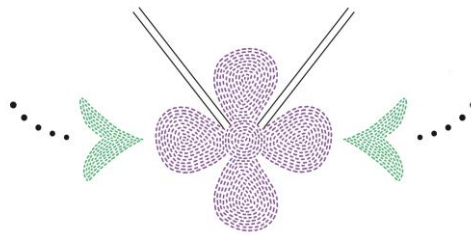


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Chateau Nova Hotel – Main Ballroom**



PUBLIC

Thursday January 25, 2018

Public Volume 43

**Freda Cardinal,
In relation to Stella Regina Cardinal;**

**Cindy Allen,
In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor;**

Gail Cyr

A.S.A.P. Reporting Services Inc. © 2018

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
OPENING CEREMONIES	1
Hearing #1	
Witness: Freda Cardinal, In relation to Stella Regina Cardinal	
Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson	
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe	
Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Laureen "Blu" Waters Gaudio, Violet Mandeville and Curtis Mandeville	
Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	5
Hearing # 2	
Witness: Cindy Allen, In relation to Marie-Adele Doctor	
Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson	
Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren	
Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Laureen "Blu" Waters Gaudio and Lila Eramus	
Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	50
Hearing #3	
Witness: Gail Cyr	
Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson	
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe	
Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Therese Villeneuve, Cecilia Boyd, Kathy Meyer and Lila Eramus	
Clerk: Trudy McKinnon	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	76
Reporter's Certification	165

IV

LIST OF EXHIBITS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
-----	-------------	------

Hearing #1

Exhibits (code: P01P09P0301)

Exhibit 1: PDF copy of transcript, Inquest into the Death of Stella Virginia Cardinal, held at Fort Resolution N.W.T. between November 24-26, 1970 (197 pages divided into seven PDF files)	49
---	----

Hearing #2

Exhibits (Code: P01P09P0302)

Exhibit 1: Audio recording of story played during the public testimony of Cindy Allen, playing time 9 minutes 8 seconds/ 17,2 MB M4A(MPEG4) audio file	76
--	----

Hearing #3

Exhibits (code: P01P09P0303)

Exhibit 1: Social Services document	163
---	-----

V

Note

The use of square brackets [] indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. Amendments were completed by listening to the source audio recording of the proceeding. Proper spellings of Dene words were provided by Cindy Allen with respect to her testimony. All amendments were made by Bryan Zandberg, Registrar for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, on May 8th, 2018 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

1

1 Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

2 --- Upon commencing on Saturday, February 24, 2018,

3 at 9:00 a.m.

4 OPENING CEREMONIES

5 MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: Good morning, ladies

6 and gentlemen. Welcome to the final day of the inquiry

7 here in Yellowknife into the missing and murdered

8 Indigenous women and girls. Yesterday we had Therese

9 Villeneuve say the opening prayer. We would like to say a

10 special thank you to her.

11 Today, we will have two ladies come

12 forward to say the prayer. And before they say the prayer,

13 I would just like to acknowledge that the sacred Kulik (ph)

14 has already been lit. We like to say a special thank you

15 to Barb Sevigny who lit the sacred Kulik. And I would

16 like to call on Elders Mabel Brown and Lillian Elias to

17 come forward, too, to say the prayer in their own language.

18 And Mabel is on her way. I'll get you to decide who goes

19 first.

20 MS. MABEL BROWN: Please, stand. Thank

21 you. Good morning, everyone. It is going to be a good

22 day, today. Let's pray. Our Lord and heavenly Father, we

23 thank you for today, this day that you have given us. We

24 are so grateful oh, Lord, God that you have given us this

25 gift of this day. You set aside this day for us. And this

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

2

1 is the day the Lord has made.

2 Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Father,
3 God, I thank you for everyone who is represented here
4 today. Everyone who stands in your presence today will be
5 blessed. Everyone who stands father, God, and come forth,
6 Lord, God. You are going to help them, and you are going
7 to bring out the light in them. Thank you for your
8 blessing today. In Jesus's name. Amen.

9 MS. THERESE VILLENEUVE: Good morning,
10 everyone. I am going to say my prayer in my language
11 because it means a lot more to me than trying to say it in
12 other dialects. So I will say it in my language.
13 (Indigenous language spoken).

14 MR. GEORGE TUCCARO: Thank you very much
15 (Indigenous language spoken). Good morning. (Indigenous
16 language spoken). I want to acknowledge, again, the elders
17 who get up and pray and give us that spiritual blessing for
18 each day.

19 Just some announcements that we should
20 know about. Today lunch will be at 12:30 to 1:30 here in
21 the main ballroom and also at the Explorer Hotel in Room
22 (indiscernible) A. Elders' room 132. And Health support,
23 once again, the purple shirts are here to offer us
24 assistance if we may need throughout the day. Do not be
25 afraid to call upon them. They are more than happy to

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

3

1 help. One-to-one counseling is also available, and you can
2 sign up at the registration desk. And shuttle service is
3 also available from 8:00 in the morning until 9:00 in the
4 evening.

5 Closing ceremony today is expected at 4:00
6 o'clock or 4:00 o'clock-ish. Metis cultural night starts
7 at 6:00 o'clock at the Explorer Hotel in (indiscernible)
8 rooms B and C. And just a reminder to keep the noise level
9 down to a minimum while families and survivors are
10 testifying.

11 And as you may notice, all around there
12 are tear bags. They are there for a specific reason. If
13 you shed tears of happiness, tears of healing, tears of
14 joy, we ask that you put them there because at the
15 conclusion of the ceremony here, there will be a special
16 burning ceremony that will take care of those tears.

17 Cell phones, we would like very much if
18 you could put them on airplane mode. Just go to settings,
19 and you'll see the airplane mode there. Some people have
20 been trying to put it with the sound off, but the sound
21 doesn't respond, and some of the cell phones have been
22 going off. So if you have airplane mode on your phone, and
23 if you need assistance, someone will help you, as well.
24 Just ask people in the purple shirts. Somebody will be
25 able to help you to turn it on airplane mode, because it's

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

4

1 very important that the cell phones are not distracting
2 anyone during their testimony.

3 As this is going to be my final time at
4 the Inquiry, I just want to say a special thank you to our
5 people from the Inquiry, National Inquiry for giving me
6 this opportunity to work with you over the last three days.
7 And I will turn the microphone over now to -- the other two
8 Commissioners are in a special meeting that is going on
9 with the National Commissioner, I think. They had
10 mentioned that they are not here. But we do have a
11 Commissioner of the Inquiry here, and we would like to
12 welcome to the microphone Commissioner Brian Eyolfson.
13 Thank you. I will turn it over to you.

14 --- OPENING REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON

15 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.
16 Good morning, everybody. Welcome to our third day, our
17 last day of community hearings here in Yellowknife. I want
18 to acknowledge and thank the elders for starting us in a
19 good way with their prayer this morning, with their
20 prayers. I would like to thank Barb (ph) for lighting the
21 Kulik that's been lit with us here this week.

22 And again, I want to just acknowledge and
23 thank the survivors and family members who have attended
24 here this week and who are here today, those who have
25 shared their truths with us here this week and those that

**Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)**

5

1 are still going to share today. We have heard some
2 difficult things. It's not always easy to share these
3 truths, but it's very important. So I want to thank you
4 for contributing to the work of the Inquiry.

5 But I think it's important not just for
6 the inquiry, but for all Canadians to hear these truths.
7 So thank you very much for that. And I just want to also
8 acknowledge the strength and resilience of the survivors
9 and families that I've seen this week in coming here and
10 sharing their truths. So I look forward to this final day
11 and continuing to work with you. And I thank everybody
12 that is joining us remotely, as well, for following what
13 people are sharing and the work of the National Inquiry.
14 Thank you.

15 **Hearing #1**

16 **Witness: Freda Cardinal**

17 **In relation to Stella Regina Cardinal**

18 **Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson**

19 **Commission Counsel: Ms. Christa Big Canoe.**

20 **Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Laureen "Blu"**

21 **Waters Gaudio, Violet Mandeville and Curtis Mandeville**

22 **Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon**

23 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good morning,
25 Commissioner Eyolfson. I would like to introduce you to

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

6

1 Freda Cardinal. Freda will be sharing the story of her
2 sister Stella. Stella disappeared in the summer of 1970.
3 Before Freda actually begins to share her story, I would
4 ask that she be promised in.

5 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Good
6 morning, Freda. Do you promise to tell your truth in a
7 good way today?

8 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes, I promise.

9 FREDA CARDINAL, PROMISED

10 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So with Freda
12 today, is Violet Mandeville and Curtis Mandeville. And as
13 we get started, I just wanted Freda to get a chance to
14 introduce herself, tell you who her support people here are
15 and a little bit about her background.

16 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I'm Freda Cardinal
17 from Fort Resolution, originally. But I live in Hay River.
18 I work there as a nurse. My support people are -- directly
19 behind me is Violet Mandeville also, from Fort Resolution,
20 and Curtis Mandeville, support person, as well. And he
21 supported me along this journey with gathering information.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you tell us a
23 little bit about Fort Resolution? So the community you are
24 from and the background.

25 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: It's one of the

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

7

1 oldest communities in the Northwest Territories, I believe.
2 It's a very small community, close-knit. We're just about
3 all related. From the Boileau clan (ph). I don't know. I
4 grew up there, moved away, like everybody else. Most
5 people, anyway, move away after they grow up to be big
6 people. Yes.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you mentioned
8 you are a nurse. How long have you been nursing for?

9 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I first started --
10 graduated in 1985, and left it for about ten years, had
11 children, married life and all this, and then I decided
12 that it was my first love. So I decided to go back. So
13 yes. Still nursing today.

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I know the reason
15 that you are really here today is to talk about your sister
16 Stella. And what I was hoping you would be able to do is
17 share some fond memories or tell us about some of Stella's
18 strengths.

19 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I remember the seven
20 years -- like, this picture here is when I was three or
21 four, and she's nine years older than me. And we were
22 close. We were always together. We shared a lot of time
23 together because she was my older sister, took care of us.
24 At times, when mom wasn't home, she took care of the three
25 of us, because three of us were left at home, and the rest

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

8

1 of my brothers were in school, residential school.

2 And she was a very strong person, good
3 hearted, kind, but at times, very stern. She was very
4 powerful, physically and in her mind. Living at home with
5 her, at times, was hard because she would leave. And every
6 time she left, I didn't know why, until I got older and
7 realized that the reason she would leave is because she was
8 going to the hospital all the time. She was ill a lot with
9 her epilepsy. And she was on a lot of medication, and it
10 kind of held her back a little bit.

11 A lot of people thought she was not with
12 it at times, but if you were really close to her, you would
13 know that she was. It's just that the medication had
14 slowed her down a lot. Yes. And I remember times when --
15 this one time anyway, when she had left. And she was in
16 the hospital, and I remember I fell off this garbage can
17 kids were playing around, and I busted open my forehead. I
18 had 14 stitches, and I cried for her because she wasn't
19 there.

20 So mom said, "Well, why don't you write
21 her a letter?" So I wrote her a letter. And in it, I
22 didn't know how to spell garbage, so I spelled it, g-a-r-b-
23 i-t-c-h. And when she -- she wrote back.

24 And she said in the letter, "Freda, the
25 next time you write to me, don't swear." And I didn't

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

9

1 realize that. I asked my mom, and mom didn't say anything.
2 She just laughed it off. We used to do a lot of traveling
3 around our house in the bushes, and we used to call it
4 exploring. We would go pick berries, make little huts out
5 in a bush. We would always -- our whole family used to
6 walk to -- it's called "across the portage" because we were
7 poor. We didn't have much, so mom would make bannock,
8 carry tea, and we would go out there, and there was plenty
9 of berries back then. Now there's nothing.

10 And we would stay out there all day and
11 pick berries, eat the berries, bannock, and drink tea, and
12 bring some berries home. And I was the youngest, of
13 course, and cranky as hell. That's too far to walk for me.
14 "So pick me up. Somebody carry me." No, no, nobody wanted
15 to.

16 "Walk, walk, Freda. Come on." So she
17 would always carry me on her shoulders, on her back. And I
18 remember those times. Every time I go to across the
19 portage I think of her and the times we spent out there.
20 We would go swimming. We did a lot of things together in
21 those seven years that I remember her.

22 There were times when mom wasn't home, and
23 things got rough with my dad who came to visit once in a
24 blue moon. And there was always alcohol in his system. So
25 she would take us -- nearby friends, family, wherever, they

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

10

1 would let us in. She would bring us there. She was like
2 our mother. And caring for us, making sure that we were
3 okay and not hurt.

4 And those times I remember her at home
5 when her friends and family would come over. And they
6 were, like, teenagers. And they would have a dance. Boy,
7 I was so happy because I would get to stay out late and
8 watch them because I was the only one who could play the
9 gramophone. You got to rank it up and then put the records
10 on and play it.

11 I was the person playing the music, and I
12 would watch them all dance in bobby socks and skirts, and
13 it was fun. And I remember when she always used to take
14 care of my hair. I had long hair, way down past my back.
15 And she would gently comb my hair, put it in braids or
16 whatever she wanted to do, ponytails. You name it. And
17 she told me that one time, "Freda your hair is so beautiful
18 and curly, wavy. Don't ever cut your hair."

19 I remember that. I kept my hair for a
20 long, long time until -- I don't remember. My daughter was
21 four years old, I think. And then I finally cut it. And I
22 kept that braid. And I always thought of her telling me,
23 "Freda don't cut your hair," in a loving way.

24 Yes, she was very there for us all the
25 time. Every time we would play music and stuff, I always

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

11

1 hear the song in my head and when it played, I cried for
2 her. Everything is Beautiful by Ray Stevens was our song.
3 I heard it for years. I listened to it for years. And it
4 came to a point where I had to stop listening to it because
5 it hurt so much, and it brought back so many memories and
6 hurt.

7 And I always think, she would tell me,
8 "Freda don't cry. Don't cry." She was always there for
9 me, going to school, she'd carry me to school. When I was
10 bullied, she was there. She was there for me and she would
11 always tell me, "Don't cry. Don't cry. It's okay. I'm
12 here." And all these years, every time I think of her.
13 And I cry. And I hurt. And I miss her. I remember those
14 words, "Freda don't cry."

15 It was amazing how such a young person had
16 to take care of us as we grew up when mom wasn't home. We
17 weren't a perfect family, but I remember her strength. You
18 know, she would be bullied because everyone thought that
19 she wasn't with it so much, and she fought back and she was
20 powerful. And I remember she would fight with my brothers.
21 And she would beat them up, too. Or any other boy around
22 or teenager that was there that would bully her. She would
23 fight right back, right now.

24 And I remember her fighting a man, my dad,
25 when he was trying to bully us. And he only came to visit

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

12

1 whenever he pleased. And she fought with him. And she
2 showed him that hey, we're strong now. We're not children
3 anymore. I'm not a child anymore. You can't bully me or
4 my siblings. And he left again. She scared him off.
5 That's how strong she was. And I remember when she would
6 go away at times, "Did you go to the hospital yet?"

7 "No I was at school." She went to
8 residential school, too. And she was, I guess, abused at
9 residential school, as well. And she used to talk about
10 those things, and I didn't understand because I was just a
11 child. And I never went to residential school. So I
12 didn't know what that was all about. And there were times,
13 I remember, we used to do crazy things. And she would sit
14 us -- I remember we used to make toffee. She made toffee
15 for us because we weren't allowed to.

16 She would get out the big cast iron frying
17 pan and put the brown sugar in it and cook it on the stove.
18 And of course, she always had seizures. So this one time
19 she was making the toffee, and she slipped and had a
20 seizure at the same time. And when she dumped the frying
21 pan outside, it fell on the porch, on the floor and she put
22 her hand in there when she had her seizure and burned her
23 hand.

24 And I remember when she went to the
25 hospital and they had to give her a skin graft, and it was

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

13

1 in the shape of a heart. The shape of a heart on her hand,
2 the scar. And I'll never forget that. She showed me where
3 on her leg that they got the skin from. She explained
4 everything to me so I could understand because I thought it
5 was just something she drew on her hand, you know.

6 And I remember for Christmas, her and I
7 got -- and she gave it to me. And it was a little cross.
8 You look inside and you can see our Father in there, the
9 prayer, in little, tiny letters. I don't know how they
10 made it, but it was a cross, and you look inside, and you
11 can see our Father in there. That was so cool, so neat. I
12 kept it for years and then lost it. I don't know what
13 happened to it.

14 Like, there are so many memories that I
15 have of her that, you know, her as a human being, very
16 beautiful person. And for her life to be so short and
17 gone. I know for a fact that she would have loved to have
18 been a mother, as she was pregnant, six months pregnant.
19 I'm sure she would have been the best mother that she could
20 be. But that didn't come to light at all.

21 When I was 19, I had my first child. And
22 then, again, all these memories come out again. And I
23 think of my sister, and she would have had her child when
24 she was 19. You know, just about everything that you do in
25 life comes up again and again and again. And my daughter

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

14

1 had her first child, my granddaughter, when she was 19.
2 And again, you know, it brings out -- it's not bad. It's
3 good. It's good thoughts and memories and you know, I
4 often think she would have been happy to be an aunt, a
5 great aunt.

6 Like, I'm a great grandmother now and my
7 great granddaughter -- my granddaughter had her when she
8 was 18. And it brings it out again. And there's five
9 generations of us -- or four generations of us. And had
10 she been here, I'm sure she would have enjoyed sharing with
11 me and us sharing together how many nieces and nephews I
12 might have had. Who knows? Great nieces and nephews, as
13 well.

14 It sticks in your mind forever, and it
15 will never go away. There will never be closure. I will
16 miss her forever. Not only me, but my family, her friends,
17 the community. Everybody knows what she was like.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So before we
19 actually start talking about when Stella disappeared, can I
20 just ask a couple questions in relation to your sister's
21 epilepsy? Because you had mentioned to the Commissioner
22 that she was on a lot of medications and had to go to the
23 hospital.

24 I know you were a kid, but when you say
25 she was on a lot of medicines, what did she have to take in

1 order to not have seizures or to have life without too many
2 seizures?

3 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: She to have -- you
4 mean you want the names of them? I don't know. I forgot,
5 but they were old-timer meds. Like, not up-to-date, if I
6 can remember now. But at least one for her seizures she
7 had to take Dilantin. And she took these medications every
8 eight hours. And even if she didn't miss, she would still
9 have seizures.

10 And there were times, I remember, before
11 she goes into a seizure, she would either have this little
12 yell, a little voice that would come out, a high pitched
13 sound, or she would sit in one place and stare. And
14 sometimes if you were paying attention, and this was
15 happening, there was always a sign before she would have a
16 seizure. And you would say, "Stella, Stella," you know?
17 And she would, like, come out of it. It was like she would
18 come to, just like she was in a trance. She would come out
19 of it, and it would be fine.

20 But if you didn't, she would go into a
21 seizure. And if she missed her medication, she would seize
22 even more. And when she goes into a seizure, she had grand
23 mal seizures, she would sleep for at least two to four
24 hours, depending. And without that medication, she would
25 not last too long because she would be sleeping. She gets

1 up, and she's so tired from this. And it would take a long
2 time for her to kind of get back into her healthy, jolly
3 self again.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And we know that
5 the time that she disappeared, you were telling the
6 Commissioner, she was pregnant. So in terms of having the
7 medication while she was pregnant or trying to minimize
8 that, I imagine that was pretty important for her, right,
9 to make sure she was on a fairly regular schedule with her
10 medicines?

11 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And then the only
13 other question is, you talked about how people -- so this
14 was back in the late '60s, and I don't think people
15 understood as much about epilepsy or what was happening.

16 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Exactly.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Was there a lot of
18 stigma around it?

