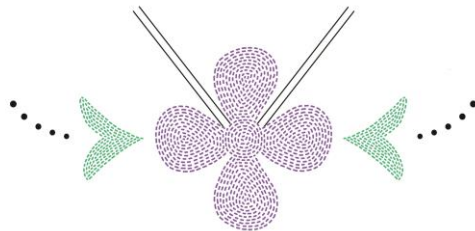


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel
Britannia Ballroom
Metro Vancouver, British Columbia**



PUBLIC

Sunday April 8, 2018

Public Volume 117

**Laureen “Blu” Waters and Dawn Gaudio,
In Relation to Viola G. Melvin**

**Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.

41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2

E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246

II

APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Non-appearance
Government of British Columbia	Non-appearance
Government of Canada	Anne Turley (Legal Counsel)
Heiltsuk First Nation	Non-appearance
Northwest Indigenous Council Society	Non-appearance
Our Place - Ray Cam Co-Operative Centre	Non-appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	Beth Symes (Legal Counsel)
Vancouver Sex Workers' Rights Collective	Non-appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Metis Nation	Non-appearance

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Public Volume 117
April 8, 2018
Witnesses: Laureen "Blu" Waters and Dawn Gaudio
In relation to Viola G. Melvin
Chief Commissioner: Marion Buller
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe
Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Kathy Louis, Bernie
Williams, Louise Haulli Reta Blind, Gladys Radek, Florence
Catcheway, CeeJai Julian, Merle Williams, Deni Paquette, Donna
Dickison, Ruth Alfred, Harriet Prince, Elaine Bissonnette,
Eunice McMillan, Candace Ruth, Janice Brown, Theresa Russ,
Deanna Lewis, Jennifer Thomas, Margerat George, Juanita
Desjarlais
Clerk and Registrar: Bryan Zandberg PAGE

Testimony of Laureen "Blu" Waters and Dawn Gaudio 1
Reporter's certification 67

IV
LIST OF EXHIBITS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Witnesses: Laureen "Blu" Waters and Dawn Gaudio Exhibit: (code: P01P15P0505)		
1	Folder containing six digital images shown during the public testimony of the witnesses.	66

1 Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Sunday, April 8, 2018, at 3:01 p.m.

3 (DRUMMING)

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good afternoon,
5 Chief Commissioner. (Speaking in Anishinaabe). I just
6 want to start by acknowledging the host communities that
7 allow us to be on their territory as a guest. It's with a
8 great amount of pleasure that I get to introduce the next
9 person who will be sharing their story and sharing the
10 story of her grandmother, and Laureen "Blu" Waters, or
11 *Nokomis* Blu, as she is often known as, and her daughter
12 Dawn Gaudio -- Gaudio? Am I saying it right?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Gaudio.

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Gaudio, thank you,
15 will be sharing their story.

16 Rather than have Blu promise in, she's
17 actually going to speak about her truth in traditional way.

18 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: *Tan'si*.
19 (Speaking in Cree). I stand before you today, and I offer
20 my words to my ancestors, to those that came before me, to
21 my family who now watches over me, and to those little ones
22 that are yet to come, that I will speak the words to my
23 truth, to my experiences, and speak so everyone can hear
24 those things that need to change.

25 These are my words to my ancestors. These

1 are my promises to them. My words are all I have.
2 Everything else is on loan from the Creator, so I give to
3 each and every one of you my word today that these will be
4 my truths. *Meegwetch.*

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So I'm going to
6 refer to you as Blu as opposed to using -- I'm used to
7 calling you Grandmother Blu, so I'm going to call you Blu
8 today if that's okay, and --

9 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** (Indiscernible).

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** -- thank you very
11 much for making that promise, and I just want to start with
12 you telling us a little bit about you and introducing
13 yourself and the type of work you do nowadays.

14 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** One of my primary
15 jobs is to work for Seneca College as an Elder on campus, a
16 job that I'm very thankful that I have because I get to sit
17 with those students who have moved to
18 post-education -- post-secondary education to find their
19 way in this world, and -- and the good thing is they
20 continue to teach me because I don't have all the answers.
21 I can only teach them what was taught to me and then learn
22 from them, so I'm very grateful for that work.

23 I work for the district school boards,
24 Toronto, York, Peel, and here for the National Inquiry, I
25 sit as Commissioner Brian Eyolfson's grandmother, his

1 spiritual adviser, to help him with his journey doing this
2 work.

3 Those are my primary jobs that I have, but
4 my work has been with community and always has been with
5 community. Community was the one that named me. Community
6 is the one that calls me when the needs are there, and
7 they're the ones that -- that are my first and foremost
8 work that I do.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And you mentioned in
10 Toronto and the area, so you -- you currently are in
11 Toronto, although you've been doing lots of traveling
12 lately. Most of your work and the community you're talking
13 about is actually in Toronto?

14 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Yes. I live in
15 Peterborough right now for about the last seven months, but
16 I'm in Toronto at least three, four times a week, so I
17 travel about, I don't know, 280 kilometers a day, back and
18 forth, to do that work.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I also want to talk
20 to you -- before we talk about your grandmother and how
21 your grandmother was murdered, I want to talk to you a bit
22 about your childhood and growing up, where -- you know, can
23 you please tell the Commissioner about your youth and where
24 the beginnings were?

25 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Well, I kind of

1 have ties to British Columbia because I was conceived in
2 Comox, so we'll go back to there.

3 (LAUGHTER)

4 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: My brother was
5 born in Comox, and my parents were carrying me and wanting
6 to visit my grandmother, and they figured they still had
7 a -- just over a month left to be able to get to Toronto
8 and back, but three or four days into them arriving in
9 Toronto, I guess I decided I wanted to come a little bit
10 early. Always in a hurry. That's me. My first name was
11 Fleetafoot (ph), which means "fast on your feet," and I
12 guess that was true, and that's probably why they named me
13 that, because I came early.

14 So I was born in Toronto, and -- my parents
15 were only 18 years old, and they already had my brother,
16 who was 2 years old, so they were very young, and my
17 grandparents had talked together and -- while my mother was
18 in the hospital with me, and my grandparents came when I
19 was seven days old, and they decided that two young parents
20 of 18 and still not living in a good way wouldn't be the
21 best choices for parents, so they took my brother and
22 myself, they took me from the hospital at eight days old,
23 and brought me to my first home, and that's where I lived
24 was with my grandmother.

25 We had a great childhood. We -- we were

1 taught all the things that we needed to -- to know. I -- I
2 remember traveling on -- getting up early in the morning
3 and going on a bus with my grandmother, who I'll refer to
4 as *Kohkom*. *Kohkom* would say, come on, let's get going, and
5 we would have to carry certain items, and my job was to
6 carry a 2-man tent, and she took lots of bags, and my
7 brother took some, and we'd get on the Greyhound bus and go
8 to Peterborough, get off, then, in the middle of the road.
9 There was nothing there at that time, and we would find a
10 corn field and put our tent in a corn field so we wouldn't
11 be seen, and we would go around collecting the medicines
12 and the things she needed to make trades with, and we would
13 stay overnight in that corn field, and I used to say,
14 why -- why do we have to be here? And she would say,
15 because we don't want people to know we're here because
16 they'll come and take everything, and then they won't
17 understand why we do this, so let's just do this and get to
18 sleep.

19 So we'd get up the next morning and jump on
20 the next bus and head back to Toronto, and she would do her
21 medicines and prepare what she needed, and we would travel
22 down to Regent Park, Moss Park, a place with where all the
23 Indigenous people were because that was a time when no one
24 had money and no one wanted to hire anybody if you were
25 Indigenous. They'd just look at you and say, ah, you're a

1 dirty Indian, you're going to be drunk, and we're not
2 hiring you.

3 So a lot of people lived in that area, which
4 was low-income housing. It was called the projects, and we
5 would go there on a Sunday -- on a Saturday morning because
6 my grandmother would start making bannock the night before,
7 as soon as she got off work, and we'd have a whole shopping
8 cart of bannock to trade, and that's how we'd get a lot of
9 our items would be to go there, and she would trade, and
10 someone would give her ten pounds of flour, and someone a
11 dozen eggs, and someone a pound of butter, and someone some
12 good old Crisco or just plain lard, and we would have the
13 things that we needed, those staple things that cost a lot
14 of money to buy, and we didn't have a lot of money at that
15 time.

16 When I was 4, just about 4 years old, my
17 grandfather passed away, and my -- my *Kohkom* had to work
18 two jobs to take care of my brother and myself. She had
19 already raised all her children, and -- and most of her
20 other grandchildren and -- sorry, nieces and nephews, she
21 had raised them, but she knew that if my brother and I were
22 to be the people we were meant to be, that she had to do
23 that work and help teach us.

24 And while she was at work with her two jobs,
25 we weren't the most obedient children, I guess, because we

1 would be hungry. We had an aunty who -- when she was going
2 through menopause was probably one of the first or second
3 times she ever was to a doctor, and she went there to see
4 what she could do, and they gave her shock treatments, so
5 she never was the same. So my grandmother, my *Kohkom* would
6 ask her to come and watch us while she worked two jobs, but
7 she would forget. She'd forget that she had to do that, so
8 we would get up ourselves in the morning and go to school
9 and come home at lunchtime because the school was close,
10 and we would open up a can of whatever was there because we
11 weren't allowed to touch the stove because that's one of
12 the first lessons you learned: Don't touch the stove or
13 you'll burn the house down, and then we'll be living in the
14 corn field.

15 So we made sure we didn't do that, and there
16 would be no supervision there for us, but we knew what we
17 were supposed to do and what we were not supposed to do in
18 that way, so we might eat a half a head of lettuce. That
19 would be our lunch between the two of us, and we might just
20 eat crackers. Whatever was there, we would have.

