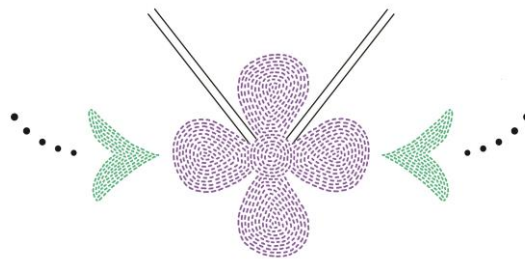


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Elmbridge Room
Metro Vancouver, British Columbia**



PUBLIC

Friday April 6, 2018

Public Volume 99

Elizabeth Myria Wilson, In relation to Tracey Clifton

**Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Breen Ouellette**

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APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
Government of British Columbia	Sara Pye (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada	Lucy Bell (Legal counsel)
Heiltsuk First Nation	No Appearance
Northwest Indigenous Council Society	No Appearance
Our Place - Ray Cam Co-operative Centre	No Appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	No Appearance
Vancouver Sex Workers' Rights Collective	No Appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation	No Appearance

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Commission Counsel: Breen Ouellette

Clerk: Bryana Bouchir

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

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1 Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, April 6, 2018 at 11:24

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you,
4 Commissioner Audette.

5 For the record, my name is Breen Ouellette
6 and I'm a lawyer with the National Inquiry.

7 It is my very great honour to introduce
8 today Elizabeth Myria Wilson who lives in Coquitlam.
9 Elizabeth has brought people in support who I will ask her
10 to introduce.

11 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Janna and her
12 mom, Mavis, Jackson and Windsor.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETT:** Mr. Registrar,
14 Elizabeth has requested to affirm using an eagle feather.

15 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good morning,
16 Elizabeth. Hi. I'm going to pass the eagle feather to
17 you.

18 Elizabeth, do you solemnly affirm to give
19 your evidence -- let me start that again. I'm still waking
20 up.

21 Do you solemnly affirm to tell the truth,
22 the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

23 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** I do.

24 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Elizabeth, would you

1 start by telling us about yourself, your occupation?

2 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** (Speaking in
3 Hailhzaqvla).

4 Hello, good morning. My traditional name is
5 (speaking in Hailhzaqvla), which means "Abalone Shell
6 Woman." I come from the Heiltsuk Nation on my father's
7 side and Tsimshian Nation on my mother's side.

8 And I have worked as a Heiltsuk language
9 teacher for 12 years in the community of Bella Bella. But
10 I am currently a student at UBC in the Indigenous Teacher's
11 Educational Program to further my education as I do have my
12 certificate and language proficiency through SFU but I'm
13 now going in for my full teacher's certificate.

14 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** In conversations we've
15 had prior to this hearing I have come to understand that
16 you would like to speak in part about a family member.
17 What is her name?

18 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Tracey Clifton.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And is Tracey missing
20 or was she murdered?

21 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** I believe she
22 was missing.

23 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what is your
24 relationship to Tracey?

25 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well,

1 technically, she would -- she is a cousin to my mother, so
2 therefore, I would refer to her as an aunt.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And when did she go
4 missing?

5 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** I would say
6 early '70s maybe. I wasn't even born yet so.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so you didn't know
8 her personally?

9 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** No.

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So are you telling us
11 what you have learned from your older relatives?

12 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah, and I
13 just found this out maybe two, three years ago, that we
14 have had a family member, my aunt Tracey, go missing. So I
15 asked questions about it and was told that she had gotten
16 into an argument with her mom. So, therefore, she left
17 home, started walking the highway, which is now referred to
18 as the "Highway of Tears", and was never seen again.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And you said she was
20 walking from home. Where was home?

21 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Prince Rupert.
22 So I believe she was walking to Terrace or maybe Port Ed
23 because we have family along the way and I'm pretty sure
24 she had friends as well. So we're kind of unsure what her
25 plan was or was it to go see family or friends.

1 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And do you know
2 anything else about Tracey's disappearance?

3 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** No.

4 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do other family
5 members possibly know more?

6 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes. My mom
7 referred two of my uncles who are two of her brothers but
8 it's fishing season and they're not in contact right now
9 so.

