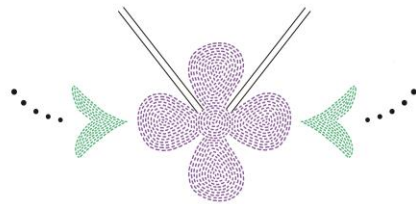


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Best Western Nor'wester Hotel
McGillivray & Kaministiquia Rooms
Thunder Bay, Ontario**



PUBLIC

Tuesday December 5, 2017

Public Volume 38

**Lillian Southwind, Candice Panacheese & Ina
Commanda, In relation to Viola Isabel Panacheese;**

**Vicki Loon, Mary Skunk, Glenda Skunk, Melissa Skunk
& Chief Connie McKay,
In relation to Sarah Skunk;**

**Charlotte Murray,
In relation to Verna Patricia Sturgeon-Gliddy**

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II

APPEARANCES

Aboriginal Legal Services	Non-appearance
Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario	Sandra Montour (Representative)
Animakee Wazhing #37, Eagle Lake First Nation, ANAFN/Grassy Narrows First Nation, Obashkaanda-gaang, Ojibway Nation of Saugeen	Non-appearance
Assembly of First Nations	Non-appearance
Association of Native Child Family Services Association of Ontario (ANCFSAO)	Katherine Hensel (Counsel)
Government of Canada	Anne Turley, Sarah Churchill-Joly (Counsel), Jennifer Clarke (Paralegal)
Government of Ontario	Catherine Rhineland Emma Haydon (Counsel)
Independent First Nations	Katherine Hensel (Counsel) Deanna Keeshig (Representative)
London Abused Women's Centre	Non-appearance
Mishkeegogamaang First Nation	Non-appearance
Ontario Native Womens' Association	Robert C. Edwards, Christina Comacchio (Counsel) Courtney Skye (Representative)

III

APPEARANCES

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, AnânuKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association Inc., Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, Manitoba Inuit Association	Non-appearance
Sioux Lookout Collective	Non-appearance
Thunder Bay Police Services	Tiffany O'Hearn Davies) Edward Marrocco (Counsel)
Toronto Police Services	Non-appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation	Non-appearance

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Best Western Nor'wester Hotel McGillivray & Kaministiquia rooms.

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1	Single digital image displayed during public testimony.	93
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Thunder Bay, Ontario

--- Upon commencing on Tuesday, December 5, 2017 at 9:00
a.m.

--- **OPENING CEREMONIES**

--- **OPENING SONG**

MR. RON KANUTSKI: *Migwetch.* (Speaking in Ojibway). Thank you for being here this week for the Inquiry.

At this time I'd like to turn things over to our Elder, Isabelle Mercier, to commence the opening ceremony.

ELDER ISABELLE MERCIER: *Migwetch, migwetch.*

MR. RON KANUTSKI: And Sam (ph), and Rita (ph), and (indiscernible).

ELDER ISABELLE MERCIER: And I brought the tribe with me. What I'm going to do is a traditional opening. And as an Ojibway woman, I'm a water carrier. I have offered tobacco to our brother to light the smudge and invited three of the drummers from Fort William First Nations to join.

So what I'm going to do is light the smudge. Sam will smudge the room, and bring the -- the -- back. I will do a prayer. And then we will be calling in the grandfathers. And the reason we're calling in the grand -- we're doing the calling in the grandfather song is we have

1 people who have -- were not here at the opening.

2 And when we sing this song we're asking the
3 Creator to come and be with us, but also the ancestors of
4 the people to come and support them as they come and share
5 their voice, share their spirit, and share the journey.

6 So I will now go to our brother and we will
7 smudge -- excuse me, Brother, can we smudge the women and
8 the drums and the bundle first, please.

9 I'll ask you to stand if you can.

10 --- OPENING PRAYER

11 --- OPENING SONG

12 MR. RON KANUTSKI: Good morning, everybody.
13 I would like to encourage people that are just coming in to
14 join us to come on in and take a chair.

15 A gentle reminder, please, turn your ringers
16 off on your phones during the testimony. It can be very
17 distracting when the phone starts going off because we all
18 have that desire to want to answer the phone, and then
19 we're all trying to answer our phones, and everyone's
20 checking, and so if we could just shut them off, and put
21 them on mute at this time.

22 And I also was asked to mention these -- one
23 more time from the committee that -- for family members who
24 would like a sweat lodge ceremony, this evening, at Dilico
25 at 7:00 p.m. this evening, there will be one conducted

1 there. Please, sign up at the registration table. I
2 believe, for families that are here they will also provide
3 a taxi service to attend that ceremony.

4 We have craft activities happening in the
5 health -- in the health room, McKenzie "A" upstairs, with
6 Children's Centre Thunder Bay, they will be here. And the
7 Elders' room is in McKenzie "B" upstairs.

8 And also it says again, "Please, no film or
9 photography." I know it seems kind of weird because you
10 see a whole bunch of cameras here, and it is -- it is being
11 broadcasted out, but they don't want people taking pictures
12 and photos on the outside at the request of some of the
13 families as well, so please, no extra photography or
14 filming. And I believe that's all I have on that paper.

15 Again, we have a number of health support
16 here in the room, in purple shirts, some of them are
17 wearing sweaters, I think they're chilly still this
18 morning, and -- but they are around -- could I maybe just
19 bring my health support team up? Just so people can see
20 them. All the health support that are here this morning,
21 if you could just come on up and greet -- greet everybody.

22 Because these are a number of organizations
23 throughout the city that have joined us, and I have
24 actually a piece of paper with both sides -- double sided
25 with agencies that are supporting this conference, so first

1 and foremost we want to say thanks to everybody for being
2 here with us.

3 There's a lot -- okay, come on up every -- we
4 got -- some people are -- I have like, three or four rows
5 here. Okay, we're going -- okay, photograph.

6 She wants me to get out of the way. I'm
7 getting the get out of the way single. Look at her. I
8 know -- I know I'm gorgeous, but look at her. The ladies
9 were admiring my dandruff on my shirt. That's
10 (indiscernible). There's an abundance of dandruff. You
11 look so gorgeous with that.

12 If we could have a round of applause for all
13 our support who's come out to join us, thank you so much
14 ladies. I've noticed there's no gentlemen there. Health
15 support, just one -- just one.

16 So I will wait -- our Commissioners --
17 Commissioner, would you like to share anything this
18 morning?

19 Brian Eyolfson is here with us. I keep
20 saying that wrong probably, but Eyolfson?

21 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Yes -- yeah.

22 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Good, all right. Yeah.

23 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Just want to
24 say good morning, everybody, thank you for being here on
25 this snowy and windy morning.

1 I especially want to thank for firekeepers
2 out there for tending to the sacred fire for us while we're
3 here this week.

4 I want to acknowledge yesterday we heard a
5 lot of truths shared here. Was a -- a long day, and we
6 heard a lot of difficult things, but I think we also saw a
7 lot of strength and resilience from family members and
8 survivors, and I want to thank them for sharing their
9 truths, and for some of the -- the recommendations that
10 people shared with the Inquiry as well yesterday.

11 So I -- I also want to acknowledge the
12 drummers and -- the drum and our Elders and helpers for
13 helping us do this work in a good way, in guiding us.

14 And we also have a, a busy schedule today, so
15 I look forward to continuing to do this work with everybody
16 today, so I -- I thank everybody for coming here to share.
17 And I thank everybody who's here for support in whatever
18 capacity you're here to support the families and survivors
19 and the work of the Inquiry, *chi-migwetch*.

20 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Okay. Oh, great our
21 family has -- is here, and we're ready to commence.
22 They're waiting for one family member who is actually stuck
23 in Thunder Bay. I should have -- could are picked them up
24 with the four wheel drive this morning. But they'll be
25 joining us in a little bit.

1 I do -- I'm looking for a Dorothy Swift Wolf
2 (ph), if anybody knows who that is. And I believe we have
3 something that belongs to her. I thought I was getting a
4 beautiful presentation this morning. I was all excited, I
5 thought, "Wow, I haven't gotten an Eagle Feather in a long
6 time," but no, apparently it's not mine. We're just trying
7 to get this back to the rightful keeper. So if anybody
8 knows Dorothy, please, let her know that we have something
9 that's -- belongs to her.

10 Also, we have a session that was supposed to
11 be in-camera that it will be public, I believe, at 11:00
12 and upstairs, so we'll have two public sessions going on at
13 once, thank you.

14 I'm going to turn things over to the counsel
15 here.

16 **Hearing # 1**

17 **Witnesses: Lillian Southwind, Candice Panacheese**
18 **and Ina Commanda**

19 **In Relation to Viola Isabel Panacheese**

20 **Heard by Commissioner: Brian Eyolfson**

21 **Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox**

22

23 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Good morning, Mr.
24 Commissioner. I present to you the family of Viola Isabel
25 Panacheese. Today we have Bruce (ph) Panacheese on the

Hearing - Public
Lillian Southwind, Candice
Panacheese & Ina Commanda
(Viola Isabel Panacheese)

7

1 very right, Lily Panacheese, or Lillian, sorry, Southwind,
2 and in front of me is Candice Panacheese. The family would
3 like to do a promise to tell the truth on the feather.

4 So Mr. Registrar, if we could have...

5 And you can do it together.

6 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Good morning.

7 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Do it together, Bryan.

8 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Good morning.

9 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** All of them can hold it
10 together.

11 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Together?

12 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Yeah.

13 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Okay. Good morning,
14 everybody. Welcome.

15 **LILLIAN SOUTHWIND, Affirmed:**

16 **CANDICE PANACHEESE, Affirmed:**

17 **INA COMMANDA, Affirmed:**

18 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Here's your microphone.

19 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Oh, do I start
20 talking?

21 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So Mr. Commissioner, we're
22 going to start with Lily.

23 Lily, I'm wondering if you can tell the
24 Commissioner a little bit about who you are, where you're
25 from, and where you grew up.

1 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** My name is Lily
2 Southwind. I was -- I'm the oldest of seven. My parents
3 had five girls and two boys. This is my sister, Candy
4 (ph), and my brother, Bruce. He's baby brother. Candy is
5 like, right in the middle.

6 We are originally from Mishkeegogamang. My
7 mother was originally a Sachigo Lake Band member. My
8 father was from Mishkeegogamang. Currently I live in Lac
9 Seul. Lac Seul is about a 40 minute drive from Sioux
10 Lookout.

11 Sioux Lookout is where my mother went
12 missing, and I've kind of just stayed around there hoping
13 that some day she'll come back.

14 But it's been a -- a struggle for our family.
15 I'm just waiting for my auntie, who's supposed to be
16 sitting here with us, my mother's sister. She's taking
17 taxi, and she's probably shoveling -- I don't know.

18 **(LAUGHTER)**

19 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** But when -- when --
20 when we -- when I knew we were going to be coming here to
21 share our story again. I've shared it so many times over
22 the years and it's never gotten easier, but I was asked
23 write something, "You can give yourself notes." And I
24 said, "You know what? I'm not going to do that. I'm just
25 going to talk from my heart. Talk about my mom from my

1 heart. I don't need to write notes."

2 But -- like I said, it's been a struggle for
3 all of us. We've all hoped, and still hope today -- I do
4 anyway, that my mom will come back, or...

5 I want to acknowledge my former Chief,
6 she's sitting behind me, Connie Gray-McKay, she's been a
7 whole bunch of support in all these years, and my
8 community, who has been a bunch of support too, not only
9 for myself but for all my siblings, my -- my family.

10 I'm sure they would have all wanted to be
11 here too, but everybody's busy and -- well, not busy, but
12 such short notice to make plans because we all have
13 families.

14 So I'm the oldest of seven kids that my
15 parents had. My father went to residential school. He
16 went to Pelican Falls, not for very long, for three, four
17 years. My mother went to the residential school in Kenora.

18 Our -- my dad was a -- a miner. He always
19 worked in mines. He was a driller. So we grew up -- the
20 first ten years of their marriage we grew up in the Red
21 Lake area, and so we lived in towns. And I'm thankful for
22 that because during that time a lot of our people were --
23 like, the kids were sent to residential school, and we were
24 lucky that we didn't have to go. We went to public
25 schools.

1 My parents separated off and on from 1980.
2 They would get together, try their relationship. She'd
3 leave again. And it went on like that right until she went
4 missing.

5 My mother went missing in August of 1991,
6 from Sioux Lookout. I reported her missing. She was
7 living in Winnipeg at the time with my sisters. I was
8 going to school in Sioux Lookout, and my father had -- he
9 was working out at the mine and he came out to visit. He
10 was on his two week off shift, and he took my boys -- my
11 two older boys, Bruce and Brian (ph), for a taxi ride from
12 Sioux Lookout to Winnipeg to go visit their *Kookum*, my mom.

13 My parents got to see some of their
14 grandchildren; Bruce, Brian, Joey (ph), Ronnie (ph), and
15 Merissa (ph), and Chopper (ph) -- Candy's oldest. They got
16 to see those grandkids. Right now they have lots. I don't
17 -- I can't even -- I know I have nine.

18 But when my mom went missing she was bringing
19 my boys back. Both my parents were bringing my boys back.
20 And my dad was going back to work at the mine. At the time
21 it was called Bond Gold (ph).

22 But anyway they were bringing the boys back
23 from a visit and my dad told me -- actually my -- both my
24 parents, they told me, "Lily, we're going to try again."
25 And I thought, "No. Don't. I'm just tired of you guys

1 trying, break up, try again, break up." And my dad -- at
2 the time said, "This time -- this time it's going to be
3 good. We're going to do it this time." And so I wasn't
4 happy because I was tired of the hurt of going through that
5 break up all over again.

6 Even -- at the time -- I was 23 years old at
7 the time. I was an adult. I had my own kids. And for
8 them to tell me that again, I wasn't happy. I'm sure the
9 rest of my siblings probably would have been happy, but I
10 wasn't.

11 But anyways, my dad told me, "Keep mom here
12 until I come back out. I'll be back in two weeks. I'll be
13 back. Just keep her here and we'll go from there."
14 "Okay." Told him, "Okay."

15 And Sioux Lookout -- her brother came to
16 visit in Sioux -- her brother was Arthur Munro (ph), he
17 came to town from Sachigo, and they got together and she
18 started drinking, and she -- she was gone for like, I don't
19 know, two, three days already.

20 And the last time I saw her she was passed
21 out at -- at the time it was called the Welcome Hotel (ph).
22 And I tried to wake her up because I wanted to take her
23 home. Take her to my home, and, "That's enough, like,
24 don't drink no more." And she told me, "I'll be okay.
25 I'll be okay. No, just leave me here." And I told my

1 Uncle Arthur, "Keep an eye on her. I'm going to let her
2 sleep. I'll come back and I'll come and get her. Don't
3 let her go anywhere." He said, "Okay." I didn't go back,
4 like, right away that day.

5 I remember that day because it was such a
6 beautiful day. It was sunny, and it was such a nice day
7 that day. And I came out of that hotel and I thought,
8 "This day is beautiful. I have to come back and get mom
9 and take her home." I didn't go back right away. When I
10 did go back they had apparently been thrown out of the
11 hotel room. I don't know where they went, but I went
12 looking for her. I went to -- well, I asked people in
13 Sioux Lookout, and in town, "Like, where do people go?"
14 "Like, where do people go to drink?" "Where can I go
15 look?" Sioux Lookout's a small town. But I looked
16 everywhere where people said I should go look. "Go check
17 here." "Go check there." "Go check by the water." "They
18 usually hang around here." So that's what I did.

19 A few days later my Auntie Daisy Munro (ph)
20 came to town. And she asked me, "Where's -- where's your
21 mom?" And I said, "I don't know. I've been looking for
22 her." She told me right away, "Lily, go report her
23 missing. Come on, let's go report her." And I -- I told
24 her, "You know, I don't --"

25 There's my auntie. That's my mom's sister.

1 It's my Aunt Ina Commanda. My mom's second oldest sister,
2 because Mandy's (ph) older.

3 Seat between us, Ina. Tell Margo (ph) to
4 come and sit here.

5 **MS. INA COMMANDA:** I got pictures
6 (indiscernible).

7 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Come and sit here.

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Candy.

9 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** This is my Auntie
10 Margo Chum (ph).

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

12 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** She's a Chum now,
13 hey. She's my mother's sister, and my Auntie Ina Commanda.

14 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No, I'll sit here.

15 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Margo, sit down here
16 (speaking Ojibway language) sit down.

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Pardon?

18 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Sit down here.

19 **(LAUGHTER)**

20 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Silly auntie.

21 So we went to report her missing in August of
22 1991. It was the 13th or the 14th because I'm sure it was
23 a Wednesday. But we -- I -- my Auntie Daisy came with me
24 to report her missing. We continued to look for her over
25 the next few days, and the police became involved and they

1 had helicopters and police dogs search. They interviewed a
2 lot of people. People that she was with -- that we think
3 she was with before she went missing. My -- my Uncle
4 Arthur was one of them.

