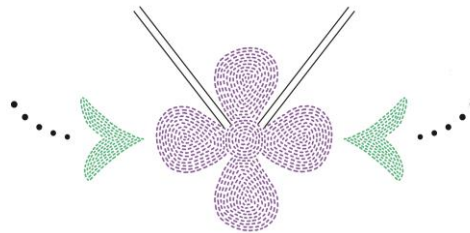


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Radisson Hotel, Ambassador A
Winnipeg, Manitoba**



PUBLIC

Thursday October 19, 2017

**Public Volume 13
Alaya McIvor & Rachel Willan;**

**Erin Houle, Gertrude Flett, Lisa Houle & Sonny
Podolaniuk, In relation to Eileen Mary Roulette;**

Jenny Lay, In relation to Linda Bighetty

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II

APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	No Appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak /Women of the Métis Nation	No Appearance
Government of Canada	Anne Turley (Legal counsel) Amber Elliot (Legal counsel) Christine Ashcroft (Legal counsel)
Government of Manitoba	Coral Lang (Legal counsel) Heather Leonoff (Legal counsel) Samuel Thomson (Legal counsel) Kendra Jarvinen (Legal counsel) Mitch Kredenster (Legal counsel)
Manitoba MMIWG2S	Angie Hutchinson (Representative) Leslie Spillett (Representative)
Manitoba Moon Voices	No Appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Manitoba Inuit Association	Beth Symes (Legal counsel) Rachel Dutton (Representative, Manitoba Inuit Association)
Winnipeg Police Service	Shannon Hanlin (Legal counsel)

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Radisson Hotel, Ambassador Rooms A & B (i.e. the two main public hearing spaces).

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1 Winnipeg, Manitoba

2 --- Upon commencing on Thursday, October 19, 2017 at 9:04

3 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Good morning, everyone.

4 We have some announcements to make just so we get everybody
5 comfortable with what's going on today. So, I'm going to
6 turn it over to my very, very best friend right now,
7 Terrellyn, the Director of Community Relations and Health,
8 and she's going to talk about some announcements.

9 **MS. TERRELLYN FEARN:** Good morning,

10 everyone. Thank you. I want to welcome you here this
11 morning. My name is Terrellyn Fearn. I am the Director of
12 Health and Community Relations. For those of you that may
13 be joining us new, I just want to share that I am a visitor
14 to this territory. I'm very honoured and humbled to walk
15 on the territory of the Treaty 1 people and the homeland of
16 the Métis people as well. I'm from a small community in
17 Mi'kma'ki, which is Nova Scotia, Glooscap First Nation.
18 So, I'm very honoured to be here.

19 We are moving into the fourth day of hearing
20 so many stories and sharing from our beautiful families and
21 survivors. And, I want to continue to honour them and
22 acknowledge them in their courage and their bravery to come
23 forward and to share. I want to acknowledge all those that
24 danced, those jingle dress dancers that danced in the
25 jingle dress healing dance last night. That was for -- in

1 honour of the families and survivors to provide them
2 support and healing, continuous healing on their long
3 journey. And, also acknowledge the drum group that was
4 there as well. So, many thanks for that.

5 Just some morning announcements. I want to
6 remind everyone of the supports that are available to you.
7 The beautiful fire that we have at Oodena, I want to
8 acknowledge the fire keepers that have been there holding
9 us all in their thoughts and prayer as we journeyed when
10 that fire opened on Monday. So, we do have the shuttle
11 that runs about every 15 minutes from the hotel to Oodena,
12 and there's another one that comes from Oodena to here.
13 And, that's just right out front in the lobby and it's
14 complimentary.

15 I also want -- just to remind that we have
16 the Elders Room just across the hall here, and there are
17 many beautiful Elders, grandmothers and supports in that
18 room for you as well. We have many different traditional
19 supports, medicines. We also have faith-based supports as
20 well for you to use and access. I know one night they held
21 a prayer group in one of the rooms upstairs.

22 There's also private space for you to
23 gather. If you would like to sit with someone and speak
24 privately with them, we have therapists and support workers
25 on hand that you can access. You can -- there's a schedule

1 at the registration desk. So, I think it's Michelle and
2 Denise, the two friendly faces out there, if you go and ask
3 them, they would be happy to block some time. We also have
4 one of the Elders that's doing Reiki as well, so she's
5 happy to schedule some time. I had her work on my back a
6 little bit. It was fabulous.

7 We also have our water, our breathing.
8 Remember to keep ourselves grounded as we walk throughout
9 the day. Just a reminder that the meals are served here as
10 well, snacks and dinner -- lunch, as well in the Family
11 Room upstairs for families and survivors, and then the
12 feast again tonight at 6:00 for families and survivors
13 upstairs.

14 If you have any questions or concerns, or if
15 you need to speak with someone, I'm here for you as well.
16 So, please find me or any of the beautiful purple shirts
17 that are around, and we would be happy to support you in
18 what ways we can. We're also going to be checking in on
19 you as well. Anyways, I wish you all a beautiful day and
20 *chi-migwetch*.

21 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** We have been asked to take
22 into account people of different faith. So, this morning,
23 we're actually going to do three different prayers. We're
24 going to do -- Josie Bear, if she would come up to do a
25 traditional prayer, and then we're going to have Dolly and

1 Erwin do a Christian prayer, and then Annie to do our Inuit
2 prayer. So, Josie, would you like to come first? You're
3 all going to come up together? Excellent. You're scared?
4 Don't be scared. They don't bite.

5 **MS. JOSIE BEAR:** *Bonjour.* Creator, thank
6 you for this beautiful day. Thank you for bringing us all
7 together as one family. We just ask for strength for the
8 families that are so courageous and brave to come up here
9 and speak their truth. I just pray that you'll keep your
10 hand upon them, and I pray that we listen with our ears
11 open and our hearts open, and to be there to support, and
12 to love and to guide. *Chi-migwetch.*

13 **MR. ERWIN:** As a husband, as a father and as
14 one of the spiritual gatekeepers for our Treaty 1
15 territories, I'm here to stand with my wife who does the
16 prayer so that I could offer empowerment to our women so
17 that they can arise and pursue their destinies in life.
18 I'll now turn this over to my wife.

19 **MS. DOLLY:** Thank you. Good morning,
20 everyone. Can I just share something? As we sat in the
21 debriefing the other morning, the other -- and as I sat
22 there, I looked around the circle, and seeing the women
23 sitting in the circle, and of course, a Bible part came to
24 me where there's a whole chapter in the Bible that talks
25 about a woman. It says, "Who can find a virtuous woman?"

1 Who can find a virtuous woman? It says, "For her price is
2 far above all rubies." And, as I sat there and I looked
3 around, I thought, "Wow." I look and I see gems. It says,
4 "Her price is far above rubies." Women, you are costly,
5 you are priceless. You pay the price, women. A gem is
6 something that is very costly. You see my ring? It's
7 costly. And, just to think this is how -- this is how
8 we're described. We're described as a gem, something
9 that's paid, that's costs so much money. More than money.
10 You mean so much as women.

11 Then, I thought of -- I looked up the word
12 "virtuous", and you know what it means? It means warrior.
13 As I sit in this room, I look at warriors. We are
14 fighters, women. We are fighters. I'm a mother, a
15 grandma, a great-grandma, and I'm a fighter. I stand in
16 defence over our women. I know where I've come from, I
17 know my journey and I wasn't always like this. I was down
18 for so many years.

19 You know what? We've been married almost 50
20 years, and I know where I come from, eh? I was just
21 someone to iron his pants, had his lunch on the table at
22 12:00, 5:00 when he walks in the door. But, I want to just
23 -- I wanted to share this. I look out here and I see gems,
24 I see rubies, I see warriors. We're not quitters. We're
25 going to fight. We're going to fight. We will not keep

1 quiet.

2 And, I'm just going to pray a little prayer.

3 I love the prayer that Josie prayed. Creator God of the
4 whole universe, we thank you and we're grateful for this
5 day as we look about us. We're so grateful for life.

6 We're thankful for life, the life that you have brought to
7 us, the things that you have given to us, we're forever
8 grateful. Our families, our girls, our daughters, our
9 children, we're so thankful for our families today.

10 We're also thankful for creation. We're
11 thankful for all walks of life today. There's no one as
12 exempted from this walk, and we're so grateful, Lord. We
13 just pray for the families that are in this room today that
14 are going to come forth and will not be silenced anymore.
15 And, Lord, we just look to you for strength for the
16 workers, the people that are involved in heading up this
17 meeting.

18 We pray supernatural strength into their
19 minds and their souls, spirits, that you help them, give
20 them wisdom, be wise, the words and give them understanding
21 hearts that they're able to understand the people and what
22 they have to share. And, we pray today that everyone in
23 this room would be a strength to one another, that we can
24 walk together cooperatively together where we can have
25 impact, where we can have influence. And, Lord, we just

1 bless this day now. We ask this in the Creator God of all
2 universe, Jesus. Amen. Amen. *Migwetch.*

3 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Now, I would like to ask
4 Annie, my other BFF throughout the week, to start the
5 prayer.

6 **MS. ANNIE BOWKETT:** Thank you. *Ullaakuut.*
7 "Ullaakuut" means good morning in my dialect. Thank you.
8 I just want to say thank you to -- for your wonderful
9 prayers of these beautiful people and beautiful you are,
10 all of you. And, I will say a prayer. (Speaking in Native
11 language).

12 **Hearing # 1**

13 **Witnesses: Alaya McIvor and Rachel Willan**

14 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

15 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

16 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Good morning.
18 Commissioner Audette, I would like to introduce the
19 witnesses for the first public hearing this morning. This
20 morning we have before us two witnesses who have already
21 had the opportunity to testify, but today, they're going to
22 be courageously sharing stories of their lived experience
23 and they're going to be providing, I anticipate, some very
24 thought-provoking ideas and recommendations.

25 And so, although they had originally

1 promised their truth, we will be asking them to give
2 another promise statement.

3 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good morning. Rachel
4 and Alaya, do you promise to tell your truth in a good way
5 today? Thank you.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, this
7 morning, I understand that Rachel -- or, no, sorry, Alaya
8 would like to start with some comments.

9 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** (Indiscernible), first
10 but foremost, I would like to acknowledge the territory
11 that we're gathered on here today is the Treaty 1
12 territory, territory of my ancestors, also the home of the
13 Métis Nation. Prior before I get started, I would like to
14 acknowledge my spirit name, my spirit names. "She who
15 collects the medicine for the people" and "she who works in
16 the heart for the people". My clan is the Lynx Clan.

17 So, I'm here -- so prior, leading up to
18 this, so there was, I don't know, there was a mistake in
19 two stories that were trying to be put together. So, I'm
20 going to be telling my story of sexual exploitation and
21 human trafficking.

22 So, what do you call it, this story is going
23 to empower -- hopefully empower those victims whom are
24 being victimized across Canada to -- to see a light and to
25 -- to understand, not only understand -- understand that

1 they're a victim, but help them identify their roles and
2 responsibilities moving in from that victimization into the
3 survivor role, into the warrior role that they should be
4 in. So, I'm going to -- I'm not going to get into too much
5 detail. I don't want to take a lot of time.

6 So, one of the things I do and have been
7 doing for a number amount of years is educating our youth
8 across the province here in Manitoba on exploitation and
9 human trafficking. I think it's very important to educate.
10 Education is key when it comes to the issue because our
11 youth are very vulnerable as Indigenous youth.

12 So, one of the things, I actually was just
13 in Brandon yesterday educating Sioux Valley Dakota Nation,
14 a school from grades 9 to 12, on the realities of
15 exploitation, human trafficking and gangs. So, you know, I
16 was very surprised. They were very respectful on the
17 topics and very engaged. Not only engaged, but they were
18 key players in advancing their community and educating
19 their peers on -- on this issue that we tend to forget,
20 that we tend to not really talk about because of the stigma
21 attached to it.

22 So, I'm just going to start off of where I
23 come from. So, my name is Alaya McIvor. I originate from
24 the Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation community, 186
25 kilometres northwest on Lake Manitoba shorelines. I come

1 from a single mother of seven. One of the things when I
2 share my story, I don't ask for no pity, no sympathy, first
3 but foremost. So, one of the things with my story is
4 you'll notice that I do a lot of full circles in my story,
5 where I was and where I come from and where I'm at today.

6 So, my mother, you know, raised seven kids
7 on her own, tried her best. I don't blame my mother, I
8 don't blame the systems, but what I do is I can help people
9 identify, you know, identify those gaps. Not only those
10 gaps but, you know, moving forward in a positive way. So,
11 as far back as I can remember, you know, my mom, you know,
12 tried the best that she could. You know, my mom was, you
13 know, as any other single Indigenous mother that raised --
14 tried to raise her children to the best ability as she can.

15 But, at the age of 7 was my first encounter
16 with child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse really
17 traumatized me and really traumatized me as a child. And,
18 one of the things the perpetrator had said was that he was
19 going to murder me if -- me and my family if I came forward
20 and disclosed. And, to me, as a child, that always played
21 in the back of my head, and the first time I ever shared
22 was when I was 18, and that was a number amount of years to
23 hold that pain.

24 But, prior before that, I was put in the
25 care of Child and Family Services at the age of 12 on a

1 voluntary placement, and this was 30 -- no, 23 years ago.
2 Twenty-three years ago I was put in the care of Child and
3 Family Services in a voluntary placement within my First
4 Nation community, which is Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation.
5 I was put in the care of my family, and then I was reunited
6 on my 12th birthday with my family, and it didn't last for
7 long; you know? It was my birthday and, you know, my --
8 one of the things, me and my siblings, we always fought,
9 just like any other siblings would, and it was the evening
10 and my mom was like, "You know what? I had enough." She's
11 like, "I can't do this." She's like, "All you guys do is
12 fight, fight, fight." She's like, "Maybe Child and Family
13 Services can help you," you know? And, I was like,
14 "Whatever." And, one of the things was, in Manitoba, here,
15 when kids in care run, they're called AWOL.

16 So, what do you call it -- so I went AWOL
17 within my community, and one of the things I did was
18 because -- one of the things, here I come here as a trans-
19 Indigenous woman; you know? And, I'm very vocal and
20 instrumental, you know, in Manitoba here and, you know,
21 across Canada because there's not too much of people like
22 me that speak up the way I do. One of the things -- one of
23 the things, you know, here in Manitoba, I never seen
24 someone that I can look up to, someone that -- someone that
25 was a positive person here in Manitoba to -- to role model;

1 you know?

2 So -- because I see my -- my two-spirit
3 trans individual sisters and brothers really marginalized
4 and oppressed, and exploitation and human trafficking, you
5 know, you name it. You know, so one of the things I wanted
6 to do because I didn't -- I didn't see any of those role
7 models within the community that I -- I told myself that,
8 you know, if I can't -- if I can't see any of those role
9 models, I will be that role model.

10 So, at 12 years old, one of my only options
11 when I was AWOLing within my community -- one of the only
12 options was suicide; you know? And, one of the things I --
13 you know, one of the things I tried to do was I tried to
14 commit suicide. I didn't succeed in suicide, and I'm
15 thankful for that. And, at that time, you know, I had
16 thrown an extension cord on a tree and had wrapped it, and
17 I was standing on a log and let myself go. And, what do
18 you call it, I was hanging and that tree broke. And, for
19 me, I didn't know what that would entail and what that
20 purpose was, why that tree broke, up until years later in
21 my life.

22 So, I was like, "Okay," and it was storming,
23 and then I was like, "I might as well give myself up," and
24 then Child and Family Services came and got me within my
25 community, which is the Dakota Ojibway Child and Family

1 Services. I then, within a 24-hour period, was given an
2 ultimatum was to stay in my community and/or to depart my
3 community and go into Winnipeg. Well, as an Indigenous kid
4 in a northern reserve, what would you choose? I chose the
5 city. And, within a 24-hour period, I was purchased a
6 Greyhound bus ticket. And, with that Greyhound bus ticket,
7 one of the things was the DOCFS, that was probably the best
8 \$13.00, \$14.00 they ever spent to get a kid out of their
9 care not understanding that -- the effects and the trauma
10 that would be bestowed upon that \$13.00, \$14.00 bus ticket.

11 So, what do you call it, I was taken to
12 Portage la Prairie and I was excited to come to Winnipeg,
13 you know, the fast life; you know? And, one of the things
14 my Child and Family Services worker told me driving --
15 driving into Port, she was like, "You know what? Never
16 come back to the community." And, I was like, you know,
17 "Whatever." The woman cannot look at me to this day when I
18 go back home, and one of the things I do is I go back home
19 consistently. You know, that's the place where I need to
20 go back home to ground myself as an Indigenous person,
21 where I come from as an Indigenous individual.

22 So, she put me on that Greyhound bus with no
23 one receiving me on the other end. So, when -- the bus
24 depot actually was downtown here in Winnipeg, just down the
25 street over there where the Holiday Inn is. So, one of the

1 things, I got off that bus, and there was an Italian man
2 standing there and he -- and one of the things with
3 Indigenous kids and Indigenous people, we lack that
4 attention, so we seek it. And, one of the things was this
5 Italian man was giving me all of those attention -- all of
6 that attention that I wanted, I guess, or I was seeking at
7 that time. And, he's like, "Come here," and he lured me to
8 a place where exploitation is very rampant in this city,
9 and he got into his car and picked me up and, you know, I
10 serviced this perpetrator for a number amount of hours, and
11 only to not understand, again, what sex was. I didn't even
12 know what a condom was, I didn't know anything of anything
13 in that matter, you know, up until being, you know,
14 sexually abused as a child.

15 And, one of the things was he took me --
16 there was a Coffee Time on Princess and -- Princess and
17 Notre Dame, which is just one block from here, one block
18 radius, and he gave me \$5.00, and he's like, "Go get us two
19 coffees," and I'm like, "Oh, okay." And, this is how naïve
20 I was as an Indigenous kid in care coming to the city. I
21 left out of his car and there he was driving off. So,
22 those -- those behaviours started being normalized
23 instantly to me.

24 So, one of the things at that time, I was
25 like, "Oh, well, he gave me \$5.00, maybe I should go do

1 that again." So, I went back to that same location where
2 he lured me and got me into his vehicle, and this behaviour
3 was normalized. And, one of the first things at 12 years
4 old was my first hit of crack cocaine. No kid should be
5 smoking crack cocaine at 12 years old. And, that would
6 just escalate into a general spiral effect of addictions,
7 exploitation. One of the things -- I needed to numb that
8 pain, and one of the things with exploitation when you're
9 victimized in exploitation, you really need to numb the
10 pain of -- really numb that pain.

11 So, I went from that -- from the visual sex
12 industry -- so one of the things, too, you're going to hear
13 the proper language and terminology to use when covering --
14 covering this topic with me. So, I went into -- from the
15 visual sex industry, I went online, and back then -- so
16 online -- so it shifts; you know? Exploitation shifts and
17 human trafficking shifts. So, back then, I don't know if
18 you guys remember, but there was dial-up computers, you
19 know, when internet was first coming out. Yahoo Chat sites
20 were where I was exploited and human trafficked. I was
21 picked up and taken from location to location. And, at --
22 like I only realized this just within the past 10 years
23 that I was a victim of human trafficking and I didn't know.
24 I call it taken. You know, that's how I identified it, as
25 taken. And, you know, in reality, it's human trafficking.

1 So, those are forms of human trafficking,
2 and I was taken to hotels, shipped out to Saskatchewan, you
3 know, Duncan, British Columbia, Vernon, Vancouver, Calgary,
4 you name it, I was there. And, one of my turning points
5 was I was up probably seven or eight days, and I was at a
6 trailer, a trailer park in Duncan, British Columbia. I was
7 taken off the mainland of Vancouver. And, what do you call
8 it, I was in this trailer park and I wanted to sleep. I
9 was really deprived and very deprived of sleep, and I was,
10 like, trying to sleep, and this guy had anal sex with me
11 while I was sleeping and that was very discomforting. And,
12 I was like -- woke up, and I was like, "Get the fuck off of
13 me," and he's like, "No, I'm getting what I fucking paid
14 for," and I had no choice but to let him.

15 And then I was shipped to downtown east side
16 Vancouver and I stood there on Hastings and Cordova, and I
17 looked around me and, you know, addictions and
18 exploitation, human trafficking, it was just so open and so
19 -- so out there and just so normalized. Those behaviours
20 are just so normalized. I had people overdosing here,
21 people, you know, injecting there, people dying over here,
22 like it was crazy; you know? Only to disclose to another
23 perpetrator how bad I wanted to come home. And, one of the
24 things, when I left Manitoba, I left with two white bags,
25 those two white bags, and my two white bags had everything.

1 You know, I didn't have no I.D.'s, I didn't
2 have -- I didn't have nothing and -- but those two white
3 bags, and those two white bags were my everything because I
4 lived a transient life, whatever, I was bouncing from one
5 couch to the next, and people started fighting for me, over
6 me, not even understanding it because I was so entrenched
7 in addictions that they were actually fighting for me as if
8 I was a piece of property, and they were fighting over me
9 for them -- for me to be at their house or from that house
10 to the next house, and I was like, you know, "What the
11 hell's going on around me?"

12 So, in 2004, I came home. Again, I had
13 disclosed to one of my perpetrators and he drove me up to
14 Calgary and, what do you call it, he looked at me when we
15 pulled into Calgary and he told me, "This is far as I can
16 take you." My heart fell to the ground. I was like,
17 "Well, what do I do from here?" So, I get on that CB, he
18 was like, "You're guaranteed a ride." And, I got onto that
19 CB, within a minute, I got a response from another
20 perpetrator that I would service for two days at that truck
21 stop.

22 Finally, two days later, when -- and he
23 finally started up the semi, to me, my heart was being
24 lifted back up because I was coming home. You know, on my
25 way home, I was like, "Yes, I'm going home." What was I

1 coming home to? I don't even know why I was happy. I was
2 coming home to go back into the visual sex industry; you
3 know? Why I was coming home I don't even know. I didn't
4 even have a relationship with my family due to my
5 addiction, you know, because I was so addicted and so
6 entrenched that I didn't even, you know, make time for my
7 family or didn't even have that time to reach out to my
8 family because I just kept wanting to numb pain after pain,
9 after pain of servicing perpetrator, after perpetrator,
10 after perpetrator.