21 And then at dinnertime, we'd come home, and
22 we would hope she'd be there, but sometimes she wasn't.
23 Most of the time, she wasn't, and -- and that was hard. My
24 brother a couple years older than me and very -- very brave
25 at the time when I look back, he would take us to

1 High Park, and he'd say, don't worry, we're going to eat;
2 it's my job to make sure we eat. And so he would jump over
3 the duck pond at High Park, and I'd be on one side of the
4 fence, and he'd be on the other, and he'd grab a goose, and
5 he'd snap its neck. It made an awful sound in the
6 beginning because it would be squawking, and he'd be
7 yelling at it to be quiet, and -- so he'd snap its neck,
8 and then he'd thank that goose, and he'd throw it over the
9 fence, and he'd say, now pull the feathers out real quick,
10 and I'd be, like, 5, 6, 7 years old doing this, and we'd
11 pull the feathers out, and we'd save the feathers, and then
12 we would cook it on a barbecue grill that we had taken from
13 somebody's backyard because we knew we had to eat, so he'd
14 make a fire, and we'd cook that goose, and we'd bring some
15 home for my grandmother because we knew she'd come home at
16 11 o'clock because she was working two jobs.

17 And when she'd get home, she'd yell out,
18 *astam*, which means "come here" in Cree, and we'd jump out
19 of bed and we'd go in the kitchen, and we'd say, what,
20 *Kohkom*? What's this? And -- and that's my grandmother up
21 there with my mom. She was my mom, as well, as far as I
22 know; and she would be a little bit angry, but not really
23 that angry, but she'd say well, I know it's a goose, my
24 brother would tell her, but why is it here? Who brought
25 this here? And my brother would say, well, we did,

1 and -- why did you do that, and where did you get it from?
2 I said, we're hungry; aunty didn't come today again, but we
3 gave you some. We would be real happy, right? We cooked
4 it for you. And then she'd be, like, it looks good.

5 (LAUGHTER)

6 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: But then she'd
7 add in, remember, them Children's Aid going to come
8 knocking, and if they catch you with this, they're going to
9 take you away. So we always had a fear of Children's Aid
10 coming because my grandmother and many other grandmothers
11 believed in kinship, that the family raises the children
12 when the parents can't do the job. The aunties, the
13 grandmothers, the uncles, the cousins, they're the ones
14 because that's the family linkage, but yet Children's Aid
15 would come and say, where's the papers for these children,
16 when we first went to school, and my grandmother, my *Kohkom*
17 would say, what do you want at my door? And they'd say,
18 where's the papers for these children? She said, we didn't
19 have papers. We didn't have paper. We never wrote on
20 paper. I'll go get you some sand from the backyard, and
21 I'll write for you. She said, that's how we used to work.
22 We used to write in sand when we had something to say, and
23 that's what we believe in, traditional law, and that's
24 written in the sand only, and then it's erased when you're
25 finished because we're not supposed to leave our marks like

1 that.

2 So they'd get angry, and they'd say, well,
3 we're going to check into this because our laws state that
4 you have to have signed custody of these children. Where
5 are their parents? She said, in British Columbia. They'd
6 say, where? She goes, go find them. And that was her
7 answer, right? Because our law supersedes their law, and
8 that's what I was always taught.

9 So we would be a little bit scared, but you
10 know, a couple days would go by, and we would be hungry
11 again, so back down to High Park. High Park was our rez.
12 We called it High Park Rez; 273 hectares of land that was
13 gifted to the city of Toronto on our land, but yet, we're
14 not allowed to live on our land? Didn't seem right to us,
15 even as kids.

16 So we'd go down there, and sure enough, I'd
17 say, don't get another goose, *Kohkum*'s going to kill us.
18 He'd say, no, no, no, no, no, we're not getting geese, no,
19 no, no. We'd get down there, and I'd hear (unreportable
20 sound). We're having duck tonight, I guess.

21 (LAUGHTER)

22 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: And I'd be the
23 one pulling out the feathers from the duck. I'd always get
24 that job. I -- I don't know why, but -- and we'd save the
25 feathers because we'd reuse them, right? We never wasted

1 anything. We'd have two ducks cooked because we'd bring a
2 whole one home for my -- my *Kohkom* so she wouldn't have to
3 make anything for her lunch the next day, either, and of
4 course, she'd come home at 11 o'clock at night, and we'd
5 hear that word: *Astam*. And we'd come running out. What
6 is this? My brother's being really smart now, eh? *Kohkom*,
7 you don't know anything. It's a duck.

8 (LAUGHTER)

9 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: He got the look.

10 (LAUGHTER)

11 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: And then he'd
12 get, I know it's a duck. Were you at the park? Yes.

13 (LAUGHTER)

14 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: And, of course,
15 Children's Aid's name would be in there, as well, but
16 that's how we had to live, right, because we didn't have a
17 lot of money, and being an adult, how unjust was that that
18 the Government was paying non-Indigenous families to take
19 care of Indigenous kids, but yet they wouldn't give a cent
20 to my *Kohkom*, and she had to work two jobs? That's an
21 injustice in itself, but if you give your kids away, we'll
22 pay you. So it never seemed right to me.

23 The only hard time we ever had was my
24 brother one time said, jump on the bikes, and we're going
25 to High Park, and I thought, oh, I wonder what we're

1 getting today, and I thought, okay, maybe we're going go
2 fishing. I like to fish. And now we had a broomstick and
3 a roll of duct tape and a brand new hunting knife, a
4 hunting knife that he got by going down Ronsonsvale (ph)
5 Avenue asking people for 10 cents because he had to get
6 back on the streetcar to go home, and he was real busy
7 because he saved up 20 bucks because it cost him 16.99 for
8 the knife, but he got it without having to steal it because
9 he got the money, and he taped that broom pole up when we
10 got to the park and stuck the knife on the end of it and
11 get my *Kohkum's* roll of sinew out and tied it around the
12 other end of the broomstick and wrapped it around his wrist
13 and said, we're going hunting beaver.

14 And we sat there for hours, and the sun was
15 just about going down, and he spotted the beaver coming out
16 of the -- the beaver dam, the hut there, and first shot, he
17 threw it, and he got that beaver, and he pulled it in, and
18 it was, like, I bet you 25 pounds, and I think I might have
19 weighed 40 or 45, and him probably 60, and we threw it in
20 our burlap potato bag sack because that was our backpacks.
21 We didn't have real cloth. We had burlap sacks. And then
22 he tried to carry it home on his back, but it was too
23 heavy. It was 25 pounds, so he duct-taped it to the
24 handlebars on his bike, and off we went home, but we spent
25 about a good hour slicing the heels of that beaver and then

1 trying to pull the skin off, but it wouldn't come off,
2 right? The fur wouldn't come off, and we never had a
3 beaver before, so we didn't even know how to skin it, and
4 by that time, we were hungry enough that we just took it
5 and put it on the old blue arborite table, those blue
6 arborite tables with the silver legs that pulled apart and
7 that you could put a leaf in. Well, we forgot that. We
8 didn't put no -- nothing underneath the beaver on the
9 kitchen table, and we ate something and went to bed.

10 By the time my *Kohkom* got home, that beaver
11 had bled all through the table, down over the floor, and
12 she called us out, and she was a little bit upset this
13 time. And when we got there, she looked at us, and it took
14 about two minutes for her to say something, so we knew we
15 were in trouble this time, and then she looked at us and
16 said, what is this? And she looked at my brother, because
17 she knew he was going to be smart. She goes, I know it's a
18 beaver. I'm assuming it come from the park. Why is it
19 like this? We said we didn't know how to take the fur off,
20 and we were hungry.

21 She hung her head, and she said, go back to
22 your room and change and just come out in your underwear
23 because I don't want to bleach too much. So she taught us
24 how to skin that beaver at 11 o'clock at night, and she
25 taught us how to season it, and she put it in the oven, and

1 she said, you'll be nice and full tomorrow morning because
2 we'll cook it real slow overnight, and don't worry, you
3 won't have to go to the park for the week because you got a
4 pretty big beaver there. So we were real happy, then,
5 right, because she taught us something new, but she always
6 taught us what we needed to know, all those things about
7 survival, living in a city, living away because our rights
8 were taken away because some of my family married non-
9 Indigenous people, so now our Indigenous families were no
10 longer Indigenous, right? I don't know how you go
11 overnight from being Indigenous to non-Indigenous, and who
12 gave the Government the right to say who we are, to say who
13 our blood line is.

14 But we did what we had to to survive, and it
15 was hard, but I remember all the fun I had with her, right?
16 I remember all the times when she went without for us
17 because that's what *kohkums* do, right? They take care of
18 their grandchildren to the best of their ability. She
19 didn't have a good life growing up. She had nothing. You
20 know, they had to scrape to get by as well.

21 I don't know if they were in residential
22 schools because it was never talked about, but I know my
23 one aunty, she would wash us with Javex so we wouldn't be
24 dirty Indians. She would wash all the hardwood floor with
25 Javex after we had just put the paste wax on and buffed it

1 with them old buffers, and she'd come along with a bottle
2 of Javex and pour it down and get down on her hands and
3 knees and scrub it with a brush because we didn't want to
4 be dirty, so I think she was in residential school, but I
5 never got to ask her.

6 So there was always those derogatory remarks
7 being thrown at us kids because we were -- there was only
8 two of us for a long time that lived in that area, and then
9 a good friend of mine now, her name is Tanesha Oakram (ph),
10 her family came, and her mother was Ojibway, so we had
11 another -- third kid to play with, but -- and she was
12 segregated, as well, because she was half-Jamaican and
13 half-Ojibway, so she didn't fit in anywhere either.