5 So for -- for maybe two, three weeks from the
6 time that I reported her missing she -- the police, to me
7 did what they could, like, after a few weeks they said,
8 "Okay, we -- we've -- we -- we have to pull the team that
9 came from the south. We have to -- there's just -- they --
10 they can't look anymore." So I said, "Okay, well, what --
11 what else can we do?" We're -- we were still looking.

12 They wanted the most current pictures of her.
13 I had some. When -- the first time they asked me for those
14 pictures I had this gut feeling -- like, just feeling --
15 don't give it to them, and I wish I followed my gut.

16 Like, my parents -- my mother especially, she
17 was -- she -- she was a gambler like, she'd always say,
18 "Just always follow your gut, Lily. Follow your gut. You
19 know, there's -- there's a reason to go with your gut --
20 gut instinct." She always told us too, to share. "If
21 somebody's hungry, feed them. If they're cold, bring --
22 bring them in your home, let them be warm. And to feed
23 them."

24 My dad on the other hand was -- I think he
25 was cheap.

1 (LAUGHTER)

2 MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND: He -- he'd always
3 say, "You know I work hard and I work for my family. I --
4 I work to feed them, to clothe them, to keep them warm. I
5 don't work to -- for you, Viola, to bring all your friends
6 into our house. You know, I -- I -- I don't work for them.
7 I work for you, and you, and you, and you."

8 And that day when the police asked me for
9 those pictures I -- I gave them reluctantly, because we
10 didn't have -- they didn't have current -- like, a current
11 picture of her to post -- like, to share in hopes of
12 finding her, so I gave it to them. They said -- I told
13 them when I did give it to them, I said, "I want these
14 back. I want them back right away." And they said, "Yeah,
15 we'll give them back. We're just going to make copies.
16 You can come and get them." Okay, so I gave it to them.

17 And every now and then a police officer would
18 come and see me, give me an update, and, "This is what
19 we're doing now. This is who we've been talking to."
20 They'd come ask me again and again, "Is there anybody else
21 that you think she would go see or who she might be with?"

22 At the time when my mother went missing she
23 had cancer. She was taking -- I think she was on chemo
24 therapy, right, Donna (ph)?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

1 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** But she had to be
2 near a doctor. And her being in Sioux Lookout at that
3 time, away from her doctor, she shouldn't have been away
4 too long because she had regular appointments and she
5 needed to see her doctor.

6 At that time -- I knew in the days that she
7 was -- hadn't returned I knew something was wrong because I
8 had her medication. She had a bag, and all her medication
9 was in that bag. And I thought, some -- something's wrong
10 because she wouldn't -- she wouldn't stop taking her
11 medication.

12 I -- so I reported her in 1991. I didn't
13 hear from the police after a while for -- I don't know how
14 many -- maybe a couple of years -- two or three years
15 after. There were different officers that went through her
16 file. They're -- it would change over. A new officer
17 would come in and then another officer would take over,
18 another officer. I think I went through -- I don't know,
19 three or four different officers that I spoke with.

20 But anyway, during that time -- during those
21 years I hadn't received my mom's pictures back. I gave
22 them three of them. And they didn't give them back. I'd
23 go to the Sioux Lookout detachment and I'd ask for them and
24 they'd say -- the first time they told me, "You can't get
25 them back until the case is closed." Like, and I said,

1 "Well, you -- you told me you were just going to make a
2 copy." Like, "You said you were just going to make a copy
3 and give me my originals back." I walked away upset.

4 And again my gut instinct told me, go back,
5 go back. So I went back again and again and again. I
6 don't know how many times I went back to that detachment.
7 And I don't even remember over what period of time I -- it
8 was at least a couple of years, at least. And finally one
9 day I just said, "Okay. I'm going there and I'm just going
10 to stay there. They're going to have to drag me out of
11 that building. I'm just going to stay there and get my
12 pictures back. I'm not going to let them tell me that the
13 case has to be closed," or I don't know how many different
14 things -- what kind of different things they told me. They
15 told me many things. But that one day I went there. I was
16 determined to get them back.

17 I wanted them for my siblings, myself, my
18 kids. I sat there. I went there that day, in the morning,
19 and I -- the lady came to the -- the window -- was a glass
20 window and, "You're sitting here for nothing. You're not
21 going to be getting anything today." I said, "I don't
22 care. I'm just going to sit here. You guys keep telling
23 me that you -- you said you were going to give them back.
24 You -- that's -- that's what you said." I sat there all
25 afternoon.

1 My husband -- he wasn't my husband at the
2 time. He was my partner. But he came in that afternoon
3 and said, "Lily, we got to go. Our ride is ready to go, so
4 we got to go." And I said, "No." So he left -- I don't
5 know. Then he came back again. And I'm glad he came back
6 when he did because at that time the lady came to the
7 window and said, "The sergeant would like to talk to you."
8 Okay. Finally, I thought, I'm getting my pictures. All it
9 took was for me to sit here all day.

10 I went into that office. He took -- he took
11 us into -- myself and my husband, into that office, and he
12 said, "We don't have your mother's pictures." I said,
13 "What do you mean?" "We don't have them. Her file was
14 lost." I said, "Well, what do you mean lost? How can a
15 file go lost?"

16 And at the time the Sioux Lookout detachment
17 was in an older building and they were moving into a newer
18 building. They hadn't moved yet. But they were in the
19 process of gradually moving into the new building. And
20 that officer -- that sergeant told me, "Her file may have
21 gone into the burn pile." And I just sat there and I was
22 in shock. My first thought was, "So when was it lost?"
23 "How long has it been lost?"

24 All that time when things could have been
25 done, or people could have been interviewed again, all that

1 time it's -- it's gone. Like, when did they realize that
2 it was lost? Was it every time I came to the police
3 station to go try and get my mom's pictures back? Like, I
4 don't know that. I'd like to know that. What if I wasn't
5 persistent and determined to get my mom's pictures back?
6 Would her file still be gone today?

7 Over the years -- that was 1991, all the
8 people -- the first year or two, I -- I would -- I saw the
9 file. I saw all the statements that people made and
10 signed. There was many statements in there. I was --
11 because I'd go check every now and then, like, I'd go --
12 I'd ask, "So what's going on with the file now?" "What's
13 going on with my mom's case?" "Is there anything new?"
14 I'd go ask that, and I saw it -- I saw the file a couple of
15 times.

16 I was allowed to look at it and -- because
17 they'd ask me, "Is there anybody else that we could
18 interview?" And I saw those people that signed their names
19 on -- on those statements that they made. And now -- that
20 day when I was told that her file was lost and it may have
21 gone in the burn pile. I'd asked that officer, "So now
22 what?" And he told me, "We're rebuilding it. We're
23 rebuilding the file on officer notes. We're working on it.
24 Those officers have moved to different places, but we're
25 going to rebuild it with their notes."

1 And I thought, "With their notes?" What
2 about all those statements that people made? Like, they're
3 -- a lot of those people that she was with -- today they're
4 -- they are -- they'll all gone. Like, they've all passed,
5 and you can't even go ask them anything now. They probably
6 could have, like, in the first few years, but they're all
7 gone.

8 My Uncle Arthur passed away a year after my
9 mother went missing. My father died not even a year after
10 we reported my mother missing. August is not a good month.

11 But you know, in all of this -- in all of --
12 all this -- with my mom being missing and -- she -- she
13 taught me a lot of good things, and she -- her and I
14 were -- I was close with her. And when -- when I think
15 about all this of her being missing, and I often think,
16 "Why?" Like, "Creator, why -- why are you putting me and
17 my siblings, my family -- like, through this?" "Why is it
18 -- why does it have to be like this?" "Why can't we just
19 find our mom, bring her home?"

20 When she told me she had -- she had cancer.
21 She sat me down at my kitchen table and she said, "I want
22 to ask you two things, Lily." And I knew it was something
23 serious because she -- she never sat me at the kitchen
24 table. Like, she never -- so when -- she sat down first
25 and I sat down and I knew she was -- it was serious,

1 whatever she was going to say. She said, "I'm not well.
2 We know -- we -- I have cancer. I want you to do two
3 things for me."

4 "The first thing I want you to do is bury me
5 -- bury me beside my brother. I'm not going to live
6 forever. But bury me beside my brother, my brother Henry
7 (ph)." I said, "Okay." "And the second thing I want you
8 to do is take care of the girls." Meaning my younger
9 sisters. "Take care of the kids." My first thought after
10 she told me that -- I didn't say, "Okay." My first thought
11 was, "Well, what about me?" "Who's going to take care of
12 me?" But I told her, "Okay, Mom, I'll try to do what you
13 want me to do."

14 And when she went missing I still have
15 that -- you know, I -- I told her I would take her home and
16 put her beside her brother. I think -- today I -- I really
17 believe that if she knew my dad wasn't -- if she knew my
18 dad was gone I think she'd want to be with -- beside my
19 dad. And my dad and my uncle are buried in different
20 places. But I do want to find her. I do want to take her
21 home. I do want to do what I told her I would do for her.

22 I also think that in all of this -- over the
23 years, and why we haven't found her, and I really believe
24 the Creator -- at the time I probably would have died too.
25 I think He's just had mercy on maybe me. I don't know.

1 Maybe my siblings. And -- and I want -- I want to find
2 her.

3 But I also think of other families that have
4 gone through what we went through. You know, the OPP
5 losing her file -- for how long? Like, what if I didn't go
6 ask for my pictures all the time? Would they have even
7 known? Like, it could have been still missing. Somebody
8 made a boo-boo somewhere along the way. And from all of
9 this I want something good to come out of it. I want --
10 for one thing I -- I don't want any other family to ever go
11 through that frustration. That anger. That anguish. That
12 -- there's so many emotions still today. I get angry
13 because I feel my family was wronged. You're supposed to
14 help people. You didn't help.

15 I -- today my mother's file is not even in
16 Sioux Lookout. It's in a vault in Orilla. What if
17 somebody had something to say? They would go to the Sioux
18 Lookout OPP detachment, "I have something I think you
19 should know." Like, the file's not even there. I asked
20 why it was in a vault. They couldn't even tell me why it
21 was in a vault.

22 My daughter happened to be going to school in
23 Kitchener, and when I was told that my mom's file was in a
24 -- in -- in Orilla I thought, "Hey, Orilla around here." I
25 was visiting her at the time. Maybe I could go there.

1 Like, from Kitchener to Orilla, like it's -- it's around
2 here somewhere. Maybe I could go there and check. I
3 called that officer, and he said he'd need time to get it,
4 but for me I was just nearing the end of my visit with my
5 daughter and we had to go back home. So I didn't get the
6 chance to go look.

7 I've prayed -- I was told one time to --
8 like, I really want my mom. I want to take her home. And
9 this Elder told me, "You know what, pray to the water
10 spirit, to the forest spirit. Pray to them. Ask them to
11 release her. Let her go." I did that years ago and
12 they're not releasing her.

13 I don't know where she is and I wish I did.
14 It would be good if we had closure. Like, she would never
15 ever leave her kids or her -- like, her grandkids. She
16 loved the grandkids that she did get to meet. She would
17 never leave them. I need a minute.

18 Ina. (Speaking Ojibway language).

19 **MS. INA COMMANDA:** Yes, that's my beautiful
20 sister up there sitting on that film. And doing what she
21 always liked to do. She liked to play cards. And it is
22 true what Lily says, that she'd never leave on her own and
23 leave her kids and her grandchildren. She was so proud of
24 her grandchildren.

25 But I'm going to say this in -- in my

1 language because I don't know how to say it in -- say it
2 properly in English language. When they did that
3 investigation (speaking Ojibway language). As if -- it is
4 how I still feel too, like, as if she's -- you know, when
5 you ask the police something they say -- as if you're
6 bothering them. "I don't have time for this." But to us
7 this goes on and on. I hear about the other families and I
8 just cry for them too. Evil has touched us.

9 I remember when I lived in the bush with my
10 grandmother, and my grandmother never seen a white person
11 until I was taken away to school. And she used to hide me
12 under her skirts. Calling my dad not for me -- not -- for
13 me to take -- be taken away. And we -- we used to live in
14 the bush in a tent, even in the wintertime. I remember
15 that. And I was always so warm. Never hungry. Just me
16 and grandma.

17 And then my dad took us to Pickle Crow Mine,
18 where he was a miner, and that's where things changed. And
19 they learned about booze. They learned how to fight their
20 women. Things like that. It was never like that before.
21 I don't even remember ever getting hit by my parents or
22 even from my grandma. I have really good memories of that,
23 and I -- I just long for that. Where we loved each other.
24 I would never, ever think of hurting another person. And
25 yet we still get hurt by force and -- and it goes into

1 murder.

2 I have a niece too, that was brutally
3 murdered in Winnipeg. It's going to be two years in
4 February. Still there -- there's no answer there either.
5 And the police -- one of the detectives was talking to us
6 last year. He -- my -- my niece is the spokesperson for
7 that -- for Marilyn (ph), and she lives in Big Told Lake.
8 And she told me, she says, "I'm so upset." She says, "I
9 can't talk to that detective."

10 So we had a memorial in Winnipeg for her last
11 year, and she -- I talked to that detective, and told him I
12 was really -- I couldn't understand what he meant. He
13 said, "It was her lifestyle." And I said, "Does that mean
14 because she didn't live up to like, some people's standards
15 that they wouldn't bother doing anything about it?" But he
16 did apologize and he said that, "I'm sorry that there was
17 miscommunication there." But we still haven't heard
18 anything.

19 But anyway, I pray for all of us, every one
20 of us who has gone through this. It never leaves. And
21 I -- I just love my sister's kids so much, and even when --
22 they're -- they're really something. They made it on their
23 own. Their father was looking for my sister. And he
24 hopped a train trying to get to Winnipeg to look for her
25 there. He fell off the train and my sister had to go and

1 identify him. My sister called me that morning and she
2 says, "Ina, what am I going to do?" And I says, "Well, you
3 have to go." I was already living here in Thunder Bay at
4 that time. So they -- and you know, these -- these
5 children -- somebody was looking for them. Looking for --
6 looking after them, I mean, and that person is God.

7 And I thank every one of you for -- for
8 letting me share this. It's hard, as you all know. Every
9 -- every one of you that are here you have gone through the
10 same thing, and I am glad for -- for those you who can bury
11 your loved one.

12 For these kids -- their mom is still out
13 there. My -- my mother died believing that she was taken
14 by Rapture. Yes. Thank you very much.

15 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Ina, there was an article
16 -- a newspaper article that you brought with you this
17 morning. I'm wondering if we could get that up on the
18 screen.

19 **MS. INA COMMANDA:** Oh, yeah. I've got it
20 right here.

21 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** No, no, the one that you
22 gave me. There was a short little clip.

23 There, on the screen you can see the article
24 that I'm talking about.

25 **MS. INA COMMANDA:** This -- this one here --

1 this police -- this -- this one I saved from Sioux Lookout
2 paper at the time it came out. That's the only -- that's
3 the only newspaper printing that -- to my knowledge, that
4 was ever done. There was no other...

5 Was there, Lily? Or is that -- that's the
6 only time, hey? Just a little article like that; that's
7 it.

8 And I took my parents there too. I was
9 working here for -- for the lodge, and I took time off for
10 two weeks to take my mom and dad to Sioux Lookout. And we
11 drove through every bush road that I could point my truck
12 into. And my dad would not give up. We used to come out
13 of there dark.

14 Hey, Margo?

15 Yeah. Took my sister, Margo, too. And that
16 is the only thing that was ever written about her. That's
17 26 years ago.

18 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** (Indiscernible) Bruce?
19 Lily? Anybody else wants to speak?

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You were asking for
21 this one too?

22 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** I was asked if I had
23 any recommendations, or -- and I thought about it. I don't
24 think -- I -- I wouldn't want any family ever to go through
25 dealing with all of this, like we have. Well -- and I know

1 there's many -- many different stories, and some -- you
2 know I came here to -- to Thunder Bay last year and the
3 first time I couldn't even tell my mother's story because I
4 was listening to all these other people's stories and I
5 thought, "Oh, my gosh, they have it a whole lot worse than
6 we do." We are -- we have it bad too, but there's other
7 people that have it a lot worse.

8 And in thinking about -- I think about my mom
9 all the time. And I remember things that she taught me,
10 and one thing is to -- if you can make something good come
11 out of something bad, then do it.

12 And I would like to see -- I don't know --
13 you know, the -- the police force anywhere probably have so
14 many different -- so -- so many different cases to deal
15 with and there's just not enough time or people. I would
16 like to see maybe the government -- I don't know. If we
17 have OPP, why can't we have a task force just for missing
18 people? Doesn't have to just be women, but men too, you
19 know we have missing men. Can we have one task force
20 everywhere for those people? OP -- like the police can do
21 so much, but there's -- I know there's not enough manpower.
22 Not enough whatever.