11 So, in 2004, I came home, and shortly after
12 in 2004, September 29 to be quite exact, I'd seen my best
13 friend for the very last time on Higgins at Waterfront
14 Drive. Little did I know, prior up to that, leading up to
15 that, a perpetrator had picked me up in that same location
16 and asked me about, like, detailed my best friend. He's
17 like, "Where's that one?" I'm like, "I don't know," you
18 know? And, I had serviced him and he dropped me off, and
19 then the night I last seen my best friend, you know, I was
20 devastated. She went missing September 29, 2004. November
21 the 3rd or 4th that year, her body was found 8 kilometres
22 outside of Portage la Prairie at a rest stop. Her name was
23 Divas Boulanger.

24 She came from a northern community, Berens
25 River First Nation. She was a trans-woman. I lost it, and

1 I lost my best friend. It was so traumatizing. It was so
2 traumatizing that I was asking every perpetrator that would
3 pick me up if they were going to murder me because if they
4 were going to murder me, to murder me now, because --
5 excuse me. Because society had so much stigma and rather
6 judge us than understand us. You know, we couldn't go get
7 proper supports from the general public that we -- the way
8 we can today.

9 You know, back in 2004, you know, we
10 utilized one place at that time, but during that time when
11 the lead investigation -- the lead investigator came to us
12 and started asking us questions, you know, a lot of people
13 paint the RCMP with a brush, you know, with the same brush,
14 not understanding that there are some good RCMP officers
15 out there, and I was privileged enough -- we were
16 privileged enough to have someone who didn't judge us for
17 the lifestyle, did not -- did not -- he gave us dignity and
18 he gave us hope. And, this guy took on Divas' case right
19 from when her body was found, the RCMP, Brent Novakowski
20 (phon), took on that case and he met us where we were at,
21 he would come meet us on the street. And, you know, one of
22 the things because -- you know, we are a community, we are
23 a family whom are exploited and/or human trafficked. We
24 hold a lot of pieces of puzzles that could possibly solve
25 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls' cases.

1 Little did I know years later that I would
2 be one of those people to solve my best friend's murder
3 with the information that I held. I didn't even know; you
4 know? And, because that -- the RCMP officer gave us that
5 safe space to come forward, and he built a relationship and
6 a bond with us that we were able to come to him at any
7 point in time when we felt we had any information leading
8 up to the disappearance and death of my best friend. And,
9 the perpetrator, Ted -- Theodore Herntier, who had picked
10 her up and murdered her, actually picked me up again and he
11 took me to his house, which was in the Chestnut area, and
12 he was like, "Do you want to sleepover?" But, I was so
13 addicted already because, like, I just needed to numb a lot
14 of pain, I was like, "Okay." And, I was laying on a futon
15 mattress, and then he got on top of me and he started
16 choking me, and I was able to fight him off of me. And, I
17 was like, "What the fuck are you doing?" And, I had jumped
18 up and I was like -- put my clothes on and I was like,
19 "Drive me back. Drive me back right now." He was like,
20 "Okay, okay."

21 And, what do you call it, he drove me back.
22 And, you know, today, I'm like would -- this guy was
23 probably going to murder me too; you know? And then
24 because I was such an addict, even though I was an addict
25 at that time, I remembered each and every perpetrator that

1 would pick me up and exploit me; you know? And, I had --
2 I'm like this human filing cabinet that stores, you know,
3 and one of the things today, when I walk within our
4 community and I see perpetrators, you should see how fast
5 they run.

6 But, with Divas' case, you know, it didn't
7 get solved right away, so I still lived with that trauma,
8 you know, of losing my best friend, being exploited, you
9 know, not knowing who the murderer was.

10 So, that was in 2004, and in 2004, I was in
11 an art project, one of the first, like, art projects here
12 in Manitoba who worked with exploited populations. And,
13 one of the things was with that art project, we had a
14 chance to shoot a documentary. And, one of the things --
15 because people watch -- our Indigenous sisters, peoples,
16 watched in the movie, *Pretty Woman*, in that movie, depicts
17 the wrong picture, and I wanted to depict that movie and
18 tell the true story of, you know, *Pretty Woman*. And, one
19 of the things at that time, I wanted to exit. You know,
20 it's called *Pretty Woman in the Real World Trying to Exit*.
21 And, it was compiled with seven stories with seven
22 survivors whom are, you know, making a difference today in
23 the community.

24 So, I shared my story, and during that
25 story, I was kept -- again, because I was still actively

1 entrenched in exploitation and people were still fighting
2 over me as if I was a piece of property, and -- I was kept
3 in the basement of 123 Sutherland for three days during the
4 shooting of that film, you know, continuously being raped
5 and being beaten from a perpetrator.

6 I was able to get away, but one of the
7 things, getting away from that perpetrator, is I felt that
8 perpetrator around me at all times. So, I would run from
9 one location to the next, to the next. I couldn't, you
10 know, walk because he really traumatized me. He really,
11 really traumatized me.

12 So, during that time I, you know, was on
13 social assistance, and I had an appointment with employment
14 -- or social assistance, and I was so -- such an addict.
15 Like, I was so hardcore. I walked in and, at that time, I
16 was on \$87.50 every two weeks. I had to live off of that,
17 and I didn't have no I.D. still. I didn't have any I.D.,
18 and one of the things I had to do was, you know, to cash
19 that cheque, I had to spend -- or give the person \$10.00 at
20 the grocery store, and then I was always left with very
21 little, next to nothing.

22 So, I went to my social assistance
23 appointment with Crystal Damedalia (phon), who was a social
24 assistance -- or a social assistance worker here in
25 Manitoba. She was like, "You're making too much money."

1 I'm like, "What are you talking about?" "You're making too
2 much money on the street." And, she's like, "You should go
3 out there with a receipt book. I'm cutting you off social
4 assistance."

5 I was cut off social assistance, and I was
6 like -- because I was such a mess, I was like, "Okay,"
7 because I didn't even know my rights yet. You know, I
8 didn't know anything and I walked out of there. I was
9 like, "Oh, I guess I have to do that," you know? And so, I
10 went. And, what do you call it, when they had cut me off,
11 I was like, "I guess I have to try to come up with \$500.00
12 for rent," you know, how many perpetrators I have to
13 service for this.

14 So, in 2007, I was, you know, I -- again,
15 this is one of my turning points in 2007. I came in
16 confrontation with the Winnipeg Police Service whom -- whom
17 took me to District 3 here in Manitoba, and interrogated me
18 and taunted me for my gender, as being a trans-Indigenous
19 woman. They were calling me brutal names and really rude
20 names for people with an authority figure. They really,
21 you know, took their power and used it to their ability to
22 degrade someone who was very marginalized.

23 But, one thing I told them, I looked at them
24 when the whole district was standing there making fun of
25 me, insisting that I had 2 ounces of powdered coke, that

1 they would never get away with it, that they would never
2 get away with it.

3 One of the things I did right after that,
4 you know, Nahanni Fontaine at that time was with Southern
5 Chiefs Organization. You know, I called her immediately.
6 I was like -- that this is what these people did to me.
7 And, she was like -- it really traumatized me, but one of
8 the things I wanted to do was shift that trauma, shift that
9 trauma and start making detrimental changes in systems.
10 And, what do you call it, she came to me and I shared my
11 story with her, and that woman, like, you know, sat there
12 with me. I cried because it was so embarrassing, but not
13 only embarrassing, but I started to realize that my human
14 rights are being violated.

15 And, what do you call it, and then I filed a
16 LEAR (phon) report, and then I was told in 2007 when I
17 filed that LEAR report after breaking down to this
18 investigator that I would have -- it would be -- there
19 would be a 0.1 chance that my, you know, my disclosure to
20 them with the district would go anywhere. So, I lost hope.
21 I lost hope in that.

22 Then, in 2007, you know, because I was
23 already, you know, thinking of my future, my future, I
24 wanted a future, and one of the things I did was, you know,
25 I was sobering up, one of my attempts to sobering up. I

1 was like -- I went to the -- back to the safe house that we
2 would utilize, and there was a woman who lost her kid there
3 that day to Child and Family Services sitting at a table.
4 This is a house full of women because a lot of women, after
5 they lose their children here in the Province of Manitoba,
6 in Winnipeg, you know, self -- you know, they'll go to
7 addictions, they'll go to -- you know, once that -- once
8 those drugs run out, they have -- they need to, you know,
9 continue on, and there's forms -- some of them will fall
10 into forms of exploitation, and then end up there. And,
11 she had lost her kid, and I went up to one of those
12 workers, I was like, "Don't you think you should take her
13 into an office? She's going to start a chain reaction
14 here. All these women have kids that have been
15 apprehended." And, they're like, "No." And, I was like,
16 "What?"

17 And then I went to another office to a woman
18 with a lived experience, just someone like me where I'm at
19 today, I was like, "Is there anywhere we can get any sort
20 of money?" I was like, "Because, like, if you just seen
21 what I seen, you know, that's not how you work with us."
22 And, what do you call it, she's like, "I'll look into it,"
23 and she looked into it and, like, months later, she's like,
24 "Guess what?" She's like, "I applied for funding dollars
25 with the Canadian Women's Foundation of Canada." She was

1 like, "And we got the money." And, what do you call it,
2 and I was like, "Really?" And, she's like, "Yes." She was
3 like, "What are we going to do with it?" And, I was like,
4 "Well, one thing we're going to start doing is we're going
5 to start educating these women on perpetrators; you know?
6 And, we're going to start showing them how to spend that
7 \$87.50; you know? And, we're going to start showing them
8 how to get I.D.'s."

9 So, I used a lot of the things that I was
10 lacking and turning that and shifting that, and it was
11 basic life skills to begin with, and one of the things is
12 we called it -- we needed a name for it, so we called it
13 the Anti-Violence Advisory Team.

14 So -- because things shift continuously, and
15 one of the things are the perpetrator's licence plates here
16 in Manitoba, and identifying licence plates, and showing
17 them what licence plates look like, how to leave your DNA
18 within vehicles. So, that was just a little form, and this
19 was back in 2007. To date, the Anti-Violence Advisory Team
20 is still running on zero dollars; you know? And, it shows
21 you that programs can still run as long as you want them to
22 run. You know, you don't need money to run them.

23 So, you know, I was going in and out of my
24 addiction till 2011. 2011 -- 2010, 2011, during that time,
25 I would sit at the Sexually Exploited Youth Community

1 Coalition. I was the only survivor that would sit in that
2 room with 50 executive directors. I felt this small
3 because these people had lots of education on me, and --
4 but I was determined that these people weren't going to,
5 you know, make decisions on our behalf without our consent
6 and our voices needed to be attached to that.

7 So, I sat there, and in 2011, that coalition
8 seen -- had seen this -- my success. But, not only that,
9 that coalition and those partners with that coalition, you
10 know, turned out to be my supports. And, one of the
11 things, rather than giving me a hand out, they gave me a
12 hand up approach. You know, and one of the things, working
13 with survivors, you know, and victims, that's the approach
14 that needs to be taken, you know. And so, in 2011, there
15 was, actually, in this very same room, what do you call it,
16 actually in this very same room, right there, I shared my
17 story for the very first time. It was called -- a
18 conference called "Dear John: It's Rape, Not a Date".

19 I shared my story in front of 350 people for
20 the very first time. You can hear a pin drop. To me, that
21 was very liberating, very moving. It gave me hope to move
22 forward, empowered me to continue on the work that needed
23 to be done. That same day, I got an apology from Keith
24 McCaskill, who was the Winnipeg police officer for his
25 district, you know, for his influence on my trauma. I then

1 -- that day, there was policies changed with the Winnipeg
2 Police Service that when -- when trans, two-spirit people
3 do come incarcerated and their rights of being incarcerated
4 on strip searches and such.

5 So, also, that following -- that year or the
6 following year, so one of the things, I don't know if you
7 guys know about this hotel, but this hotel is trained to
8 identify exploitation and human trafficking. With the
9 Hotel Chain Association in Manitoba, this is one of the
10 first hotels to -- to adopt that and implement it with
11 their staff.

12 So, along the way, in 2011, right after I
13 shared my story, it was very liberating, very moving, I was
14 approached from stakeholders within the community to form a
15 HOME. You know, a HOME was something that I was lacking,
16 something that I didn't have, which is Hands of Mother
17 Earth rural safe healing lodge. It's, I think, Canada's
18 only healing lodge, Indigenous healing lodge for young
19 victims of exploitation and human trafficking. So, one of
20 the things, with 18 survivors of exploitation and human
21 trafficking, we sat with an architect and designed this
22 home from the ground up.

23 So, one of the things we did was we
24 purchased ceremonial land from one of our respected
25 grandmothers and we nourished that land. And, one of the

1 things we didn't want to just build on the land, we wanted
2 to build off of what was on the land. So, in that home,
3 it's a 6-bed safe HOME. It's not a -- it's not a group
4 home. It's a HOME, Hands of Mother Earth. And, one of the
5 things we did was, in the duration of the planning, we
6 wanted to have a school in-house to -- to tutor the girls
7 where they needed to be at, you know, to get them into --
8 into the school systems.

9 So, from there on out, I started working on
10 a lot of -- a lot of initiatives under Tracia's trust. So,
11 one of the things that I always do when I share my story is
12 I always acknowledged a young girl who was Tracia Owens,
13 who was a young girl who succeeded in suicide here in the
14 Province of Manitoba. So, the province -- she fell through
15 the gaps of the system, and the province opened a trust in
16 her name, and it pumps in or around \$11 million each year
17 into that trust.

18 So, one of the things that I always share is
19 her name and that her spirit still lives within us, her
20 spirit still lives within the community. So, I always
21 acknowledged that young woman because if it wasn't for her,
22 and -- I don't think Manitoba would be where they are
23 today.

24 So, again, just some of those initiatives
25 that had come out of -- out of Tracia's trust is Dear John:

1 It's Rape, Not a Date; All Children Matter; Protecting
2 Sacred Lives; Survivors Protecting Sacred Lives. And, one
3 of the things where survivors led these -- these yearly
4 educational forums, and had up and around 300 to 400, 500
5 people at times come in and -- come in and be educated on
6 the realities of sexual exploitation, human trafficking.

7 And then in 2011, we lost my cousin to a
8 murder, as I shared the other day. And then, again, I
9 shared the other day that 2011, one of the forums, one of
10 those -- one of the action forums that we did, because I'm
11 all about action, is I joined a walk in Toronto to Ottawa;
12 you know? And, you know, I came back home and I was like,
13 "Okay, well, what's next," that sort of thing.

14 So, we -- we, here in Manitoba, again, we
15 try and, you know, educate, not only educate, but champion
16 what is coming within our jurisdictions of our communities.
17 So, we partnered with the Canadian Football League, NFL,
18 NHL hosting in the Hotel Association in Manitoba leading up
19 to hosting the 104th Grey Cup and Tim Horton's Heritage
20 Classic Cup that was hosted here. So, the prevention and
21 intervention work in partnership with -- in collaboration
22 with the coalition and stakeholders within the community,
23 you know, championing exploitation, human trafficking here
24 in the Province of Manitoba.

25 And the influx of those games coming in àto

1 our province were very high online. So, on that online
2 department, you know, Backpage, Craig's List, Tinder,
3 Shemale Canada. So, we seen the influx in exploitation
4 occurring and how -- how many -- how much people were being
5 trafficked into our city.

6 So, one of the things and one of the
7 prevention pieces, we partnered with the Winnipeg Police
8 Service, and one of the things the Winnipeg Police Service
9 was doing was actually responding to each of those ads and
10 paying them a visit, so outreaching to those -- to those
11 potential victims of exploitation and human trafficking.

12 So, one of the things, we never stop there.
13 Leading up to that, we launched Buying Sex Isn't a Sport in
14 response to those games, and one of the things we did was
15 we started educating communities. So, we got billboards on
16 buses; you know? We didn't only get billboards on buses,
17 but we -- we launched Manitoba's human trafficking hotline,
18 first of its kind in Manitoba which is still here today.

19 So, one of the other things during that time
20 also, you know, I sat around the room with other survivors
21 of exploitation and human trafficking, and there was a need
22 here in the Province of Manitoba for a 24/7 safe space for
23 youth. So, one of the things, sitting with those
24 survivors, we championed that. We got funding for it from
25 the -- from the province and from the city, and we launched

1 it, and one of the things we identified in -- we wanted to
2 piggy back off of -- off of the expertise and knowledge,
3 not only knowledge of, in how one of our stakeholders had
4 been championing and how they came about, how their
5 organization came about and why their organization came
6 about which was Nidena Way (phon), Nidena Way Resource
7 Service. How that organization got started was because the
8 young youth whom were being exploited within those
9 communities, so we wanted to piggy back off of that and
10 fund that piece there. So, during the duration of that
11 time, we started planning, meeting what a 24/7 adult space
12 would look like.

13 So, during that time last year, I think it
14 was last year or two years ago, Canada and the United
15 States came together for the very first time. So, I was
16 one of the key partners in that identifying border cross
17 human trafficking. So, we got -- I had the privilege to
18 sit with, like, FBI, border security, and educate them on
19 -- on the realities of exploitation and human trafficking,
20 sharing the realities. Also, some of the stories of
21 survivors across Canada are shared in the Globe and Mail,
22 also on Al Jazeera television.

23 So, some of the work that's continuously
24 being done, currently, myself and Rachel work on an
25 initiative called Our Circle to Protect Sacred Lives with

1 the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. So, some of the things
2 that I've been very instrumental in, and that I am one of
3 the first trans-Indigenous women who sits on the advisory
4 council for the Winnipeg Police Board. I was also
5 nominated as the CBC AM Manitoba person for trailblazing.

6 Also, just recently, I was in Toronto on a
7 human trafficking summit with survivors. We are part of
8 1,200 Plus Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Part 2,
9 which is a documentary that will be released any day, as I
10 was telling you guys the other day. Also, I sit on the
11 Board of Manitoba Moon Voices, which is an Indigenous-led
12 organization of women. And, I was recently identified
13 through Southern Chiefs Organization as 1 of 150 leaders
14 championing change with Status of Women Canada.

15 So, that's just some of the work that I have
16 been doing and that's not done yet. You know, there's
17 still a lot of work to be done; you know? So, if anything,
18 you know -- if you've noticed, I've done a lot of full
19 circles, and one of the things with Hands of Mother Earth,
20 I had the privilege enough -- I was privileged enough to go
21 back and go back there and work with young survivors and,
22 you know, see where -- where our vision had went, you know,
23 to see the impacts of the vision.

24 And so, it's very empowering, you know,
25 within -- like, every day that I came to work, it was --

1 you know, it was touching because now I was actually, you
2 know -- you know, giving these young women gifts. You
3 know, I would sit around the drum and drum with them and,
4 you know, giving them those gifts that they should have,
5 you know, that they should carry. One of the things I
6 implemented last year was, you know, we need to make them
7 drums. We need to make them those pieces for their bundles
8 when they depart the home, you know, to -- for them to go
9 back to, sort of thing.

10 So, leaving off on that, so one of the
11 things, people tend to forget, you know -- and one of the
12 hardest things, you know, because I just recently switched
13 employment, and I took some time off because I burn out,
14 you know, and burn out is very rampant when you're working
15 frontlines. One of the things I tried to do, go back to
16 social assistance, and it's very hard to stay off that
17 system, and I've been fighting that system for two years,
18 you know, to stay off of it; you know? So, I've been
19 paying, like, hardcore tax dollars; you know? I'm being
20 taxed like, you know, deadly.

21 And, anyways, one of the things, you know,
22 moving forward, you know, I really hope that our taxpayers'
23 dollars here that are being put into this, because people
24 tend to forget about Indigenous people and think Indigenous
25 people get things for free; you know? I'm just as that

1 non, you know, Indigenous person paying as much tax as that
2 other person, you know, that it's being -- you know, my tax
3 dollars are being actually implemented into something, from
4 my perspective, you know, seeing that it's actually making
5 change in victims' lives and moving them from those stages
6 of being victims to survivors to warriors, because if it
7 wasn't for the community, you know, if it wasn't for those
8 partners, you know, those people -- those people who have
9 seen my gifts with -- and helped me identify my gifts and
10 my tools along the way, I don't think I would be here
11 today. I think I would still be marginalized and oppressed
12 in those systems.

13 So, across Canada, you know, a lot of --
14 there's a lot of our women who's having a conversation with
15 your legal lawyer here last night. If you go a block, it's
16 like -- you'll -- in Manitoba here, 97 percent of those who
17 are victims to exploitation and human trafficking are
18 Indigenous, and it's in the visual sex industry. And, a
19 lot of them, you know -- I told them too -- I told her too,
20 if you go down -- if you walk down the block, because
21 you're Indigenous, you know, you'll get propositioned.
22 But, that's just the reality here in Manitoba and in Canada
23 how -- how they look at us Indigenous women, you know, and
24 how they see us; you know?

25 Like, still to this day, you know, I'll be

1 walking to a meeting and I'll get propositioned from
2 perpetrators, and one of the things, I'm like, "You're
3 still driving around here after how many years? Like, give
4 it up already," you know? You know, still preying on the
5 vulnerabilities of victims; you know? So many years later,
6 you know, it's just sickening, and gross, and disgusting
7 all around.

8 So, some of the things too is, you know,
9 moving into the recommendations component, when it comes to
10 exploitation and human trafficking, we really need to set a
11 precedence on and when people are charged on that matter.
12 You know, we need to change the justice system in that
13 format and hold these people, these perpetrators,
14 traffickers, accountable for their actions in -- in the
15 trauma that they're bestowing upon these victims. You
16 know, they really need to, you know, be slapped with 10-
17 year sentences for victimizing and traumatizing an
18 individual. Also, assuring that survivors have the
19 opportunities for employment within their services they
20 accessed when victims to advance them into the roles of
21 survivors and warriors. Also, one of the things we can do,
22 which are very tangible, helping them identify their gifts.
23 You know, their gifts and their strengths rather than their
24 weaknesses.

25 One of the biggest ones for me was

1 implementing a wraparound approach when it comes to
2 addiction services, mental health, housing, detox,
3 treatment centres. Even though they're a wraparound
4 approach -- you know, when I talk about a wraparound
5 approach, you know -- you know, not having your doors
6 closed; you know? And, when they want treatment, like 5
7 minutes, they get that treatment in 5 minutes, not next
8 week to go get a medical clearance. That should be all
9 housed in one place. Not to put any Christians out of
10 place, but there's a lot of detoxes, a lot of treatment
11 centres I have accessed. One of the things -- okay, one of
12 the things -- I'll go back to the things -- one of the
13 things that I tried to access.