19 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. That's why she
20 was, kind of, bullied. And the kids in school would bully
21 me and say, "Your sister has fits," and stuff like this.
22 And I would tell her, and I would cry. It would hurt. And
23 I would tell her.

24 And, "That's okay. Don't cry. Never
25 mind." And sooner or later, she would get back at them.

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

17

1 But yes. These were life sustaining drugs she was on for
2 these grand mal seizures.

3 If she missed more than a day of
4 medication, more than 24 hours, she would continue to
5 seize. Then she would seize up because seizure, sleep,
6 seizure, sleep, more seizure, seizure, seizure. And she
7 would automatically have a heart attack because all your
8 muscles tense up. And a lot of times she would be blue
9 around the mouth because she wasn't breathing, no oxygen.
10 So it wouldn't take long for her to succumb to her death if
11 she was without the drugs.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I want to turn
13 your attention to when she actually disappears. Can you
14 give us a little bit of the background leading up to what
15 happens or before she actually disappears? And you do this
16 with as much detail as you recall or how you are
17 comfortable talking about it.

18 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Well, she came back
19 from Council (ph) hospital and went to St. Anne's Hospital
20 in Fort Smith. That's where she was. And met up with our
21 cousin who she went to visit with her at Long Island (ph).
22 That's near Fort Smith, 50, 60 clicks south of Fort
23 Resolution. Her husband was out there manning the tower,
24 so my sister went out there to visit with her. She invited
25 her over there. So they went.

1 From there, from all the research I've
2 done into it, found out that she went missing -- where she
3 just went missing. And there was almost no rhyme or
4 reason. They did searches and stuff, but I don't think
5 they did enough. They said in the coroner's report that
6 all these witnesses and stuff spoke out and what not. And
7 the RCMP didn't do a good enough job, I think, at
8 communicating.

9 Communication is a big, big important
10 issue when it comes down to anything, anything. Because
11 they did not communicate to our family that this had
12 happened. And apparently my dad was living in Fort Smith
13 at the time, and he heard it off the street. That's how he
14 got to know. And my mother had to hear it from Father
15 Menez (ph) in Fort Resolution.

16 Where were the RCMP at this time? Why did
17 they not communicate to us? And why did the doctors not
18 communicate to anyone that my sister has seizures, needs
19 medication. You know, the welfare of this young lady was
20 not taken care of properly. That was not communicated, as
21 well, to anyone until this coroner's report. Only then, a
22 lot of these things came out.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I will
24 actually pass the copy to the Commissioner here. But just
25 so we're clear, the coroner's office -- no one ever found

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

19

1 Stella.

2 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: There was never a
4 body that the coroner's officer actually examined, was
5 there?

6 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No. So when I heard
7 there was a coroner's inquest, I thought to myself, "Hey
8 there is no body. Why are they having a coroner's
9 inquest?" They should have gone another route, I feel.
10 But that never happened. Instead, they had a coroner's
11 inquest.

12 And immediately after -- because it was
13 in, like, November, and this incident with my sister was in
14 June. So, like, they didn't have time to investigate.
15 Like, there was no proper investigation as well. And who
16 is heading this? Who is involved? Like, Renewable
17 Resources. I mean, there was so many inconsistencies in
18 this whole thing that I found it to be just so not right.
19 Not right to be dealing with a person's life like this.
20 And not only the person, but the family, the community as a
21 whole.

22 Everyone needs to be on board here, you
23 know? All the government programs that they have out there
24 -- that they had or they should have had, that I hope they
25 have now.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I am looking at
2 this very large, heavy package. And it is dated, so we are
3 going to pass it to the Commissioner. But it will go into
4 exhibit in a PDF format because the paper is fairly
5 delicate. But before I hand it to him, I just want to
6 point out a couple of things. You have seen this; right?

7 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You have been
9 looking at this, and you had assistance locating this? And
10 was it Curtis who helped you get this?

11 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: No. So this was -
13 - how did you come to this document?

14 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Well, I came to
15 Yellowknife -- I don't remember the officer's name or the -
16 - the RCMP called me up one day and said they wanted DNA
17 testing done. And I asked, "Why. Is there something I
18 should know?" And they said for future reference
19 concerning your sister Stella. I said, "Okay."

20 So I came here, and I did the testing, and
21 this is when I came across this. The RCMP told me that --
22 because I said how can I get some information? It's called
23 ATIP. I guess you can get it on the computer, off the
24 Internet. And he said also some more information you can
25 get, he said, "The coroner's office and that is where you

1 can get some information. It's public review and I'll set
2 up a time when you come here and you go over there, and you
3 get your copy." So I did.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So you are
5 correct. The inquiry was public. And so if it was public,
6 you were able to access the document because it was public.
7 And I notice, and you have seen this, but I have noticed
8 that the index to witness lists 40 witnesses.

9 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So at the time of
11 the inquest, which you have explained to the Commissioner,
12 was in November, so about six months after your sister went
13 missing. About 40 people were interviewed to find out what
14 possibly happened.

15 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And this was all
17 without there ever being a body or your sister found?

18 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right. Not even a
19 piece of item that belonged to her. Nothing.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So having reviewed
21 the document and learning more, kind of, you have learned
22 more about the events that happened when she disappeared
23 because of your own advocacy, because of going out and
24 trying to find information; right?

25 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so you have
2 explained to the Commissioner your sister was visiting
3 family out at a lake, out at a tower. Can you explain what
4 you mean by "tower" just so --

5 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: It's a fire watch
6 tower where they hire someone. And they go out there for
7 Renewable Resources, and they radio in fires, there's a
8 tower. You go up there and you're looking around and you
9 spot a fire. Then you radio it in to Renewable Resources,
10 wherever you are closest to, that would be Forth Smith.

11 And you would always have to have
12 batteries. It was all battery-operated radios, so Fort
13 Smith should know that all these places need to have all
14 their batteries, everything that you need to live out
15 there. And you can't just walk off. There's no roads off
16 of there. There's no bridge.

17 It's an island in the middle of a river.
18 So you have to have a lot of -- what do you call it? They
19 have to provide you with everything that you need in order
20 to run it properly, in order for them to know. So
21 batteries was a big issue there because they couldn't radio
22 back to Forth Smith because the batteries had gone dead.

23 But apparently Fort Smith, it said in
24 there that they knew that the batteries were low but did
25 not bring any until this event happened.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I know we are kind
2 of piecing it all together, but so your sister is visiting
3 family. And one of the family members' husband is the
4 person responsible for the fire tower. This was the person
5 hired. And so, you know, there is an assumption that if
6 you are at the fire tower, you have an ability to
7 communicate. So your sister is out there, and then she
8 runs out of medication at some point?

9 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. She runs out of
10 medication. And then apparently the pilots came there,
11 never brought any batteries, but dropped them off. And
12 they were given a letter to give to the doctor to write a
13 prescription. And he was to bring the medication back
14 because he was coming back the next day, supposedly. But
15 that never happened either. And the doctor didn't
16 communicate to anyone that she needed this medication
17 immediately. So she was without.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So she is out on
19 the land, she doesn't have access, but at one point, the
20 pilot comes in, they have a conversation, and they are
21 supposed to be bringing batteries, too. So batteries and
22 medications?

23 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And they do not
25 come the next day, and we do not know why. I could be

1 wrong, but I do not think it is known exactly why they did
2 not come back the next day. It was not a weather issue?

3 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No. It wasn't a
4 weather issue. I think they felt a fire somewhere -- I
5 don't think it was too close. But that was the number one
6 priority.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So in the
8 interviews, people talk about what they recall or how your
9 sister was starting to act or react as she did not have
10 medication.

11 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: She was having
13 some --

14 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Hallucinations.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. So she was
16 having some different symptoms. What were those?

17 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Hallucinations,
18 deliriums, didn't sound like her when she's without
19 medication, that I know.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And at one point
21 they figured that the helicopter is coming back and going
22 to land that day. What happens? Like, when is she last
23 seen? What is she doing when she is last seen?

24 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Well, apparently she
25 had some seizures -- a seizure, whatever, and started to

1 develop them more and more throughout these nine days that
2 she was without medication. And hallucinating and what not
3 and playing hide and seek behind the trees. And she went
4 down to a water hole with the couple to go get water to
5 bring back to the cabin. And she never returned.

6 They said she had a paper shopping bag
7 with items in it and all her clothing. And it rained that
8 evening. Now, don't you think someone would have found
9 something because the paper bag would break? It would be
10 strewn out somewhere -- like, I mean who is going to be
11 carrying all this stuff in their arms in the rain or
12 whatever.

13 Like, I mean, is she going to know if this
14 is what's happening with her? Is she going to know enough
15 to pick up the items and whatever and carry on wherever she
16 was going; right? No. But they never found not a trace.
17 Not a trace of her. She just disappeared.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And in terms of --
19 like, what were the things they did find in terms of -- I
20 know a number of witnesses -- a lot of similar questions
21 were asked of different witnesses. But a lot of witnesses
22 -- like, there are conversations throughout whether there
23 was some blood on trees or in places.

24 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: Yes. Like, when they
25 had searched, these witnesses said when they were on the

1 search, one had seen -- some had seen blood on a wooden
2 bed. Some had seen bloody towels in the garbage nearby.
3 Some had seen blood on trees that were nearby, as well, and
4 I don't know. They never really knew what -- they never
5 investigated that.

6 They just said that these witnesses said
7 these things, but there was no follow-up on it, I don't
8 think, ever. And I don't know. And they said where she
9 was last, there was a fire within 15 minutes of them
10 leaving her there. Because they figured she was going to
11 come back, as well. But there was a fire in that area
12 where she last was, within 15 minutes of her being there.
13 So an area was burned where she was. But still no sign of
14 her or any items or any cans. Cans won't burn. Bones
15 won't burn in such a light fire.

16 Yes. They searched. They dug. They dug
17 up holes. They dug a few places and stuff but they never
18 did -- the checked that water pond and whatever. I guess
19 it wasn't very deep and whatever. They looked for tracks.
20 And at some point someone said that there was tracks on the
21 moss. I don't think you can make tracks on moss. But you
22 definitely can on the mud that was around the little pond,
23 but they never ever did investigate those tracks, as well.
24 They never said whose it was.

25 They just said there were tracks there and

1 there were only three people there. So whose tracks were
2 they? They didn't investigate that. They didn't say which
3 direction it went or anything like that. And they had
4 helicopters come around searching this way and that way.
5 And the only reason the helicopter came that day was
6 because he saw that fire, the smoke from that fire. So he
7 came there and found out that this was burning, and that's
8 how they started getting people there to fight that fire in
9 that area.

10 And they also got dogs out there -- a dog
11 and his master. But the funny thing is, when I read all
12 these witnesses' statements that when they brought the dog
13 out there, they did not search the immediate area with the
14 dog. The helicopter dropped the dog and his master off
15 over there, searched an area, they picked him up, brought
16 him to another area over there.

17 Why was he not searching the immediate
18 area where she was? If they are looking for a person,
19 they're going to need some item or whatever to find this
20 certain scent. But there was no, nothing. No items left
21 around. But she was in that cabin, so the dog is going to
22 find her scent there, and from there go. And I'm sure he
23 would have smelled her tracks if those were her tracks over
24 there and followed and so on and so forth. But that never
25 happened, as well.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms of the
2 cabin, in the inquest, there is mention of the fact the
3 door was being locked and that it was being nailed shut
4 because the family members were concerned she was going to
5 wander out in the night as her hallucinations and stuff got
6 worse. So they nailed the doors shut so people could not
7 come and go. Do you recall that or can you share a little
8 bit about that?

9 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: Yes. Well, my cousin
10 was afraid of bears and stuff that might wander and enter
11 the house. So her husband, Joe (ph), spiked the doors
12 shut. I don't know how many spikes they had in there or
13 how long they were, how far in they were, or anything.
14 None of that was released, none of that information. But
15 apparently, he nailed the doors shut or spiked it shut.
16 And then they played cards until 4:00 o'clock in the
17 morning. They went to bed.

18 At 5:00 o'clock, at one point, they said
19 she woke them up at 6:00 o'clock -- or 5:00 o'clock and
20 asked to go outside because she saw some people outside and
21 wanted to go out there and see these people, these men that
22 were out there. And she wanted to go home with them.

23 And before that, in a statement, they said
24 that they had all sharp instruments, everything, knives and
25 anything that you can hurt yourself with, because they were

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

29

1 afraid that she might hurt herself. So everything was
2 hidden under their bed, apparently. And at 6:00 o'clock in
3 the morning, she was asking to open the door. So she was
4 given a hammer and very shortly after that, she had the
5 door open.

6 Well, if they were afraid of her hurting
7 herself or anybody else or anything, like, why did they
8 give her a hammer after they hid everything else? That was
9 never investigated. I don't understand that. And yet, she
10 opened the door, and she was outside. She peeked outside,
11 came back in. They had breakfast. She didn't have any,
12 and then from there, she went out. And she asked them to
13 come with her, and they said, "No. This is too far."

14 And they said she said she was at Mission
15 Island which is close to Rez (ph), and we go there for
16 picnics all the time. And they tried to explain to her
17 where she was, and she wouldn't comprehend that,
18 apparently. And then she had a seizure. She hurt her
19 head. She had a cut on her head. And then they decided to
20 go out for water at 10:00 o'clock in the morning. And then
21 about a quarter after -- after they went to the pond, got
22 the water, my sister was out there. She was never to be
23 seen again.

24 There was that fire there which brought
25 the helicopter, apparently, at 1:00 o'clock in the

1 afternoon. And he brought the medication and the
2 batteries, I guess, I think. But it was too late. She
3 didn't have a chance to take the medication. So they said
4 they brought it back to Fort Smith.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you have
6 learned all that mostly from what is in this public
7 inquest?

8 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You, obviously,
10 like, you have expressed that you think there are some
11 inconsistencies, and you have a lot more questions than
12 what was answered in that process.

13 But one of the things I want to ask you
14 is, what is the finding? What does the inquest -- so there
15 are jurors that listen. They hear these witnesses. There
16 is some medical evidence. What is the decision, at the end
17 of the day, in this inquest of what happened to your
18 sister?

19 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Misadventure. Death
20 by misadventure. How do they know she is dead if there is
21 no body? I don't understand that. I don't even understand
22 why they had a coroner's inquest in the first place. But
23 yes. Death by misadventure, which I totally find hard to
24 believe.

25 I have also read the police report, which

1 first time you saw it. But did they also explain to you
2 that there had been, maybe, some changes in law, privacy
3 law?

4 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. I said, "Well,
5 how come I can read everything, names and everything in the
6 coroner's inquest and the same names are in the police
7 report. What is the difference?" Well, apparently there
8 are different privacy legal issues there with the RCMP, the
9 federal government, and everyone has their own privacy
10 laws.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. And some
12 jurisdictions, when there has been a finding by the
13 coroner's office or a chief examiner of death, it will
14 often result in the police file being closed. But is the
15 police file closed now, that you are aware of?

16 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: No. I still kept on
17 bugging them with the help of Curtis here, my information
18 guy. And we questioned, and they gave us a little summary,
19 like a four-page summary of a police report. And I know
20 the police report is bigger than that, you know? And it's
21 almost like he gave us the same information that's in the
22 coroner's inquest, but I know there's more to it than that.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so is it open?
24 Is it closed? Have they explained to you where it is at
25 since there has been a finding of her death?

1 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: It's open, but it's
2 just sitting there. I don't know what the word he used but
3 --

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Are they actively
5 investigating it right now?

6 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Oh, it's inactive.
7 It is just sitting there collecting dust, kind of thing.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So it remains as
9 an unresolved police file, but in the Northwest Territories
10 there is a coroner's inquest that makes a finding of death
11 by misadventure?

12 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, obviously, you
14 have more questions than what the investigation or the
15 inquest had and more questions about what is known in terms
16 of what happened to your sister or some of the details.

17 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. I still have a
18 lot of unanswered questions that I know can be answered,
19 but it has just not happened.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms of -- and
21 again, I know you were young when your sister Stella went
22 missing --

23 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But you had said -
25 - and I just really want to go back to this point because

1 you have said there were searches, they looked in the pond,
2 there was a number of things that were done to, actually,
3 at least, initially look for your sister.

4 But you were talking about communications.
5 The fact that nobody was actually communicating to the
6 family about what they were doing. Can you tell us a
7 little bit more? Like, you said your dad found out on the
8 street. You mom found out from the priest.

9 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: What were the next
11 steps after you first found out Stella was missing? Who
12 was in communication with you, sort of, moving forward or
13 up to the inquest?

14 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Nobody. There was
15 just no communications whatsoever. Apparently, police told
16 whoever, the priest, and I don't know. There was just a
17 lot of hearsay and stuff.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did the family
19 actually participate? Did your mom or daughter, are they a
20 witness in this?

21 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: My mother is.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so she got to,
23 actually, provide a little information?

24 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: A little bit, yes.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now, you are a

1 nurse, and you have been a nurse for years. So much like
2 you have come to the information about your sister's
3 disappearance, you have come to a better understanding of
4 epilepsy and medications and really, I think --

5 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right. Back then I
6 just knew when she had a seizure, we knew what to do
7 because it was so frequent that it was nothing. We weren't
8 scared. The first time I used to be scared a bit. But
9 after that, I grew into it. I knew what to do and how to
10 react to help her and, you know, just so that she would
11 recover faster and whatever. Although, we had nothing, you
12 know. But just to watch and you had to be there.

13 And now I know. I know all the ins and
14 outs of it. Like, I mean, I never knew back then that she
15 could die from it because as a child, you don't know about
16 death and stuff. Well, she never died before, so how am I
17 supposed to know that, that could happen? But now I do.
18 And that was never looked into, investigated into that she
19 will succumb to her death in epileptic fits, it's called,
20 where you keep on having seizures over and over and over
21 and over.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: There were some
23 findings or recommendations -- I'm sorry -- out of the
24 inquest?

25 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In relation to a
2 couple things. Do you recall what those were?

3 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: That the RCMP should
4 communicate with families immediately before word gets out
5 on the street. Because that always happens. And the first
6 responders are usually the RCMP, but they never
7 communicated that. There was no, nothing else.

8 There was no other -- the Renewable
9 Resources should be up-to-date with everything. They
10 should communicate better. They should have sufficient
11 needs at these towers. I don't know. But now we have a
12 lot more, a lot more groups and organizations and more help
13 these days that I hope today, and in the future, that this
14 doesn't happen anymore.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: On the very last
16 page, Commissioner Eyolfson, there is the decision of the
17 jury and the coroner. And there is a list of
18 recommendations. Just so everyone knows what I am doing,
19 he has the copy there. I am just giving you that same last
20 page.

21 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Okay. There is a lot
22 of information to remember.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It is. But when
24 you were just talking about that the next of kin be
25 notified first, that is one of the recommendations?

1 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. "Hospital and
2 medical authorities take more interest in people in such a
3 case of Stella Cardinal. That Forestry have spare
4 batteries and radio on hand at isolated towers. RCMP
5 should have had more experienced men for ground search" (as
6 read).

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So interestingly,
8 this is an inquiry -- inquest. Sorry. Back in the '70s.
9 But a couple of the things -- so you know, you may have
10 concerns and a lot of questions, but a couple of the things
11 they actually recommend back in 1970 make a lot of sense.
12 Like, the next of kin should be notified sooner.

13 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: It makes a lot of
14 sense today, too.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Exactly. That the
16 hospital and medical authorities -- and they say in case,
17 "more interesting people such as the case of Stella
18 Cardinal," (as read) because back then that whole stigma --

19 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But even in the
21 '70s, they recognize the need to address the types of
22 issues she was having and the lack of medication. And I
23 mean, it seems pretty obvious that the spare batteries in a
24 tower that is designed to be a communication centre for
25 fires have batteries. So do you feel -- like, whatever

1 your other concerns are with the fact that an inquest was
2 held, although there was no body, do you think that some of
3 the recommendations they made, made sense and should have
4 been helpful?