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Would you please pass
11 on my invitation to them to register for the National
12 Inquiry before our registration process closes on April
13 20th?

14 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes.

15 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you.

16 I also understand that you are a survivor of
17 violence. What kind of violence have you experienced in
18 your life?

19 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, all.
20 Physical, mental, verbal, yeah.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And when did you first
22 encounter violence?

23 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** As a child, as
24 young as I can remember and in my home from my father.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What were your

1 parent's lives like?

2 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Lots of
3 alcohol, drugs, parties.

4 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what were their
5 lives like growing up?

6 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** My mom's was
7 lots of travelling. Her parents were in the fishing
8 industry and, yeah, they did a lot of travelling. My
9 father was ill with TB so he was sent to a TB hospital for
10 majority of his childhood. Once he was removed from that
11 he was placed in boarding homes. He lived in 13 different
12 boarding homes, 12 of them he says was the worst part of
13 his life. Lots of racism, lots of violent behaviour
14 towards him, sexually abused, the -- thankfully the 13th
15 home he went to a family who lived in Lillooet and he
16 always said this family had saved him. Yeah, they took him
17 in and looked after him as if he were their own son. So it
18 was really nice.

19 I still have yet to meet this family. We've
20 seen each other's photos through social media. We've
21 talked through social media but I haven't physically met
22 them yet. I look forward to the day that happens because
23 they have not only taken my dad in but they've made it a
24 point to keep track of his life and they've always known
25 that he's had children and I believe the mom refers to us

1 as -- myself and my siblings as her grandchildren, even
2 though we haven't met her yet. So that would be really
3 nice to finally get to meet them.

4 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So what was your life
5 like growing up?

6 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** It was
7 difficult. I did spend as much time as I could with my
8 grandparents and numerous aunts and uncles. My -- because
9 like I said, my parents were more focussed on alcohol and
10 drugs and I was beat up a lot. And, of course, for a
11 majority of it was for no reason or for little things like
12 dumping my juice or my milk or being so ill with the flu
13 that I couldn't sit up and do my homework. I got beaten
14 for that. And I don't blame my parents for it. I blame
15 the alcohol and the drugs and the life my dad had growing
16 up. And I always made sure that my sisters were never
17 physically hurt. So I would take the blame for anything
18 that they've done wrong or just anything wrong that my dad
19 had thought was wrong in his eyes. I took the blame for it
20 and took the beatings and whatnot so that my sisters
21 didn't.

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did it get to a point
23 where you just couldn't stay in the home anymore?

24 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah, because
25 the alcohol -- like, once we moved to Bella Bella from

1 Hartley Bay, I believe I was 10, and the drinking became
2 worse because the alcohol was easier to get, the drugs were
3 easier to get. So the violence became worse. House
4 parties.

5 My sisters and I always shared a room and a
6 bed but when we moved to Bella Bella my gran, my dad's mom,
7 set up a room for myself. And numerous nights I would
8 either find myself going to my sister's room, because they
9 shared a room, or they would come to mine. But it was --
10 it became normal and it was -- like, we never left our room
11 in Hartley Bay because we were always together because of
12 the house parties. I wouldn't allow my sisters to be left
13 alone. We barricaded the bedroom door so that nobody would
14 come in because we quickly found out that people would come
15 in thinking it was the washroom. Well, in some cases it
16 was true and others I believe that they were using it as an
17 excuse to get to our bedroom.

18 So, yeah. I removed myself from that
19 situation. It was really difficult leaving my sisters but
20 I couldn't do it anymore. So I left and I moved in with a
21 couple who didn't hesitate to take me in and took part in
22 raising me as their own. They became really, really close
23 to me and I essentially didn't take long to refer to them
24 as mom and dad. And they had two boys who are my brothers.

25 So I lived with them for a little bit and

1 then I moved away with a family friend to Victoria to
2 Saanich and was there for about a year and a half. And
3 that family was really nice at the beginning and was nice
4 to take me. And I'm sure they had good intentions at the
5 beginning. Things changed quickly. I was becoming
6 mistreated a lot, so near the end of the year and a half I
7 packed out middle of the night because, again, I didn't
8 want to be a part of that mistreatment anymore and because
9 it was -- it wasn't physical but it was mentally abusive
10 and emotionally abusive, which was becoming pretty close to
11 being sexually abusive as well. So I had removed myself
12 from that situation and moved in with a friend that I knew
13 through school.

