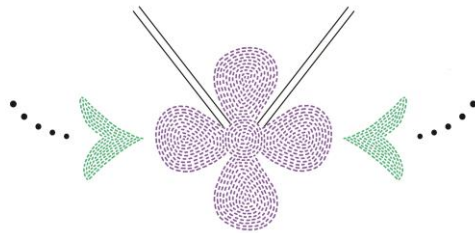


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Riverlodge Place
Thompson, Manitoba**



PUBLIC

Tuesday March 20, 2018

Public Volume 72

**Hilda Anderson Pyrz, Dennis Anderson, Keith Anderson,
Carol Wood, Lianna Anderson, Melvin Anderson,
Minnie Anderson & Arla Tait,
In relation to Dawn Anderson**

**Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

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APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Stuart Wuttke (Legal counsel) Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs	Non-appearance
Government of Canada	Lucy Bell (Legal Counsel)
Government of Manitoba	Samuel Thomson (Legal Counsel)
Manitoba Moon Voices Inc.	Non-appearance
MMIWG Coalition (Manitoba)	Non-appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Manitoba Inuit Association	Non-appearance
Winnipeg Police Service	Non-appearance
Women of the Metis Nation	Non-appearance

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In relation to Dawn Anderson

Commissioner: Michèle Audette

Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe

Order: The contents of the Coroner's report (Exhibit 4)
are to be sealed.

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Darlene Osborne
(National Family Advisory Circle), Thelma Morrissette,
Agnes Spence, Audrey Siegl, Bernie Poitras Williams,
Isabelle Morris, Andy Daniels, Ovide Caribou, Florence
Catchway

Clerk: Maryiam Khoury

Commissioner for Oaths: Christian Rock

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

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1	Folder of 20 images displayed during the public testimony of the family. P01P14P0101_Anderson_et_al_(Anderson)_Exh_1]	114
2	Family video of Dawn Anderson, 11.1 MB MP4 file, 3 minutes 36 seconds. [P01P14P0101_Anderson_family_video_Exh_2]	114
3	APTN report on Dawn Anderson, 34 MB MP4 file, 6 minutes 57 seconds. [P01P14P0101_Anderson_APTN_video_Exh_3]	114
4	***SEALED*** Autopsy report for Dawn Anderson	114
5	Three letters i) Letter of Ms. Hilda Anderson to the Honourable Jennifer Howard dated December 5, 2011 (two pages); ii) Letter of RCMP Sergeant Dave Porter to Ms. Hilda Anderson and the Anderson family dated January 25, 2012 (four pages); iii) Letter of Dennis Eidet, RCMP Inspector to Ms. Hilda Anderson dated August 9, 2012 (three pages).	115

Thompson, Manitoba

--- Upon commencing on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 10:07
a.m.

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good morning. Good morning, Commissioner Audette. This morning, it's my pleasure to introduce you to the Anderson family. First, I'd like to start by introducing -- it's Arla, and right beside me is Keith, and here on the other side of me is Dennis, and then we have Melvin, and then we have Hilda; we have Minnie, Lianna, and Carol. They have asked to please be promised in each on the feather, so if we could promise them in individually, that would be appreciated.

MR. REGISTRAR: Hi, everyone. My name's Christian Rock. I will be your registrar for today.

ARLA TAIT, Affirmed:

KEITH ANDERSON, Affirmed:

DENNIS ANDERSON, Affirmed:

MELVIN ANDERSON, Affirmed:

HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ, Affirmed:

MINNIE ANDERSON, Affirmed:

LIANNA ANDERSON, Affirmed:

CAROL WOOD, Affirmed:

MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Commissioner Audette, today the family will be sharing the story of their sister, Dawn Anderson. What the family would like to

1 do is introduce themselves, and we'd like to start with
2 Hilda.

3 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** My name is
4 Hilda Anderson Pырz. I'm the sister of -- of Dawn. I'm
5 the second-youngest in the family. My sister Dawn was the
6 youngest, and I just wanted to share a little bit of, like,
7 who I am. I'm a very strong Indigenous woman, and I work
8 hard at trying to change the pathway for us. I come from a
9 very strong family who is deeply rooted in their culture
10 and their language. It's very difficult for us to share
11 our truth, but it's also important for us to share our
12 truth. We come from a family of 11, and now we have 10
13 after losing my sister. We're very protective of one
14 another in our family, and we're also very supportive, and
15 we grew up a lot -- we grew up most of our childhoods
16 living off the land. My father was a commercial fisherman
17 and a trapper, and I feel, you know, this has really
18 grounded us in who we are as Indigenous people and as a
19 family, and it has taught us survival, and I feel, you
20 know, when we're gathered here today, we're gathered here
21 in strength for one another, and also, you know, to create
22 a pathway for change for Indigenous women and girls across
23 this country who are experiencing high levels of violence,
24 and I'm just going to share the mic with my mom now.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hilda, can you also

1 introduce your support person to us?

2 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Pardon? Oh,
3 sorry.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can you introduce
5 your support to us?

6 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I have here today
7 with me a grandmother who's very -- been very supportive of
8 me and my journey and as well as many other MMIWG family
9 members and survivors in Manitoba, and she continues to
10 support me and give me strength to go forward in the
11 important work that I do because I also -- in my role, I'm
12 the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls liaison
13 for the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, and I'm also the
14 cochair of the Manitoba Missing and Murdered Indigenous
15 Women and Girls Coalition, so usually I'm on the other side
16 supporting, but it just -- you know, it's important for us
17 to share our truth today, so it's difficult when -- for me
18 to be sharing today, and I'm glad that Thelma's here.

19 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** *Bonjour.* (Speaking
20 in Native language). I'm just really pleased and honoured
21 to be here to support Hilda and her family to tell their
22 story about their loved one. *Miigwetch.*

23 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** Oh, this is very hard
24 for me. I'm Dawn's mom, and I miss my daughter so much. I
25 think of her every day and just wish that wouldn't happen

1 to so many -- so many young girls and women that are needed
2 by their families, and it -- it's really hard especially
3 when they have kids to look after and -- and then have to
4 be left behind on account of somebody hurting their mother.
5 It's so hard. I -- I can't say no more. I can't say no
6 more.

7 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** *Tansi.* Dawn was my
8 (indiscernible). She was my little sister. I'm the
9 third-youngest of 11. My heart is broken. It aches. My
10 baby sister's gone. I just want the ache to go away, but
11 it doesn't. We need -- we want closure. I know nothing
12 will bring back -- bring back Dawn. Without that closure,
13 this will continue to happen to other families, other
14 babies at 4 and 7 years old and younger who will lose their
15 mothers. That closure has to come so it stops. These
16 babies need their mothers. My mom needs her -- needed her
17 baby. The heartache has to stop somewhere, sometime.
18 (Speaking in Native language).

19 **MS. CAROL WOOD:** I'm the fourth-youngest
20 daughter of the family out of 11, and losing my little
21 sister was really hard. It still is hard today for our
22 family because a part of each one of us is gone because she
23 was a part of every one of us, and that's the hardest
24 thing, and my mom, I pray all the time -- because my mom's
25 not getting any younger or anything like that. I pray to

1 God that we find as to what happened to my little sister
2 before anything happens to her, and I -- like, I pray for
3 strength for my family always, and I really think this
4 process that is happening now -- because people weren't
5 able to speak before, and now they're able to. Somebody's
6 listening. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here, and it -- like,
7 it does give the family hope because they're able to tell
8 their story, and it's just not amongst family anymore.
9 You're telling other people, and I thank -- I thank you
10 people for doing that. Thank you. (Speaking in Native
11 language). Thank you.

12 **MS. ARLA TAIT:** *Tansi.* My name is Arla.
13 I -- Dawn was my cousin, but I considered her my sister as
14 well as I consider Keith and Melvin, Dennis, Lianna, Hilda,
15 the family, my brothers and sisters, and Minnie, like a mom
16 to me.

17 I was pretty close to Dawn when she moved
18 back home to Leaf Rapids. You know, she'd often come over
19 to my house with her girls, and, you know, we did a lot of
20 things together, and I'm -- I'm thankful that I'm here and
21 able to share some of the -- some of the things that
22 happened, and hopefully, we find some closure. I'm happy
23 to be part of this family; very supportive, and they made
24 me feel very loved and supported, and that's all I'm going
25 to say for now. (Speaking in Native language).

1 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** I have my wife and my
2 daughter here with me. I have Randy (ph) Anderson and
3 Brit (ph) Anderson, and -- my name's Keith Anderson, and my
4 spirit name's (indiscernible), White Wolf.

5 First and foremost, I'd like to sit there
6 and acknowledge all of you people that sat there and, you
7 know, brought what's happening today to this point and
8 that, and -- and, you know, the hard work that's been put
9 into it and that. I mean, now you've given us the
10 opportunity to sit there and voice ourself and everything
11 else, and -- and, you know, the wheels are turning, it's
12 moving and everything else and that; so I'd like to sit
13 there and say thank you to everybody for their support and
14 everything else, and that, and then -- I mean, to me,
15 acknowledgment is a -- is a great thing, and, you know, for
16 all the people, you know, with their hard work and
17 everything that's been put into this and that. You know,
18 you've been across Canada and everything else.

19 But I'd like to sit there and go back.
20 Like, with us, we're land people, our family, and then even
21 with the RTLs, like, registered trap line, our -- our
22 territorial use and that, we're going on five generations
23 on -- on the land that we used and that. We teach our
24 children and then our grandchildren, you know, the
25 grass roots and the -- and the way of life of our people

1 and that, and then -- like, with -- with my sister and
2 everybody, you know, we used to move from camp to camp,
3 everything and that, and, you know, we've shared a lot of
4 good times everything else, and with my late sister Dawn
5 and that -- you know, me and my wife, we've been together,
6 what, 38 years?

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Almost 35.

8 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** Okay, 35 years. I can
9 only count to -- anyways, one of the greatest gifts that my
10 sister gave us, and that, is that my wife couldn't have
11 babies, so when she was 17, she approached me and my wife,
12 she was pregnant, and asked us if we would take her baby,
13 and that, so me and Brit accepted and that, and she came to
14 the hospital here in Thomson with her, and went into
15 that -- when she was in labour, went into that labour room,
16 and that's where we ended up with Randy, and that's
17 26 years ago. Randy just turned 26 on March 1st, and that,
18 but -- I mean, you know, that's a blessing, as well, you
19 know? Like, we endure hardships and everything else and
20 that, but, I mean, at the same time, you know, she gave us
21 one of the precious things in life was that gift of life.
22 Thank you very much.

23 **MR. DENNIS ANDERSON:** Good morning. I,
24 also, would like to start by thanking everybody that's come
25 here to show support and share their truth as well. My

1 name is Dennis Anderson. Dawn Anderson was my sister.
2 Like Keith -- Keith was mentioning, we all grew up, like,
3 on the land, fishing, trapping, not so much the girls, but
4 they were always around and they did come out, you know,
5 to -- to the camp and stuff like that, and I think -- I
6 think growing up in that fashion and just being Indigenous
7 and anybody that is or is close to Indigenous people knows
8 what family means.

9 And my sister Dawn, she was quite a girl,
10 I'll tell you. She'd -- you know, like, she was one that
11 cared about everybody and everything and shared -- you
12 know, if she had something, if it was her last little bit,
13 she was willing to share it. She would take in kids.
14 There was always a ton of kids around her, and like, you
15 know, she definitely danced to the beat of her own drum,
16 you know, by the way she dressed and the people she knew.
17 You know, like, she never -- she was one that had an open
18 mind and an open soul.

19 And I also would like to give thanks to this
20 Inquiry because I do believe that there's going to be good
21 and positive things come of it. In the very least, we're
22 going to -- you know, we're -- we're not alone. We know
23 that. There's many people with many, many stories that
24 hurt every day like we do, and it's -- you know, like, it's
25 really hard, and I understand other families, what they

1 must go through because we go through it daily. You know,
2 I watch my mother hurt, I watch my sisters hurt, and I
3 watch my nieces hurt, but through all, that we've
4 always -- like Keith says, we've always been a very strong
5 family, and we do support each other, and I think through
6 it all, we have stuck together, like, through thick and
7 thin. I mean, like, we're -- we're pretty -- we're pretty
8 powerful individuals, and we're more powerful as a unit,
9 and we do get strength from each other, always. Like, we
10 never turn our backs on each other, we support each other,
11 and you know, like, that's important, and I think through
12 this process, too, like, just supporting each other and
13 hearing other people's stories and sharing our truth, you
14 know, like, I -- I really believe that positive things is
15 going to come of this, and, you know, like, I thank you all
16 for giving us the voice and a place to voice our -- you
17 know, our truths, and I -- you know, like, it's been a long
18 road, and maybe, you know, this is the light at the end of
19 the tunnel where some people including myself and other
20 families are going to gain some closure of some sort from
21 this process.

22 So -- and I'd also like to introduce my
23 support person here. That's my partner Lisa. And yeah, I
24 thank you all for, you know, providing us, you know, like,
25 not a -- only our -- our -- our own -- like, to share our

1 story but to listen to others, as well, that go through
2 this -- you know, that's been through the same thing, you
3 know, and -- like Ms. Osborne. I mean, that's powerful,
4 powerful thing you -- you've had to deal with, and
5 listening to you, you know, like, you gain strength from
6 stuff like that. I appreciate it. Yeah, so that's about
7 it, guys. I'll pass the mic on here to my brother Melvin.

8 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Hi, my name is Melvin
9 Anderson, and behind me is my honey, my support person,
10 Myrna Spence (ph), and I was just telling my sister Hilda
11 here, jeez, you know, everything you think of to say, seems
12 like everybody that picks up the mic seems to take the
13 words right out of your mouth, but -- and we can repeat it
14 and -- like they said, like, we are glad we get this
15 opportunity and the support that we have from the people
16 that do come here and listen, and my sister Dawn, she's
17 quite the person. Like, we -- we loved her with all our
18 hearts, even though a lot of times when she was a little
19 younger and a little wilder, we liked to kick her butt
20 sometimes, but, you know, like -- and I imagine it goes
21 with pretty well, like, all the mission Indigenous women.

22 When this tragedy happened to us,
23 we've -- we got so much support from other people that we
24 barely knew, but my sister had touched their hearts, and
25 they still -- they have a Facebook of my sister, and every

1 day or something, there's always something new written that
2 they used to do with each other, and -- and it's just the
3 way she touched people's lives.

4 I'm her third -- her third-oldest brother.
5 She used to really rattle my cage sometimes, just the way
6 she was, but -- you know, she was her. She lived her own
7 life the way she wanted to, you know, and we didn't
8 criticize for her. Sure, we'd give her heck a lot of
9 times, but, you know, she'd laugh and straighten out for a
10 week and then back at her again, but -- and we do miss her.
11 Every time we sit down, like, myself, Dennis, Keith, any
12 one of my family members, there's not one set we don't sit
13 down that her name doesn't touch our lips. Even just
14 talking about some events that happen through life, it just
15 still brings tears to your eyes because you can just
16 picture her doing that stuff, and that's the hardest part
17 because, you know, those days are gone. If she was around,
18 she'd probably still be pulling those pranks, but -- and we
19 do miss you, my sister. We love you, and we always think
20 about you.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So the family would
22 like to share a video of Dawn. Maybe, Hilda, you can just
23 explain a little bit about the video.

24 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** So this video was
25 created at Myra's (ph) wedding and Kevin's wedding, who

1 are -- I guess they're adopted into our family. It's a
2 video of my sister Dawn, and Dawn really liked to cater and
3 cook. She was always cooking up a storm and, like, feeding
4 everybody in the neighbourhood, and you could always
5 guarantee, like, to -- if you went to her house, she'd cook
6 you a gourmet meal, and every -- she was really well known
7 for her creativity as well as, you know, preparing all
8 kinds of meals, and she was continuously hired on contracts
9 to do catering and stuff like that, so before we lead into
10 talking about, like, who she was, we wanted to share a
11 video.

12 (VIDEO PLAYED)

13 MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ: So I'll start by
14 sharing on who my sister was because I don't want people to
15 only remember her because she's gone. I want people to
16 remember her because she lived. I always called her the
17 Indigenous Lady Gaga because she was really open. Like,
18 she had an open mind, an open heart, and an open spirit,
19 and it didn't matter what walk of life you came from; she
20 welcomed you, and she never judged you, and she loved you
21 who you were.