5 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Exactly. Yes. The
6 RCMP never notified us. They never notified the next of
7 kin right away. The doctors didn't communicate the health
8 needs of my sister. And RWED (ph) didn't have the
9 batteries at the tower.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Just for anybody
11 who is not from here, what does RWED stand for? Do you
12 know?

13 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I forgot.

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It is okay. It is
15 the renewable resources. And wildlife.

16 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Wildlife something or
17 other.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: They were the
19 folks that were in charge of the fire towers and, like,
20 sending out messages to deal with --

21 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: And hiring the people
22 to work up there. Yes.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so we know you
24 still have a lot of questions, and you have provided us a
25 lot of information, but I want to actually provide you an

1 opportunity to share with us some ideas and recommendations
2 and, specifically, about how you came to information.

3 I'm so struck by how much work you have
4 had to do to find out as much information about you sister
5 and that not everybody has the time or has the tenacity to
6 keep going after information. So I am wondering if you can
7 even share some tips with other families about how you got
8 things or what you had to do in order to make sure you were
9 finding out information and where you got help from?

10 Because there is a good part of this story
11 about how you can lean on others to get help. And that
12 might help other families know what they can do, too.

13 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes. Well, on my
14 journey, I just hounded and hounded and hounded the people.
15 I asked questions everywhere I went. And trying to find
16 out where to get information, where to get files from and
17 all this. And then all of a sudden this guardian angel
18 popped up: Curtis Mandeville. He helped me with a lot of
19 this last part of the journey to today, to help me get all
20 of this information and stuff. And yes. A lot of
21 telephone calls.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And Curtis is here
23 in a support capacity, but I understand his current job is
24 actually to help families find information?

25 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

40

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So do you know
2 what his title is? Besides that information guy? Is he
3 the family information liaison coordinator?

4 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So when the
6 inquiry came out and announced different provinces and
7 jurisdictions would have additional money dedicated to
8 family liaison units that would help families find
9 information, you found assistance. But I think you guys
10 probably knew each other even before that; right?

11 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: We never did speak
12 about my sister's case at all. Never.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But the help you
14 are getting now from Curtis, is, actually, something other
15 families can access, too; right?

16 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Exactly.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So you come in
18 with all this tenacity and all this information, but now
19 you have someone else who can help you get some
20 information.

21 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Right.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And has that been
23 helpful?

24 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Very, very, very
25 helpful. We need more. We need more out there to help all

1 the families who are in need and don't know what avenue to
2 take and where to go. But I was already on the road trip
3 so, you know. He just pointed me in the right direction,
4 as well.

5 Like, I was going all over the place. He
6 just said, "Hey. Let's go this way." And we got there,
7 and we got a lot more information than what I would have
8 done by myself.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: No. And that is
10 great because I think sometimes we are always focusing on
11 what is not happening, so when we can recognize what is
12 happening well or how we can make it better, this might be
13 one of those examples.

14 Would you agree with me that having the
15 type of resources that actually are dedicated to helping
16 families get the information they need, so it is kind of
17 being test driven here when they announced the Inquiry and
18 special funding. But would you, as a recommendation, say
19 now we need to do this moving forward? It can't just be
20 short-term that provinces and territories actually have to
21 continue to provide these resources.

22 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: Yes. Exactly. We
23 need these resources and other resources. Like, I mean,
24 that can help us communicate properly in every aspect.
25 Like, I mean, there are a lot of resources out there:

Hearing - Public
Freda Cardinal
(Stella Regina Cardinal)

42

1 Different group of people, different societies, councils.
2 Like, we all need to work together in order to get things
3 done or to get information to like -- communication is a
4 big, big thing. And I know there are groups out there, but
5 we all have to communicate and come together.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In that same way,
7 are there ideas and recommendations for the Commissioner or
8 the Commission, in general, that you have that you think
9 would be helpful? I know it is a big question.

10 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I'm stumped. I had
11 it, but it passed in my head. I had it written down there
12 somewhere.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Maybe let me help
14 you out a little in terms of asking more specific
15 questions, if you are okay with that?

16 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Okay.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You were just
18 talking about how if organizations and everyone was working
19 together better, so we now have this (indiscernible)
20 office. But are there other ways that different services
21 could communicate with each other so that when you are
22 communicating together, there is a better way for everyone
23 to know what is happening? Like, if there was some type of
24 coordinator or someone that, at least, in the Northwest
25 Territories --

1 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I don't know, but I
2 was thinking about investigative services, like, I mean, I
3 hope we have a society of some sort of investigators that
4 would help some cases that are still open. You know, maybe
5 there is hope out there. Who knows. And I think a lot of
6 times, too, that when you are looking for a person, they
7 should invite the rangers in as well. I would like to
8 recommend that.

9 I have been a ranger since 1996 because I
10 thought, you know, if anybody ever went missing, I would
11 advocate and get the government to get the rangers involved
12 because they know the land. They are experienced people.
13 They can live out on the land no matter what the weather
14 may be, and they can be out there and be of a lot of help.

15 So I have been a ranger since 1996. I
16 haven't been active in the past few years since I moved
17 back to Hay River, but yes. That is one of my -- because
18 they are everywhere. They're all over Canada. And they
19 know their areas more than anybody else does.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms of the
21 rangers recommendation, just so if people do not know who
22 the rangers are, can you tell me a little bit about who the
23 rangers are?

24 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: The rangers are a
25 group of people who are to protect Canada. We are the

1 frontline people and so if there is anything that happened,
2 we are, kind of, like the scouts to the foreign people who
3 are going to come to our land and help us keep sovereignty;
4 right?

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: The rangers are
6 trained, though; right?

7 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: Oh, yes. We are
8 trained.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: They are trained
10 in the geographies or other geographies with wilderness
11 skills, with first aid skills, with a number of skills to
12 help people. And just so we understand your recommendation
13 properly, because it is a great one, and it is nationwide.
14 You are right. If rangers were called in on certain types
15 of searches, it would increase the people who are actually
16 looking, but also a group of people with a higher skill
17 set.

18 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: Right.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so --

20 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: And it is probably
21 cheaper for the government, too.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Efficiency, on top
23 of everything. Okay, no. That is a great recommendation.
24 Are there other recommendations either in relation to the
25 search or the process after that you can think of?

1 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: I can't think of it
2 right now, but can these recommendations be handwritten and
3 handed in, as well?

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. Absolutely.
5 Anything in terms of -- you are testifying now, but if you
6 wanted to make further submissions in writing, and I should
7 not speak on behalf of the Commissioner, but I am sure he
8 would agree with me, we would be more than happy to accept
9 those. And sometimes you need to think a little deeper.

10 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: I know. It's kind of
11 hard to be put on the hot seat. I mean, you are used to
12 it, but I mean, you know someone who is not used to it.
13 It's kind of overwhelming.

14 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You know, I just
15 want to make sure that we are not missing anything. Like,
16 you have shared a lot and the evidence that you are
17 providing today, I think, has been very helpful.

18 What are some of the big things you would
19 not want to miss? I know, you know, you had told me and
20 you have said today you still cannot understand the fact
21 that there is a finding of death when there is no body. Is
22 there any recommendation around that? Like, when inquests
23 happen or occur, how can they make findings in absence of
24 evidence or --

25 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: Well, there are a lot

1 of people out there who know, usually, more than what is
2 written in these things, in these books, ledgers, whatever.
3 Because there are always people out there who know. And
4 there are always people out there who talk. You know, it
5 would be awesome if at least one person would come out. It
6 doesn't matter what case it is, and just help us. Give a
7 little tip, a little answer, a little something. You can
8 be anonymous. You can help so many people.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And is it fair to
10 say that now that you have collected all this information,
11 you have some more knowledge, you are still suspicious?
12 You still feel like there was potentially some wrongdoing,
13 but you do not have those answers? Is that fair to say
14 that your sister could have somehow been done wrong by, or
15 that she did not have the right care -- at minimum, she did
16 not have the right care?

17 MS. FREDa CARDINAL: At minimum, she did
18 not have the right care. And I am suspicious. I have
19 feelings that had everything been put in place properly,
20 and you know, all these proceedings, testimony, and all
21 this were done right, I guess. I don't know. Maybe there
22 would have been a different outcome.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In the
24 possibilities of the world -- like, in the inquest, the
25 medical opinions, and you said yourself that your sister

1 would not have lasted without medication. So there is
2 always a likely presumption that she has passed. But one
3 of the things that is important is, that when people have
4 information that they do not share, so are you interested
5 in pleading or compelling people to share information?

6 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Yes.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: To come forward --
8 after all these years to come forward if they had any more
9 information?

10 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Exactly. Like, I
11 said, people talk. And a lot of people know more
12 information than anything that was said in these
13 testimonies and what not. And yes. If anyone out there
14 knows something, come forward. It doesn't matter. You can
15 always remain anonymous. But to help the families go
16 through this, and maybe there will be closure for a family,
17 and they will be on their healing journey.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I only have one
19 more question before I am going to ask Commissioner
20 Eyolfson if he has comments or questions. And that would
21 be, what if anything would you want to do to share the
22 legacy of your sister? What is a good way to memorialize
23 her, to make sure everyone knows who she was or if there
24 was a way to honour her, what would it be?

25 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: I don't know. Just

1 to get her story out. Let everybody know. But I'm not --
2 I don't know. It is just that she will always in my heart,
3 and that is enough for me that she will always be there.
4 There will never be closure.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You have done a
6 really good job, actually, though, in terms of sharing her
7 story today. So part of that has happened because of your
8 courage.

9 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Thank you.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So thank you.
11 Commissioner Eyolfson, did you have any questions or
12 comments for Freda?

13 --- STATEMENTS FROM COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON

14 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: I do not
15 have any questions to ask, Freda. I think you have shared
16 a lot, and I think Christa has asked you a number of
17 questions, so I do not have any additional questions to ask
18 at this point. I just want to thank you for sharing about
19 Stella and telling us some of the good memories that you
20 had, but telling us her story. So I appreciate that.
21 Thank you for all your recommendations, as well, and for
22 coming and participating and contributing to the work of
23 the National Inquiry. I really want to thank you for that.

24 And before you leave, I have a small gift
25 of appreciation for you for sharing your truth today. I am

1 going to as if Grandmother Blu will help me with that.

2 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: So Commissioner
3 Eyolfson is going to bring this over to you. One is the
4 scarf from the Native Women's Association here that will
5 help you with your healing journey as you go forward.

6 And the other is an eagle feather. And
7 these feathers have been collected right from the west
8 coast to the east coast. And they have been collected by
9 matriarchs and grandmothers and community members to help
10 the family members who come to testify and share their
11 stories with they healing journey and to honour you and to
12 thank you for this information that you have given so that
13 others can learn from you and others can know that they are
14 not alone. And neither are you. We are here to support
15 each and every family and survivor and to hear their
16 stories to make differences and to make recommendations.
17 So thank you very much for this hard work that you have
18 done today.

19 MS. FREDA CARDINAL: Thank you.

20 --- Exhibits (code: P01P09P0301)

21 Exhibit 1: PDF copy of transcript,
22 Inquest into the Death of Stella
23 Virginia Cardinal, held at Fort
24 Resolution N.W.T. between November
25 24-26, 1970 (197 pages divided into

1 my elders, [Muriel] Betsina (ph), who lives in [N'dilo],
2 supporting me. Grateful for her to be here. And I also have
3 my good friend, Lila Erasmus, she's also from [N'dilo].
4 Lives there. [Nacho Nyak Dun] person from the Yukon that
5 lives here. And then I have Roy Erasmus, Sr., also from the
6 area supporting -- from this area supporting me as well.
7 And I'm grateful for their support. So mahsi.

8 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Mahsi. It's
9 customary that there's an oath administered, and an oath is
10 basically a recognition of the importance of a place, a
11 process, and the importance of exchanging. You've come to
12 share about your grandmother, about the loss of your
13 people, and these are sacred things, and I accept that as
14 oath in itself. So we're ready to begin when you are.

15 MS. CINDY ALLEN: Mahsi. I'm grateful to be
16 here to further talk about my grandmother and her story,
17 but also her story is that which is faced by many
18 Indigenous women, Dene women, in the north and in the
19 Northwest Territories. I'm here to honour her because I
20 want things to improve, not only for people in my community
21 in [N'dilo] and in Dettah, but also for all Indigenous
22 women and girls. Things need to change and I'm here to
23 advocate for change in a good way. It's not about laying
24 blame, but it's about moving forward in a good direction.
25 So that's my intention.

26 So I presented at the inquiry in

1 that information. I have also had to do an ATIP request to
2 GNWT health and social services to get the records about my
3 grandmother's health care. And that isn't easy, as well.
4 But I'm doing that. And people are cooperating and I
5 appreciate that. The RCMP are cooperating and I have other
6 supports that are also helping me along my journey, and I
7 really appreciate that.

8 So I'm continuing that. And this is
9 another part of that story. So there -- things aren't very
10 good here in the Northwest Territories for women, and it's
11 likely the same across the country for our Indigenous women
12 and girls. I would like to see more supports in the
13 community for women and girls. I want to mention, because I
14 have also been given permission by [Cecelia] Kell to tell
15 her story. So there was a CEDAW ruling in 2012 that found
16 the government of Northwest Territories and Canada, they've
17 -- the U.N. found that they had discriminated against
18 [Cecelia] Kell, a Tli Cho woman. And the remedies they
19 suggested were that she be given a house and that she be
20 compensated for the trauma and loss and hardship that she
21 faced. And then the third ruling was that Canada, the GNWT,
22 hire Indigenous women to provide information, legal
23 information to Indigenous about their court challenges and
24 help them.

25 The system is failing our women and girls.
26 For [Cecelia] Kell, she's homeless in Toronto. She could

1 not get the supports in the Northwest Territories. She had
2 to leave the Northwest Territories to get her supports. And
3 that's sad. And I understand that they are not Indigenous
4 women in the legal symptom helping, that are getting
5 trained by Canada or hired by them to help Indigenous
6 women. So that has not happened and is that needs to
7 happen. And so part of my story here is to talk about
8 Indigenous law, because that also has to come forward, and
9 that's what I want to speak mostly about, is that we have
10 our Indigenous laws, and we need to revive those, talk
11 about them, teach them to our children and our families.
12 Through colonization we have lost a lot of those teachings.
13 People don't understand what they mean, our Dene laws. And
14 I think that needs to happen.

15 So I want to speak about -- about -- about
16 that some more. So in the north and in the Northwest
17 Territories, Yamoria is widely known -- that's the name of
18 our law maker, our Dene law maker. He gave us our sacred
19 laws. He's also known as Yamozha, but he's -- his teachings
20 and his laws are our -- what people -- Dene people should
21 know. But we also need to be critical about that. So the
22 Yamozha -- the importance of the Dene laws are so important
23 that the Dene nation logo, our flag, which I have presented
24 right here, is about one of the more widely known stories
25 of Yamoria. So Yamoria was here when the world was new. And
26 he walked around the world and he went around teaching Dene

1 people our laws. And he also went around, he shaped the
2 landscape and he shaped [the laws], and he gave stories to
3 us through his travels of where he went. So we have sacred
4 places in our landscape where Yamozha, Yamoria traveled.
5 The more widely story is that Yamoria traveled around and
6 he went to kill the marauding giant animals. So you can
7 tell that the story is very old because the -- when you
8 think about giant animals and monsters, well, when was
9 that? When did we have giant animals? That was when the
10 world was new. At the time of the dinosaurs. The stories
11 are thousands of years old.

12 So the one that's more widely known about
13 Yamoria, he traveled around and he went chasing after the
14 beavers that were killing people, and so he chased the
15 beavers up and around [Denendeh] and up the McKenzie River.
16 And at the fork of the McKenzie River and the Bear River, I
17 believe -- no the confluence of the two rivers, he killed
18 one of the beavers and he had a fire and he cooked the
19 beaver and he ate it, and that's a sacred fire, because the
20 grease dripped down and we're supposed to remember the
21 sacredness of that. And then after he ate the beaver, he
22 took the skin of the beaver and he placed it on Bear
23 Mountain. And you can see the three hides of the beavers on
24 the Bear Mountain. And that you can see today. You go out
25 on the land and the [Sahtu] and you can look at Bear Rock
26 and you can see those hides there. And so people know that.

1 And so he was traveling around teaching
2 people about the Dene laws and cleaning the land and making
3 it safe for everyone. So that is the most widely known --
4 and it's the general story about Yamoria and it's so
5 important that we've recognized that in our flag and who we
6 are as people. But we don't -- we need to unpack more
7 stories and more truths about what do the Indigenous laws
8 actually mean? I think we've lost them through
9 colonization, and we need to uncover that. And we need to
10 uncover women's stories and our Indigenous stories.

11 Most of the stories in the Northwest
12 Territories and Dene, a lot of them are men, men's stories.
13 They've been recorded by anthropologists and others but
14 that's the male perspective. And this will become very
15 evident when I tell one version of the story. Because if
16 you look at it with a critical eye, an Indigenous woman
17 perspective, a Dene woman perspective, you'll see that the
18 stories condone violence, death, murder. They speak about
19 that. And these are the stories that are taught to our kids
20 and to our families. Well, we need to hear other stories
21 beyond violence, death, murder, cannibalism. And we need to
22 hear Indigenous Dene interpretations of our laws. And I'm
23 just going to speak generally just what our Dene laws are.
24 Because they themselves also need to be further examined.
25 And I just want to acknowledge all those wonderful Dene
26 women and men who have supported me and taught me about

1 the law of coexistence. And I think that this is alongside
2 share what you have. The law of coexistence speaks about
3 respect and paying the land and the animals for the things
4 that they provide to you. And that if you don't pay the
5 land, pay the animals, pay the spirits, you could face
6 serious hardship. You could starve. You could have bad
7 things happen to you because you're not paying them
8 respect, the animals. And the spirits will leave you. So
9 the law of coexistence is really important as well.

10 So Yamozha, these are the laws that he
11 gave us as Dene people. And he -- and so I would say that
12 Dene people -- some Dene people, they just implicitly
13 practice our Indigenous laws, our Dene laws. They do share,
14 they do care for other peoples, they do help, and they are
15 respectful. But then as we know this inquiry is here to
16 tell the story of Indigenous women and girls. There's a
17 break in the laws. There's a break in the traditions.
18 Things are unbalanced, because if people followed these
19 laws from Yamozha, then we'd not need to be here speaking
20 about it, because we'd all be around the camp fire. We
21 would be in the circle. You'd have men and women together,
22 standing together. So I'm very grateful to have my
23 supports, men and women here, as it's very important.

24 So I'm going to speak about one version of
25 Yamozha story, and that's Yamozha and His Beaver Wife. And
26 this story is told by -- it's a [Vital Thomas story, a

1 Tlichon] person. Archie [Beaulieu], a respected artist who
2 recently passed away, he did the beautiful illustrations of
3 the story. And it's translated by Mary [Siemens]. So I'm
4 going to ask that we go through the story and Francis [Zoe]
5 also narrates part of the story, and he's [Tlichon] person.
6 So that I'm going to ask that the audio tech people prime
7 that up and you'll hear the story, and then I'll give you
8 my interpretation and critique of that, and the reason why
9 I think we need to talk more about our women stories,
10 because as I mentioned I think it's the men's stories that
11 are being told, but we need now to tell our women stories,
12 and there needs to be more work done in that area. That
13 would be a recommendation that the inquiry can bring
14 forward, is that they can recommend the documentation of
15 these stories and helping provide the means to make that
16 happen. Because right now that's sporadic at best. And I
17 see that difference between the Northwest Territories and
18 the Yukon. Because I live in the Yukon right now. The Yukon
19 is a matriarchal society for most Indigenous people, and
20 there's many stories and books of Indigenous women. Yukon
21 First Nation women's stories. I haven't seen that in the
22 Northwest Territories. I don't see an Indigenous women's
23 story book. And I would like to see that because they --
24 our stories have our laws and our teachings in them, and we
25 need to revive that. So if we -- I'm going to ask the tech
26 people to start the audio and I will flip the pages of the

1 prompts and we'll carry on. And then after that I'll give
2 my interpretation. Mahsi.