14 You know, one of my first attempts at
15 accessing treatment, I didn't even know who I was. I
16 didn't believe in anything, I didn't even know who I was as
17 an Indigenous person, but I had access to Anchorage program
18 here. And, on my first day, you know, they threw a Bible
19 in front of me, and as soon as that Bible hit the table, I
20 was out that door because, you know, I didn't even identify
21 what -- you know, who I was or, you know, my values. I
22 don't mean that in any -- any forms of disrespect. You
23 know, but, you know, it took me years to actually go into a
24 church and, you know, I do go to church now. I really --
25 you know, I look at both, you know, my Indigenous

1 perspective, also a Christian-base. So, one of the things
2 is having more Indigenous-led treatment centres.

3 So, some of the things that need to be
4 implemented within First Nations communities is -- because
5 it's occurring within our communities and it usually stems
6 within our communities, exploitation. So, one of the
7 things with our circle to Protect Sacred Lives -- so I've
8 been fortunate enough to go into these fly-in communities
9 for the past couple years and go in and build partnership,
10 and help community identify, you know, what exploitation,
11 human trafficking looks like, and help them use proper
12 language. And, you know, proper terminology overall and
13 helping them design a safety plan of what that safety plan
14 looks if and when a survivor comes forward within those
15 communities, and partnershiping with jurisdiction
16 communities within their jurisdiction.

17 So, curriculum, also, for schools. You
18 know, it's very key. You know, those are very tangible
19 things. And, when this curriculum is developed, it's
20 developed from survivors. You know, that's very important
21 because if you take it into -- it's not going to mean
22 anything, and it has to be survivor-led. All of these
23 initiatives should be survivor-led, first but foremost, not
24 led for us but by us, sort of thing.

25 A survivor's empowerment model to help, you

1 know, victims. Uniting mothers with children in care.
2 That's one of the biggest ones. If you reunite a family,
3 you know, because there's, like, lots of women who lost
4 their kids and had moved to exploitation. If you reunite
5 those families, you know, you're going to see a success
6 rate of our Indigenous women stop being victimized. You
7 know, there's a lot of women that I know whom lost their
8 kids in care. You know, if we integrate their kids into
9 their care, they'll be successful, and not just give them
10 their kids in care and just think they're going to do the
11 best, but going through community and giving them that
12 community wraparound approach.

13 And, when I say "community", you know, you
14 have those partners that are -- right? You have those
15 partners. Child and Family Services, you know, Anchor, the
16 Leadership. You know, you have that support, you know,
17 that wraparound approach. We are giving them that hug
18 around approach where you're leading with them, not for
19 them, they're leading themselves, but just helping them
20 identify their strengths.

21 So, one of the things too is, at this point
22 in time, this morning, I got up really early. I get up at,
23 like, 5:00 sometimes, and I just start doing what needs to
24 be done, and this morning -- you guys are asking for an
25 extension. Please don't ask for that at this time. You

1 guys have a lot of money, you know, you guys have a lot of
2 money right now. You guys have \$53 million. You don't
3 need an extension at this time. Please refrain from that.
4 You're only hurting us more.

5 But, you know, I'm saying that in a nice
6 way. There's a lot of money there, you know, because that
7 \$53 million isn't being put into these -- funding these
8 recommendations. That \$53 million is actually being --
9 being put just for things like this that you guys are
10 freeing from -- asking for any more money at this current
11 time, you know, because that \$53 million should be more
12 than enough.

13 You know, if you're going to ask for more
14 money, you ask for more money for those recommendations,
15 for the implementation and action for any of these
16 recommendations, not for -- to extend these things because
17 it's -- these are -- you know, we'd rather see action now.
18 Like, for myself, again, I don't consider myself a victim
19 anymore when it comes to exploitation and human
20 trafficking. If you notice, you know, I am a survivor, a
21 warrior and it's about time that we start really, you know,
22 putting our money where our mouth is, you know, sort of
23 thing?

24 So, I think I'll leave it off at that, but
25 again, also, remembering to -- each and every victim out

1 there, you know, not -- if I can do it -- you know, and
2 community, if I can do it from the community approach, not,
3 you know, rather than a hand out, a hand up. If I can do
4 it, anybody can do it. So, I'll leave you guys off at
5 that, and I'm going to just pass it on to Rachel.

6 One of the things that I might do with
7 survivors and also, too, one of the things I didn't share
8 was back in 2011, I formed a survivors' circle, you know,
9 that really -- that's really instrumental now, and helping
10 them identify, you know, and own, you know, because one day
11 I want to do other things; you know? And, I would like
12 them to start owning it.

13 One of the things, too, is that, you know,
14 when it comes to exploitation and human trafficking, we, as
15 Indigenous women, never chose or choose that life style.
16 We never choose to be exploited. We never chose to be
17 human trafficked. And, one of the things with Indigenous
18 peoples is we don't look at the sex industry as a form or
19 any forms of employment. That is not employment. So, I'd
20 just like to leave you guys off at that. Thank you.
21 *Migwetch.*

22 **RACHEL WILLAN:** Hi. I'm just going to --
23 I'm going to be really quick. I'm -- I know I shared some
24 hope, and that's the message I wanted to convey on Monday
25 with my husband. And, I also have another part -- another

1 direction, and I felt a bit uncomfortable sharing with my
2 husband beside me because, for me, what I have with him is
3 special, and what I have out there, it was not special. It
4 was taken from me and that's part of the streets. I've
5 been exploited and trafficked.

6 I -- I'm just going to touch upon some
7 things and that's -- being out there for the very first --
8 actually out on the street other than the bars, I started
9 off in the bars early -- really early, and eventually it
10 led to the streets. And, in the beginning, when you're out
11 there and you're young, you become the newest, kind of,
12 girl on the street and, you know, you're like the new fish.
13 So, you're constantly picked up and, you know, you're
14 basically just used and over, and over, and over, and over.
15 And, for me, at that time, it seemed like I was special.
16 You know, I was given the attention.

17 And, I wasn't always dumb. I could say that
18 even at the age -- at that age, I learned pretty fast and I
19 got tired of that. I got tired of giving my body away
20 after a certain point and it became aggressive after I --
21 that's why I say I learn quick. I learned to take it
22 rather than do anything. I said, "Well, no, I'm taking it.
23 Good bye." Out.

24 And, I exposed myself to lots of violence.
25 When I say "violence", I mean being thrown out of cars,

1 being strangled just unconscious, and that person's no
2 longer alive. And, you know, I was -- I jumped in and I
3 drove four blocks down, and I was so high that I didn't
4 even look at the person I was jumping into the vehicle
5 with. I got to the back lane, and arms were wrapped around
6 me so tight, and I just kept flinging my right hand as hard
7 as I could, and I must have stunned the crap out of this
8 person because he let go and threw me out backwards and
9 almost ran me over.

10 And then it wasn't till when I went -- I got
11 institution, I went -- I went into this institution that I
12 was reading the newspaper. We get an hour a day out of our
13 rooms, and I was reading the newspaper and I looked, and
14 I'm like, "Huh, this person was -- this is the person that
15 did that to me." But I also seen them prior to -- after
16 the incident because we all know the way the houses work.
17 I ran into him and I'm like, "Okay, that's the person that
18 did it to me." And, because it's such a -- the drug world
19 with the women, you tend to all know one another.

20 So, he -- the person did -- I felt a bit
21 validated, or whatever, happy, because he got smacked
22 around, you know, there, but I still don't think they
23 deserved death. But, the reason why that person died that
24 I followed the trial through the media was because there
25 was sexual advantage on another person too, and then that

1 person ended up doing that.

2 So, in a sense, when I think about my past
3 and all those -- you know, being out there for 20-plus
4 years, I was -- I always knew that there was something out
5 there in the universe. I didn't know whether it was
6 Christian, I didn't know whether it was traditional, I
7 didn't even know who the hell I was. I was just walking
8 down the dark streets by the tracks, made it out to
9 Toronto, made it out to Calgary, made it out to -- you
10 know, Toronto was the most scariest, but the funnest, I
11 must say, and that's been picked up in Winnipeg and I've
12 travelled across out that way.

13 And, I bought new clothes, showered at the
14 rest stop, did this, and I knew that if I left the guy that
15 took me there, I was going to be left out there. So, I
16 pretty much dragged his ass, he was smaller than me, with
17 me everywhere I went. Whether I was high or not, I made
18 sure this guy's not leaving my side. My partner, the girl
19 we went with, she got lost out there and left out there.
20 And, ironically, we ended up in Winnipeg the same time.

21 So -- but most of the time being out there,
22 I -- it was the most horrid time of my life when I think
23 about -- you know, I don't question why my life -- I give
24 great -- I give gratitude for that, but I always wonder how
25 could I made it out of those situations. I think that all

1 the violence that occurred in my early age was -- I was
2 able to have that fight and that resiliency to hang onto
3 something and know where I wanted to go. You know, I
4 didn't know, but I knew, and I could just remember so
5 vividly just drinking and drinking like a 26 straight, and
6 then going to go look for the first person in my path was
7 going to get it, and it was really sad.

8 And -- but there was also good times. I'm
9 not going to say the thing's bad, but for me, I contribute
10 that to bad -- to the wrong -- what I didn't want and
11 that's how I lived for the longest time, and it landed me
12 just this full circle of repetitive behaviours that I
13 didn't want, but I travelled the dark, dark streets. And,
14 at that time, when you were charged with prostitution, if
15 you were charged on Jarvis, the parameter from Jarvis --
16 Main and Jarvis all the way up to Arlington, all the way up
17 to Selkirk, and all the way up to Main again, all around
18 there, you were not allowed back in that, like, block. You
19 had to stay out of there. So, that pushed us further out.
20 That's how it went. And I'd go back, breached over and
21 over, and over. That's a different story because I lived
22 in that area, and I couldn't understand why they're telling
23 me I couldn't go back in this area.

24 So, every time I was walking, I would be
25 told that I'm working, "Keep going, keep going," and

1 actually following me; you know? Following me. And, I
2 remember -- you know what? I could remember that
3 challenging myself, I always walked in the dark back lanes
4 because I felt shame. I knew some of my family were
5 driving around, so I would go right into the back lanes,
6 and that's where I travelled, really dark, and I always
7 think, now that I'm sober, I'm like, "Huh, I'm not walking
8 down back lane," you know?

9 But, I -- and I -- but at the same time, in
10 my head, walking down the back lanes, I would literally
11 carry, like, a weapon right in the open and just walk, and
12 if anybody came at me, they were going to get it. And, it
13 wasn't nice, but I -- I was in such a dark place that I
14 chose to walk down the dark streets.

15 And, that's where I was for a long time, and
16 I could remember some -- sometimes having no choice to be
17 out there because I didn't have nowhere to live because,
18 again, like, what Alaya's mentioned, yes, it was a terrible
19 and it continues to be a terrible system to be told that
20 you can't get your basic necessities met, such as a home or
21 an apartment, a place to lay your head. And then, you
22 know, you're given this one form that has all the food
23 banks on it and all these things, and that's what they send
24 you away with. And, because you don't lose your I.D. --
25 well, you know how many pairs of shoes I left inside

1 vehicles and how many purses and how many jackets running
2 around in the middle of -50 with just a pair of shoes
3 because you just needed that next fix and you needed to
4 survive? We have never had that.

5 So, our system, when it comes to that
6 system, that's always been -- and I made sure this time
7 that I was not going to be part of that system. So -- but
8 my recovery came on its own. I don't want to focus on too
9 much on the street part, but I definitely spent a lot of
10 time out there, and I was writing down some things here --
11 sorry, writing down some things, something that -- I'm
12 trying to keep this as positive as I could because that was
13 before, and we all know -- like we all don't know, but the
14 basic 20 plus years that girl -- some perpetrators were
15 Winnipeg Police.

16 I remember being pulled over and being told
17 I had three warrants. One was for my initial charge, and
18 most of them were breaches, and the only way that I could
19 let go -- and I remember it was Thanksgiving Day, and I was
20 on William and Isabel, and I got pulled over, and the only
21 way that I could not go to prison that time was by
22 providing services to the police officer. And, I remember
23 his name, and I will not say it though, and when I see him
24 today, he's now, I don't know, up in the chain of command,
25 he wears the white shirts, so he's -- and I always knew

1 that if they're by themselves in the car that they've
2 become a supervisor, they're no longer -- you know, their
3 command went up when they're by themselves.

4 So, he was always driving around, and I did
5 service him, and he tried it a few more times, and the very
6 last time, I said, "Oh, well, you know, F that. If you're
7 going to charge me," bang, and I got out of the car. And,
8 he would purposely pick me up in front of drug houses and,
9 like, arrest -- like, apparently arrest me or, "I just have
10 a question for you," and I would be so afraid because
11 people would think that I'm a rat or I'm talking. So, I
12 would literally, like, hide down and just bend down right
13 on William and Isabel because I didn't want to be seen in
14 their undercover police car, and he would drive down the
15 lane. And -- like, this was nonstop for about three
16 months.

17 And, finally, you know, there was another
18 one -- I don't know, you must know the one that walked the
19 beat and, you know, what I'm getting to there is that most
20 of our -- there's a lot of law enforcement too that are
21 predators. That's what I'm saying. Like, not all of them,
22 but I've endured lots and that's just one of my stories
23 that I'm going to share.

24 Another one that I have right here is --
25 that I'm going to share is -- this is more recently. This

1 is updated August 30th, 2017. "Charges stayed in sex case
2 against former Winnipeg Crown lawyer." He was charged
3 while I was employed at our only service provider in
4 Manitoba that provides services to exploited women. He was
5 charged during one of the stings here, and just so
6 everybody knows, I've been speaking at John School since my
7 sobriety and that's going on 11 years.

8 I speak at least three times a year, and
9 when I'm speaking, and the very beginning of the first two
10 years, I have had a hard time to be -- not to be angry
11 because I felt angry. But, this guy right here, his
12 charges were stayed, and if you can relook, which I didn't
13 look up, but in the Winnipeg Free Press, there's an
14 article, not this particular article stating, "Well, it
15 happened. What can I do? All I can do is move forward."

16 And, the attitude that he gave to the
17 Winnipeg Free Press just threw me off like a loop; right?
18 And, that was in one of the -- whenever they get their
19 kids, but the article is -- it's charges stayed because he
20 completed John School. "Justice Official," -- I'm just
21 going read some of it. "Richard Smith, 55, was
22 arrested...and charged with...services for consideration
23 for abetting the victim to breach a court-ordered curfew."

24 So, because this woman had charges, he
25 turned around, to his advantage, and kept repeatedly

1 getting sexual services from her. "Court heard the now 26-
2 year-old victim worked at a Winnipeg massage parlour
3 between 2013 and 2015. That's where she met with Smith."
4 So, this was ongoing. All of his charges were dropped
5 because he attended John School. That's there.

6 And, one of the things that -- that's part
7 of my past, but one of the recommendations that I have as
8 survivors is -- is, you know, the 24-hour safe space that
9 we hope to get. I know that when our women are murdered or
10 missing, we always hear it the next day, and that means
11 that from 4:00 in the evening till 9:00 in the morning, if
12 you go back and look at the data of the time of deaths of
13 our women, you're going to find that they've probably been
14 -- been murdered mostly during that time. You're not going
15 to find too much. You know, I'm not saying that, but
16 that's something to look into because when we don't have
17 those services, when we close our doors and go to the
18 comfort of our home, our women are out there and we don't
19 have anywhere to go, and I was one of them for so, so long.

20 One of the -- the things that also is new to
21 my kid, and this mentioned my kid. My child is, you know
22 -- he was just more recently taught in the last curriculum
23 about Indigenous culture. And, I noticed a decline in my
24 little boy when he was coming home. So, I got a pretty --
25 you know, the email was pretty vague for me and it was

1 saying how it -- it expressed all the negative. He's not
2 doing his work, he's not doing this, la, la, la, la, la, so
3 I questioned him. I said, "Mike, what are you doing in
4 school," I said. And, he said, "Mom, we're doing this
5 thing and we're learning about our culture."

6 So, for me, I replied back. I had to read
7 it twice. I replied back and I said, "Did it ever occur to
8 you that my child's maybe going back to his childhood from
9 when he was in child welfare?" I said, "Instead of you
10 focusing on negative, what are you doing for our children
11 other than just running through the mill from the book that
12 we all know that happened to Canada, the history of
13 Indigenous people?"

14 So, I questioned him, and he goes, "You
15 know, you're right." And, I said, "There's lots of funding
16 dollars with the TRC that your school right here can pull
17 out of," I said, "to do self-care with those children.
18 But, rather than send my children and tell my child that
19 he's not doing his work? He's doing it because he's going
20 back to the abuse."

21 He took all the time. So, one of the --
22 another thing is with -- I felt like I had to fight to get
23 my time here, and that's how I felt and that was her fault.
24 And, I feel like just walking out of here because, you know
25 what? Rushing is the worst, being told to hurry up

1 constantly.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Rachel, take your
3 time, please. Take your time. It's okay.

4 **MS. RACHEL WILLAN:** That's not what we came
5 here for. I'm so tired of being polite.

6 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** If somebody
7 just mentioned or said to you that you have a few minutes
8 left, it's -- I didn't hear from the translation, so take
9 your time.

10 **MS. RACHEL WILLAN:** You know, there's so
11 many people that I lost, and I don't come here and
12 represent just one single person. I have family members
13 that I've lost. But, you know what? I speak up for
14 everybody. When I come here as a survivor, I speak for
15 them, not just for myself, but I also speak for my children
16 because when we're talking about the inquiry here, I don't
17 see anything here for our youth. I don't see nothing.

18 That was one of my recommendations. Sitting
19 in bed, I'm thinking, "Why couldn't this inquiry do
20 something really hopeful for our people? Like, bring in
21 the Theo Fleury, Jordin Tootoo, somebody that can inspire
22 our youth and have a day for our youth to be part of this
23 National Inquiry? Because those are the ones that are
24 going to be the next generation and probably wiping all of
25 our asses. And -- you know? And, I don't see no youth

1 involved here.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** May I suggest that
3 -- we absolutely want Rachel to take her time and tell her
4 story, but may I suggest that we just have a short 5-minute
5 break so that we do have an opportunity just -- Rachel, are
6 you good with that? So, she would like a break. So, could
7 we please have a 5-minute break?

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Five?

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes, thank you.

10 --- Upon Recessing at 10:41

11 --- Upon Resuming at 10:58

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Velma, can you
13 please come up?

14 **MS. VELMA ORVIS:** (Speaking in Native
15 language). *Migwetch manidoo* for this day, for everyone
16 here in this room. We say *migwetch* for the Commissioners,
17 for all the helpers and for the families that have come to
18 share, and we send them our love and our best wishes.

19 We ask *Mishomis* and *Nokomis* if they could
20 come stay with us until we're finished and help us be
21 grounded and balanced so we always do things in a good way,
22 so that we can share with each other and care for each
23 other; to be kind, to be respectful and to love each other
24 equally the way Creator would want us to. Also, to be
25 honest and truthful, and have the humility and courage to

1 do that. We ask that from our hearts. Ahow (phon)
2 *migwetch.*

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
4 Audette, if we could continue with the hearing? And, I
5 would like to give the microphone back to Rachel.

6 **MS. RACHEL WILLAN:** All right. One of my
7 questions to the Commissioner -- Commissioners and the
8 whole inquiry is, knowing that you're coming into Treaty 1
9 territory in Manitoba, knowing that we have the highest
10 number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls,
11 also the most Indigenous people per capita, everyone knows
12 that and the numbers are only growing, it feels that we're
13 crunched into five days and we literally have to fight for
14 our time, and that's something that should have been looked
15 at from the Commission from the beginning, because now it's
16 creating hurt feelings.

17 You know, we can't be cut off from our time,
18 and my -- you know, that's how I felt prior to going out
19 and having a few minutes to regain myself. And, the reason
20 why we're having this as well, it's technology. Most of
21 our people don't, or can't afford or are way far, so we
22 have so many people walking in because they know the
23 inquiry is here now. So, this is their one opportunity to
24 walk in and say, "Hey, I want to share my story," because
25 they don't have the means of technology and to share, to

1 get a hold of you and do emails. I'm learning that and I
2 went through education. I've graduated from college and
3 I'm still learning about technology. I don't even know how
4 to use Snapchat. I have to find somebody to screen my
5 kids' Snapchats because that's -- it's advancing every
6 single day. So, you know, that's how it feels coming here.

7 Another recommendation that I have is, other
8 than the times of death of most of our women is probably
9 going to be after 4:00 and I had made mention of that, are
10 harm reduction. We lack harm reduction. We don't have any
11 safe places. You know, as a survivor, at 2:00 in the
12 morning when I wanted to get high and I didn't have no
13 utensils to use, I picked out of a bucket of dirty needles
14 and I just prayed to God and that I was not picking the one
15 that was going to kill me one day, and that's the reality
16 of what we have to face. And, I did that, did that many
17 times.

18 I had unprotected sex, and I've had women
19 say, "Well, you know, this -- this guy offered me this much
20 money, you know, \$10.00 to do this," and, oh, no, I
21 wouldn't do that and, you know, I was very bold in that,
22 the outside world of us women surviving out there. I said,
23 "You know what? Don't act like your better because we all
24 have to do what we have to do," and there's times that I
25 did things for \$10.00, and I'm not ashamed of that today

1 because I had to survive and I did it unprotected. And,
2 today, I could say that I'm living example that I was being
3 watched, and I was -- I had my protection all along, and I
4 just never knew it. I have always known that I was loved,
5 but the love that I knew is not the love that I know today.
6 It was more of a need and I also needed to be loved. I
7 just pulled myself away from the people that loved me.

8 And, like I was saying, John School, they
9 call it John School, and it's run through the Salvation
10 Army in Manitoba here. And, Salvation Army is the one that
11 represented the Crown attorney here that was Richard Smith.
12 He paid the \$1,000.00. He paid that money to be able to do
13 the program and use his voice, and share -- share his story
14 and he got let off.