14 Middle of the night -- well, throughout the
15 day because I was home alone because I was grounded for
16 being a minute late the night before, so that -- the next
17 day I slowly started packing my stuff and putting it in the
18 basement, by the basement door ready to go once everybody
19 was asleep. So that's what I did. And my friend's mom and
20 she came and they were waiting outside with their vehicle
21 and took me in and I was with them until the end of that
22 school year and then I had to move back to Bella Bella.

23 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell us why
24 you had to move back to Bella Bella? Who made you move
25 back to Bella Bella?

1 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, the
2 school board and because my parents had -- still had legal
3 say in what I had to do. Agreed and, yeah, they had me
4 move back because I was hoping to stay with this -- with my
5 friend and her mom but wasn't allowed.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And did the school
7 board make any attempt to ensure it was safe for you to
8 move back?

9 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes. Well,
10 they didn't really know the family situation. It was -- I
11 don't -- well, I shouldn't say they didn't know. Maybe
12 they knew, maybe they didn't. But they -- I guess in a
13 way, no, they didn't ensure that my safety would be
14 priority moving back.

15 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What happened when you
16 returned to Bella Bella?

17 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** I quickly got
18 into alcohol and drugs myself and met my ex-husband. We
19 were together for -- I quickly moved in with him at his
20 parent's home and about a year after we got together I
21 became pregnant with our first child. And things were
22 going really great and then I guess she was around 7 months
23 old when I found out I was pregnant with our second child,
24 which then I was 15 at the time and my ex-husband was 20
25 and he felt the right thing to do now was to get married.

1 So we had gotten married on our oldest daughter's first
2 birthday and I was seven months pregnant with our second
3 child.

4 But during the time of the birth of my
5 second child, my oldest son, my mother-in-law passed away.
6 I'm sorry. And that was really difficult and that was
7 another life-changing moment for, not just myself, but my
8 ex-husband and his family. And his father turned to
9 alcohol to cope with the loss. And so, therefore, we took
10 it upon ourself to remove ourselves and our children from
11 that situation again. And we then got our own place and
12 were finally living on our own as a young married couple
13 with a family. And we took his youngest brother with us
14 because he was only 16, same age as me, at the time.

15 Things were okay. And then we found
16 ourselves drinking more and more and then we realized what
17 we were doing was wrong so we'd stop for a bit. And then I
18 got pregnant with our third, my youngest daughter, and
19 quickly realized I needed to do something. That's when I
20 got into the school and became a substitute teacher for a
21 number of years. And then the opportunity came to get into
22 the language department, so I started working there for a
23 while.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what were you
25 teaching in the language department?

1 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, the
2 Heiltsuk language, anything and everything that I could
3 teach the students and our language, our culture, our
4 history.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so then how did
6 your marriage go from there?

7 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** It became
8 worse. The last three years of our marriage was a huge
9 struggle. Lots of arguing. We did try to make it a point
10 to not argue or allow our children to hear our arguments or
11 argue in front of them. But the last three years it became
12 worse. They were -- our children were witnessing more and
13 listening to it more.

14 I started drinking a lot to deal with the
15 situation, which, at the time, I didn't know was the wrong
16 way to deal with it. But because I've seen it done
17 throughout my life it was the only way I knew.

18 Near the end of our marriage we -- it was --
19 it became physically abusive. Yeah, it just deteriorated
20 and got worse.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Would you share with
22 the Commissioner one of the incidents of violence that you
23 have previously told me about?

24 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, we had
25 just gotten back from a trip. And my youngest daughter

1 went to lay down. She went to sleep, took a nap. She was
2 10 at the time. And my youngest, who my ex-husband and I
3 adopted from birth, he was just not even -- well, just over
4 one, one years old at the time. And I was packing him and
5 I can't even really recall if anything was done or said. I
6 don't believe there was anything to trigger what had
7 happened. But my ex-husband came at me and -- with his
8 hands to my throat while packing our baby. And his brother
9 -- one of his brothers came in and grabbed our baby and
10 took him and didn't say anything.