3 *Audio recording begins.*

4 [FRANCIS ZOE - English introduction to
5 Yamozha and His Beaver Wife]: [This is a magnificent story.
6 It's supposed to be a very romantic story. It's supposed to
7 be very touching the way some people told the story.
8 There's various peoples that told the story, especially the
9 elders. Many elders told us the stories.] In those days we
10 didn't tell stories, we didn't have TV, telephones, videos,
11 such things. So it was really unique to hear stories like
12 this. Some of these stories were very touching. Tells a lot
13 of things about [Dogrib] life, [Tlicho] life. But
14 basically what -- who is telling this story right now is,
15 [Vital] Thomas. He's a unique person. People would,
16 especially young people my age took a lot of their time
17 just to listen to what he has to say. He's a very unique
18 person. He's a very good story teller. Even my brothers and
19 his grandchildren would just sit there quietly listening to
20 what he has to say. Very super story-teller. I know this
21 fellow. [Before he passed away]. Always took time to visit
22 him at his home in Ray prior to him dying.

23 [MS. DIANNE LAFFERTY]: "Thank you for
24 choosing to read Yamozha and His
25 Beaver Wife. When you hear the soft
26 drum beat, it's time to turn the

1 page. We hope you enjoy the story.
2 Yamozha and His Beaver Wife. Yamozha and
3 His Beaver Wife. A long time ago before [Dogrib] country
4 looked as it does today, there lived two brothers. Sazea,
5 little bear, and Yamozha, walks around the world. In
6 childhood the two brothers played many superhuman but cruel
7 tricks on their fellows. Eventually Sazea went down to the
8 Arctic coast. Yamozha remained in the bush country of the
9 McKenzie River drainage, created many of the natural
10 features of the region. After Sazea left, Yamozha was very
11 lonely. To take his mind off his brother, he walked for
12 many days. As he was walking, he came to a girl who was all
13 alone. She had lost all of her family and was now alone.
14 Yamozha asked her to marry him. The young woman agreed but
15 only if Yamozha could keep one promise, that she would
16 never get her feet wet. She said, don't ever step in grassy
17 water or go over a little creek, just keep on the dry
18 places. Yamozha laughed. That's an easy promise to keep,
19 you don't need to worry about getting wet, I will take very
20 good care of you. In the beginning Yamozha kept his
21 promise. The two walked for many years all across the
22 country. Yamozha took good care of his wife, when she was
23 tired, they rested. When they came to rivers and streams,
24 Yamozha cut down trees and bridged them so his wife could
25 cross. One day in late summer they came to a tiny creek
26 with only a small trickle of water. Yamozha thought that

1 his wife would be all right, so he did not cut down a tree.
2 She can step over it without any problem, he said to
3 himself. In one stride he crossed the water and kept on
4 going. But Yamozha had a lot on his mind and walked a long
5 way before he realized that his wife was not behind him.
6 When he turned around, she was gone. Now, what has happened
7 to that girl, he wondered. I'd better wait for her to catch
8 up. Yamozha waited for a long time, but still his wife did
9 not appear. At last he began to feel uneasy and he began
10 retracing his steps through the forest. When he reached the
11 place where he'd last seen his wife, he was astonished to
12 find that the small trickle of water had turned into a big
13 lake. In the middle of the lake was a big beaver house. A
14 beaver swam out of the lodge. Yamozha asked it, have you
15 seen my wife? The beaver answered, I was your wife until
16 you forgot your promise and let me feet get wet. Because
17 you did not take good care of me, I changed into a beaver.
18 I can't follow you anymore. Yamozha became furious. My
19 magic is powerful, he answered the beaver. I will catch you
20 and turn you into a woman again. He began to chase the
21 beaver. When they came to Marion River, he lost her. He
22 looked for her everywhere, digging into the bush. Around
23 [Shotti] Lake today there are all kinds of little creeks
24 made when Yamozha hopelessly dug in the earth. He did not
25 find his beaver wife. Yamozha was tired from all of this
26 work, but he kept on looking until he got to Marion Lake.

1 Still, there was no sign of beaver. Yamozha needed to rest,
2 so he sat down on [, a mountain on Murphy's Point. On top
3 of this mountain is a flat rock, where Yamozha sat when he
4 looked for his wife. As he sat on top of the mountain,
5 Yamozha listened carefully. He heard the sound of a beaver
6 chewing, somewhere around [Neeshi] or [Old Fort], which is
7 on the north arm of Great Slave Lake. Old fort is on a
8 long, long point. That point is the dam beaver was trying
9 to make. Just before Yamozha got there, beaver saw him, so
10 she dove and hid. Yamozha followed her around the south
11 shore of Great Slave Lake, right around the west side.
12 Finally he came to the end of a point which is called
13 [Tsaken], ["Beaver House"], where beaver had made a house
14 and had a baby. Yamozha dug into the top of the beaver
15 house. You could see the hill where he dug his hole. He
16 took the baby and killed it. The mother fled down the
17 McKenzie River and Yamozha followed her, carrying the
18 baby's body. There is a burning place down the McKenzie,
19 the smoldering beds of lignite above Fort Norman. That's
20 where Yamozha cooked the young beaver. As he was cooking,
21 the beaver grease melted down and started to burn. And
22 Yamozha said, this smoke will last forever. You can see
23 smoke there today, in the winter and in the summer. When
24 Yamozha finished eating, he walked further inland to
25 stretch the hide on the ground. He carried large boulders
26 and set them around the edge of it. In the barren lands

1 before Norman Wells, there's flat land in the shape of a
2 beaver pelt. Yamozha was still angry at beaver. He went
3 back to her lodge, but she saw him coming, so she swam down
4 the big river. When she reached the Arctic Ocean, she kept
5 on going without looking back. Yamozha knew he would never
6 catch her. He used his medicine power and turned her into
7 an island. The end."

8 *End audio recording.*

9 MS. CINDY ALLEN: Mahsi.

10 I'm grateful to speak about this story,
11 this [Tlichó] story. This story from when the world was
12 new, from my ancestors, [Tlichó] elder story, [Vital]
13 Thomas. And I honour those stories that have been recorded
14 and those teachings that have been recorded. And so what I
15 say now is my interpretation of the story, and how we need
16 to widen our gaze and uncover the stories of women, our
17 Indigenous stories, so we can hear the women's perspective
18 on this. So I offer my interpretation of this story to help
19 in that process.

20 So if you look, this story here, Yamozha
21 and His Beaver Wife, is another version of the story that's
22 more widely known, that's associated with the Dene nation
23 flag. And our laws, our Dene flag, the [story] of Yamoria.
24 But in the Yamoria story, the legend that's more widely
25 known, you do not know that the beavers that he's chasing
26 are his wife and his child. They do not tell you that, so

1 he's chasing his wife and his child in this version by
2 [Vital] Thomas. And if you look critically at it, Yamoria
3 had a marriage contract, a marriage promise to his beaver
4 wife. He broke that. He did not put the branches down for
5 her. One of the roles that I understand Dene men have
6 actually is for breaking trail. And to take care and
7 protect your wife. He did not do that. He broke his
8 marriage contract with her. So she had a right to leave.
9 But when she stood up and said, no, you broke my promise,
10 he became violent. He stalked her, chased her all over the
11 country, all over [Denendeh]. She had a baby. Whose baby do
12 you think that is? It was his baby. So he killed his own
13 child and ate his own child. And then when his wife
14 escaped, and he couldn't get her anymore, he transformed
15 her into an island, essentially killing her.

16 That's through my Indigenous woman's eyes,
17 I'm looking critically at the story. And I would like to
18 hear women's stories come forward. At the intro you heard
19 Francis [Zoe] speak about how touching the story was, a
20 romantic touching story. Well, just by reading the English
21 words, you missed that. You don't hear or see about the
22 love and care that Yamozha would have for his wife, and
23 that should be between a man and a woman that are husband
24 and wife.

25 So he's chasing her. He kills his child,
26 he eats his child. This is not a nice bed time story, per

1 se, but what is missing is the Indigenous and Dene
2 teachings that go along with this, that would give context
3 to the story and would inform about the teachings that --
4 and the importance of the Dene laws. My view on this is in
5 part about this story is that Yamozha, besides being our
6 law maker for Dene people, he also was a man, a human man
7 with failings. He had medicine powers, he had great
8 medicine powers. He could transform himself into anything.
9 He could transform himself into another animal or another
10 creature. Why did he not, if he loved his wife, why did he
11 not transform himself into a beaver and live with her like
12 that? Because there are stories about that, about Yamozha
13 living like the animals.

14 So this story is -- this story is a man's
15 story, but it's a woman's story. And as I mentioned
16 earlier, a lot of the stories in the Northwest Territories
17 that are recorded and published like this, are men's
18 stories. And I would really like for our Indigenous women's
19 stories, our Indigenous laws as women come forward and be
20 taught. And that those teachings, those teachings [will]
21 help us live in the future.

22 We survived for thousands of years here in
23 the Northwest Territories [as] Dene and across the country
24 with our Indigenous teachings. And in the Northwest
25 Territories -- I just think about my own family, my
26 grandmother and my grandfather, they were one of the [First

1 People] in Yellowknife and in the region here. They moved
2 into town in the 50s, but they were still living a bush
3 life and had a camp out of town into the 70s, 80s, and 90s.
4 We still have a family camp off the highway close to town.
5 So whereas other Indigenous folks may have 500 years of
6 colonization, here it's literally been only one or two
7 generations. And so the rapid change into the modern world
8 has been accelerated here in the north. And so people are
9 trying to adapt but it's not working. They're having
10 trouble. They don't know our laws or don't really
11 understand our laws. Our laws are about respect, love,
12 caring, sharing, and be happy. But what does that mean? So
13 I would strongly encourage that we start telling our
14 stories as women and girls. I'm very grateful to be here,
15 and the inquiry starting that process. We are telling our
16 stories of trauma, but we have to move beyond the stories
17 of trauma into stories that give us guidance and hope into
18 the future. And it's by including not only the men in the
19 circle, but the women and the girls that that will happen.
20 That you'll have the community behind you, if you include
21 everybody around the fire, and I encourage that.

22 And I'm grateful here to tell my story and
23 talk about my grandmother, Mary-Adele Martin Doctor. She
24 was the granddaughter of Chief [Monfwi], so I have a sacred
25 connection to my [Tlicho] ancestors and I honour my
26 grandmother and my grandparents because I want to truth to

1 be told and I'm here to help in that process. And I just
2 say mahsi cho to you, the inquiry for granting me another
3 opportunity to tell my grandmother's story, and to speak
4 about little bit that I know, and about -- this is about
5 honouring my grandmother and making things better for women
6 and girls. It's been a challenge trying to get information,
7 but I am persevering. I was informed yesterday that my
8 First Nation, [Yellowknives Dene] are going to be doing
9 some work with Indigenous men, elders, and Indigenous women
10 elders on traditional teachings and the [rites] of passage
11 and our Dene laws. So I was very encouraged about that. I
12 know that at the local community level First Nation level
13 it's hard to do things at times, but I acknowledge their
14 efforts and I say mahsi cho and you're on the right path,
15 and we need to get more people around the circle and we
16 need to do more to tell our women's stories. Mahsi cho.

17 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you so
18 much for sharing with us some more about your grandma. And
19 it's nice to speak her name and talk about her here in her
20 territory.

21 We had -- the inquiry had an expert panel
22 in August on Indigenous laws and decolonization and we
23 acknowledge that it was really a tip of the iceberg. But
24 there were some interesting things that I learned there
25 that I wanted to get your thoughts on.

26 I'll acknowledge first that we heard from

1 a number of people, but it was -- we heard about
2 [Anishinabe] law. We heard about some Cree laws. Ilnu (ph)
3 laws, Inuit laws. What I heard and what we learnt was two
4 things that stuck out to me. That the displacement -- I
5 mean a lot of these laws -- you spoke about how laws are
6 shared and practiced and taught every day, and then that's
7 one of the laws. And a lot of colonial policies and
8 government interference made those practices illegal.
9 Whether it was -- and the church, the mission work that
10 took place across the country. But that displacing of the
11 laws, making Indigenous laws illegal, it was part of the
12 impact of residential school, ripping it from the children,
13 stopping that process of sharing it and transferring it. We
14 heard one expert talk about how that has resulted in a
15 state of lawlessness. And that struck me, that by imposing
16 a new legal system that's not of the land and of the
17 people, it's never fully effective. And by pushing a way
18 the laws of the people and the land, there's this state of
19 lawlessness. And it's in where Indigenous women and girls
20 and trans spirited are marginalized and then are preyed on.
21 I don't want to use vulnerable because it's not their
22 state, it's what we've created around them.

23 What do you think of that?

24 MS. CINDY ALLEN: I think that has been the
25 case -- I mean, if we look at our Dene laws, be respectful
26 of elders and everything around you, if people would follow

1 that, respect everything around you, and elders, does not
2 mean that you can go in and break into their house, assault
3 them, and they die. That does mean that you treat people
4 badly. Respect and caring of everything around you means
5 you honour everything and you hold them up, and you support
6 them. And I think through colonization, residential school
7 in particular, there's been a serious impact on our laws,
8 our Indigenous teachings, because people are trying to fit
9 in the modern world, and the justice system right now is
10 failing, failing us, failing Indigenous people, Dene
11 people, and it's profound in the violence and the harm
12 that's going on in our communities, that people turned a
13 blind eye to because they don't want to speak badly about
14 others, and they don't want to say anything. There's a code
15 of silence that goes on in our communities, and we have to
16 break that code of silence and speak our truth and bring
17 our teachings back.

18 The system, as I understand it -- so in
19 the case of family violence and, you know, harm that would
20 be against a woman and -- because of that violence is
21 criminalized, it would not go to a talking circle, and our
22 Indigenous teachings, our Dene teachings, we would bring
23 those conflicts to talking circles with elders and that the
24 couple and the parties would be given traditional teachings
25 to bring them back into harmony and balance. We've lost
26 that. We can't bring those harmful, violent interactions to

1 a talking circle because the Criminal Code won't allow us
2 to do that. I say that's wrong, especially if those talking
3 circles can help bring people back into balance. It's maybe
4 by talking to an elder and grandmothers and grandfathers
5 that you learn the teachings that you're supposed to know,
6 and then you'll realize the error of your ways and go on a
7 right path.

8 Indigenous people are very forgiving at
9 times if you take responsibility for your actions. It seems
10 things now people are not taking responsibility. They are
11 relying on the modern world to help them, but the modern
12 world is failing us, and we have to find a new path
13 forward. And I say that we should embrace our Indigenous
14 laws, as we are nations, and we have our own laws as
15 Indigenous people. We were here first. This is our country,
16 this is my land, and we should have that recognition. As we
17 move towards self-government in land claims, Indigenous
18 governments will have the right to pass their own laws. I'd
19 like those laws to be informed by Indigenous teachings, our
20 Dene laws. Because that will help guide us in a good way in
21 the future. So Mahsi.

22 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you.
23 And you touched on -- I think the last point, one of the
24 last questions I had was the importance of having that
25 place. I don't want to use the word power because that's --
26 the power to make laws, that term, jurisdiction. So the

1 importance of self-government in the revitalization and the
2 using of these laws was something I was going to ask you
3 about. You've answered it, unless you want to add more.
4 Good, okay.

5 The final thing, I am very saddened to
6 hear that [Cecelia] is homeless in Toronto. I'm familiar
7 with that decision, the [CEDAW] decision. And some of her
8 experiences, and I'm grateful that she's given you
9 permission to speak of her.

10 I wanted your thoughts on the [CEDAW]
11 decision in the recommendations. And what your thoughts are
12 on their -- I guess -- effectiveness. Are these things that
13 need to be pushed more?

14 MS. CINDY ALLEN: Things need to change.
15 The systems here are dominated by men, and I'm -- it's no
16 disrespect to our men. I honour you, but some of that --
17 what has happened, there's a power imbalance and the women
18 are marginalized. In [Cecelia] Kell's case, with the
19 [CEDAW] ruling, she has not received justice. She lost her
20 home through intersectional discrimination and violence,
21 because she was an Indigenous woman. The U.N. found that.
22 That was the case. There's a ruling in her favour against
23 the Northwest Territories and what happened to her. She
24 does not have a home. She's homeless. She's not even in the
25 territory anymore. She doesn't feel supported. She did not
26 get compensated. And, in fact, when she did have a job,

1 that money was garnished from her wages to pay for the
2 court costs where she was trying to fight for her rights
3 for her home. So that's wrong as well. So they penalized
4 her for speaking out and made her pay double, you know, for
5 that harm that was given to her. And as I understand it, as
6 well, the third -- and it's important in this case because
7 we're talking about trauma and women that need help and
8 legal advice -- Canada should hire Indigenous women to be
9 legal counsel to help inform our Indigenous women, our Dene
10 women about their legal rights. And that has not happened
11 as well. And there's systemic barriers for Indigenous women
12 moving forward. And I have faced them myself. I have not
13 got to the bar yet. I got my law degree in 2014. I have not
14 found an articling position yet. And I have tried for
15 years, and it's a challenge. As an Indigenous woman, I have
16 other responsibilities, not only to myself, but to my kids
17 and my family and my community. I'm very active in my
18 community, even though I live in another place. I'm very
19 supportive of my kids, and I want to continue to do that.
20 So I have those responsibilities. And so I'm willing to
21 work hard, but not at the sacrifice of my family and my
22 community. So a lot of law firms and a lot of governments,
23 they don't recognize that, that they don't -- they want
24 someone in there who can work 70 hours no problem, no
25 questions asked. 70 hours a week, you know? And I'm
26 willing to work hard, but not at the sacrificing of my

1 family and my community and the people I support. I would
2 like to see more Indigenous lawyers to help Indigenous
3 people with their legal challenges. I think it's really
4 important to have an Indigenous perspective to bring to
5 light some of the challenges that Indigenous people face.
6 Bringing it back to my grandmother's situation, I looked at
7 the court records, what I was able to look at. There was no
8 [Gladue] written about this woman who harmed my
9 grandmother. But that's the Supreme Court ruled on that,
10 the [Gladue] case, and it's written into the Criminal Code,
11 that [Gladue] reporting should happen. It's not. It's not
12 supported generally in the legal system in Canada. But
13 those reports would give background into the traumas that
14 Indigenous people face. Mahsi.

15 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I don't have
16 any questions. Commission counsel -- sorry, we started
17 without you, but I want to make sure -- Cindy and I just
18 continued a conversation. We started it in Whitehorse, so
19 we figured we could just continue. But you've joined us and
20 thank you. I wanted to make sure that there aren't any
21 questions that you were hoping to raise or get touched on.

22 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you, Madam
23 Commissioner, and I apologize, I was in the other building,
24 another hearing that went beyond the scheduled time. And
25 but you know, I have a sense that it was probably better I
26 wasn't here, and there was a magic that happened, and I

1 thank all of you for contributing to that. But
2 particularly, those who were involved in the dialogue. So
3 Cindy, thank you so much. Madam Commissioner, thank you so
4 much for carrying on and allowing this narrative to be told
5 in the free and very loving way.

