23 don't want to remember. I will admit the ones that have  
24 long-term effects forever. I will share.

25 The greatest irony, he should be here. I



1 don't cry for myself. I cry because I found out on Tuesday  
2 that he's been charged again. After 25 years in this  
3 community, how many more -- nothing's changed. And my  
4 guilt is, I did what I could. I did what I could 25 years  
5 ago, and he's been charged again. His own family member.

6 I wasn't going to do this this week. I  
7 have other work to do, but (Speaking in Inuktitut) when I  
8 heard. It is not just a violation of the body, it's an  
9 ongoing violation forever of the mind and the heart and  
10 your life. (Speaking in Inuktitut). The irony of irony is  
11 that he took pictures, and here we are on camera. And I  
12 can't even ask that he not watch. No one can guarantee  
13 that he's not watching right now taking morbid pleasure in  
14 watching this. But you didn't win. Norman Ford, you  
15 didn't win. Not now. Not ever. (Speaking in Inuktitut),  
16 and no excuse forgives your actions. (Speaking in  
17 Inuktitut). Now the community knows (Speaking in  
18 Inuktitut) and what you've done. This room could be filled  
19 by your victims alone. So many innocent children in this  
20 community alone. Norman Ford. (Speaking in Inuktitut).

21 I am a survivor. And I know that many  
22 cases of violence in general, especially against women and  
23 children, young girls, are acted on by perpetrators who  
24 were themselves victims of violence and child sex abuse.  
25 We've learned that through the Truth and Reconciliation

1 Commission, many, many generations.

2 I say this not to defend behaviours or  
3 these people so that as part of this process, we trace all  
4 the steps that lead up to behaviours like this. We need to  
5 trace the generational traumas. One program is not going  
6 to fix one set of victims. Many, many programs over many,  
7 many years.

8 I'm a survivor of child sex abuse. I was  
9 8 or 9 years old when a grown man, friend of a family,  
10 called the house. We lived across the road from each  
11 other, and we were home. My sister and I were babysitting.  
12 Innocent children playing. And the phone rang and he said  
13 at the other end, "There's a gift here for your mom and  
14 dad. Why don't you come and get it? Maybe they'd like to  
15 come home to a gift." And as a child, that sounds nice.  
16 Go get a gift for your parents, a surprise.

17 So I went across to his place. I walked  
18 in. When I was inside, he reached around and he locked the  
19 door. And I need to trace all the events as they occurred  
20 because it traces the process of a mental health breakdown.  
21 That's the trigger, the click of a lock, because I knew in  
22 that moment that I was in trouble, but I had no control.  
23 There's nothing I could do. He put his hand and started  
24 pushing me slowly away from the door. He walked me and  
25 said the gift is in the bedroom. Walked me down the short

1 hallway and into the bedroom, and he did what he did. I  
2 don't need to go into those details.

3                   From that click of that and since that  
4 moment, over 30 years I have lived in a heightened state.  
5 (Speaking in Inuktitut). We develop habits. My hands  
6 clinch, fidget all the time since then. My feet fidget all  
7 the time. My legs fidget all the time. I have migraines  
8 from clenched jaw, and I don't know that I do it until my  
9 jaw gets tired. My shoulders, my neck, my teeth, always  
10 tense. 30 years. I have a constant sense of being  
11 watched. I hate walking in front of people because I think  
12 somebody's watching all the time.

13                   Eight years old and that was just one  
14 part. As part of the sex assault, he took pictures. He  
15 took three pictures with a Polaroid camera. I hate  
16 Polaroid cameras. You can photograph me with anything else  
17 not with a Polaroid camera. I hate entertaining. I will  
18 sing for you. I will not entertain you. Entertainment, I  
19 liken it to him posing me to take his pictures. I was  
20 entertaining him and his sick needs, exposed.

21                   As a result of those pictures and over 30  
22 years, I have night sweats. I jump up in the middle of the  
23 night when I sense something or someone watching me, and I  
24 start to wrap blankets tightly around me. Even if it's  
25 hot, I will wrap a blanket around me and curl up. I don't

1 want to feel that somebody's watching me. Over 30 years, I  
2 lived with that.