11 So I got up. I managed to get him off of me
12 by kicking him. And then -- and grabbed our baby's
13 bottles, formula, water. And because we had just gotten
14 back from a trip, mine and my baby's clothes and stuff were
15 packed together in a bag and it was still by the door. So
16 I grabbed that and had left and went to my parent's place
17 and I have never been back since.

18 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And when you left, how
19 did you resolve the issue of the children?

20 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** It was a
21 struggle to come to an agreement to be better parents for
22 them and to work together for them because he was angry
23 that I had left. And when I had left I quickly got into
24 another relationship with a woman and that was new for him.
25 So he was angry and had tried to keep the children from me.

1 And he had gone to court and tried to fight for full
2 custody but we had talked and came to an agreement to have
3 joint custody of our children.

4 And it took a few months to -- for him to
5 come around. And I wasn't expecting him to but he did.
6 And it was really nice. And we get along a lot better now
7 than the last three years of our marriage. And our two
8 younger children live here in the city with me. So he has
9 come to visit on a number of occasions now and he stays in
10 my home with my partner and I and to visit with our
11 children. And things have turned around in that aspect
12 and, yeah. I think we're best friends now and we can go to
13 each other about anything. We help each other out
14 financially and, yeah. So it's good.

15 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I would like to go
16 back just a little. You had also told me about another
17 time where there was violence and you were going to a
18 relative's home. Could you tell us about that?

19 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah. That's
20 when our two older children were just under two and Kevin
21 had been out for a few days drinking. And so I -- it was
22 during the summer and I wanted to get the kids out of the
23 house. So I was on my way to visit one of his aunts and
24 his grandma. And I was really close to their home when my
25 ex-husband had come around, turned the corner in a vehicle

1 that was driven by a friend.

2 They had stopped and I thought, oh, great,
3 he's done drinking. He's going to come join us kind of
4 thing. But, no, he got out and he was angry. He was so
5 angry. And he had tried to come at me and I was holding
6 the stroller. The kids were -- it was one of those double
7 strollers that sat this way rather than, like, front top
8 kind of thing, not side to side. And I was holding onto
9 the stroller because we were up on a hill and I didn't want
10 -- I couldn't let it go. If I let it go the kids would
11 have started rolling down the hill.

12 And I was just trying to push past him as
13 hard as I could. And the friend that was driving him was
14 trying to help as well and get him back in the vehicle.
15 And thankfully he did and I got to his aunt's house where
16 his grandma was also there. And I guess about an hour or
17 so passed and Kevin had showed up and was still really
18 angry and was trying to push his way through. But his aunt
19 and his grandma wouldn't allow him to get past the door.

20 And the RCMP were then called. I'm not sure
21 by who but they were called. And when Kevin had heard that
22 they were coming he took off and was running through the
23 village to try and avoid the cops and whatnot. And then
24 they finally got a hold of him and took him in and then,
25 yeah.

1 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So were they called in
2 part because the violence was more escalated than usual?

3 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah. I
4 believe someone called that had witnessed what had happened
5 in the street and probably saw him coming to the house.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And do you remember if
7 anybody was harmed when he tried to get into the house?

8 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, he was
9 because he had tried to grab a knife that was on the
10 counter by the door but he had knocked the -- a glass
11 coffee pot over and it broke and I guess he had slipped and
12 cut his hand really bad. But he -- at the time he was the
13 only one that was physically hurt. But that was I think
14 about it that was physically harmed.

15 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And just to clarify,
16 which RCMP detachment would that have been; do you know?

17 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** I believe
18 they're situated out of Prince George but I'm not sure.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Okay. Thank you. And
20 when the RCMP took your ex-husband into custody, did they -
21 - what did they do? What was the response?

22 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, they said
23 it was their duty to charge him with domestic violence even
24 if I didn't want to. But they did inform me later that I
25 could have those dropped if I wrote a letter to the judge

1 stating that we were going to work on our marriage and seek
2 counselling and so that's what I did. And there wasn't any
3 follow up or anything like that because, I don't know, I
4 kind of feel that if there was maybe things would have
5 gotten a lot better.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And when you speak
7 about follow up, are you talking about something that --
8 like, rather than an arrest and a charge and a conviction -
9 --

10 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** M'hm.