6 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you. I
7 don't have any more questions. I wanted to thank you again
8 for building on and enriching what you shared with us in
9 Whitehorse, and also for bringing into the inquiry the Dene
10 laws and teachings that we weren't able to have as part of
11 our expert hearings in Winnipeg. This term expert, I really
12 don't like it. I have to find another one. It's people who
13 have information that is -- that you can't anywhere else.
14 So this richness, for bringing it and highlighting it.
15 We've heard from a lot of places and a lot of people that
16 it's these laws that are part of the solution. And some
17 people may listen to a story and think, why did they just
18 read a children's story? And that be relevant to all of
19 this. And I just -- how is it not relevant? So I just want
20 to thank you so much, and for your supports. Mahsicho.

21 Moving into the final before we adjourn,
22 we have some gifts. The gifts have evolved since I saw you
23 in Whitehorse. We've -- everywhere we've gone there's gifts
24 and love that each community wants to bring to the next,
25 and each family, survivors want to bring to the next who
26 are coming forward. So from the Native Women's Association

1 here in the Northwest Territories is a scarf for you. We
2 also have from the inquiry some arctic cotton. And from the
3 matriarchs of Haida Gwaii, an eagle feather that they have
4 gathered and brought. I just get to be the gift giver. I'm
5 really just the conduit, so I'm going to pass this on.

6 Cindy, we just want to thank you for
7 sharing your words, sharing your information sharing your
8 knowledge that you've accumulated to give others that hope
9 that you have and to remind us that traditional laws were
10 here long before any other law. So we want to thank you for
11 that. And thank you for your being brave.

12 --- Exhibit (code: P01P09P0302)

13 Exhibit 1: Audio recording of story
14 played during the public testimony of
15 Cindy Allen, playing time 9 minutes 8
16 seconds/ 17,2 MB M4A(MPEG4) audio
17 file.

18 **Hearing #3**

19 **Witness: Gail Cyr**

20 **Heard by Commissioner Qajaq Robinson**

21 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

22 **Grandmothers, Elders and Knowledge-keepers: Therese**

23 **Villeneuve, Cecilia Boyd, Kathy Meyer and Lila Eramus**

24 **Clerk: Trudy McKinnon**

25 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

26 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Good

1 afternoon.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good afternoon,
3 Commissioner Robinson. I'd like to introduce you to our
4 next participant, Gail. Gail will be sharing her story as a
5 survivor of the foster care system in the 1950s and
6 violence suffered as a child and as an adult. I would ask
7 that before we get started, that Gail be promised in.

8 AFFIRMED: GAIL CYR.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And just to get us
10 started, I would like to have Gail introduce herself and
11 her supports.

12 MS. GAIL CYR: My name is Gail Cyr. I am a
13 resident of the City of Yellowknife. I originally come from
14 Winnipeg in Manitoba and I have been here in the city for
15 44 years. So I have seen a few changes and a few things
16 come and go in Yellowknife. But I'm glad to be here and I'm
17 glad the Commission is here on Chief [Drygeese]'s
18 territory. Thank you. And I'll introduce my support group.
19 Therese Villeneuve, Lila Erasmus, Cecilia Boyd, Kathy
20 Meyer.

21 I think you'll recognize some of the
22 people that were here. They've either been support or
23 elders. And Cathy, of course, told her story earlier.
24 Therese and Cecilia worked with me with the native court
25 workers when we started it up in '75, a long time ago, and
26 they are long time court workers and worked with the
27 service. And, of course, Kathy -- Lila is a good friend. We

1 worked together on a number of projects. And also we're
2 part and parcel of women's drum group.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay, excellent.
4 And so Gail, you've already told us you're from Manitoba
5 originally, but you've been here for a number of years. Did
6 you just want to start by sharing some of the background of
7 your childhood with us? Is that a good starting point?

8 MS. GAIL CYR: All right, thank you very
9 much. I want to just sort of give a part of my childhood
10 just in terms of how the foster system has formed part of
11 the perfect storm in what affects Indigenous people across
12 Canada and in the States and in South America and just
13 about anywhere in the world. There's been severe
14 colonization, traditions, beliefs, cultural practices and
15 everything has been outlawed in many places, and there's
16 incredible violence in some of the places. And sometimes
17 committed by Canadian companies. So what I want to do is
18 basically sort of start off -- I'll give you a bit of the
19 indication of the foster family situation that I lived
20 with.

21 There are presently in one province about
22 11,000 kids in care right now. In another province there's
23 10,000 kids in care. That's only two out of 12
24 jurisdictions -- or 13 jurisdictions in Canada. So we're
25 dealing with, again, another portion, another tidal wave of
26 trauma to another generation of kids. And so I want to kind

1 of talk about that.

2 I was put into permanent ward care in 1953
3 shortly -- I was born in December of '52. I was kind of a
4 sickly kid, so part and parcel of the issues that I was
5 dealing with -- did I say '52? It's a little bit later
6 than that, pardon me.

7 So I was a sickly kid. I was in and out of
8 the hospital all the time with severe lung issues. I was
9 eventually put into care. My family, my mother comes from
10 the Gordon reserve in Saskatoon. Her and her husband, who
11 was born in Nelson House reserve, came from that reserve,
12 left Gordon, I believe, to start a better life and find
13 something where they can have some money, some home,
14 something to work on. They both were apparently good
15 workers, housekeeping. He in small mechanics. They left.
16 They fell into trouble in Winnipeg. And they fell into
17 exactly the same kind of trouble that I had when I was
18 trying to live in Winnipeg, and that is, we don't rent to
19 you, we don't rent to people like you, and we do not hire
20 people like you. And those were the kinds of things that I
21 had 20 years later.

22 So when I got this 9-page document from
23 social services, and I requested it because I finally met
24 another natural sister. I got this, and I was kind of
25 really bummed out for a while because I recognize exactly
26 the same things that they were going through because I had

1 personally experienced it. One of the -- okay -- so I got
2 this amazing record. And somebody just asked me at lunch
3 hour today, well, how did you manage to do that?

4 I said, well, I wrote social services
5 because I have a sister, I call her a sister, she's
6 formerly my sister-in-law. She said, Gail, Gail, Gail, I
7 think I met a sister of yours. She looks like you, she
8 talks like you, she laughs like you.

9 And I go, okay, before I get all excited,
10 we've gone through this about five years ago, and I'm not
11 going to get all hyped up again in case -- it takes a lot
12 of work to get prepared to meet somebody that you have not
13 -- you have never met before, and you just don't know what
14 the future is going to hold.

15 Eventually we did meet and she did look
16 like me, she did talk like me. Poor woman. But her name was
17 Sarah, and Carol noted her because of appearance, but she
18 did ask her, does the name Cyr mean anything to you?

19 And Sarah said, that's my maiden name.

20 So we did make arrangements to meet, and
21 we did meet. We also went down to the Gordon reserve. And
22 we talked to one of the people, Frank Cyr, who actually was
23 doing a fair amount of genealogical records in Gordon
24 reserve. What had happened with mum when she went to
25 Winnipeg is that they pronounced her name as Eva Jane, so
26 two separate words. And what her real name, and this is

1 what Frank thought it was, in that he thought that the
2 person that was on the records was this person. When
3 Winnipeg authorities wrote to Gordon reserve, they said, we
4 have no record of an Eva Jane. And so therefore she's never
5 been a band member and she has no eligibility to any rights
6 on this reserve.

7 So what happened is that so many years
8 later, finding these records, it turns out that Frank's
9 belief was that she, in fact, was a member of the reserve,
10 and her name was Geneva, not Jean Eva. Like, two separate
11 words. So when the province of Manitoba wrote to
12 Saskatchewan reserve, they misspelled her name and just
13 generally -- how would you say -- mis-introduced her to the
14 reserve. So she in the end -- she thought all this time
15 that she was status number 207 on reserve. And it was
16 denied. So she and her husband, John, were -- he wasn't
17 going to his reserve at the time, although we did go back,
18 because that's where I was born. I was born on Nelson House
19 reserve. They did actually migrate back and forth to
20 several places, growing up.

21 Things kind of fell apart in Winnipeg and
22 that's where social services first came into account. And
23 because I was sick with lung issues and everything, I was
24 taken into care. I did spend some time with a lady who was
25 in Winnipeg who looked after me during medical care, and
26 the only issue I had with her is that she made me eat

1 oatmeal, and no matter how long I waited. So I would sit at
2 that table trying to outwait her, and no, I still had to
3 eat it, lumpy and cold as it was, you know, several hours
4 early -- later. And the only thing I remember about her
5 husband is that he must have been city police because he
6 had a red stripe down his pants.

7 After that, after I was kind of cleared
8 medically, I was put into at least one foster home that I
9 can remember. And it was brutal. It was brutal. I -- I was
10 with another young boy who was smaller than I was. I don't
11 know what happened to him and I don't know if he's still
12 alive. But this home was brutal. And as a five-year old you
13 should never, ever have to feel and get to that realization
14 that you're going to get killed. You should never -- no kid
15 should ever have to do that, and I implore everybody who is
16 here is that you look after your kids, your grandkids, and
17 keep an eye open for some other kids that may be on their
18 own and may be in trouble, and help out when you can.

19 John ended up -- John was kind of a bit of
20 a fighter, so he ended up sort of being in jails a lot
21 during the war, and -- but after the war what he did was
22 that he traveled to Germany, Belgium, and Holland as a
23 sharp shooter, so he ended up -- yeah, that was my natural
24 father. So it was kind of interesting. So I can be a member
25 of the legion after that.

26 After -- the reason why this one

1 particular beating was so bad is because I was going with
2 my little brother and we were going to neighbours asking
3 for food. We were hungry, we weren't being fed. And that's
4 why the beating was so bad, and I still remember it, and I
5 still remember that little boy crying.

6 So after -- we were apprehended. We went -
7 - the province decided it was really a good idea to sort of
8 retrain us Indians and make sure that we learn some proper
9 skills, and so they put us on a farm. So I went to a farm,
10 and with the little boy -- I don't know what ever happened
11 to him because we were separated at that point. I went into
12 a farm. They had two of their boys and after that they had
13 -- they fostered two more boys, both from different
14 reserves. And of interest, with the foster system at that
15 point, it was only the family that stopped them bringing in
16 babies as young as eight years old -- eight days old,
17 pardon me -- to a 59-year old woman. 59. Eight days. And
18 she was 59, and they were still trying to get her to foster
19 kids. And the family finally put their foot down and said
20 enough, enough.

21 After that she started -- they started
22 taking in other people who came from Selkirk. There was a
23 mental institution in Selkirk, it's been closed down a long
24 time since then. But we did have a number of people that
25 lived with us that came from the Selkirk Institute with all
26 kinds of various problems, or either addictions or of

1 schizophrenia or of several other mental health problems.
2 Several serious enough that required permanent institution.
3 Until such time they thought they may be able to be release
4 said, but only under the care of an adult foster home. So
5 we ended up living with a fair number of people that came
6 from Selkirk.

7 One of these people that was there was an
8 alcoholic and a predator, and at the age of seven and eight
9 I endured a lot of physical predation by this man, and who
10 would either sneak into my bedroom or would follow me
11 anywhere on the farm. He would skulk behind me all the
12 time. So I was absolutely -- I was -- by the age of eight I
13 knew everything that happened between men and women. This
14 man, what really made it bad is that he was able, even
15 after he left the farm after a while, he was able to follow
16 me in the community. And so every time I was with my
17 friends, growing up, he'd be skulking behind vehicles and
18 skulking behind buildings or in alleys, and he'd always be
19 looking and always licking his lips and doing this, and
20 doing all kinds of sort of gyrations to grab my attention.
21 But he'd manage to do it so that my friends never would
22 sort of see him. Like, he was very sneaky. He'd try and
23 follow me home on the trucks, like, on my way home. So he
24 was quite the predator. He also made it very clear that I
25 was the fault, I was at fault. Talking to an eight-year old
26 girl who has been also told that she was pretty stupid all

1 her life. You're stupid, you're stupid, you're stupid. And
2 so this guy tells me that it's all my fault that I'm the
3 one that's causing him to sin. And he also used the line
4 that my foster mother used to use all the time, is that if
5 you tell, I'll make -- you'll go back to where you came
6 from. I was interpreting that as being going to the former
7 home that I had come from, not to the department.

8 So -- and also the foster father was a
9 fighter. He used to be paid for fights, and he was a
10 drinker at the time. Well, no, he had quit drinking at that
11 point, but he was a very angry person. Huge hands, shovels
12 for hands. And man, when he gave you a side cuff because
13 you were getting saucy or whatever, you really felt it.
14 Plus the barber strap, a big old wide barber strap like
15 that, really thick hide and everything. So we got a lot of
16 that. It was very serious discipline. When he was drinking,
17 he caused his own sons a fair amount of grief and a fair
18 amount of problems that they'd suffer later on after they'd
19 left.

20 So during the time that I'm a teenager,
21 because of all of this stuff and stress and sort of, like,
22 having a hard time in school, I didn't have anybody in
23 school. I was the only Indian kid growing up, as a little
24 kid. There were two residential homes. One for boys and
25 girls. However, they were all high school. And so basically
26 we never really met. We crossed paths the odd time, but

1 really we didn't -- there was no relationship that I had, a
2 chance to develop there. So I had sort of, like, one
3 girlfriend, but she lived far away, and I was not able to
4 attend evening functions such as going to play -- you know,
5 playing baseball or playing things like that that, you
6 know, really would help develop some supports or athletic
7 skills.

8 Because I was alone so much, and
9 everything was so much inside, I developed eating
10 disorders, of which I have to say is that in the 50s and
11 early 60s, like, that's pretty advanced. Nobody had heard
12 of them before. I knew them well. I did eventually leave
13 the home. I did stay with them all the way through, and so
14 I left the home.

15 My dad and I, we actually got along really
16 well because he did finally get some help for his anger
17 issues, and I ended up working with him in the summertime
18 haying. So bailing hay and stoking hay and doing this and
19 that, loading up barns full of hay and straw for the
20 animals. So that's what I did. He was a good story teller.
21 He ended up being a really kind man, and I ended up -- I
22 loved him, and I miss him.

23 My mom, on the other hand, ended up being
24 sort of -- whether she had some of my issues that she might
25 have suffered when she was young -- we never got that close
26 to ever being -- for ever understanding what had happened.

1 And so we drifted apart. And when it came to gender
2 equality or equity in the house, there was no such thing.
3 The boys got everything and I got -- you know, I got the
4 peanuts, I got the little scraps in the end. So there's a
5 lot of inequity in what was happening. It didn't matter how
6 old or how young. I was right in the middle. I did not --
7 not the bikes, not this, second hand clothes, clothes so
8 big that when she sewed them in at the waist to try and
9 sort of just pass by, I had a ballooning, all this
10 ballooning material on a pair of pants over my hips and my
11 bum and everything. So -- and, of course, it was a total
12 embarrassment. My sister-in-law took me to -- my dad's
13 brother's mum -- wife, who did a lot of sewing, she sewed
14 in clothes for me so that I would feel that I could
15 actually walk in a school without being mortified,
16 embarrassed and wanting to die. And it caused such a fight,
17 they never talked to each other for years and years and
18 years. So he ended up kind of -- I'm responsible for all of
19 this. And then I think I -- I think there's people around
20 here that probably have seen the movie Billy Jack. There's
21 a scene in Billy Jack where a young native girl is -- they
22 pour flour all over her face because they want her to --
23 she's too dark, and they want her to be white. And they
24 pour flour all over her. Well, my equivalent was that I
25 got my head -- my face put into a cow pie long enough that
26 I thought I was going to inhale and I thought I was going

1 to die. And that was by one of my older brothers.

2 But enough about that. When I was --
3 Vernon Kirkness (ph) was the Manitoba Indian brotherhood in
4 1972, and 1973. Applied for monies to organize a textbook
5 review of how aboriginal people, Indigenous people are
6 treated in Canada, Manitoba's textbooks. And interestingly
7 enough, our former premier, Joe Hanley, was the Deputy
8 Minister at the time. And he came to see us, as a student
9 group working on this. This book is called the Shocking
10 Truth about Indians in Textbooks. There was a crew of about
11 six of us working on this. And we evaluated all of the
12 books for things like omission, obliteration,
13 disparagement, and issues like that with the textbooks. 44
14 years ago they were severely wanting in terms of any, any
15 information about Indigenous people in Canada. One of the
16 things that -- just for a few things that we came up,
17 here's one:

18 " Heavily armed whiskey smugglers from
19 the U.S. are crossing the border and trading a terrible
20 kind of whiskey to Indians for buffalo skins, for ponies
21 and even for squaws. Half crazed with this alcohol, which
22 they gulp down at traders' wagons, drunken Indians having
23 no regard for life or property, they go wild and murder
24 each other in brawls."

25 This is a textbook, for god's sakes. And
26 then here's another one:

1 " Years of bitter competition and
2 training with savages, numbed their finer sensibilities, so
3 did sleeping with the only women in thousands of miles and
4 begetting bits of brown."

5 This is the kind of textbooks that I knew
6 up growing up.

7 Now, there has been some change in the
8 last little while with the Truth and Reconciliation
9 Commission recommending that some proper history of
10 Canada's Indigenous people be put into textbooks. So
11 moreover, the kind of things that I'm interested in is that
12 I believe, like, this kind of thing has -- this and earlier
13 information like this from John A. McDonald and his civil
14 service. They had this kind of prejudice. This is the kind
15 of stuff that made up the Indian Act. This is the kind of
16 stuff that allowed provinces and townships to ignore land
17 transfers that were signed by the Federal Government for
18 the Metis. This is the kind of background that allowed the
19 Federal Government to try and pretend there's no such thing
20 and that an Inuit Inuvialuit (ph) are not Indigenous, do
21 not have title or rights to Indigenous land. Of course, we
22 know they are wrong but that's the framework and that's the
23 historical perspective that people are led to believe.
24 Hence, from there what you do is that you have and build a
25 prejudice in terms of feeling and attitudes and racism in
26 terms of political and legislative policy. And that is what

1 we've been enduring. So -- and then, aside from that, James
2 Dashcheck (ph) wrote in his book Clearing the Plains how
3 the Federal Government policies allowed for the extinction,
4 of course, and the slaughter of the buffalo, the
5 extinction, the near extinction of beaver and other animals
6 because the trapping and the acquisition of furs was so
7 widespread, the competition was so great that whole areas,
8 whole communities were being, like, whole areas of land
9 were being depleted of wildlife, of course, which is
10 Indigenous food.

11 So and on top of that, then causing, with
12 the near extinction of the beaver, causing all the
13 ecological damage of not having proper still water and
14 passages for the -- just for safety so that you have ponds
15 of water available for their dam building. And so therefore
16 the prairies suffered extensive wild fires.

17 So between starvation, between laws and
18 policies, between attitudes, between as what Sandra called
19 yesterday was the open-air prisons, between the residential
20 school and the foster system, you have whole populations
21 suffering from traumatic stress -- PTSD. You have a whole
22 bunch of people that are -- you know, people have been
23 ambushed and they're suffering. And they're having a hard
24 time. And this is the kinds of things that -- this is also
25 the kinds of things that leads to the violence against
26 Indigenous women. When you can call, you know, sleeping

1 with squaws and sleeping with -- you know, you don't have -
2 - you lost your sensibilities so that you only sleep with -
3 - only women in thousands of miles begetting bits of brown.
4 When you have that kind of information in terms of how your
5 women are looked at, your women become targets. And so I'm
6 speaking more to the issue of stranger, acquaintance-type
7 violence against Indigenous women. There's certainly times
8 when I have felt that and I when I was in Winnipeg, I was
9 down close to around the bay. So that would be Colony and
10 Portage Avenue, in and around there. I'm dressed up, it's a
11 beautiful September day. I have got long hair. I'm a lot
12 thinner than I am now. And I looked pretty damned good, I
13 thought. Anyway, I'm walking down the street and in the
14 stoop in front of one of the stores this guy says to me,
15 Hey, squaw, you want to go for a -- for an F starting word.
16 And I walked past him like this. And the next thing I know
17 is that I'm flat on my back on the sidewalk, because what
18 he'd done is he'd yanked my head backwards so forcefully
19 that I went down so hard on the ground, I was flat on my
20 back.