15 Well, you know what? We were not let off.
16 We had to go in front of courtrooms, surrounded and packed
17 with people, and you know what? I didn't even know what a
18 fellatio was until the judge -- I asked my lawyer, "What's
19 a fellatio," I said, and he said, "A little bit of both,"
20 and I felt severe humility. Like, I was just ashamed. I
21 was like -- and the courtroom sitting packed, that's what
22 we had to go through as women. And, these guys, through
23 John School, get the one opportunity because they have the
24 money, privileged, you know, people that have that money to
25 pay their way out. And, you know what? They're not even

1 put on a registry, but our names are publicly shamed in the
2 courts, and that's not how it should be and that's still
3 happening today.

4 Some policies, legislation and laws need to
5 change because, you know, as far as I know -- I'm aware,
6 and I say this to these men, and it's been almost 11 years
7 I've been sharing my story there, and the message to them
8 is that, I'm a forgiving woman, but I always ask them, "How
9 many here have a little special girl in their life or
10 somebody that they know," and you'll see one hand pop up.
11 And, I said, "Oh, come on. All of you men have a special
12 little lady in your life, whether it's your wife, whether
13 it's your niece or granddaughter." And, you know what? I
14 said, "How would you like if somebody went and asked them
15 to suck, you know, their cock," and, you know, they --
16 their eyes bulged. I said, that's the reality of what
17 you're doing to our women. And, I said, "You have the
18 privilege right now to go home to your home in tuxedo and
19 drive your Porsche out of here. We don't," and that's the
20 sadness because their names are never given. This one got
21 some of special treatment, obviously, because his name is
22 out and he walked away a free man to go back into the
23 courts and do the same thing that he's doing. We never get
24 those opportunities.

25 At John School, you know, they said it's a

1 law that their names can't be given; right? And, I said,
2 "Well, why?" I think that everybody should know that this
3 pastor over here or this -- this person right here, or my
4 neighbour is a perpetrator picking up women out and
5 cruising at night. Their name should be on public --
6 public document because ours were and they haunt us to this
7 day.

8 And, when I go there, I've learned to say
9 what I want to say, and I continue to go there. And, you
10 know, what we're paid is -- we're paid \$100.00 to share our
11 story, to give a piece of our heart away. In a sense, I
12 find it a bit healing, but it's not healing. It's just --
13 makes these perpetrators a little bit smarter of what not
14 to do. That's what that's teaching them. They're becoming
15 more wiser and they're finding better ways. So, they park
16 down the street, they get out of their car and they say,
17 "Meet me at that car over there. You'll see me sitting
18 inside there." That's what they're doing. I see it every
19 single day.

20 When I was doing outreach, I -- you know, I
21 would see 50 women, and the meaning of "outreach" consists
22 of 8 hours solid driving down every single back lane. You
23 know, at any given, I could be shot, I could be stabbed, I
24 could be whatever. You know, people block me in the road,
25 I'll run them down for my safety. I would.

1 That's what I did. And, you know, when our
2 women are -- are going into employment, our survivor
3 sisters and everybody going into employment, and then we're
4 offered \$13.00 an hour? Well, you know what? Why are we
5 devalued with all the experience and knowledge that we
6 have? We're given the -- the lowest amount on that -- that
7 chain because we don't have these degrees or diplomas, and
8 that's unfair.

9 You know, as far as I'm concerned, I'm
10 pondering -- I do want to go back to school, but I'm
11 thinking, "Well, should I?" Because I have what it takes
12 right now to make change and be a voice and keep the ball
13 rolling; you know?

14 And, also, one of the questions I have for
15 the Commissioners are, after you leave Manitoba, when are
16 we going to hear back again from the Commission? When is
17 there going to be transparency? What are your findings
18 going to be? Like, you know, we all know -- like sitting
19 here is gathering information, but we all know the systemic
20 barriers of why all this happened. It's not something that
21 we don't know. So, because we know that, what's going to
22 come out of this and how long is it going to take?

23 We've got the recommendations from the
24 Jordan's Principle, we have recommendations from the TRC.
25 They're not even all implemented. So, are we going to be

1 sitting and collecting dust and have 1,200 more or 4,000
2 more women missing again? Like, it's nice to have some
3 transparency throughout this whole inquiry and let us know
4 what the next process is, and let us know what -- what's
5 going to be done about it because as far as I'm -- what I'm
6 thinking, is the next Liberal government, his platform is,
7 "We'll promise you to give you this if you vote for me."
8 That's what he's going to say and he ain't getting my vote,
9 that -- I promise that. But, that's what he's going to do.

10 Regardless of any government, it's a moral,
11 human right to have our basic needs met. And, when those
12 are not being met, there's something wrong with this world;
13 you know? There's more violence. We -- you know, our
14 prisons are filled up with women. They're overlapping
15 women. The men, they're easiest, fastest and oldest
16 solution is just to throw -- lock them up; right? And, you
17 know, when they come out, they come out more battered than
18 they even went in with -- to begin with.

19 So, there's the cycle. That's a huge cycle
20 that we need to combat. And, you know what? Whatever
21 happened to our old laws where we sit as a family, even
22 perpetrators; you know? Going through my education,
23 there's one community, I'm not going to mention that
24 community that actually sits the perpetrator in the circle
25 and they all forgive him and they work -- it's repetitive

1 work. And, you know what? He gets to remain in that
2 community, but he's constantly watched, but also forgiven.

3 That model of working -- and our offenders
4 are sitting in jail for thefts for trying to survive and
5 cope? I mean, they're spending \$2,600.00 or whatever it is
6 a year to house one person, and you don't get no help when
7 you're in prison. They can say what they want. You don't
8 -- you can't smudge like you can, you can't wake up in the
9 morning and walk to wherever you are and light a smudge in
10 your bowl and, you know, pray that your day's going to be
11 good, and you make it through that day in institution. You
12 don't get that ability. Why? That's inequality to us,
13 especially when we make up the highest percentage rate of
14 people and population, like in women wise. It's crazy.

15 And, I have one more -- one more thing that
16 I wanted to -- to share is our youth. I feel that
17 throughout this whole inquiry, we're focused on survivors,
18 we're focused on -- on our stories, and this needs to be
19 done and it's hard work. I've never been so exhausted in
20 my -- in a long time inside, and emotionally. But, our
21 youth are forgotten about throughout this inquiry. They
22 are not even mentioned here, our little ones that are going
23 to be taking care of us; you know? It would have been nice
24 to have a day where we bring in some motivational speakers
25 and we end off our inquiry with those speakers.

1 If you can spend -- get paid \$271,000.00, we
2 can pay somebody \$20,000.00 to -- to fly in like Theo
3 Fleury, Jordin Tootoo, whoever it is, and bring them in and
4 give us some hope and some -- to leave here with. It's not
5 much to ask for, because staying on a positive and an --
6 the resiliency that we have as Indigenous peoples, it's
7 important to walk away from something such as this inquiry
8 feeling good.

9 So, I say that in further going, we -- our
10 youth need to be remembered. And, when it comes to the
11 child welfare, I know that there's a new platform being put
12 out from the PC government. And, you know what? Has he
13 consulted with our Elders? Those are our children. He has
14 no business making his platform whatever he wants to. Our
15 Elders are not included in that. Those are our children.
16 He can say what he wants and whatever he has up his
17 sleeves, but I'm not going to believe it. I was a product
18 of the system in 53 different homes and my children became
19 products, and I hope -- pray to God that my grandchildren
20 never, ever have to be exposed to such a flawed child
21 welfare system.

22 And, the last thing that I want to say, and
23 it was very difficult for me to say this, is that -- is
24 that we hope -- this inquiry has done a great job, but it's
25 been really rough and emotional for everybody here,

1 including myself. And, I'm grateful for the opportunity to
2 share my story of being a survivor, but also being --
3 bringing my -- my husband, involving him, because people do
4 change.

5 And, I know that the Commissioner and
6 everybody in life, morally, we want the best for people.
7 We want them -- you know, the spiritual, all our four to be
8 balanced. And, when we're -- at some point along here,
9 some emails were going back and forth, and we ask that
10 Manitoba have, you know, some survivors as health care
11 people, people who are advanced in their lives to be part
12 of this inquiry too, because then we would have more
13 survivors here. You know, I see very little survivors
14 here. And, when I -- if I was to go into the house where I
15 was working, there would be 50 sitting in there right now,
16 and there's maybe two or three sitting in here today.
17 Like, that's just -- that's sad.

18 So, when I'm talking about healthy people, I
19 don't know how your Commission picked your health care
20 workers, but I know that we want the most healthiest. You
21 know, we're not perfect, but we do expect at a higher level
22 of accountability that we have some health care workers
23 that are healthy themselves, and that's a fair way to say
24 it because there are some health care workers that are not
25 healthy here and working out, and I'm not going to say

1 them, but -- I can get into detail, and I'm not going to.
2 And, Christa Big Canoe knows what I shared with her
3 personally last night, and I don't want to pinpoint anybody
4 out.

5 But, it's not fair that we have people that
6 are not healthy working with us, who have not once
7 approached us and have only approached us to tell us that
8 they just, you know, got out of a psych ward. And, I said,
9 "Oh, my God." Well, where do you pick up your health
10 workers; you know? Like, God forbid, I'm going to ask
11 somebody to help me that just walks out of an institution?
12 I'm serious. Because, you know what? I'm not condemning
13 the state she's in, but I'm questioning why is that person
14 here?

15 It takes time for us to get well and heal,
16 and there should have been some healing time before she
17 walked out of those doors or they walked out of those doors
18 and started to come and be a helper here, frontline,
19 because coming up to me as a survivor, I was shocked and
20 I'm like, "Oh, well, are you okay now?" You know, "Are you
21 feeling okay?" My job to come here is not to be a health
22 worker. My job is to come and share my story.

23 So, when we're talking about that, there
24 needs to be some real, rigorous background checks, not just
25 -- just because you don't have a criminal record, you

1 qualified to come and be a helper here. It doesn't work
2 like that. There's mental, there's all parts of us that we
3 have to be aware of. So, when you're looking for people,
4 make sure they're healthy people. That's what I'm saying.
5 And, that's -- I'd like to thank everybody for sharing.

6 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** Sorry, I just needed to
7 touch on a couple of pieces that I didn't really talk
8 about. What do you call it, so the process of the court
9 hearings with Divas Boulanger, so one of the things prior
10 to the court hearings of Divas Boulanger's case, leading up
11 to that case, I didn't know I -- I was the -- the piece of
12 that puzzle that would solve the murder of Divas Boulanger.

13 So, one of the things, I didn't even know I
14 was a dangerous witness to that case up until I started
15 piecing together the puzzle myself when I was taken into
16 protective custody and put in a hotel outside of Winnipeg
17 during the trial.

18 And, one of the things with that case is how
19 -- how those people whom are testifying against the
20 perpetrator that have perpetrated a crime, how they're
21 devalued from the defence lawyer. But, seeing because I
22 was at a good place, you know, at that time and still
23 currently am, it was very hard for the defence lawyer to
24 try and break me. He couldn't break me. That was one of
25 the hardest things, like, for him. He was getting very

1 frustrated in the court process to try and break me, and he
2 tried every which way he could to try and break me and
3 tried to put words in my mouth. And, I kept reiterating to
4 him, I was like, "No, those are the words that you said.
5 This is what I'm saying," you know?

6 And then, also, too, because I was
7 exploited, he was using terminology that I don't even use
8 towards our women that he was referencing back to me
9 because I was exploited at that time. So, he would call me
10 really degrading names, and I was like, "I'm not here for
11 that. I'm here testifying on behalf of, you know, my best
12 friend that that guy had murdered," you know?

13 So -- also, too, the sentencing, we actually
14 -- it took 12 years -- 12 years to bring justice for Divas,
15 and it would have been nice to have her family here. You
16 know, that would have been a form of healing for Tammy.
17 You know, 12 years we had to, like, you know, go through
18 this process, and little did we know that the person
19 responsible for murdering Divas, his brother was a Winnipeg
20 police officer.

21 So, one of the things I -- one of the things
22 that I had to carry every day knowing that I was the
23 dangerous witness after figuring that out was, was I next
24 again; you know? Is the Winnipeg -- does the Winnipeg
25 Police have it out for me? I learned how to forgive, you

1 know, that process. So, as you heard in my story that
2 those circles have -- that I am now sitting on that
3 advisory committee circle with the Winnipeg Police Board.
4 So, I learned how to forgive in that format, but not
5 forget.

6 So, one of the things, 12 years later, I
7 don't forgive him, I will -- I don't think I'll ever
8 forgive him, he stole my best friend, is -- you know, he
9 got life in prison and it took 12 years; you know? But, he
10 has a chance to get out in 10; you know? So, those systems
11 are just -- you know, can be revictimizing to the family in
12 itself.

13 Also, when we talk about the difference in
14 social service departments, when it comes to Salvation
15 Army, thank you for touching on that topic, that is a very
16 huge topic here in Manitoba. So, one of the things with
17 Salvation Army here in Manitoba, Salvation Army, there is
18 no salvation in that army; you know? There isn't. You
19 know?

20 So, one of the things with the social
21 service department, they will pay up to \$1,180.00 per
22 individual to be housed in Salvation Army. But, when that
23 individual wants to seek their own private accommodations,
24 that number drops from \$1,180.00 to \$271.00, which is a
25 decreasing amount of \$909.00. So, you do the math; right?

1 And, you not only do the math but, like, why is it that
2 they're building up someone's empire, you know, rather than
3 trying to build that individual up, then take them down and
4 let them be so marginalized and oppressed?

5 And, again, too, as I said to you as a
6 trans-Indigenous woman, you know, I don't see a lot of
7 trans, two-spirit folk here; you know? I don't. There's
8 no safe space for them. So, when I -- again, remember when
9 I talked about why I'm here? Because I've never seen a
10 role model, a role model, someone that I can look up to
11 because they identified as me? Well, you know, for me,
12 when I talk about GLBTTQ folk, some of our GLBTTQ folk are
13 Indigenous and they come from a northern community.

14 Usually in those northern communities,
15 they're shamed out of their community where they leave
16 their communities, and then they come to the city, and the
17 only thing they know is to be victimized, and then those
18 behaviours start being normalized with the majority of
19 them, and then they lead into, you know, exploitation, you
20 know, human trafficking. You know, and it breaks my heart
21 to see them there. And, you know, I try to empower them
22 and show them that, you know, there's a way out; you know?
23 There is a way out.

24 Also, too, when we talk about missing and
25 murdered Indigenous women, we tend to talk about Helen

1 Betty Osborne a lot when it comes to the issue. Nobody
2 ever talks about her sister, Rose Osborne, who is trans,
3 who was actually murdered. Nobody ever talks about Rose
4 Osborne. She was murdered. You know, she was murdered
5 just as brutally as her sister, Helen Betty Osborne,
6 actually here in Winnipeg.

7 So, some of the things we can do as a
8 community and, you know, as partners, you know, and allies
9 is removing the stigma attached, you know, when it comes to
10 those vulnerable populations; you know? So, one of the
11 other things Rachel had touched on is, you know, how --
12 how, you know, these perpetrators go to -- I don't call it
13 John School. To me, it's perpetrators, plain and simple.
14 Abusers is, you know, what they are. You know, I don't --
15 I don't sugar coat it; you know? I don't sugar coat it
16 because that's who those men are. You know, that's just
17 the way Salvation Army, you know, labels them, I guess you
18 can say.

19 So, one of the things, because we are a
20 coalition here in Manitoba, and having a coalition
21 championing the exploitation and human trafficking of our
22 youth and adult women, one of the things, because we're so
23 active and proactive on strategies, one of the things we
24 did was we put together a proposal from, again, survivor-
25 led -- a survivor-led approach proposal to fund a 24/7 safe

1 space. And, when this 24/7 safe space -- it's not just a
2 place where someone's going to come and lay their body down
3 and just rest.

4 So, there's envisions from -- from survivors
5 themselves on what this -- what would be housed and
6 entailed in this 24/7 safe space, which would be giving
7 them that wraparound approach and helping them to identify
8 their self-worth and self-identity, and helping them move
9 from, you know, those roles of being victimized to being
10 survivor, to warrior.

11 So, we put together that proposal for
12 \$600,000.00. It was denied. It was denied. So, it only
13 shows you what our women are actually worth to the
14 government; you know? It's pretty, you know, pretty sad.
15 They did -- it was, you know, something very tangible that
16 could have been met, \$600K, you know, to run a facility,
17 you know, a 24/7 safe space for adult women, you know, to
18 help them -- you know, help them along their journey; you
19 know? Because not once have I ever envisioned that I
20 wanted to be exploited and/or human trafficked; you know?
21 And, I don't think any of our women ever -- our Indigenous
22 women that they wake up one day and say, "Oh, well, you
23 know what? That's what I want in my life," you know, sort
24 of thing?

25 So, I think we're going to leave it off at

1 that. I did have, like, more to go on, but I'll leave it
2 off at that because I would like you to ask some questions.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
4 *beaucoup.* Thank you very much. And, do we have a copy of
5 all those recommendations or -- I know we registered it
6 here, but if you had -- was -- very good. Very good.
7 Okay. So, we have -- for sure, over here behind me with
8 Bryan.

9 Very, very concrete resolution --
10 recommendation, or tangible we say? And, to respond to
11 your question, Rachel, about what's next. You mention in
12 your presentation something very dear to many of us, that
13 five days is not enough. I can imagine also when we'll go
14 to Vancouver. You talked about Vancouver and the downtown
15 east side. There's so many survivors and family members
16 and supporters there that also have so much to say, like
17 here in Winnipeg and surrounding Winnipeg. And, think also
18 about the family who doesn't want to testify in their own
19 respective territory because for safety reasons, so they
20 ask to come here.

21 So, it is something that we are very aware
22 about that, very sensitive and very, like, "We have to come
23 back." It's something that we have to do. How and when?
24 This is the battle that we're preparing for PCO, and we
25 want to go up north. We had an official invitation. We

1 received an email from a family member to go in Thompson.
2 We hear a lot of families who say, "There's things also up
3 north, so you better come here." So, this is something
4 personally and collectively we're very, very sensitive, and
5 across Canada also to places that never had a voice, never
6 had a chance. So, it's in our mind.

7 And, the process was for smaller, let's say,
8 hearing or -- was like three days, but those days are over.
9 Even in small communities or remote places, more and more
10 because the voices that you have right now here has an
11 impact in the north to say, "If they can do it, I want to
12 do it."

13 So, I commend you for that sincerely, and
14 now we have more people registering or getting involved and
15 say, "I want to be part of private, healing circle or
16 public." And -- or testimony. So, even in the north,
17 three days we believe that it won't be enough. It won't be
18 enough. So, we are lots of warriors from inside to say,
19 "This is what needs to happen."

20 And, there are different steps, if I say in
21 the right way, where the families, to respond to your
22 question, the family hearings is to honour your truth, to
23 collect the fact and all that when you meet and take --
24 when you meet before you arrive here, and it's helping us
25 to ask the hard question to that second step or stage or

1 moment, which is the hearing with the institutions. It's
2 that moment where we will come back for asking questions to
3 the Manitoba government and those institutions under this
4 government.

5 Our job is not to do the job of the police
6 because we didn't have that mandate legally, but -- and
7 when you look at the terms of reference, and I'll speak
8 from my heart, not being -- I'm not a lawyer, this too is
9 giving us the power and the authority to say, "We want to
10 know how you did the investigation. We want to see it. We
11 want to understand why it didn't happen. How come?"

12 So, we want to make sure that those people
13 are met and say, "What went wrong here?" So, we can make
14 sure that it's in a public -- you know, this is a public --
15 a national public inquiry, so people need to be
16 accountable. People need to be accountable when I say that
17 part of the institutional hearing.

18 Do they say good things? Do they have good
19 initiative? That too we want to hear. How come it stayed
20 short-term? So far, everywhere we go, we hear that
21 initiative, couple months, couple years, it stopped. And,
22 yesterday, I'm sure you witnessed, we've heard from a
23 person that needs to be long-term, needs to be long-term.
24 So, it's by hearing all that, Canada now cannot be, like,
25 ostriches, like, "It doesn't happen in my yard." It does

1 happen in our territory. It does. Every day.

2 This inquiry will stop everything? No, but
3 it's a tool. A tool to make sure by your strong voice and
4 your truth that community hearings and institutional
5 hearings will make those recommendations hard to defeat.
6 Hard. Okay. And, to make sure that they stay alive.

7 That must be the concern of every
8 Commissioner. We know what happened with the RCAM, Royal
9 Commission. 444 recommendations, if I remember, about
10 4,000 pages, the report from here, the inquiry in 1989, the
11 list is getting longer with lots of recommendations. More
12 than 1,200 recommendations over the years. We want to know
13 why it's still there, the systemic causes or
14 (indiscernible), and all of that.

15 We know the cause. We faced it every day.
16 We feel it, hear it and it's imposed to us every day.
17 Thank God we have warriors. Thank God we have warriors to
18 influence, change our stuff or bring changes like you
19 mentioned, Alaya, in your presentation, all what you did
20 that forced this government to do things differently. Can
21 you imagine if we were adding Alaya like this across Canada
22 or you -- that -- what you did to change some policies?

23 So, this is one part of the concern that
24 when we will table this report. Government is listening --
25 is listening right now. They came to every hearing that we

1 did or expert panels. I don't call this an expert panel.
2 For me, we are family members, the experts on this tragedy.
3 And, they listened carefully because they will be preparing
4 themselves at the institutional hearings; huh? We all know
5 that. But, it doesn't stop a municipality or a federal
6 government, or a provincial or a territorial government
7 when they're listening to your testimony, your message, to
8 apply those recommendation. When we hear that we will see
9 what the Commissioner will present, we can remind them that
10 you don't need to wait. You can act now. That, you're
11 allowed to say it more than me.

12 And so, for me, I hope and that vision that
13 I have, it's our children, Rachel, our children, everywhere
14 we go, we have an event with youth and children. Sometimes
15 also with non-Native children, and to make sure that they
16 understand who is the Indigenous women and girls and why
17 there is that movement across Canada. That would give
18 those recommendations to each premier of this country and
19 to Monsieur Trudeau and say, "This is the voice of my mom,"
20 or "The spirit of my mom. Act on it now. Make sure that
21 they're not dusty like the other one."

22 But, it's a dream that every morning when we
23 lay down tobacco or for us in Maliotenam, it's going to be
24 another prayer, another ceremony that it stays alive.
25 That's my biggest, biggest, and I'm not lying, fear that

1 the recommendation, because honouring the truth and giving
2 life to that truth, I want to make sure that they will do
3 it. So, that's a fear I have and I'm not afraid to tell
4 you. So, it's something that we push from inside all the
5 time. *Merci*. Thank you for your strength. Thank you for
6 your love.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

8 --- **EXHIBITS (code P1P03P0401)**

9 **Exhibit 1:** CBC news article "Charges stayed in sex case
10 against former Winnipeg Crown lawyer" by Dean
11 Pritchard, posted August 30, 2017 7:38 PM CT,
12 two pages stapled top left corner.