11 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** --- what kind of
12 follow up do you think would be appropriate?

13 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Like, how do I
14 say it? Like, more support because we were so young. I
15 saw my parents as a married couple but through alcohol and
16 drugs. So, yeah, I think more support, because once we --
17 I think we only saw the counsellor a couple of times and
18 they said, "Okay, yeah, you guys are good. I'll let the
19 judge know" kind of thing and that was that. Like, okay.
20 Good. We carried on and, yeah.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Elizabeth, what do you
22 hope will happen as a result of your testimony today?

23 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** More support,
24 more programs built for our youth and young couples, not
25 just in small communities where it's really needed but here

1 in the city, especially the city because I really thought
2 long and hard about this because I've had a niece take off
3 because she disagreed with her mom. My youngest daughter
4 took off because she had a disagreement with me but she --
5 so support and more safe places for them to go. Because
6 when I went to help look for my niece, I had called a
7 couple of shelters who -- and told them -- or, like, gave
8 them her information and her age and they're, like, "Oh,
9 yeah, no, we don't take in that age." And I'm, like,
10 "Well, why not?"

11 Like we, as adults, can take off and we can
12 take off for hours and days and it'll be okay, but when our
13 children do that it's not. Not just because of their age
14 but for their safety. They don't know what it's like to go
15 off and on their own. So to have a place for them to go at
16 any age I think would be safe and would keep a lot of our
17 youth in our lives, male, female. So to have them go to a
18 place where there's safety for them, there's education for
19 them, to let them know that, yeah, it's okay to have a
20 break and to have numerous support in this building for
21 them. Counselling, education on what could happen in their
22 lives if they don't stay on the right track.

23 I would like to, like, see cultural support
24 because a lot of children think, well, I don't know where
25 I'm from. I don't know who I am as a First Nation's

1 person. I would like to see them connect and find who they
2 are as a First Nation's person and how powerful they could
3 be as a First Nation's person.

4 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And just as a follow
5 up question, you had spoke to me at some length about the
6 availability in terms of times of availability. Can you
7 tell us about that?

8 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** For these
9 programs?

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Yeah.

11 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah. Oh,
12 yeah, for these programs. I would like to see them 24
13 hours a day because I feel our children are more vulnerable
14 at night when they're left alone. If they're in a home,
15 everybody goes to bed. And I know, I've heard my daughter
16 up numerous nights trying to deal with what is going on in
17 her life. We're really close and we can sit and tell each
18 other anything, which I'm really grateful for but I know
19 there are times where she feels she can't. And I respect
20 that. So to have something for her to go to, to have
21 people, even to just call, because I know they have
22 hotlines and stuff but to have people that you can also go
23 to and physically see, not -- like, when you call someone
24 through the hotline, you don't know who they are. You
25 don't know what they look like. So to have children be

1 able to go to see these people as well, not just to call
2 them, but to see them, because I know I feel a lot better
3 when I go and when I sit and talk with somebody rather than
4 talk to them over the phone. But, yeah, I would like to
5 have these programs 24/7 because, like I said, our children
6 are more vulnerable at night, whether they live in a home
7 or on the street.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what would you ask
9 Canadians to do after listening to all the families and
10 survivors who've come to share their experiences with the
11 National Inquiry?

12 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** I would like
13 them to listen to as much stories as they can and to hear
14 them, not just to listen, because I believe there's a
15 difference between listening and hearing. And to really
16 take it to heart and think if they would be able to survive
17 if they were in that person's situation. How would they
18 cope with living a life like I've lived? Would they have
19 survived? Would they have come out a good person or a
20 broken person?

21 I thank God every day that I didn't turn
22 into an alcoholic or a drug user. Put themselves in the
23 shoes of the person they're listening to and hearing and to
24 think, you know, we've -- I'm sure you've heard of -- in
25 the news of a dog being accidentally sent to Japan. That

1 got more time on the news than any missing Indigenous
2 person has.

3 And I just want Canadians to think, is that
4 pleasurable [sic]? Is that right? Like, I'm not saying
5 anything bad against the family of that dog or the dog
6 itself. I'm an animal lover. But what does that tell
7 Canadians? An animal is better than me?

8 So, yeah, just hear the stories and take it
9 to heart and educate yourselves on what we've been through
10 for many years.