21 Then another issue that I had gone through
22 was, I had met what I thought was a very nice gentleman in
23 the legislative park on Colony. We spent the full afternoon
24 together, we had a lot of fun. We laughed, we talked to
25 stories, we did this. We kind of shared information of what
26 we knew and things. We eventually, we were going to go for

1 supper, and then we kind of went, well, okay -- he says, I
2 have got food, let's go to my place, it's not that far,
3 it's a nice walk.

4 Well, it was a bit of a walk, it was like
5 twelve blocks. All right, okay. So, of course, after that,
6 sort of the issue, you know, well, I have served you dinner
7 kind of thing, so you know, what's in it for me, kind of
8 thing?

9 And I said, well, no, let's be friends,
10 let's sort of do this. You know, I have had all my private
11 space invaded all my life, and I wanted to have some
12 control. And so I said, no, let's see each other a couple
13 of more times before we go.

14 And he pulls out a gun. And I have -- I
15 deal with the night with a gun to my head, with the threat
16 that -- and all the swear words, all the anger of being
17 denied. And a really, really horrible time. And but I'll
18 tell you what was the worst is that he fell asleep, it was
19 late, I had no money. He wasn't going to give me any. I had
20 to walk in the early morning, just call me Angel of the
21 Morning, remember that song? There I was walking home
22 early in the morning in Winnipeg, and I can tell you,
23 walking home in the early hours on Winnipeg close to Main
24 Street, I was more scared than what I had just endured at
25 the hands of this man, because I just -- I had terrified of
26 walking down the street in the dark and not knowing how I

1 was going to get safely home.

2 Okay, so what I did is that -- the other
3 thing that was happening is that there was this real
4 disporia [sic] -- this real disparagement between First
5 Nations and Metis, I mean, especially in Manitoba with the
6 original Metis, the Riel Metis people. And, of course, when
7 you had no status, that was even worse. We always see --
8 the government is always saying First Nations, Metis, or
9 Inuit. The thing is is that there's another class of people
10 there, and anybody, any woman who is dealing with children
11 know exactly what that's all about. And that's that fourth
12 class of person, which is having no status, and losing any
13 rights or benefits that you may have for your children. And
14 that's because you married a non-Indian or you don't
15 identify, or that you have -- this is a grandson, as
16 opposed to -- so there's a lot of reasons. There's a lot of
17 ways of how people lose their status. For example, and
18 again historically, Sharon Venne writes a book. She has a
19 book on the comparatives of the Indian Acts, and it's
20 really interesting reading, if you like reading
21 legislation, of course. But part of it is that -- there's
22 some really interesting situations, and these are --
23 Federal Government treated status as if it was a welfare
24 system. So whatever -- any time you used it, then they were
25 easily -- they would always try and take it away. But one
26 of the things that they did is, if you got any kind of

1 professional accreditation, you graduated, you became a
2 lawyer, a priest, a minister, a surveyor, an engineer, any
3 kind of -- a physician -- they automatically took away
4 people's status because they said, we enfranchised you, we
5 set you free.

6 So they took -- so if you got -- if you
7 graduated, you lost your status because you're good, you're
8 as good as any white man now. Except that you're brown, but
9 that's all right, we'll try and overlook that.

10 There was several ways. Another way is
11 that -- another thing that really impacted sort of both
12 Metis and all of us, all of the groups, because the Inuit
13 were moved all over the place. Supposedly for national
14 security. They were moved from their home lands. The Metis
15 were never recognized for having their scrip or their land
16 papers, so they were forced and chased out of all kinds of
17 communities and ended up living along railway strips on
18 federal lands. That's the only federal land they were
19 allowed to go to because they couldn't go to the reserve.
20 Reserve people would end up -- they -- lots of times the
21 acres they were promised were never delivered, and so they
22 were ending up on smaller and smaller pieces of land, and
23 the lands that were never delivered sometimes went for
24 other federal purposes. And one of them was the rewarding
25 of veterans that came back from the Second World War.

26 And in another area, another thing was

1 that if you were a township of 8,000 people, you could
2 demand by asking the Indian agents, who would also forward
3 it on behalf of -- for Metis, is that you could demand the
4 removal of any Indigenous settlement that was near you. So
5 you didn't like these pesky Indians around? Just ask
6 Indian Affairs and they will up and move them for you. Or
7 they'll set up a reserve here. And some communities were
8 removed several times.

9 The reason why I ended up moving to
10 Yellowknife was because of -- my older foster brother ended
11 up actually coming up here and working with the reverend
12 and Ruth and Gordon Bailey -- Reverend Gordon and Ruth
13 Bailey, pardon me -- out of the Pentecostal church. He
14 became a Pentecostal minister. So he was up here and he
15 actually sent information and [letters] about Yellowknife.
16 So Yellowknife was very small when he came up here. I
17 decided to come up here because I had a friend up here. She
18 took me on a little tour. Now, she was a German girl. She
19 had this edginess around her that everybody -- I noted her
20 before. We had to be roommates but I kind of kept my mouth
21 shut because we're roommates and the residence it full. It
22 could mean that I don't have a place to stay when I'm going
23 to school. When she came here, we had a tour. She didn't
24 take me down to Old Town. And I'm walking around the next
25 day, I'm going, what's down the hill? You never took me
26 down there.

1 And she goes, just a bunch of dogs and
2 Indians.

3 To which I immediately sort of put on my
4 coat, walked down the hill and met Herbie Polio (ph). So I
5 had this lady -- didn't stay very long because she thought
6 Yellowknife was a place of losers. I did stay, I worked in
7 the gold range. I had a great time. It was in its heyday. I
8 ended up working with the Indian Brotherhood, it was called
9 at the time, and my second flight was coming into
10 Yellowknife, and it was only the first one only within the
11 six months. I came in May. By July I'm chartering 737s and
12 every kind of twin otter that we can have in order to bring
13 people between Inuvik and Yellowknife into Norman Wells and
14 get them into Fort Good Hope for the first joint general
15 Dene Metis assembly, which was to me an incredibly exciting
16 thing, having seen what was going on with the people and
17 how split things were in a place like Winnipeg. So it was
18 incredibly exciting. I met all kinds of people that through
19 the years I have still seen them. It was incredibly
20 exciting. I think there was -- it was a joint claim that
21 eventually didn't go through and people did negotiate
22 separate claims, and there are still some areas that need
23 to finalize their claims and their issue for self-
24 government. We also have land claims and self-government.
25 It was unheard of. And, of course, the government thought
26 that the American Indian movement had infiltrated all of

1 these people or it was those white consultants, because
2 surely these Indians aren't smart enough to do this by
3 themselves, but they were. They were. They were the ones
4 that were directing the white consultants and telling them
5 exactly, check this out, check this out.

6 By that time law was -- it was interesting
7 because until about 1962 Indian groups could not hire legal
8 counsel to deal with any issue of Indian rights or
9 Indigenous rights. So lawyers could not work. You could ask
10 somebody and they'd have to say, I can't, I'm forbidden by
11 the Canadian Bar Association or whatever it was called at
12 the time. And by law they were not permitted to work with
13 any Indigenous group when it came down to their legal
14 rights as a collective group.

15 Legal Aid did come for individuals that
16 were charged with offences, but that wasn't political, that
17 was something else.

18 So it was interesting to see how -- you
19 saw law starting to change. I found that when I was working
20 later on, I was going through these aboriginal law reports
21 and different things, one of the things was that one of the
22 big cases that ended up happening was that foster kids, you
23 could be -- there's two states of being in the child
24 welfare system. One is the temporary ward, whereas there is
25 a chance you may go back to your original family. There's a
26 permanent ward where you'll never go back to your family.

1 At the time, the people that were making these decisions
2 decided that all temporary and permanent kids would lose
3 their Indigenous status if they had First Nation status. So
4 those things -- you know, they eventually started changing.

5 Part of the reason that they did, I guess,
6 is again, the website on aboriginal -- the military site --
7 there's a historical website on Indigenous people involved
8 in the first and second world wars. One of things that -- I
9 have kind of lost my train of thought here.

10 All right, let's move into another story
11 here. Of course -- that was certainly another reason how
12 people would lose their status, if they were treaty status,
13 is if they went for their veteran's benefits after fighting
14 in the wars, they'd lose their status.

15 So again, the whole thing of how this
16 government treats treaty international sovereign status is
17 to treat it like it's a welfare status. So this is the kind
18 of information that the public really needs to know. And
19 they'll go, it's not our fault.

20 And you can go, yeah, but you -- those
21 things have changed. Those are ancient, they have changed.
22 The attitude and the prejudice remain. And those are the
23 kinds of things that it's important for us to be strong and
24 to be able to talk to people without sort of -- you're not
25 going after the individual. You are saying, change it.

26 And it's also important that we actually

1 deal with sort of the rise in more racist, more racism.
2 It's higher. And we certainly see it with Islam, we also
3 have to make sure that -- you know what? You can't trade
4 one form of racism for another and have that being this is
5 the apple pie of the day. Like, it's pervasive, it's
6 Canadian, and while people don't want to believe it. That's
7 the worst thing, is that most people who are having
8 problems with living and getting through and who are
9 considering suicide and self-harm, is because they are not
10 being believed. So you can go into a place and say this is
11 what happened, and people will just kind of go, no, no,
12 that didn't happen.

13 Because they just simply do not believe
14 that that attitude is there when you go into a counseling
15 office or a doctor's office or a law office or a tax office
16 or a finance office and things. Or banking and asking for a
17 loan, you don't, that misbelief of what has happened is
18 there all the time. You are constantly arguing, yes, this
19 did happen. This is the case.

20 All right, and so I think one of the -- I
21 just had my first pension cheque this last -- you know, old
22 age pension. So but I can tell you that that is 40 years,
23 what I thought was my best -- my best before date. I really
24 did not believe I was going to make 25. And that's just
25 because of sort of what I was going through. It was in my
26 head, things kept on happening. I mean, I contributed to

1 some of it because I think in the end I think I was looking
2 for Mr. Goodbar, and I don't know if you know that movie,
3 but if you ever see it, you'll understand what looking for
4 Mr. Goodbar is.

5 I was basically either suicidal or wanting
6 somebody to kill me. Coming up to Yellowknife, basically it
7 saved my life. Because I mean, the concept, the interest,
8 everything was there. The traveling. We started up the
9 native court workers, Therese here and Cecilia here were
10 one of the first court workers that ever worked with us. We
11 traveled around, we camped, we visited people, we camped at
12 their camp sites, we did this and that. It was like a big
13 eye wide opening experience for me, and it gave me hope,
14 and I did feel certainly in the end, after, that I was
15 generally adopted. So I did get permanent care. I found
16 really good permanent care to which I really thank
17 everybody. And just even being here at the session and
18 knowing so many people throughout the years, people
19 remember me from being at different events, and I'm just
20 really thankful and I have always -- I can say that I have
21 really enjoyed myself and that those day, and that feeling
22 of, you know, not making 25 and all of that kind of stuff,
23 that rage, I have really been able to sort of put it away
24 and put behind. And every once in a while it wants to well
25 up and you just got to be careful and just make sure it
26 doesn't.

1 But I have worked a lot of time dealing
2 with sort of, like, advocacy and helping out people. I
3 still get people phoning me up, I still have some people
4 from the 70s and early 80s saying, there's my lawyer.

5 Like little Tommy the other day, there's
6 my lawyer.

7 So I have always -- that's something I
8 have always enjoyed and it was because I think I started
9 off being so young in a home that was pretty violent and,
10 of course, dealing with unfairness to people that came from
11 Selkirk and some of their treatment. And I felt that I had
12 to stand up and be in between some of the rage in terms of
13 verbal or physical. Things that were happening between
14 them.

15 So that's -- I guess that's where I come
16 from. So some bad things can come some good stuff. And I
17 think in the end I did all right.

18 But -- and then -- you have some
19 questions? Okay. Perfect.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I love it. I think
21 you've covered so many topics, and at the start you had
22 said to Commissioner Robinson, you start with foster care
23 and you said it was a perfect storm. And then you start
24 listing all these different issues, issues that the
25 Commission is hearing about every time they have a hearing,
26 every time they hear a story it ties back to a whole bunch

1 of the things you've covered. And in that perfect storm,
2 and it's come back around because you explained how being
3 up here has helped you, but that perfect storm has created
4 the problems that Indigenous women are facing right now.

5 So I wanted to ask if you could help us
6 define that a little more so we know the perfect storm, we
7 know all the issues you've listed. But what has it left?
8 Like, what has it created, that perfect storm?

9 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, I think -- you know,
10 we had an interesting think. It creates beautiful art like
11 this with -- on top of a whole bunch of tears and heart
12 ache and pain and suffering by families, that's what it's
13 created, that perfect storm. You know, it's created people
14 -- it's created where situations where they have students,
15 young male students that come in from (inaudible) and
16 they're looking at this. They bring in their hearts for
17 this, and they have young brothers who are basically going,
18 I have young sisters. I have sisters younger than I am, and
19 all I want them is to be able to grow and see and become
20 their dreams. I want them to have their dreams. They have
21 every capability. You know, so what we want -- we want
22 people to be able to live to their potential. And this is
23 what -- this is a beautiful thing of incredible amount of
24 torment and pain, and that is what the perfect storm has
25 brought for families in terms of both the residential
26 school system and the foster system. Desperate families

1 trying to find each other, trying to learn from each other,
2 trying to heal, trying to get help. And that's one of the
3 issues.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And in the same
5 way you talk about the healing journey, it's taken you
6 years, it sounds like, in terms of the loved experience,
7 but also coming to terms and being able to go to a place of
8 taking the harm and creating beauty. And so I think some of
9 the wisdom you'd probably be able to share with women who
10 have gone through the same thing, when you speak, you're
11 speaking strongly. Throughout this hearing we've heard over
12 and over again, I just need to -- like, we need to break
13 the silence. And when you're talking, I don't hear that
14 silence, I hear strength. But what about all those people
15 that are still being silent? What advice do you have from
16 your lived experience for them?

17 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, I think there's
18 different kinds of -- I certainly do think that families
19 certainly have to talk, and communities have to talk. They
20 have to talk about issues that have been maybe taboo, but
21 for some reason. We're not sure where the taboo comes from.
22 Is it the church that says you can't say things? Is it
23 this, is it that? Are you not supposed to speak badly, and
24 that's as simple as that? But the thing is is that you
25 have to talk about pain and some of the suffering and how
26 it manifests itself against each other. And I really do

1 want to see some ways of which some people can get some
2 help. You've got communities in full blown PTSD, post-
3 traumatic stress disorder. And it's one of the things is
4 the misbelief that people will have when they go and try
5 and get some help. The lack of help in the communities, the
6 difficulty of getting help in larger communities. It's --
7 so that's certainly an issue, is not being able to talk.
8 Not being able to get help. Or the accessibility of it. Or
9 there's just not enough help when it's there. But the
10 belief thing, by the -- the gate keepers, as they are
11 called, and these are the people who decide whether you are
12 eligible to receive any assistance, the gate keepers. That
13 term came from about the 70s, and I was the director of the
14 native court workers, and apparently they decided that the
15 court workers could be gate keepers. And that's the
16 purveyor of information, help, assistance, and access to
17 assistance. They sent this gate keeper questionnaire to me,
18 and it was all about all the negative things that are ever
19 happening in communities. And it was all bad. It was all
20 sexually bad. STDs, alcoholism, this, that, like,
21 homelessness, battered house, violence in the family, child
22 welfare issues. There was not one good thing that was in
23 there. And so I responded to the minister saying that this
24 has got to be the most foul and racist thing that I have
25 ever seen. We are not participating in this survey, how
26 dare you even talk about this because you don't talk about

1 culture, you don't talk about this, you don't talk about
2 how communities and how cohesive they can be when it comes
3 down to it. You don't talk about their independence and how
4 they can actually work and problem solve and should be able
5 to do that. You don't talk about how they can lead their
6 communities. You've left all of that out. I refuse to be
7 your gate keeper. Thank you.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So the missed
9 opportunities, right? So it sounds like there's been a few
10 missed opportunities. You talk about the perfect storm and
11 how things have changed in progressed, sometimes for the
12 better. But that racism is still pervasive, and there's
13 issues that particularly women, because we're created this
14 context in which Indigenous woman are viewed, and how do we
15 change that? Like, I do hear the hope in your voice, but
16 what are the things we can change? How can we make sure
17 those opportunities are being taken up?

18 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, I think certainly
19 gatherings like this -- I know -- I know the native women,
20 for example, has had some significant difficulty trying to
21 get groups of women together so they can talk and they can
22 deal with issues. And they can -- this is the kind of help
23 we want, government, this is where we want the money. I
24 think -- policy makers always come up, as Sandra said, the
25 contribution agreements, and federal governments are very
26 strict. They are really horrible to work with. Terra

1 control government are a little bit better but they still
2 might be working under -- they are working under federal
3 auspices as well.

4 So you have sort of like -- you have
5 people that say this is how the money is going to be spent.
6 But when it comes down to the people that are actually in
7 the field, in the grass roots, it's nowhere near what they
8 need. It's not housing, it's not this, it's not counseling,
9 it's not keeping your family together. So I think -- we're
10 hoping for organizations, commission -- different groups
11 like that to be able to really voice that loud and clear,
12 is that when we say this is what we are looking for, this
13 is how we want the help for our communities, we want you to
14 start changing your contribution agreements and make them
15 more realistic and reflective of the region that you're
16 working with. And please don't make it on a per capita
17 basis because that's absolutely ridiculous.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Just to tie up a
19 couple of quick things before we turn our attention to
20 maybe more specific recommendations, you had referred to,
21 like, a 9-page document earlier that sort of laid out your
22 family's foster history, and you explained to the
23 Commissioner how you received that. I just want to put this
24 document before her. Do you mind if I share that?

25 MS. GAIL CYR: No.

26 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you had

1 explained to us that you sought that document when you had
2 met a sister, but -- and then you wrote and asked for it.

3 So --

4 MS. GAIL CYR: Yeah, I had written to the
5 department of social services in Manitoba, and I asked
6 them, I said, I think I have met a sister, and I'd really
7 like to know anything you can send me.

8 And I didn't expect much. I didn't -- I
9 expected, due to privacy issues and things like that we
10 can't send this information out to you.

11 Which is one of the bars to actually
12 people getting help, is some of the limitations for privacy
13 things. However, they did. They sent this. I was totally
14 amazed the extent of information that was included in it,
15 and all the background of my family, I was amazed.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so, sorry, I'm
17 going to have to actually sound a little bit lawyerly here
18 for a moment and ask the Commissioner that we do receive
19 this as an exhibit, but that we redact any third-party
20 names, so any of your siblings.

21 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Of course,
22 yes.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So that it's not
24 on the public record. So I'd ask that you order a redaction
25 of any third-party names on this exhibit.

26 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I will grant

1 that order.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. There
3 was just a couple of other documents and I just wanted to
4 put them, too, quickly before, that you held up. One was
5 just simply the title of a book. But the other document
6 where you got these quotations. That was right from inside
7 this book.