23 I'd also like to see some -- like a VIP
24 protocol, that's my mother's initials, Viola Isabelle
25 Panacheese, VIP protocol for -- they have to do this as

1 soon as somebody's reported missing. They have to follow
2 these procedures right away. Do that -- that VIP protocol,
3 or -- you know.

4 I don't want her -- I don't want her story of
5 being missing for nothing. You know, there's a reason --
6 that's another thing, that's another thing my mom always
7 told me, there's a reason for everything. There's a reason
8 -- every day we go through things every day for something.
9 Sometimes it may not be good and sometimes you're happy and
10 you do good things.

11 And I want my mom to -- just to be for
12 something for her. I also want to find her and take her
13 home. Haven't found her yet. She's somewhere.

14 That picture on the screen right now, that's
15 my mom and my sister Cookie (ph), my baby sister, it was
16 her birthday yesterday, and she messaged me on Facebook and
17 she asked me, "Lily, what time did I hatch?" And I said,
18 "I don't know, but I know you hatched in Sioux Lookout."

19 (LAUGHTER)

20 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** So in looking at that
21 picture I can't even tell if it's daylight or nighttime,
22 because that's what she asked, "Was it daytime or
23 nighttime?" I don't know. But (indiscernible).

24 *Migwetch* (speaking Ojibway language). That's
25 all I want to say. (Indiscernible).

1 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So Mr. Commissioner, I
2 have no more questions.

3 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you.
4 Thank you very much.

5 Lily, I just might have a couple of follow up
6 questions for you, if you don't mind.

7 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Okay.

8 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Okay. So in
9 talking about dealing with the police and when your mother
10 was reported missing, which police force were you dealing
11 with?

12 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** It was the Sioux
13 Lookout detachment.

14 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** The ...

15 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Sioux Lookout OPP.

16 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Okay, and
17 that's who you dealt with throughout?

18 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** Yeah.

19 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Okay. And when
20 was it that you were told that your mother's file was lost?

21 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** You know I tried to
22 think of the year because I knew -- I know that's -- that's
23 important. I married my husband in 1997, and we weren't
24 married yet, so it was in between 1991 and 1997. I know
25 the detachment was in the process of moving to -- from the

1 old building to the new building. They were moving -- they
2 moved in 2003, so before 1997, the file would have been
3 missing -- I don't know -- who knows? I don't.

4 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** And then you
5 said later that the file was in Orilla.

6 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** M'hm, the rebuilt
7 one.

8 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Yeah. And with
9 respect to it being rebuilt, do you have any knowledge?
10 Were you given any information on how successful they were
11 in rebuilding the file?

12 **MS. LILLIAN SOUTHWIND:** He did say there were
13 police office notes. That's all it is, just copies of
14 their notes from their little black book, or whatever they
15 write their notes in. That's all that's in there now. I
16 don't even know if they would have all the officer notes.
17 They -- they -- they should know. They would have to have
18 made a record somewhere. I saw it one time. I -- I was
19 allowed to look at it after because I wanted them to show
20 me something, and that's what I saw was just copies of
21 officer notes.

22 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Okay, thank
23 you. Those are all the follow up questions I had. So I
24 just want to thank you very much for coming and sharing
25 your truth, and what happened --

1 information at the end and put out recommendations that you
2 know, maybe one day will still help you, and hopefully help
3 other families who are going through the same things.

4 But we want to offer you these little tokens,
5 one are seeds, and those seeds you can plant for your
6 family member, and you can look at them when they bloom and
7 hopefully they give you a little bit of hope. A little bit
8 of comfort.

9 The second thing will be some of the red
10 dresses that were made to bring acknowledgment and to bring
11 knowledge about our murdered and missing Indigenous women
12 that were made by the hands of women and the hands of
13 children all over.

14 And as well, we're going to offer you an
15 Eagle Feather each. So that you can continue your journey
16 and use this to help you with your prayers and help you
17 with your daily tasks because you are going through a lot.

18 So we want to just offer these to you and
19 I'll ask the other Grandmother if she wants to say
20 something as well for you.

21 **MS. MARLENE PIERRE:** (Speaking Ojibway
22 language). Your journey's is not over. You will come with
23 -- or you will leave with these items and they will be
24 reminders that we have listened, that other families have
25 listened, the people of Canada will listen to all of your

1 stories, and from that we will gain some peace within.

2 Our stories may never be resolved and yet
3 they may be and that is our hope for every -- each and
4 every one of you in your family and all the other families.
5 So we say, go -- go forward with that great hope, *Migwetch*.

6 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** At this time I'd like to
7 thank the family for coming forward today, and -- and your
8 courage in sharing your -- your truths with the Commission,
9 and we appreciate your -- all the time the energy that
10 you've brought forward to be here. It takes a lot of
11 courage to do what you've done today.

12 To honour yous this morning, we were going to
13 ask the Kookumus (ph) drum to sing a -- a healing song for
14 you and your family and -- and also for your deceased
15 relative as well.

16 I'm not sure if you're huggers or not,
17 sometimes people like to come and share their love, if you
18 want that, we can do that. If you're kind of not into that
19 just give me the one way or the other and I will -- and we
20 can bring huggers out, and whoever wants to hide can hide
21 if you don't want to do that. It's -- it's up to yous.
22 It's a -- if you're okay with people coming to greet you.
23 Yes? Okay.

24 All right, at this time during the healing
25 song, for those of you that want to share your love and

Vicki Loon, Mary Skunk,
Glenda Skunk, Melissa Skunk
& Chief Connie McKay (Sarah Skunk)

1 strength with this family, please, come forward and -- and
2 bring that forward in a handshake or a -- a hug, however it
3 will be accepted by the family, and we'll do that at this
4 time do give them some support -- assist them with their
5 healing. Thank you.

6 --- CLOSING SONG

7 --- Exhibits (code: P01P08P0201)

8 **Exhibit 1:** Digital folder of nine images displayed
9 during public testimony.

10 --- Upon recessing at 10:40 a.m.

11 **Hearing # 2**

12 **Witness: Vicki Loon, Mary Skunk, Glenda Skunk, Melissa**
13 **Skunk, and Chief Connie McKay**

14 **In relation to Sarah Skunk**

15 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

16 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

17 --- Upon resuming at 11:26 a.m.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** (Indiscernible)

19 because you're right beside me. Okay. Good morning,
20 Commissioner Audette. I'd like to introduce the next
21 family that will be sharing a story. And then I'll ask for
22 them to be sworn and promised in. So right beside me is
23 Glenda Skunk, and beside her is Mary Skunk, and beside her
24 is Vicki Loon in the middle, and then we have Melissa Skunk
25 in the red shirt. And providing and assisting us with

Vicki Loon, Mary Skunk,
Glenda Skunk, Melissa Skunk
& Chief Connie McKay (Sarah Skunk)

1 Ojibwe translation today, is Connie Gray McKay. At this
2 point I would ask the Registrar to please -- there -- I
3 will -- we'll walk through each one as there are some
4 different preferences.

5 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Okay. I guess we'll start,
6 right?

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can we please swear
8 in on the Bible, Glenda.

9 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Hi, Glenda.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** You can sit.

11 **MR. REGISTRAR:** You can sit.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** You can sit
13 (indiscernible).

14 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Good morning.

15 **GLEND A SKUNK, Sworn:**

16 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can -- yes. To
18 Mary. And Mary wants to be sworn as well, please.

19 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Both? Okay.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah.

21 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Morning, Mary. I'll pass
22 you the eagle feather.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And the Bible.

24 **MR. REGISTRAR:** And the Bible as well.

25 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Oh --

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Glenda Skunk, Melissa Skunk
& Chief Connie McKay (Sarah Skunk)

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** That's right. This
2 one.

3 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Sorry.

4 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Just -- just the Bible is
5 okay?

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah.

7 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Good morning, Mary.

8 **MARY SKUNK, Sworn:**

9 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Thank you.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And then, Vicki.

11 **MS. VICKI LOON:** (Indiscernible).

12 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Here you go, Vicki. Good
13 morning, Vicki.

14 **MS. VICKI LOON:** Morning.

15 **VICKI LOON, Sworn:**

16 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Thank you. I'll pass both
17 the Bible and the microphone. Good morning. Did you want
18 the eagle feather?

19 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** (Indiscernible).

20 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Okay. Would you like the
21 Bible as well?

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's affirm.

23 Affirm.

24 **MR. REGISTRAR:** Affirm? I forgot your name
25 already.

1 MS. MELISSA SKUNK: Melissa.

2 MR. REGISTRAR: Melissa. Okay. Good
3 morning, Melissa.

4 MELISSA SKUNK, Affirmed:

5 MR. REGISTRAR: Okay. Thank you. I'll put
6 that down. Will Melissa be holding the eagle feather the
7 entire time?

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

9 MR. REGISTRAR: Yeah. You can hold the
10 eagle feather for -- as you're speaking.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

12 I'll just go like that. (Indiscernible).

13 MR. REGISTRAR: Okay. Great. Microphone,
14 okay.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

16 MR. REGISTRAR: Thank you.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So today the family
18 will be sharing the story of their sister and aunt -- will
19 be sharing the story of their sister and aunt, who went
20 missing in 1995. And so what -- what we -- because we
21 have -- because we have four witnesses here, what we just
22 wanted to explain is a number of them speak English, but
23 Connie will be assisting us if there is a misunderstanding,
24 or an interpretation that's not working. She'll be able to
25 then re-ask the question if one of the family members

Vicki Loon, Mary Skunk,
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1 indicates that they need that assistance. So actually, we
2 just like to start with some background. And I'm not sure
3 if Mary -- if you wanted to start. And if you could tell
4 us about who's in your family in terms of sisters and
5 brothers? Who your siblings are?

6 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** There's about -- there was
7 seven sisters, and I'm the oldest. And this is Vicki,
8 she's third -- third oldest. And Glenda is the second
9 youngest.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Did you guys have
11 any brothers as well?

12 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Three, and one passed away
13 on 1995.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And --

15 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** There's seven.
16 Number seven.

17 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Who?

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

19 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Well, we lost -- it's
20 between the -- 1996, that's when my -- my oldest brother
21 passed away. M'hm.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And where did Sarah
23 fit in the order of age, or the oldest you were telling us?

24 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Between me and Vicki.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. One of

Vicki Loon, Mary Skunk,
Glenda Skunk, Melissa Skunk
& Chief Connie McKay (Sarah Skunk)

1 the things, is can you guys share and whoever wants to
2 share first, share a little bit about Sarah. And Sarah's
3 strengths, or maybe growing up, or what you recall about
4 Sarah?

5 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** I guess I'll start first.
6 Well, Sarah -- we were -- we were just young. We didn't
7 really have that -- that teenage life together. We didn't
8 really had that. And as far as I can remember -- I guess I
9 can't really say -- all that I know that Sarah was around
10 when we're small. And we used -- we used to live in Pickle
11 Lake, in the bush. We didn't really have no house. It was
12 just a tent. And there was a log around it that -- I think
13 that was our home. And -- and we -- I think I -- I can't
14 really remember was -- what -- if I was five years-old or
15 six, they -- they were ready about -- I guess, about to go,
16 I guess, to -- to residential school, but -- but there was
17 no room over there. So they didn't bother with us.

18 As far as I can remember was Sarah was next
19 to me. And then we went to -- we went to school, public
20 school in Sunderpat (ph). And we stayed a couple -- I
21 don't even -- a couple years anyways. And then -- then
22 we -- then we moved back to Mishkeegogamang. And I think
23 that's where -- I think she was 12 years-old, and I was
24 about 13 [sic], no -- I mean 14 because I'm older -- two
25 years older than her. And from there, it's just that

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1 our -- our family, like, my dad and -- my late dad and my
2 mom, that's -- things didn't work out for them, like. And
3 I can't really remember about Sarah. I know she was always
4 out, and -- well, she just had a difficult times, I guess,
5 raising up our family. And my mom and dad were, like, they
6 were always fighting, argue. And I -- and that's where I
7 decided to -- to try to get into trouble, so I could leave.
8 And that's exactly what I did because I just want to get
9 away from my -- from -- from all, I guess.

10 And I think I was 14 -- I was very young
11 when -- when I got sent away by -- by law. I -- I did B &
12 E, drinking underage. It's just that one night I drank and
13 I don't really recall if, like, I don't know how many break
14 and enters I did -- I can't really remember that. And
15 Sarah was around that time, and when I left they -- they
16 sent me to reform school. In a -- in Galt, Ontario. And
17 then they just kept on moving me to another -- another one.
18 I think it went by about one -- a year, I think, when I try
19 to remember. And then -- then they moved me to another
20 form school in Fort Poster (ph). And then, I think, I was
21 there for a year. That's when Sarah came over there.
22 It's just that we weren't really connected there. There
23 was just -- I know my sister's there when I was there.
24 Those are -- those are just my memories of her, when we
25 were young.

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1 And then I -- then I ran away from that --
2 that -- where I was. But she was there the next day. They
3 put me back into Galt again. And it was -- I don't know
4 how long I was there, then -- then she came over there too.
5 And I don't know why she was -- came, well, maybe she did
6 something too, I don't know. And from there, we didn't --
7 it seems like just the one night we were in that same
8 house. And then they have to move me to another house, so
9 I couldn't really see her. The only time I could see her
10 for a while was just when we were outside just walking
11 around in circles with the -- with our staff there, and the
12 other girls. That's the only time I can remember.

13 And then they -- then they placed me in
14 a -- well, I had been in the homes, well, like, three --
15 three of them. In the last one they -- they put me was in
16 a -- in Downsview, in Toronto area. But -- but Sarah was
17 in that Galt -- that reform school. That's the only time I
18 could remember when we were just, like, very young. And
19 then from Downsview I ran away from there with another --
20 with another girl. Took us about a week to get to Thunder
21 Bay, then we got caught in Thunder Bay. And then they put
22 us in jail for two days. And then someone else came --
23 take us out, then -- then they sent me home. But Sarah was
24 still out there. And that's -- because we never really got
25 to know each other as teenagers. We didn't do anything

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1 together. And there was just nothing really to -- to
2 cherish about our young lifes (ph). We didn't have that.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask you a
4 question? When -- so you were in reform school before
5 Sarah got sent to reform school, did you ever learn why she
6 got sent to school?

7 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** No.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And after you were
9 teenagers, did you ever get a chance to see each other
10 again?

11 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Only one hour at the -- in
12 Winnipeg. I happened to be there in Winnipeg, and then I
13 ran into her in the street. And -- well, she -- she ask us
14 to go to a restaurant with her. And I was with a -- a
15 friend. And the -- so we went with her because I didn't
16 really know -- know anything about Winnipeg. I think I was
17 about 17 that time. Somewhere there, anyways. And just
18 one hour. Because I don't really have anything.

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Did you want some
20 water?

21 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** I think next -- next, I
22 think it was 19 -- it was 1985 because our dad was sick
23 that time, and then she -- she came over there. I only --
24 I only saw her -- not even seem, like, only half hour. To
25 me it seems like half -- only half hour after that. That's

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1 the only -- the last time I saw her again. But I did see
2 her. Well, she came home for a while in -- I think it was
3 in 1973. She came to our home for a while. I think she
4 only stayed a -- a week, or five days. I'm not really
5 sure. And that was the last time I ever saw her, in
6 Thunder Bay, 1985.

7 We -- we didn't even -- we didn't even say
8 anything to each other, or talk to each other. She just
9 came in where our -- our dad was. And I heard her say,
10 "Feels like as if she's -- he's not my dad." It's what she
11 said. Then she -- then that's when she walked out. All I
12 know is that, I have -- I have a sister. Not knowing --
13 that's just a big blank and -- big blank.

14 After that I used to think she was in
15 Thunder Bay. All those years before she was reported
16 missing. All those years, that's all I used to think, she
17 might be in Thunder Bay, or somewhere. And then my two
18 younger sisters, I don't know really which one that
19 finally -- she -- last question she -- maybe she'll tell
20 you after. And I don't really -- how that went. And all I
21 know is that there's just nothing in me. But deep down, I
22 feel like a -- I know she -- she's been missing. And I
23 would tell my mom, if she's still out there, she could have
24 contact us, or something, or letter, or whatever. Then --
25 then when -- then when we do that walk, we just wanted

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1 to -- for me anyways, I just want her -- if she's still out
2 there, at least they'll see it. Or maybe she will come
3 out, or come see us, or -- that was my hope when we did
4 that walk. She was -- she was on my mind. That walk we
5 did. Hoping somewhere she's watching. But it didn't.

6 But our sister is missing. It's pretty hard
7 to -- (indiscernible) think like that. And after that walk
8 we did, I kept hoping that I wish she would come home
9 wherever she is. Then again, I would think, maybe she
10 should not even -- the world anymore. If she did, she
11 would come home, or at least see -- see us on --
12 (indiscernible) so. There's sometimes I would just say, if
13 I just ask myself sometimes, or just say out loud, or write
14 on the note, not -- like, Sarah, where are you? Where is
15 she? What happened to her?