11 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you, Elizabeth.

12 I will now ask the Commissioner if she has
13 any questions for Elizabeth.

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** We say
15 nichapette (ph) (Innu language of name) in Innu, Elizabeth,
16 your name. Well, before I say something I would like to
17 say that your truth, what you share to us matter, matter to
18 me, matter to everyone of us here. And there's more and
19 more Canadian I'm sure that have open mind and open heart.
20 And thank you so much for your courage to come here and
21 tell us first, of course, what's matter to you and what
22 needs to happen or change. And, of course, to be here and
23 in a humble way, in a beautiful way also to remind Canada
24 what needs to change. And merci beaucoup, nichapette (ph).

25 When you talked about those centre of safe

1 place for our youth, is it here in Vancouver or it's across
2 the province?

3 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** I would like to
4 see it across the province. It would be nice. Because it
5 would -- I believe it would keep our children closer to us
6 and it would make us feel like we're doing our job as well
7 as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, to let them
8 venture off but venture off safely. And to learn that it's
9 okay to take breaks because we do it. We do it at work.
10 We do it at home. We do it at school so.

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And I'm not
12 from B.C. You can tell. Where are you from?

13 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Bella Bella.
14 It's the central coast.

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

16 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Bella Bella.

18 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. And
20 you intend to move back there?

21 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

23 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Once I'm done
24 schooling.

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Wow.

1 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah, my plan
2 is to go back and be able to teach immersionally [*sic*] in -
3 --

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M'hm.

5 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** --- in school
6 there.

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And how is
8 it? Do you have a lot of student there or youth that are
9 going to your classes or it's mandatory?

10 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, it is a
11 part of the school system there. I believe the Grade 7
12 down are able to have 30-minute classes. Grade 8 up have
13 maybe about 45 minutes, which isn't a whole lot when you
14 add it all up, but it's something. But, yeah, I look
15 forward to being able to go back as a certified teacher.
16 Not just a teacher, but continue as a language teacher as
17 well and be able to teach all subjects in our language.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And why it's
19 important for you to teach in your language?

20 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, it's a
21 part of who we are. It's helped me realize how important I
22 am as a First Nation's woman. I didn't grow up with the
23 language but it quickly became a passion of mine.

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. You
25 learn it later?

1 MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: I did.

2 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

3 MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah, I did.

4 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Wow.

5 MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm. Yeah.

6 And now, living in the city, I have recently started a
7 language class for our urban Heiltsuk members that live in
8 the lower mainland. I successfully had my first class last
9 Saturday and I have my second class starting tomorrow.

10 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And is there
11 any Canadian who wish to approach you and say, "I would
12 love to learn your language" or ---

13 MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah, a few
14 from UBC.

15 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

16 MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: And they have
17 attended. Yeah.

18 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And you
19 welcome that?

20 MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm. Yeah. I
21 believe anyone that's willing to learn our language, more
22 the merrier to help us revitalize what we once lost or
23 nearly lost. Yeah.

24 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And to finish
25 I would like you to explain more to us and Canadian also

1 why it's so important to know who we are or to find who we
2 are. We're more powerful you said ---

3 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** M'hm.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** --- during
5 your testimony. What do you mean by that?

6 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Well, through
7 residential school we've all learned that their intent was
8 to take away from us what we had. And at that time what we
9 had was full and complete. We were -- our language was our
10 first language, which is now our second language. Our
11 songs and dances were heard almost on a daily basis.
12 Traditional practices were done on a daily basis. But it
13 was taken from us. It was hidden for so long. So to be
14 able to -- and I feel we've overcome that and we've dug out
15 almost everything that was hidden from us.

16 I don't like to say "taken" because if it
17 was taken we probably wouldn't have gotten anything back.
18 I like to look at it as it was hidden and now we've found
19 it and revitalizing and uplifting it and teaching our youth
20 what was hidden from them for so long and for them to learn
21 their culture, their language. Learn how to collect
22 medicine and embrace it, to touch cedar and build something
23 with it, like, a piece of clothing that their ancestors
24 once used rather than what we use now. I think we'll -- I
25 find that uplifting and extremely powerful.