8 MS. GAIL CYR: That comes from that, yes.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: From the textbook?

10 MS. GAIL CYR: Yes. The bits of brown
11 quote comes from the Shocking Truth. It was a quote from
12 one of the textbooks.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I'd just to
14 submit that as well, please.

15 And if we can now turn our attention -- I
16 know you're going to speak broadly about recommendations,
17 but the document I'm handing you right now, it's forsaken,
18 the report of missing women commission of inquiry. In
19 particular it's part 13, the summary of recommendations and
20 the conclusions. And I notice that you've highlighted some
21 portions, and I would just like to put this before the
22 Commissioner so that as you're going over these, she has a
23 point of reference.

24 MS. GAIL CYR: Okay. Well, as Commission
25 members and as you will appreciate that the Wally [Oppal]
26 commission actually did have severe difficulties and

1 limitations in terms of their mandate, authorities, their
2 ability to subpoena, all kinds of issues like that.
3 Inability to provide legal counsel, inability to open
4 police records and such, so notwithstanding that, I still
5 think that what he did, because of his background in
6 criminal law, is that he was able to write a pretty decent
7 report. When it came down to recommendations in terms of
8 working with police, courts, Crown offices, and work on
9 issues that ended up impeding investigation into the Robert
10 [Pickton] murders. Some of the recommendations, it's
11 interesting because I read the report on the Olsten (ph)
12 commission in the 80s, and that one was where he was
13 abducting young boys, mostly boys, deemed runaways, so not
14 of much importance apparently, and so he killed many kids.
15 And one of the things that that recommendation came up with
16 is that there's -- well, maybe not at that time -- 250
17 police agencies in Canada exist now, between RCMP, city
18 police, regional police, district police areas. So 250,
19 none of who are really actually talking to each other. The
20 Olson commission, because most of these murders were taking
21 place with kids taken in Vancouver, but perhaps taken
22 outside in RCMP jurisdiction, they were not talking to each
23 other. They have two different operating computer systems
24 and information systems and separate systems of declaring
25 who is missing and why are they missing and how long do
26 they have to be missing before a report is made. So

1 certainly one of the recommendations is that -- and I agree
2 with this, is that we have 250 police jurisdictions in
3 Canada, and what we do need to do, I think, is have a
4 national focus point on how to deal with missing persons so
5 that you have consistency throughout all of the
6 jurisdictions, and that you have some ways -- I mean, RCMP
7 should be RCMP. It shouldn't stop at the end of the G
8 division and begin a whole new thing in K division. You
9 know? We should be able to -- or is K division Alberta? I
10 think K division is Alberta, sorry. I can't remember now.

11 But, like, you know, it shouldn't be that
12 if you're calling for somebody that you think is missing
13 and they possibly might have gone across the border, that
14 you have to start all over again with another RCMP
15 division. You should be able -- that information should be
16 able -- you should be able to say, talk to your local
17 member, that member phones it to Yellowknife, that goes --
18 and then goes into -- through official channels, goes into
19 the next division. Because that's one of the things that
20 people have a heck of a time having, is that you phone the
21 Vancouver police department, which is what was happening
22 during the [Pickton] thing, and then they're told, well, we
23 don't deal with it. That's out here, you have to go talk to
24 the RCMP, start all over again.

25 So I do think that -- I'm not going to go
26 through all of these because it's just going to be way too

1 long and I know people had a long day. So -- but I do think
2 that a fair portion of these are good when it comes down to
3 police Crown, and such.

4 One of the other recommendations that was
5 mentioned earlier today -- and this is the opportunity for
6 community involvement, and that is with community search.
7 That is -- I think all community governments could do --
8 how would you say -- a repertoire of all skills. Who has
9 got skills and who is interested in doing something? If we
10 have a community emergency and it could be any emergency,
11 such as a flood or anything like that, who is willing to
12 stand up and help your neighbors? Okay? And then when it
13 comes down to community search, who can do this? Who has
14 got first aid? Who has got this, who is willing to make
15 coffee? All kinds of stuff like that. Because we actually
16 do need that as communities on a broader sense, and you
17 know, so not particularly to a missing person, but a
18 broader sense, is that if the power goes out and you have
19 long power outages, you have a huge blizzard and you need
20 some help, one of the recommendations I heard this morning,
21 and I actually was talking about it yesterday, was using
22 the Canadian Rangers. Because I was talking to Dolly, and I
23 was saying, Dolly, like, what do you think about this?
24 Because these are really skilled people. They would do
25 incredible things as resources in communities to be able to
26 help out in times of need and well-skilled outdoors people,

1 marksmen, everything. They have all of those kinds of
2 skills.

3 So my thoughts were that use any kind of a
4 thing that you have in your communities to help out and
5 help deal with sort of the issues when it comes down to
6 emergencies. And that's anybody. It could be your
7 dogcatcher, if they have -- even if they have their
8 vehicle, use them. Your fire department. I'd like to see
9 the call centre decentralized. We have one call centre, all
10 the calls for the RCMP after -- what is it? Ten? Nine?
11 They go to Yellowknife. Then you have people that --
12 sometimes the residency of people that are working in the
13 call centre in Yellowknife isn't very long. They don't know
14 the communities. Okay?

15 So some of the community governments
16 actually do have to sort of -- they have do some work. And
17 that is sort of either updating their community names --
18 street names, numberings, and mapping. MACA (ph) will help
19 with all of that. MACA does that kind of stuff. But make
20 sure that that, in fact, gets to community call centre. So
21 when you phone in from Tuktayuktuk, you can say, this is
22 the address, this is where this incident is happening, we
23 need the help now.

24 Because that call does not go to the
25 detachment, it goes to Yellowknife, then the detachment.
26 And if you can, phone the fire department. If it's really

1 bad, phone them because at least they have local help.

2 So those are kind of things that -- again,
3 I don't want to -- I don't think that people want to sort
4 of sit through -- yeah.

5 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: For my purposes,
6 though, you've highlighted -- can I assume that the
7 highlighted recommendations are the ones that you are
8 endorsing?

9 MS. GAIL CYR: Yes.

10 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And if I
12 may, I know that there's just a couple -- just on a more of
13 a thematic level, if I could ask a couple of questions in
14 terms of the recommendations on a thematic level instead of
15 drilling down to each highlight.

16 I notice that you have highlighted some of
17 the equality promoting measures. And you gave an example of
18 your lived experience, being with the boys and the girl
19 never getting the things she needed. And in particular,
20 though, there's ways that we could -- whether it's through
21 governments -- ensure that there's equality promoting
22 measures put into place. What would be a good example of
23 that? Besides something like pay equity.

24 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, okay, when it comes
25 down to equity, certainly -- I mean, money is everything, I
26 think, right? I mean, money -- I was reading one report

1 where basically the guy says if you're not young, blond,
2 blue-eyed and rich, don't exact a lot of help if you're a
3 missing person. Like, that's a sad thing. That's a former
4 police officer saying that. So we do know that money and
5 youth and appearances make a difference when it comes down
6 to -- so that's equity in that sense, you know? Like,
7 you're still a person in need regardless.

8 Again, I'm just trying not to sort of go
9 through every little thing because I know people -- we
10 don't it to be too long. Okay, yeah, so there's equity.
11 There was a lot of things said in the report, and that's
12 Victim Services. The issue of people knowing people, that's
13 kind of a sad issue because I don't exactly know how to do
14 that except to say that, you know what, people need really
15 good serious professional training so that they're not
16 using their office for control, and not using their office
17 for potential gossip. That kind of community trust --
18 because I really do want to see Indigenous people being
19 trained, and maybe what it means is that, you know how they
20 train the RCMP? They send them all over the place, and
21 then they might bring them home after. Maybe that's what --
22 maybe people need to develop the professional skills in
23 another community, but still in the Northwest Territories,
24 and then be able to return home. And they are not dealing
25 with -- you know, it's like a police officer, you know,
26 you're not going home to your community where your auntie

1 says, well, I used to change your diapers, don't talk to me
2 like that. You know?

3 Sometimes you have to leave for a little
4 bit, but maybe you don't have to go too far. And learn all
5 your skills, learn your professionalism, and so that when
6 you go back to your community, people know that they can
7 trust you. So --

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: That speaks to the
9 gender but also to -- what about to the Indigenous issues,
10 like in terms of increasing training or diversity? I think
11 you'd agree that's one of the important recommendations?

12 MS. GAIL CYR: I think there's a lot of --
13 certainly when it came down to the legal system, the native
14 court workers, was definitely that we trained people very
15 well. We had what was an eight-week training session with
16 one of our most favorite lawyers. His name was John Bailey
17 at the time. And eight weeks -- he actually gave us a
18 modified bar entrance exam to write. It was intensive, it
19 was incredible. And we had -- we had practices, we had true
20 life practices where people would argue, you know, in front
21 of a judge. And Crown and defence lawyers and such. We had
22 one time where -- we had these mock trials. We had one guy
23 where he brought in a stage pistol and he went and he went
24 -- he made the wrong direction, he went towards the clerk's
25 office of where you -- Registrar's office. He went that
26 way, and it scared the hell out of everybody. They ran into

1 the safe, and then he finally found out where we were. Oh,
2 did we get in trouble. The judge was really mad at us. But
3 it was, like -- it was a prop. Because what -- the exercise
4 was for witness skills, what do you remember? So he came
5 in, did this, went out, and then the exercise was what do
6 you remember? What was he wearing? How tall was he? What
7 was this and that? And it was really a good exercise. But
8 yeah, got us into a little bit trouble.

9 Another story about that was that when the
10 new courthouse opened -- do you know the new courthouse?
11 It's that silver building that's sort of squarish. And we
12 had the minister from Ottawa come in, Ron Bashford (ph) at
13 the time, and he -- so he's opening up the building with
14 the ribbon cutting and everything, and we're telling our
15 new clients who are now -- the courthouse is where the
16 Native Women's is now -- and so we're telling our clients
17 is that you know -- you go to the new courthouse on Monday.
18 Do you know where it is? No. Do you know that building
19 that looks like a bunch of sardine cans stacked on top of
20 each other? Yeah. That's where you go.

21 We had lots of fun. So again, what I'll do
22 -- what I'll offer to do is I'll offer to actually -- I
23 have meant -- I have been trying to get some stuff on
24 paper, and what I'll do is I'll offer to make sure that I
25 do spend more time doing that. Within -- I'd say a little
26 bit longer than within the next couple of weeks, because I

1 have got some busy time coming up.

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And this is
3 something we've been saying throughout the week is, you
4 know, this is not your last opportunity. If you had more
5 things you want to write, the Commission would be happy to
6 accept them in addition to --

7 MS. GAIL CYR: Yeah.

8 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I just wanted to
9 forge the opportunity, if you had any further ideas or
10 suggestions, I do understand that you were going to -- that
11 you want to sing for us as well before the Commissioner --
12 would you like to do that after the Commissioner asks you
13 questions or before?

14 MS. GAIL CYR: You can ask questions
15 first.

16 COMMISSIONER QAFAQ ROBINSON: Awesome. I
17 have some questions about the court worker program and I'll
18 tell you, when I was in law school, and then after law
19 school, because the court worker program is Nunavut as
20 well. And as a prosecutor, as a young prosecutor, going up
21 against a court worker with way scarier than against
22 lawyers. Because you know -- you know the community. Like a
23 bail hearing. You know what the options are, you know what
24 the resources are, you know who is who, what's there. And
25 I'll go in and a court worker -- I'm going to lose this, so
26 I'm -- yeah, so it's really important work that the court

1 worker program does.

2 And I have some questions about it as it
3 stands now. Is this an ongoing program? Are there more
4 court workers being trained?

5 MS. GAIL CYR: They -- unfortunately what
6 happened with the court worker program is that they went
7 over to the civil service. Unfortunately we started off
8 salary a little bit too low and it didn't increase, and so
9 we -- salaries started falling behind. So the person who
10 came after me in terms of a director -- staff really
11 lobbied to be part of the civil service and get taken in
12 under justice. And they did. So the salaries and all of
13 that stuff increased, they got offices, but their duties
14 got squeezed down to practically only filling forms. Very
15 sad. Really, really sad.

16 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And it was
17 an initiative that was really linked to access to justice.

18 MS. GAIL CYR: Yes, yes.

19 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Because of
20 the lack of lawyers, the lack of Indigenous lawyers --

21 MS. GAIL CYR: Exactly.

22 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: -- the lack
23 of lawyers that spoke --

24 MS. GAIL CYR: Risk management again.
25 That's last time I was talking to the head of legal
26 services board, that's one of the things we were saying.

1 Risk management. You know, what if they make a mistake? We
2 could get sued. You know that kind of -- yeah.

3 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Are there
4 any other training programs -- I'm going to give you a
5 little bit background because we heard from Cindy Allen and
6 a couple of other people that talked about access to
7 justice and the need --

8 MS. GAIL CYR: The [CEDAW] decision, yes.

9 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Exactly. And
10 the need to have particularly Indigenous women trained,
11 legally trained. And I see the court worker program, and
12 the training that you received as being something that
13 could provide that service. Do you have any thoughts on
14 that?

15 MS. GAIL CYR: Well, one of the things
16 that I understand is that even if a society started up
17 again for the Northwest Territories, that federal rules now
18 have changed so that they are only for courts, criminal
19 court. What the territorial government did in the 70s, 80s,
20 was that the -- there was an agreement that the territorial
21 share could go to civil issues. So that would be divorce
22 and separation, wills, estates, change of name,
23 unemployment insurance, landlord and tenant disputes,
24 things like that. Because there's a significant number of
25 issues in those whole areas when it comes down to
26 residential tenancies. And I have even dealt with some of

1 those, pro bono, of course, because I'm not a lawyer. And
2 but that's helping out people sort of deal with
3 administrative tribunal issues. And but yeah, no -- it's
4 busy. It's busy. There could be a whole new program
5 designed to deal with civil issues, even alone, and let the
6 government look after the filling of Legal Aid forms. Yeah,
7 because the civil areas are just as important.

8 We've had so many serious problems where
9 women have faced -- you know, you finally get -- you get a
10 partner, you're really happy, you've got a partner, they're
11 moving in, and then suddenly, like, the person who seemed
12 to be job-orientated is no longer interested in finding
13 work, and more interested in sort of doing drugs. And we're
14 talking with people that have spent their time getting
15 their social work or their teacher's degree, or their
16 nursing degree, and they're coming in and saying, I have
17 just been -- I have got problems, I don't know what to do
18 with this guy, and I'm going to be evicted. Or I'm being
19 threatened with eviction.

20 And I'm going, yes. And at the same time
21 we can help you out with that, but you have to understand
22 that you're going to lose your professional accreditation
23 as well. As long as this man is under your roof doing
24 illegal drugs, cooking up stuff, doing this and that and
25 having all kinds of stuff in your apartment, you're going
26 to lose your professional accreditation as well.

1 So there really does need to be some good
2 programs developed with legal services for women because
3 they seem to be -- at this point they seem to be suffering
4 higher and greater needs.

5 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: There's no
6 law school in the Northwest Territories?

7 MS. GAIL CYR: No, we don't have a law
8 school. I wish we did. Nunavut does. I'm going to -- if
9 Nunavut can do it, surely the Northwest Territories can do
10 it.

11 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Are there
12 paralegal training options in the Northwest Territories?

13 MS. GAIL CYR: No, no. It's more of less
14 it's a lot of people that just kind of, like, band
15 together, put together their time, and do it free and help
16 out. They're either an agency -- an employee of an agency
17 that does that, or people that are just interested in just
18 sort of helping people out.

19 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Okay. Thank
20 you so much and thank you for giving some of the context in
21 the prairies as well. You know, when I think about your
22 mom's status being questioned and the impact that must have
23 had on her. I don't think people really appreciate that.

24 MS. GAIL CYR: Yeah, not being able to go
25 back home.

26 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Yeah.

1 MS. GAIL CYR: Yeah.

2 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And then,
3 you know, the realities and Manitoba and up here, so nice -
4 - you know, information from all over you've shared with
5 us. Thank you so much for that.

6 MS. GAIL CYR: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I have all
8 these little notes. An R with a circle means this is a
9 recommendation.

10 MS. GAIL CYR: And I will. I'll put some
11 of them back in. Like, we want the coroners involved a lot
12 more than they are right now. When it comes down to death
13 review panels, proper follow-up. If we need our Coroner's
14 Act reviewed so that you can get proper -- because as they
15 did in Ontario, they had to amend the Act to ensure there
16 was going to be Indigenous people on that inquest to review
17 the deaths of all the students. And, of course, the
18 coroners -- it was the medical examiner's office in B.C.
19 who was the one that argued with the police and the
20 government that all the alcohol murders that were John Paul
21 Gilbert, I think it was, they had to argue that there's no
22 way, absolutely no way that these women would have -- could
23 have drank this amount of liquor by themselves. Their blood
24 count levels were so high, they said it was absolutely
25 impossible for somebody to voluntarily do that, ingest that
26 much alcohol. So what they've finally -- they finally

1 figured out is that somebody is holding them down and
2 putting in, like, long neck bottles down their throat and
3 forcing down all that alcohol so that they basically --
4 they died of alcohol poisoning. That's a medical examiner
5 that did that. Because more or less all of these deaths --
6 and most of them were Indigenous women -- were attributed
7 to too much drinking, until this medical examiner said, no
8 bloody way, nobody can drink that much.

9 COMMISSIONER QAFAQ ROBINSON: I don't have
10 --

11 MS. GAIL CYR: One more final thing, too.
12 The UK has an I'm okay, 800 line, which is -- sometimes
13 people just don't want to be with their families. Their
14 families have caused a lot of pain, they are in a lot of
15 pain, they don't want to talk to them directly, they don't
16 want to phone them, they don't want to be found where they
17 are. And so the UK put in an I'm okay line, which is a 1-
18 800 line that basically you can phone it, it's, like, you
19 can say who your name is, you are not -- you're directed to
20 an operator, and the operator basically takes your message,
21 and they will forward it to the information that you give
22 them. And that basically says, I'm okay, I'm not dead,
23 leave me alone.

24 COMMISSIONER QAFAQ ROBINSON: That's
25 really important because, you know, there's the rights of
26 families that want to know, but there's that right.

1 MS. GAIL CYR: Right, you might just want
2 to --

3 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: An agencies
4 and freedoms too.

5 MS. GAIL CYR: Your family might have been
6 so toxic or whatever, you know?

7 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: You just
8 need your space.

9 MS. GAIL CYR: Or you might have been
10 toxic. Both of you might have been toxic, but the thing is
11 that you don't want to talk to each other. But you're
12 trying to just let somebody know. Like, you know, no sense
13 putting out a big community such for me, I'm still alive, I
14 just don't want to talk to you.

15 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Yeah. Thank
16 you so much.

17 MS. GAIL CYR: All right, thank you. Okay,
18 just to sort of close -- I know there's some final things
19 that are going to happen, but I have got a little song that
20 I have, and it's called I'm a Native Woman.

21 Some people have heard this song before.
22 --- Sings.

23 MS. GAIL CYR: Thank you very much. Thank
24 you very much. I'm very glad I was able to attend and be a
25 participant. Thank you, everybody, out there. I wanted to
26 kind of leave us on a lighter note. We've been dealing with

1 some pretty heavy stuff and pretty sad. There's been lots
2 of tears. And I did forget my poem, but I'll leave it with
3 the Commission. Yeah, so let's try -- let's not keep down
4 there, let's sort of do whatever we can to get us all back
5 up there again, okay?