16 I was talking to my mom a couple days ago.
17 I ask her questions, which I don't even -- I didn't know.
18 I ask her, what -- what year did she leave? Then she told
19 me, 19 -- 1966. That's when she -- she got sent away too.
20 Just for breaking the windows. There was no -- nobody
21 tried to help us. I was just telling my -- asking my mom
22 that. I wanted to know about who was the Chief that year.
23 Who was the councillors? Then she told me who they were,
24 how they -- how they agree to be sent away. I was a little
25 bit angry because of that. Then she said to me, "You

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1 weren't the only ones that" -- they wanted to be -- to be
2 out, I guess, and to be sent away, but the other ones
3 didn't. That's when she -- that's what she said to me.
4 All those years I didn't know. I thought -- I thought I --
5 I know I did -- I did something wrong. I know that.
6 That's why they sent me to reform school.

7 I was in Galt for two years and a half. And
8 I was -- I finally -- finally made it home because --
9 because I ran away from -- from there. We -- I know that
10 we -- me and this girl I was with when we took off from
11 Downsview. I know we endanger our lives, I know that. We
12 have -- we had to -- we had to run away from that -- the
13 transfer truck. Well, see that guy told us there's a dead
14 body under where you're sitting. That's what he told me.
15 I was 15, not time then. When I think about that, ahh,
16 that struggle.

17 The last time when I saw Sarah, 1985, oh,
18 how I wish -- I wish I could just talk to her that time.
19 But I could never have that now. I guess, that one was
20 just hopeful that there was really (indiscernible) for me.
21 And we don't really have -- I don't really have anything.
22 All those years she's been missing, and she still is today.
23 There's a lot of times I ask God, "Where is she? Help me.
24 Somehow, someday." I used to be peace with myself. Look
25 how the closure would -- that's my desires. That -- to

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1 bring her home. Every day I think about that. At least I
2 would know if she's out -- if she's gone already. There's
3 always hope when you -- you know, when -- when you hear
4 about the news, they found some -- some bones. I always --
5 I always think maybe it's her. It's just that deep down,
6 as if she's gone already. That's just the way I feel, for
7 me anyways. She's no longer around. She's out there
8 somewhere.

9 I don't think she was happy either. Wonder
10 if she was -- you had to anyways. She was 12 years-old
11 when she got sent away. I -- I was -- I was 13 when I got
12 sent away. She -- because she came right -- she came --
13 I'm not really -- a year, or more than a year after me.
14 And it just -- there's just nothing in me. There's just
15 nothing. I just want her to be home. At least I'll know.
16 That's all I think because -- I just want her -- whatever
17 just to -- I don't know.

18 After, when she was reported missing, I -- I
19 start having hopes. And I just -- I just thank my sisters,
20 they did that. And when them NAPS officers came to see me
21 when I was living in Thunder Bay, they -- they want to take
22 some blood from me. And -- and I went to that -- I went to
23 their office. They try to take the blood from me and then
24 they couldn't do it. They -- I don't want to say that,
25 what I said. So they -- they went -- they already went

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1 home. That's when they took a DNA from my mom. Ever since
2 that time, I think it was 2014 when they took our things.
3 They took DNA from my mom. Ever since from there, that's
4 when things came to rise up in my mind. All kinds of
5 things. But just -- I mean, not -- there's just nothing.
6 Until I see the day to bring us whatever the news will be.
7 I'm just waiting for that day.

8 And it's hard. Sometimes I just cry. Cry
9 to my -- to my God. I just want to know. It's -- it's
10 really holding me up, every time. Every time -- Every time
11 I pray for her, or pray to the winds, it's -- I guess, made
12 us strength sometimes. Sometimes I just break down. But I
13 feel okay after knowing that there is God up there
14 watching -- watching over me, seeing when I struggle.
15 Seeing what's on my mind. This is where I always run to.
16 That's about all I'll say because there is really nothing I
17 can say because I didn't have that.

18 What -- what saddens me is she wasn't happy
19 either. The way I was. That's -- maybe she did try and
20 get out too. Just because of my parents' break-up. When I
21 think about it, I kind of -- that's why they split us up
22 because of my parents, that's what I always think. It
23 really damage a child's life when you see your parents like
24 that. It hurts. But there is nothing you can do. I kind
25 of blame them in a way. That's why -- that's why my sister

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1 is no longer here. (Indiscernible) I don't know, that's
2 the reason why. God. Everybody has a different ways of
3 living. I had mine. I only -- I have to saying this,
4 that's what's in my heart. I only had the ones -- things
5 only I -- I know are the truth. The true feelings. And I
6 want my sister to -- the regret is that I really never get
7 to hang around with her. Not like the way I hang around
8 with my sisters now. I'll never have that with her.

9 I know there's a lot of times I feel so
10 angry. But I just have to know, a couple days ago, why --
11 I just want to know what year. I don't know why I ask my
12 mom that, I don't know. I just wanted to know. That's the
13 most regretful thing you could face is, not really knowing
14 your sister. All you know is she's missing. That's all
15 you know. There is nothing to hold onto. Just that
16 someday, somebody will come. Yeah, that's all I want to
17 say.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Mary.
19 I -- can I see if Glenda can answer some questions before
20 we go to you, Vicki; is that okay?

21 **MS. VICKI LOON:** Yes.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask a couple
23 questions, just to get some clarification?

24 (Indiscernible). Thank you. So your sister has told us
25 that she refers to her younger sisters starting to initiate

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1 her to -- to report Sarah missing. Can you tell us a
2 little bit about some of the things that you did to find
3 out more information, or to get her reported missing?

4 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** Me and my younger sister
5 were talking about our sisters here. And then we started
6 talking about Sarah. And that was about 2001. And I asked
7 her, I wonder why they never looked for her. And she says,
8 "I don't know." So I started to asking -- ask my mother,
9 "How come they never tried to find her, or try to locate
10 her so that she can come home?" I started phoning around
11 in the places they told me that she was -- she was at last.
12 And I thought it would be easy to -- finding her. And then
13 that's when I approached Jackie George, the NAPS officer
14 who started it. I asked her, "What can I do to find my
15 sister?" Then she asked me, what sister I was talking
16 about. And I told her, Sarah Skunk. And she -- I can't
17 remember the questions she asked me. Then she told me
18 that -- that she's going to do a missing persons. But on
19 my own time I did phone around the places I was told where
20 she used to hang out, but they never have a record of her.

21 Then when I -- when my younger sister, her
22 name is Elizabeth, when I told her, and she -- so she
23 started helping me. We went online -- internet, try to
24 find where -- where to begin. I remember that day, I
25 marked it on my wall, on my calendar, November 2, 2001, I

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1 started. I didn't think it was going to take that long,
2 and still I -- I -- today I still hope that she's out there
3 somewhere. Maybe she just doesn't want to be found.
4 Just -- what my sister's been saying. I asked them,
5 "Why -- how come she left?" I even asked my mother that.
6 But one of my sisters said because of marriage. My sister,
7 Mary-Ann (ph) said that. And I was really hurt when --
8 when she said that to me.

9 And then I turned to my younger sister, and
10 I told her, "First, I want to say to Sarah if we see her, I
11 want to tell her I'm sorry." Because I don't have the same
12 dad as them. When I think about my step-dad, maybe she
13 was -- he was replacing me of Sarah because he used to buy
14 me a lot of things. Every time he seen me in broken shoe,
15 he would go and measure my shoe size, and he'll go to store
16 and bring me shoes. Maybe that's -- maybe he was replacing
17 me because she never came home. I often to think about
18 that. I would get a new jacket too. And I was really
19 thankful, but I didn't know that the reason why he did
20 that. And -- and today, I still wait for Jackie George
21 to -- to email me. Every time I see something on the news
22 that there's bones found, or -- "Can you check if that's
23 her?" Sometimes I would email to her, to ask her that.

24 My sister, Mary-Ann, too, she would phone me
25 and -- and I'm hoping that one day we'll see her. And then

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1 I begin to think, "Why is it taking so long for officers --
2 are they doing something?" I started questioning that.
3 Because I asked her again that time, "Why is it taking so
4 long?" Because -- and she -- Jackie George turned around
5 and told me because she went with ten different names.
6 Then I asked her, "How many names does she go by? And what
7 names?" And she never told me. It hurts me when I think
8 about it.

9 Sometimes -- should I ask my mother, "Do you
10 still feel her?" Every mom should feel their kids. And I
11 always tell her that because I can feel my -- my -- one of
12 my boys get hurt. I asked her that one time that, but she
13 didn't answer me. And still today, I'm still waiting for
14 her to -- police to -- or NAPS officers to -- "Yes, we
15 found her alive." I'm really hoping that she's still
16 alive, out there.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask a
18 question? Mary was talking about both her and your mother,
19 Eva, who was originally going to come today, but wasn't
20 able to make it, getting DNA. Can you tell us a little bit
21 about what was happening there? Why there was blood
22 samples, or collection of DNA?

23 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** They found some in -- in
24 D.C. area, a woman was found. And -- and my nephew, he's a
25 NAPS officer, he thought that was Sarah. And that's why

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1 they took my mom's DNA to check if that's her. But we
2 didn't get report right away. It took some time. I don't
3 know how long. And -- but that wasn't her there we were
4 told. And the officers said that her DNA's all over now,
5 worldwide, they told us. Then if they have that, how come
6 it's still taking so long?

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm sorry, when you
8 say, officers, were there more than one -- is there more
9 than one police service that's looking into --

10 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** That Jackie George and my
11 nephew, Merlin (ph). But that's what he thought -- that
12 was my sister when they -- when the -- when the picture was
13 sent to them.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Do you know if
15 there's other police services that might be -- that it was
16 reported to as well?

17 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** I tried OPP one -- at the
18 beginning, but I didn't get nowhere. They just told me
19 that we had officers too in the reserve when I started.
20 That's really -- it's really painful everyday when you
21 think about it. When I think about my sister. I tried
22 locating her -- her kids too. They say that she had three
23 out there. I don't even know their names. Maybe, if we
24 find the kids, we'll find the mother. Those were my --
25 that's what I thought. I had nowhere to look after that.

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1 Then, my sister Mary-Ann started -- she updates me
2 sometimes.

3 I thought I was going -- it was going to be
4 easy talking about her. And knowing that -- why she left
5 and -- I seen her once, must have been 8 years-old, she --
6 she was a nice woman. She was really -- at the time, my
7 sister was just -- she must have been one -- one or two.
8 She would hold her, and just let my sister -- our sister
9 fall asleep on her lap. And one of my sisters told me that
10 was my other sister, her name was Sarah. That's the first
11 time I met her.

12 I remember that day when she left. It was a
13 nice, sunny day. She said that -- that she's leaving. And
14 I was looking at her, leaving, and getting on a car. And
15 she turned around and says, "I'll come back for you. I'll
16 go get settled, and I'll come back for you." Those are my
17 last -- her last words with me. And someday I hope -- I'm
18 just hoping that she'll come home. Because I -- I asked
19 around, is that the -- really the year that she's missing,
20 1995? But nobody ever answered me about that. I ask --
21 I -- I ask my mom sometimes. I feel like we're in a
22 problem because there's me and my -- my brother. We don't
23 have the same dad as them. But we're still, we're -- we're
24 still family, doesn't matter where I came from. And she's
25 always going to be my sister.

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1 I almost didn't come here too. And I told
2 my husband when I left, I got to continue looking for my
3 sister. And so I came out. And I keep thinking, those
4 officers are not even looking in the right place too. When
5 I -- when I think about it because there's a hole there
6 that -- and there's six of us standing, one sister is -- is
7 gone. I don't know where she's at, and I hope she's okay
8 where ever -- maybe she just doesn't want to be found too.
9 Those are my thoughts, what my sisters say about her. Is
10 that it?

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** It's okay. I'm
12 going to ask Vicki some questions, and you can talk again
13 if you want.

14 **MS. GLENDA SKUNK:** Okay.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. So, Vicki,
16 can I get you to -- to also share with us, what you know
17 about -- if -- you're welcome to share. If you want to
18 talk about -- anything about Sarah, and what -- what part
19 you've had in looking for her, letting people know she's
20 missing?

21 **MS. VICKI LOON:** Oh, okay. I don't know how
22 many times my story will be heard. But I think this is
23 about the fourth time, I think. And to me, it's just like
24 a continuing my search, or an answer. But as far as I
25 remember, my sister, Sarah, we haven't really -- we didn't

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1 really have that -- that contact, like, through our --
2 through our teenage years. I barely remember when we were
3 just kids. Parts of it I -- I remember.

4 But the day that really -- really is clear
5 to me, is the day that he [sic] left on the cruiser. And
6 just because of all the broken (ph) windows. I was with
7 my -- my two younger sisters there with me, and we watched
8 her leave. And I must have been 10 years-old. And she was
9 12 when she left. And then the following year -- and that
10 was where I was sent to residential school. And my other
11 two younger siblings, and my younger brother -- we left to
12 residential school too, I guess, because it was just a
13 system. I guess, my -- my mom had to let them go. She had
14 a choice.

15 And to me, sometimes, like, thinking about
16 it -- about my younger siblings, I wonder if they would
17 have been in that '60s scoop, (indiscernible), no it -- it
18 would have been. Because it's the way that they were --
19 they came to my mom. To let -- letting us go. And I
20 guess, she choose residential school, for that. She didn't
21 know the system. How the system was. It was her choice by
22 this -- those government, or -- that came by to her to ask
23 her. Her choice is that they wanted to take us.

24 And I was in Kenora for three and a half
25 years. And that -- that last year when I was in Kenora,

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1 the school where I was going to in that town, Cecilia
2 Jeffrey School, it was a residential school in Kenora. And
3 they told me to come to the office, that -- that after
4 Christmas holidays -- I never did see my siblings all that
5 time. Only the summer -- summer holidays for three months,
6 I guess, and they were back to residential school again.
7 So we barely did really see each other. And already Sarah
8 wasn't there.

9 And -- and they send me down to -- to
10 Brantford just to go take care of my -- my sisters and my
11 little brother. And I was -- I think it was the last year
12 and then it went -- that Brantford school was opened. And
13 then when I got back from the residential school, from
14 Brantford, and then that's where I ended up into reforming
15 school. The same place they went. And I was pretty --
16 pretty much of a sad story for me, anyway. Why, and not
17 knowing why. But in all these years, when I was out there,
18 I used to hope I would run into Sarah because that's where
19 she was too. By then she would have been already 16, or
20 almost 17. And we were supposed to be -- I mean, they only
21 had the 15 year-olds, I guess so, I mean, going up to 15
22 years-old just to be in that school. Once you're 16, then
23 you can't go back there. So I was hoping and wishing that
24 I would see Sarah there that time. But knowing then, I
25 guess, she would have been 16 or 17 at that time that she

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1 was no longer there.

2 In all these years -- in all this years, I
3 used to always hope that I would see her again. But then,
4 at last she came for a visit. My younger sister, Ruth,
5 brought her home from here -- Thunder Bay. And she stayed
6 with me for five -- five days. And we did -- we didn't
7 really have very much to say, like, our memories as a
8 child. I think what really we talk about is that school,
9 where they sent us when we got into trouble. And that's
10 the only thing we could talk about that time. I talked to
11 her about the times when I used to take off from there too
12 in that reforming school I was going to.

13 I took off there about five times. I always
14 ended up in Toronto with just white girls. And then they
15 send me this way. I thought they were going to send me
16 home, but I guess not. Okay. I'm here in Thunder Bay.
17 Didn't stay around that long, and they send me back. While
18 I was down here when I was -- I looked for my sister, but I
19 heard about her, but never ran into her. Because I know
20 there was some people that used to know her that time, but
21 never really met her. Because I guess she was just -- kind
22 of just going back and forth to Winnipeg or to B.C.

23 And -- and then when I got sent back to same
24 place where I -- where I was, that's when I kind of took
25 off again. And I did come all the way to Thunder Bay. And

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1 I was hiding out for seven months before I turned 16. And
2 she came for a visit at home for five days. Knowing -- not
3 knowing what really to talk about, but just those bad
4 memories in the -- that school, I guess, she -- she went to
5 and myself. And to me, like, you know, I know just
6 families have gone through a lot, like, break-ups and
7 everything in their family. And that time that she -- she
8 talked to me about it. And then -- then I told her, you
9 know, it's been happening -- this -- ever since, like, you
10 know. Not to really, like, put down my sisters, or either.
11 (Indiscernible) it just happened. And it seemed kind of
12 funny to her, seeing her dad living alone in the house.
13 And -- and then, kind of, I -- I told her that time, you
14 should go and just visit other people, go visit the family.
15 Because I couldn't always go anywhere with her because of
16 my younger kids I had.

17 But she was always close to my daughter,
18 Melissa, when she was there. She would always hold her.
19 And she asked me once, how old she was. And I told her
20 Melissa's age at that time. And then she said that she
21 only mentioned one daughter that time that she -- she had a
22 daughter in B.C. And that she wasn't allowed to see her.
23 And this thing that keeps bothering me is, like -- we like
24 to, like, you know, if she ever had that visit with her
25 daughter, or maybe not because I know for a fact she

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1 wasn't -- never allowed to see her daughter all those times
2 when she tried.