14 But my grandmother knew that Children's Aid
15 would be coming, and she always was aware that they were
16 going to knock on our door at any time, and which they did.
17 I mean, we had them come over and knock on the door at
18 4 o'clock on a Friday afternoon, and my brother would get
19 the door, and he'd say, oh, my *Kohkom* went over to
20 Loblaw's, she has to get us some more juice because we ran
21 out of juice, and they said, well, how long will she be
22 gone? And he said, I don't know, a half an hour. Where's
23 your aunty? She's busy upstairs, and they'd say, okay,
24 we'll be back. And he'd watch for them to leave, and he'd
25 jump on his bike, and he'd drive from Dundas and Bloor on

1 his bicycle up to Dundas and Keele, and he'd get my aunty,
2 and he'd say, aunty, come quick, the Children's Aid coming
3 back, and they'd get on the streetcar and come back.

4 And by the time she was already in there,
5 she'd sit three feet behind the door, and she'd sit there
6 on a chair, and when they knocked on the door, we opened
7 the door, and they'd ask her, you know, can we come in?
8 No. They'd say, well, you know we have a right to come in.
9 She said, you want to pay half the rent, you can come in.

10 (LAUGHTER)

11 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: And she wouldn't
12 let them in, and, you know, they'd ask her questions. You
13 know, are the children fed? She said, do they look
14 starving? Well, do the children have enough clothing and
15 everything? Don't they clothes on? Don't they look clean?
16 Can't you smell the bleach? So she wouldn't let them in,
17 and then when she had enough of them, she'd say, I'm
18 finished with you. I have no more -- I have no more
19 answers for you because you shouldn't be answering me
20 questions, and she'd slam the door, and off they'd go.

21 So that didn't really help out the
22 situation, but it was a point of resistance, right, and a
23 point of being interfered with that she didn't like. So my
24 grandmother knew a time was coming that Children's Aid, you
25 know, might actually take us away, and when my brother was

1 10, I was 8, he decided to go and live out here, actually,
2 in Chemainus with my father. My father was living out in
3 Chemainus, because he said he wasn't going to any
4 Children's Aid, so he went and lived with my father in
5 Chemainus, and my grandmother started talking to the family
6 down the street, which was a white family from Nova Scotia
7 and Newfoundland, and they had five kids of their own, and
8 she'd made arrangements with them that would they take me
9 from Monday to Friday and make sure that Children's Aid
10 would be satisfied, and then on the weekends I'd go and
11 stay with her because she only would live up the street
12 because she knew and she heard the stories when she was
13 down in Regent Park of how many people lost their children,
14 and they never got to see them again, and they couldn't
15 find them, so she wanted me close.

16 So they agreed, so when I was 10, I went to
17 live with the white family down the street, and that's
18 where I found out about the injustice of the payments
19 because they were being paid to keep me in their home.
20 They were given a certificate for dental or prescriptions
21 or for anything that I might need, and I had to convert to
22 Catholicism because they were Catholics, so it was like I
23 was a double agent living a double life because during the
24 week, I would be a Catholic and go to church everything
25 else, and then on the weekends I'd be with my *Kohkom*, and

1 we'd be singing songs and drumming and going out to the
2 park and going -- learning about which medicine is what, so
3 she prepared me.

4 I -- I just have one more thing to throw in.
5 I just want to back it up a bit. In between that time, my
6 brother and I had to go to a before-school and an
7 after-school home or else we would be taken away by the
8 Children's Aid, and there was no -- no family, I guess,
9 that would take both of us, so I was in one home with a
10 family called the McDonalds (ph) and my brother was in
11 another home just around the corner from me with the
12 Perrys (ph), and we were there with them for a few years,
13 and when I first went there, it wasn't too bad because I
14 just had to be there for about a half an hour, half an hour
15 in the morning, and -- until 4:30 when my aunty would take
16 care of us because my brother would jump on his bike and
17 run up and tell her to be at home at 4:30, and -- but the
18 bad part was that was when I was 7 years old, and -- I
19 think we have a picture of me with one of my nephews. I
20 don't know if we can find it to put up. Well, there, I was
21 9. Okay? I was 9 years old there, and my nephew was about
22 3 -- 2 and a half, 3 years old, so I was really small. I'm
23 not that big now. I'm bigger this way but not bigger that
24 way.

25 (LAUGHTER)

1 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** So I was 9 years
2 old there, and that was -- that was out in Delta, B.C.,
3 when I went to visit my -- my nephew. So I was two years
4 younger than that, and I was at this care family's home,
5 and this woman used to say to us when we came home after
6 school, I'm going to make you dinner, go and do your -- go
7 and do your stuff, because she had another couple kids
8 there, and I would sit on the third floor, and she'd
9 say -- and when I call you, say, yes, mother. And I'd sit
10 on that third-floor landing, and she would call us, and I
11 would sit there, and I would count, and I would say when I
12 get to 10 I'll say, "yes, mother." And I'd get up to 8, 9,
13 I couldn't get to 10 because she wasn't my mother, and she
14 wasn't nice, so I would sit on that landing till it was
15 time to go home so I wouldn't get dinner, but I refused to
16 call someone "mother" when they weren't my mother and they
17 didn't deserve to be called "mother."

18 And while I was there, at 7 years old was
19 the first time I was sexually abused by another person who
20 was there from care, and that's how the Government was
21 taking care of us. That's how Children's Aid was taking
22 care of us, by forcing us to go to somebody's house and be
23 sexually abused at 7 years old by other foster kids that
24 are in the system that had already been hardened and been
25 abused, and a lot of the times abused people become

1 abusers, and that's exactly what this person was.

2 So that was hard, right, and I couldn't tell
3 my grandmother because the threat was, I'll tell Children's
4 Aid and they'll take you away for sure because they'll know
5 you're lying, so you couldn't tell, so you just had to be
6 fearful every time you came from school and hope that they
7 weren't there because there was no option.

8 I don't know if you have anything to...

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No. Thank you for
10 sharing. So once you were living -- you were living down
11 the street with a family, you still get the chance to see
12 your grandmother on weekends and stuff, I'm assuming?

13 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** M'hm. Oh, yeah.

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

15 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** It was the
16 highlight of my week.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hm. You had
18 mentioned that you also had to go to the church a lot,
19 attend the church almost daily?

20 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Yeah. I guess
21 you would call her my foster mother. I called them my
22 adopted parents although I was never adopted. We had to go
23 every night, especially the month of May, which was the
24 Month of Mary -- things I can't forget -- and do the rosary
25 and learn all the prayers and make sure the priest seen you

1 because if he didn't, he'd be telling your parents that he
2 didn't see you, and then you'd be in trouble because he
3 didn't see you.

4 So yeah, we had to go almost every night
5 because she was a deacon in the church, and that was part
6 of the things we did, six kids walking down the road, going
7 to church every night. So it wasn't the most fun times,
8 but on the weekends, it was -- it was good because I didn't
9 have to go on Friday night, and I got to go and see
10 my -- my *Kohkom*.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I understand you
12 spent a number of years, actually, with that family, so
13 from the time you were ten until how old were you when
14 you were --

15 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** I was 19 when I
16 left there, because I felt an obligation, and I felt a
17 responsibility, and it wasn't entirely bad. They had good
18 intentions, but they only knew what they knew. They would
19 introduce us -- introduce me and if my brother came around,
20 this is our little Indians that we adopted. So, you know,
21 and they thought that was okay to say because that's what
22 they learned. They didn't realize the racism and the
23 discrimination that they were saying, and we weren't old
24 enough or we didn't want to challenge them, and we just
25 thought, well, yeah, that's who we are, so that's okay, but

1 it really wasn't, right? And a few times, you know, I got
2 into arguments when I was older, and they would make a
3 comment, like, well, we tried to beat the Indian out of
4 you, and it didn't work; and no, and it never will, right?
5 So, I mean, these are comments that were common especially
6 coming from the east coast because we know the history of
7 the east coast, of the annihilation of a whole group of
8 Indians. You know, we know that those were the British
9 colonizers who came over on the ships. They were still
10 under British rule. They were the last ones to join
11 confederation. So they still had that British ruling in
12 them and thinking that they were the original owners of
13 this land and they were the ones that made the laws, so you
14 couldn't challenge that as a kid.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, actually, you
16 still -- you're still connected with them. You still feel
17 like you have responsibilities and obligations to them. Is
18 that fair to say?

19 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Yeah, it is.
20 I -- I -- they moved up from Nova Scotia, and I even moved
21 them into my house with me because that's part of the
22 kindness that I learned. That's part of the reciprocal
23 understanding of following those -- those teachings of
24 respect and truth and honesty and humility, bravery and
25 wisdom and love. Right? So, yeah, and I still -- I still

1 have contact with them. They called me today, and now that
2 they're older, they're like, 80 -- 81 and 75. It's hard to
3 walk away when you see someone who needs help, even though
4 you may not have been the number one child on the list, but
5 being raised in a way that this is my work, this is who I
6 was raised to be, to do this work, and I -- I wouldn't do
7 it any other way.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I want to step back,
9 and I want to step back to the day that you actually
10 discovered your grandmother murdered, and I know it's not
11 going to be easy to tell, so take your time and share as
12 much as you feel comfortable sharing.

13 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Yeah, I -- you
14 see, my -- my *Kohkom* was like my mother. She was the first
15 person who loved me. I was 16, and I had -- had a day off
16 school, a professional development day, and I had decided
17 to go with my foster mother to Dufferin Mall, and I -- we
18 were walking up the street, and I said, hang on, let me go
19 and see if my *Kohkom* needs anything, because I know she had
20 just retired a year before, so I knew she was going to be
21 there during the day now.