1 And like I said, once I learned quickly that
2 I was able to take to my language and speak it quickly and
3 learn it quickly, I feel complete now as a First Nation's
4 woman because I have that in my life and I can continue to
5 make it stronger because I'm not fluent in my language.
6 And I always tell my students, you know, kind of prepare
7 them I guess to think, you know, we will never be
8 completely fluent in our language anymore because we didn't
9 grow up in it. So I have a three-month old grandson and he
10 could be fluent because I could speak to him as much as I
11 can in my language. So those kind of things I find
12 powerful because he will learn at a very early age who he
13 is as a First Nation's one day young man who will be as
14 respectful as I can teach him or as respectful as his
15 parents can teach him.

16 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And how do we
17 say grandmother in your language?

18 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Kokum.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Kokum?

20 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Kokum.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Kokum. Well,
22 he has a beautiful kokum.

23 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** (Speaking in
24 Hailhzaqvla). Thank you.

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** We say nokum

1 (ph), us.

2 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Oh nice.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yes.

4 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Similar.

5 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** So far but
6 same thing.

7 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Similar, yeah.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yeah, yeah.

9 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** That's nice.

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yeah. Wow.

11 We say (speaking in Innu), merci, thank you.

12 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** (Speaking in
13 Hailhzaqvla).

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** We'll
15 practice just you and me behind a blanket.

16 I'm so blessed to be sitting here. We are
17 four today all week sharing this important work and I'm
18 always, always blessed to be the one sitting with you today
19 so I have to say thank you.

20 And we have something for you and I would
21 like to know if you would accept a gift from us, from the
22 National Inquiry.

23 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes.

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yes, okay.

25 And the person usually who explain the beauty and the

1 history of those gift is not here. She is bringing my
2 partner, Serge (ph), and some of our staff from Quebec who
3 works for the National Inquiry in the downtown east side,
4 because I wanted the people from Quebec to see ---

5 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** M'hm.

6 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** --- the
7 reality ---

8 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes.

9 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** --- what's
10 happening there ---

11 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** M'hm.

12 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** --- but also,
13 the warriors who are saving life. So ---

14 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes.

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** --- Bernie
16 brought our people there so she's not here.

17 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Nice.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** So I'm not
19 going to be good like her but I'll try.

20 We -- when we started this journey almost a
21 year now, we were up north -- for me it's north from where
22 I'm from in Quebec in Whitehorse, but for Qayaq it's not
23 the north. She's from far, far, far where there's no more
24 tree. And we received 400 eagle feathers to give to family
25 and survivors or to amazing people who come and share their

1 truth to us and to Canadian, of course.

2 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** M'hm.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And 400, of
4 course, went very fast. And there were a day that we
5 didn't have any more eagle feathers. And this young man
6 took some of his feathers from his regalia ---

7 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Oh wow.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** --- beautiful
9 -- it was powerful. A few weeks ago in Montreal this Elder
10 sees that oops there's no more eagle feathers. So we went
11 back to Kahnawake, took some of his traditional hat and
12 gave us.

13 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Wow.

14 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And two weeks
15 ago we were in Thompson, Manitoba and, again, a man heard
16 that, oh, no, no more eagle feathers. So he went and
17 harvest along the river ---

18 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** M'hm.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** --- beautiful
20 eagle feathers, so they're from Thompson.

21 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Wow.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And we would
23 like to give you one.

24 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes.

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** From, of

1 course, I'm blessed -- I have beautiful Elders from this
2 land that will do this for you on our behalf. Merci.

3 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Don't tell Bernie. I
4 was wrong. You were good at that.

5 **MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Thank you.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Commissioner Audette
7 has asked me to invite people to come up and share a kind
8 word or a hug if you are moved to do so. Thank you.

9 Pardon, Commissioner, may we adjourn this
10 hearing?

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Can we say
12 yes? I say yes.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Okay. The
14 Commissioner adjourns the hearing. Thank you.

15

16 --- Upon adjourning at 12:32

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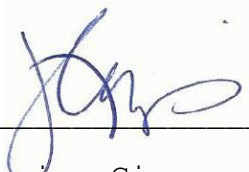
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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Janice Gingras, 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 blue ink, appearing to read 'Janice', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Janice Gingras

April 17, 2018