3 But then, all these years, I guess we kind
4 of had that -- well, with me anyways, I denied that she was
5 missing. I know -- and with me, I thought she was out
6 there because I know I used to hear that she went there to
7 Winnipeg, she went to B.C. And all the time I used to
8 think that she went to B.C. to try to see her daughter
9 again. And it -- to me, it was just kind of -- how hurting
10 it is. Why we were torn apart from there, just because of
11 the residential school system and the court system. And I
12 just don't know why they couldn't try to help us -- us
13 families. And now -- just that now, what's happening with
14 my sister out there? Or if she's gone. And I usually talk
15 about this with my sister, Mary-Ann. You know, with me, I
16 know it's pretty hard, but you know there's -- one day at a
17 time. And I am tired of waiting sometimes. No matter
18 how -- how many times I come to these kind of inquiries,
19 and nothing has ever really -- never find answer, with me
20 anyways.

21 And -- and not -- not, I'm just standing.
22 And I know there's -- hear a lot of people do their -- the
23 way they're going through it too with their families that
24 have been murdered. And the fellows that have still been
25 missing, as we don't know where they are, or we will ever

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1 see them. But our hope is that we will. And to lay them
2 to rest in their home. How many times I think -- I wonder
3 if I'll be -- still around if they ever find my sister. I
4 always think. But I think about my mom sometimes, how much
5 she's going through too, all her life. And I can't blame
6 her for everything because it's just the way life is. And
7 she's getting old. She always remembers about our sister's
8 birthday. Like, for us too, we don't know where we are,
9 where we stand. I respect my mom, and, like, I could ask
10 her a lot of questions, but I don't want her to hurt more.
11 I know we want find answers, the dates, and everything, but
12 no that's -- sometimes she can't really recall herself.
13 Maybe, she's just wondering the way we wonder too. Like,
14 where she could be, or is she still alive, or gone?

15 And -- and I -- the thing -- other thing
16 too, when I think about it, is things about the systems and
17 everything. I don't think a government can't really unfold
18 everything for us, for our healing. Because when I had at
19 residential school payout, it didn't help me at all. And
20 it -- the things that the -- I heard people went through, I
21 don't think -- money can't really make you happy. That's
22 just my thought. And -- and so from here, I don't know,
23 what I -- to expect. I appreciate and acknowledge for
24 everyone that's doing their best to find answers and find
25 our missing and murdered woman. I'm not only thinking

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1 about my sister, but others as well. Because every time
2 there's -- we hear these remains found, and this makes me
3 (indiscernible), it brings back memories, you know. I even
4 pray about it, you know, some day we will hear if it's the
5 remains of my missing sister, you know. And if not, you
6 know, I don't know how long we're going to still wait. But
7 now, we -- but now, today, I'm thinking about -- with our
8 own -- our own daughters and sons today, that make sure
9 that doesn't happen to them.

10 There's so much now that we are -- our girls
11 are murdered today. And it just seems like, you know, all
12 these reports that police are doing, and I think it's just
13 continues ever -- every day, every year. But really, me, I
14 don't really know very much about politics and everything,
15 but I just know what's in my heart, what to -- what to
16 understand and deal with. But you know, in this walk we
17 did, you know, I was -- I was happy that we're going to do
18 that walk. I know my sister, Mary-Ann, and my daughter,
19 Melissa, we did that walk. They planned that walk. And my
20 hopes were if my sister was still out there, that she would
21 see us. That we are looking for her. But if not, I don't
22 know, just -- I hope, I guess, one day we'll find -- find
23 out what really happened. And I guess, that's all I need
24 to say.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Vicki.

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1 Melissa, can I ask you some questions? Can I start with
2 just a couple clarification questions, and then let you --
3 first of all, you're Vicki's daughter, right?

4 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Yes, I am.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so Sarah was
6 your aunt?

7 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Yeah.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And your aunt, Mary-
9 Ann, was originally supposed to come in today, but she's
10 been weathered out in another community.

11 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Yeah.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah. You've been
13 very helpful in helping because there are some language
14 issues and everyone, obviously, did a really good job in
15 English without assistance. But if there was anything they
16 want to say further, and we can do that for sure. But I
17 wanted to ask you a couple of questions because we've heard
18 about the walk a few times now. So I was wondering if you
19 could start with that because I know that you were an
20 important part of planning the walk with your aunt, Mary-
21 Ann, who's not here today. So if -- can you?

22 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I can do that. We were
23 just having a table discussion one day, my aunt Mary-Ann
24 and I, and we were talking about my aunt Sarah. You know,
25 wondering where she was. Is she still out there? You

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1 know, does anybody -- anybody out there know anything about
2 Sarah? So I said, well -- my aunt said, let's do a walk.
3 So we -- we picked Mother's Day weekend to start our -- our
4 walk just to acknowledge that she was a mom, a woman. So
5 while we were in the planning stages, and we're, like,
6 "Holy crap, man." Like, we -- we have Rena Fox, we have
7 Viola, you know. I said, "We got to do a walk for them as
8 well." So we contacted the families, and let them know
9 what we were doing. We wanted to make sure that it was
10 okay with them. And -- and it was. So rather from
11 walking -- instead of walking from Mishkeegogamang to
12 Thunder Bay, like we had originally planned, we -- we
13 walked to Sioux Lookout in honour of Viola Panacheese
14 because that's where she went missing. And from there we
15 walked to Kakabeka Falls, where Rena Fox was found
16 murdered, in honour of her memory. And we ended the walk
17 in Thunder Bay on Agnes Street where my aunt's last known
18 residence was.

19 And when we planned this walk, it was --
20 we -- we didn't expect it to get as huge as it did, but we
21 had grandmas, we had moms, we had dads, we had
22 grandchildren, we had great-grandchildren. It was -- it
23 was bringing families together in memory of three beautiful
24 women that's missing, one murdered from our community. And
25 those are just three -- just, I mean, there's others as

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1 well. But when we first started that was what we were
2 hoping for, is that somebody would see us walking there
3 that would have some information on Sarah. And that they
4 would come forward so that, you know, we'd have something
5 new to go on.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, like, a big part
7 of it wasn't just commemorating the beautiful women because
8 that was part of it, but part of it was to raise awareness
9 to let people know --

10 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Raise, yeah.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** How important was it
12 to have other community members, not just Indigenous
13 community members, know about this issue?

14 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Because it -- it's
15 reality. That's what it is. That's what's happening in
16 our communities. And, you know what? Honestly, I sit here
17 and I'm going to be honest, but when we were planning that,
18 it really hit me. Right then and there. I was like, "Holy
19 shit." Like, this is what's going on. It was right at
20 that very moment when we -- I'm sorry for my language by
21 the way. I tend to swear every now and then. Like, this
22 is real. This is what's going on. And something needs to
23 be done about it.

24 We had planned to do a walk again the
25 following year, from Thunder Bay to Mishkeegogamang, to

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1 symbolize that we wanted to bring our women home. But at
2 that time, we -- we couldn't do our walk because our -- our
3 community was in the middle of our -- our own search for a
4 missing young woman at the time. Where we searched for 60
5 days, every day, looking for her. So we had postponed that
6 walk.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm just going to
8 actually pass this to you to look at. This was an article
9 on the walk. And it's just titled, "Mishkeegogamang First
10 Nation Walks to remember the murdered, missing." You might
11 recall if a reporter talked to the family. I'd just like
12 to hand it to the Commissioner, if you can just take a
13 quick peek at it. You don't have to read it.
14 (Indiscernible). I can't even read it without my glasses.
15 It's just (indiscernible) story that talks about the three
16 women who (indiscernible).

17 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** (Indiscernible), yeah.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I'm just going to
19 pass this up to the Commissioner, and -- thank you. I
20 am -- was also -- Melissa, you've been very helpful in
21 assisting, getting the family to come down here. And it
22 made me think about a question I think is really important
23 about when we're trying to involve people and include
24 people to make sure we have resources and people that can
25 speak the language, or ensure that people get to a place.

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1 Can you tell -- talk a little bit about that?

2 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Definitely more notice,
3 for sure. I didn't -- I had families messaging me, and
4 honestly, I didn't know what to say. Because I didn't even
5 know what was going on, what were the arrangements, where
6 was things -- definitely more notice, and more proper
7 planning. Proper planning. Due to the sensitivity of the
8 issue, the funding, like, I mean, I'm sure Connie can say a
9 whole bunch more, she's -- but at the same time, like, I
10 understand it involves a lot of work. I understand that.
11 And it's dealing with a lot of families. I guess, with
12 that being said, it -- it just goes to say, that it's so
13 important that these issues get treated with -- with heart,
14 right. Rather than just emailing back and forth, trying to
15 make arrangements; that kind of stuff. Because it is -- it
16 is -- it just seems, I don't know what the word is,
17 (Speaking Native Language). That -- that's the only thing
18 I can -- I don't know how to say that in English.

19 **MS. MARY SKUNK:** Carelessly done.

20 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Carelessly done. I'm
21 sorry, but that's -- that's just my -- my thoughts on that.
22 But at the same time, I'm grateful for this -- this chance.
23 For all the families' stories to be told, and you know, and
24 I'm -- I'm really hoping that some good things can come out
25 of this. We heard Lillian Southwind earlier. I hope some

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1 good can come out of all this bad. Yeah.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** On that note, what
3 are some of the ideas? I know you talked about awareness
4 with the walk, but what are some ideas or recommendations
5 that could make change? And I know you got a -- a lot,
6 probably. But because you've -- you've been trying to
7 raise awareness and do this work for some time. But if you
8 could give the commission some recommendations about -- or
9 ideas about what needs to change. What needs to be done in
10 terms of the recommendations they'll be making, that would
11 be helpful too.

12 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I guess the big and
13 most -- for most right now -- and this is, like, such a big
14 piss-off for me, is the police system. That they need to
15 be educated on the whole intergenerational trauma stemming
16 from residential schools, the '60s scoop. Right from
17 addictions. And how to respond to calls when somebody is
18 calling to report that their daughter, or their sister, or
19 whoever is missing.

20 And I don't know if this is appropriate, I
21 just want to share a story of why I feel so strongly about
22 that. My own daughter, whom I know very well, she's my
23 daughter, I raised her. She's part of my heart beat. I
24 knew her to be a really good mom, took care of her kids.
25 All of a sudden, I started noticing changes in her. She

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1 got into addictions so fast, like, made my head spin.
2 Because I know my daughter, and this is not her. I -- we
3 didn't know where she was for a couple days. Me and my
4 friend, we drove around looking everywhere for her in
5 Thunder Bay. By this time we had information that drug
6 dealers had her vehicle.

7 And I didn't know where she was. We located
8 her. I asked the police for help. And I gave them some
9 information. I told them -- they asked me what her
10 background, and I told them she was Native. A whole
11 different attitude after that. And when -- all, you know.
12 I say, "Okay. Well, can you please, at least, go check
13 where I believe she is?" They did -- "Oh, we can't do
14 nothing. She's an adult." You guys don't know her. You
15 don't know the situation. You guys are not listening to
16 me. They drove away.

17 I got in shit for this later, but I sat by
18 her vehicle and waited for those drug dealers to come out.
19 And I, myself, took those keys off them. And I had to do
20 whatever I could to protect my daughter. I sat outside her
21 house while these drug dealers are going -- driving back
22 and forth from her place. And again, I phoned the police.
23 This is what's going on, right in front of my eyes right
24 now. Still nothing. And I finally told the supervisor I
25 was talking to at the time, I said, "When you guys going to

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1 help me? When she's finally in a body bag? Is that when
2 you guys are going to finally respond?" I gave them the
3 licence plate number, everything.

4 And you know what? I managed to bring her
5 home for Christmas, and then she went missing for about a
6 month and a half. I didn't know where she was. And I
7 couldn't get no response from the police. She finally got
8 arrested in Winnipeg. And you know what? I'm not saying
9 that all police officers are like this because I -- if I
10 could meet this police officer in Winnipeg that arrested my
11 daughter, and looked at her and said, "This is not who you
12 are. I'll take you to a place where people that get in --
13 caught in this life -- lifestyle end up." He scared the
14 crap out of her, and made her come home. So I'm not saying
15 all police officers are like that. They're not.

16 But there definitely needs to be -- they
17 definitely need to be educated on how to respond to calls
18 like that. Because when you're getting a call from a
19 mother regarding your child, and you know your child, it
20 deserves to be listened to. I shouldn't have had to take
21 matters into my own hands like that. So this is definitely
22 one of the most important things to be real -- like, really
23 looked. Because that's where it stems from. Like, they
24 have this view that if a Native woman, or any Native goes
25 missing, it's because they're -- "Oh, they're just drunk."

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1 You know, "They're in a -- a drug addiction." There's a
2 reason for that.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Does it matter, even
4 if they are? Should it matter, even if they are in
5 addictions or in a state?

6 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** What do you mean?

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Well, like, it
8 should -- should it matter whether they're drinking or not?
9 That -- that they respond, or that you're getting --

10 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** No, it shouldn't matter.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- spoken to the way
12 that you should as a mother?

13 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** It shouldn't matter.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Were your -- do you
15 have any other ideas or recommendations? I know you
16 probably have a -- a few.

17 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I -- you know, I keep
18 thinking about my aunt Sarah as you're asking me that
19 question. I hope one of the other recommendations that
20 come out of this is funding for after care programs --
21 definitely after care programs. You know, we can -- we can
22 do program, after program, or get people to go on their
23 healing journey, right. But when they come home, there's
24 nothing. So we definitely, definitely need more after care
25 programs. You know, what if, you know, they had that when

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1 my aunt Sarah came home for that one week. What if there
2 was there -- that support there?

3 I have one memory of Sarah that I hold close
4 to my heart. And I think that's the one.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** It's (indiscernible).

6 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Four -- I was 4 years-
7 old. I always -- in my mind, I always thought it was,
8 like, maybe six, seven because I remember it clearly as
9 day. And I know we're out of -- we're all at a place in
10 our healing journeys, I know. I guess, the reason why I
11 hold this close to my heart is because of -- this is the
12 one time that I remember as a child receiving affection.
13 And it was from Sarah. And I remember it because we were
14 walking on the road and she was holding my hand. She
15 was -- this was somebody that was walking with me, holding
16 my hand. And we were walking to this big church we -- I --
17 I think -- I thought it was big from -- probably because I
18 was a kid. We were walking to this church, her and I. And
19 I remember her telling me that she had a daughter that
20 looked like me.

21 And, you know, so what if there was stuff in
22 the community at the time. I know at -- today, we do. You
23 know, we have -- you know, we're starting to get resources
24 and that, but we need more funding for, like, after care
25 programs for families that are hurting, you know. They --

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1 I know I tend to lose train of thought, and I go everywhere
2 because I can say a bunch of things about what I would like
3 to come see out of this. Because this is what's happening.
4 This is what's real.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And that's okay if
6 you're wandering a little, like, in terms of sharing your
7 family's lived experience. And even the experience you
8 have helping others, is helpful for us when you have ideas.
9 And I'm sure the Commissioner doesn't care either if you're
10 a little all over the place because we value your ideas.

11 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** You know, I listened to
12 my auntie's stories, and I really, really wish my auntie
13 Mary-Ann and my kokom were here. I was listening to my
14 aunt Glenda when she said that when they came to get my
15 kokom's DNA, they -- when they found the body in Seattle,
16 they did a face composite on her. And each and every time
17 something like this happens, they -- they brought that --
18 that sketch of what this person would have looked like, and
19 every single one of us that was there, the resemblance and
20 everything, everyone said, "Holy shit. That's Sarah.
21 Like, it has to be." Right to the scar that this person
22 probably had. They said that they would have something for
23 us. I think it was like six weeks or something like that.
24 We waited six whole friggin' months. And my kokom would
25 sit outside the window wondering was it her. Six friggin'

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1 months from what. They -- on three months, four months
2 after -- more than what they told us we'd hear something
3 back.

4 And then all my aunties, you know said to
5 me, when there's something on the news about a body being
6 found, especially Mary-Ann, she goes, "Can you look into
7 this? Can you look into this?" And I do my best. But
8 each and every time it's, like, starting all over again.
9 And it's hard because you -- you -- I want -- I feel
10 helpless. And this is, like, starting, like, and it's
11 not -- the family's always searched for her for as long as
12 I can remember.

13 I remember when I was 15, I was going to
14 high school here, and I was at a friend's place. And my
15 friend's uncle came in, and he asked me what my last name
16 was, and I told him. Asked me where I was from, what my
17 last name was. So I told him, Skunk. He said, "Oh, do you
18 know Sarah Skunk?" And right away, he got my attention. I
19 said, "Do you know her?" You know, do -- and he says,
20 he -- he would run into her sometimes at the -- what do you
21 call those places where people go -- shelters. And right
22 away, I would look into -- but there was no -- ever known
23 record. And then me and my uncle Georgie (ph), this was
24 when I was in high school again, we found a last known
25 address, which was Angus Street. We went there, but by the

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1 time she had -- already been gone.