22 And she was also very creative and very
23 artistic, and she was an amazing mother. She really loved
24 her children, and it's really important, you know, for
25 us -- one of the biggest reasons is when her daughters get

1 older, they're going to ask what happened to her, you know,
2 and maybe someday we can tell her what really happened to
3 her, but for now, we continue to search for that truth.

4 She was -- you know, I just wanted to share,
5 like, even when she passed away, at her funeral, there was
6 probably, like, 600 people who attended her funeral, and it
7 was huge. It was probably one of the biggest funerals that
8 I've ever been to, and that shows, you know, how many
9 people's lives that she touched, and even though sometimes,
10 like, she struggled in her own life, you know, financially,
11 but that didn't matter to her. Whatever little that she
12 had, she always shared with everybody. You know, it was
13 her kind heart, and she was also very strong. Like, she
14 would, you know, challenge anybody to protect her family as
15 well as her children and her friends. Everybody knew her,
16 and she was very outspoken and -- but also kind. Like, she
17 had -- you know, she was well rounded in her personality,
18 and I feel that, you know, even with the LGBT -- like, the
19 community, I felt that she raised a lot of awareness in the
20 north because of all her friends who were, you know,
21 struggling to come out for that acceptance, and she would
22 just, like, say, just be who you are, you know, and really
23 encourage and support them and, you know, build these
24 circles of support for them in the north because it's very
25 difficult, you know -- you know, when you're struggling in

1 the north and to come out of who you really are, but I felt
2 that she built a -- like, a -- a bridge for a lot of her
3 friends who are 2-spirited to, you know, be proud and be
4 who they really are and be comfortable with who they are,
5 and I know a lot of her friends, like, are watching today
6 and supporting who are 2-spirited, as well, and I know,
7 like, with me, when I first moved to Winnipeg, I was, like,
8 you know, just a northern girl from a small community, and
9 I probably only went to the city maybe about four times
10 prior to me moving there, and she was living there first.
11 It was -- although she was my little sister, in many ways
12 she was like my big sister. Like, she seemed to know more,
13 like, about life and just what it had to offer. You know,
14 I was -- I found that maybe she was, you know -- it was
15 like she was -- she guided me in a lot of ways, and she
16 introduced me to a lot of really awesome people, you know,
17 and -- and I continue to be friends with those people
18 today, and -- and I value those friendships that she's left
19 behind because they were a part of her, and even sometimes
20 they say to me, it's really hard to see you because you
21 remind me so much of your sister, and I feel that, you
22 know, life is unfair to her to take her away so suddenly,
23 and she had so much left to do, and she had children to
24 raise, and she'll never get to see them grow up, to
25 graduate, to get married, to experience, meet your

1 grandmother. She'll never have those opportunities because
2 they were taken away from her, and I know that she would
3 have loved every part of that journey with her children and
4 her life, and before she passed away suddenly, she was
5 talking to me about relocating because she wanted to go
6 into nursing. Now she can't do that, either, because that
7 opportunity's been taken away from her, and you could
8 always -- like, if there was -- she really loved the
9 elderly community, too, and she would do anything and
10 everything she could to help them out. Like, she would
11 clean for them, cook for them. She did -- she was
12 just -- her heart was made of gold, and she had an amazing
13 smile that would light up a room.

14 And she's left a big hole in our family, and
15 it really difficult to heal when you don't have closure,
16 but I know that her spirit continues to live on through her
17 children, especially her youngest daughter, who's so much
18 like her, Tamika (ph). She smiles like her mom. Her
19 personality's like her mom. Every time I see my nieces, I
20 still have a hard time, but I always maintain my composure
21 because I don't want them to see my sadness and how much I
22 miss their mom.

23 And she -- Dawn was always, like, game to
24 try anything and everything too. Like, she just wanted to
25 live her life to the fullest with no regrets, you know, and

1 I think when -- if she was allowed to live her life, she
2 would have lived her life like an old hippy.

3 I'm just going to pass the mic on to my mom.

4 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** I want to thank
5 everybody that has been -- that came down to this -- this
6 thing going for the missing and murdered girls because it's
7 very hard for everybody that has lost a daughter or a
8 mother or sister, the way they go missing and nobody knows
9 what happened to them. It's very hard, and I want to thank
10 everybody that has come.

11 I went to one in Winnipeg, and -- the one
12 they had here for a week. I came to it, and it helps, you
13 know, to let things out and talk about the person that
14 you're lost. It's so hard, but I want to thank you people,
15 all that have been -- come -- that has been here. I just
16 thank you.

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Just say something
18 about Dawn, about who she was, Mom, about her --

19 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** Okay.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** -- about her spirit,
21 (indiscernible)

22 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** Yeah. My -- my
23 daughter Dawn, the things she used to do sometimes when she
24 was small is so -- I have to tell you this one. It was
25 really funny. Her oldest sister Sandra and her were

1 sitting by this eagle that the boys had brought home at the
2 fish camp, and they were sitting there, her and
3 Dawn -- Sandra and Dawn, and then that eagle, I guess, put
4 his tail up, hey, and he squirted, and she got it on the
5 side of her face and in her ear.

6 (LAUGHTER)

7 MS. MINNIE ANDERSON: There was a lot of
8 silly things that happened to her, and then one time, too,
9 when she was small, Sandra took her uptown to the town
10 centre, and then they came home, and Dawn had a big black
11 eye, and I said to Sandra, I said, what happened to your
12 sister? She said, she fell down, she -- I wasn't watching
13 her. She said she was running around, and her dad got
14 upset with Sandra, eh?

15 (LAUGHTER)

16 MS. MINNIE ANDERSON: But didn't phase on
17 Dawn. She was quite a lady, and she -- my daughter was
18 such a kind person too. Like, there was always kids
19 playing outside her place, and she'd cook up a big meal,
20 and she'd call them in, and she'd feed those kids, and the
21 kids would all go in, and after they finished eating and
22 that, she'd turn on the TV, and she used have to this thing
23 that played music, and she'd dance with the kids inside the
24 house, just having fun with them. The kids used to love
25 her so much.

1 Yeah, she was quite a girl, and I miss my
2 daughter so much every day. I think about -- and I phone
3 her little girls, there, with their dad in Winnipeg, and I
4 talk to them and that all the time, and they're coming down
5 for the spring break to visit, so -- see how things will
6 turn out. Just hope -- I know they'll be happy to see
7 everybody.

8 And -- I don't know. My daughter, we all
9 miss her so much, and it'll be so close -- good when we
10 find out some things that we don't really know, and
11 sometimes my family keeps a lot of things away from me.
12 They don't let me know things, but I find out in the end.

13 **(LAUGHTER)**

14 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** Yeah, it's -- I just
15 want to thank you people again. Thank you very much.

16 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** My baby sister Dawn,
17 it's always -- they say -- they always say it's the
18 youngest ones and the quiet ones that you always have to
19 watch out for. She was -- the only way that I can describe
20 her is the eternal light of our family. She was just an
21 absolutely amazing individual. Everybody's already said it
22 so far with people that have talked about my sister. She
23 took anyone and everything in -- in, into her home. Stray
24 animals, cats, dogs, wounded birds, mice, everything.
25 Everything that she could find and -- you know, that she

1 figured needed nurturing, she was there.

2 I always had her beside me as a little girl
3 because we spent so much time out in the bush, out on the
4 trap line and on the river and that for commercial fishing
5 and trapping. She was seven years younger than me. She
6 was almost like my real live baby, type of thing. I did a
7 lot with her, and I remember spending so much time with her
8 by the water. I loved to swim, and so did she. She loved
9 camping, canoeing, walking. She loved her nature walks,
10 taking her kids and just going for hours in the bush. She
11 found beauty in the simplest of little things and great
12 things.

13 You know, what I wouldn't give to hear my
14 baby sister say to me again: Hey, Li. That's what she
15 used to always call me. Hearing her voice on that video
16 that was shared, (speaking in Native language). Her
17 laughter, just the things that she did because she just did
18 them. The people she used to bring home from the city, it
19 was always priceless to watch my mom's reaction depending
20 on who Dawn brought home. Dawn brought home one of her
21 girlfriends one time, one of her buddies, and the girl had
22 her hair dyed fire-engine red. My mom when she -- when
23 Dawn wasn't around: (Speaking in Native language), she
24 says. Like, oh my God, do you see this person?

25 **(LAUGHTER)**

1 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** But that's how Dawn
2 was. She didn't do it intentionally. She just seen that
3 person for the spirit that they had in them. Didn't matter
4 how they looked, who they were, what they did.

5 I think when you -- when you talk about, you
6 know, homosexuality, I think she's the one who really
7 brought my mom out of her shell with that, as well, because
8 of all of her friends that she always bring home: Oh, come
9 home, my mom will -- my mom -- doesn't matter to my mom.
10 That stuff doesn't matter. Just come. And my mom would be
11 (speaking in Native language) again.

12 **(LAUGHTER)**

13 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** Like, oh, my God,
14 again, eh? She opened my mom's heart and mine to a lot of
15 things that my mom -- you just don't see up north. We were
16 out in the bush by ourselves with our family. Dawn
17 introduced my mom, as young as she was, to a lot of beauty
18 and a lot of people despite what they been through, the
19 choices that they made, because that's the way Dawn was. I
20 just think about all the things that she did with my mom
21 and -- you know, and my mom is (speaking in Native
22 language), like, you know, all the time with everything
23 that Dawn did. The animals, my mom would -- Dawn would
24 take in, my mom would say (speaking in Native language),
25 Dawn, that's enough, like, you know? The cats, the dogs,

1 everything, the kids.

2 But I look at Dawn, and she's so much a part
3 of my mom, so much a part of my dad. She was the way that
4 she was because of them. She taught my mom. She taught
5 us. She taught our siblings, our nieces, our nephews. My
6 dad called her (speaking in Native language), "Dawn" in
7 Cree. My oldest daughter, I named her after my sister, my
8 baby sister. Dawn was my first baby, and my oldest
9 daughter was my second.

10 We were raised very, very close. Together,
11 our family stands strong. There's 11 of us kids, and now
12 one's gone. We still stand strong, but sometimes we
13 falter. We feel weak. We feel broken. We get angry
14 because one of us is not there. That's all we can do is
15 ask why? Why Dawn? You know, when you look at -- when you
16 try and justify people out there and what their purpose is
17 in life, and you look at one of the greatest gems in our
18 family and our community, and it was her that was taken.
19 It -- sometimes, it just doesn't make sense.

20 I keep asking Creator why this happened. I
21 keep praying for answers before Mom goes so she can rest in
22 peace. I've had people tell us and tell me, Lianna, this
23 is happening to the Andersons for a reason. Your family's
24 so strong. You stand together. You are a force to be
25 reckoned with. If anybody's going to bring out the truth,

1 it'll be your family. It happened to you guys for that
2 reason. I hold on to that. I hold on to that strength of
3 my family, of who we are, of the way my mom raised us, my
4 dad raised us, of how they kept us together. I know it's
5 going to be that strength. I know it's going to be our
6 ability to be able to speak, to be able to still love
7 despite what has happened, to know that love will guide us
8 and not hate.

9 It's just so wrong. I look at my sister,
10 her babies, her beautiful daughters. Her beauty lives on
11 in them, but it doesn't take away the hurt. It doesn't
12 take away the pain of losing her. I look at all the
13 beautiful things that Dawn made, things she drew, the
14 things that she put together with the simplest of things
15 that other people would have thought of as maybe as garbage
16 or not worthy as keeping because she was that type of
17 person to find beauty in everything. She was our family
18 gem. She's going to be our purpose, to find closure, to
19 find truth, to ensure that there's processes put in place
20 so other families don't have to go through this. That is
21 Dawn's purpose. She has the strength in our family to get
22 us through this.

23 I just look at her smile. All I see is her
24 smile, her bright eyes. I sure miss that "hey, Li." It's
25 hard when you have the rock of your family, my mom, the

1 strength that she has, the things that she's endured, we go
2 through life growing up, and she takes away all our hurts.
3 This one time, all I pray for is that I can take away her
4 hurt of losing my baby sister because that's what my mom
5 did for us. She looked after us. She cared for us,
6 provided for us, and always took away the hurts. I want to
7 be a part of taking away her hurt.

8 What do you tell kids when they ask where
9 their mother is, when they wake up from dreams that are so
10 vivid, expecting to go back where they were with their mom,
11 knowing that their mom was there because their dreams are
12 so real? How do you explain that? How do you explain
13 death to a 4-year-old, to a 7-year-old, when all they've
14 known is the life and the beauty of it through their
15 mother?

16 We need answers. We need closure. We need
17 to put processes in place so this doesn't happen to anybody
18 else. My sister was a beautiful force of life. She was
19 taken from us, I believe, way too soon, and I don't want
20 that purpose to be in vain. It will not be in vain. I
21 will find the strength in my mom, my brothers, my sisters,
22 my family. We will stand together. This has to stop
23 happening to people. A life is a life, regardless of what
24 they've been through, where it's been, where it comes from.
25 It's all sacred. My baby sister was sacred; her life was

1 sacred; her purpose was sacred, and she's gone. It will
2 not be in vain. I will not give up. My family will not
3 give up.

4 The gem in our family is gone. Her spirit
5 remains strong in all of us, in her children. Her memory
6 will live on, but I just miss her smile so much. I miss
7 her cooking. I miss her laughter. I miss how she was able
8 to bring everybody together, how she was able to open my
9 mother's eyes to the most beautiful of things that were so
10 foreign to my mom at one time. It was -- I miss being able
11 to sit on the sidelines when Dawn would bring somebody else
12 into the house that would shock my mother. It was always
13 so cool to watch that because that's how Dawn was. She
14 shocked everybody with her beauty, her spirit, her gift of
15 life, her love of life. My heart just aches so much. I
16 really want it to heal. (Speaking in Native language).

17 **MS. CAROL WOOD:** My sister -- my little
18 sister Dawn, she was so unique. She was just so different
19 from anybody, even growing up as a child. Like, all of us,
20 we catered to her, like, to her every need, took her
21 everywhere we went and everything like that, and one thing
22 I have to say is as if she -- like, when we started having
23 kids, as if she watched and catered our kids, and they
24 looked -- like, my nieces, my nephews, they looked up to
25 my -- even my kids, they looked up to Dawn, and every time

1 there was a problem, it was Aunty Dawn that was able to fix
2 it, and I know at times, like, we have -- like, there are
3 things that a parent can't do, that somebody else could do,
4 and she was always the one that was able to do it. Like,
5 the kids, they always went to her, and I think that's
6 why -- even -- not -- like, with our family, that's why
7 everybody came to her because she was approachable. She
8 had a gentle touch for everyone, and, like, she knew how to
9 talk. She knew how to listen. She knew what to say. At
10 the times -- like, if -- like, what Lianna was saying,
11 like, 2-spirited people, like, they didn't know who to talk
12 to. Dawn was able to talk to people, like -- people, and
13 with her, she just welcomed everybody with open arms, but
14 with Dawn, too, she had an ear to listen to Elders and
15 everybody -- like, she didn't turn away. Anybody'd say,
16 no, I don't have time to listen to you, I don't have time
17 to -- or just walk past them when they were trying to get
18 to her attention. No. She took that time. Even if she
19 was just -- like, she had to go right back home, no, she'd
20 spend a little bit of time to talk to this person. She
21 would never walk past anybody. She'd have to stop and talk
22 to you, and even me, like, I live in South Indian, and at
23 times when I used to go into the town centre, I see her.
24 Man, she'd be coming out the Co-Op doors with her arms
25 open, and she's so big -- like, she was my big little

1 sister, I called her, and then she just wrapped me up in
2 her arms, and -- oh, it's -- miss that.

3 And -- yeah, in -- even with our girls and
4 that, like, we see Dawn in -- like, in every one of them,
5 they have a trait of Dawn, a look of Dawn, when you look at
6 all of them, and it's just so hard sometimes, but I thank
7 God, like, they're given that gift, my nieces, my nephews.
8 Just -- thank you. Yeah.

9 And like I had said, again, thank you guys
10 for listening. Thank you for listening to what we have to
11 say when others did not listen. They just put it aside,
12 but I think it's time for people to start listening to what
13 people have to say because the people that we've lost means
14 something to us. They didn't -- they're not just a piece
15 of garbage or dirt that you sweep under something. No.
16 You know what? They had the same blood that flows through
17 their veins like we do, and everything. They had a heart,
18 and that heart loved the people that miss them now, and I
19 thank you guys again. Thank you very much.