13 **Exhibit 2:** One-page handout "Eat Free Everyday in
14 Winnipeg"

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** There's a
16 family member, a beautiful woman who asked me to be with
17 her for the next two hours. I was supposed to be back at
18 1:00, so I want to honour her request. So, I will be away
19 for the next two hours. So, maybe your lunch will be
20 longer? I am so sorry.

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay, commence in
22 two hours.

23 --- Upon recessing at 11:39

24 --- Upon resuming at 14:14

25 **Hearing # 2**

Erin Houle, Gertrude Flett,
Lisa Houle & Sonny Podolaniuk
(Eileen Mary Roulette)

1 **Witnesses: Erin Houle, Gertrude Flett, Lisa Houle and Sonny**
2 **Podolaniuk**

3 **In relation to Eileen Mary Roulette (nee Houle)**

4 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

5 **Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren**

6 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Madam Commissioner,
8 we are ready to proceed with the next family. And, it is
9 about 18 minutes after 2:00 and today is October 19th,
10 2017. And, this is the first afternoon session in this
11 particular room. And, we have actually a number of -- we
12 have a sign that is indicative of the person who is being
13 commemorated today. It's Eileen Mary Roulette Houle, and
14 there are members of her family here.

15 So, I would like to start, please, by
16 introductions. And, my name is Wendy van Tongeren, V-A-N,
17 T-O-N-G-E-R-E-N, and I am one of the Commission lawyers,
18 and I will be conducting this session with you. And, I'd
19 like each member to do something similar to that, to say
20 your name and spell it, and then tell us the relationship
21 that you have to the family, to Eileen.

22 So, just basically it would be like
23 identifying that you're a sister or a daughter, and then
24 indicating if you are here for support or if you're
25 actually going to speak today, okay? And, by the way, you

Erin Houle, Gertrude Flett,
Lisa Houle & Sonny Podolaniuk
(Eileen Mary Roulette)

1 won't actually be held to that because we appreciate that
2 some people may not have decided exactly what they're going
3 to do.

4 **MS. LISA HOULE:** My name is Lisa Houle. My
5 sister was Eileen, my younger sister.

6 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Give it to
7 Erin.

8 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** My name is Erin Houle.
9 Eileen was my mother.

10 **MR. SONNY PODOLANIUK:** Hello. Oh, sorry.
11 My name is Sonny Podolaniuk, my wife's sister was Eileen.

12 **MS. GERTRUDE FLETT:** Hello. My name is
13 Gertrude Flett, my little sister is Eileen Houle, and I
14 want to say *migwetch* to everybody that's here. Thank you.

15 **MS. KAREN HOULE:** Hi. My name is Karen
16 Houle. I'm here for support of Auntie Eileen.

17 **MR. DAVID MEECHES:** My name is David
18 Meeches. I'm Erin's uncle.

19 **MS. DEACON HOULE:** My name is Deacon Houle,
20 my auntie's mom.

21 **MS. MARY CRATE:** My name is Mary Crate; I'm
22 here to support the family.

23 **MS. DONNA HILLSON:** My name is Donna
24 Hillson; I'm here to support the family, a health worker.

25 **MR. IRVIN WILSON:** My name is Irvin Wilson.

Erin Houle, Gertrude Flett,
Lisa Houle & Sonny Podolaniuk
(Eileen Mary Roulette)

1 I'm here to support the family. Health worker.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, Sonny, do you
3 mind if I attempt to spell your name, just so the
4 interpreters have it? Please correct if I didn't do this
5 properly. It's P-O-D-O-L-A-N-I-U-K; that's correct? And,
6 Flett, Gertrude, F-L-E-T-T. Okay. Thank you.

7 So, first of all, thank you everybody for
8 being here. It takes all of this breath to create this
9 miracle that -- bringing people together to bring light to
10 very dark and difficult subjects. So, thank you so much
11 for coming.

12 And, the first matter of business as well,
13 is that some of you chosen to speak, and there's Alice and
14 Erin, and potentially Sonny. And -- I'm sorry? Oh, sorry.
15 Lisa. And, there may be others, but we would start perhaps
16 with the three of you. And, I understand that you would
17 like to hold an eagle feather and to affirm to speak in a
18 good way for this hearing; is that right?

19 So, Mr. Registrar? Lisa, Erin and Sonny.
20 And, Gertrude, would you like to hold one? Thank you.
21 It's certainly not our intention to exclude anybody; we
22 just want everybody to be comfortable.

23 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good afternoon, Lisa,
24 Erin, Sonny and Gertrude. Do all of you solemnly affirm to
25 tell your truth in a good way this afternoon? Yes? Okay.

1 Thank you. Welcome.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now, I haven't met
3 Alice and Sonny before, but we spoke on the phone and we
4 just met briefly outside. Sorry, Lisa. What do I keep
5 calling you? What did I call you by mistake? I'm sorry.
6 Lisa. I meant Lisa. And, Erin, we've spent some time
7 together, haven't we, preparing for today?

8 So, I am inviting you, Erin, to be the first
9 person to speak and are you comfortable with that? Okay.
10 Now, the place to start in terms of the speaking is to just
11 reiterate or indicate that you've come here voluntarily
12 because you wanted to speak to the Commissioners about
13 certain matters; is that correct? And, what are the
14 subjects, just so that the Commissioner has a bit of a
15 heads up about what you're going to be talking about? What
16 are the topics? Okay. Here's another important piece.

17 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** The violence against
18 vulnerable native women.

19 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Anything else?
20 Okay. That's okay. So, let's start then, by you telling
21 us a little bit about yourself, how about your age, your
22 family, your occupation?

23 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I am 31 years old, a mother
24 of four. I have my aunties and my uncles here, and many,
25 many other family from Ebb and Flow Manitoba. I have 12

Erin Houle, Gertrude Flett,
Lisa Houle & Sonny Podolaniuk
(Eileen Mary Roulette)

1 aunties and uncles -- I mean 11, 12 including my mom.
2 Numerous -- very numerous cousins. Yes, I have a degree in
3 office administration. I'm supposed to be working, but my
4 children are -- they come first.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you see the
6 banner behind me, and that is a banner which is
7 commemorating your mother; is that right?

8 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you're here
10 today to tell the Commissioner at least the information
11 that you have about what happened to her?

12 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes. My mother was
13 murdered by a man. A man, like, killed her and -- well,
14 the point of this was the violence that -- also that I went
15 through with my partner through 16 years. Like, I wanted
16 to tell my story through what I went through, the violence,
17 and she suffered also, like -- you know?

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, where would
19 you like to start?

20 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Tell the story of what
21 happened to my mother.

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Go ahead.

23 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I guess she was -- I was
24 only, like, 14 at the time -- well, 13 in August, and then
25 -- it happened in August; I was 14 the next month. I

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1 really -- I was really, like, young at the time and --
2 like, my story of what happened was not actually what
3 actually happened because now that I'm an adult now, like
4 I'm finding out more of what really happened. So, it's all
5 coming to me now, because I didn't want to know what
6 happened before. Like, I blocked it out. And, my family
7 here are the ones that are probably going to tell you more
8 of what happened to her.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. But, you --
10 first of all, your mother, as far as you know, she was born
11 in 1966?

12 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes.

13 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you were born
14 in 1986?

15 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes. She's 20 years older
16 than me.

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes. And, how
18 old ---

19 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Exactly 20 years older than
20 me. She would have been 51.

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, how old are
22 you today?

23 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** 31.

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** That's exactly 20
25 years.

1 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now, what -- when
3 your mother died, she was living outside of Winnipeg; is
4 that right?

5 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes, she was living in
6 Bacon Ridge, Manitoba. It's, like, part of Ebb and Flow,
7 Manitoba, it's -- they're very close by, but it's off
8 reserve. It's like a Métis settlement.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Mm-hmm.

10 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** But, it's not part of Ebb
11 and Flow.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, what do you
13 remember about actually moving there?

14 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I was excited to move back
15 home. Like, I've never lived in Ebb and Flow -- well, as a
16 -- like, she raised me in Winnipeg. We were home for one
17 month when this happened. I wasn't home. I was with my
18 auntie, Maureen Gabriel, in a Pow Wow in Long Plains when
19 that happened. She was at a dance -- well, it was -- there
20 was a wedding that time and she went out with family and --
21 she went out with family and she was going out to have a
22 good time. She wasn't going out, like, to -- like, she's
23 not, like, an alcoholic. She doesn't drink, like, all the
24 time, like -- so she went out to have a good time
25 apparently and...

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so, what you're
2 telling us now comes from information you've received from
3 family members; is that right?

4 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes, there's...

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so, what is it?
6 What is the narrative?

7 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Well, I was only -- like I
8 said, I was only 12 at the time -- well, 13, and what I
9 thought happened was, like, well, he was supposed to give
10 her a ride -- like, he was supposed to give her a ride home
11 and she was drunk at a party and there was like -- it was a
12 family party. It was a wedding of our family; right? That
13 guy -- that guy that murdered her was actually our cousin
14 -- well, that was our cousin; right? So, I don't know.

15 She was missing. There's no date on her
16 actual death. We don't know which day she died on. It was
17 -- he -- he had told us, like, what happened and -- I want
18 to pass it on to somebody else right now. She should tell
19 the story, she knows.

20 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Sure. Lisa,
21 do you think you can finish the story? Okay. Go ahead.

22 **MS. LISA HOULE:** She wanted to celebrate her
23 birthday. She never went anywhere. She went out. She
24 wanted to come home, looking for a ride. The only person
25 there was his mom's vehicle -- Darcy McIvor's mom's

1 vehicle. She jumped in there, and we never seen her until
2 -- well, we never saw -- we couldn't see her. It was a
3 closed casket.

4 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So, Darcy
5 McIvor was the man who was charged with the killing; is
6 that right?

7 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Yes, it was.

8 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, he had a
9 mother, I think, whose name was Marilyn, was it?

10 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Yes.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, did you know
12 Marilyn?

13 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Yes, I know her to this
14 day.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. And, the car
16 that she was in, to whom did that belong?

17 **MS. LISA HOULE:** I believe it was her and
18 her husband's. I forget his name, but...

19 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now, at this time,
20 were you actually living in Ebb and Flow yourself or in the
21 area?

22 **MS. LISA HOULE:** No, I was living in the
23 city.

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, what was it
25 that occurred that alerted you that all of this was going

1 on, that there was something that was potentially dangerous
2 for Eileen, your sister?

3 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Well, if she ever came to
4 the city, she would leave me a message just saying that she
5 was there.

6 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Mm-hmm.

7 **MS. LISA HOULE:** She never did at that time.
8 And, I just waited on my family to call me back with no
9 luck until halfway home from Winnipeg to Ebb and Flow when
10 they found her body.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, did you
12 receive information about that at that time or near to that
13 time?

14 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Yes. Yes, they -- not too
15 sure if the police went and got him at his house and took
16 him to where she was at.

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, he was living
18 with his mother at that time?

19 **MS. LISA HOULE:** He was living with his mom
20 and whoever lives in that house.

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, you were living
22 in Winnipeg. And, did you at any time around the time
23 where she went missing, did you find your way to Ebb and
24 Flow?

25 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Yes.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, what happened
2 when you went there?

3 **MS. LISA HOULE:** The following -- well, she
4 went missing Sunday morning, 5:00, 6:00-ish. Sunday went
5 along. We didn't even find her till Monday morning-ish,
6 like 3:00 or 4:00, or earlier maybe. And, I remember just
7 a lot of family in the yard and stuff.

8 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** At Ebb and Flow?

9 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Mm-hmm. At my mom's place
10 in Bacon Ridge ---

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay.

12 **MS. LISA HOULE:** --- where she lived.

13 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** In Bacon Ridge.

14 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Mm-hmm.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, were you
16 actually in the Bacon Ridge area when the body was found,
17 when Eileen's body was found?

18 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Well, I wasn't there
19 because the police already took Darcy over to this -- where
20 she was and whoever -- the coroner took her already and we
21 all went to where she was at, where she laid dying.
22 Apparently, he burned her up, burned her head, burned her
23 feet. So, she doesn't walk.

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so, this is ---

25 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Burned the car, he also --

1 in the woods.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I see.

3 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Far away from the road.

4 Far.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, this is why
6 later it was a closed casket, is that what you're saying?

7 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Yes, because he burned her.
8 Burned her. Tried to burn her up. I don't know if she ran
9 away because she wasn't -- she was far from the vehicle.
10 The car was, like, I don't know how much. Maybe 20 feet or
11 30.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, when was the
13 last time you had actually seen Eileen before she passed?

14 **MS. LISA HOULE:** About a month. About a
15 month, because she just moved over there.

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes. So, how many
17 months passed that she was there before this happened?

18 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Not long. About a month
19 and a half, maybe even two months. Maybe. Because she
20 just moved there, and I think her and her husband were not
21 having -- getting along and she moved to Bacon Ridge. She
22 was living in the city, but she moved.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** How long had she
24 been out of Bacon Ridge, living in Winnipeg?

25 **MS. LISA HOULE:** She was always living in

1 Winnipeg, and then she moved to Ebb and Flow, Bacon Ridge.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I see.

3 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Then two months into her --
4 where she started to raise her kids, that's when she wanted
5 to go out and celebrate her birthday, but that person
6 didn't bring her home.

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Right. There are a
8 number of siblings of Eileen. Your mother had a number of
9 children, didn't she? How many was there?

10 **MS. LISA HOULE:** I have five brothers and
11 six sisters, including her would have been seven of us
12 altogether. So, 12.

13 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, what was going
14 on with the family in -- with the impact of this tragedy?
15 How did they take it? What did they do?

16 **MS. LISA HOULE:** And, it wasn't good. It
17 wasn't good at all because that was my mom's relation. It
18 wasn't good at all. I don't think we ever gotten back to
19 being friends with the whole family after that. No. We'll
20 say hi, but...

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Anything else you
22 would like to tell us about at this point? There might be
23 something further down the road, but ---

24 **MS. LISA HOULE:** Not that I can think of
25 right now. But, she was a caring lady. She loved her

1 kids. She loved my kids also and I have two.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes. So, Erin,
3 would you like to start your talk about the impact that
4 this had on you?

5 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Well, in the courtroom, at
6 Darcy McIvor's courtroom, it was packed. It was, like,
7 family and -- from what I know, there was only, like, two
8 members of his family -- well, his, like, immediate family.
9 We wrote victim impact statements and read them. I know
10 that I read mine, like I know that, but I don't remember
11 what I wrote. It was so long ago. I was hoping you guys
12 could get, like, copies of it. I don't know if that
13 happened, but he just sat there and just stared -- like,
14 after we just all kept -- kept telling our stories. What I
15 recall is people just screaming at him and crying and
16 yelling, and he just sat there. He just sat there.

17 Marilyn McIvor is our relation, that's my
18 *kookoo's*, like, cousin -- first cousin. So, Marilyn his
19 mom, like her mom, my *kookoo* Theresa, like, traced the
20 whole -- she told us, like, immediately, she forgave that
21 family. She was at their house, like, paying cards right
22 away. She's -- she told us to forgive them, so I forgave
23 them -- like, for myself though. I forgave him for my
24 healing. Like, I forgave Darcy for my healing.

25 The courtroom at that time was like -- it

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1 was in Dauphin, Manitoba, the court -- the court case.
2 And, I feel that he was given a slap on the wrist. Like,
3 manslaughter. And, he's living a full life right now.
4 He's married, I think. I've heard he's married and, like,
5 that's not (indiscernible). But, I've also learned that
6 the reason why it was a manslaughter was because she fought
7 back and he had scratches on his face. Like, that's why it
8 was manslaughter.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, was it a family
10 member that told you that or somebody else?

11 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** What?

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Who told you about
13 the reasons for the manslaughter?

14 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** That whole -- there's --
15 it's all, like -- like, it's not all, like -- like, it's
16 rumours and stuff. So, like, I've heard of the stuff that
17 I know.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, on your point
19 about the victim impact statement, the Commission has a
20 parallel project of asking for and receiving records, and
21 this will be one of the records that will be asked for and
22 to answer some of these questions for the Commission and
23 others. So -- and perhaps on the issue of manslaughter as
24 well.

25 So, Erin, you were 15 years old at that

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1 time, and all of a sudden, there was this very significant
2 void in your life. How did you cope with it?

3 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I would just like to -- I
4 would like to mention also that I have, like, two other
5 siblings, a younger brother and a younger sister. All
6 three of us, our lives are, like, totally, totally not --
7 like, I don't feel like we fulfilled our -- like, we could
8 have been, like, better in life, but because of the loss of
9 our mother, we haven't done much.

10 My sister is, like -- she put herself in
11 care because our stepfather was not a good father. My
12 brother, Daniel, he tried to commit suicide and he was in
13 an accident too and his friend died, that was, like,
14 recently, and me -- my -- I started drinking almost
15 immediately my mom died. I just went, like -- like, this.
16 Like, all the way down. Like, for a long time. Like, a
17 long time.

18 Like, and I was only, like, 14 years old. I
19 met my -- I met somebody, like, the very, like, same time
20 that my mom died and I was with him for 16 years. I had
21 four children with this guy and we drank heavily, like --
22 but -- and I was living with my dad for a bit in Bacon
23 Ridge when this happened, and I didn't get along with him
24 either. I didn't like him. Because they weren't together
25 when she passed away and he came back and, like, just

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1 seeing him just -- I knew something was wrong, like,
2 because he was the one who broke the news to me about my
3 mom's -- like, what happened to her. So, when I saw him
4 walking through the door, I was like, something is really
5 wrong and I was not happy to see him.

6 So, he's in my mom's house taking care of
7 me, my brother and my sister. I eventually move out and go
8 live with my *kookoo*, Theresa. I quit -- I'd go to less
9 school. I started drinking. I'd get into fights. Well,
10 my ex was -- like, he -- he liked to drink a lot in Ebb and
11 Flow, and we would fight all over. He would fight, like, a
12 lot of people. Like, he would go and fight a lot of people
13 all the time. It was insane. Like, every weekend, he
14 would be scrapping out a different person. He's, like,
15 very violent. I don't know why I was with this guy, so
16 attracted to this violent guy. I was with him. I don't
17 know.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, why were you
19 with him? I know -- we've -- you've talked about this
20 before and just think about this from a -- was there any
21 connection between being with him and the fact that you had
22 just lost your mother?

23 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** When I was with this guy,
24 it was just like -- he was like my crutch, like I needed
25 him. Like, I didn't care, like -- like, I liked him and,

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1 like, it was -- it was, like, more of a -- I don't know.
2 We didn't talk or nothing. All we did was drink and party,
3 that's it, but still I stayed with this guy for so long.

4 2001, that's when I was 14. Then, 2002, the
5 drugs and -- that's when me and him started living together
6 and his sister, like the next year; right? I moved into --
7 it was him and at his sister's house. And, a lot of
8 emotional abuse. Like, I needed him. I turned into, like,
9 this really, really crazy person. Like, I obsessed over
10 him because I just -- like, I didn't have my mom with me,
11 right, so I used him as -- to fill that void for my mom.
12 Like, I couldn't -- I couldn't sleep at night without him.

13 So, that's why I kept running to him and --
14 like it made -- I don't know. Now, it makes, like, total,
15 like, sense, but it didn't before and I -- I did some
16 pretty crazy stuff to him, like just -- because I wanted
17 him to stay with me. I didn't want him to leave me. Like,
18 you know -- like, all we did was drink. We never talked
19 about anything.

20 He never went to my mom's grave, not even
21 once. Like, whole 16 years we were together, not once has
22 he been to my mother's grave. Like, he would tell me --
23 like, if we were going to break up, he would say, oh, I'll
24 go to her grave with you. Like, he would use that as,
25 like, a tactic. So, like, that's 2002.

1 2003, like the next year, like it was
2 getting worse and worse, right, the drinking and the
3 fighting. Yes, he was -- like, fights all the time and
4 it's like -- I would never see him lose a fight. Like,
5 I've never see him lose a fight. He would always be the
6 one punching people out, like it's -- but I would, like,
7 take my anger out on him too. I own some of that too
8 because, like, I can tell I started -- like, his arms too
9 because I'm scratching him. It was just violent. Like, I
10 don't know, just a bunch of rage. So, that goes on for,
11 like, three, four years after my mom died. Like, I kept
12 going back looking for security.

13 2004, I couldn't get over him. I tried,
14 like, many times and I couldn't. I kept going back -- I
15 ran back and, like, we tried to have, like, children and
16 never could. So, in 2005, I did get pregnant, then I had a
17 miscarriage, and then we started -- he left me at his
18 sister's and was living in Winnipeg with my cousin, and I
19 had a miscarriage in Bacon Ridge where he left me. So, we
20 break up there, 2006, like we're not together. It's, like,
21 on and off again.

22 He doesn't get really violent until fucking,
23 like -- like, this is when we started doing drugs. Like, I
24 was, like, probably -- the date's here. I was probably 14
25 or 15 is when I started doing, like, all these drugs

1 together and it just gets worse and worse. Like, losing my
2 mom, I went through, like, this -- a lot of drugs. Like, I
3 just started doing like drug abuse and -- like, I'm clean
4 now and sober, but all this -- my dad was the one -- like,
5 when I was, like -- he was the one who started smoking
6 crack with me. Like, I got that from him, Danny.

7 So, like, this is 2007 -- I'm trying to find
8 the timeline here that we made.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I think it's on the
10 sheet that you made ---

11 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I'm 20 years old now and,
12 like -- yes.

13 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, the drugs, were
14 they on and off as well?

15 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes.

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, what actually
17 inspired you not to do drugs? Because I think there are
18 some times in the timeline where you just make a decision
19 to quit.

20 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** We -- I have my daughter,
21 right, Rihanna. I stopped doing drugs there.

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Is it 2007? When
23 was Rihanna born?

24 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** 2007. Well, this is, like,
25 where I stopped doing drugs, where it's, like -- I started

1 to believe, like, nothing, like -- I don't know.

2 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: What's that?