2 So this is in '86. So we've always
3 searched for her. When I was living out in B.C. I did what
4 I can. And my auntie Glenda and them messaged me, can you
5 look into this? Can you look into this? This could
6 possibly be Sarah's daughter, you know. We -- we've always
7 searched for her.

8 And so when you're living this, you're
9 wondering where your loved one is, you're always going to
10 hold that fear, like I did when I couldn't get no help with
11 my daughter. That's the biggest fear. Is that the same
12 things going to happen to her. Why? Is it because she's
13 Native? I should -- I always try to deal with things with
14 love and compassion, but do I get angry? And this -- it
15 pisses me off. It does. I hear about my aunt Sarah
16 getting sent far away because she broke a friggin' window
17 at 12 years-old. Why? I listen to my mom and them
18 stories. Like, no child should ever have to go through
19 that. And that's what everybody, like, with all these
20 recommendations, like, I hope part of that recommendations
21 too, is to educate all these different services; child
22 welfare, police, whatever. Like, the impacts that carry
23 forth from all this stuff that happened.

24 You know, I don't think my mom meant it, but
25 I was in residential school for three years. I may look

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1 white, but just so everybody knows here, I'm Native -- full
2 Native. And -- but just to touch a little bit on that, it
3 was hard going to a residential school. A white kid, but I
4 didn't know how to speak in English by the way. But that
5 was the system. And it breaks my heart when I listen to my
6 kokom talk about this stuff when she was given a choice,
7 either her kids got caught up in this whole child welfare
8 system, where she was not going to see her kids again, or
9 residential school. What would you guys choose? Where you
10 can see your kids again, or not see your kids again. Why
11 did she have to make a choice like that? Look what
12 happened, my aunt Sarah's missing.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just want to make
14 sure I give you a chance to, if you want to add anything
15 before I also ask your aunts if there's anything else they
16 want to add?

17 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I would actually really
18 like Connie because me and Connie work together, and
19 something I let anger get the best of me, and -- and I -- I
20 would really like for her to share because like I said, our
21 community, we have three women that are MMIW. And I would
22 really like for her to share also; if that's okay?

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Certainly.

24 **CHIEF CONNIE MCKAY:** *Miigwetch.* (Speaking
25 Ojibway). Just first of all, I would like to say honour to

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1 the Mish members. It doesn't matter how many times we hear
2 their story, our story, that the pain and the hurt is still
3 there and it's very, you know, hard to listen to.

4 What I'm really hoping comes out of this
5 inquiry is that history is taught in schools. Is it the
6 real history? Is it the history of what's happened to our
7 people on this -- on this land? It has to be the true
8 history, the true reflection because a true reflection
9 comes accountability. Once you start to integrate that --
10 that history in the -- in the schools, you will get a
11 different outcome. You know, history is taught to -- to
12 teach us so we don't do it again. But if we're not
13 teaching that true history now, it will continue to happen
14 because I want to see my grandchildren learn that they were
15 not Indians lurking in the bush. That they were not bad
16 people. I want them to learn that they were strong people
17 because strong people persevere against such atrocities.

18 Canada has a really dark history. And if
19 they want to see something different in the future, they're
20 going to have to change how that history is taught. It has
21 to be the truth. I don't know how many times this morning
22 I heard the word, truth. Truth means facing what really
23 happened. Acknowledging, yes. There were apologies made,
24 but they were -- were they really sincere apologies? I
25 mean, that only can come from the people that -- that they

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1 received that apology. So I think we need to teach that --
2 that truth in the schools.

3 And the other truth that we really need to
4 look at is, looking at our communities. I'm sure
5 throughout this whole commission, you're going to find
6 common denominators. Common factors that affect the well-
7 being of families in our communities. You heard my
8 families here. And I call them my families because I was
9 their -- their Chief for many years. What is in the
10 communities? What factors affected the families to be in a
11 health -- unhealthy position? You got to look at things
12 like housing. How can families be happy and -- and well,
13 if they don't even have a house to live in? How does a
14 hierarchy of child welfare affect? We have to start -- we
15 have to quit looking at intervention, and start looking at
16 prevention.

17 How do we acknowledge our history, our way
18 of doing things? We had our own government systems. So
19 it's really important that we acknowledge those. How did
20 we do things in our communities to support our families?
21 It's too much -- these programs come into our communities,
22 and they become the boss. It shouldn't be like that. And
23 we have to equip our leaders. You know, I was in that
24 role. I know what it's like to be the punching bag from
25 both -- both sides. Your people are mad at you because

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1 they have displaced anger. You're trying to do the best
2 you can to support your people, but you're not given the
3 resources. So you're set up for failure. The government
4 knows that. They know that.

5 You know, a few years ago, I think it was in
6 2007, \$9.1 billion supposedly went to First Nations
7 communities. Guess where 4.1 billion of that went? The
8 bureaucracy of Indian Affairs. Can you imagine what impact
9 that would have if more of that money went to communities?
10 Those are the issues. We have to have more programs in our
11 communities for women. We have to support our -- the
12 teaching of our traditional roles. And a real heavy focus
13 on men because, you know, when you look at history, men are
14 forced to live on reserve. They are stripped of their
15 feathers, their warriorship. We have to focus on those.
16 Those are really important. And once -- because they
17 represent the outer circle, the protection circle. And if
18 that is not being nurtured as men, the warriors of our
19 communities, that is not going to filter down to the hub of
20 that, and that's the children.

21 So those are my recommendations, is to
22 support communities. Not just to throw money, but that
23 money has to be in programming. It has to support the rise
24 of our culture because our language is part of that. Our
25 language is -- teaches. Our elders, so many -- so many

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1 wounds in our communities. And the voices that you heard
2 here, those were the hearts of the people. Those voices
3 need to have -- let Viola be heard through the voices of
4 her children. Let Sarah be heard through the voices of her
5 sisters and her nieces. And let the other many voices that
6 were heard here, and honour those women. Something has to
7 change. And Canada has a responsibility. It has a
8 responsibility because they acknowledged us First Nations
9 people, us equal, treaty partners. And they have a moral
10 responsibility. And until that responsibility's fulfilled,
11 Canada will not prosper because its first relationship, its
12 foundational principles have not been honoured through the
13 treaty process. *Miigwetch.*

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

15 **CHIEF CONNIE MCKAY:** Thank you.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just want to make
17 sure that any of the family members, if they have anything
18 else they want to add, or that you didn't get a chance to
19 discuss, that you have that opportunity to do so.

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

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. You want to
22 do that?

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible). No.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So Commissioner
25 Audette, the family is done presenting what they'd like to

1 present. So I was just wondering if you had any questions
2 or comments for the family members? Commissioner Audette,
3 can you go (indiscernible)?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: We're getting you
8 something prepared, but we just wanted to make sure you
9 have something.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you so much.

11 Except I can't use (indiscernible). Okay.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you so much.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I need strength.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

17 That's what my habit (indiscernible).

18 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. *Merci*.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Speaking Native
20 Language).

21 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: *Merci*
22 *beaucoup*. (Speaking Native Language). Thank you. And
23 this journey triggers a lot. Anger. We're -- we are asked
24 to be strong as mother and women. I know it's a title,
25 Commissioner, also, and grandmother, but I try each time

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1 that, maybe. But I'll sleep well because I have to say it.
2 And I said it before, and I will continue. And first of
3 all, for me, it's not a job. It's something that I dear,
4 sincerely. Sincerely. I wish we were able, when they gave
5 us that mandate a year and a half ago, to re-open all
6 cases. All cases. My niece, my auntie who got killed,
7 your auntie. All cases across Canada. That why, why are
8 we keep -- or, still keep in the dark. But we -- we didn't
9 have that mandate, so we're pushing, pushing and pushing
10 for what leaders ask way before us, that we can re-open
11 those cases with this national task force. That's one
12 thing.

13 The other thing also, we know the system
14 failed. But we know there's people in that system,
15 Indigenous people, Canadian people, or people from Quebec,
16 that are not Native who wants to change. But I guess, it's
17 too big. And I know there is some good people. My niece
18 was found because the police in Quebec was very kind, and
19 did everything to find her. But what about the rest? The
20 rest of many stolen sisters. And I had question, you know,
21 I had question but as a human being, I have emotions also.
22 And Connie, your recommendation, or your message, or your
23 words, triggered the anger that I'm trying to put aside.
24 This is why I love sweat lodge, where I can waahoo, but now
25 it's public. And this is why I love the grandmothers

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1 because your recommendation pointed. We can blame our own
2 systems, you know. Maybe the province doesn't have enough
3 resource.

4 I'm anxious to hear that in the second
5 stage, which is the hearing with the institutions. I'm
6 anxious to hear because you help us to build those question
7 to the police, to the coroners, to the health and social
8 services, to child protection, to the justice system. What
9 happened here, or there, or everywhere? You are helping me
10 as a mother and as a commissioner to build those question.
11 That's -- that's for sure. This is why I have a special
12 book, the red one, just for hearings. So it's easy to find
13 in our big shelf because we have so many notes. And I want
14 to make sure they're not dying on the shelf, of course.

15 We know for many, many years, we're not the
16 first inquiry, but I hope we're the last one. We know
17 what's missing. We know what's lacking. We know what went
18 wrong. We're the expert, we know that. But it seemed that
19 the system need to have another kind of expertise,
20 university, to prove with data, with statistics, analysis.
21 Or a justice system will tell them, like, this inquiry it's
22 a creation under the Inquiries Act, so it's involves lots
23 of legalistic aspect, which I will defend, okay. Don't get
24 me wrong because Canada needs to be accountable. They --
25 they agreed to put this inquiry, but I hope they hear from

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1 the heart of all of you, and us. Us as a mom from inside,
2 staying here, regardless what happened, or still happening.

3 That extension is needed, even if it's not
4 me, the next commissioner. The cause is way more important
5 than a person, that's what I think. So we can do it --
6 things correctly. How do we say in English, in a good way,
7 or that we take the time to bring the families in that
8 circle. And we have the time to go across Canada. It's
9 nice to go in the cities, very nice, very important, very
10 powerful.

11 But I still believe coming from a First
12 Nation community, I live, you know, I'm still connected to
13 my (Speaking Native Language), my home. We were there all
14 week. Where we brought women who never spoke. We saw,
15 yesterday, a woman that -- a woman that never spoke about
16 her rape. So my heart is suffering because of the timing,
17 the resource, the financial resource, humans resource
18 capacity, to go in the north where voices been kept in
19 silence for many, many, many, many -- for -- for too long.
20 So I agree. You have me on that. And empowerment, if we
21 need to be better, I'm in. I want to better in this
22 journey. For all of us. And we've been hearing -- I take
23 the criticism. I take the love also. I will continue
24 until somebody else decide that my time is over, but
25 believe me, when I'll be free moccasin because I'm not that

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1 free anymore. I have to respect -- I'll be -- even if you
2 don't see me walking behind you, or with you, or beside
3 you. And we don't want to be kept in the dark.

4 And of course, my question was very, very,
5 very, maybe, naïve, or when did you start that search
6 officially? Who was there to walk with you when you called
7 the police and say, "We want to know what happened?" Who
8 was there to emotionally, mentally, physically, spiritually
9 to support you in that tragedy? That -- those -- those
10 was, and will be always my question when a family are -- or
11 survivor come here. And it is hard, and I'll say it, what
12 about for those who cannot drive, fly because it's
13 expensive, don't have internet, or the technology, or the
14 financial capacity to come and share their truth. They are
15 in our prayers. How do we reach to them? I know there's
16 an organization that exists. So for me, in the extension,
17 that role, that relationship needs to be stronger. And
18 that has to come from us because we -- we didn't do it
19 enough. Everything went fast, everything goes fast. Even
20 me, I don't know where I go first thing in the morning.
21 I've learnt to give up and say, I believe something will
22 happen. And I'll sit somewhere. So that -- no more
23 frustration, or anxious. And I'm calm when I'm listening a
24 family.

25 But we need to take the time to do it right

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1 because the cause, we don't -- we -- we're not going to
2 have another inquiry like this. And we need to educate
3 also. That it is a tool to educate the Canadian. Like, I
4 think you said it, Melissa, it's -- it's still happening
5 across Canada. It's -- and it is. It's not acceptable.
6 That's my English. So it came from the heart, but very
7 dedicated and if you have other question, other comment, to
8 all of you here because I know when we come here, we're
9 nervous. I said it, and I'll repeat it, and it's -- when
10 we leave the room, I should have said that, I should have
11 mentioned this, or I forgot this. The circle is still
12 there, the door is still open. Do not hesitate to contact
13 us and say, I want to add this to my truth. *Merci*
14 *beaucoup*. Thank you very much. (Speaking Native
15 Language).

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Did any of you have
17 any questions in relation to that because I know that would
18 be a lot to translate, or take in. Did you guys need
19 anything clarified? Maybe, Connie, you can just -- yeah.

20 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I just want to say
21 something.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Oh, here. It's on
23 this one.

24 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** We can go first, then
25 we (indiscernible) --

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1 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** Okay.

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** -- travel.

3 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I just wanted to say
4 something really quick. Back to when I was saying about
5 how -- how this whole inquiry is to me -- like, seems so
6 (Speaking Native Language).

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Look like
8 what? (Speaking Native Language).

9 **MS. MELISSA SKUNK:** I didn't mean it to
10 sound so rude as it, like, when -- when I say (Speaking
11 Native Language) in Ojibwe, it doesn't sound as rude as
12 when you translate it into English, okay. But, like, I
13 understand the workload. I understand all the families and
14 all the stories that you guys hear. And, you know, and --
15 and I go through Facebook, or, you know, newspapers and I
16 hear and see all the stuff about -- and my -- that would be
17 like the issues that families do have. And I can say that
18 it is creating division. It is. And, you know, sometimes,
19 yeah, I get a little pissed at -- here and there and
20 whatever. But at the same time, I do understand.

21 And -- and just like you said, you know,
22 like, this is our one shot to honour all our family members
23 that are missing. And those that have been murdered. This
24 is our one shot, and we have to go with it and try to make
25 it work in honour of them. And it's really sad for me to

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1 see the fighting with words and all -- because I know as my
2 Aunt Sarah's niece, her story, my mom and aunties' stories,
3 my kokom. (Speaking Native Language). And my kokom. You
4 know, that if there's -- if there could be good out of bad,
5 then that -- even though we don't have all the answers, and
6 we're somehow making it work.

7 **CHIEF CONNIE MCKAY:** Can I? Because I just
8 wanted to say that I know this -- what -- what's going to
9 happen is that once this inquiry's done, it's mandate.
10 There are people -- they're going to -- they're going to
11 want to say something, they're going to want to talk.
12 They're going to have -- it'll be almost like a missed
13 opportunity. So in our communities, I think there has to
14 be resources given to keep that opportunity open for
15 families to want to continue, like, mental health people,
16 elders that can be supported to support people as they talk
17 about their journeys of missing and murdered women.

18 And when I was talking about my community,
19 there are communities who have higher numbers of murders
20 and missing women. We have two missing women, a missing
21 young man, and many murdered individuals. And if you look
22 at the history of Mishkeegogamang, you'll see a history of
23 trauma. Where resource companies have come in and they're
24 taken, and taken, and taken, and never left anything.
25 Those impacts, the historical impacts of -- of those on our

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1 community have made our community at a -- at a higher risk.
2 The fact that we're road access. Those are the things that
3 are -- that are causing those risks to be higher for our
4 members. So I think, if something can come out, you know,
5 it would be to provide those individuals to work --
6 continue that work of healing.

7 Since 1981, my community has lost over 300
8 people. That's a lot of people. That's a lot of grief.
9 And a lot of loss. And a lot of it is related to --
10 they're all connected. All these things are connected,
11 spiritually connected. And so when this inquiry's
12 finished, you're going to have people back home in the
13 communities. We're all spiritual beings. There's sadness,
14 it connects to other people's sadness. Everything's
15 connected. And if you don't provide an opportunity for
16 that sadness to leave, that tragedy to leave that story to
17 be told, it's going to continue. We're going to continue
18 to lose people to addictions. We're going to continue to
19 lose people -- children to the child welfare system. It's
20 going to continue.

21 So what I'm saying is that opportunity needs
22 to be made available to our people to be able to speak
23 because for far too long, and you said it yourself, we've
24 been silenced. History has silenced us. It has been a
25 genocidal policy, terminal instruments to keep us quiet.