20 **MS. ARLA TAIT:** I'm a very sensitive person,
21 I guess you could say, and I knew Dawn as that also. I saw
22 a very sensitive, kind, loving soul in -- in Dawn. I also
23 saw some of the struggles that she had. She -- she
24 shared -- you know, she shared a lot of things with me, and
25 I was honoured, I guess, to be able to be there to listen

1 to, you know, some of the things that -- that she was
2 struggling with and even a lot of things that she was happy
3 about and looking forward to. Like, she was looking
4 forward to going to school, and one thing that really
5 sticks in my mind is her asking me if she was a -- like,
6 she'd look at me, and I remember that moment, and she said,
7 I'm a good mother, right? You know? You know, she was
8 kind of looking for that acknowledgment, and I did tell
9 her, yes, you're -- you're a good mother. You know, you're
10 doing a great job with your girls.

11 She was very sharing. You know, anything
12 she had, she'd -- she'd give. You know, it didn't matter,
13 you know, how much she was struggling. She would always
14 lend a helping hand whether it be, you know, something she
15 had to eat or a piece of clothing, you know, even a
16 listening ear, you know? Even cooking meals for people,
17 you know? She loves -- she loved to cook, and she often
18 came over to my place, you know, to cook a meal and share
19 it with us, you know, whether it be at her place or at my
20 place or Mom's, you know?

21 You know, I grew up with Dawn, also, you
22 know, around -- in our community and at fish camps and trap
23 line, we'd often see each other, and yes, she did always
24 have a smile on her face. You know, she could light
25 up -- light up a room or wherever she was. You know, she

1 was so special.

2 It is very hard on me, also, and I -- you
3 know, I miss her dearly. I often think of her daughters.
4 I'll cherish all the memories that I have of Dawn, and
5 hopefully, we will find the truth that we need to be able
6 to make it a little bit easier as time goes on. I hope and
7 pray we find the answers that we need. (Speaking in Native
8 language).

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sorry. When you're
10 working with so many family members, you've got to check in
11 with people just to make sure the order's good. I'm just
12 going to actually ask a couple questions of Keith because
13 Keith lived in the same community as Dawn when -- in
14 November 18th, 2011, and so I was just going to ask Keith
15 if you could just share a little bit of background with us,
16 you know, about where you guys in Leaf Rapids, and before
17 you get into full details of the incident, though, we will
18 be showing the video, so what I'm really asking is if you
19 could share with the Commissioner, you know, where Dawn was
20 living and what it was like in Leaf Rapids leading up to
21 the event, the circumstances of her death.

22 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** Okay. My sister was
23 living in the Kias Bay (ph) on Bay 6 and that, and she was
24 there with her two little ones, and there were -- and -- in
25 the community, so that following morning on my sister's

1 passing, like -- you know, Leaf Rapids is not very big and
2 that, and I tried to help with community involvement and
3 everything else, and I'm usually involved with the youth
4 and that. I usually put my name into the RCMP just in case
5 somebody goes missing, anything like that, so they -- they
6 know where I am.

7 So that morning, we got up, and then I took
8 my wife to work. She works at the Co-Op and that, and
9 then -- I'm usually in and out, in and out and that, and I
10 have a lot of people that usually sit there and try and
11 contact me and that, so I checked my voicemail, and this
12 was after 9:30 and that, there. Dropped my wife off and
13 that.

14 So I get a voicemail, and it's the RCMP, and
15 they sat there and they said, well, Keith, could you come
16 and see us at the cop shop, it's urgent and that, so okay.
17 I go up there and that, and then they -- they take me into
18 the room, and then with one breath, he sits there and they
19 tell me they found my sister deceased and that, and then I
20 didn't even get a chance to swallow that. The next minute,
21 they sit there and they tell me, your nieces are home
22 alone, you know, we can get a babysitter.

23 So, I mean, I don't get a chance to absorb
24 one thing, and -- and that, and it's bang, bang, bang.
25 Okay, well, right away, like -- and that, my main concern's

1 my nieces, right? So, you know, at no point in
2 time -- and, like, I'm sharing my feelings and my thoughts
3 and everything with the whole -- the way the whole process
4 went and everything else and that.

5 So right away, I sit there and I take off,
6 you know, to my sister's house. My nieces are there alone,
7 you know, the house is kind of a mess, the phone's ripped
8 off the hook, the TV's got a big crack in the side, and you
9 know, my nieces sit there and said, you know, this person
10 or whatever punched the TV or whatever and -- and -- and
11 that, and -- you know, and then -- I'm the only one there,
12 so, like, my head's full. I've got to find my mom in
13 Winnipeg. I've got to find all my brothers and sisters. I
14 mean, there's 11 of us and that, and then I have to sit
15 there and, you know, go -- go home, phoning and everything
16 else and all that.

17 So Arla lived on the same bay -- you know,
18 Arla's my second cousin, but to me, you know, we spent to
19 much time together, it was basically a sister to me and
20 that, so I went and seeked her help to come and sit there
21 and help me with my nieces because, you know -- because I
22 had to sit there and contact all family members and, you
23 know, tell them what happened and everything else, and then
24 I knew it was going to hit my mom and the girls and that,
25 and it did all of us pretty heavy, but I know most of the

1 impact was going to hit my mom and the girls, you know, so
2 I wanted to sit there and, you know, get people in places,
3 things in -- you know, for them when they're told and that.

4 And -- you know, my wife works at the Co-Op.
5 I go see her and that, and you know, to me, I'm just
6 thinking about families, the girls, everything else. I go
7 tell my wife, you know, that my -- they found my sister
8 deceased and that, and I didn't even wait for her. I just
9 left her and that, and, like, she couldn't even go tell her
10 boss, and she had to catch up to me because I was gone and
11 that.

12 And that -- you know, I got Arla to help,
13 and then as each one of us speak and that, you'll -- you'll
14 sit there, and we all have parts of the story of where
15 we're engaged and -- and that, but, like, with myself, you
16 know, the after-thought of what happened and everything
17 else and that, and it's just like -- you know, it didn't
18 hit me until later on: Okay, where was my sister? You
19 know, did they have her in the garage or anything like
20 that? It just seemed like to me -- everything was taken
21 away from me. It almost seemed like, you know, that RCMP
22 had total control of everything. You know, they
23 had -- they identified her and everything else, and yet,
24 you know, I'm a family member that's there. Where was my
25 opportunity? You know? And then they sit there and -- you

1 know, like I said, you know, I walk in the room and bang,
2 bang, bang, bang. You know, they didn't sit there and say,
3 you know, your sister's deceased and -- you know, could you
4 identify her, we have her here. I don't know. Like, even
5 with me, like, did the ambulance pick her up who identified
6 her and all that and to find out that, you know, they were
7 the ones that identified her, you know, and then, you know,
8 who pronounced her dead, you know, and everything else?

9 But to me, it seemed like a family member
10 with that happening and that -- like, I went outside, and I
11 looked at where my sister was supposed to have -- you know,
12 like I said, they -- they said frozen or whatever and that,
13 but, like, you know, I used to drink and that. I used to
14 watch people pass out. You didn't just go straight down,
15 you know what I mean? Like, indentation on the snow. You
16 know, there was no kicking around, no -- nothing, no
17 movement and that. It just -- bang, and the -- the body
18 heat and that melts in the snow, and I've trapped all my
19 life. You know, I sit there, I watch tracks, everything
20 else and all that, you know what I mean, and that, but to
21 me, you know, it's -- you know, it wasn't ribboned off,
22 nothing. You know? The phone's off the hook, ripped off
23 the hook, you know, the TV's got a crack in it. Well, I
24 mean, you know, doesn't that say something?

25 But the -- one other thing that really

1 impacted me and kind of hurt me was, you know, is
2 how -- you know, me as a family member with my sister being
3 found like that, deceased and that, that opportunity was
4 taken away from me, even to sit there and identify my
5 sister and that. You know what I mean? They didn't even
6 tell me, like, whether they had her in the garage. I -- to
7 this day, I still don't know what happened, you know what I
8 mean, and that.

9 And -- like, you know, I'm just going to sit
10 there, like -- you know, and the emotional aspect and that,
11 just to sit there and kind of fill that in, to sit there
12 and kind of let you know that -- you know, from my
13 perspective, where I'm sitting at and how I feel. I mean,
14 there'll be other parts of the story as we sit there where
15 each one of our family members played a role in and that
16 that -- you know, that you'll get the full story of, you
17 know, what happened, and I'm just the starting point
18 because I was the only one at home.

19 But see, this is my fourth time in the ring,
20 and what I mean by that is, you know, my sister's passing,
21 we helped do a documentary with APTN, and then there was a
22 young lady that sat there and was deceased a month ago at
23 home, and she had an 8-year-old daughter and that, and she
24 come to me, Uncle Keith, to sit there and help her go up
25 when that viewing of her mother that they had and that, and

1 when I stood there and that, you know, I was there for her
2 and that, but I -- you know, at the same time, standing
3 there and that, I got angry, you know, with this
4 detachment. They sat there. They gave her the
5 opportunity. You know, we done a drum song. You know, we
6 were smoking in the garage, you know, and everything else,
7 but where was my opportunity, you know, to sit there and be
8 able to identify my sister?

9 And then today, the fourth time around for
10 me and that. I guess fourth time in the ring, but it -- I
11 mean, it mustn't be bad because, you know, with this
12 traditioning (ph) and that, number 4's a good number and
13 that, and -- you know, I sit there -- I try to let go and
14 that. I'm a traditional and -- and spiritual person, and
15 then, you know, I listen to gut feeling everything else.
16 You know, I listen to the energy and being able to accept
17 it and being able to interpret it.

18 But from -- since day one when my sister
19 was -- you know, when I was there and found deceased and
20 that, nothing sits right with me on that. My gut feeling
21 tells me, you know, there's nothing -- there's nothing that
22 sits right, you know? The same night they found
23 her -- like, the same day we found her, her garage burnt
24 and that, and then from -- you know, I'll vocalize my
25 emotions and that, because, I mean, a lot of times to me,

1 it's a learning process, and it also helps other people to
2 sit there and -- you know, understand emotion or whatever
3 because a lot of times, it's a feeling, but sometimes when
4 you can sit there and take that energy and interpret it
5 into a -- a voice, you know what I mean? It helps and
6 that, but to me, you know, I've always sat there and, you
7 know, acknowledged things and that, and then with
8 acknowledgment, there's acceptance, and then with
9 acceptance, there's understanding. But see, I have
10 acknowledge and I have acceptance, but I don't have no
11 understanding of what happened. So at the same time, you
12 know, I can't even cry to let go because to me, you know,
13 I'm honest with myself, and I feel like with me, you know,
14 as a traditional and spiritual person, to me, it seems
15 like -- you know, I like to finish something, but at the
16 same time, I don't even have a starting point to complete
17 it, and then, see, I have to take it, and I have to put it
18 in that little box and put it beside my heart and keep it
19 there, but at the same time, you know, what point in time
20 and opportunity do I sit there and I have to sit there and
21 let her go?

22 And then I think of all the other people
23 that's going through the same thing. Maybe some of them
24 don't understand their emotion or what they're -- what it
25 is that they're going through. I don't know. I can only

1 interpret mine, you know, and the impact that's sitting
2 there and -- you know, that a lot of people face that are
3 going through the same thing and that.

4 You know, I went through a lot of things,
5 different things, even with my father, losing my father and
6 that, but this one, like, you know, I don't have no closure
7 to it or nothing and that, and then the way I feel with
8 myself and that, you know, I don't even have a starting
9 point. And then, you know, with what's happening today and
10 that and what we're doing here, maybe that is my starting
11 point. I don't know. But, I mean, a lot of times, we
12 don't sit there and vocalize or communicate and that, and
13 it's not just one person. It's all of us. You know? We
14 all got to get in that same boat and all go the same way
15 for the same goals and that.

16 And then a lot of times, like -- you know?
17 We have family gatherings. You know, I learned a long time
18 ago, like, you know, I went to ceremonies, I went to
19 different things and that, and then I -- you know, I've
20 learned about, you know, our different brothers and
21 sisters, but to me, it always came to one thing. It was
22 about family. Everything's family and that. You know, we
23 have our -- our -- you know, our main family, but look how
24 many people we adopt in that, you know, and our circle
25 keeps on getting bigger, and us as Indigenous people, we're

1 always adopting. We don't need a piece of paper.

2 And then, like, with me, that's -- that's
3 what's happening, and that's how it's impacted me and
4 everything else. At the same time, you know, how long do I
5 carry it or whatever? And then, you know, at this point in
6 time, I'd like to sit there and share a dream with you and
7 that. I always knew I was going to be the one that was
8 going to take my sister home, into the spirit world. I
9 always knew that, and then, you know, when a year come or
10 whatever and that, I sat there, you know, and I
11 dreamt -- you know, I had her, she was all wrapped up in a
12 pink sleeping bag, and I was taking her home. We stopped
13 by. My nieces sat there and visited her mother for a
14 while, and then their grandfather came and he said, I'll
15 help you, and then I sat there, and I took her home.

16 (Indiscernible) with us as Indigenous people. You know, I
17 sit there and I share that dream with -- with you's. It
18 means a lot to me, and at the end of the day, you know,
19 between us, you know, it doesn't matter to me who believes
20 me or not, but it matters to me as an individual, and I can
21 only speak for myself.

22 And I thank all of you. You know, you're
23 beautiful people, and it's like this that we have to sit
24 there and stick together and that. You know, you can't
25 knock us down if we all get together. You can push one of

1 us over and that, and -- it's such an impact, though, and
2 that, and then to me, you know, given this opportunity, I
3 would have never backed down or whatever and said no, you
4 know, and I appreciate it that my family got this
5 opportunity and that, and I'm not scared to be here or
6 whatever and that to sit there and tell my story because to
7 me, I think, you know, at the end of the day, we have to
8 voice these things and that, and I'm not scared to be a
9 warrior to sit here and tell my story, to support other
10 people so that -- you know, a lot of these things have to
11 stop. Thank you.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Keith.

13 Hilda, can I just ask a couple questions. I
14 know Keith shared the -- the sort of beginning part of the
15 story when he was called to the RCMP office and how he
16 learned of Dawn's death, but I understand that the family
17 believes that there might have been someone involved in
18 harming Dawn. I understand the family doesn't want to name
19 that person. Part of that is because it's the family's
20 belief there was really no investigation done, right? We
21 just heard from Keith that he got called to the RCMP office
22 and then went straight to the house, and when he went to
23 the house, there was no police tape. Is that true?

24 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes, there was no
25 police tape because Keith was the first one on the scene,

1 like, out of our family. We didn't arrive until -- because
2 we had to travel from Winnipeg, but when Keith went there
3 and other family members, like, that are related to us and
4 my sister from South Indian Lake, as well, arrived there
5 shortly, like, within hours after she was found, and there
6 was no police tape securing the scene.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And there was
8 nothing on the door sealing it?

9 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** No. It was open.
10 Like, anybody could come in and out of there because they
11 were able to go in, you know, to get, like, clothing for
12 her children and stuff like that. There was nobody
13 securing the scene at all.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And we heard Keith
15 say that Dawn's body was found outside in the snow.

16 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes, that's
17 correct.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so the family
19 was informed that she had died from exposure or something.

20 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Is that true?

22 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** And that's what I
23 found so odd, like, because I've been an advocate for many
24 years, and I understand investigations, and I also
25 understand the court process, and I found it so odd that it

1 was so cut and dry when it came to how my sister died, how
2 she was found, because at the time that she was found, they
3 didn't know how she died. They didn't secure the scene,
4 and they didn't even, you know, give her the quality or
5 quantity of an investigation, you know, that she deserved,
6 and now we sit here today with so many unanswered
7 questions, you know, wondering what really happened to her
8 the night she died because a lot of the circumstances
9 surrounding her death, like my brother Keith mentioned,
10 like, you know, her phone was ripped off the wall, her TV
11 was smashed, her house was in a -- like, in complete
12 disarray, and all those telltale signs to me say that
13 something went wrong, you know, and I feel like when it
14 comes to -- you know, I'm not going to get into full
15 details yet, but, like, when it comes to policing, the RCMP
16 in the north, that's a huge institutional failure on us as
17 Indigenous people. You know, that has to improve, and it
18 just boggles my mind.