3 MS. ERIN HOULE: (indiscernible) some of
4 this got wrong.

5 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Oh, there's some of
6 it wrong?

7 MS. ERIN HOULE: I think so.

8 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. Well, just
9 tell the truth. Just correct it so it's the truth.

10 MS. ERIN HOULE: So, yes, anyways, I have my
11 daughter, Rihanna Houle, she's -- in 2007. I'm not with
12 Lyle this time; that's not his child. So, we break up and
13 then Rihanna's -- I quit doing, like, all the drinking and
14 all the -- like, the crack and all that shit. Like, that's
15 all gone. I go to school, like, with -- to Brandon
16 University for three years. And, Rihanna is three years
17 old and, finally, she -- like, he comes back into my life
18 and, like, he accepts her and, like, everything is all good
19 again. Like, I believe, like, I'm happy he's back and,
20 like -- to me, that was like a -- to me, that was like a
21 miracle that he came back to me. I was so happy to have,
22 like, Lyle back in my life.

23 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And, just to insert
24 here. In your studies, you were studying a Bachelor of
25 Arts in Education; is that right?

1 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes, to be a teacher, which
2 I went to school with two of my aunties also, and one of my
3 aunties graduated and...

4 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you almost
5 finished ---

6 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes.

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- that degree?

8 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** It was a five-year program.
9 Yes, I was getting, like, As and Bs, and -- like, it was --
10 I enjoyed school, like, so much. I was doing so good.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** You did. And, you
12 hadn't finished high school. And so, you upgraded
13 basically and got these amazing marks once you started; is
14 that right?

15 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes, you can -- yes, I
16 applied as a mature student to Brandon University and I
17 got, like, As and Bs, and you obtain regular student status
18 after so long, keeping good grades and -- yes. And then I
19 had him back in my life, I buy a van off these guys, and he
20 steals it and -- like, he ruined it -- he ruined it for me.
21 I don't know. He was supposed to, like, help me, like,
22 with the baby and so I missed my -- I missed my exams, and
23 then I just decided just to leave, so I go -- that's when
24 Anderson's born; right? My 8-year-old, Anderson, 2009. I
25 give birth to his son, Anderson Malcolm.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Right.

2 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** A few days after leaving
3 the hospital, like it's -- our birthdays are all in
4 September; right? So, Rihanna's birthday, then my
5 birthday, September 17th. Rihanna's September 15th,
6 Anderson is September 12th.

7 So, my birthday, I decided to go have a --
8 like, a drink with my neighbour, and then I come home and
9 he -- like, I have a -- I have, like, a chipped tooth, like
10 he -- I hit my head on the dresser. I woke up on the floor
11 and I have, like, a scar right here from hitting my head on
12 the dresser, and Anderson is crying in the crib. I wake up
13 and he's crying in the crib. He's not even there. So,
14 then, that's when I go to a women's shelter here in
15 Winnipeg. I had Ikwe -- I go to Ikwe's women's shelter,
16 they take me and Anderson and Rihanna, and we go stay
17 there.

18 Then, I get a place, it was a friggin' awful
19 fucking place. Spence Notre Dame, the school I hate.
20 Anyways, I get this three-bedroom apartment and I'm there
21 for, like, six years. It's horrible. I felt so stuck
22 there. Not at first. Like, when I got there, it's just me
23 and Rihanna and Anderson, it was okay. And then...

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, during those
25 years, are you finding any resolve or ease in the suffering

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1 around your mother? What are you -- how is this
2 interrelating?

3 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** My drug addiction and all
4 that gets worse, but I'm there. I start -- we both
5 develop, like -- like a really, really bad, like,
6 addictions on prescription pills and -- like, I thought I
7 needed pills to fucking live. Like, I took Xanax to get
8 through the day, then Restoril to sleep at night so that I
9 wouldn't stop crying about my mom. Like, I thought I would
10 need a pill to sleep because I would stay up all night
11 thinking about her. And then during the day, I would take
12 a Xanax just to -- I don't know, just to -- like, just
13 thinking about her non-stop, my mom.

14 Like, for the longest time, that's all I
15 ever just think about her in that apartment. Like, this
16 is, like, how many years now? That pain just doesn't go
17 away. That's, like, constant and -- you think -- you think
18 you'll be okay after this many years and -- like, I just
19 felt so alone and I -- like, he would see me crying in my
20 room, holding my baby, and he wouldn't even ask me anything
21 about -- like, if -- are you okay? Like, he -- we never
22 talked about my mom. Never. Never.

23 So, I give birth to our second child --
24 well, third, baby Lyle. Like, our second son I should say.

25 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** In 2012; is that

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1 right?

2 MS. ERIN HOULE: No, Lyle was born in 2012.

3 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Oh. So, Anderson
4 is your first son and Lyle is your second son?

5 MS. ERIN HOULE: Yes.

6 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.

7 MS. ERIN HOULE: And, after giving birth to
8 Lyle, like, it's the same thing that happened before. I go
9 out on my birthday and he doesn't like that. And, all our
10 birthdays are, like, in September. Lyle's born on
11 September 18th. All four of us, same month. We celebrate
12 the kids' birthday, we take care of them. Like, everything
13 is all good. Like, they have their birthdays and -- like,
14 I'm always, like, left out. Like, I go and do something
15 with my friends, then I come home, and the same thing
16 happens again. He fights me in front of my kids when I
17 come home, after I have a baby. After Lyle's born. Like,
18 it's the same thing that happened.

19 Like, by this time, like, he's smoke --
20 we're both smoking, like, crack together again, like --
21 because like -- he starts, like, selling -- we're selling
22 weed together and then -- like, this -- it just gets worse
23 and worse and worse, right, the drugs and the fucking --
24 like, the drugs and -- yes. Like, the cycle; right?

25 So, I'm still with this guy, like even after

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1 he's fought me all this time. Like, that's the kids' dad.
2 He's, like -- he's a great father, but -- like, that's what
3 I keep telling myself, he's a great dad. But, he is.

4 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I think you
5 actually had conversations with him about getting married
6 and having a family, that type of thing?

7 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** He would be the one to --
8 like, he kept talking about our weddings. Like, he would
9 get drunk and talk -- like, he planned out our weddings and
10 like...

11 So, after baby Lyle, then we have another
12 child, right, Eric. This time after he's born, I come home
13 -- like, same thing happened, right, like after every
14 single birth, and then this time he's kicking me non-stop
15 until he passes out in front of the kids, and the kids are
16 just crying, watching me getting kicked over and over
17 again. And, the police actually stopped issuing a
18 protection order against him because the first time they
19 put the protection order in place themselves with Anderson,
20 like back in that year, in -- when I was back in Ebb and
21 Flow ---

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, the protection
23 order put him on conditions not to contact you or what
24 was ---

25 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes. So, that's why he

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1 was, like, always, like, hiding stuff and -- like, we were
2 together, but it was like we weren't supposed to be
3 together, but he was there anyways, like -- and that's why
4 when I charged him, they don't want to put a protection
5 order on him because I didn't show up in court before, like
6 when we got back together, but then when I really wanted
7 to, like, leave him, they wouldn't do it. So, like, it's
8 just -- it's like a cycle. It's like...

9 So, after he's kicking me -- like, when I'm
10 -- when I'm -- after Eric is born, after that happened, I
11 go to the shelter again with all my kids, all my children,
12 all four of them, at Ikwe, and I'm there for six months.
13 And, my kids get apprehended from Ikwe and I lose my kids
14 because he's coming to the shelter -- like, I felt trapped
15 at that shelter. I couldn't leave. I couldn't leave
16 because he knew I was there, and if I was to get to another
17 place, like, he would, like, come there. So, I really
18 didn't feel like there's any way out of that place. I felt
19 so trapped at Ikwe, like...

20 When I was at the shelter, they -- I thought
21 they were helping me. I really believed that they were
22 trying to help me, but Lyle was coming there to pick up the
23 kids, and that's a shelter for women; right? And, he's the
24 abuser. And, he's coming there to pick up his sons, but --
25 he's entitled to see his sons. I can't -- I don't know.

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1 When the kids got taken, we -- I got a place and we have
2 visits with the kids, like, after that.

3 At our visits and our court dates, he -- he
4 gets violent after our court dates. Like...

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, now, is this
6 criminal court or some other type of court?

7 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Our -- well, together --
8 when the kids first got apprehended, we were together. So,
9 we went to court together and everything, and when he was
10 getting -- fighting me after court and after the visits, I
11 separated the court and separated the visits. That's when
12 -- in August, that's when I decided to leave him. It's
13 when -- after the kids were apprehended.

14 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, that was in --
15 when was that?

16 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** 2015. Like ---

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** 2015. Okay. So,
18 just -- not long ago.

19 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** That's -- that's when I
20 finally decided to leave this guy, like after our kids got
21 taken and -- like, I tell him, like, I don't want to be
22 with him no more and, like, he just tries to drag me home
23 with him and I don't go home no more. It's not a home no
24 more. The kids aren't even there. Like, it's not -- it's
25 not a home.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, the children
2 are still living with you now, aren't they?

3 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Now?

4 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes.

5 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes. I have my -- all my
6 children back.

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** In 2017. Okay.
8 And -- and you are -- are drug free?

9 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes, I am -- well, I went
10 to BHF for eight months.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** What's BHF?

12 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Behavioural Health
13 Foundation in St. Norbert. I don't care what anybody says,
14 it's an amazing place. I loved it there.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, how about
16 alcohol?

17 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Alcohol.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Do you still drink?

19 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Oh, I had -- I had -- I was
20 sober, like, eight -- like, a year and -- like, over a
21 year, and then, like, a month ago, like I -- yes, I had --
22 I had a relapse. And, I'm taking, like, all these, like,
23 programs and stuff, but I've always been taking them.

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you've told me
25 that you've actually seen counsellors from time to time and

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1 they've given you some coping strategies, or a way to, kind
2 of, self-regulate so that the suffering isn't quite as
3 painful. Who were your teachers and what type of things
4 did you learn that worked?

5 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Counsellors. I go to
6 Family Dynamics, I take group counselling. There's even --
7 I go to the North End Women's Treatment -- the North End
8 Women's on Salter and Selkirk there. Catherine was my drug
9 counsellor. I see her every Tuesday. It's -- it's
10 ongoing, like the -- the work.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Mm-hmm.

12 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes.

13 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so, what are --
14 what are some of the principles of the work? In other
15 words, like if there's a formula, like one and one equals
16 two? So, it's a combination of what and what that helps
17 you with your suffering and helps you stay away from drugs?

18 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I think it's like -- it's a
19 combination of whatever works for you. Like, I -- I go to
20 AA. I love AA. It's like -- it's awesome there. I go to
21 the one on Spence and Portage, the Finding Freedom.
22 There's like a one hour, like -- like, lecture, and then
23 one hour you get to listen to -- like, do the work and the
24 steps and -- yes.

25 I've tried -- like, I've done -- I've been

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1 doing, like, all these treatment programs, even at --
2 what's that one in North End? The ---

3 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I don't know. If
4 there's anyone that can help?

5 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** The Pritchard House, yes.
6 Pritchard House is like a one-month program.

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, you see the
8 thing here is that the Commissioners have got the huge task
9 of inquiring and reporting on some of the things that
10 systemically have contributed to the vulnerability of
11 Indigenous women and girls and two-spirited people. And
12 so, you are -- you've lived it. You've lived the
13 experience of losing a mother when you were just a young
14 and vulnerable teenager ---

15 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** It's my alarm to pick up my
16 baby from school.

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Oh. And, some
18 things have truly transformed your life.

19 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** My kids.

20 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. And -- and
21 that's another interesting thing is I've heard that your
22 mother was equally devoted to her children, in the same way
23 that you are to yours.

24 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I was always told -- like,
25 our families, like, we always tell -- we -- my mother and,

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1 like, they told us, like, take care of your kids. That's
2 -- your top priority is to take care of your children.
3 And, I was never without anything. My mom took really good
4 care of me. I've got to do the same thing, pass it on and,
5 like, all of our -- all my aunties, they always tell me
6 that and they tell their children that. Like, your
7 children are your top priority, you have to take care of
8 them. Like, put them before yourself. That's what I did.
9 I -- the hardest thing to do was to let Lyle go and I let
10 him go. Like, that was really hard to do and -- but I
11 chose my kids over him.

12 They -- I couldn't take care of him and my
13 kids. He took out a lot of energy out of me that I -- I
14 didn't have that energy anymore to deal with him. So, when
15 I stopped fighting with him and letting him go, and I just
16 -- when I let him go, I -- I had the energy to -- to work
17 on myself and my kids, and to see them and to take care of
18 them and to do all that work that to -- to get sober. I
19 just had to change my priorities. My priorities now are
20 not him. He was my priority, which was sad. I -- I -- I
21 made him my priority over my kids, that's how it was.
22 Like, I see now how that was.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, if you were
24 thinking yourself as -- as a helper to the Commissioner,
25 and you think back to when you were 15 and that week after

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1 your mom's death, and if there was a table, and on that
2 table was all the programming, all the things that were
3 available to you to help you now cope with that void that
4 has been created because of your mother's death, what would
5 be on that table? What would have prevented you from
6 getting into the obsessive relationship that you had with
7 Lyle and getting into the many drugs, and making the
8 decisions that you made in -- in light of the -- the
9 suffering that you endured? What would be on that table
10 that would have prevented some of that suffering and ---

11 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Well ---

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- put you on a
13 path more like what your mother would have kept you?

14 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Well, at that time that
15 happened, I lived in Ebb and Flow. So, on reserve, I don't
16 think there would be much for children, like for youths on
17 -- off -- on reserve, but if it was -- if this -- if this
18 tragedy would have happened in Winnipeg, it could have --
19 there could have been, like -- I don't know. It could have
20 been different. Maybe there's, like -- there could have
21 been like counsellors and stuff on the reserve but, like, I
22 don't know.

23 When I was in Ebb and Flow, I spoke to a
24 therapist, but once -- like, that was only there once.
25 Like, once a week or something, but there should have been

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1 someone there more, somebody that I could relate to maybe
2 as -- as a youth. I just didn't -- I didn't like the
3 counselling at first, but now I'm like -- I'm embracing the
4 counselling. Now as an adult, like I'm 31 now. When --
5 when I lost my mom, I did try the counselling, like my
6 auntie told me to go to the health office and try that,
7 so...

8 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Have you engaged in
9 ceremony to assist you over the years?

10 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes. Well, smudging is,
11 like, what got me through at BHF. Like, sleeping --
12 before, like, I wouldn't be able to sleep unless I smudged.
13 Like -- and when I would wake up, if I didn't smudge, I
14 would have a bad day. Like, it was like doing it over and
15 over again, just to have good days and good nights, being
16 able to sleep and -- I didn't press "dismiss" on this,
17 sorry.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Is there something
19 we should be doing? Is your child okay?

20 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** No, it's -- I keep pushing
21 snooze.

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Oh, I see.

23 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** It's a reminder. It says,
24 "Day care reminder".

25 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, what about

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1 education? You know, you've actually pursued quite a bit
2 of education, haven't you, with the university and then
3 college, and you received a certificate, so that you are
4 now a qualified administrative assistant?

5 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I took that at Ka Ni
6 Kanichihk. I did that program, their information -- yes,
7 the -- it was a -- it was through three -- three programs,
8 the Institute of Trades and Technology, the one on Higgins
9 and Main, and Red River, and Ka Ni. Like, there was, like,
10 three that put that IOAA program there, Information Office
11 Ad -- and it was, like, all, like, Native women that took
12 it. And, this -- I was pretty lucky to have that program,
13 like, close to my place too, and -- like, the day care
14 and...

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And so, what role,
16 if any, has being further educated, so not only do you have
17 new horizons to visit when you are thinking, but also you
18 have new skills that will help you in your life and in your
19 -- in your work life, your career. What -- has there been
20 any connection between that teaching and learning and the
21 suffering that you have had with your mom, your loss? Has
22 it helped you with your suffering?

23 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I -- I don't know. I don't
24 understand the question. Could you ask -- could you say it
25 again?

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1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes. I'm just
2 wondering if -- if the fact that you are going to school
3 and going to classes and learning things, that you could --
4 I'm sure many of them apply to your life. In other words,
5 it would mean that you actually would have a goal about a
6 job that you could apply for, you might have some ideas
7 about your world view and how you're going to look at life
8 and work with other people, and how you treat your children
9 and friends and family. How much of this came out of your
10 college education and the courses that you've been taking?
11 In other words, how important is education -- has it been
12 to you in your growth?

13 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Well, education is
14 important. Like, for me, like, school is fun. Like, it
15 gave me -- it gave me like a -- like, a -- like, a -- like,
16 I felt proud. A sense of, like -- like I could do it.
17 Like, I was doing it with my children and...

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Is there --
19 is there anything else you would like to say?

20 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I guess the losing --
21 losing my mom and going through, like, all this was like --
22 like, the -- the drug addictions and the violence, and like
23 breaking free from all the violence and, like, the drug
24 addiction, like there's -- there's -- like, you need -- I
25 don't know. I wanted to change. Like, it was -- and -- I

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1 don't know. I just -- I just found -- I just found a way,
2 like, a strength in myself to change, and I don't know. It
3 wasn't easy, like -- but -- it's not easy. Like, the --
4 the pain is still there. Like, it's always going to be
5 there. You just -- I just got to find better ways to cope
6 with it.

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you have
8 talked about the -- the uniqueness of an individual. And
9 so, one thing that works for one person may not work for
10 another, and vice versa.

11 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Yes.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** But, for you ---

13 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Definitely. Yes.

14 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** For you, if you
15 were to name, sort of, the top five things that helped you
16 absolutely, you know, reframe your life, transform into a
17 human being, taking your place so that you can look after
18 your children, what are those five things? It could be a
19 counsellor that you dealt with, it could be a book that you
20 read, it could be just being separate from your boyfriend,
21 it could be ---

22 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I think it was just like
23 seeing my children at visits was, like, enough to make me
24 want to change. Like, just -- when -- when my -- when my
25 son would, like, be happy to see us is like -- just these

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1 little things that hurt, they -- they pushed me. The stuff
2 -- the stuff that hurt the most was, like, what pushed me
3 to change. Like, I -- I didn't want to hurt no more, so --
4 like, I just -- I fixed my own problem by seeking
5 treatment, like asking for help and -- there's like -- my
6 children are like -- yes, they are -- they are my -- my
7 main reason obviously, like, to do all this.

8 My baby would cry for his foster parent and
9 he -- when he got apprehended, like I -- I was -- I used to
10 breastfeed -- I breastfed all my -- my children; right?
11 And, when he got taken, it was like -- it was hard. And,
12 that was probably the hardest thing to see, was to see him
13 running and crying for her when she would leave and drop
14 him off at a visit, and he's only, like, 1 or 2. Like, a
15 little baby. Like, that's my baby, you know? That was the
16 hardest thing for me to see.

17 I guess also being -- being hungry and being
18 homeless was another thing. Like, another reason. After
19 losing everything -- like, I -- when I -- when I left him,
20 he took everything from me also. He took -- he used to
21 tell me, like, it's your fault your life is like that.
22 Everything is your fault the kids got taken. It's all your
23 fault, like -- then I realized, like, it's not my fault.
24 Not everything is, like, my fault. Like, I took ownership
25 in what happened, but -- like I forgave myself, so -- and

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1 then I got help. But, he -- he wouldn't admit to his
2 problems and -- and his addictions. He would still use and
3 still, like, think there's nothing wrong. I admitted that
4 I had a problem. He never did.

5 So, he wanted to come with me to treatment,
6 but he didn't want to admit that he had a problem. It's
7 like holding someone's hand when they're laying down on the
8 ground and you're, like, trying to walk, you know? Like,
9 two -- two -- two addicts in a relationship doesn't work.
10 There's -- it -- it never works.

11 When -- when I go to treatment, you never
12 see two couples together in a treatment centre that work
13 out unless -- I don't know. There is, but I just think it
14 just usually doesn't work out.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, this is one of
16 the reasons why I felt it was so important for you to -- to
17 tell this narrative, is the difference between a person who
18 can barely move your legs through a healthy day and --
19 because of your pain, and as a result of your own fortitude
20 and the love of your children and some assistance from some
21 people, including your family and other agencies in the
22 community, you are able to come here today and tell us
23 this, tell us this truth as a sober educated woman. So,
24 congratulations.

25 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** Thank you.

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1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Are you going to
2 talk to us? Okay. So, Gertrude, would you like to say
3 something?

4 **MS. GERTRUDE FLETT:** Okay. I'm going to --
5 I'm blessed with three daughters, one son and 14
6 grandchildren. And, to talk about Eileen is -- it's hard.
7 I -- I was hurt when she -- when that happened. She was,
8 like, my little daughter. She -- I was older, nine years.

9 Like, my mom helped us go through this. It
10 was always said by her, she was very -- she had her fate.
11 She was a single mother/parent raising us, raised all of
12 us. When we lost Eileen, my siblings, we were all
13 devastated. My mom protected us, tried to protect us all
14 our life -- all our lives. She raised her grandchildren.

15 And, I was okay as long as my mom was there.
16 She was my rock. My heart was okay as long as my -- my
17 mom. And then 2005, she was diagnosed dementia. I seen my
18 mom go through -- go through that and that's when she
19 started talking about Darcy McIvor, swearing at him. And,
20 yet my mom always prayed. She always prayed first. She
21 taught us to. Took us to church every Sunday.

22 And then when she went into that dementia,
23 she -- every -- everything changed. In 2007, I mean, after
24 she went into a nursing home, I -- I cried for a year when
25 my mom left because she was always there. Every day, I

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1 went visit to see my mom. I took care of my mom. And then
2 when she -- put her in a nursing home, I was hurt more.
3 She had to go. 2008 -- she was in a nursing home for three
4 years. 2008, my mom passed away, then I was at peace with
5 my mom because she didn't need to suffer anymore.

6 We all suffered when Eileen died, because
7 Eileen was a nice person, kind, everything. She always
8 smiled. When she moved back in June, I visit her every
9 day. Every evening I went and checked on her to make sure
10 she -- she had enough of -- for her kids too. And, I
11 always talked to her. She said, "You know what, sister, I
12 came home. I took -- I brought my kids home to raise them
13 in the country."

14 And then in August, that's when she came and
15 seen me, and my other sister, Joanne. They came and seen
16 me that Saturday before they left to the dance. She came
17 and asked me, "Come with us." And, I told her, "I don't
18 want -- I don't feel like going anywhere. I have my own --
19 I have my kids too. I don't want to leave them." So, when
20 they left, that's the last time I seen my sister. She was
21 so happy.