22 And I went and I knocked on her door, and
23 there was no answer, and I thought, ah, I'm going to go
24 around to the back and see if her coat's on the chair
25 because that's what she did. She came in and put her

1 jacket or coat or her sweater or whatever on, and if she
2 was home, there'd be a teacup on the table. If she was
3 gone out, the teacup would be in the sink, and I looked in,
4 and I seen the teacup on the table, but I seen two -- two
5 teacups on the table and her sweater on the chair. So I
6 knew she would be there, and I knocked on the back door and
7 peeked in. I couldn't see her, and I went around to the
8 side of the house, and I thought, I'll look in and see.
9 They have a parrot, and if that parrot cage is open, I know
10 for sure she's home because that parrot would tear apart
11 her curtains. She wasn't very happy that parrot, and the
12 parrot cage was open, so I knew she was home.

13 And when I got back to the front door, it
14 was open, and I -- sorry. When I was going back to the
15 front door, I seen this man named Lawrence Dorian (ph), who
16 was a friend of -- I guess you would call him my
17 step-grandfather. My grandmother had been married a few
18 years before that to him. He was our neighbour, and I
19 motioned to him to go to the door, but by the time I got
20 there, I was 16 and quite capable of running then and got
21 around to the door and tried door. It was open. And he
22 came walking up the hallway towards me, and I asked him,
23 hey, Larry, what are you doing here? And he said, oh, I
24 just thought I'd stop in. I'm off today. And I noticed he
25 had on an ugly, ugly colour rust shirt, and he had

1 a -- sorry -- a stain on his shirt and a pair of blue jeans
2 on and a pair of black dress shoes, and I looked at him and
3 I thought, oh, wow, my grandmother must have gave him some
4 ice cream with strawberry jam, because that's what she
5 would do when somebody came over, right? Give you
6 something a little bit sweet. And I asked him, where is
7 she? And she said, she's gone over to Loblaw's to get some
8 milk, the same thing that we used to say, so I figured it
9 must be true. So I said, okay, well, let her know I'm
10 going to Dufferin Mall, and I'll come and check on her
11 later. And he leaned up against the wall, just on the
12 other side of the bedroom where I couldn't see in the
13 bedroom. So I told him, okay, I'll be back later, and he
14 said, okay, and I left and went off to Dufferin Mall.

15 And I was coming up the street in the
16 afternoon, and I seen a fire truck there up -- up the
17 street, and I seen an ambulance, and I seen some police
18 cars, and I thought, oh, something must have happened at
19 the laundry right beside her house, and then as I got up
20 the road further, one of the neighbours came out and said,
21 you better go and see, I think the ambulance has got your
22 grandmother in there. And so as I was walking fast and
23 getting to cross over, the ambulance drove by me, so I went
24 running up to the house, and I -- and I went running in,
25 and the police were in there, and my step-grandfather was

1 in there, and I said, what's going on? What's happening?
2 What's happening? And the police said, well, they've taken
3 your grandmother away. She's no longer with us. And I
4 said, what happened? I said, I was here today, and I
5 talked with Larry. Right? I said, Larry was here today,
6 and I talked to him. She was fine then. She was at
7 Loblaw's. What's going on? So the police took me and
8 said, come with me to the kitchen.

9 And as they did that, my mother -- my birth
10 mother had come down from Jane and Weston Road. It's where
11 she lived. So she lived in Toronto for about 15 years, and
12 we seen her once -- once a year at Christmastime, and she
13 was only a 10-minute car ride away from us. But she came
14 in, and she was drunk, so she had driven down there drunk,
15 so I guess they phoned her, and she came in, and I was
16 crying, and she looked at me, and she said, why are you
17 crying? It's my mother. And I was very angry at that time
18 because I thought, no, it's my mother, because she couldn't
19 be, and -- so that was very hard, and she was acting up,
20 and I think that's probably one of the first times I seen
21 that -- how my *Kohkom* had protected me from what I would
22 have grown up with, which was that alcoholism and that
23 abusive language and things like that.

24 So while I was talking to the police and
25 telling them what I seen there that day, I looked down, and

1 under the kitchen cabinets was an old-style cabinet that
2 had an indent underneath the bottom of the cupboards, and I
3 looked, and I seen partial -- one set of my grandmother's
4 teeth, and I started to cry harder because I knew something
5 must have happened for sure because why would her teeth be
6 laying there on the floor?

7 So the police took me into the living room,
8 and I think that time my mother was outside yelling at
9 whoever, and I have no idea who -- where my
10 step-grandfather was, but there was three or four police
11 officers there, and I sat down on the couch, and as I was
12 sitting there, continuing to tell him how I had gone around
13 from the front to the back, I looked down and underneath
14 the TV was the other set of her teeth, and I thought,
15 what -- what did he do between the kitchen and the living
16 room? And you say my grandfather found her in bed? He
17 thought she was sleeping? That's a -- a full length of the
18 house.

19 So it took a while for me to be able to tell
20 my story to them because I knew that something bad
21 happened, but I didn't know what, and I didn't know what
22 for a long time. I just knew that he had murdered her, but
23 that's all I was told.

24 I remember the name of the seargent named
25 Seargent Jack Press from homicide department. He came and

1 talked to me afterwards, as well, and -- I don't remember
2 much from that time. I lost that school year. This
3 happened on April 14th, 1977, so I lost that school year.
4 I don't remember the days. I don't remember any events. I
5 remember my brother coming from B.C. to Turner and Porter
6 Funeral Home. That's where she was laid -- laid out for
7 people to come and visit, and I remember my brother having
8 a fight with my mother because he had come in an ugly
9 three-piece rust suit. That colour rust, I don't like at
10 all, and he -- she was angry with him because my brother
11 and I are both two-spirited, and my grandmother raised us
12 to be two-spirited people, allowed us to be two-spirited
13 people, because she said we have gifts for the people, and
14 my mother was angry and screamed and yelled at my brother
15 saying, you're not a -- you're not a boy, you're not a man,
16 you're a woman. And my brother, of course, was 18 at the
17 time. He just said, I don't have to listen to you, and he
18 turned around and left, and I started crying because my
19 brother was leaving again, and that was at a time when I
20 needed him.

21 And I don't remember anything else until I
22 was in court, and that was quite a while later. I don't
23 even know how long, September or something. I don't know.
24 But while I was in court, I sat there for about three weeks
25 inside the courtroom, and I -- I had no counsel. I had no

1 one to help me. I got on the streetcar. I put my -- I
2 think it was a quarter at the time and went down to the
3 courthouse and sat there listening to stuff I couldn't
4 understand, and I remember them calling my name to go up to
5 the stand. I'm sure I told them the story, the same thing,
6 because that was the truth, what happened. I don't
7 remember if they cross-examined me. I don't remember any
8 of that stuff because that whole year was lost.

9 I remember my aunty, my Aunty Val, which I
10 don't know if her picture was up there or not, but I have a
11 picture of my Aunt Val who just passed away two years ago
12 now, and she came with me the day of the sentencing, and
13 she was like a second mother to me because she lived on the
14 second floor with my cousins, and -- so she helped me. She
15 sat there with me, and that's when I heard what had
16 happened to my *Kohkom*. That's when I heard that he was
17 originally charged with second-degree murder and indignity
18 to a human body.

19 After he had strangled her, trying to get to
20 some money that was underneath their kitchen sink in a
21 small 12-inch-by-12-inch lock box that my *Kohkom* didn't
22 know the combination to because they were saving to go on a
23 honeymoon, and he had worked with my step-grandfather as a
24 shipper and receiver for Overland Express. He had to be
25 able to read and write because he was a shipper/receiver,

1 but yet he was telling the Court that he couldn't read or
2 write and that he didn't know anything, he was a simple
3 man.

4 So they pled him down to manslaughter and
5 they dropped the charge from where after he strangled her,
6 and he broke a bone in her neck, and she suffocated to
7 death, and she scratched him. He was all scratched up,
8 apparently, so she fought. She was only 5-foot tall and
9 maybe a hundred pounds, if that.

10 And after he had strangled her, he had sex
11 with her while she was dead, with my *Kohkom*, because she
12 wasn't worth anything to him. She was my world. And this
13 man could stand there and say he didn't mean it. How could
14 you not mean it while you had your hands around somebody's
15 neck? How could you have -- how could you not mean it when
16 one part of their teeth ended up in one room and one in
17 another? How could you not mean it when you picked them
18 off of the floor and put them in a bed and had sex with
19 them after they were dead? And I'm glad I didn't know
20 about it before the trial because I would have had people
21 go down there and take his life.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Excuse me, Blu.
23 Could we take a short break?

24 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Yes.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** We'll take a

1 5-minute break, please.

2 --- Upon recessing at 3:53 p.m.

3 --- Upon resuming at 4:06 p.m.

4 (DRUMMING)

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: *Meegwetch*. Thank
6 you. Thank you for the song.

7 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: *Haw'aa*.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I know the last
9 point you were touching on is very difficult, and I don't
10 want us to take you back there, but can I take you back to
11 the courtroom?

12 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: Yeah.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I think there's a
14 little more in terms of you had just shared that it was
15 over the money, but can you talk a little more about the
16 relationship between Larry and your step-grandfather?