19 We continuously hear stories of how policing
20 is failing, not only us as missing and murdered Indigenous
21 family members but as survivors, as other individuals who
22 require that service in the north, that it's continuously
23 failing, and we keep telling our stories, and we keep
24 asking for that change, and it seems to be falling on deaf
25 ears. It's like they would rather believe this institution

1 that has failed miserably rather than several people from
2 different communities, different families, different
3 nations telling their stories, not only to this Inquiry,
4 but other experiences like I mentioned previously. Like,
5 something has to change. Our voices have to be heard when
6 it comes to different institutions and service providers
7 for us as -- as Indigenous people.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So I understand that
9 there's a video. There was an actual documentary done on
10 your sister in relation to, like, all the flags you're
11 talking about. Can you tell us just a little bit about
12 this video before we watch it?

13 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYZ:** So my family was
14 asked to participate in a video that was done nationally by
15 the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and it was a
16 video that was done with -- like, in different -- in
17 Nova Scotia -- I'm sorry, I can't remember exactly the
18 locations -- the other locations -- and in Manitoba, but
19 the reality is we all have the same story to tell about
20 questioning the police practices and how they investigate
21 the death of Indigenous women and girls, so I just think
22 it's kind of ironic regardless of your geographical
23 location that we're experiencing the same things, and that
24 should be sending a strong message to Canadian governments,
25 that change has to happen and change has to happen now.

1 So it's just -- this video will show, like,
2 kind of a summary of, you know, some of the key points that
3 we're going to be speaking to in more context.

4 **(VIDEO PLAYED)**

5 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Can you turn it
6 up, please? You can't hear it.

7 **(VIDEO PLAYED)**

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Maybe we can pause
9 it to do a volume check.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible).

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And actually -- can
12 we (indiscernible). Yeah. Can we -- we're actually just
13 going to take a 5-minute break. That will give everyone an
14 opportunity to stretch and stand up, as well, and we'll see
15 if we can figure out the volume issue.

16 --- Upon recessing at 11:45 a.m.

17 --- Upon resuming at 12:00 p.m.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you for taking
19 the break. Commissioner Audette, we're going to try
20 playing the video again. Hilda will share some few words,
21 and then we can have -- yeah. So go ahead.

22 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** So we're going to
23 be showing a video that was done by the Aboriginal Peoples
24 Television Network, and I just wanted to give, you know, a
25 special thank you to Holly and Jared here who are, you

1 know, really respectful and gentle when they did the
2 documentary as well. The documentary shows, like,
3 regardless of your geographical location on the policing
4 efforts when it comes to missing or murdered Indigenous
5 women and girls, and I think that it makes a powerful
6 statement because we don't even live in the same provinces
7 and we're experience the same things, and it will highlight
8 key points that we're going to be discussing in further
9 context after we break for lunch and we come back. Thank
10 you.

11 (VIDEO PLAYED)

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did you want to add
13 anything else, Hilda?

14 MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ: I just think, you
15 know, to call children, basically, liars, you know, when
16 the children themselves emotionally shared that they
17 witnessed, you know, basically my sister being removed in a
18 body bag, to say that that didn't happen, just really
19 demonstrates on how police protect their own. As well, you
20 know, not linking the fire -- my sister was found 19 hours
21 prior to that fire being deliberately set, and not linking
22 the two together and she had been partying in the garage
23 the night before clearly demonstrates, again, failure on
24 how the RCMP investigated my sister's death. You know,
25 it's just like saying -- and not calling the ambulance, it

1 shows -- it clearly demonstrates that there's a two-tier
2 system within policing when it comes to Indigenous people,
3 you know, to basically put my sister in a body bag and
4 throw her in the back of a truck, not give my family the
5 dignity or honour of identifying her; allowing a police
6 officer who was her neighbour and who was the one who found
7 her to identify her shows how broken the system is, and
8 I'll just end there because we're breaking for lunch.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
10 Audette, if we could take a 30-minute lunch break, we will
11 be recommencing with this family following the lunch break.
12 Thank you.

13 --- Upon recessing at 12:10 p.m.

14 --- Upon resuming at 12:58 p.m.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So thank you,
16 Commissioner Audette. The family would like to continue
17 sort of where they left off, particularly now that we've
18 seen the video and understand a bit more of the context of
19 Dawn's death. Hilda will be sharing with you a document,
20 and she'll be asking you questions, and she'll be -- sorry,
21 she'll be sharing some questions the family asked.

22 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** So I'm just going
23 to share a letter that I received from the Royal Canadian
24 Mounted Police on December -- or sorry.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** August 9th.

1 allegation that the two officers of the
2 Leaf Rapids Detachment did not properly
3 conduct the investigation with a respect
4 to the death of Miss Dawn Anderson which
5 occurred on November 18th, 2011.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So you're talking
7 about the response of a complaint, but the first step of
8 that was to make a complaint.

9 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yeah.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Right? So when did
11 you make the complaint?

12 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I honestly can't
13 remember the exact date off the top of my head, but it was
14 shortly after my sister passed away because I felt that,
15 you know, we had to do something because we couldn't just
16 stand by and allow things just to go away because they
17 wouldn't go away for us, so we had to, you know, access the
18 mechanisms that were there for us to, you know, raise this
19 issue to a higher level.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Before the
21 complaint, did you -- did you write any concerns or other
22 letters to the RCMP detachment commander in Manitoba?

23 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I actually -- not,
24 like, myself, with my siblings, we compiled a whole bunch
25 of questions, and we sent them to the Leaf Rapids

1 Detachment directly, to the sergeant who was responsible
2 for the RCMP detachment in Leaf Rapids at the time.

3 So I'm just going -- I'm not going to share
4 all the questions, but just a few key questions that I feel
5 that really demonstrates institutional failures when it
6 comes to, you know, the -- everything surrounding my late
7 sister's passing. It says -- one of the questions we asked
8 was why was the local doctor or the ambulance -- why wasn't
9 the local doctor or the ambulance called to the scene upon
10 the discovery of Dawn? Ambulance assistance was not -- was
11 deemed not necessary, as Dawn was clearly deceased.

12 And I just also wanted to further mention
13 that my sister was officially pronounced dead over the
14 phone by the Medical Examiner's office in Winnipeg, and
15 they were not on the scene. The police officers were on
16 the scene. However, it was the Medical Examiner's office
17 in Winnipeg who officially declared my sister dead and that
18 the scene could be cleared, just so people understand that
19 context as well.

20 And I feel that this is important to add
21 into. When you take the core body temperature of somebody
22 who's deceased, based on our research and what others have
23 shared with us, it can determine at approximately what time
24 that they died, so we asked, was Dawn's core body
25 temperature taken; if not, why? And it says -- like, we

1 know that the officers are not the ones who do this, and
2 that's evident, but just even the way that they answer the
3 question, it says core body temperatures -- core body
4 temperature was not taken by the officers on the scene, as
5 this was not a common procedure for officers so undertake.
6 We understand that, but even answering it in that context,
7 like, we understand that it's somebody who's medically
8 trained who -- who would have done this, if it was
9 available.

10 And then another question we asked, which is
11 kind of contradicting here, like, to what actually happened
12 in their response, it says, why was the area not
13 immediately taped off and secured where Dawn was found, as
14 the cause of death was not determined upon her discovery?
15 The security of the scene was maintained by the presence of
16 the officers.

17 In this instance, the Medical
18 Examiner's -- Medical Examiner's office authorized the
19 release of the body and the scene. Therefore, further
20 security of the area was not required.

21 So that was done, like, would you says,
22 Keith, within, like, an hour.

23 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** Yeah. Probably. Yeah.

24 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Okay. I wasn't
25 there, but I -- Keith was the first one on the scene, and

1 it's -- we asked, why was Dawn's home not secured or taped
2 off? Why was Dawn's home not secured or taped off or
3 secured where Dawn was found, as the cause of death was not
4 determined upon her discovery.

5 The Medical Examiner's office authorized the
6 release of the scene. Therefore, the further security of
7 the area was not required.

8 And then I -- I asked the -- we asked the
9 question too: Why was the forensic unit not called in? It
10 says:

11 Calling in a forensic unit is not
12 automatic in a fatality investigation.
13 In this case, the officer's examination
14 of the scene determined there was no
15 need for forensic exam.

16 And we also asked the question, was there
17 any fingerprints taken at the scene or in Dawn's home? No
18 fingerprint exam was conducted.

19 And we asked, the scene -- was Dawn's hands
20 bagged to preserve any evidence from under her fingernails?
21 It says:

22 The investigators examined Dawn
23 Anderson's hands at the scene and saw
24 nothing of note, as a result, saw no
25 need to bag her hands.

1 And we also asked, was there any castings or
2 photographs taken of the footprints around Dawn? No
3 footprint castings were taken. The only footprints
4 observed near the body appeared to be those of Dawn
5 Anderson, not including the footprints of the officers.

6 And we asked -- because at the time, like,
7 they didn't know who was around. We said, why wasn't Child
8 and Family Services called to remove the children from the
9 scene immediately upon discovering they were alone? The
10 officers believed it would be better if the children were
11 in the care of family members at that time. The officers
12 located Keith Anderson, who took over the care of the
13 children. But we know, like -- and it really bothers me,
14 too, watching the video prior to our lunch break when the
15 officer basically calls my nieces a liar, you know, and
16 saying that the children were not alone, and 4- and
17 7 years-old don't lie. You know, they said they were
18 alone, and they shared with my sister Lianna observing my
19 sister being removed in a body bag in an RCMP truck.

20 And we just asked, who signed off the
21 necessary proof of death documentation? It says:

22 This is not a police responsibility.

23 The Medical Examiner's office should be
24 able to provide this information.

25 And this is key, too, because I feel it's

1 taken a lot of dignity away from my sister and has been
2 really, like, shameful and disrespectful to my family. It
3 says:

4 Who provided the positive identification
5 to confirm the deceased individual was
6 indeed Dawn?

7 It was her neighbour who discovered her
8 body. It says:

9 One of the investigating officers
10 identified Dawn Anderson at the scene.
11 He was known to her for nearly three
12 years.

13 Who cares if he was known to her? You know,
14 what about the family? We're the ones who lost a loved
15 one, and I think that's so shameful of the RCMP to do that.

16 And how was Dawn's body transported from the
17 scene? In a truck or in the back of a truck. It says:

18 Dawn Anderson's body was placed into a
19 body bag and carried into the box of the
20 marked RCMP patrol truck.

21 So she was basically bagged and put into the
22 RCMP truck with no dignity where they could have called the
23 ambulance and the local doctor to the scene. He was never
24 called, and he was actually shocked that he was never
25 called to the scene, and he didn't find out till later that

1 afternoon that my sister was deceased, and he had called,
2 like, higher levels of authority to express his concern
3 that he wasn't called to the scene.

4 And we also heard from several different
5 people who have tried to share different things that
6 they've heard or that they know firsthand with respect to
7 the police investigation into my sister's death, and many
8 of them told us that they weren't even given the
9 opportunity to share their -- what they knew about Dawn, or
10 it wasn't even officially recorded. It was so nonchalant,
11 they said, when they went to try to share information.

12 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** And what did they say,
13 Hilda, when you tried to set up that Crime Stoppers thing?

14 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** That wasn't me.
15 We'll do that later.

16 And I asked -- because there was the fire
17 19 hours after my sister was found deceased, I asked the
18 following question: Was there photographs taken of the
19 interior of Dawn's garage; if not, why? It says:

20 Photographs of the interior of the
21 garage were not taken. The garage had
22 been searched by two officers, and they
23 found nothing of any evidentiary value
24 to be seized or to be photographed.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So you keep talking

1 about the detachment, so is the Rapid Leafs
2 detachment -- is the Rapid Leafs detachment --

3 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Leaf Rapids.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- Leaf Rapids

5 Detachment, the officers that are stationed there, are they
6 full RCMP officers? Are they special constables, or --

7 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** No. They're full
8 RCMP officers. And then I also -- one of the things that I
9 asked in my complaint to the RCMP with the Public
10 Complaints Commission, they asked me what are the outcomes
11 that I would like, and I asked if the individual who was in
12 the home the night my sister died, who has a very violent
13 history, if he could be subjected to a polygraph, and then
14 they came back to me and said that they asked him if he
15 would do a polygraph, and he refused because he has that
16 right.

17 And I also asked, has the RCMP released any
18 public written communications to announce the death of
19 Dawn; if not, why? And I said, if so, can all copies of
20 communications be provided to the next of kin on or
21 before -- and I gave a specific timeline, because at the
22 time -- well, even still today, I was leading a lot of the
23 stuff that we were doing with respect to my sister's
24 passing and informing my family because we felt that that
25 was an easier process rather than trying to communicate

1 with everybody because we have such a large family, and it
2 said:

3 A media release to local or provincial
4 news outlets announcing a fatality in a
5 community is not automatically completed
6 in each case. If a news media outlet
7 was to inquire about a fatality, the
8 detachment may issue a brief media
9 release but limit the information.
10 Names would not be released without next
11 of kin consent. Detachments can issue a
12 media release requesting public
13 assistance. The purpose of this type of
14 release is to canvas the general public
15 for anyone with information relating to
16 a specific event. In this case, the
17 detachment determined a request for
18 public assistance has not been required
19 at this time.

20 And again, that just shows, like, you know,
21 there was a fire, you know, and the disarray in her home,
22 and to basically not even ask for any public assistance as
23 to what happened that night, even leading up to her
24 passing, you know, that clearly demonstrates another
25 failure within the detachment by not requesting the

1 public's assistance.

2 And I also -- because I felt it -- you know,
3 why didn't the Fire Commissioner not come to Leaf Rapids?
4 Because there was the fire, you know, 19 hours after
5 somebody was found deceased, that was directly attached to
6 her home, and it boggles my mind that -- you know, that
7 there was no Fire Commissioner that came out to do an
8 inspection, so at the time I wrote a letter on
9 December 5th, 2011, to the Honourable Jennifer Howard, who
10 was the minister responsible for the Office of the Fire
11 Commissioner, and basically, I don't have the response here
12 today because I just -- you know, it's a difficult process,
13 and I couldn't pull everything together, but basically, the
14 letter just offered their condolences and said it was a
15 very difficult time for the family, and it was the RCMP who
16 deemed it was not necessary for the Fire Commissioner to
17 come out.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So it seems like,
19 you know, you're -- when you're asking the RCMP questions,
20 they're turning to the Medical Examiner; when you're asking
21 the Fire Commissioner questions, they're turning to the
22 RCMP. It seems like a lot of people are happy to say it's
23 someone else's responsibility.

24 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** And -- and that's
25 what I felt. I felt like it was -- you know, every time we

1 went to somebody, it was always somebody else's
2 responsibility. It was like a big -- you know, it's almost
3 like a game: Let's blame this -- this institution, let's
4 blame that institution. It's like, well, what about us as
5 family? You know, we -- we're looking for answers, you
6 know, and all you're doing is creating this, like, circle
7 that's continuously going, and we have no real answers, you
8 know, and nobody's being accountable. It's, like, just
9 shifting the blame. I think it's time for institutions to
10 be accountable, you know, and to admit when they do wrong,
11 and by doing that, they go forward in a different way, you
12 know, in fixing their processes, you know, so
13 in -- in -- ultimately, there's a better outcome for
14 families as well as for the institutions, you know, if we
15 go forward together and admit wrongs and fix these wrongs.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Now, I understand
17 that you asked for and received a copy of the Chief Medical
18 Examiner's autopsy report form.

19 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes, I did.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm going to pass
21 this up to the Commissioner, but before I do, as I often do
22 with any coroner's report, I request that it be sealed, and
23 the purpose I'm making the request for it to be sealed is
24 to maintain the dignity of Dawn because it does describe
25 personal attributes and information about her death.

1 So may I have the sealing order?

2 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Oui.* Yes.

3 *Merci.*

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And I know that

5 you're the one who received the -- the post-mortem.

6 Essentially, it states that she died from exposure?

7 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yeah.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes?

9 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yeah, and even
10 like, when, my sister was in her casket, like, she had this
11 weird indentation above her -- her right eye, I believe,
12 and she had, like, bruising on her chin, and even, like, on
13 her arm like this that she had, like, finger markings on
14 her arms, but none of that is noted in the autopsy. They
15 just talk about, like, an injury on her nose and her hip.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So it's obvious the
17 family took a number of steps that you guys have been
18 advocating --

19 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- quite a bit. I
21 have a couple questions that maybe one of your brothers
22 might want to answer simply because they were also in
23 Leaf Rapids -- is that okay -- to Dennis or Melvin?