22 And, that Sunday, my -- my daughter was
23 getting married on August 25th, we were -- that Sunday, we
24 were at my friend's house there and we started, like -- we
25 made perogies there, get ready for her wedding. And then

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1 that Monday, we still didn't find my sister. We still --
2 they didn't find her anywhere. And then that's when I -- I
3 knew, like, what happened and where she was, because that
4 was our family that -- that took her life. It was a young
5 boy. So much -- so much happened that time. I couldn't
6 sleep for six days. Every time I looked in the bush, shut
7 my eyes, I would see my sister laying -- laying -- laying
8 in the bush.

9 It was hard for us, because my mom raised --
10 raised us to love, have faith, but my belief is the Creator
11 and he's with her. Sadly, two years ago, my grand -- my
12 first grandchild, she was 20 years old, she died in a car
13 accident. My precious pride and joy, I raised her, but I
14 know she's with my sister.

15 That Marilyn McIvor, that was my friend.
16 When she got married, I was one of her maid -- maid of
17 honours. Everything changed after. We were like sisters,
18 Marilyn and I. After when Darcy did this -- nobody
19 deserves abuse. My mom left relationships to stop that.
20 And, I thank her for that every day because -- my little
21 sister is here, Lisa. I see her too. Joanne, who is the
22 youngest -- or is the baby. I mean, that's who I look up
23 to, is the Creator. And, I pray for my children and my
24 grandchildren and my family, because without faith, there's
25 -- there's no way to go on, to go beyond -- above and be

1 anything.

2 I couldn't talk -- I couldn't talk for a
3 long time. I kept this inside because I love my sister --
4 my sisters. But, for her to go through that, that was --
5 there's many women out there.

6 When my sister passed away, 2001, my
7 marriage ended. I left my husband. We were separated for
8 five years. My girl was only -- my baby was only 13 at
9 that time. I told him because he wanted to drink. I asked
10 him, I said -- my husband is Danny Flett, whoever knows
11 him. I told him -- I asked him, I said, "Stay with me for
12 one month", because I was so traumatized. I couldn't even
13 go outside. I was even scared to look at an abandoned car
14 because that's where my -- my sister was -- was last in.

15 I asked him, I said, "Can you at least stay
16 with me, like, one month?" Then, he just left. Took his
17 guitar, left. Then that's when I -- I -- because I was so
18 mad. I was so mad. Even -- to even drink alcohol. I --
19 we drank -- I was so mad to even touch alcohol. That's how
20 hurt I was. And then I told him, "Just go. Do what you
21 have to do." I only have one daughter to raise. All my
22 other children are already on their own.

23 And then five years after we separated, he
24 came, we reconciled. He begged. I said, "I will. Okay."
25 We tried -- I tried. And then when he started getting

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1 sick, he was on -- he's on dialysis and he's sick. He
2 started emotionally abusing me. And, that's when I knew,
3 like -- I even told my daughters that "I'm doing this for
4 you girls, because nobody deserves abuse." I was
5 emotionally abused by him. Putting me down. And, I tried.
6 Three months ago, I left -- I left home. I left my
7 husband. My daughters are looking after him. I couldn't
8 do it anymore. I went and lived with my daughter in
9 Brandon for three months.

10 And, I'm with Erin now and I believe I was
11 meant to come and see Erin. I didn't know it was -- she
12 was -- it was this bad for her, because I love kids. I
13 love her -- her boys too. They call me auntie, Auntie
14 Gert, my favourite name. So, I'm happy to -- to be here
15 with Erin. I'm still hurt by my sister, Eileen. I'll
16 never forget my sister.

17 Right after my sister passed away -- this is
18 a good story. Right after my sister passed away, August
19 18, that's when she was buried, I dreamt about her. She
20 was all dressed in white. And, I -- in my dream, like
21 there's a blanket -- and three of my granddaughters are,
22 like, playing around. Then all of a sudden, I pulled out a
23 blanket and then here she comes, like standing up, smiling.
24 And then I ask her, where did you go? Look at this, the
25 chariot card, where did you go? We missed you. And then

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1 she's just smiling, smiling. She said, "You know what,
2 sister? That wasn't his fault." I didn't understand what
3 he meant. In order for me to heal, I had to forgive him.
4 And, I did that.

5 She ran out -- she ran outside to my mom's
6 house in -- like -- all of a sudden, like there's snow,
7 she's running, and I can see her footprints, and I'm just
8 following her. Then, as soon as you walked into my mom's
9 house there, seeing Danny, her husband, sitting there, and
10 I'm going to the -- like, I'm so happy. I'm just -- you
11 know? Like, I go to the kitchen sink, I open the tap,
12 start washing dishes. And then when I look back, that's
13 when I woke up, and that's the last time I dreamt about my
14 sister and that was, like, 15 years ago.

15 But, I'm glad she came to me and I don't
16 know, sometimes -- but everybody has to follow whatever you
17 believe in. Follow, like -- carrying her was Erin, right
18 here. She came and lived with me when she was 8. She
19 stayed with me for eight years. I call her my pizza pop.
20 But, I thank the Lord every day for my mom, because without
21 her, we -- we wouldn't be here. And, I love my family. I
22 want to thank Lisa too for being here. My sister Joanne
23 takes it very hard because she was the last to -- to be
24 with -- to be with my sister, Eileen.

25 I have a big family. I have five -- five

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1 brothers and seven sisters. When my mom passed away, she
2 had 50 grandchildren, 48 great-grandchildren. That was,
3 like, around 2008 then. I don't know what she has now.
4 With my -- I have an older sister too, she -- she's --
5 she's good too. She watches over everybody back home.

6 So, I want to say *migwetch*. I know there's
7 nothing -- nothing -- you can never change what happened to
8 my sister. That happened, like, 16 years ago. And, that's
9 -- that's my -- after she passed away, I was so hurt. I
10 was so -- I couldn't even go on. Like, I -- I didn't know
11 what -- I didn't know what to do and -- I don't know how I
12 -- how I survived on this. My mom bought me a carton of
13 smokes that time and -- but, during the wake, I -- I just
14 smoked. Sat outside by the fire. I didn't understand
15 about the Native culture.

16 My brother, Ralph, was the -- he was the
17 spiritual healer, but -- after my mom died, I looked up to
18 him. He passed away 2013, diagnosed with meningitis. And,
19 I -- I was hurt when my brother died too, because he was a
20 spiritual healer. He was the one that always talked to me
21 about everything, life. I even sewed for him, cooked for
22 him, but this isn't -- *migwetch*. I want to say *migwetch* to
23 everybody and bless you all. It starts to -- and that's
24 what will help us to go through is the Creator. And, I'll
25 be here for Erin as long as she wants me. It's just my

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1 duty to -- to take care of my nieces too. Thank you.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, Sonny, I think
3 you had some information about the police investigation.

4 **MR. SONNY PODOLANIUK:** Yes. To begin with,
5 my name is Sonny Podolaniuk. I was born November 28th,
6 1961. What I found most extraordinary about this situation
7 is that when Eileen was missing, the family and other
8 members from the community had phoned the RCMP, indicated,
9 you know, some things that they knew and what they
10 suspected. And, from what I understand, they really
11 wouldn't do nothing about it.

12 So, what I did was, I phoned the RCMP and
13 said, she's missing, presumed dead. And, at that point,
14 they sent the Hasty Team out, from what I understand, they
15 had some members who were around the house and -- you know,
16 it could get ugly. He was charged with murder. When the
17 police went there, they explained, to my understanding, the
18 reason why he wasn't having a murder conviction, because
19 they took him from the place to the body and they were
20 trying to give the impression to the family that they were
21 concerned that she was still alive. And, right then and
22 there, there's no murder because I guess the legal system
23 would have benefited him instead of the community, you
24 could say.

25 And, I think maybe -- it's a little

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1 emotional here this afternoon, people are digressing from
2 what this inquiry is about, is the facts, the racism and
3 other things, because from what I understand, there was
4 another murder before this of a woman in Bacon Ridge. They
5 knew who it was; no conviction. I don't know if that
6 played any part of it, but it might have.

7 It's just that it seems that if I hadn't
8 have phoned and said that she was presumed dead, they might
9 have waited until the next day or whatever. So, I know
10 that there was a statement of facts that were agreed upon,
11 that he had to say, yes, I did that. That was me. But,
12 only got six years. So, if that's justice, there is no
13 justice.

14 Other things -- I don't know what I could
15 speak to, other than, you know, the facts. Because it was
16 a highly emotional situation and a lot of people could have
17 got seriously hurt. And, thank God they didn't. And, what
18 we've got to concentrate on is why it happened, what can we
19 do so it doesn't happen again, and -- you know, it's like
20 these amber alerts. They know there's something going on.
21 They're not going to wait until they find a body. They're
22 going to actively search for that person.

23 And, perhaps there should be a victim's bill
24 of rights instead of the accused's bill of rights. They're
25 all seem to be more worried about, oh, the accused, we

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1 don't want to mess with his rights. Well, what about the
2 -- you know, the poor family? From what I understand, he
3 was seen full of blood, and his clothes were washed by a
4 family member. I'm not going to start naming names or
5 anything like that, because I think that's just wrong.
6 That's just going to inflame emotions that should have been
7 dealt with a long time ago.

8 This gentleman, he has been on the reserve
9 drunk, knocking on doors. I -- I had a binder, a file that
10 -- because I was involved with the victim services and
11 stuff like that, and what really seemed to bother me was,
12 at the sentencing, his lawyer tried to bring up a -- I
13 don't know what kind of program, but apparently because he
14 was Aboriginal, they were trying to say that he shouldn't
15 get as much time, but the whole reserve was Aboriginal, you
16 know? I don't understand that. So, thank God the judge
17 had common sense to say, no, you know? If it was a white
18 lady or whatever, sure it would have been a different
19 circumstance.

20 And, you know, I think we really should
21 start thinking of the fact that there is systemic racism in
22 the authorities, we should educate the public and others,
23 that if they do see this, there should be a means of
24 readdress. Other than that, if you have any questions, I
25 am more than happy to answer them.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you very
2 much, Sonny.

3 **MR. SONNY PODOLANIUK:** You're welcome.

4 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Erin, you
5 had shown me a poem that you had written and -- and one of
6 the ways that you have been -- yes. One of the ways that
7 you have been engaged in your healing program is that you
8 write things in your book that -- to your mom. And, I'm
9 just wondering if there is one that you feel would be
10 suitable to read to us?

11 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I take -- yes, I take grief
12 counselling and, like -- I was, like, all -- I'm excited
13 now to take grief counselling. Like, I'm ready. I'm ready
14 for it now, like, but as a youth, I was -- I wasn't ready.
15 Like, it was all, like, fresh and, like -- everything was
16 just like new. But, part of my grief counselling process
17 is like I write to my mom in a journal. But, before, like,
18 it didn't make sense, but now I, like, am embracing it and,
19 like -- hold on.

20 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I'll help you to
21 hold the microphone while you're looking in your book.
22 Okay. Here you go. Thank you, Lisa.

23 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** So, probably the reason why
24 I was, like, so hard on myself for so long about my mom,
25 like just crying and crying non-stop and why the pain felt,

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1 like, so raw because, like, it just -- every day felt like
2 it was yesterday. Even though it's been, like, five years,
3 six years, seven years, eight years, nine years, ten years,
4 it still felt like it was yesterday I lost her. I just cry
5 and cry and cry. It was like, how come I feel this way?
6 How come I feel this way?

7 When I was taking grief counselling, I have
8 guilt of things that I did to my mom and I'm holding onto
9 that guilt, like all this shitty bad behaviour that I felt.
10 So, like -- this is, like, something I wrote in my journal
11 which helped lift a lot of this hurt and pain off of me, so
12 I don't feel like that no more.

13 I wrote, "Mom. I'm sorry for running away.
14 I know I hurt you and I shouldn't -- I shouldn't hold onto
15 this hurt and pain. I'm going to let it go and -- of this
16 hurt and pain because I know you wouldn't want me to feel
17 this way. You would want me to be happy. I hurt you by
18 running away and I know that you forgive me." She's, like,
19 what would your mom say to you if you told her that, like,
20 you were sorry? She would probably forgive me. I was like
21 -- I was like -- like, wow. That just opened my eye right
22 there -- my eyes.

23 So, I just, like -- I stopped being hard on
24 myself and I -- like, I let go of some of that pain which I
25 was holding onto. I still hold onto that pain. Don't

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1 blame yourself for things that you did because a loved one
2 that loves you -- if you love each other, you're going to
3 forgive each other; right? So, I'm not going to hold onto
4 that anymore.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** It's certainly not
6 your fault, Erin. Okay. Lisa, is there something you
7 would like to say?

8 **MS. LISA HOULE:** I'm good.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** You're good. Lisa
10 is good. Sorry, did -- Madam Commissioner, those are their
11 questions from counsel. If -- and I believe there's a
12 photograph too, that...

13 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** This is my cousin, Colton
14 Pratt (phon). He's also missing, but it's -- he's not a
15 female, so his family -- it's a -- just saying. The family
16 wanted to speak in the inquiry, but he can't be included,
17 so I just wanted to show you. This is my cousin, he's
18 missing. And, it says, "Colton Pratt. Missing since
19 November 6th, 2014 from Winnipeg, Manitoba. Date of birth,
20 August 13th, 1988. Gender, male. Height, 5'10".
21 Weight/build, 160 pounds. Brown hair, brown eyes. Colton
22 was last seen in the downtown area Winnipeg. Colton's
23 family and police are concerned for his safety. Any
24 information could be important, do not hesitate to call.
25 If you have any information regarding the disappearance of

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1 this person, please contact Winnipeg Police Service."

2 Men have a lot of -- like, they go through
3 the same things we do, they just don't speak about it.
4 They're entitled to the same rights women are and I just
5 want to speak on that part too, because a lot of violence
6 they go through. Like, I was just saying, look what I did
7 to, like, my ex. Like, I -- I take ownership in that, like
8 what I did to him. Like, it goes both ways. That's all I
9 wanted to say.

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
11 *beaucoup.* And, I had the privilege to meet the mom of your
12 cousin. Yes. And, we will meet, her and I, and I will
13 listen, yes, because I'm a mom of three beautiful sons and
14 two girls, and I found that our men are part of the
15 solution, and we know that the statistic of our missing men
16 or killed/murdered is very -- way too high here in Canada.
17 So, I hope your voice is heard over there in Ottawa. It is
18 here. You want to add something?

19 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** There should be, like,
20 equal -- there should be equal programs for men, as well as
21 women. Like, women have all these programs to go to and
22 all these things for us, but there should be things for men
23 also, because they -- they want to get help too.

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yes.

25 **MS. ERIN HOULE:** I just -- I just, like,

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1 wanted to -- like, that's also, like, an issue, but yes,
2 those are our sons and our dads, and you know?

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yes. I love
4 that. *Merci beaucoup.* Thank you so much. Sonny, I think
5 you -- how do we say? I'm learning some English
6 expressions over here. You right nail or -- help me.
7 Something like that.

8 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** You hit the nail on
9 the head, I don't know.

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** You got it
11 about the -- the -- the systemic race -- the systemic cause
12 when you mention racism. And, we've heard it before, but
13 in this official framework, Canada is listening or we're
14 making sure that they are listening, that it seems that
15 when it's an Indigenous woman or an Indigenous man, the
16 response of the justice system or the legal system, the
17 response does not seem to be the same when it's a Canadian
18 person. So...

19 **MR. SONNY PODOLANIUK:** I think they respond
20 after the fact.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** I want you to
22 say this with the microphone.

23 **MR. SONNY PODOLANIUK:** I think they're more
24 of a -- they respond to it after the fact instead of trying
25 to put any kind of effort or anything to stop it. Like, an

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1 ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, I'm sure we
2 have all heard that. And, it's just sad, you know, that --
3 it seems that -- maybe it's the media, maybe it's something
4 else that is painting Aboriginal, Native, Métis, anything
5 other than by the Caucasian, women as weak. And, that's
6 wrong and I don't agree with that, and I think people
7 should start recognizing that and doing something about it,
8 because in the Native culture, the woman is the boss.

9 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Sonny is not
10 wrong. And, for Erin and your community, everybody is
11 welcome to answer that, but in your community or the
12 extended family who lives in other territories, is our
13 community as well equipped when there's a tragedy like this
14 to help us, to support us not only as an individual, but
15 when we lose someone? It's -- everybody is affected. So,
16 is your community was -- can provide that support?

17 **MR. SONNY PODOLANIUK:** Ebb and Flow or any
18 community or which community?

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Both.

20 **MR. SONNY PODOLANIUK:** It all depends on, I
21 guess I would say, who is, you know, in the administration?
22 Are they related to them? Was, you know, this a good
23 person? Or are they going to look, oh, that person just
24 did drugs; we're not going to investigate that. I mean,
25 why did she do drugs? Why did that person do drugs?

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1 That's what they have to look at. Not afterwards, you
2 know, hmm, yes, well, she had this in her pocket and that.
3 Well, who cares, you know? Fix the problem before it
4 happens, not after.

5 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*

6 *beaucoup.* Thank you very much. Well, *merci beaucoup,* and
7 -- okay. There's a -- I'm surrounded by beautiful women
8 with lots of wisdom, and we want to give you something that
9 the women from Haida Gwaii collected along the river --
10 along the beach. The matriarchs. Yes, yes. Some eagle
11 feathers. And, they're here and the prayers were for you,
12 for the family members, the survivors, and the warriors
13 that you are. And, we will give you this on behalf of the
14 National Inquiry. (Speaks in French language).

15 --- **Exhibits (code: P1P03P0402)**

16 **Exhibit 1:** Digital photograph of Eileen Mary Roulette
17 (nee Houle).

18 --- Upon recessing at 15:57

19 --- Upon resuming at 16:09

20 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** We're going to offer
21 a song for my niece that's sitting here, to -- just to
22 honour her and to honour all women. This song that my
23 other niece is going to sing is a song from a grandmother
24 who has now gone on to the spirit world, but she -- she had
25 this dream many years ago. She had this dream many years

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1 ago when -- we're going to be starting, and we have a young
2 lady sitting here that really needs us to pay attention to
3 her. So, I'm asking you in a good way, give her that time,
4 give her that space. *Migwetch.*

5 But, this song -- in her dream, Nojekweban
6 (phon) dream, she was standing on land that's called
7 (speaks in Native language), that's Rosa Rapids. That's a
8 ceremonial land just south of Winnipeg, and in her dream,
9 this grandmother heard a sound that was coming from the
10 north side where the water running, flowing, and the sound
11 of that voice drew her in that direction. And, as she
12 walked, she could see someone coming up over the
13 embankment, and as she got closer, she could hear more
14 clearly the sound that was coming from her. It was a song.

15 And, this grandmother, she was just a very
16 tiny, petite grandma, she had on a very long skirt, so long
17 that the top of her -- bottom of her skirt touched the
18 grass and she was draped in a shawl. And, as she walked,
19 she kind of just shuffled, and she had her head down, kind
20 of like that, as she shuffled along. And, as she got
21 closer, Nojekweban could hear that song.

22 So, that grandma sang that song for her and
23 told her this song is for Anishinaabekwe. This song is for
24 Anishinaabekwe, to remind her of her beauty, of how sacred
25 she is. And so, that song has been sung pretty much

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1 everywhere around Turtle Island, where Nojekweban still
2 resided here, in this physical realm. And so, many people
3 -- I hear it. I hear it. People are singing it. And, I
4 -- the way that I've been taught, if you're singing a song
5 that is not yours, you have to acknowledge where it comes
6 from. And so, that's what I'm doing. I'm acknowledging
7 where this song comes from, and it comes from that
8 grandmother, Nojekweban, from Rosa Rapids. And so, I'm
9 going to -- I'm going to drum and my niece is going to sing
10 this song. *Migwetch*.

11 (MUSICAL PRESENTATION)

12 **Hearing # 3**

13 **Witness: Jenny Lay (Daughter of Linda Bighetty)**

14 **Heard by Chief Commissioner Michèle Audette**

15 **Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren**

16 **Knowledge-keepers, grandmothers, elders: Florence**

17 **Catcheway, Bernie Poitras Skundaal, Thelma Morrisseau, Stan**
18 **Pierre**

19 **Registrar: Mr. Bryan Zandberg**

20 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Madam Commissioner,
21 for the record, my name is Wendy Van Tongeren, T-O-N-G-E-R-
22 E-N. And, today is October 19, 2017 in Winnipeg. The time
23 is 20 minutes after 4:00. And, I'm very pleased to see
24 Jenny Lay sitting here with us, who will be the main
25 spokesperson.

1 Before we begin, I would like to have
2 everybody, all these good people who have come to support
3 Jenny, identify themselves. So, I will hand the mic.

4 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON-PYRZ:** Hi, my name is
5 Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, and I'm a support to Jenny. And, my
6 last name is spelled P-Y-R-Z.

7 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** *Bonjour*, my name is
8 Thelma Morrissette, and I'm here to support this beautiful
9 young woman.

10 **MS. SHANNON MCCORRY:** Hello, my name is
11 Shannon McCorry, and I'm also here to support Jenny. My
12 last name is M-C-C-O-R-R-Y.

13 **MR. STANLEY LAPIERRE:** My name is Stanley
14 Lapierre (phon). I'm here to support this young, beautiful
15 Anishinaabekwe.

16 **MS. MARY AZURE-LAUBMANN:** Good afternoon.
17 My name is Mary Azure-Laubmann. I'm here to support this
18 young lady also. I'm with the Keewatin Tribal Council,
19 Thompson.

20 **MS. KAREN HARPER:** Good afternoon. My name
21 is Karen Harper, and I'm here amongst all these support for
22 this wonderful, young, brave lady.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So, we've
24 met before, and we have a plan. And so, let's start with
25 the fact that you actually are holding a feather, and that

1 you will make an affirmation about the good speech.

2 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good afternoon, Jenny.
3 Do you solemnly affirm to tell your truth in a good way
4 this afternoon?

5 **MS. JENNY LAY:** I do.

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

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now, we've heard
8 from everybody here already adjectives like "beautiful",
9 "brave", so many wonderful things. And, it's your
10 opportunity to start with a little introduction about
11 yourself.