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1 And that has to change. And the voice of the people needs
2 to return. *Miigwetch.*

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* We
4 have so many -- you so right, even now, there is so many
5 demands, and it's a good sign. It's a healing process.
6 But we have to make sure that we have the capacity to
7 welcome them in a safe place. And that, I worry. And
8 we -- we have to be ready for that. But it's the first
9 time. I have to say thank you, that I -- maybe my other
10 colleagues heard it before in another place, but it's the
11 first -- first time that -- as a recommendation, that this
12 healing process on missing and murdered Indigenous women
13 and girls, is still happening for sharing our truth.
14 *Merci. Merci, Maître Big Canoe.* I think I'm going to
15 switch in French for thirty seconds. *Merci, Merci, merci*
16 *du fond du coeur.* Thank you so much. And we have a gift --
17 gift for -- for you. It came from amazing women. There
18 she is. You want to explain it? She's so cute.

19 **MS. AUDREY SIEGL:** First, I'll introduce
20 myself. (Speaking Native Language). I'm grateful,
21 honoured, thankful to be able to be here on -- on the land
22 of the people that are in this land. That are in these
23 trees, these waters. I -- I thank all of them for
24 welcoming us and caring for us the way that they have. And
25 the feathers that are wrapped in the yellow are -- this

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1 community has been extremely generous with feathers. We've
2 been gifted more feathers to pass onto the families here
3 than we have in all the other cities put together, so we'll
4 share the ones in the yellow. And they are from -- they're
5 from here. And some may have -- there's a boy who took his
6 regalia apart to give the feathers to the families. There
7 are elders who have taken apart their fans because it's
8 what they have to offer. And it is what we do. It's how
9 we take care of each other, so I raise my hands and say,
10 (Speaking Native Language) to each of you, to all of the
11 staff, to everybody who's making this work. To our
12 beautiful elders who take care of us, so (Speaking Native
13 Language).

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ask the elder to give
16 it to you.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I should do it.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I want to say thank
20 you so much. Thank you for that.

21 MR. RON KANUTSKI: Connie, are you's -- are
22 you's all okay with people coming up and greeting you's?
23 Okay. Are you okay with people coming up and visiting with
24 you? Okay. Well, he can -- we can sneak you in.

25 (Indiscernible). All right. At this time, as they're

1 passing out gifts to the family, we're going to call on a
2 healing song for the -- the people of Mishkeegogamang
3 and -- that are here today, and for this family. As per
4 request, we are asking that we just, kind of, honour their
5 space at this time. And they are going to, kind of, just
6 go out with the song. And we're not going to do our -- the
7 way we were hugging and that. We're just going to, kind
8 of, hold back from that. Thank you.

9

10 --- Exhibits (code: P01P08P0202)

11 **Exhibit 1:** Single digital image displayed during public
12 testimony

13

14 --- Upon recessing at 1:44 p.m.

15

16 **Hearing # 3**

17 **Witness: Charlotte Murray**

18 **In relation to Verna Patricia Sturgeon-Gliddy**

19 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

20 **Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox**

21

22 --- Upon resuming at 3:16 p.m.

23

24 **MS JENNIFER COX:** Madame Commissioner, I
25 present to you Charlotte Murray. She's here to speak about

1 her cousin Verna. Verna is essentially a sister to
2 Charlotte, and with her are her support folks. I'll just
3 get you to identify your name for the record.

4 **MS. CHARLOTTE TWANKWIT NACASSE:** Bonjour.
5 Charlotte Twankin Nacasse (phonetic).

6 **MS. SHARON JOHNSON:** Sharon Johnson.

7 **MS. MARILYN PIONIN:** Hello. Marilyn Pionin
8 (phonetic).

9 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** And before we start,
10 Madam Commissioner, if we could have a promise to tell the
11 truth on the feather, which Charlotte has with her?

12 She would like to do it on the Bible. I'm
13 sorry.

14 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Charlotte, do you swear
15 to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
16 truth, so help you God?

17 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** I swear.

18 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Thank you.

19 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Charlotte, I'm
20 wondering if you can start by telling the Commissioner a
21 little bit about who you are, where you're from and where
22 you grew up?

23 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** All right. Hello.
24 Bonjour. My name is Charlotte Murray. I belong to the KI
25 Band, which is Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, also known as

1 Big Trout Lake. That's what it was known for before. I
2 recently got my indigenous name back in September, and the
3 name I was blessed with is Kitika Goonts (phonetic), which
4 means "little fawn".

5 I'm here today to speak to you about my
6 sister. The lawyer, Jen, Jennifer, introduced her as
7 Verna. Growing up, her name was Patricia. So her actual
8 name is Patricia Verna Sturgeon Gliddy. Sturgeon was her
9 maiden name and Gliddy was her married name.

10 Just to clarify something, Patricia is and
11 will always be my sister in my heart. She was actually my
12 cousin biologically if you wanted to get technical. So by
13 Western standards, she was my cousin, but by Aboriginal and
14 Indigenous standards, she is my cousin -- my sister.

15 Patricia's family, as broad as it was, her
16 immediate family consisted of her mother, Dina Sturgeon,
17 who is -- was my auntie. Her and my mom are sisters --
18 were sisters, and her dad Simeon Sturgeon is still living.
19 Patricia left behind four siblings, four blood siblings:
20 her oldest brother Levius (phonetic), her oldest sister
21 Loretta and her younger siblings William and Samantha.

22 I would just like to take this time to say
23 that you will notice me wiping off sweat off my face every
24 once in a while. Please don't take it as my being shy or
25 that in some way I'm uncomfortable being up here, because

1 I'm not. I think this is my body's way of telling me that
2 I'm going to soon be going through the change.

3 (LAUGHTER)

4 MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY: And now with that out
5 of the way, I would like to say that my own family, my
6 biological blood family consisted of my mom and dad,
7 Stephen and Peggy Gliddy, and my biological siblings,
8 Marsha Tate - she recently got married - and my younger
9 brother Andrew Gliddy. And in our family, we also had two
10 of my cousins living with us. One of them later became an
11 adopted sister, but really she was my - she is my sister,
12 and her name is Danielle. She too also married a Tate. So
13 my female siblings both married Sachigo men, so more power
14 to them.

15 Growing up, our home was the place to hang
16 out, not only for my immediate family but for all my
17 cousins, my sisters, my brothers, all of them. We always
18 took care of each other, but we also fought. I'm not going
19 to sugarcoat anything.

20 I just want to share with you a little bit
21 about my sister Patricia because I want to give you guys an
22 idea of who she was, especially you, Michele.

23 So my sister Patricia was a beautiful
24 Indigenous woman who always kept her hair around shoulder
25 length, and she stood - and I'm being very generous here -

1 she stood maybe 5'1. Patricia, she loved to laugh and she
2 loved to help people that needed help, not just in the
3 community but if she left the reserve and came to where I
4 live in Sioux Lookout. So on the streets we have people
5 that are stuck. And very often Patricia would take the
6 time to help these people in any way she could by either
7 giving them a few dollars, enough to go buy coffee, or give
8 them her own lunch. And that was the way that she was.
9 And I remember quite clearly, us being in Sioux, this was
10 before I moved there, this was when we still in our teens.
11 We were walking down the main drag in Sioux Lookout, which
12 is known as Front Street, and there were so many people
13 that
14 were -- for lack of a better term, less fortunate than we
15 were. And so my sister, Patricia -- we were with our other
16 sister, Marsha (ph), and the three of us, we were walking
17 and everybody that we walked by, she gave them money out of
18 her pocket. To the point where, by the time we made it to
19 our destination, she had none. And yet, there were maybe
20 ten more people lining up for money from her. So in an
21 overwhelmed kind of voice she said, "Charlotte, Marsha, I
22 need money." So Marsha and I, we dug into our pockets and
23 we gave her the money and she passed it on.

24 Patricia, she was a sensitive soul. And by
25 that I mean, she could cry over anything. I've got to

1 admit that she and I were known as the saps in our family
2 because she and I -- we're both so sensitive that we can
3 find a reason to cry even during a horror movie. I mean,
4 who does that? But I clearly remember a time that we were
5 watching Stephen King's 'Sometimes They Come Back'. For
6 those of you that aren't familiar with the movie, it's
7 about a boy. And his brother dies, but then we fast
8 forwarded to the end, his brother comes back in the form of
9 a ghost or however. And he never aged, but the little boy
10 had aged. And so that just killed Patricia and I. We just
11 sat there and we cried. And our family, they sat around
12 and they were just laughing at us. But the more -- the
13 harder they laughed, the more we cried. We just couldn't
14 understand why they couldn't see what we were seeing. But,
15 yeah, it's one of my most fondest memories of her. Oh, I
16 could tell you so many other times that she and I cried
17 together, but that's not why I'm here.

18 So our families resided in
19 Kitchenuhmaykoosib, which is a reserve north of here, about
20 500 kilometres. And it's a fly-in community only, so it's
21 very isolated. So back during the time before my sister
22 Patricia was murdered, there really wasn't much in place on
23 the reserve, as far as supports. For example, there was no
24 family drop-in places where she could take her kids. At
25 the time, there was no sexual assault workers. They had no

1 advocates to go with them during meetings with Child and
2 Family Services, which in our area is Tikinagan. And --
3 and so I've always believed that if we had more services,
4 like those in place, that the circumstances leading to my
5 sister's death, her murder, may not have happened.

6 So my sister, Patricia, she had four
7 children. So those children are now 19, 17, 15, and 9. So
8 seven -- if you do the math, and subtract seven years from
9 their current age, that's how old they were when their
10 mother was taken from them. Her two older boys -- the
11 oldest is Donovan; and her next one is Vincent; and her
12 daughter, her little girl, who is a spitting image of my
13 sister, is Madison; and the baby, his name is Demetri, and
14 he's just as cute today as in that photo. So -- but
15 Patricia got married in February of 2000 to a man named,
16 Chris. And that's who's in the photo with her. I remember
17 the year, 2000, because that's the same year I met my
18 husband. Well, actually, I'd met him the year before
19 and -- but it was Patricia's wedding day that brought my
20 husband and I together. So her wedding day was always
21 special to me.

22 Okay. So sometime after Patricia's fourth
23 child, her children went into care with Tikinagan. The
24 younger two were lucky enough to find a loving foster home.
25 And they live here in Thunder Bay, with a lady named Ruth.

1 And in my family, she's known as Auntie Ruth. But her two
2 older boys weren't quite as lucky. They ended up in
3 different foster homes. They're now back in the reserve,
4 so they now live with their dad. So -- and each child has
5 different struggles that I will go into later on.

6 When my sister, Patricia, had her babies
7 taken, she became without hope. Without her babies to keep
8 her grounded, her life got harder. She drank, and lived on
9 the streets here in "T" Bay for a couple of years. And
10 during those years -- during the -- the couple years, I
11 lost touch with her. Simply because I didn't know where to
12 call. I didn't know where she was residing, I didn't know
13 with who, but our prayers were answered.

14 The last six months to nine months of her
15 life, she was working on getting better. She was in the
16 process of bettering herself in the hopes to one day get
17 her children back. She had gone back home to Big Trout to
18 patch things up with her husband, Chris. And so for nine
19 months she lived like a person with a new lease on life.
20 She could envision that one day she would get her children
21 back.

22 On September 2nd, 2010, Patricia, my sister,
23 had to fly back to Thunder Bay -- here, to testify in a
24 criminal hearing. Prior to coming out, Patricia had asked
25 for support in the form of an escort. She had wanted to go

1 with her husband, as she had been anxious. Patricia's
2 request was denied. So that day, Patricia left K.I. to
3 travel here to testify against a man who had hurt her. To
4 this day, I never understood why they sent a woman that was
5 already vulnerable to have to come here to face something
6 so stressful as court, and to have to face the person who
7 victimized her, alone.

8 So it was at court that she later went out
9 for a break to have a cigarette. And it was while she was
10 outside on the court steps that she met up with Joanne
11 Vivier, who would later plead guilty to first degree
12 murder. When she met up with Joanne, they left the court
13 grounds. They went to a -- from -- they went and indulged
14 in some alcohol. And while they were indulging, they
15 bumped into another person -- another woman, an -- an
16 Indigenous woman named, Michelle Morris, who also later
17 pled guilty to first degree murder for my sister.

18 So sometime during that night, after they'd
19 been indulging, they had gone back to my sister's room.
20 And my sister, Patricia, was staying at the Airplane Hotel
21 because that's where they had put her up. By, they, I mean
22 the people that she'd come out with to testify. So whether
23 that'd be the police she travelled with, or the lawyers
24 that she travelled with that day, but that's where she --
25 that's where she died. She died at the Airplane Hotel by

1 the hands of Joanne Vivier and Michelle Morris. And she
2 died because she'd taken a beating from them. The two
3 murdered my sister, and it just seemed so surreal.

4 You know, I was at home that day, September
5 2. I'd gone to the grocery store, and I had bought
6 supplies that I would need the next day to properly
7 celebrate my daughter's third birthday. So that brings me
8 to September 3rd. I woke up. I started cooking for the
9 birthday dinner that we were having later on that
10 afternoon. As I mentioned, my daughter, Erin (ph), had
11 turned three, September 3rd, 2010. So it was a day that
12 was supposed to be filled with celebration. Not only for
13 my daughter, but for my nephew Markus (ph) as well, who had
14 turned seven just a day before. So on September 2, my
15 nephew, Markus, had turned seven. So we were having a
16 double birthday that day.

17 So I was in the room and I was doing last
18 minute things. I was wrapping birthday presents for my
19 daughter, Erin. She's here in Thunder Bay with me today,
20 but due to the nature of this hearing, I did not feel it
21 would be proper for me to have her sit up here with me.
22 But I brought her with me because she's my snuggle buddy,
23 and she gives the best hugs. So I was in my room wrapping
24 their presents. Presents for my daughter, and presents for
25 my nephew. As I happily came out of my room, I went to the

1 kitchen, which was where I'd prepared all the food and all
2 the guests were there.

3 And I walked into the kitchen as my mother
4 was hanging up the phone. As she turned around to face me,
5 the look on her face informed me that something awful,
6 awful had happened. And she broke the news to me. I
7 remember her saying, "Charlotte, you need to sit down."
8 And I looked right at my mom, and I said, "Mom, I'll take
9 it standing." And she told me that my sister, Patricia,
10 was gone.

11 September 3rd was supposed to be a day of
12 celebration. I woke up that morning not knowing the news
13 that was going to hit me that evening. I asked her, "How?"
14 Because I'd known she'd had -- she'd gone to Thunder Bay
15 with police. How could someone who'd been flown up on a
16 plane with police and a bunch of lawyers be dead the next
17 day? And at the time we didn't have any details, other
18 than that her body had been found in the hotel. And that
19 they had confirmed that it was my sister. They were just
20 trying to notify everyone before Facebook could break the
21 news to family.

22 So my mother -- I remember her asking me, do
23 you just want to -- oh, forget the birthday party. And I
24 told her -- I said, "We can't do anything tonight. The
25 kids are depending on this day of seeing the cake." So I

1 did what I could. I swallowed my pain. I swallowed my
2 hurt. And I went through the motions of throwing my
3 daughter and my nephew a birthday celebration that they
4 deserved. And when the dinner was over, I remember walking
5 back to my bedroom where I had just wrapped presents
6 earlier, and these racking sobs broke through my body. I
7 can remember how -- how powerful my sobs felt.

8 I -- the next few days, my sister was on the
9 phone with our Chief and Council. And I remember getting a
10 call saying to pack my bags and come down to the airport
11 right away because my flight had been paid for to go up to
12 my reserve and wait for the coroner to release our baby
13 sister. And if memory serves, the council member of my
14 band that went above and beyond that day, that got my
15 sister and I our flights up to Big Trout, was Jackie McKay.
16 I don't recall if I ever thanked him. So, Jackie, if
17 you're listening, I just want to say that I thank you from
18 the bottom of my heart for making sure that my sisters and
19 I went home, so that we could be there for when our baby
20 sister was brought home.

21 When I -- all through the police
22 investigation, or what there was of the investigations, I
23 personally, was never spoken to, or contacted. I never
24 have personally spoken to the coroner, but that's in the
25 works right now. I will get to speak with the coroner,

1 eventually. But during the time, I did ask my sisters --
2 the ones who did -- the two that were our go-to because in
3 our family, the ones that they spoke with were the sisters,
4 the biological sisters, Loretta Ash (ph) and Samantha
5 Sturgeon (ph). So they were our go-to. They were the ones
6 that informed the rest of the family. And so the coroner
7 had shared with my cousins that our sister had died from
8 blunt force trauma.

9 I sit here and I think, blunt force trauma.
10 That's such a broad term. When I personally saw the damage
11 caused to my baby sister, the damage that was done to her
12 body, that was more than blunt force trauma. The way they
13 left her -- her body, they tried to annihilate her. Joanne
14 Vivier and Michelle Morris will always be the monsters in
15 my nightmares. They broke my little sister in several
16 places. When we saw her in her casket when she was brought
17 home, she was almost unrecognizable. The funeral home did
18 the best they could to fix her up. But the damage was
19 evident.