24 Okay. So the question I have, because we've
25 heard, and I know we're not speaking about the individual

1 the family suspects because there was never charges laid
2 against him because there was no investigation, but can you
3 just tell a little bit -- share a little bit with the
4 commissioner sort of, like, a bit of background about him
5 without naming him in terms of -- the family has said a
6 couple times he was violent. It's known that he's violent
7 in the community?

8 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, and -- like, many
9 times even after my sister's passing that his name has been
10 thrown around as the one doing harm to other people and
11 nobody doing anything about it.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Do I understand that
13 he -- he has been charged subsequently for abusing other
14 people?

15 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** I don't really know,
16 but I know he's -- like, he's not around in Leaf Rapids
17 right now. I presume he's incarcerated right now.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I also understand
19 that from -- there's at least a couple stories where people
20 have explained that this individual has actually talked
21 about unintentionally killing your sister.

22 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, and we've talked
23 to the individuals, and we've asked them to go to the RCMP
24 and make statements and stuff like that, and they have gone
25 there, but I -- I don't know if any investigation -- of any

1 investigations that have gone any further from there, and
2 it's -- there is a lot of people that -- that hear -- that
3 hear him say these stories, and a lot of them are too
4 frightened to go and make statements or just clam right up
5 when you come up to them and confront them about what
6 they -- what we've heard that they've heard, and they just
7 don't say anything. They're just too, I guess, afraid of
8 him.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And has the family
10 continued to go back to the RCMP or touch base with the
11 local detachment on any time they hear these things as
12 well?

13 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Yes, we have -- like,
14 myself and my brother Dennis heard just recently, we've
15 heard and we've gone to them, and then we've asked the
16 person to come forward and go to the RCMP and make a
17 statement, and I'm not quite sure of what the response was.
18 I think -- I'll give Dennis the mic here. He -- he's the
19 one that really talked to the person.

20 **MR. DENNIS ANDERSON:** Yeah. On that point,
21 I'll just go back to the beginning, Mel, if you don't
22 mind --

23 **MR. MELVIN ANDERSON:** Yeah.

24 **MR. DENNIS ANDERSON:** -- as to how the
25 information came about. I was walking uptown one day to go

1 grab something from the grocery store, and I ran into a
2 lady who -- who confront -- well, didn't confront me,
3 but -- you know, like, I was joking around with her just
4 like you do everybody else that you meet, like, from a
5 small community, right? And then she -- she had a -- you
6 know, like, a look about her like she was sad or something
7 like that, right? And then I said, you okay? And she
8 said, you know what? She said, Dennis, I'm really glad
9 that I ran into you, and I said, well, yeah, okay,
10 what -- what's bothering you? She said, actually, I was
11 going to try to get a hold of all you guys because I got
12 some -- some disturbing information -- or I find it
13 disturbing, and it's been really bothering me, she said,
14 that my daughter had come home and told me something about
15 what may have happened to your sister.

16 So I -- you know, like, it's -- it's like
17 everything else. You're waiting for that certain little
18 something, you know, to maybe -- okay, this is it. It's
19 going to be -- you know, like, something's going to come of
20 it, right? So my brother Melvin and I, we -- we went and
21 we contacted the RCMP. We went down there, and we said,
22 you know, like, this lady's got some information that might
23 be vital to, you know, like, my -- my sister's death, so on
24 and so forth. And they said, well, if she comes up, we'll
25 definitely be, you know, talking to her.

1 So her mother and her had gone up, and
2 during a party, he had admittedly said to a couple of
3 people that were there that he -- he had a hand in my
4 sister' demise, but he didn't really mean to, right? Now,
5 whatever that means, it's irrelevant. I mean, like, his
6 statement's irrelevant, and I -- you know.

7 And so the RCMP -- or she went and she
8 talked to the RCMP and told them what she had heard
9 and -- you know, like with the -- with her mother's help,
10 you know, and there again, we were just stone-walled
11 because the other people that were there were not going to
12 say nothing, so even though she had made this report or
13 statement, then it's a he-said-she-said kind of thing,
14 right, yet the other people that were there, they will
15 not -- you know, like, if we just had a couple of people
16 against him, you know, just the one time, if somebody would
17 have said like, yeah, yeah, you know, like two or three of
18 them, you know, that could have opened up something, right?

19 And -- but basically, that's what I was
20 told, when the R -- and I -- and I had phoned the RCMP, and
21 I said, you know, like, guys, I really want to hear back
22 from you on this. You know, like, it's -- you know, like,
23 I feel that it's vital information, and they -- they
24 promised that they would get back to me, and they did.
25 They actually come back to my house. I

1 think -- they -- they had a call to go to South Indian that
2 prior day, so the following day they had come to my house,
3 and they -- what I had just shared with you about -- you
4 know, like, the he-said-she-said kind of thing stopped.
5 Like, that was it, you know?

6 And the one guy, actually, the one RCMP
7 officer, he looked at me, and he said, you know what,
8 Dennis -- like, after I explained to him, I said, I'm not
9 going to stop that. You know, like, this is not the end of
10 it. You know, like, this is -- this is not where this
11 ends, you know? And I told him, I said, I'm going to
12 continue fighting. And he looked at me, he says, you know
13 what, Dennis, if it were my sister, he says, there's not a
14 chance that I'd be giving up either. You know? And
15 through -- through it all, that was probably the only kind
16 word or positive reaction that I personally have gotten
17 from the RCMP of any sort.

18 And, you know, like, it's just -- like, the
19 whole investigation is just all shot full of holes.
20 Everything. Like, it's just -- like, they just -- like,
21 let's get this done and over with, you know, like -- and,
22 you know, like, just rush through it, it's all done. I
23 mean, look at the questions that Hilda had asked them. You
24 know, like, the investigating officer, the investigating
25 officer, the investigating officer. You know, like, jeez.

1 You're talking to a guy that's supposed to be, you know,
2 their boss or their superior, and he can't answer questions
3 on behalf of them, and he's just passing the buck back to
4 the guy that was there, and I mean -- like, that doesn't
5 excuse them, as well, but I mean, like, it's just -- like
6 Hilda says, it's pass the buck, pass the buck, you know?
7 And it's -- it's -- it's written, you know? Like, that's
8 their answer. That's their answer to all our questions.
9 We'll just pass the buck. You know? It's over with. Deal
10 with it. Well, it's not over with, and yeah, we're still
11 dealing with it, you know?

12 And one thing I'd like to mention, you know,
13 about the officer that did give me that little bit of
14 positive feedback was he was not one of the original
15 investigating officers; and back to the individual who, you
16 know, may have had a hand in this, like Mel says, you know,
17 like, he walks around, people are frightened of him, yet
18 people come -- I bet you weekly, I hear it from somebody in
19 that community, and there's only 500, 600 of us that live
20 there. I bet you once a week, at least, once a week, I
21 hear somebody come tell me something, and I tell them, you
22 know, like, don't tell me because then -- it's just hearsay
23 if I go there. Go -- go to the police. Make a statement.
24 That's where it stops. You know, like, it's almost, like,
25 oh, I'll feel better if I go tell him. At least they know.

1 You know? Like, it's almost -- people look for excuses
2 within themselves to -- you know, somehow they feel that
3 they've done something right if they go and tell you, but
4 what are you going to do about it? You're just an
5 individual looking for answers, you know, looking for a bit
6 of justice, looking for a little relief, looking for some
7 closure, you know, and I appreciate that they tell me, but
8 it does me no good. It does nobody no good. Maybe it does
9 them some good to know that they're telling somebody, but
10 they're telling the wrong people, and I -- honest to God,
11 Commissioner, I bet you at least once a week, if not twice
12 a month, I hear something. Somebody comes, tells me
13 something pertaining to the death of my sister, and yet to
14 this day, you know, it's never been investigated properly,
15 and it continues, you know?

16 You know -- you know, like, and you hear
17 about it all the time. You know, people are afraid of
18 these people, or they're afraid of maybe the parent or
19 where he stands in the community. You know, like, you hear
20 all kinds of horror stories, you know, little -- you know,
21 like Betty Osborne (ph). Perfect, you know, example. You
22 know, like, everybody knew in that community or most people
23 knew or have heard the stories, and for how many years did
24 them sinning people walk the same ground that that poor
25 girl did, and her family?

1 And in essence, what I'm saying is, pretty
2 much, that's how we feel. Why do -- does he get to walk
3 and enjoy the same things that I do, and then when he's
4 under the influence of something, he's bragging? You know,
5 I'm not afraid of this person at all or his family or any
6 repercussions that may come my way because of what I'm
7 saying here today. I'm not afraid, and I will continue to
8 fight. Yeah, "we," and we're a strong unit, and -- you
9 know, like, it's -- it's a very hurtful thing to have to
10 see and live through it, like, on a daily basis, and I kid
11 you not, Commissioner, at least twice a month, I hear
12 something out of people's mouths directly to me about what
13 happened that night, and yet I -- my hands are tied. I
14 can't do anything, and I can't get them to do anything
15 because they're all afraid, and you know, like, this
16 individual, I feel, he's got a very violent past, and I
17 feel that he probably should have been incarcerated long
18 ago as a dangerous offender, and it's my belief that that's
19 where he belongs.

20 You know, and it's sad. You know, like, I'm
21 sure -- I'm sure these investigating officers, whoever did
22 this, I'm sure every time they hear about us or see us
23 doing something, they're cringing, and they're -- I bet you
24 they're -- in their minds, they're going, jeez, I should
25 have, I should have, you know, but their superiors protect

1 them too. You know?

2 And, yeah, like, you can see on the tape,
3 you know, they blatantly lied, and they said my nieces
4 lied. They got no reason to lie. Their mother was taken
5 out of their yard in a bag, and they were alone, and they
6 watched. Now, how is that proper investigation any of
7 kind? How is that proper treatment of Indigenous people or
8 anybody by people in authority? How could they have let
9 that happen? You know, it borderlines on disgusting is
10 what it does.

11 And like I say, hopefully through voicing
12 our opinions and telling our stories, like, everybody
13 that's here, I pray to God that we all find some kind of
14 answer in the end because that's what this is all about,
15 you know, not only for our stories but each individual here
16 that's going to testify or do their testimony, you know,
17 they feel the way we do. They've been done wrong. They
18 have not been handed a proper solution or an answer.
19 They've been quite -- quite the opposite. They've been
20 skirted around so they don't have to be provided with an
21 answer, and it's time that this stuff ends, and, you know,
22 like, it's just -- and it's Indigenous people, you know,
23 that take the brunt of it. We have no trust with the RCMP.
24 None of us do. Indigenous people -- you know, like, it's
25 crazy. Like, you don't want to talk to police because

1 we're -- you know, like, we're branded, man. You know,
2 like, and it's a sad, sad thing to have to say in 2018, you
3 know, like, and all this stuff, you know, like, that goes
4 on in this -- in this country, and two cases in particular
5 we've seen as of recent. Everybody's seen it on
6 television, right? You know, like -- and it's the same
7 thing. It just keeps happening. Why is that? And it's
8 not -- like my sister said, it -- it's a geographical
9 problem. Like, it's across the country. Doesn't matter
10 where in this country. It's happening everywhere. Why is
11 that? You know, and that's what we're here to change or
12 hopefully bring light to, find answers, you know, find
13 closure. That's what this is about. For me, that's what
14 it's about. This is not the end of my fight either. I
15 will continue. I promise you, I'll -- thank you.

16 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I also wanted to
17 share, my brother Dennis and Melvin and my brother
18 Brunel (ph), and Dawn's -- the father of her children, we
19 went to meet with the RCMP when this happened in
20 Leaf Rapids, and one of the things -- I found it really
21 kind of bizarre because at the time you're in shock, you
22 know, because you just lost your loved one and you're not
23 really thinking about everything and maybe not asking the
24 right questions, but one thing I found interesting is, why
25 was the officer who found my sister, who was her neighbour

1 doing the investigation -- you know, because when we went
2 there, they said, oh, he's on holidays for a couple of
3 days, he has a couple of days off, and then the officer who
4 was talking to us, he said to us, he said, oh, when
5 we -- when the individual who was in your sister's home the
6 night that she died was interviewed, he was visibly
7 distraught; and I'm thinking, like, who cares if he was
8 distraught? What about us, you know? And then they said,
9 oh, he even told us that he walked around her house looking
10 for her, and I said to that officer, I said, that's a lie.
11 I said, if he walked around the house looking for her, he
12 would have saw where she was lying because, you know, in
13 the wintertime, there's, like -- there was a bush there,
14 but it was all bare. There was no leaves or anything on
15 it. It was just, like, twigs sticking out, and they
16 weren't very high, and you would be able to see clearly
17 where she was lying, so I said to that officer, I said,
18 he's lying.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Also, about
20 footprints.

21 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Oh, yeah. And,
22 like, even, you know, not -- basically saying that there
23 was no footprints and no castings and stuff like that.
24 Like, to me, that doesn't make sense. If you find
25 somebody, you don't know what happened to them, you would

1 think you would go into investigative mode, you know, but I
2 think -- like, to me, I know so many families in northern
3 Manitoba who have told me their same story, you know, that
4 they believe that foul play was suspected in the -- in
5 their loved one, but the RCMP and the Medical Examiner's
6 office continuously ruled their deaths as exposure due to
7 intoxication where -- you know, even if they died of
8 exposure due to intoxication, what about all those events
9 that lead up to their death? You know, what about those
10 individuals that were involved? You know, I feel -- I
11 don't know. Like, it -- it really needs to change. We
12 need to change. You know, there's a lot of good police
13 officers. I'm not, like, saying they're all horrible.
14 There's a lot of good people who are working in
15 institutions who are really trying to create meaningful
16 change, but we need to do better.

17 And I was actually going to pass the mic to
18 my sister Lianna because she has some really key things,
19 like, with my two little nieces that shared.

20 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** I guess this horror
21 started for me just shortly after my brother Keith got the
22 news and he -- and he went home because I had taken my mom
23 with me to Winnipeg that time. We were going there -- we
24 were going there for meetings, and I remember that morning
25 when we were leaving, Dawn was outside the town centre.

1 She was just -- she had one of her friends coming to the
2 town centre there where it's the main street in Leaf Rapids
3 to buy groceries, and she -- and my mom seen her, and my
4 mom went and gave her a hug and told her to be good, and
5 that was the last time my mom seen her alive. It was few
6 days after that, that's when we lost her.

7 But my brother Keith called me. He kept
8 calling me. I was driving in Winnipeg, and I told -- and
9 then my daughters said -- you know -- like, I was right in
10 the heart of traffic, rush-hour, during lunch on a Friday
11 afternoon, Winnipeg, and Keith says -- like, told him,
12 phone me as soon as you pull over, and I did, and I -- and
13 I phoned him, and then he says, Dawn's gone. I says, Dawn
14 who? He says, our sister. I said, well, where did she go?
15 He says, she's dead, and he hangs up on me, and I'm just,
16 like, what? I phone him back, and the phone was busy, and
17 then I phoned him back again, and I said, what happened?
18 He says, they're telling me they found her outside her home
19 this morning and that she froze to death, and I'm thinking,
20 this is crazy. This can't be. I phoned the RCMP, and I
21 asked them, like, what is going on? And I talked to one of
22 the officers that was in the RCMP detachment, and he tells
23 me that Dawn's neighbour, who is an RCMP officer, was
24 leaving for work shortly -- 9 o'clock that morning, and he
25 seen Dawn in between his house and her house, about

1 those moments when this happened, and I'm thinking, Dawn's
2 dead outside her home; my God, what happened to her? Who
3 did this? We need to find out. You know, there's going to
4 be a big massive investigation, and my brother Melvin said,
5 like, you know, Lianna, he said, like, Dawn's house is a
6 wreck, he says, and -- and I says, well, don't touch
7 anything. Get everybody out of there. You guys are
8 contaminating the scene. There's going to be a big
9 investigation. We're going to find out what happened to
10 Dawn because something happened to her, and I says, get
11 everybody to stop cleaning up, and just get everybody out
12 of there. Don't let anybody in the house.