3                   When I got very busy with the career, and  
4 we spent a lot of time in hotel rooms, I made a habit of  
5 including in my travel kit, a big safety pin, and every  
6 hotel room, I pinned the curtains to make sure there was no  
7 light coming in because if there's light coming in, he can  
8 see me. And for the first little while, I put a towel on  
9 the bottom of the door. If there's light coming in, he  
10 could see me. I still close every closet door before I go  
11 to bed, in case he can see me because of those pictures.

12                   Shortly after this happened, we moved to  
13 Arviat, so I put it in the back of my mind. As a child,  
14 you move on with your life. About 12 or 13 years later, I  
15 moved back here to Rankin. I got a job, Ilinniarvik High  
16 School, 1990. And I was living here for a little while  
17 when I got a request for my testimony against him, and I  
18 felt that -- I didn't think about it until that moment, and  
19 I realized then that after 12, 13 years that he had  
20 continued this. I knew nothing about pedophiles and  
21 predators after what had happened to me.

22                   So 12, 13 years later, I'm living here in  
23 Rankin, and I get this request to give my statement because  
24 he had been charged. And I did. And while the very  
25 methodical method of the RCMP was then and is an effect

1 one, I was a fortunate one. I had a really good RCMP  
2 member who took my statement, and my sister --

3                   It's after -- up to this point, I think we  
4 have hope for I believe that something can change, that  
5 something will change. It was only after I gave my  
6 statement that I felt a daunting sense of isolation. My  
7 family could only do so much for me, but there was no  
8 support then. 1990, there was no place to go. Who do I  
9 talk to? I couldn't go to the church because he was going  
10 to the same church, and there was betrayal there. They  
11 picked him as well as me. But my mind said you can't have  
12 both. And there was guilt that I was asking the church to  
13 choose.

14                   So after giving my statement, complete  
15 isolation. Complete. I would quickly do groceries in case  
16 he's down the aisle. I didn't go to public events in case  
17 he attends as well. I stopped going to church, so there as  
18 nothing to do here. Nothing left here in Rankin. I don't  
19 know if we still are, at the time, it was the circuit court  
20 system and it was delayed twice. So every four to six  
21 months, the circuit court came around in 1990/1991, and he  
22 delayed it twice, so it took almost a year from the point  
23 of giving my statement to that first court hearing. It  
24 took almost a year to finally have some movement, and in  
25 that year, we're living in the same community.

1 This is when all of the mental health  
2 issues that I believe could be managed got worse up to that  
3 point, beside the isolation. I've always had amazing  
4 family support. This is when, in that year, waiting four  
5 months, "Oh no, he didn't get a lawyer. Next time."  
6 Another four months. Something else happened. Now we have  
7 to wait some more. This is when it's easy to get into the  
8 drinking and the drugs. This is when that stuff calls to  
9 you, so I felt stuck. Isolated.

10 In that year, the following mental health  
11 conditions developed. Small ticks, the twitching got  
12 worse. Hyperawareness of my surroundings. Are you a  
13 threat? Are you a threat? Do you hate me? What are you  
14 going to say to me? It's no longer your community. You  
15 don't belong here anymore. Anxiety attacks. And the  
16 biggest one for me was trust. Who do you trust in your  
17 community? Who do you talk to? Everybody knows everybody.  
18 The isolation makes you socially inept. You feel socially  
19 inadequate because you are socially inept. All  
20 relationships struggle. Thank God for sisters and parents.

21 After a couple of tries and the court  
22 process finally began, he was convicted. He got 18 months  
23 and served a third. Less time than it took to get the  
24 conviction. And because we didn't have the registry yet,  
25 he was not on the register. But I think -- and I'm going

1 to come back to it in the recommendations -- in these  
2 communities especially, those deterrents have to be  
3 stronger. The convictions and the time they're given has  
4 to be stronger. I don't know if it's more, more time, but  
5 something has to change.