17 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: Uh-huh. So Larry
18 and my step-grandfather's name was Vic, they worked
19 together at Overland Express, and they knew each other, and
20 they knew each other well, and my -- my step-grandfather
21 had for sure told him that there was money there in that
22 safe, and that's what he had went there to get. He had
23 called in sick that day, I found out later, and what I
24 didn't say earlier is that my step-grandfather, I told you
25 he lived beside us, but I only went there when he wasn't

1 having anybody to help you, as a 16-year-old kid, right?
2 It wasn't right. You know, I know it's, you know, 41 years
3 ago, but there was no dignity for anybody who was -- or
4 identified as an Indigenous person, and it's not much
5 better today. It really isn't. You know, we can think of,
6 you know, how -- how far we've come, and we have come a
7 certain distance, but we haven't come far enough, nowhere
8 near far enough, because we can't still be who we are. We
9 can't still do our ceremonies like they should be.
10 We -- we don't have access to lands to do them. Who wants
11 to sweat inside the city? We're not meant to sweat in
12 between concrete buildings. We're not meant to do our
13 *Yuwipi* or our tie-up ceremonies or any of our ceremonies in
14 the -- in the city, in the concrete, right?

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can we talk a little
16 bit about what happened to Larry after he was convicted of
17 the manslaughter?

18 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** So that day that
19 I heard those things in the courtroom and I finally seen
20 who he -- who and how he really was, he got sentenced to
21 15 years, ten years to be served in Penetanguishene mental
22 health centre, so he got to sit there and have fun, watch
23 TV, not be behind bars like he should have been. He got to
24 be institutionalized in a place where he would be given
25 medication to make him feel good, and a man who knew how to

1 read and write but claimed that he didn't and got away with
2 it because of our criminal system. That's not our system.
3 The system we have is not our system. Our system, he would
4 have been brought before the grandmothers, and he would
5 have been sat down, and he would have been explained to of
6 how he impacted not only the immediate family but the
7 extended family, the community, and the whole nation,
8 right? And he would have had to apologize in front of
9 everyone, and he would have had to speak to me directly,
10 and he would have had to apologize, and he would have had
11 to do something to show that he had truly learned from what
12 he did was wrong. I never got to tell him how I felt. I
13 never got to tell him the impact that he had on my life or
14 the rest of my family. What was already a fractured
15 family, he became fragmented because I couldn't speak to a
16 mother anymore and never came to visit me anymore because
17 my *Kohkom* wasn't there. Yeah, I talked to her once a year
18 and I didn't even know she was my mother until I was 6 or
19 7 years old, but she was still my mother, and I lost that
20 contact until I was well into my 30s, and I never got to
21 learn from her more because there's still a lot I don't
22 know, and I'm 57 years old, and I could have still had a
23 lot of time to learn from her, and maybe she could have
24 taught me how to process anger because I still have a
25 problem with that, especially when it comes to the

1 injustices, because I never seen her angry. Never.

2 But he got 15 years, serving 10, then parole
3 for the next 5, and while I was sitting at a job -- I
4 already had my -- my children. This is my daughter Dawn
5 who's come here with me to -- to sit and -- and comfort me
6 and help me. She didn't get to meet her -- her great
7 grandmother. She didn't even know about these things that
8 I'm speaking about today because I didn't want to tell her,
9 but I need our -- our family's lineage and knowledge to be
10 carried on, and she's strong. She's strong.

11 So while I was at work and already had my
12 children, in walked Sergeant Jack Press from the homicide
13 department. I have no idea how he found me to tell me that
14 Lawrence Dorian will be getting out of -- out of jail.
15 He's eligible -- eligible for parole, and he's been a model
16 prisoner, so there should be no reason why he can't get
17 out. I said, what does that mean? He said, well, he'll be
18 getting out, and he'll be going to live in Burlington,
19 which is why I have a problem crossing that bridge, that
20 Burlington bridge, because I know he was walking around and
21 my grandmother wasn't. He was able to be free and live his
22 life then, and he said, he'll be there with his sister, but
23 if you see him, give us a call. Well, I'm 26 years old
24 now, right? 27 years old. Is he coming after me because I
25 was the one that was there in the house that knew he was

1 there? Oh, we don't think so, they said. There should be
2 no reason. He's been a model prisoner. I didn't hear
3 anything about whether or not I could say I didn't want him
4 to come out. They didn't say anything to me that I could
5 appear before anything, and maybe there wasn't anything at
6 that time. I don't know, but I certainly wasn't advised of
7 anything; besides, he's been the least, and he's been a
8 model prisoner, as if that cleared the sheets of
9 everything.

10 He never once wrote a letter saying he was
11 sorry for it. If he had all that time in a rehabilitation
12 place, I never heard from him. I don't even know if he's
13 alive today. Probably not, but -- and I don't want to look
14 into it because if he was alive, I wouldn't want him to be,
15 and that goes against my own teachings, and I'm -- and I'm
16 an Elder in the community, but a man who disgraces a woman
17 after she's passed away is not a man. Even our animals
18 don't do things like that. He -- I can't even refer to him
19 in a name because there is no word for it, but he's not
20 human and he's not animal. He's below -- I can't even give
21 a name to it, as I say, because our Creator didn't make
22 something like that. That's the product of colonization
23 and views that are non-Indigenous. Those are the ways of
24 someone who's non-Indigenous and a colonizer.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Blu, I do want to

1 return to you to talk about some of the community work you
2 have, but first, I'd like to ask Dawn a couple of questions
3 if that's okay.

4 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** M'hm.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So -- can you turn
6 the microphone on?

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Oh, sorry.

8 **MS. DAWN GAUDIO:** Sure.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you, Dawn.

10 I -- I know that you grew up with a mother who did a lot of
11 work in the community and was often working late hours, who
12 was often on call, helping people in need, and I know that
13 today's the first time you've heard some of the stories,
14 and so I'm -- the question I have for you is hard, and it
15 might not come easy, but looking back, do you understand a
16 little bit more about some of the work your mom's done?

17 **MS. DAWN GAUDIO:** I think my mom was always
18 who she was supposed to be. She always did the work she
19 was supposed to do, that she was called to do, and to be
20 completely honest, I don't think that the paths she's
21 chosen in life were dictated by the events that she
22 endured. I believe that there was a lot of quirks, maybe,
23 that she acquired along the way because of it. Like, the
24 continuous canned food. So much canned food, always in the
25 cupboard, and just, like, being really strict --

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hm.

2 **MS. DAWN GAUDIO:** -- and not being able to
3 go anywhere or stay overnight or -- like, really regimented
4 times to be in -- in the house, and -- like, overtly
5 protective. Like, a lot of safety precautions. Yeah, I
6 can see how that would -- would be. I mean, she always
7 said she didn't want anybody to hurt us, so we couldn't
8 really do much, at least me, especially. My brother could
9 play outside a little bit longer, but not me. So I just
10 thought she was super overprotective, but yeah.

11 Working with women, especially, and
12 children, like, she always did work like that. She always
13 did talk to everybody. I don't think that, myself, my own
14 belief, a personal event in your life or something that she
15 went through broke her. I think it scarred her, but I
16 don't think it broke her, and I don't think that we should
17 let those things break us.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No, that's true.
19 You mentioned quirks and the canned food and sort of the
20 strict -- the protection.

21 **MS. DAWN GAUDIO:** Lots of cans. Lots of
22 cans.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And lots of
24 protection, not being able to go out. I imagine she made
25 you -- once there was the technology -- text you or touch

1 base with her or phone or...

2 MS. DAWN GAUDIO: And we had very limited
3 computer time and very little time on the phone, specific
4 time frames. Like, pretty army-like. Yeah.

5 (LAUGHTER)

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But, you know,
7 something your -- your mom just said is, you know, the
8 lineage and the -- the culture and the teachings as -- and
9 being able to pass that ancestry on, she's still been able
10 to do that, hasn't she?

11 MS. DAWN GAUDIO: Yeah. More so, like,
12 later on in life because we were raised Roman Catholic as
13 well. I'm -- I was close with her -- we call them adopted
14 parents -- my grammy and granddad. I didn't know any of my
15 family members. I met my biological grandmother when I was
16 in my teens, and I've only ever seen her twice before she
17 passed, and my biological grandfather never responded to
18 any of my letters. I remember when she told us that, you
19 know, you're not really white, and I was like, oh, okay.
20 And since then, yeah, it's -- it's been a lot of
21 discovering it together, so -- yeah. It was something that
22 she didn't really talk about very much.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Is there anything
24 else you wanted to add, Dawn, because I think you've
25 already said some powerful words, but now hearing what

1 you've heard from your mom, is there anything you want her
2 to know?

3 **MS. DAWN GAUDIO:** There's never anything you
4 can do. It's what's supposed to be. You saw what you were
5 supposed to see. You did the work you were supposed to do.
6 Your healing will never end because the suffering will
7 never end, but that's how we know we're alive, but I'm
8 always here for you.

9 **(APPLAUSE)**

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Blu, I -- I am
11 also from the Toronto community and well aware of the work
12 that you do in the community for youth, for two-spirited,
13 for women. I know that some of your work is driven by your
14 life experience. You know, Dawn saying what was meant to
15 be may have been part of what's put you on the path,
16 but -- and you were pretty modest in the introduction about
17 the type of work you do, so I want to talk to you a little
18 bit about the work you do in the community and why you do
19 that work.