13 And that investigation never came. It
14 didn't come. The RCMP never investigated anything. I was
15 told through my conversations with them, when I asked them,
16 I says, why didn't you guys call the ambulance? Why didn't
17 you call the doctor? There's a doctor in Leaf Rapids
18 that's there 24/7. The ambulance lives right across the
19 street from where my sister lives. Why didn't you guys
20 call the ambulance? Why didn't you call the doctor to the
21 scene? And they said, well, Lianna, the Chief Medical
22 Examiner pronounced her dead over the phone. Like, how the
23 hell do you pronounce somebody dead over a phone? How can
24 you as a person, as an RCMP officer, know what kind of
25 vital signs that you have to look for, even that simple

1 thing of holding a mirror to my sister's face, this close,
2 he could have seen if she was gasping for that last breath.
3 Those RCMP officers didn't know anything about doing that.
4 They pronounced her dead over the phone by the Chief
5 Medical Examiner.

6 Right away, we started hearing, oh, she was
7 partying the night before, she was drunk, she went outside.
8 She passed out; and I'm thinking, wow, that's -- you know,
9 this is -- like, it was almost a state of disbelief, and
10 you almost have to kind of think, like, really?

11 Later on that day, the -- the doctor in the
12 community, like, you know, he -- like, you know, when I got
13 back home, he came to me, and he was really, really upset
14 and disturbed, and he said, Lianna, he says, I'm so sorry.
15 He says, you know -- he says, I'm the doctor in the
16 community. I didn't even hear from the RCMP that there was
17 a death in the community, that somebody froze to death
18 outside. He says, I was in the clinic, and I seen how
19 visibly upset the staff were, and I asked, like, you know,
20 what is going on? He said, my staff told me because of how
21 close they were to your sister, of the relationships they
22 had with her, that she had passed away. He said, that's
23 how I found out as a doctor in our community of not even 5,
24 600 people that there was a death in the community, that
25 the RCMP had picked up somebody deceased outside, and

1 that's how the doctor found out. The ambulance wasn't
2 called.

3 And I'm thinking, like, how does this stuff
4 happen? My brother, they call my brother to the RCMP
5 station, Keith. He gets a message on his phone: Oh, can
6 you call -- come by the RCMP detachment? We have a -- it's
7 kind of urgent. So he goes there. Two minutes later, they
8 tell him, we found your sister dead outside her place. Oh,
9 by the way, your nieces, your 4-year-old and 7-year-old,
10 are alone in the house. We have to go there and pick them
11 up. Meanwhile, my sister's in the garage, in the back of a
12 truck, in a body bag. My brother wasn't given the honour
13 to be able to go and look at my baby sister's face once
14 more and say, yes, that is our baby sister, that is our
15 sister; to be able to touch her, to be able to call family,
16 to be able to say prayers for her, to be able to see her
17 before they took her away, but instead, she was just put in
18 a body bag in the back of a truck, waiting for the
19 Boardman's Funeral Home in Thompson to come pick her up.

20 When they came and -- when they picked up my
21 sister, my nieces, they're 4 and 7 years old, they stayed
22 with my mom for the first three months after my sister
23 passed, and then they came and stayed with me. The tidbits
24 that they started talking about and -- and the stuff that
25 they were saying, it's just -- it just haunts me because

1 it's just not right, and the way that we are as a family,
2 we censor what the kids watch on TV. Like, you know, we
3 don't -- you know, they wouldn't have picked up this stuff
4 from anywhere, and when my niece tells me, like, you know,
5 that they were alone in the house, like, you know, that the
6 police had come, they came inside, and the radio was really
7 loud, and -- you know, then they left, and they went
8 outside, and they said they seen the truck because -- and
9 they said they noticed it because it -- it came and drove
10 up on their yard, and they seen the cops put something --
11 like, a long bag in the back of the truck, and they were
12 alone in the house watching this. Then they left, and I
13 said, well, who stayed with you, and they said nobody.
14 They were alone in the house. The -- the cops came and
15 picked up my sister and left. They came in the house.
16 They seen my 4- and 7-year-old nieces alone in the house,
17 left them alone, went outside, bagged up my sister like
18 whatever, threw her in the back of a truck and then took
19 off. She was not worthy of a call to the local doctor,
20 the -- the local ambulance. My nieces were not worthy to
21 immediately call somebody at CFS or something to console
22 these children with what they just found outside. They are
23 human beings. I look at these pictures. Look at them.
24 They're so beautiful, and what they seen, what they were
25 left alone, we didn't -- like, we -- Hilda talks about, you

1 know, like, the -- the -- the public -- the complaint that
2 we made to the Public Complaints Commission about what they
3 did, even with the sheer fact that they left my nieces
4 alone in the house, 4 and 7 years old, the Commission
5 didn't find any wrongdoing in that. Like, how is that
6 possible?

7 You know, my niece, my 7-year-old niece, one
8 day, she's -- I had gotten her ready for bed, and -- you
9 know, like -- and, like, they had mentioned that when my
10 sister Dawn, at her funeral, like, she had a bruise on her
11 chin. She had bruises here. She had bruises on her arms
12 like this, and it's not our way to take pictures, but I
13 wish that one time we would have, but we didn't, but
14 everybody remembers that. Everybody remembers those
15 bruises on her because she was so fair, and -- and you
16 could see every little mark and everything on her.

17 And my niece said one evening -- it was a
18 couple of months after my sister's death. I put her to
19 bed, and I was laying, and I was watching TV, and she came
20 out. She says, Aunty, she says, I have a question, she
21 says, and she was very articulate, very smart, brilliant
22 young lady, and -- and then I said, what's up, my girl?
23 And I was laying on the couch, and she comes over, she
24 said, how did they fix my mom's neck? And I says, what do
25 you mean, my girl? And she said, well, her neck was going

1 like this. It was, like -- and I says, where did you see
2 that? And then she just kind of had this look come over
3 her eyes, and she says, oh, she says; never mind, she says;
4 I'm going bed.

5 And I was forever haunted with that
6 conversation. I didn't have the means to know how to talk
7 to her. I wanted to shake her: Tell me exactly what you
8 seen. What happened? Where did you see this? Like, you
9 know -- like, how -- how do you know this? But I didn't
10 have the means to be able to do that without traumatizing
11 her, and I couldn't, and it's been haunting me. It's been
12 eating me up inside, that conversation I had with her.

13 And my -- my other niece, like, the
14 4-year-old, she was in nursery, Kindergarten, and the
15 Town Centre Mall in Leaf Rapids is our main street, and
16 everybody goes there. That's where you go to school.
17 That's where you get the groceries, the gas, the mail,
18 and -- you know, that's where the final liquor store opens
19 at 12 o'clock noon, and you have everybody lining up
20 outside waiting for it to open, and I had to go and get my
21 niece from school because she got out a half-hour before
22 lunch, and I went to get her, and we were walking, and
23 then -- and I remember there was this group of people
24 outside the pharmacy, and I was walking with her, and she
25 just started crying, and she was just kind of pulling back,

1 and I said, (speaking in Native language), like, you know,
2 what's the matter? And then she just started crying, and
3 she just -- digging my body into my legs, and she said,
4 Aunty, she said, that's a bad man, and I said, where, I
5 said? And all I could see was these -- group of guys
6 standing outside the pharmacy, and -- and then she just
7 started crying, and I picked her up, and she was just
8 shaking and shivering: That's a bad man, Aunty, that's a
9 bad man. And then, like, you know, as I walked in between
10 where the pharmacy was and these guys standing, I had to
11 walk past them to get to my office, she just started, like,
12 crying out loud, and she was just -- terror, she was
13 fearful, like, and I was just -- and I couldn't figure out
14 what the hell was happening.

15 And -- but the one thing that intrigued me,
16 as the stories started coming out, is the story of that one
17 man, that man -- and I don't care if his family sees this.
18 I'm not scared of him. I'm not scared of him and his
19 family and what they've done to terrorize people in our
20 community. I'm just so sick of it. I want it to stop. I
21 want to it stop in our community and other communities
22 where you have those people terrorizing innocent people.
23 I'm -- I'm done with it, and -- but, you know, like, that
24 man that was standing there, that's the one, that's the
25 name that keeps coming up. The one story that's consistent

1 is that my sister was partying with these guys in her
2 garage. Sometime during the night, she [sic] got into an
3 argument with her. He punched her. He knocked her out.
4 He put her outside. She froze to death. That's the one
5 consistent thing that we're hearing all the time. We
6 cannot get people to come forward and make those statements
7 because they're scared of him and his family and what they
8 do. They know the system all too well. The system is so
9 messed. That man has done so much to people in our
10 community, and nobody will stand up to him and make a
11 statement and say the wrongdoing that he's done to them
12 because when they make statements, they get terrorized by
13 his family. Their -- his family will even make statements
14 to say that he wasn't there, and the way our system is,
15 well, if you've got ten statements saying an individual
16 wasn't there, but the victim knows that that
17 person -- exactly what it was that they did to them, who's
18 the judges going to believe? That's how messed up our
19 system is, and that's where my sister's caught in between.

20 There was no investigation. There was
21 nothing. We hear the stories about how one of the guards
22 mentions that they had picked up this man later on the day
23 that my sister was found. He was freaking out in the cell
24 wanting to talk to one of his sisters, so they get his
25 sisters there. They start talking Cree. After she leaves,

1 the guy just totally calms down. He's reported as having
2 all these scratches all over his chest, all over the -- his
3 upper torso of his body. She leaves. Few hours later, you
4 hear all these other rumors. She's running around town
5 trying to get somebody to burn down my sister's garage. We
6 hear that it was one of her brothers that eventually did
7 it.

8 Now, you know, it's -- it just seems like
9 it's a story that's come together for us because -- like
10 what my brothers have said, what my sister said. People
11 are coming to us and telling us all these things all the
12 time. Throughout that, this is what we've been able to put
13 together, and I -- and in my brilliance, always wanting to
14 believe in the good and that there's always a way
15 and -- you know what, we're going to get to the end of
16 this, we're going to find out what's going on, and when we
17 went to the RCMP, no, we need those people to come and make
18 statements. Lianna, we know your family's going through a
19 really hard time. I'm thinking, like, no, don't give me
20 that. Don't do that to me. Don't do that to us.

21 And then so I called Crime Stoppers, you
22 know, and I said, hey, you know what, if nobody wants to
23 give statements, they can phone and give these tips and our
24 family will give money, and, you know, somebody is going to
25 eventually come clean and go -- they can -- they can give

1 these statements and the tips and everything, and they
2 don't ever have to give up their names so they're safe.
3 It's going be okay. So I phoned Crime Stoppers, and I tell
4 them what happened to my sister, and they said, well, you
5 know, we don't really take that information from the
6 public. We have to call the local police detachment and
7 get the specifics to be able to print as a part of the
8 Crime Stoppers report. I says, okay, great. I says, you
9 know what, I says, and you let them know, I says, you know,
10 our family's going put money towards, like, you know,
11 trying to get to any kind of information forward on this.

12 They call me back. Well, you know what,
13 Lianna, we're sorry, we can't do this because we talked to
14 the RCMP detachment in Leaf Rapids. They don't suspect
15 foul play. They know that your sister was partying and
16 that she died of exposure, so there's no need to do a
17 Crime Stoppers report, and I'm just like, what? Are you
18 kidding me? Really? And I'm thinking, like, well, what
19 about her garage? Not even a few hours after they found
20 her, her garage -- like, Leaf Rapids is known for violence,
21 bootlegging, drug-dealing, all the domestic and sexual
22 assaults that gone there. Like, that's the norm in our
23 community. That's the norm in all of our communities
24 because we don't have the programs and services. It's not
25 known for arson. We worry about forest fires, but not

1 arson. And you know what? When my sister's garage, they
2 deemed it was arson, no investigation. I went to the
3 deputy fire chief. I said, I want to know why you didn't
4 call in the Fire Commissioner. He said, Lianna, he said
5 the RCMP called it off. They deemed that it was arson,
6 there was no need for the Fire Commissioner to come in.
7 The RCMP over a telephone conversation with the Chief
8 Medical Examiner's office when they had my sister laying on
9 the ground told the Chief Medical Examiner's office
10 that -- you know, the basic conversation that she likely
11 froze to death. In those moments when they made that
12 initial contact with the Chief Medical Examiner's office,
13 they determined how the potential autopsy was going to go.

14 When Crime Stoppers contacted them, you
15 know, to -- to get posters up, to get people -- to give
16 them the freedom to be able to get out the information that
17 they knew about what happened with my sister, the RCMP
18 stopped Crime Stoppers from getting involved. When the
19 Fire Commissioner's office should have come in, the RCMP
20 told them, no, we know it's arson. They didn't come in.
21 The RCMP, when they found my 4- and 7-year-old nieces alone
22 in that house, they could have called CFS. They could have
23 called some kind of support. They did nothing. Who the
24 hell gives the RCMP that much power? Who allows them to
25 get away with what it is that they're doing? Who -- who

1 gave them the -- the power to be the judge, the jury, the
2 investigators or -- or lack of?

3 Now I'm angry. I didn't want to be angry
4 doing this, but it angers me because there's something
5 wrong with the system in the way that it works and what's
6 not being done.

7 I look at my nieces, you know, and the
8 long-term care for them, and -- you know, and how we
9 approach it. How do we talk to them about what they seen
10 that night, about what happened, about how we can draw that
11 information out of them because to me, they are probably
12 the prime witnesses of what potentially happened. Like,
13 where did my niece see that her mother's neck was broken
14 and it was going like this, and when she seen her mother in
15 the coffin, that it appeared that her neck was fixed? My
16 nieces tell me that the man that everybody talks about,
17 that he knocked my sister out and put her outside and she
18 froze to death. My nieces tell me that earlier that
19 morning, he cooked them breakfast, and then he left, and
20 then the RCMP came.

21 My aunt who lives next door to my sister
22 tells me, like, the night before my sister's passing that
23 Dawn came over there twice because -- well, we find out now
24 that her phone was ripped out of her wall, but she came
25 over to their -- she came over to her place twice to use

1 the phone to phone the police to -- she said that there was
2 the devil. She wanted that man out of her house, and she
3 said the police never came. It's a small town, you know.
4 We're talking about 5, 600 people. Everybody watches what
5 happens to -- as soon as you see lights at night, everybody
6 jumps up at the window and looks out. Like, you know,
7 it's -- that's how we are in small community, and my aunt
8 said the police never came.

9 When you look at -- you know, even where
10 we -- where we said about, you know -- it's always in the
11 north. Like, you know, you always see those RCMP
12 communications. Like, you know -- you know, man found
13 deceased, frozen to death, like, you know, and this age or
14 that age and everything else. You see those communications
15 coming out all the time in the north. Nothing, absolutely
16 nothing came out about my sister Dawn. The only thing that
17 ended up coming out after I believe some time after we had
18 the report from the Commissioner's office is they said that
19 there was a fire. They put that as an RCMP thing that they
20 put out.

21 We put up posters, everything. We went all
22 over social media asking anybody and everybody, like, to
23 stop calling my mom, to come to me, to come to my sister,
24 to my brothers and give us the information but not to go to
25 my mom, and a lot of the stuff that we heard, we kept it

1 from my mom, but my mom's very resourceful. She ended up
2 finding out a lot of stuff on her own.

3 Like, the system is so, so, so broken. When
4 I have the doctor that was in our community, and he tells
5 me that he was so disturbed that he never heard from the
6 RCMP that somebody was found outside supposedly froze to
7 death, you know, that they didn't contact him, they didn't
8 tell him anything, that he was so disturbed with that that
9 he ended up getting a hold of the Burntwood Regional Health
10 Authority at the time -- that's what it was called, but now
11 it's the Northern Regional Health Authority -- getting hold
12 of the supervisor there, and -- like, you know, and telling
13 him what happened in the community because he was so
14 disturbed with it that it was not normal, that it wasn't
15 right what happened.

16 And, you know, I see that family. They
17 cannot look me in the eye. You know, I see that man daily,
18 like, you know, when I'm at home, and I'm thinking, like,
19 what gives you that right, you know? The system gives him
20 that right. That man has a track record like you wouldn't
21 believe. He's very well known for always wearing
22 steel-toed boots. Like, how the hell does our system allow
23 for somebody like that who's so violent in knowing how they
24 are towards other people to continuously wear steel-toed
25 boots? We always have people who come forward and tell us,

1 oh, did you hear he beat up this person? Oh, did you hear
2 what he did to this person? Oh, did you hear what he did
3 over here in threatening somebody else? And I'm thinking,
4 yeah, I've heard it all. I've been through it. My
5 family's been through it. My mom lives it because the
6 system allows for it.