20 At the time that this was all going on with
21 my sister's murder, her biological brother, William, was
22 incarcerated right here in the Thunder Bay D.J., District
23 Jail. And on the day of our sister's funeral, my brother
24 had one more day left in his sentence. And whoever
25 controls the jails didn't have any compassion -- enough

1 compassion in their hearts to let him put on a suit to come
2 to his sister's funeral. Oh, they said, "Yes, you can
3 attend her funeral." But under their terms. They wanted
4 him in his jumpsuit, they wanted him shackled, they wanted
5 him paraded, like he was some kind of vicious animal. So
6 my brother, he opted against it because he didn't want the
7 memory of his -- our sister's funeral to be made into a
8 circus. So he stayed.

9 I didn't personally participate in any of
10 the court proceedings. I mentioned earlier that my cousin,
11 Loretta -- well, my sisters, Loretta and Samantha, along
12 with Patricia's biological dad, Phillip (ph), were the ones
13 the services were open to. By, services, I mean their
14 travel to court from the res to Thunder Bay was covered.
15 And they were the ones that were notified of upcoming court
16 dates, but very often those changed without notice. Mike
17 [sic] -- my sisters, did -- shared the info that they were
18 privileged to with the rest of us the best that they could.
19 And they tried to keep everyone in the loop, but it's hard.
20 It's hard when you have one family member living in Round
21 Lake, another -- majority of the family living in Big
22 Trout, some living in Sandy Lake, and then us living in
23 Sioux Lookout, and some in Thunder Bay. It's hard to keep
24 everyone in the loop. So they did the best that they could
25 to share the emails that they had, and contact info of

1 everyone with the proper authorities.

2 They didn't get much help from victim
3 [sic] -- Victim Services that I knew of. We, as a family,
4 and not even my sisters, Loretta and Patricia [sic], were
5 informed of the value of providing a victim impact
6 statement. Nor were we even made aware that it was an
7 option. And that's when a victim liaison advocate would've
8 come in handy. Had we known about the victim impact
9 statement ahead of time, I personally would have provided
10 one. Even if I couldn't be present. I would have had one
11 of my sisters read it for me. It was very challenging to
12 get info about any kind of court dates, and reaching family
13 was harder. I was going to try and be present to one of
14 the court dates, and I tried asking for the actual date.
15 And it kept getting changed on me. So I lost my nerve.

16 I was never -- never able to bring myself to
17 attending, or even admitting that my sister had been
18 murdered. The idea of someone murdering such an amazing
19 soul was just so over my head I could not believe that
20 somebody actually hurt her that way. I just want to say
21 that for five years I pretended like my sister was still
22 around. It was how I coped. So for five years my sister,
23 Patricia, was on one grand adventure after another. You
24 know, I pictured her on top of the Eiffel Tower, taking
25 selfies. I pictured her riding those gondolas on the

1 rivers of Venice in Italy. I pictured her sunbathing on
2 the wonderful sandy beaches of Malibu. I pictured her
3 rubbing elbows with the stars in Hollywood. So for five
4 years that's what I took comfort in.

5 Then two years ago, the Friendship
6 Centre in Sioux Lookout offered a sharing circle in part of
7 the MMIW inquiry. And I went. I sat in the circle, and I
8 listened. And I remember thinking to myself when the
9 feather gets to me, I'll just say, *Miigwech*, and pass it
10 along. Well, that day, in that circle, the feather came
11 close to me. And each time it got closer and closer, I
12 felt drawn to it. And I remember reaching out to take it
13 from a good friend, and that was still my plan. I was
14 going to say, *Miigwech*, and keep passing it. When I got
15 hold of it, it was like something powerful came over me.
16 It was like an electric charge that went from my hand to my
17 elbow, and then to my shoulder, and then -- and then all of
18 a sudden, I could hear somebody talking. And I thought to
19 myself, "God, she's strong." She's saying exactly the
20 stuff I need to say. It was me. I was sharing. And so
21 five years of pretending came out. In one fast, powerful
22 share. My heart and my brain were ready, by my body
23 wasn't. My body didn't know what hit it.

24 I remember shaking, and I remember feeling
25 the room close around me. I remember getting up, and I

1 remember turning to my left, and giving the feather to the
2 lady on my right -- on my left. And I remember looking at
3 my good friend -- my good friend, Candy. And I said, "I
4 can't do this." I said, "I'm sorry, but you're going to
5 have to excuse me." And I left. When I got out into the
6 hallway of our Friendship Centre in Sioux Lookout, I cried
7 like I'd never cried before. I cried so much, that I swear
8 to God, people at Front Street probably heard me crying.
9 And I remember people around me, and I remember focusing on
10 one face. And I remember telling that face, "I need to go
11 home. I need to go home." So my friend, she drove me
12 home.

13 And then we got word that the healer wanted
14 me to come back so that he could talk to me some more. So
15 I waited until I made sure that most of the people in the
16 room had already cleared out, and I went back and I spoke
17 with the healer. And we had a good chat. I told him stuff
18 about my sister I'd never told anyone. And he listened.
19 He was exactly what I needed at that moment. And I wish
20 that other people that were hurting had people like him to
21 help them. And so that was how my name got shared with the
22 inquiry. And now I'm here.

23 And it brings me to my recommendations. I
24 believe escorts are needed for victims, or witnesses when
25 leaving their home reserve to go testify. Whether it'd be

1 for them, or whether they're testifying for somebody else.
2 I believe, wholeheartedly, that had they granted my sister,
3 Patricia, an escort and had allowed for her to be
4 accompanied by her husband, I believe that she would have
5 been a -- alive today. I believe that Joanne Vivier and
6 Michelle Morris never would have murdered her.

7 My other recommendation is that more effort
8 needs to be put into -- reach out to family members with
9 updates on court dates so that they're given time to make
10 arrangements to be there, if they should choose to be
11 there. In our case, it would have been helpful to know
12 that we could have shared a victim impact statement, or
13 statements. I've often wondered how is sentencing
14 determined when a loved one is murdered. And I often
15 wondered would our victim impact statements have made a
16 difference in the sentencing. The time Joanne Vivier and
17 Michelle Morris spent in jail for their crime of eight
18 years, just doesn't seem sufficient enough for me. Eight
19 years on a life that was so loved. How were they able to
20 determine the sentence that they got?

21 Another recommendation that I have, Michèle,
22 is families need to be notified of upcoming parole
23 hearings, probation, and release dates. And I will tell
24 you why. No one in my family was notified. Not Loretta,
25 not Samantha, who would have shared with the rest of us

1 that they were getting out. We found out -- I woke up one
2 morning, and I fired up the old computer. Turned on
3 Facebook, and as soon as it loaded, the first picture I saw
4 was of Michelle Morris's face. And I felt like somebody
5 kicked me in the gut. The wind was knocked right out of
6 me. I can't remember the exact head -- heading --
7 headline, but it was something to the effect of 'Police are
8 Requesting Information on the Whereabouts of Michelle
9 Morris Who is in Breach of Probation.' So that was why I'm
10 making that recommendation.

11 Here is a big one. Someone is needed within
12 the communities to provide information about the rights of
13 surviving family members. A liaison, or an advocate to
14 help explain what to expect in court proceedings. It is my
15 belief that the Crown attorneys who overlooked my sister's
16 trial, or court, however you want to word it, they need to
17 be held accountable to the families before they begin the
18 talk of plea bargaining. They need to make families aware
19 of their plan for a plea bargain. They need to explain why
20 they feel a plea bargain is needed. The Crown attorneys
21 also need to be held accountable to the community of -- the
22 communities of the families about negotiations for plea
23 bargains. In my sister's case, Joanne Vivier and Michelle
24 Morris were originally charged with first degree murder,
25 and they pled guilty to first degree murder. But it was

1 later pled down to manslaughter. Sitting here now
2 reflecting, it just doesn't make any sense to me. Why they
3 would have done so. If they already had the guilty plea,
4 why knock it down?

5 At this time, I would like to say thank you,
6 Michèle, for listening. I would like to thank the media
7 for the coverage that they're doing today, and days before,
8 and tomorrow and whatever. I would like to say a big thank
9 you to my two supporters, Marilyn (ph) and Shawna (ph).
10 And the elders, and my friend, Sharon (ph). The previous
11 family had mentioned how they felt. It could have been
12 better organized. And I was sitting back there thinking,
13 that's exactly what I said to my friend. And so that would
14 be my recommendation to the inquiry is I felt like I was
15 forgotten about. I didn't get my travel arrangements to
16 come here until the night before I was supposed to come
17 here. And then there was miscommunication. One of the
18 ladies I spoke with had promised us flights, and another
19 lady had said -- talked about buses. And it was my
20 understanding that if we had gone with the bus, we would
21 have been here Saturday night. So when Saturday rolled
22 around and I hadn't heard from anyone, it was my assumption
23 that we were flying out the next day. And then I didn't
24 hear from anybody until Saturday night. Yeah, and the plan
25 was that I was supposed to catch a bus, which was

1 contradictory to what I had been promised. So I ended up
2 hitching a ride with Shawna Fyloo (ph). And my daughter
3 came with me, and for my return portion, I wasn't sure if I
4 was suppose to use the bus ticket. And then I -- and then
5 I was told that I was going to be flown home, and I was
6 like, "Yeah." And I asked which day, and I had been told
7 that it would be booked for Thursday morning --

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Tomorrow
9 (indiscernible).

10 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** A -- two days.

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Two days.

12 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** Yeah. So Tuesday
13 morning. So I thought, okay, that's great. I'll have an
14 extra day where I could meet with and plan to meet with my
15 niece and my nephew who live here, who are Patricia's
16 youngest two. And then this afternoon I found out I'm
17 leaving tomorrow morning. So I won't get to see them. I
18 almost had second thoughts about sharing publicly, and it
19 was just because I was feeling stressed and -- and I wasn't
20 sure how my family was going to take it. And -- and after
21 I spoke with Patricia's daughter, she said, "I'm glad. I'm
22 glad you're doing it. Then at least she has a voice." So
23 that's why I'm here today. And I just want to thank
24 everyone that's here, and everyone that's out there in
25 cyber-world. Thank you for taking the time to listen.

1 And Michèle, I have one last thing to say to
2 you. I heard that you can get -- that you can apply for
3 standing, if you're a family member. Because I would like
4 to stay involved with the inquiry after this day. So if
5 it's possible, I would like to apply for standing. A
6 special shout-out to my other lawyer, Susan (ph). Thank
7 you.

8 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Madam Commissioner, I
9 don't have any more questions. So I'm wondering if you
10 have any questions or comments?

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci, Maître*
12 *Cox.* It's more comment -- it was so -- so, how do we say
13 in English? You're powerful and the question, poof, you
14 answer it. They're wondering, poof, you answer it. So the
15 comment will -- I would start this comment by -- for you
16 and all the families that are here, and who were in
17 Whitehorse, Smithers, Membertou, Maliotenam,
18 Saskatchewan -- in Saskatoon, sorry, Edmonton, Winnipeg,
19 even for the hearing for the -- in Winnipeg, the first one
20 we did in the wrong place also because family didn't feel
21 safe in that space we went for the expert panel. And he
22 even by calling it, expert panel, like, as if family are
23 not expert. On -- on behalf of myself, it was a real
24 nightmare to see even the adfac (ph), your friend behind
25 can say -- testify about that, and you too as a -- an --

1 former enfac (ph) member, how hard it was to inform the
2 victims and families. And this is our responsibility. I
3 don't make the calls, but I represent those calls, so I --
4 I am so sorry.

5 Am I happy with that? No. So for all
6 families and survivors who are listening, you didn't
7 deserve that stress at all. So is it going to repair, I
8 don't think so. But I don't think it was right and still
9 right today that you're not the only one here who doesn't
10 know when they're leaving. So it is a big concern. It --
11 and I know, our new executive director will have to find
12 solutions. We'll have to find solutions, and the
13 commissioners, myself, don't like that -- to hear that.
14 And -- and I'm not asking you to accept my apology, but
15 deep inside I know that it's unacceptable. So I am very
16 sorry.

17 And not only on the travel, but the
18 miscommunication, all that process, was and still very
19 something. So I accept -- I accept what you -- you say,
20 and the -- the family before you also. And for the next
21 hearing that we will do in the winter and the spring,
22 hopefully we have that extension. I hope the people that
23 works for the inquiry will make sure that there's no more
24 accidents, or mistake, or that type of organize -- how do
25 we say? Our -- the way we're organizing. Yeah. Because

1 it hurts me. Thank you for your strength. And your
2 recommendation was -- not was, they are very powerful and
3 the one that very -- I was like, "Yeah, I did most of
4 them." Only one I couldn't attend. My girls wanted to see
5 me, so I -- I'm sad to say, I didn't go to Edmonton.

6 But the -- the one you say about
7 sentences -- *les sentences*, even myself, I'm scratching.
8 How do we -- how come that sentence was that, and this and
9 that. So we have that concern, and we -- I want to
10 understand. And I'm not from that world, but I'm in the
11 position now that I'm able to ask those question from
12 inside. So I'll advocate for that one for sure, but for
13 the rest also. So I have to say thank you so much, and
14 thank you for your supporter, and FILU for helping
15 beautiful woman here. And all the other women also -- to
16 come here or to -- to be prepare.

17 Thank you also for the Friendship Centres
18 across Canada, and the one in Sioux Lookout. Many of them
19 are making miracles, or helping, or trying to save, or to
20 walk beside many people, so I -- I acknowledge their work
21 and -- and there's never nothing for nothing. That day you
22 went there, you passed that feather, somebody heard you,
23 asked you to come back. And look where you are today.
24 Look where you are today. Opening that path, or helping,
25 or telling the truth, but also to have the courage to say,

1 "Hey, Michèle, there's something wrong the way things are
2 happening." And that, I admire that. Your voice is
3 important to me. And the love that we have for women, that
4 makes us strong, so I want to say thank you and if it's
5 okay for you and other women, let's pray that the next
6 hearings are way, way, way more -- how do we say?

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Structured.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Structured
9 for the women and the men that will come to us. *Merci*
10 *beaucoup*. With that, would you accept a beautiful eagle
11 feather from us?

12 **MS. CHARLOTTE MURRAY:** Yes.

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Oui?* We have
14 -- we -- we have five of them (indiscernible) English. I
15 just added one. I'm not going to give myself an eagle
16 feather, so -- *oui*. My grandmother, Bernie, can explain.

17 **MS. BERNIE SKUNDAAL WILLIAMS:** I just want
18 to explain this -- these -- these eagle feathers started
19 their journey from Haida Gwaii, that's on the west coast of
20 the mainland in B.C. And my understanding now is that
21 these feathers are from this territory now. Yesterday,
22 they were given out from Sechelt and the last community was
23 Haida Gwaii and from Sechelt. So now, the feathers have
24 been donated from this community now. So -- and it just
25 keeps going to other places now. So I want to say

1 (Speaking Native Language) to you.

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Some were from my
3 community who spoke French. But they're all gone. They
4 have one last shuttle left. *Merci beaucoup.*

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you so much
6 (indiscernible). I think it's white sage.
7 (Indiscernible).

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I didn't get your
9 name?

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Shawna.

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Shawna? *Merci.*

12 Thank you so much. Thank you.

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

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
15 *beaucoup.* The sage and (indiscernible).

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

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Sorry, I said white
18 sage.

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

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

21 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible) for
22 the support. (Indiscernible).

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You've got national
24 media (indiscernible).

25 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Yes. For the purposes

1 of the record, if we could adjourn or conclude this matter.

2 You want to say more?

3 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Ladies and gentlemen,
4 this is our last public session, part of the MMI -- IW, so
5 I've -- the family is willing to accept any visitors. I
6 have to -- I have to look at -- and if you'll accept the
7 love from the guests in the audience that are with us.

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

9 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** All right. I -- I get
10 to -- I get to go first. Sorry. *Excusez-moi, excusez-moi.*
11 I -- I go again. Hey.

12 **(LAUGHTER)**

13 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Okay, thank you for your
14 strength. And we invite those who wish to come up and pass
15 their love and -- encouragement and strength on to this
16 young lady. And give her ongoing support for her -- for
17 her tomorrows. And at this time we'll also be going to the
18 drum to -- for the adjournment and the closing of these
19 public sessions. And we would like to thank all of you's
20 for coming out and being a support to these families for
21 the last three days. Tomorrow will be a continuation.
22 However, they'll be closed -- they'll be closed sessions.
23 They will not be open to the public. Close it up.

24 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Close it up song?

25 **MR. RON KANUTSKI:** Well, yeah. Healing

1 song. Healing song and then, yeah, for the -- yeah. Do
2 the healing song for her, and then close it up. This is
3 adjourned.

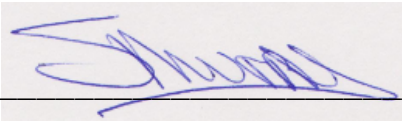
4 **--- Exhibits (code: P01P08P0203)**

5 **Exhibit 1:** Digital folder of six images displayed
6 during public testimony

7 --- Upon adjourning at 5:02 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shannon Munro, 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.



Shannon Munro

February 24, 2017