6 I stayed on here in Rankin trying to get  
7 back to my life until he showed up in church after serving  
8 his time, and he wanted to shake my hand, and I knew then  
9 that I had lost the community. Not because the people  
10 chose, but the system makes us choose. It protects him  
11 more than it protects the victim. And I had to leave. I  
12 was lucky. I was offered a job in Ottawa, a one-year  
13 contract. And I thought, one year, I just need one year to  
14 get away for a bit, then I'm going to come back home. How  
15 many don't?

16 Missing. Many leave, maybe with the  
17 intention when they're better they'll come back and they go  
18 missing because there was nothing there in place for them  
19 to make them feel safe. The communities force us to choose  
20 because the systems are set up that way.

21 I'm a grown woman. It took me a long time  
22 to be comfortable to say I'm a woman. I was stuck as a  
23 child. Even in my career. But I am a grown woman. I'm a  
24 successful one in every way. I have a great career. I  
25 have a great marriage. I have a beautiful family. I built

1 my life. I've taken it back. But still, when I come back  
2 home, tabunak (ph) here to Rankin, I'll be at the store,  
3 Northern or the Co-op, and I'll be cautious walking down a  
4 aisle. Take a quick look in case he's there. Always  
5 looking behind me in case he's there. Over 30 years later,  
6 he has served a third of 18 months, and I still live with  
7 the fear of going down the aisle in a Northern store.

8                   You learn to build a life around that  
9 stuff, but we shouldn't have to. He shouldn't be here.  
10 And it hurts to say that about another human being, even  
11 now, knowing that he has been charged again 25 years later.  
12 How many more live here and don't have a place to go and  
13 live with that? Always looking over their shoulder. And  
14 that was one incident in my life. Many of these are many  
15 times. I think we can fill the room with his victims. And  
16 they live here. He needs to not be living here.

17                   So, as I said, we leave. Searching out  
18 anything, something better, whatever that is. I happened  
19 to land with an incredible opportunity. I've lived, as I  
20 said, an incredible 20 plus years. I lived a life that  
21 also has happened to heal me enough to know absolutely that  
22 we can heal enough, but I have a couple of recommendations.

23                   The first is a culture specific or  
24 relevant support system for victims. We have a beautiful  
25 healing facility here, and it's doing amazing work with its



1 inmates. Nothing for victims. Where do they go for  
2 supports? Programs? For every abuser, there's at least  
3 five victims. We need to invest in these equal facility  
4 programming, help, professional help facilities for  
5 victims. We need more healing centres. Every region  
6 should have one. But we need them for the victims too.

7 I say culture specific or culture  
8 relevant, but our culture is changing. So what is that  
9 culture? We need to invest in finding that story, finding  
10 that culture, and working from there.

11 There needs to be a major overhaul in the  
12 way a case is investigated. Life here is different. Very,  
13 very different. We live in incredible unique environments.  
14 Beautiful ones. But life here is different. Our  
15 relationships with a criminal and a victim is different.  
16 How we approach investigating information collecting needs  
17 to be community relevant, Inuit community relevant.

18 I think we also should have as part of the  
19 investigation process, if they don't already have one, a  
20 advisory group from the community to give proper family  
21 history. I think knowing families helps in the investment  
22 for victims, and this is where it gets challenging for all  
23 of us, I think, when we talk about reconciliation. And we  
24 know there are so many generations of victims and abusers.  
25 It's rampant.

1 Incest. Many of abusers themselves are  
2 victims of all kinds of abuses. We need to find period of  
3 time. If we call it a forgiveness period, I don't know  
4 what we call it. But a time when an abuser exhibits a  
5 willingness to heal. And I think for a little while, we're  
6 going to have to -- as hard as it is for me to say it --  
7 provide that opportunity so that they have an opportunity  
8 themselves to heal and to have closure.

9 Having said that, pedophiles don't heal.  
10 They can't change. Predators will always be predators.  
11 There has to be a clear line between those with a  
12 willingness to heal and those we know will not. I can name  
13 four people right now that should be charged but get away  
14 because they are in positions of power. And they're  
15 predators. They get away with it. There has to be a clear  
16 line until our communities are healed enough. And it's  
17 going to be a period of time, I don't know what that period  
18 of time is, but a forgiveness period avail of  
19 understanding, whatever we call it. That's the unique  
20 position our communities are in. There's so many.  
21 Probably every day.