7 You know, recently, my -- one of my cousins
8 passed away in Leaf Rapids. When they found my sister
9 Dawn, within the hour after finding her, they bagged her
10 up, put her in the back of the truck, put her in the
11 garage, called Boardman Funeral Home, they came and picked
12 her and up called my brother to the RCMP station, told him
13 that she had passed, didn't give him the opportunity to go
14 and honour her, to see her.

15 A month ago, my sister passed away in
16 Leaf -- my cousin passed away in Leaf Rapids, and I was so
17 touched and so, you know, in awe with the respect that my
18 late cousin was given. When they found her, immediately
19 the RCMP went and picked up her oldest daughter and brought
20 her to the scene and got her to identify her mom. You
21 know, the ambulance was called, and she was taken, and from
22 what I understand, they took -- they eventually took her to
23 the RCMP station because they don't have a morgue or a cold
24 room or anything like that at the clinic in Leaf, and the
25 family was called. They had prayers. They had song. They

1 smudged my cousin. They were able to see her, to touch
2 her. They were able to see her go. This is the same
3 detachment that I just described that treated my sister the
4 same way, although there's different officers there now and
5 stuff like that. This is an institution, for God's sakes.
6 Do they not have rules, regulations, processes that they
7 all follow? Apparently not.

8 Like, you know, I -- I look at the -- the
9 RCMP officer who found my sister. You know, he
10 eventually -- from the time that they found her, he ended
11 up taking some time off, stress leave. He ended up taking
12 vacation leave and within months was transferred outside
13 the community. Hm. I wonder why? Could it be when he
14 found her, he boggled up the whole situation and should
15 have did something differently? Could it be from that
16 point that they messed up royally by not calling the
17 ambulance, the doctor, and by doing some of the stuff that
18 they did, that they ended up a major cover-up in acting
19 like it was nothing and that it was going to go away?
20 Well, they obviously do not know my family. They do not
21 know the children that my mother raised. We're not going
22 to give up. We're not letting this go. There is major,
23 major red flags going up all around with this. This is the
24 story that we've been able to put up with -- put together
25 with the information that we've received from people coming

1 to us in the community, and all I have to ask myself is how
2 in this day and age does stuff like this happen?

3 My sister was partying with somebody. She
4 has a big heart. She lets anybody in. That night,
5 unfortunately, she let the wrong person into her home. As
6 story would have it, he knocked her out, put her outside,
7 and she froze to death, but as the system would have it,
8 she was drunk, she passed out, and she froze to death. How
9 does that happen? And how is it that nobody else seems to
10 think that the way the RCMP shut down the investigation
11 from the very moments that they found my sister,
12 influencing the Chief Medical Examiner to be able to make a
13 decision on the phone, influencing the -- the -- what do
14 you call it -- Fire Commissioner's office, Crime Stoppers?
15 The RCMP did all that. Who -- who gave them that much
16 power? I'd like to know. It's wrong, and it has to stop.

17 You know, I look at this, and I look at what
18 happened with my sister. I said it before, and I'll say it
19 again. I know this happened to my family for a reason. We
20 are strong. We work together. We stick together. And as
21 you can see, we pulled out all stops. When the RCMP
22 wouldn't do their investigation, we started our own. We
23 started collecting information from people, the stories, to
24 be able to put together the story the way that we have it
25 because nothing else is telling us that anything else

1 happened. When the RCMP wouldn't do their job, we tried
2 holding them accountable. We went to the Public Complaints
3 Commission. They stood up for them. They backed them up.
4 No wrongdoing. I went to Crime Stoppers to try and engage
5 a different process. The RCMP shut that down.

6 We tried. We've pulled out a lot of stops,
7 and even up to a couple months ago, you heard my
8 brother -- Melvin and Dennis talk about an individual even
9 still coming forward to this day about stories about what
10 happened to my sister that night, and still, nothing. No
11 investigation, nothing.

12 Like, what does it take? I don't
13 understand. I need to understand. When you're hearing
14 these stories -- we're not making them up. This is not
15 Hollywood. We're not doing any kind of major film
16 production here. This is real life. This is what we face
17 in the north in our communities.

18 I look at my two nieces. They were 4 and 7
19 at the time, you know, and what they were able to put
20 together and how they look at this and -- you know, and all
21 they remember is -- and what I remember is the dreams and
22 the memories that they had of their mother; you know, how
23 they would wake up, like I said, you know, and I'd hear
24 them crying, and I'd go to their bed, and they would start
25 fighting me, like, why are you here? I want to go back

1 know mom's. I just seen her. She's at home. I don't want
2 to be here. I want to go home to my mom. That's what
3 their dreams tell them because they don't understand death
4 at that time, and our system just doesn't seem to care
5 about 4- and 7-year-old little girls.

6 Like, even in the sheer moments that my
7 nieces were found alone in that house, the RCMP -- you
8 would think such a mega corporation in this country would
9 somehow find the resources to say, you know what, those
10 little girls, something must -- they must have seen
11 something, they were traumatized, you know, whatever might
12 have happened, and say, you know what, here, Anderson
13 family, look, we -- there's these services, here's these
14 outlets, you know, you guys, you -- you can use all of
15 these to help with your family to get through this.
16 Absolutely nothing. Nothing like that at all. It's wrong.
17 It's wrong. Thank you.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hilda.

19 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** I just --

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hilda. Sorry.

21 **MR. KEITH ANDERSON:** I just want to add
22 something there to Lianna's talking about, like, with my
23 nieces. Okay, they're getting up in age and everything
24 else. What's going to happen when the light bulb goes on
25 with these little girls and they recall what happened? You

1 know, it might not right now, but what happens in the
2 future when that light bulb goes on? And then -- and if
3 they want to sit there and say something or whatever it is,
4 pertaining to my sister's death, what are they going to
5 tell her? It's not legit? You were a little kid? What?
6 I just wanted to add that. Something to think about.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hilda, I believe
8 you're going to turn to some recommendations?

9 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** But one -- okay.
10 One thing I just wanted to share is there's major impacts
11 to us as family members, as well, on what happened the
12 night my sister died. Like, a prime example, my mom's
13 health has really deteriorated since losing my sister, you
14 know, dealing with all the stress, and my older sister who
15 couldn't be here, she suffered a breakdown as a result of
16 my sister dying, but she's recovering now, and she's doing
17 a lot better; and my two nieces, I was the one who told
18 them that their mom was gone, and I see my oldest niece.
19 She's socially awkward. She suffers from depression.
20 She's trying to find her way because she remembers the most
21 about her mother. We've gotten my nieces a lot of
22 counseling and therapy, but nothing will ever replace their
23 mother.

24 And I find, like, far too often -- like, I'm
25 going to go into some recommendations as well -- when it

1 comes to our missing and murdered Indigenous women and
2 girls that children are often left behind. They're
3 forgotten. There's no real resources in place for them.

4 And I also wanted to share one important
5 thing. The night that -- I can't remember exactly if it
6 was the night before or the day of, my younger sister
7 called my oldest sister, and I think that was a big
8 contributing factor to her breakdown. She told her, if
9 anything ever happens to me, don't ever let it go. She
10 says, look to that family, and my sister always felt so
11 responsible because she couldn't reach anybody to check on
12 my sister because everybody was out of town or -- and my
13 brother was out on the lake or the river during the
14 wintertime doing his trapping.

15 It's -- there's devastating impacts to each
16 and every one of us. I suffered a long time from anxiety
17 after my sister died. I still do sometimes.

18 And I feel that's why it's so important that
19 we go into recommendations as to what can be done better
20 for Indigenous women and girls and Indigenous people in
21 general, so I feel that, you know, one of the key things,
22 as soon as something happens, there needs to be mental
23 health supports for MMIWG family members and survivors who
24 are traumatized and that are in crisis that is culturally
25 appropriate, safe, and includes both short-term and

1 long-term care.

2 Wrap-around support services such as mental
3 health education and mentoring for children of MMIWG
4 families that is culturally appropriate, safe, and includes
5 both short-term and long-term care.

6 Create opportunities for Indigenous men to
7 reclaim the roles and responsibilities as protectors of the
8 family. Start the teachings when children are young in
9 their home and at school. This will provide them with the
10 opportunity to understand their roles as men and as
11 life-givers.

12 Create healing circles for men and boys that
13 includes healthy masculinity.

14 Create 24/7 safe spaces for Indigenous women
15 and girls in urban and rural and in First Nation
16 communities.

17 Strengthening and empowering programs for
18 Indigenous women and girls in our First Nation rural and
19 urban centres.

20 Reclaiming Indigenous languages and
21 identity; knowing who you are, your culture, and your
22 language.

23 Healing centres in all First Nation
24 communities, healing from intergenerational trauma and
25 addictions.

1 Parent parenting programs that are
2 culturally appropriate.

3 Awareness campaigns on sexual abuse and
4 sexual violence.

5 Awareness campaigns on domestic violence.

6 Antiracism campaigns specific Indigenous
7 women and girls.

8 Safety training and school curriculum for
9 First Nations in rural areas and areas such as internet
10 safety in an urban area, safe relationships, predator
11 behaviors, gang awareness, drug awareness,
12 human-trafficking and sexual exploitation.

13 Access to affordable safe housing in First
14 Nation in urban areas and rural areas.

15 Opportunities for employment and training
16 for Indigenous women and girls.

17 Access to quality education in our First
18 Nation communities for Grades K to 12; also opportunities
19 in our First Nation communities for post-secondary
20 education.

21 Access to child care.

22 Culturally appropriate training for media,
23 and I just wanted to elaborate more on media. Media can be
24 really instrumental in changing the views on how Canada
25 views Indigenous women and girls. They could show, you

1 know, how gifted we are, how loved we are, that we're
2 mother, daughter, sisters, aunties. You know, I feel that
3 they can create a lot of social change on how we're
4 perceived because we are worthy. You know, we're loved,
5 we're valued, we're respected, and I feel that media can
6 play a big part in that instead of, you know, headlines
7 that label us and that makes society say it's okay, you
8 know, to kill us or to kidnap us.

9 Family resource centres in all First Nation
10 communities.

11 Women shelters and second-stage housing
12 available in First Nation communes, because we know in
13 Manitoba that there's only four shelters in the 63 First
14 Nations here, and there's no second-stage housing, so that
15 really needs to be addressed because a lot of our women and
16 girls are experiencing violence.

17 Tool kits for Indigenous women and girls on
18 various subjects that impact Indigenous women and girls.

19 And this is key too: Changing government
20 policies and legislation that discriminates against
21 Indigenous women and girls, and creating and enacting
22 legislation that protects Indigenous women and girls
23 against discrimination and violence.

24 National public awareness campaigns that
25 showcase the strengths, gifts, and the beauty of Indigenous

1 women and girls.

2 Reclaiming balance in our communities,
3 bringing birthing back to our communities, educating on the
4 sacredness of pregnancy and celebrating the gift of life.

5 Mentorship programs between Indigenous women
6 for Indigenous girls.

7 Review of police practices and the justice
8 system and the impacts both have had on MMIWG families and
9 survivors.

10 Culturally appropriate victim service
11 programs for First Nations.

12 Access to legal representation for
13 Indigenous women and girls and families, as well, because I
14 find it's hard to, you know, go against a system if you're
15 living in extreme poverty yourself. How are you going to
16 find the means to fight such a huge machine?

17 And funding and resources dedicated to
18 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and
19 especially with our women who have gone missing. You know,
20 families are struggling to find the resources to search for
21 that missing loved one. I see it, and I know families
22 personally who are impacted by this, and I see their
23 struggles, and my heart breaks for them. You know, we need
24 to have -- sadly, because it's so common that we have so
25 many missing Indigenous girls here in Canada. Why has

1 there been no mechanism developed specifically, you know,
2 to address this, to ensure that those resources are
3 immediately on the ground for those family members and for
4 those searches? Because time is critical, you know, when
5 we have a missing Indigenous woman or girl. You know, that
6 could potentially find her and save her life.

7 And I also wanted to share, like, you know,
8 it just boggles my mind that we live in this country called
9 Canada, even my own relatives who live in South Indian Lake
10 in Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, my own family members,
11 they're living in third-world conditions. They're
12 struggling to survive. They're not even having their basic
13 human rights met. You know, I'm ashamed of Canada. You
14 know, like, why is this happening? But yet, we're on an
15 international stage showcasing that we're such a good
16 country? If we're such a good country, then governments
17 need to step up to the plate and ensure that those basic
18 means of survival are provided to our First Nation
19 communities.

20 And I also wanted to say that, you know,
21 it's important for -- like one of the grandmothers said,
22 and she's actually sitting right behind me, she said, you
23 know, this National Inquiry is our one opportunity to tell
24 our stories and to create that change, and many of us in
25 the Indigenous community or even our nonIndigenous friends

1 feel that we'll never have another opportunity like this
2 again, so it needs to be done right, and it needs to be
3 meaningful to families and survivors, you know, and I
4 commend Commissioner Audette for the work that she's doing,
5 and -- like, the process has been a struggle, but it's very
6 difficult, you know, to make a machine this huge, you know,
7 flourish with a 2-year mandate, to ensure that people who
8 matter the most are included and their voices are heard, so
9 I think if an extension is granted, it has to be granted on
10 the basis of, like, hearing the voices of MMIWG family
11 members and survivors on what the process should look like,
12 and then acting on those recommendations as well.

13 I don't think I have any other things to
14 add.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask one
16 question?

17 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Sure.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I -- I notice you're
19 reading this off of something -- I notice that you're
20 reading off of a paper, but it's something you prepared for
21 something else. Is it possible for to you -- to send us
22 the --

23 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Yes, yes.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- the written one?

25 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON PYRZ:** Definitely. Like,

1 sharing all these recommendations -- these are not my
2 recommendations. I work with MMIWG families and survivors.
3 These are things I've heard them say repeatedly to
4 governments, you know, to different circles that they're
5 in, that these are changes that they want to see, but what
6 I think is so sad is we don't see a lot of these things
7 being implemented, even though they're -- they've been
8 repeatedly shared by MMIWG family members and survivors.
9 It doesn't take, like, you know, a lot to implement some of
10 these things. Some of them are very basic, and it just
11 boggles my mind as to why, you know, provincial and federal
12 governments have not acted on this, these recommendations,
13 that have been shared repeatedly, not only by me but by,
14 like, several other MMIWG family members and survivors
15 across the country.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's -- thank you,
17 everyone in the family, for sharing today, and -- I mean,
18 you just exemplify what a strong family unit is, the way
19 you comfort each other, the way you're finishing each
20 other's sentences. I wanted to offer Commissioner Audette
21 an opportunity to ask questions or make comments.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** (Speaking in
23 native language). This is where I wish my English would be
24 very, very at the same as your second language, I guess,
25 English, where everything was there. Everything in your

1 message, your words. It was very obvious that Canada
2 failed on your family and your sister, the system, starting
3 when your sister called for help, and to the -- it's sad
4 you have to be here. You have to be here.

5 So -- and I'll do my best. You know, my
6 English, Hilda, so it'll come from the heart, and we have
7 so many --

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'll translate for
9 her.

10 **(LAUGHTER)**

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* I
12 have to say thank you for all of you. I didn't know you.
13 I had the privilege to meet your sister in another
14 capacity, in another life, but always because we lost a
15 loved one or we have a survivor in our family, and not long
16 ago, she was in New York. Your voice resonate at the U.N.
17 about what's going on here in 2018 here in Canada, so you
18 have quite a leader in your family, but I see that you're
19 not alone. Very articulate, very passionate, very
20 dedicated, very -- something needs to change, and
21 Lillian -- you talk -- Lillian?