20 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Well, I knew who
21 I was meant to be from the time I was 4 years old because
22 my -- my *Kohkom* told me, and then paths in my life have
23 lead me to where I am now. One of those paths was on my
24 way to Sundance, and I learned the buffalo dance, and I do
25 that buffalo dance for our youth who commit suicide, and

1 we -- at Sundance, we hang a buffalo skull off our back,
2 and we offer that up for those people who have committed
3 suicide so that that buffalo, which is the biggest and the
4 strongest animal we have -- Commissioner, as you know,
5 being from Saskatchewan, it sustained us for our lives
6 until they were almost run into extinction, for fun and
7 games from the nonIndigenous people, so we would
8 starve -- that buffalo's the only one big and strong enough
9 to take those suicide spirits back to the Creator because
10 they've interrupted their path. They've stopped that
11 normal progression that they were supposed to walk and
12 learn, and they did that because they were suffering. We
13 failed them. We failed them as human beings because they
14 were suffering, and we didn't see it, and much like I did
15 to my daughter, I hid stuff from her because didn't want
16 her to know about it, right? I didn't want her to have to
17 bear that weight, but our children know, and those young
18 ones, those young ones, they -- they know things that we
19 think they don't know, and they become overburdened because
20 we haven't taught them because we lost our ways. Our ways
21 were taken away, so culture's very important for us, to
22 regain our culture and our languages and our -- and our
23 ceremonies because that's how our ancestors survived, and
24 in that ceremony, the buffalo collects those spirits and
25 takes them back to the Creator, and it's usually a

1 year-long process that that happens because we have to
2 mourn, right? Our tears are our healing, right? Those
3 tears are washing away those things that we need to let go
4 of.

5 I have a hard time crying because I see so
6 much sadness, and I experienced a lot of sadness, and I see
7 our youth experiencing those sadnesses, so I have to be
8 strong for them, and we do that work for students because
9 it needs to be done. Our youth are killing themselves
10 left, right, and centre, right, because of the world we
11 live in and the things that have happened in our world and
12 the losses that we suffered through those that -- from
13 residential school and '60s scoop.

14 It hasn't been an easy journey for
15 Indigenous people since -- since those ships landed and our
16 ways started diminish, so I do that work for them. I sit
17 and I listen to them. I spend time with them. I cook for
18 them. I cooked up some pickerel a couple of weeks ago
19 while I was there because they're hungry, because we still
20 can't afford to feed our children, and I know what hungry
21 felt like, so I cook for them at Seneca College. We whip
22 them up bannock. We bring in food ourselves to feed our
23 students because even our institutions don't have enough
24 funding in our resource centres to help out the need that's
25 out there. I do sweats for our two-spirited people because

1 they've been driven away from our ceremonies from the
2 colonial ideas of the gender binary.

3 When I was young, my grandmother told me,
4 one day you'll -- you can be a hunter, you can be a
5 gatherer, you can be a child-protector, you can be a
6 builder, because we didn't have specific gender roles. We
7 had responsibilities. So if you were good at hunting, you
8 were a hunter. It didn't matter whether you were born with
9 a male body or a female body. If you were a good hunter,
10 you were a good hunter. If you weren't, you're a
11 vegetarian nowadays, but that's a different story.

12 (LAUGHTER)

13 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: If you knew where
14 those medicines were, you were able to go and get them, and
15 you were able to prepare them, and you were able to help
16 the people, and those two-spirit people were always welcome
17 in our communities. They were a vibrant part of our
18 community. They brought the balance because they could do
19 whatever responsibility was needed, and we have driven them
20 out of our communities because we've accepted that gender
21 binary, and our youth are suffering because of that,
22 because our two-spirited people are not allowed to be who
23 they are, they're not accepted in ceremonies, they're not
24 accepted outside of ceremonies, they're not accepted in
25 their own reserves, and they're not accepted in the city,

1 from those Elders in the city, because they've been
2 influenced through Christianity and through the colonial
3 effects, and it's time we bring them back into the circle
4 because they bring the balance, those two-spirited youth,
5 and I'll go anywhere --

6 (APPLAUSE)

7 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: I'll go anywhere
8 to help them because I was fortunate enough to be who I am.
9 I tried living the other way. I married Dawn's father.
10 Beautiful man, best friend, but not a husband with me
11 because that's not who we were meant to be. I was meant to
12 have my beautiful children. My children have a good
13 relationship with him. He's happy living his lifestyle,
14 and I'm happy living mine, and that's the way it should be.
15 We should be allowed to be who we are and not have somebody
16 tell us who they are. Right? We shouldn't say, oh, you're
17 a woman, you're a man, you're a woman, you're a man. We
18 should say, who are you, and let them tell us who they are,
19 because we don't go up to anybody else and say to them, oh,
20 you're Asian, you can't stand on this side, you have to
21 wear a skirt; or you're African-American, you have to wear
22 a skirt. We don't -- we don't do those things to anybody
23 else. Why do we hurt our own people? Why do we keep this
24 lateral violence going amongst our own people? Because
25 when someone can't be who they are, that's lateral violence

1 when you tell them they're not that person. We don't have
2 that right. Our teachings are to be respectful, and you're
3 not being respectful if you're telling somebody who to be.
4 You're being respectful of you. Let them be who they are
5 and accept them for who they are. My children did it. I
6 was scared to tell them who I was. I was petrified, and
7 when I finally told them, they looked at me and said, it's
8 about time you knew, Mom. We all knew.

9 (LAUGHTER)

10 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: Our young ones
11 know. They have the answers for this time that we're in.
12 We have to start giving them those tools. Us that carry
13 these sacred items, it's time we give them to them. What's
14 the worst they can do? We can stand beside them and make
15 sure they do it correctly, or we can let them do it so they
16 learn and they carry on for us. Why have our ancestors
17 carried these drums, these medicines, all these tools,
18 these pipes but to teach others? Why are we holding them?
19 It's time for us to give them to our youth. It's time for
20 us to gift those gifts away. That's our way. We gift
21 things to people. We help them, we teach them, and then we
22 let them go with it. Right? Because if we don't let them
23 go, they're going to be taking their own lives because they
24 can't be who they are. We have to give them that
25 opportunity to be who they are. The same way our

1 ancestors, our relatives gave us that ability, we have to
2 pass it on. It's not ours to keep. It's ours to hold onto
3 and to teach to somebody else.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I know during your
5 earlier testimony, you did touch on a couple of really
6 important points, particularly the fact that the
7 system -- the child welfare system often paid non-
8 Indigenous families in foster care when they wouldn't help
9 the kinship relationships, so I was curious if you had any
10 specific -- because we see -- still see that happening in
11 places, and -- across the country, and so I was wondering
12 if you had any specific recommendations on what we need to
13 do to strengthen kinship relationships and support those
14 kinship relationships?

15 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Give the money to
16 the families.

17 **(APPLAUSE)**

18 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** How can we pay
19 someone who doesn't know anything about us to teach us and
20 raise us to be the people we're supposed to be? How can we
21 pay someone who has no idea about us, but yet we make
22 every -- the original family members of those children be
23 made to feel like they're nothing? They know what's best
24 for us, our aunties and our -- our grandmothers and our
25 cousins and our brothers and sisters. Why are you paying

1 other people instead of giving that money to us? Right?
2 You don't pay us our treaties. You don't pay us for the
3 land you took. At least pay -- pay the families to raise
4 the children that you're trying to take.

5 (APPLAUSE)

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: One of the things
7 we've often heard, particularly with CFS or Child Welfare
8 Services, the reason that Indigenous children are often
9 apprehended is seen as neglect, and when you were telling
10 your story about the beaver on the table or the fact that
11 your grandmother would tell you, jeez, if they catch you
12 doing this -- I see the way that you guys were doing that
13 was actually whether you felt disconnected from the land or
14 not, you were doing something you inherently knew. Your
15 blood memory knew how to feed yourself and take care of.
16 How -- how do we recognize that lifestyle, that living off
17 country food, that the traditional ways is just as
18 important and as valued so that when we think of things
19 like children are neglected because they're in poverty,
20 what about those traditional tools?

21 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: You know what,
22 when -- when we hunted in High Park -- and we called it
23 hunted in High Park, right -- that's 50 years ago. The
24 waters were clean. The animals were clean. They weren't
25 polluted with mercury and -- and petroleum products. But

1 teaching a child to hunt and fish and use the gifts the
2 Creator gave us, the Creator created everything on this
3 earth so that we would be able to sustain ourselves, and we
4 have become dependent on a government system that cares
5 nothing for us. They make us not be able to grow things on
6 our own properties because it's against the law. You can't
7 go hunting because it's against the law unless you have
8 your status card or you pay the Government a fee for a
9 license, and then you have to pay the Government a fee to
10 go to a hunting course, and then you have to pay the
11 Government a fee to learn how to put bullets in a gun,
12 right? High Park is 20 -- 27 -- there's High Park
13 there -- 2,700 hectares of park land, right? Why can't we
14 hunt the geese there? They come and land, they take off
15 again. They're clean there. They're not as clean as what
16 they should be, but they're still at least cleaner, and it
17 feeds people's bellies, right? Why can't we go to our
18 provincial parks and hunt in our provincial parks that have
19 never been built on, that are not contaminated, and take
20 the lives of those animals, giving them thanks beforehand,
21 and feed our families, teach our children how to do that?
22 No. The Government won't do that because they want us
23 dependent on them. They cancelled the home economic
24 programs in school so our children wouldn't know how to
25 cook because both parents are having to go to work.

1 (APPLAUSE)

2 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: Right? Our
3 children don't know how -- mine did because, you know, as
4 you heard, I ran them like the army, but...