12 **MS. JENNY LAY:** My name is Jenny Lay. I'm
13 originally from Thompson, Manitoba. I attend school here.
14 I'm almost done my first degree. Today, I'm here to speak
15 about my mom. She died in 1998 when I was four years old.

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Excellent. Thank
17 you. All right. So, in speaking about your mother, let's
18 put the context around her. So, tell us about the family
19 that she was living with at that time. Obviously, you were
20 a part of it, and there were others as well.

21 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Well, there's my father.
22 She wasn't actually living with him at the time. This all
23 took place in Grand Prairie, Alberta. She was living out
24 in either Nelson House or Thompson with family members.
25 She was also transitioning from a women's shelter in Grand

1 Prairie.

2 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And, you have a
3 sister as well?

4 MS. JENNY LAY: Yes, I have a sister. Her
5 name is Carrie Lay. She is three years older than me.

6 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Right. And you're
7 23 years old, having been born in 1993 ---

8 MS. JENNY LAY: Yes.

9 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: --- is that
10 correct? And, you were living in Grand Prairie as well,
11 were you?

12 MS. JENNY LAY: At the time, yes, I was
13 living in Grand Prairie with my father. Both my mother and
14 father, but my mom had gone back to Nelson House, and so I
15 was just living with my father and my sister at the time.

16 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: You know, Jenny, I
17 know how very capable you are, and so it's really my task
18 here to have you do 99 percent of the talking.

19 So, I'm aware that, with the assistance of
20 others, it's been a situation where you've received
21 information, because you were such a little girl at the
22 time when this occurred; you were only four years old. So,
23 you've sought out information to try and get a clearer
24 picture of what happened. And so, I encourage you, and
25 invite you, to tell your story. But, if you want to refer

Jenny Lay

(Linda Bighetty)

1 to this information that's been provided, just tell us what
2 the source was, and please proceed. Feel free to say
3 whatever you need to say.

4 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Okay. I'll take that. So,
5 originally, I had requested information about my mother's
6 death. A few years ago, when I was denied, they said I had
7 to wait 20 years after her murder.

8 So, what I did, I actually got in touch with
9 Hilda. We met under very, kind of, weird circumstances.
10 But, she got me in touch with Project Devote. And, Project
11 Devote had contacted the police force in Grand Prairie, in
12 order to get some information about what had happened to my
13 mother. So, I'm just going to read the information that
14 they had given me.

15 So, this situation is pretty difficult;
16 involves domestic violence and a homicide. June 18, 1998,
17 my mother, Linda Bighetty, was with her boyfriend checking
18 out a residence that she wanted to rent. And, she wanted
19 to see my sister and I. She was actually living out in
20 Nelson House for a while, and she had told family members
21 that she wasn't happy in Grand Prairie, and that she wanted
22 to come and take me and my sister back to the reserve to go
23 live there with her. So, she had come to Grand Prairie to
24 visit us and to, you know, try to get us out of that
25 situation that we were in.

1 She was dropped off in Grand Prairie, and
2 she planned on taking us to a park. It was a park she took
3 us often. It was Muskoseepi Park. I have a lot of good
4 memories there. Visitors at my father's, my father's
5 house, confirmed that she was, she was -- she had been
6 there.

7 The following morning, my father was seen
8 walking with my sister and I, and we were dropped off at, I
9 believe, my babysitter's house. I don't remember her name.
10 My father had been employed with a construction company at
11 the time. When my mother didn't return when she was
12 supposed to, to her friend's, people started to look for
13 her. She was not accounted for at the shelter that she was
14 staying at. So, a missing persons report was filed, and
15 the missing persons report actually included both my sister
16 and I as well.

17 My father had had a few encounters from
18 people in the town of Grand Prairie. He had went to the
19 pawn shop and pawned some of his items, and he took out the
20 money he had in his bank account at the time.

21 Because of the missing persons' report, the
22 police had went to my father's house, and they had found
23 that the house was padlocked from the outside. They had
24 looked in the windows. And, what I was told from Project
25 Devote was when they looked in the windows they could see

1 my mother's foot. They could see my mother's foot from
2 underneath the futon, where he had put her.

3 They had come back with a search warrant.
4 When they found her, she was deceased in the bedroom. She
5 was found naked, bound, and wrapped in bedsheets.
6 According to the coroner, she died of asphyxiation. The
7 scene that they found was consistent with homicide.

8 A police investigation was launched. My
9 father, at that time, he went to British Columbia, and he
10 went to his friends' house, and he told them that he had to
11 get away. He was charged, he was arrested and charged with
12 second degree murder. I'm not sure how they found him, but
13 a Canada-wide arrest warrant was put out for him. He was
14 committed to stand trial for manslaughter. So, he was
15 remanded into custody, but he was released with no
16 contacts, so he wasn't allowed to contact people in the
17 situation.

18 He had made an application for bail, which
19 was granted. He went back to work, and he had conditions
20 that he had to meet before his trial. All the records show
21 that this situation was consistent with domestic violence
22 homicide. My father, later that year, in September, he
23 committed suicide. So, I never really, you know, got to --
24 got to, kind of, figure out what happened for myself.

25 My mother -- both my parents, I know that

1 they loved us. It was apparent in my life, as a child,
2 that they did love us, regardless of the issues that they
3 had. Like, my father -- I know that there was -- growing
4 up I saw a lot of substance abuse and drinking in my house.
5 And, there was violence. There was already violence in my
6 house when I was that young.

7 So, that's pretty much -- pretty much the
8 story.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now, the -- perhaps
10 now would be a good time for you to show us, direct us
11 through the photographs that you brought of your mother.
12 What is your mother's name?

13 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Linda Bighetty.

14 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay, thank you.
15 So, is this a slide show, or is it various pictures, or ---

16 **MS. JENNY LAY:** They're just pictures ---

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Because I haven't
18 seen them before.

19 **MS. JENNY LAY:** --- that I was able to ---

20 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So, right
21 now, on the screen, there is a picture in a frame. Who is
22 in that picture?

23 **MS. JENNY LAY:** That's my sister on the
24 left, my older sister, and my mom and I. I believe that
25 was at her friend's house.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, can you tell
2 from that picture how old you were there?

3 **MS. JENNY LAY:** I must have been about maybe
4 two and a half ---

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Mm-hmm.

6 **MS. JENNY LAY:** --- on there. This picture,
7 my mom had taken a trip with my aunt, the one who raised
8 me, and they took this picture of her.

9 This is actually one of my favourite
10 pictures. My mom looks really healthy here. I am not sure
11 if I was -- I don't think I was born yet in this picture.
12 That's my sister and my mom. I'm not sure, though. I
13 believe that was taken, maybe, in our backyard. Maybe.
14 Maybe at the Odyssey House. I'm not sure.

15 That's just another picture of my mom
16 someone had given me.

17 And, another one someone had given me as
18 well.

19 That's me on the left, my mom, and my sister
20 on the right. I was pretty young there. I must have been
21 maybe one year old there.

22 Us, again. My sister on the right, my mom,
23 and then myself.

24 That was when I was born. My sister, and
25 her. I'm not sure who took this picture, honestly.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, I take it, for
2 all of those pictures, people have given them to you ---

3 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Yes.

4 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- because you
5 were four when she died. And, that actually opens the door
6 to an issue that we talked about, which is getting
7 information about even yourself, where you've been, what
8 you've done as a child, because you are dependent, of
9 course, on adults.

10 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Yes.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you have made
12 efforts to, as you indicated, to receive information, and
13 it's not always forthcoming. And, you did want to say
14 something to the Commissioners about that issue of getting
15 information?

16 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Yes. I would just like to
17 say, you know, because this happened when I was so young,
18 and because it involves both my dad and my mom, I had a lot
19 of conflicting opinions about what happened, from my
20 father's side of the family. And so, when I was growing
21 up, I was very confused about what had happened. I was
22 told one thing by one side of the family, and another thing
23 by the other. And, no one ever really sat me down and, you
24 know, explained what had happened, especially from an
25 unbiased opinion.

1 Like, it would have been nice if someone had
2 -- someone, not a family member, would have gave me the
3 information of what had happened to my mother. Because I
4 didn't understand what was going on at the time, and that
5 caused a lot of confusion in my life. I didn't know the
6 details. I didn't even need the details, but I just -- I
7 would have liked someone to tell me the truth. You know,
8 like, not trying to defend my father, or not trying to
9 shield me from the bad things that have happened, because I
10 was there, and I had already experienced a lot of trauma in
11 my life. And, you know, they thought I couldn't handle it,
12 but it honestly caused me more hurt to grow up not knowing
13 what happened, and to have family members tell me different
14 things.

15 I just think it should be -- information
16 about the death of the murder of a family member should be
17 given to those who are directly affected to it, like the
18 children. It would have been really helpful.

19 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** In your mind, is
20 there a relationship between information being withheld,
21 and the vulnerability of an indigenous girl or woman?

22 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Well, I think if I knew more
23 of the dynamics of the situation -- I had a lot of trouble
24 in my teenage years. I went through a lot of drug abuse
25 myself, and I think I was very vulnerable at that time

1 myself, and a lot of bad things could have happened to me.
2 And, I think it would have been nice to know the dynamics
3 of the situation, so that I can sort of help myself to
4 prevent me of getting into situations where I could be a
5 vulnerable person.

6 It would have been nice to, like, you know,
7 like, maybe, take some learning experience about the
8 situation, about who to trust, what kind of people I should
9 be around. I think it would have helped me a lot.

10 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, I appreciate,
11 and we'll be asking the Commissioner at the end of this
12 that we have a partial in-camera hearing for some of the
13 things that you'd like to say.

14 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Yes.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** But, on that point
16 that you make, with whom did you live, and how did that
17 come about? And, describe what it meant for you.

18 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Well, there was Family
19 Court, after my parents had died, to determine where I
20 would go. And, a few people had come forward saying that
21 they would like guardianship of us. One of those people
22 that came forward -- well, first, I'd like to say, my Uncle
23 Tom, he passed away from lung cancer. That was my dad's
24 brother. He was one of my favourite people when I was
25 young. He had come forward and he requested adoption.

1 But, during that time, he got really sick, and he passed
2 away.

3 One of the people that had come forward
4 looking to adopt me and my sister were -- they were not
5 good people. They actually caused a lot of harm for me and
6 my sister. And, I just find it wrong that they weren't
7 screened. They weren't -- there was no background check,
8 or -- there was not even an ask for me and my sister who we
9 wanted to go with at the time. And, it's really
10 disappointing that they were even given the opportunity to
11 try and come forward to adopt us.

12 And, if we were actually adopted by them, we
13 would not have had nearly -- nearly as normal a life.
14 Like, I'm not saying that growing up my life was okay, but
15 I'm saying it would have ben a lot worse if they had
16 adopted us. So, that's another thing, like, when people
17 are coming forward to adopt the children of, or take
18 guardianship of the children of murdered women, there needs
19 to be more screening done to those people, regardless if
20 they're family members. There needs to be some sort of,
21 you know, background check, or something like that, so you
22 know the kind of people that we are being adopted out to,
23 because at that age we're really vulnerable. We can't
24 really make decisions for ourselves. And, I feel like it's
25 the responsibility of the Crown, or whoever was making the

1 judgment call of who we were going to be adopted out to, to
2 check out these people before -- even before they're
3 allowed to come forward and make the suggestion that we
4 live with them. I think that's really important.

5 I was raised by my great aunt, Viola Webber.
6 She tried her best. I think she tried her best. And, it
7 wasn't always the best. I had a lot of trauma growing up.

8 But, one of the things I'd like to say is,
9 we were never checked on. Like, even after my parents
10 died, my sister was allowed to see a psychologist once. I
11 never saw one. They said I was too young to understand
12 what's going on. But, I have memories of what happened, so
13 I -- I think that's not right.

14 And, not a single time did someone come to
15 my aunt's house and ask us how we're doing. Like, not a
16 social worker or anyone like that. And even if they did, I
17 didn't know about it. You know, maybe they went and asked
18 my aunt how we're doing, but they shouldn't be -- even if
19 they did, they shouldn't be asking the guardian how we're
20 doing, they should be asking us directly.

21 I think there needs to be someone, a
22 professional person, who builds a relationship with the
23 children of slain women, so that they can continue that
24 relationship throughout their life and growing up. So,
25 that they know they have someone to talk to, or someone

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1 that they can trust to tell them what kinds of things are
2 going on in their life, and when things aren't going so
3 well, someone they can turn to for help. And, that never
4 happened for us.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you mentioned
6 to me in one of the interviews that also in transition
7 houses you felt that there might have been something that
8 happened.

9 **MS. JENNY LAY:** I personally feel that my
10 mother would not have been murdered if someone had went
11 with her to visit me and my sister. She was in a
12 transition home at the time, the Odyssey House. It's for
13 women who are suffering domestic violence. I had stayed
14 there a while with her. And, I just -- I don't understand
15 how come no one went with her.

16 She just came back from Thompson and, you
17 know, she was going to tell my father that she wanted to
18 take me and my sister. And, they should have known. They
19 should have known, and they should have -- should have been
20 smart enough to know the history of domestic violence that
21 they had with each other. And, they should have provided
22 maybe even a police officer, or someone just to go with her
23 to get us, or to visit us. They shouldn't have allowed her
24 to go alone, because I feel like she would still be alive
25 if they didn't let her go alone.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, combining the
2 memory that you do have of when you were a child, and now
3 the insight that you have as a mature woman, can you see
4 that if some of these adults had approached you, that you
5 might have told them some of the things that were going on
6 in your upbringing?

7 **MS. JENNY LAY:** For sure. I think so.
8 Well, maybe not a stranger. But, that's what I mean. You
9 should go back to building a relationship with the
10 children, because I had no one to be my voice. I didn't
11 know how to speak for myself.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Are there any other
13 recommendations that you would like to make, before we
14 venture to the next part?

15 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Yes. So, first, I would
16 just like to say some statistics I got from Stats Canada,
17 that every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her
18 intimate partner as a result of domestic violence. And, I
19 think that's really high.

20 And, again, with the access to information,
21 I don't think I should have been denied the access to
22 information when I requested it a few years ago. They said
23 I wasn't directly involved in the crime, but we were there.
24 We should have been allowed, you know, to meet with someone
25 to at least go over what happened, some sort of

1 professional person to go over what happened, because it
2 would have been so helpful for me growing up.

3 I think that there needs to be more
4 education and more programming, and more opportunity for
5 safe spaces for women. Make shelters more accessible for
6 people. Just because -- you know, just because they don't
7 have bruises on them, that doesn't mean that they're not
8 being abused.

9 And, to allow a support worker, allow the
10 opportunity to have support workers come. And, you know,
11 when they want to go visit their children in a home where
12 they've been abused, or when they have to be around their
13 partner that abused them, that support worker should be
14 there for them.

15 And, yeah, that's what I'm saying, that
16 there needs to be more support for women who are
17 transitioning from a domestic violence home, or a support
18 home, to wanting to live on their own. There needs to be
19 more support, maybe more funding, or more housing for them,
20 safe housing for them to go to. Because I know my mom was
21 looking for a place on her own. Like, I don't understand
22 why she had to do that herself. There should have been
23 people to help her do that.

24 I think the government needs to employ more
25 people in the social services field, especially those who

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1 are educated and understand indigenous culture, their way
2 of life, their common affairs and issues.

3 And, I think that there needs to be more
4 funding for all missing and murdered indigenous women
5 family members to attend honouring and remembrance
6 ceremonies and gatherings. And, provide funding for us to,
7 you know, initiate our own ways of healing individually.

8 Another thing is, my mom, she wasn't really
9 familiar with the city life. She spent -- she grew up on
10 the reserve. She was raised on the reserve, and that's
11 what she knew. So, I think that there needs to be more
12 support for people who are coming from the north, or from
13 remote locations, who are relocating to an urban centre.
14 There needs to be more access to resources, even specific
15 programs for people who are moving from reserves to bigger
16 cities.

17 Another thing, going back to my lack of
18 mental health support growing up, like, no one took me to a
19 counsellor or anything like that. And, I think that there
20 needs to be more trauma mental health support and social
21 services for the children of MMIW, regardless of their age.
22 You know, they said I was too young to understand what
23 happened, and that's why I didn't need to see a
24 psychologist. But, I know that there are child
25 psychologists who are trained to help us, regardless if

1 they think we understand or if we could be affected by it.

2 And, I think that those need to be more accessible for us.

3 I don't think that we should be forgotten
4 about. You know, they say that this trauma happened to my
5 mom, but I lost a lot. I lost that unconditional love a
6 parent can give to their child throughout their life. And,
7 she never got to see me do what I'm doing today, the good
8 things that I do in my life. She never had the opportunity
9 to see that.

10 So, I feel like I really missed out, and I
11 feel like we're very forgotten about, just because we
12 weren't the ones that got murdered. But, we have to carry
13 around the burden of what happened to us for the rest of
14 our lives. And, I just think that there should be more
15 support for that.

16 And, another thing that is really important
17 for me, I'm almost done my first degree, and I've had a
18 really hard time with funding and, you know, having enough
19 resources for myself, because I have no parents to support
20 me. And, I think that there should be more bursaries and
21 scholarships available for families of MMIWG who want to
22 start their education, or continue their education, because
23 they're the ones who are going to be very helpful in the
24 future for family members to change how this happens to
25 people, and to support those who have been affected by it,

1 because they've been through it themselves. I think that's
2 really important.

3 And, those are my recommendations for this
4 particular hearing.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you, Jenny.
6 Madam Commissioner, there is another chapter in the story
7 from Jenny. And, the counsel suggests that it would be
8 most appropriate to deal with it in-camera. So, the
9 procedural consequence is that we will be closing this
10 particular portion with the usual ceremony that we do in
11 closing, and moving to another location. Thank you.

12 Did you want to say anything?

13 **MS. HILDA ANDERSON-PYRZ:** Jenny asked me if
14 I wanted to share anything, and I think she's made some
15 really powerful recommendations when it comes to the
16 children who are left behind, because they've been so
17 forgotten. And, I see that a lot. Like, you know, they're
18 ending up in the child welfare system. You know, they're
19 not being provided with appropriate supports, you know,
20 support that's really needed, and that should continue, you
21 know, even after they turn 18, because, like Jenny here,
22 she doesn't have any parents to support her.

23 And, you know, we need to give them the
24 tools they need to succeed, because we just can't leave
25 them and forget about them. Because, that's wrong, that's

1 wrong for governments to do that. And, governments really
2 need to step up and start taking care of the children that
3 are left behind.

4 As well as another key point that Jenny made
5 was with respect to women who are experiencing domestic
6 violence, they need to be provided that wraparound support
7 when it comes to themselves as individuals, and protecting
8 their children, because we know even today things like that
9 are still happening. And, governments really need to step
10 up and start providing adequate supports and resources to
11 indigenous women and girls who are experiencing violence.
12 Because we know, even in Manitoba, with all the First
13 Nations in Manitoba, there's only four shelters, and
14 there's no second-stage housing with those four shelters in
15 our First Nation communities.

16 And, a lot of our women and our girls are
17 leaving our First Nation communities because they're
18 experiencing violence. And, when they come to major urban
19 centres, they are so vulnerable, you know? And, we know,
20 that there are those predators who are just waiting in the
21 wings for our women and our girls who come to the city who
22 are vulnerable as well. And, I'm not saying that's why,
23 you know, that's the only reason why our women and girls
24 are going missing or getting murdered, but I just wanted to
25 make those key points, that we need those supports and

1 resources, and especially for the children who are left
2 behind. Thank you.

3 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Sorry, Michèle has asked
4 me because, Jenny, you've given us such a sacred gift to
5 the Commission of your story, that we are sharing with you
6 some gifts as well. The seeds that you were given are
7 seeds to this area, and they are hopefully going to be
8 planted, and have them grow.

9 The feather is from the Grandmothers of the
10 Haida Gwaii, matriarchs of the Haida Gwaii. These were
11 handed out in Smithers. And, when they were handed out, it
12 as such a warm feeling with the witnesses, or the families,
13 that the matriarchs called for a gathering of eagle
14 feathers from the beaches. And, they have generously given
15 these feathers to be given to every family when they tell
16 their truth.

17 So, those are the gifts that we give you,
18 for the gift that you have just given us.

19 **--- Exhibits (code: P1P03P0403)**

20 **Exhibit 1:** Slideshow comprising eight colour family
21 photos of Jenny, her mom Linda, and Jenny's
22 sister.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I think we're ready
24 to proceed then. And so, the family members and supports
25 will attend with us to another location, and we can

1 proceed. Thank you very much, everyone. That's the end of
2 all the sessions, the public sessions, today in this room.
3 Thank you very much for attending, and being such an
4 attentive audience. It's really appreciated. Thank you.

5 Thank you, everyone. Before everybody
6 leaves, we have to close the session with a prayer. I'm
7 going to let the families go, the family go. If -- Jenny,
8 will you come back and take hugs, and everything, from
9 everyone when you're done your in-camera.

10 **MS. JENNY LAY:** Yes. Sure.

11 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Okay. So, we're going to
12 let her go off into the in-camera sessions, so that she can
13 finish her full testimony, which she still needs to do.
14 And then hopefully Jenny will feel good enough to come and
15 have supper with all of us. Okay?

16 So, I'm going to close today. Again, supper
17 is always available in the family room at 6:00 p.m.
18 Everyone is welcome. I've asked Dolly to do a closing
19 prayer. Tomorrow we will reconvene in this room with one
20 family at 9:00 a.m. And so, Dolly, can I ask you to close
21 the session with a prayer, please?

22 **ELDER DOLLY:** Thank you, Debbie. Let's all
23 rise. We've come to another close of the day. Lord, we
24 thank you for this day, Lord, for your presence that we
25 felt, Lord, and for the healing virtue that we felt

1 throughout the day as families begin to sit in, Lord, and
2 to speak, and to give their testimonies. And, Lord, we
3 thank you, Lord, for everyone that came into this place
4 today, into this room. And, as we go out this evening,
5 Lord God, that we would take your presence with us wherever
6 we go, so that we can feel the secure, and the safety,
7 Lord. And, we just look towards, Lord, this evening now,
8 every places we go, Lord God. And, bless everyone, Lord,
9 that leaves this building, that leaves this place, Father.
10 We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

11 --- Upon adjourning at 17:03

12

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shirley Chang, 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 be 'Shirley Chang', written over a horizontal line.

Shirley Chang

January 22, 2018