22 **MS. LIANNA ANDERSON:** Lianna.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Lianna.
24 Lianna, sorry, you talk about I didn't want to come here
25 with anger or I didn't want to -- well, I don't think you

1 need -- I don't know how you can come here without that
2 anger. After all what you explained to us, describe and
3 teach us, us here in this room but also across Canada;
4 people are watching, people are listening, not only our
5 families and survivors or friends, but we have some allies,
6 you know that, but also we have government people following
7 the work of this Inquiry, watching or listening. It depend
8 how we want to see it. So we cannot say everywhere we go
9 that it -- it's not happening or it was an isolated case.
10 You're right. It's -- this -- there's something wrong.
11 The system is wrong. You mention it, and all your
12 recommendation, it's something we need to honour. This
13 Inquiry, we will receive that. I will fight, and I know my
14 colleagues will support this, that very clear, very -- very
15 specific and targeted for real good reason or sad reason,
16 but your recommendation are based on, you said it, too many
17 meetings that you attend, circle, event, or gathering, so
18 there it is, for me, it's powerful, very, very powerful,
19 and I will do everything to make sure that in our report,
20 our report, we like it or not, there's a possibility here
21 to create that chapter that needs to happen where Manitoba
22 government is also accountable, where a municipality is
23 also accountable, our own Indigenous government is also
24 accountable, our people, but citizen of Canada, huh, you
25 mention about this country, they have the power to change,

1 also.

2 So I hope your voice was heard in those
3 kitchen, houses, offices, people that are listening right
4 now, your message, that they cannot deny anymore. They
5 can't. They can be part, though, of that change that we
6 need to have, we need to see and witness. So this is what
7 I -- I -- me, for me, now, I will do to make sure that
8 those recommendation are part of that report, calls for
9 action.

10 I am shocked to hear that in your territory
11 here up north -- I'm from the north. I don't know. My
12 trees are smaller than yours, but it's the same cold.

13 (LAUGHTER)

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Where there's
15 only three shelter -- four, sorry -- to protect the women
16 and the children.

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And all three of them
18 (indiscernible) Manitoba.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yeah.
20 All -- all Manitoba?

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:**
22 (Indiscernible).

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yeah, yeah,
24 yeah. In Quebec, we have 14 on 58 First
25 Nations -- Indigenous communities, and it's not enough.

1 Four, it's unacceptable. It's -- I mean, I am shocked to
2 hear that, so I hope I'm not the only one shocked to hear
3 that, but it hope it doesn't stay there.

4 I still, again, going to repeat what I said
5 this morning: Any government who is listening right now,
6 we don't need to have the report of this important Inquiry
7 to do some action that you mentioned now, so I hope they
8 listen.

9 The other thing, also, I did receive all
10 your evidence. For me, this is evidence, and this is
11 truth; this is fact. I will carefully read it. I know my
12 colleagues will do it because we have to read all the
13 testimonies that families share to us or give us, and if we
14 have question, and I'm sure we'll do, we have an
15 opportunity in this journey, also, to show -- *comment on*
16 *dit en anglais* -- what Wendy is doing, the work of Wendy,
17 forensic review -- see, English -- and what went wrong and
18 why. Canada needs to know what went wrong and why. They
19 need to know, also, did we do the same thing to a Canadian
20 woman? Did we treat her family the same way that we
21 treated our Indigenous women? Canada needs to know that,
22 so we have that responsibility. That's how I see my role
23 as a Commissioner, so *merci beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup,*
24 and I'm learning from you how the resilience and the
25 strength but how you cope with that anger, and you're so

1 united, and you have a strong sister, but I see you're not
2 alone.

3 And your mom, to have all your children
4 supporting you, being there with you, it's -- so many moms
5 don't have that, or too many mothers and fathers don't have
6 that, so I hope that people see that it's important to be
7 surrounded by love and by families, and, also, you
8 mentioned how important that people are there to support
9 the families, and this is what saved us. We got lost when
10 we lost somebody. Who was the best person to support
11 it -- us was the family or a survivor. I want to say thank
12 you. (speaking in native language).

13 *Oui.* There is something we do everywhere we
14 go across Canada. We ask the family first if you would
15 accept on behalf of the National Inquiry a gift, a gift,
16 and this gift, there is a history, where it came and why it
17 came, and it became a beautiful tradition.

18 We follow protocols everywhere we go. I
19 even learn each time I go to a place, some went to a lodge,
20 a sweat lodge, or they were (indiscernible) with sage, and
21 we have our grandmother Bernie, usually, who explain this
22 beautiful gift, and I'll ask --

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** She asked me to, if
24 it's okay.

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** She asked you

1 to do it? Okay. Can you do it?

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. The
3 matriarchs from Haida Gwaii, so one of the grandmothers,
4 Bernie, is from Haida Gwaii, and the matriarchs from her
5 region -- oh, actually, she is coming out.

6 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Thank you,
7 *Maître* Big Canoe.

8 **MS. BERNIE WILLIAMS POITRAS:** Sorry. I'm
9 busy tying eagle feathers in there.

10 I just want to -- first, we were listening
11 to you and to your family, just my, you know,
12 heartfelt -- you know, for your family. I don't know what
13 it feels like. I fully agree with you, though,
14 that -- that the system has to change, and it's very
15 one-sided.

16 I want to also share about the feathers,
17 that these feathers started its journey from my home in
18 Haida Gwaii, and the families across -- across this
19 beautiful land of ours here, and the people in this
20 territory, the spiritual people who have so kindly donated
21 these eagle feathers for the families. Families have also
22 donated all across Canada, and we're just really honoured
23 to give this to you as a gift on behalf of the
24 Commissioners, the Grandmothers, the Elders. I want to say
25 *haw'aa* to you again. *Haw'aa*.

1 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*

2 Another thing I forgot to say, Hilda, about having more
3 voices from families and survivors in this journey, you're
4 right. You're right, and everywhere I go, it is important
5 that the people from your land welcome us and help me in
6 this journey, but, also, the families. You know, some
7 people will say "expert." For me, you're the expert, so
8 yes, from inside, you have an allies who says we have to
9 have more families that help us and guide us in this
10 important and unique journey, so you have my support for
11 that. I forgot to mention that. Thank you.

12 So I would to ask our sister if she has few
13 words for you. Darlene.

14 **MS. DARLENE OSBORNE:** (Speaking in Native
15 language). I thank you, the Anderson family, and I admire
16 your mom. She's so lucky to still have her daughters and
17 her sons, and that was missing in our -- in our family
18 circle. I come from a big family, my husband's family, the
19 Osborne family, and that was missing, and it had to be me
20 and my husband to lead the circle, and we had to take care
21 of our grandchildren.

22 As one of you mention, what's going to
23 happen with the -- when they grow up, and that was our
24 first question when -- when Felicia -- when we lost
25 Felicia. You know, Renata is going to be a teenager, you

1 know. They were just small kids when we lost Felicia.
2 Today, we are struggling. Still, we are struggling because
3 they turn to heavy drugs, and that's what's controlling
4 their lives, but we're not going to give up. We are a
5 strong family, and from my family to yours, we'll continue
6 supporting our families and our -- and our loved ones, our
7 children, especially our grandkids. Those are the ones
8 that we have to take care of. You just mentioned, they
9 were 4 and 7. Ours were about the same age, 2 and 3, and
10 today we see them wasting their lives with drugs and
11 alcohol, and most -- most of our adults are my brothers and
12 my sisters and my sister-in-law, brother-in-laws,
13 they -- they live a sober life, but they don't live a happy
14 life because they're still struggling because we haven't
15 had any closure, but we will. I'm so happy that we had
16 this Inquiry in the north because we all felt that we were
17 the forgotten people of the north, so let's stick together
18 and support each other. (Speaking in Native language).

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* Thank
20 you. *Merci.*

21 **(GIVING OF GIFTS)**

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I think it's on,
23 yeah. Can we get the witness mic on, please?

24 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** Hello?

25 **(LAUGHTER)**

1 **MS. MINNIE ANDERSON:** I want to -- I want to
2 thank everybody for this meeting that we've had, and it's a
3 good thing that it -- that we had it because it'll help out
4 a lot of people with the missing women and girls and for
5 the children that have lost their mothers. I want to thank
6 you all. Thank you very much.

7 **MS. SHEILA NORTH:** *Tansi.* Sheila North,
8 (speaking in Native language).

9 Thank you for -- for coming here and, you
10 know, being with our families here in the north. My name
11 is Sheila North. I'm the Grand Chief of Manitoba
12 Keewatinowi Okimakanak, and I'm also from the Bunibonibee
13 Cree Nation just over there.

14 **(LAUGHTER)**

15 **MS. SHEILA NORTH:** Not that far. It's an
16 honour and a privilege for me to be here this morning, and
17 I know it's a -- a very sacred but also sad time to be with
18 the families. I wanted to bring you greetings on behalf of
19 all of our Chiefs and councils that we work with in the
20 north, the 30 communities that I represent, and about
21 72,000 people in this region. It's a beautiful area, and
22 I'm always happy and glad to be coming home when I come
23 this way. I don't come home enough, but when I do, it's a
24 peaceful place, and I'm -- I'm glad that you're here to
25 experience the beauty and the love that we have, despite

1 the challenges that -- that we carry and -- and have
2 to -- to deal with. You can see the strength and the
3 resilience of our families who just carry the pain, and
4 you'll hear more of them from different stories, and it's
5 too bad that we have to bring them out this way.

6 I -- I'm very grateful, though, that the
7 Inquiry has made it up here. I -- I don't want to get too
8 political because this is a time and place for families to
9 share their stories and a time for some of the -- you know,
10 the concerns that I hear from families will be dealt with
11 in a different way, but I thank you for coming.

12 I -- I do have a sense -- you know, we hear
13 a lot about closure, closure, people want closure, and I
14 hear all the time from families, too, and I can understand
15 that more now in my -- my father, Gilbert North, Gilbert
16 Street North, he's from Cross Lake, but he raised us in
17 Oxford House, and I was telling Counsellor Osborne about
18 it, and her sister, about my -- my grandmother, my dad's
19 mom. She was taken to a TB asylum when my dad was a
20 teenager because she had TB, and so they took her away
21 to -- to OC -- or The Pas, and then my -- my dad and his
22 grandparents lost track of her, and the family never knew
23 where she was, and what happened was she was taken to
24 Birtle, just near Brandon, and then after that, she was
25 taken to Brandon where she died, but she delivered a baby

1 at that time, and that baby was taken by a family in
2 Minnedosa.

3 But my dad was 75 this past fall. All those
4 years when he was a teenager -- think he said he was
5 15 -- to 75 years old, he never heard or found out what
6 happened to his mother. He never knew where she was.
7 Nobody knew where she was. The Government knew because
8 they put her in a grave in Brandon, but we had no idea, and
9 my cousins and my aunties who are very relentless, like
10 this family, they -- they kept digging, and they kept
11 asking questions, and they put it on Facebook, and someone
12 finally -- a volunteer researcher from near Brandon found
13 records of -- of grave sites, and they found my
14 grandmother, and they just found her this fall -- this past
15 fall, so in September, October, around then. That's when
16 we knew where she was, and we went to have -- my parents
17 and my family went to have a little ceremony at the grave
18 site, and somebody donated a headstone, and that was the
19 first time my dad said he had any sense of closure, all
20 those years, not knowing where his mother was, and yet he
21 hid that pain from his family and raised a good family and
22 always treated my mom with respect.

23 And that's the beauty and resilience, but
24 also, that's the pain and reality our people face. They
25 carry a lot of pain, and it -- it's not right in this

1 country that it happens because we -- we have a persona
2 that Canada's so wonderful and peaceful and -- and kind,
3 and yet we hear about these stories, and we hear about what
4 happened to others.

5 I had a chance to -- to reflect on that when
6 we went to New York to talk about this issue just last
7 week, and I was encouraged to know that we are leaders in
8 this topic in the world, and that's one thing I took away
9 and I feel encouraged by, but it doesn't take away the
10 pain.

11 And when you talk about closure, my
12 dad -- he passed away in October, and I think when we talk
13 about it now, my sisters and my mom and I and our family,
14 we think that he was waiting for that closure. He wanted
15 to find out where his mother was, and all -- a lot of times
16 he carried the pain and also talked about how angry he was,
17 but he never told us. It was my mom who told us later, and
18 he didn't -- it doesn't seem like he was ready -- ready to
19 leave this world until he had some closure, and when he
20 finally got it, he felt at peace to go, and he -- he left
21 in October, and when I say that, it doesn't sound real
22 because I feel like I could still call him, but -- but I'm
23 grateful that we're having this opportunity because it's
24 important. It's all the families ever wanted was to be
25 validated, to be heard and to be listened to, but we have

1 to go beyond that. We know the stories, we know the
2 struggles, and it's upon all of us and the Inquiry to start
3 identifying the reasons why this thing -- these things keep
4 happening; the systems, all of the systems, policing, CFS,
5 health, government systems, policies and all that are
6 hurting and hindering the lives of our people, and that has
7 to stop, and I hope, that -- you know, that -- that the
8 leadership at the Inquiry will -- will see -- will have a
9 really clear picture so you can relay it to -- relay it to
10 Canada and the world of where the problems are and then,
11 you know, talk about the solutions that you're hearing from
12 the families because we know the solutions. We want to
13 take care of ourselves. We have the right to take care of
14 ourselves, and we -- we want to do that, and it's high
15 time.

16 So that's where I'll leave it. I want to
17 encourage everyone that's here to be brave. I know you are
18 already. I'm hearing that there's different people here
19 from different parts of Canada that are here to tell their
20 stories, too, so I'm really surprised and -- you know, it's
21 very -- it's encouraging to see so many people coming
22 together to -- to share their grief, but I wish the rest of
23 the Inquiry well and the rest of the families well, and
24 thank you, and -- and Hilda for sharing your story, as
25 well, and the whole story and Minnie. Thank you. It was

1 very nice to meet you.

2 Yeah, and that's it. Thank you very much to
3 all of your staff that are here and all the support staff
4 from the region, as well, and all the Elders.

5 (Speaking in Native language). Thank you.

6 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
8 Audette, before we actually have an adjournment, before
9 the -- before the next family -- or survivors before us, I
10 notice that some of the health support staff and others are
11 standing there with drums, and usually what that means is
12 they want to circle the family with love and drum, and so
13 if the family could sit here. I don't know if Jade (ph) or
14 someone wants to -- Bernie? Sorry. Warrior Women.
15 Warrior Women. Did you have a microphone? I'm actually
16 going to join them, guys, too, so -- I'm going to grab my
17 drum there (indiscernible).

18 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** All right. This is a
19 song that we sing for strength. It's a song to remind us
20 that especially as Indigenous women that we are warriors.
21 It's a song that came to Martina Pierre from the
22 Lillooet Nation in B.C. in a sweat about 30 years ago. It's
23 never to be sung in anger, and we sing it to cleanse you.
24 We sing it not just to shower you with love and strength
25 but with comfort and peace because you've done some good

1 hard work here today, and we choose to honour you with one
2 of -- with one of our treasures, with one of our songs, to
3 raise our hands and to say *hiatchka* (ph) for leading the
4 way for so many other families to be brave.

5 (SINGING AND DRUMMING)

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I just ask that we
7 have a 10-minute break before the -- 10 or 15? What's your
8 preference? Ten or 15?

9 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: No, I don't
10 make that call.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ten. So a 10-minute
12 break before we have the next witness up.

13 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: *Merci.*

14 --- Exhibits (code: P01P14P0101)

15 **Exhibit 1:** Folder of 20 images displayed during the
16 public testimony of the family.

17 [P01P14P0101_Anderson_et_al_(Anderson)_
18 Exh_1]

19 **Exhibit 2:** Family video of Dawn Anderson, 11.1 MB MP4
20 file, 3 minutes 36 seconds.

21 [P01P14P0101_Anderson_family_video_Exh_2]

22 **Exhibit 3:** Folder of 20 images displayed during the
23 public testimony of the family.

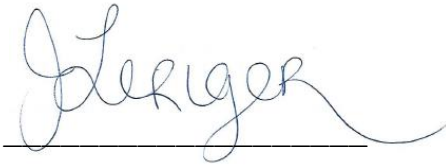
24 [P01P14P0101_Anderson_et_al_(Anderson)_
25 Exh_1]

Hilda Anderson Pyrz, Dennis Anderson, Keith Anderson, Carol Wood, Lianna Anderson, Melvin Anderson, Minnie Anderson & Arla Taia (Dawn Anderson)

- 1 **Exhibit 4:** Family video of Dawn Anderson, 11.1 MB MP4
- 2 file, 3 minutes 36 seconds.
- 3 [P01P14P0101_Anderson_family_video_Exh_2]
- 4 --- Upon adjourning at 2:53 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jenessa Leriger", written over a horizontal line.

Jenessa Leriger

May 10, 2018