22 Why? How can predators get away with  
23 serving a third of their time? Why are victims and acts of  
24 violence against children okay? I don't understand that  
25 part of the law. I really don't. I think we need to look

1 at it, especially as it relates to Indigenous children.  
2 Make it stronger somehow. Our children -- (Speaking in  
3 Inuktitut).

4 QUESTIONS BY MS. FANNY WYLDE:

5 MS. FANNY WYLDE: Susan, if I may, I have  
6 a few questions. When you said that you were requested to  
7 provide a statement, was it the authorities that contacted  
8 you or another person?

9 MS. SUSAN AGLUKARK: It was another  
10 person.

11 MS. FANNY WYLDE: And when the man was  
12 convicted, you mentioned he was sentenced to 18 months.  
13 Were you the only victim on that case or there was other  
14 victims?

15 MS. SUSAN AGLUKARK: There were other  
16 victims.

17 MS. FANNY WYLDE: And I guess my last  
18 question would be: What kept you going all these years, as  
19 a child to today?

20 MS. SUSAN AGLUKARK: I couldn't find the  
21 picture I wanted to share with you. It was a picture that  
22 was taken in the same building where he lived, and it was  
23 just before the abuse. And I saw myself in this picture  
24 before that click. And the journey has been we can go back  
25 to that place. The innocent child, we're never going to

1 get it back. Once it's gone, it's gone.

2 But that look is the one I kept trying to  
3 return to. There's an innocence there going back to that.  
4 I borrowed from my sisters' innocence from them. My  
5 parents always believe in something better for us, so they  
6 pushed us. I'm always lucky, I think. I was very  
7 fortunate that there was always something to work towards.  
8 There's always something in front of me to work towards, to  
9 stay focused on. I think that's what kept me going from  
10 that child to when everything else -- 1998 is when it came  
11 to him.

12 MS. FANNY WYLDE: Thank you. I will now  
13 leave Commissioner Robinson if she has questions or  
14 comments.

15 QUESTIONS BY COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

16 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I love you,  
17 your music, your voice, Arctic Rose, your message to  
18 Nunavut of hope and strength and faith that you could reach  
19 what you strive for. (Speaking in Inuktitut).

20 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: -- through  
21 your music, through your foundation, I'm really humbled  
22 that you've chosen this space to continue that. (Speaking  
23 in Inuktitut).

24 I just want to say believe the children.  
25 Don't choose. You're right, it's making sure they have

1 that space too (Speaking in Inuktitut).

2 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Before we  
3 adjourn, this is the last public hearing of our inquiry in  
4 Nunavut, and I want to thank you for being, continuing, and  
5 closing our work here. I really see it as a beginning in a  
6 big way. A continuation and a beginning of more. This  
7 isn't about choosing sides. It's about making a community  
8 safe for everybody.

9 There was an academic who talked about  
10 when the Qallunaat laws came into the communities -- non-  
11 Indigenous laws came into the communities, it stripped the  
12 power away from Elders, the real legal systems that were  
13 here, and that created a state of lawlessness that you have  
14 to choose one over the other, and a lot of what you've  
15 shared and what I've heard from others, that resonates with  
16 me. (Speaking in Inuktitut).

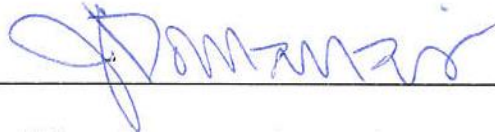
17 MS. MONICA UGJUK: Before we finish, I'd  
18 like to close with a prayer.

19 --- PRAYER

20 MS. LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: This hearing is  
21 adjourned, and we will take a break until 3:30 for the  
22 closing ceremony. Thank you.

23 --- Whereupon adjourning at 2:23 p.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.



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Jovelle Domanais, Court Reporter