5 (LAUGHTER)

6 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: My son was baking
7 cakes at 9 years old and waking us up because I had fallen
8 asleep from working to eat cake, but we need to teach our
9 children. We are in a -- in a world today where technology
10 is the greatest resource we have, but if we don't remember
11 our old ways of how to fish and hunt and skin and use that
12 hide to make our regalias, to learn to dance again, to make
13 the skin on our drums, to make our rattles so that we can
14 regain our culture; if we don't teach that to our children,
15 why did our ancestors suffer? Right? It's our
16 responsibility. For those of us that have learned and been
17 gifted those teachings from people who spent the time with
18 us, we have to start doing those things again. We have to
19 bring programs back into school that teach our young ones
20 to cook because both their parents are out there working.
21 By THE time they get home, pick up their children, you
22 know, if they're sick, they attend to them, it's
23 Kraft Dinner time again. We were raised on Kraft Dinner,
24 but we know it's not balanced. We did it because we had
25 to, but the parents are tired to cook. The children have

1 to wait till the parents come home. Right? It's no
2 different now. We have latchkey kids now. It's just that
3 we learned to hide it because the Government kept stealing
4 all our kids, right, and taking them away, but they need to
5 learn how to cook in schools. Bring back those programs.
6 Teach them how to sew, because then by the time they're in
7 Grade 7 and 8, they know how to sew their regalia, right?
8 They know how to cook food. They know how to make feast
9 foods. They know how to carry about their cultural ways.
10 We have to regain those things back, so we have to do that.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** What other
12 recommendations would you like to share with the
13 Commissioner?

14 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Well, I want to
15 say, first of all, that Justin Trudeau was here. He was
16 here, not far from here, but did he come here? Did he show
17 up here to show his respect to the murdered and missing
18 Indigenous women? No. Our ancestors said that there will
19 be those people that come and they speak with a forked
20 tongue, and I'm starting with Justin Trudeau -- well,
21 actually, I'm starting with his father who made the
22 White Papers, who want to eliminate the Indigenous people,
23 and you can't tell me a child doesn't learn by its
24 environment, so you can't tell me he never heard his father
25 talking about the dirty Indians, because his father sure as

1 heck said it.

2 And he promised us Indigenous people that he
3 would no longer put pipelines in, that he would take care
4 of the problems with the water at Attawapiskat. Pipelines
5 are going in not far from here. Our grandmothers are
6 standing there right now defending that land because he
7 said --

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** He's not welcome
9 here.

10 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Pardon?

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** He's not welcome
12 here.

13 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** No, and I don't
14 blame you, because what beautiful resources you have will
15 be ruined, but he was here, and he promised he wouldn't put
16 in those pipelines, and we believed him. We believed that
17 snake with the forked tongue because not long afterwards,
18 he started putting an okay in for pipelines, and
19 Attawapiskat still has no fresh water, so how can we
20 believe those in government that tell us one thing and do
21 another? We have to get our own people in government. We
22 have to start running.

23 **(APPLAUSE)**

24 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** We've been lied
25 to too many times. It's time that we put our own people in

1 those places to look after our own people because they're
2 not looking after us. So we need to stand up against
3 government in a way that we take their places, that we
4 become responsible because then we only have ourselves to
5 blame, right?

6 We need to make sure that our children are
7 taken care of and that we help each other to become healthy
8 again. We become addicted to opiates, and we use the
9 alcohol, the spirits, our -- our -- our ancestors named it
10 right. They're spirits, but they're not spirits from our
11 place. They're spirits to take us down, and we use them to
12 hide the pain that we've endured over all these years, but
13 all it does is block that pain for a little while. That
14 root is still deep down inside of us, and unless we pull
15 that root out, so we need our healers to come back to our
16 centres. We need our medicine people to come back and show
17 us how to remove those roots so that we don't keep falling
18 back into alcohol and addictions, so we need our health
19 centres to have traditional people in our hospitals, to
20 have a traditional person in it, not have them so that when
21 they come in, they've got to show the nurses and doctors
22 everything that they're using, ask for permission for a
23 space, and there's always none available. We need our own
24 healers inside working in hospitals and health care
25 centres.

1 (APPLAUSE)

2 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: We need our
3 people in the school systems. We have qualified people to
4 go into school systems. We need to start protesting and
5 saying, why are you passing over our Indigenous people that
6 have applied for these jobs and hiring non-Indigenous
7 people to teach Indigenous courses? Right? We need to
8 say, stop, enough's enough. We have qualified people that
9 can go in and teach. We need land-based programs because
10 that covers the whole aspect of teaching our children the
11 resources to go back to the land, to live off the land, to
12 be taught by our own people who still have those ways and
13 still have that knowledge, and these are basic things. We
14 need to know that when somebody goes to a health care
15 centre, they're not going to be left in a wheelchair or on
16 a stretcher for ten hours after they've had a stroke so
17 that by that time, they're going to become immobilized, and
18 now they're going to need more extensive treatments. Just
19 because they're Indigenous, they're put in the hallway
20 because the first thought is, they're probably drunk. It's
21 still happening today; and Canada, wake up. You think this
22 doesn't happen? It's happening today. Right? Come to
23 places like Winnipeg and here in Vancouver. My daughter
24 said she'd never seen such racism in all her life -- and
25 we've lived in Toronto -- is what she's seen here just

1 walking down a street. Okay? This is her first visit
2 here, so Canada, I don't know why you can't see, and I
3 don't know why you won't use your voices and stand up for
4 the Indigenous people because it's our land you're here on.
5 We welcomed you.

6 (APPLAUSE)

7 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** So we need the
8 school systems to know who the Indigenous people are. As
9 was said earlier in the week, we need our Immigration to
10 say who the Indigenous people were, to teach them. You
11 know our 94 recommendations that were given to us by the
12 TRC: People, wake up. They're recommendations. They hold
13 no weight. We were so happy. Oh. They -- they re-
14 tortured and traumatized our residential school survivors
15 to get the information what was needed to make a
16 recommendation. That's like me saying, yeah, okay, I'll
17 look at it. How many of those recommendations are in case?

18 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Shame, Canada.

19 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** We need laws. We
20 need policies, so I would like to see policies put in place
21 where it becomes law, because the only way we're going to
22 fight them is by laws because they -- they set this up by
23 law. Who we are and how we are today was developed by law,
24 the Indian Act, set to get rid of us. Let's make policies
25 and vote for those who will make policies and laws that

1 help support us, that have put requirements in that every
2 person who attends a school has to be taking courses to
3 learn about Indigenous people and land.

4 (APPLAUSE)

5 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: And it's the law.
6 It's not a recommendation. It's the law, because that's
7 the only way we're going to win is by putting laws in
8 place. I speak, and I -- I try to make, you know,
9 reconciliation, but it's -- we're not here to reconcile
10 people. Canada has to reconcile with us.

11 (APPLAUSE)

12 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: "Reconcile" means
13 to make right. We're not the ones that need to make things
14 right. The rest of Canada has to know what damages have
15 been done to our Indigenous people so they can make it
16 right. Yes, it wasn't the current people that are walking
17 here, most of them today, but what are you doing to make
18 things right? How are you standing up for those people
19 that don't have fresh water to drink, right? If -- if
20 you're a -- a person who's immigrated to Canada or taken a
21 Canadian citizenship oath, it is your responsibility
22 because as a Canadian citizen, you are now obligated to our
23 treaties because you are represented through the Government
24 side. We're still here on our side. You're still not
25 following the things to make it right, so start standing up

1 for the things that are wrong. Stand up beside us.

2 (APPLAUSE)

3 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: And most of all,
4 take care of our kids. Put some child centres back in.
5 There is no rec centres. The Government took out all the
6 rec centres for the kids, for the youth. They don't have
7 places to go to play sports or to hang out in or to, you
8 know, learn how to play pool at, where they can get their
9 first dates at. You know? They -- they need safe spaces
10 to go to that feel like home, not prisons, because that's
11 where we're sending them, right? They need safe spaces
12 where they can go and have access to a gym; you know,
13 physical education materials there; you know, floor hockey,
14 basketball, baseball. How many -- how many items are
15 thrown away from companies that have a slight defect in
16 them? I'm calling on Cooper. I'm calling on all those
17 baseball companies, all those hockey companies. Give our
18 kids equipment that might have a word spelled wrong instead
19 of throwing it in the garbage, right? Give back. Canada
20 has made way too much money off of our backs.

21 (APPLAUSE)

22 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: It's true. Give
23 our kids sports so they can play, but we can't give them
24 sports as Indigenous people because nobody's going to hire
25 us to get a job so that we can buy them sports equipment,

1 so our kids sit back, and they watch the game of lacrosse
2 that we created. That's where it's wrong, right?
3 Fred Sasakamoose is one of my relatives. Played
4 professional hockey, one of the very few because we
5 couldn't afford to send our kids to play hockey. Right?
6 We have the abilities. We have the skills. Give us the
7 same opportunities as you give every other person who just
8 lands inside of Canada. Right? We don't want anything
9 more. We want a fair shot.

10 (APPLAUSE)

11 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: So give us the
12 same opportunities, so if they -- if the Inquiry can put
13 requests out to have companies to help support our
14 Indigenous communities that are suffering, right? Make
15 donations to them. They get written off for it. Help out
16 wherever anybody can, and put a recommendation in that
17 the -- that the Canadian Government takes care of those
18 promises that they haven't, such as clean water, because if
19 we don't have any water, we're not going to keep living,
20 and those people that do not have water deserve to
21 have -- to be able to turn on their kitchen tap and have
22 water come out of it. They shouldn't have to drive three
23 miles down the road to a filling station and fill up
24 containers that they've been using for the last ten years
25 because they don't even have other containers, so how

1 healthy is it to put water in a container you've been
2 refilling for ten years knowing that it's made out of
3 plastic, and back ten years ago, that plastic wasn't
4 supposed to be refilled.

5 So we need to really start helping our
6 communities out that have been left out. Promises have
7 been made, but they haven't been kept, so we need the
8 Government to start keeping their promises by -- by the
9 recommendations and the requests, and I think the
10 word "recommendation" means just to make a recommendation.
11 Doesn't mean it has to be followed. I think it should be.
12 The families of the murdered and missing Indigenous women
13 demand that these things happen, not recommend, because the
14 Government will say, yeah, well, I recommend I get a pay
15 raise, but you know what? They'll give it to themselves,
16 but when we recommend it, it doesn't get heard, so it
17 should be that we demand these things.

18 Huh?

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

20 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Oh, you can say
21 that.

22 **MS. DAWN GAUDIO:** I have -- I have a
23 recommendation. Not every community, some that don't have,
24 like, fresh water or -- have struggles with, like, the
25 education systems, and everybody wants to be a part of this

1 across Canada. I know this. Everybody's losing people,
2 and it's not a totem, which I think are awesome. You know,
3 memorials, monuments, they're great, but maybe a flag that
4 everybody should be having erected at every institution,
5 educational, health care, doesn't matter what province
6 you're in, a federal flag to represent Indigenous peoples,
7 especially in memory of the murdered and missing Indigenous
8 women.

9 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** We're only one
10 family. We can only speak to the things that we
11 experienced, and if we can see this many injustices, and we
12 know that over a thousand people have come and testified
13 for us. The number's probably way up there higher, but we
14 know definitely over a thousand. Canada, doesn't a
15 thousand families who have lost their loved ones matter?
16 If it was your loved one who was missing or had been
17 murdered, you'd want justice, so we're not asking for
18 anything above and beyond. We're just asking to be treated
19 fairly, to have coroners give reports. People have been
20 waiting six years for a report not knowing how their loved
21 one died. That's shameful on our coroner departments.
22 People have been waiting to find out what happened to their
23 loved ones, and there's still no answers, and there's
24 people out there who know. You know, I heard -- I
25 heard -- I heard the words, tell the truth and shame the

1 devil. Well, we need to start telling the truth. People
2 who know things need to start saying. Those families are
3 asking to find the bodies of their loved ones so they can
4 put them to rest in a good way so that ceremony can be
5 done. That's all we're asking for, and we're asking for
6 the rest of Canada to realize that every woman, every
7 child, every young boy that they kill, those women are the
8 life-givers. You've now taken a mother, an aunty, a
9 grandmother, or a boy away from their family. We're not
10 here to kill each other. We're here to lift each other up
11 and support each other and live peacefully. We need Canada
12 to listen and to start respecting the -- the original
13 people of this land, the Indigenous people. We're not the
14 stereotype that you watched on TV, that -- you know, we're
15 scalping people and going around with -- with bows and
16 arrows and setting wagons on fire. That's Hollywood,
17 people. That's not real life. We were the ones that had
18 our children taken away. We were the ones that had our
19 culture almost destroyed. We were the ones that had our
20 ceremonies banned. We were the ones that were harmed. We
21 didn't harm you. We made an agreement for you to share
22 this land with us. All we're asking for is for you to hold
23 up your part of the bargain. Share it with us peacefully.
24 That's all we ever wanted, and equally, we need to get our
25 halves back because you took more than just your half.

1 That's about it.

2 (APPLAUSE)

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: *Hai, hai.*

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: *Meegwetch, Nokomis*
5 (speaking in Anishinabee) *Kohkom* Blu.

6 Chief Commissioner, do you have any
7 questions or comments for Grandmother Blu?

8 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Well,
9 Blu, I have to share one of my grandmother's teachings with
10 you, and my grandmother's teaching was, sometimes it's just
11 better to shut up.

12 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: Yeah.

13 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: So I'm
14 just simply going to say thank you with all my heart to you
15 and Dawn for reminding us of our obligations, reminding us
16 of the beauty and strength of our cultures and languages,
17 our ceremonies. Thank you for reminding us that we're
18 beautiful, strong, resilient people. You've given us a
19 lot -- oh, you're going to tell me something, aren't you?

20 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: Yes, I am. I
21 have one more thing to say.

22 (LAUGHTER)

23 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: I'm trying hard
24 to hold my tongue. You know, this Commission was set up
25 for a 2-year term, a just over 2-year term, and the

1 Government made a big deal about it. They were being so
2 gracious to give us a -- you know, an inquiry that people
3 have been fighting for, like Gladys and Bernie and all the
4 rest of the people down here, you know, especially here in
5 the Downtown Eastside: Oh, we're going to give you an
6 inquiry, and it's going to be Indigenous-lead, and you can
7 do what you need to do, and here's \$53 million.

8 By the time the Commission got going and
9 everything else and people were hired and things put into
10 place, you know, that takes time, and they want the
11 Commission to cover more than 500 reserves in Canada on a
12 2-year -- on a less than 2-year term with \$53 million, but
13 yet they're handing out 15 and 20 and \$30 million for
14 single initiatives. Right? Millions' worth of dollars for
15 the single initiatives, and we've asked for an extension
16 with the -- you know, us family members have asked for an
17 extension to the Commissioners, and the Commissioners
18 applied for an extension, and I only hope that they give us
19 that extension.

20 (APPLAUSE)

21 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: Because I'd like
22 to see them go to 500 reserves with \$53 million in less
23 than a 2-year turnover time to get all the stories from
24 every community that there is inside of Canada, and it
25 couldn't be done. So they think they set us up to fail,

1 and I know they do, but we're not going to fail because one
2 way or another --

3 (APPLAUSE)

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We're not going to
5 fail.

6 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: No, we're not
7 going to fail, and one way or another, even if they only
8 give us a 6-month extension, we will give them a report.
9 It won't be a thorough report like they'll be expecting
10 because they're going to say they gave us all this money,
11 but we don't have that much time to do it in, and we can't
12 visit everywhere because there was -- there was specific
13 things that they put in place -- I think they're called
14 terms of reference or something that they had to -- the
15 Commissioners had to follow. They couldn't go outside of
16 those things. They can't approach communities and ask for
17 us to come in because then they're not being impartial, so
18 it was put out there for communities to contact us. Well,
19 some communities don't even have telephones. They don't
20 have Wi-Fi. They don't even have water, so how can we
21 reach all those communities with the message, you've got to
22 contact the Commission? Right? It's impossible. But
23 we've tried the best that we can as family members and as
24 the workers with the Commission, have tried the best that
25 they can to put that out there that the people had to

1 contact the Commission and be invited to the communities,
2 and we've had an overwhelming response. We can't even get
3 to the numbers of the ones that -- that requested us to
4 come in and do that in the 2-year term because there's over
5 500 of them.

6 So I -- I also ask that Carolyn Bennett, you
7 know, stand up for the words that she used that she will
8 support the Commission in the beginning. Don't be swayed
9 by people who are angry because we can't please everybody.
10 We're human beings, and we're going to have conflicts,
11 we're going to have disagreements, and don't be swayed
12 by -- by family members who feel that they haven't been
13 heard. Well, you should be talking to Trudeau and to
14 Carolyn Bennett about that, about only a 2-year term to be
15 heard with. Don't be angry at the Commission because they
16 can't get there.

17 (APPLAUSE)

18 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: Because they have
19 a right to be angry that their story's not heard, but they
20 don't have a right to be angry at the Commission, and I
21 support them for wanting to have their story told because I
22 struggled whether or not I was going to tell mine, and I
23 applied just like everybody else, right? But I struggled
24 whether or not I would tell my story, and I asked my -- my
25 *Kohkom*, should I do this? And I offered my tobacco, and

1 when I opened my eyes and looked up, I had a red cardinal
2 sitting on my bird feeder, and I said, thank you, *Kohkom*, I
3 will do it for you.

4 But those people that are out there that are
5 making waves for the Commission, I hear you, and I feel
6 your frustration, and I feel your anger, but it's not the
7 Commission you should be angry with. It's the Federal
8 Government who only gave us a 2-year term to do this work
9 in. We've applied for an extension because we see the
10 amount of stories that need to be heard. We hear about it.
11 We see the anger from the people who want to be heard.

12 So I call upon Carolyn Bennett, and I call
13 upon Justin Trudeau. This is your opportunity again to
14 make things right with the Indigenous people. Let our
15 murdered and missing women's voices, children, girls,
16 two-spirit, and trans be heard.

17 **(APPLAUSE)**

18 **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Sorry, Marion. I
19 got to talk for when I see injustice. I'm sorry for
20 interrupting you.

21 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Well,
22 actually, thank you for interrupting.

23 Blu, you've given us so much today and every
24 day that you're with us, and, as you know, we have gifts
25 for you and Dawn. We have eagle feathers for you because,

1 as we know, the eagles will, with their feathers, lift us
2 up and hold us up when we need it, and when we feel we can
3 go to the next level, we can push ourselves and do even
4 more. Those eagle feathers will lift us up and carry us to
5 those new heights.

6 And we also have some seeds for you because
7 when the Commissioners -- I see some of them back
8 there -- and I started, we wanted healing and new growth to
9 happen as a result of our work, and so we decided to give
10 the people who participate seeds to plant. Hopefully,
11 something will grow. If it does, take a photograph and
12 send it to us for our archives, and actually, we're getting
13 photographs now of things that are growing across Canada,
14 and I hope you have better luck than I did in my garden,
15 but Dawn, Blu, thank you so much. You made a difference
16 today. Thanks.

17 (APPLAUSE)

18 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** We are adjourned. Thank
19 you.

20 -- Exhibits (code: P1P04P0101)

21 **Exhibit 1:** Folder containing six digital images shown
22 during the public testimony of the witnesses.

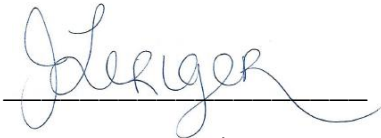
23 --- Upon adjourning at 5:04 p.m.

24

25

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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

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

Jenessa Leriger

April 12, 2018