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: On that note I
7 believe that the Commissioner has some gifts that she'd
8 like to give you for sharing your truth and for sharing
9 your wisdom. Certainly, so Commissioner Robinson is going
10 to be giving you a beautiful scarf that's from the Native
11 Woman Association of the Northwest Territory. She's also
12 going to be providing you Labrador tea, which I think is
13 her favorite. And what she's giving you that's wrapped in
14 the red cloth are -- it's an eagle feather, and it
15 represents truth and part of the healing journey and the
16 matriarchs of Haida Gwaii had actually directed that the
17 Commission gift anyone who was sharing their stories an
18 eagle feather as part of that truth telling, and part of
19 that journey. And the original ones were collected from
20 Haida Gwaii. And as they ran low, as we had more and more
21 people actually testifying and sharing their stories, there
22 was a call out by the matriarch to -- throughout the
23 country, and feathers have been gathered and given from all
24 over the country, from, like, Labrador, from Nova Scotia,
25 there was one moment in Thunder Bay that I found quite
26 touching where a young man actually undid his regalia and

1 cleaned his feather so that he could give all the feathers
2 from his dance regalia to the women that were testifying
3 and the families that were testifying. And so you know, the
4 stories they're telling are touching people's hearts across
5 the country. And they all recognize the importance of
6 sharing that symbol of truth. And so always, as always,
7 it's really important in terms of repository [sic]
8 acknowledging the story that's being told as a gift, and
9 returning a gift.

10 On that note, Commissioner Robinson, I
11 believe we can also adjourn for the hearings. And that
12 there will be closing ceremonies that will occur at 4:00,
13 but in terms of adjourning the hearing, we are officially
14 done for this courtroom. So if I may have you officially
15 adjourn the hearings.

16 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I officially
17 adjourn the hearings here in Yellowknife and we'll be back
18 here at 4:00 for our closing.

19 --- Recess taken at 3:09 p.m.

20 --- Upon resuming at 4:05 p.m.

21 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: We have a whole
22 hat full of missing material. Somebody had reading glasses.
23 They were found in the men's washroom so I hope no lady
24 comes and picks it up. Really? Okay, they'll be back at
25 the registration desk. Obviously no takers there.

26 We have a USB, Lexar USB. Anybody missing

1 a USB? Okay.

2 A bank card. The PIN number is -- just
3 kidding. It's RBC. It says Lexus. RBC bank card. No takers?

4 OJ Simpson's glove. I got you smiling at
5 least, that's good. I think it's one size fits all. And
6 Janet, it's yours? There you go. That's your hat, too?
7 That's not yours? Okay.

8 Okay, we did manage to find -- okay -- the
9 podium is coming up, get out of the way. Okay, thank you.

10 --- CLOSING CEREMONIES

11 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Ladies and
12 gentlemen, welcome to the closing ceremonies of the
13 National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous
14 Women and Girls Yellowknife.

15 Before we start anything else, I just
16 would like to inform you that the Yellowknife's Dene
17 drummers and Bobby Drygeese will be joining us, and they
18 are going to ask that they not be filmed when they do their
19 prayer song, but they can just turn the cameras down, you
20 can still hear the audio, because I understand that this is
21 going -- live streaming on Facebook as well. So thank you
22 very much for that.

23 And with that, we'd like to call upon
24 Bobby Drygeese and the Yellowknife's Dene First Nation
25 drummers to come forward with the closing prayer song.

26 Where's your young drummer? Here he

1 comes. There you go.

2 BOBBY DRYGEESE: Thank you for having us
3 again and my little son here, because the third guy didn't
4 show up, but drums are over there. But all the same --
5 outside the door. Okay, I'll talk really slow, then. But I
6 wanted to thank you guys for having us again and when we're
7 dealing with a lot of things in our community, especially
8 with us, too, I'm on the First Nation council for
9 Yellowknife's Dene and there's a lot of things that we have
10 to deal with, and a lot of issues that are hard to make
11 decisions on because there's a lot of things we have to
12 deal with in our communities with family, and our
13 neighbours with people that are close to us, people that
14 we've been hunting and gathering with, people we travel
15 with all over our land and making sure that -- it's
16 difficult, especially, like, we're small communities, so
17 it's got to -- think about how we're going to do things and
18 how we're going to make things right and make things good.
19 And we've got to make sure that -- try to community to each
20 other as much as possible. Share as much as possible, and
21 just helping each other. Because, like, a lot of times
22 you've always got to make sure you speak up openly. You've
23 got to speak up and make sure that you don't be shy. Like,
24 our elders and my granny always said, like, don't waste
25 time being shy, you're going to be old soon, so -- if
26 you're shy, you're not going to talk to people, you're not

1 going to do things, you're not going to see things, you're
2 not going to experience life. So that's what they said.
3 Don't waste time because, like, she was older and she did a
4 lot of things and she always said, like, life is just
5 experience, that you've got to go, go, go until you can't
6 go no more. Elders are lots of fun. But you've got to
7 communicate, you've got to talk with them, too, so -- my
8 son here, he's overtired, so we gave him some sugar, and
9 now he's -- he's going to drop soon. But thank you
10 everybody for coming, and hopefully everybody is okay with
11 everything this week and I hope you guys found what you
12 guys were looking for and there's a lot of answers that
13 can't be answered right now. I mean, a lot of questions
14 that can't be answered right now, but we've got to keep
15 searching and keep on being positive about life. It's like
16 when we first started, we were doing that journey song. You
17 think for the future all the time and you watch beside you,
18 where you're stepping, the people you're with, you make
19 sure everybody is good, safe, and you think about the past,
20 your family history, your ancestors, the loved ones you
21 leave at home. Make sure everybody is safe. So we'll do
22 another prayer song right now that Joe Shalo (ph) song
23 singing about angels in the sigh watching over us when
24 we're taking our journey on land. So we'll do that one. So
25 I'll say mahsi cho and everybody have a safe trip.
26 --- Song Performed.

1 MS. CECILIA BOYD: I'm very grateful that
2 they asked me to say the prayer. As we say this prayer, we
3 will remember all this beautiful young missing girls,
4 women, maybe boys, too. We have to remember them. They are
5 beautiful people, just like us. We need to know where they
6 are.

7 Our creator, Jesus, wouldn't you care?
8 You're the boss of us, and you love us and anything else.
9 Anything on earth. We thank you for your beautiful
10 creation. Help us to take care of the earth, the land, the
11 water, the sky and all the living things. Only take what we
12 need. Thank you for our ancestries, grandpas, grandmas, our
13 parents, auntie. Through hardship on the land, they love us
14 so much. That's why they taught us to have faith, to tell
15 the truth. And they tell us about right and wrong as a
16 young age. They also tell us how to share and to be a good
17 citizen. Be proud of who you are. Our forefathers also
18 taught us to respect animals because they are our main
19 source of food. And we know what is happening to the
20 animals today.

21 This week has been one of the hardest
22 topic to observe. As many young ladies, women, men, told us
23 a very difficult story about sexual abuse, death, and loss
24 of loved ones. We heard the story, we are the witness. Yes,
25 we are not perfect, nobody in this room is perfect, and we
26 make mistakes, we've got to learn from it. We are on this

1 earth all together, on this land, so that we can make each
2 other life better for all of us. It doesn't matter who we
3 are, we have to believe it. This is the way god want us to
4 live, and so is our ancestries. Thank you for all the
5 people that came to listen to the meeting. Thank you to the
6 Commissioners, they came to listen. One of the elders, they
7 told me yesterday, there's answers out there, all you have
8 to do is keep digging deeper, deeper, deeper and the answer
9 is there. I believe it. So now what I want to do is we're
10 all going to join hands and we're going to say our Lord's
11 Prayer, our father, so that the justice and closure will be
12 done. Mahsi cho.

13 --- Lord's Prayer recited.

14 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank you very
15 much, Cecilia Boyd, and also I'd like to say thank you to
16 our elders who were here over the last three mornings to
17 help us with the daily inspirational prayers. Mabel Brown,
18 Therese Villeneuve, and Lily Elias. Thank you so much for
19 your participation.

20 Also at the opening ceremonies on Monday
21 afternoon we were very pleased to have Rasi Nashelik (ph)
22 join us with the lighting of the Quiliq. And to those
23 people who participated through testimony, and even our
24 deepest, darkest moments, the light of the Quiliq there to
25 help us. And for that we are grateful to the Inuit and in
26 particular to Rasi and Barb, who helped us at the various

1 hearing sites with the lighting of the Quiliq. Thank you so
2 much.

3 And we'd like to call upon Rasi to
4 extinguish the Quiliq at this time. Would you like to say a
5 few words while you're doing that?

6 MS. RASI NASHELIK: I guess we could have
7 Qajaq to talk first. She wants the Quiliq lit while she's
8 talking.

9 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Ladies and
10 gentlemen, we'll draw to the microphone one of the
11 commissioners of the inquiry, Qajaq Robinson.

12 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:

13 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you.
14 To me -- you know, at the beginning of every hearing
15 there's an oath, right, a promise to tell the truth. To me
16 the light of the Quiliq, the light is the ultimate oath. It
17 is as long as it is lit, everything that we're doing has
18 that truth, has light. So I didn't want to extinguish until
19 everyone had spoken, because when it's done, we are done
20 for now. So I'm sorry, it just didn't feel right. Next time
21 we'll change the program. But I guess this is an example of
22 -- you know, we come to a space and we have plans, we're
23 going to do things this way and this is the schedule and
24 this is the agenda. But in moments, that's not, one, how
25 life works, and that's not how things are done right. It's
26 been talked about in different ways with tradition. Doing

1 it the traditional way, it being guided by something more
2 than the watch or the dollar. (Speaks in native language).

3 I want to first thank you for all of you
4 in the community. Yellowknives, Dene First Nation, all the
5 people who call this territory and this city home for
6 making this so welcoming. The term (speaking in native
7 language), like, it's this state of being together and
8 welcome together. The English words don't capture is. Your
9 space, the space we've created together for me has been
10 incredibly welcoming. It's home, it's safe, it's a place
11 where we can grow and learn together and this is something
12 that we've done together. And it's something that we've --
13 when we received our mandate, how is this going to look,
14 everybody wants to know, what are your rules, what is your
15 schedule, what are you going to do, how is it going to
16 look? And I get that, people want to know and be prepared.
17 But more important is this ability to build spaces
18 together, and I'm -- I want to thank all those involved in
19 preparation coming here. I want to thank our teams that
20 have engaged in this relationship to make this happen. I'm
21 so grateful and humbled to be standing here with you to
22 have received the gifts and responsibilities, you know?
23 That have been given.

24 I want to talk a little bit about what
25 you've taught me for two reasons. I want you to know that
26 I'm listening. I have heard about the impact of having so

1 little services and resources to turn to when things get
2 hard. Knowing you're struggling with poverty, when you're
3 struggling with the violence has been turned on you. When
4 you're dealing with mental health issues, where do you
5 turn? Those challenges.

6 The challenges of not having your language
7 being part of the service that's provided to you. That your
8 understanding of family and relationships and life is not
9 the same understanding as the people that are providing the
10 service to you. That conflict that's created.

11 I have heard about when things go well,
12 when there's respect, when the help that you need, people
13 want to give it to you, when police do what they're
14 supposed to do, when social services come and they respect
15 your language, your culture, your ways and your rights.
16 This is fundamental.

17 We've heard about the challenges with the
18 turn overs in the system, not training local people so, you
19 know, the doctor you see one day is not the one you see in
20 two weeks or next month. Those are challenges. To get the
21 education to be the one that provides that service, you
22 don't get it here. You have to leave your territory.

23 We've heard the need and the
24 acknowledgment to address racism. To confront ideas of
25 white supremacy that basically say that what Indigenous
26 people aren't equal. That the underpinnings of a lot of

1 what our government and our state are built on is seeping
2 with that idea that some people are not people, are less
3 than. And that history since the Sir John A. McDonald days
4 and before continues in today, and that we have to confront
5 that.

6 I heard so much, but these are some of the
7 things that jumped out, and I wanted to share what I heard
8 with you. I heard about how things can be done when you
9 come together as a community, when you come together in
10 relationships, when you do things together. And I want to
11 quote Jerry, what she shared with us, together we are
12 strong. And this is true.

13 I want to thank (speaking in native
14 language) to this room, to this space and for giving us
15 this light and this warmth this week.

16 Finally, to those listening, I'm going to
17 quote Sandra. "Now you've heard, now you know, now you
18 can't say you don't know. I know you know. We know you
19 know. So what now?"

20 And like I said at the beginning, we all
21 have a role. Look for your role. Be uncomfortable with the
22 discomfort of discovering your role in this. Thank you,
23 merci, (speaking in native language).

24 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: They made me
25 the boss. What we're going to do is rather than hear from
26 the Honorable Minister Cochrane right now, we're being to

1 continue to hear from the commissioners of the national
2 inquiry and I'd like to call upon Brian Eyolfson to come
3 forward with his final words.

4 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:

5 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you.
6 Wow, an incredible week it's been here in Yellowknife. This
7 week is definitely going to have a lasting impression on
8 me. I want to thank all the survivors and families for
9 everything that they shared, and also as my first time in
10 this beautiful territory, I want to thank the Yellowknives
11 Dene for welcoming us here so openly this week. Thank you
12 so much.

13 I also just want to acknowledge the
14 strength and resilience as shown by everyone in this
15 territory through all the truths that were shared and the
16 recommendations and it's that sharing of those truths and
17 recommendations that will carry the work of the national
18 inquiry forward. So thank you so much.

19 Just to name a few of the things that we
20 heard about this week in terms of truths and
21 recommendations, we heard about the need for various levels
22 of government and jurisdiction to work together
23 cooperatively to help find solutions. We've heard about the
24 importance of establishing appropriate memorials to honour
25 lost loved ones. We've also heard about the importance of
26 cultural competence in delivering services and providing

1 services for Dene, Inuit, and Metis. We've also heard about
2 the need for hearing support that's provided to families
3 and survivors on a long-term basis. And also we've heard
4 about the need for educating Canadians on Indigenous
5 issues, including the tragedy of missing and murdered
6 Indigenous women and girls.

7 So those are just some of the things we've
8 heard about and while we've heard about some of the losses
9 and tragic impacts of violence on individuals and
10 communities, there was also a lot of laughter this week.
11 And there was a lot of hope, and there were a lot of
12 friendships made.

13 And I'm also grateful for the evening
14 celebrations this week. So thanks for sharing your
15 community and culture with all of us. On Tuesday we
16 experienced the teachings and the culture of the Dene, and
17 we had the Inuit and Inuvialuit teaching shared with us
18 Wednesday night, last night. And this evening is dedicated
19 to the Metis of this land. So thank you very much for
20 sharing all that with us.

21 I just want to say to all of you, all of
22 your contributions to the national inquiry are invaluable,
23 and thank you so much for participating or supporting or
24 just being here and listening us. Mahsi cho, thank you.

25 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank you
26 very much. Now I'd like to call upon Commissioner Michele

1 Audette.

2 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:

3 COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: No kiss.
4 Oops, you heard. (Speaking in native language). A few words
5 in French just to make sure that Canada, who speaks French,
6 hear about you. May I?

7 Alors avant de commencer le protocole
8 qu'on enseigne au quotidien c'est de saluer évidemment les
9 gens qui nous accueillent sur ce magnifique territoire
10 qu'on appelle maintenant le Territoire du Nord-Ouest.
11 C'est un territoire qui appartient aux Denes, aux Métis et
12 aux Inuits.

13 Merci aux aînés, Madame la Ministre, merci
14 beaucoup mes collègues les commissaires, les membres du
15 Parlement, Herb and your caribou. Wow! Merci beaucoup de
16 nous accueillir ici.

17 Ce que nous avons entendu cette semaine a
18 été frappant, a été choquant, a déchiré par moments mes
19 principes, mes valeurs comme maire, mais aussi mes valeurs
20 comme commissaire. De voir qu'un enfant qui est donné au
21 système mais se retrouve finalement doublement
22 marginalisée, violée, battue, abandonnée par une situation,
23 par un système, par des lois, et la liste est longue, sur
24 toute sa vie. Toute sa vie.

25 Et aujourd'hui elle nous a donné le
26 cadeau, le devoir puis la responsabilité de faire en sorte

1 que ce cycle se termine une fois pour toute. C'est un gros
2 mandat. C'est pas seulement quatre commissaires et une
3 centaine d'employés qui va faire cette différence, mais par
4 contre nous allons contribuer à faire la différence.

5 C'est aussi les gouvernements. C'est
6 aussi les municipalités. C'est aussi les citoyens et les
7 citoyennes qui vont faire ce changement-là à partir de
8 maintenant.

9 Le rapport, ce n'est pas une excuse pour
10 retarder un changement.

11 In English. Protocols, where I'm coming
12 from, it's always important to acknowledge the people that
13 are welcoming us here. And there's so many of you. So many
14 of you very beautiful, very powerful, very alive, very,
15 very, very strong. And I have to say thank you to the
16 elders, to Madam la Ministre, les membres du Parliament and
17 Herb and I was sick yesterday, and I'm still sick, I'm just
18 pretending I'm not. And the best medicine was caribou. He
19 gave me some caribou and now I'm back. Watch out.

20 And also a gift that I received today.
21 Every one of us share this responsibility. Three of us were
22 here, we're parents, we're friends, we're partners, but
23 we're also commissioners, and we went to different rooms
24 and today a person, one human being, a woman gave us a
25 gift. But also reminded us that the moment she was born the
26 system failed her. The moment that she breathed, nobody was

1 there for her. Nobody. And she reminded us how many of us
2 across Canada are broken, raped, marginalized,
3 discriminated. The list is too long. But she also reminded
4 us that things -- those realities are still exist, are
5 unacceptable, and that needs to change. So I committed
6 myself to this beautiful lady. I want you to stand up.
7 People need to see how strong, how beautiful, how powerful
8 you are. And what we're doing, it's for you and many other
9 women across Canada. Tony, over there, with her partner.

10 And the same thing, if you can stand up,
11 all the women that spoke with us, in private, statement
12 gathering, or here in public, if you wish to stand up, so
13 we can honour you. The people here can honour you, but also
14 the rest of Canada, for your strength, your courage. If you
15 can stand up. Thank you so much. Thank you.

16 This is the day I don't like everywhere I
17 go, because it's for me physically our spirit physically
18 separate. I go back. I'm a mum, I'm a partner, I'm a friend
19 over there. I have to balance. But I want to make sure that
20 our spirits stay connected. I want to make sure that what
21 we're doing right now, it's worth it. It's worth it. A
22 message to the media, come on, we need you. Forget about
23 what's going on at the inquiry, put the family there, share
24 their stories, talk about them, educate Canadians, educate
25 people who don't know about the families and the survivors.
26 You have that magic, use it. And I know you do. We'll talk

1 about the extension, don't worry. But family first. Come
2 on, help me. Help me on that.

3 And to finish, people say the inquiry will
4 prepare and present recommendation. But we all know we
5 don't need to wait the final report to change today and
6 tomorrow. We don't need. We can do it now. Sandra, we
7 should make a T-shirt with your quote and hash tag.

8 You've heard, you've listened, you became
9 a witness now. You can make that change. So help us to make
10 that change. We deserve equity. Equality, justice. We
11 deserve that. We breathe the same oxygen. So I want to go
12 home and believe that what we're doing here it's for all of
13 us, all of us, and for our children, and for all the women
14 who spoke, and the women that will come and speak, there's
15 so many of you are waiting to come. So we want to make sure
16 we do it right, and believe me, after today, caribou, the
17 drum, the richness with your culture, I became again a
18 fighter.

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank you very
20 much, Michele. You're the only one that made me blush
21 today. She remembered Georgie, Porgie, pudding and pie.
22 There you go. What a guy won't do to ask for a kiss.

23 No, ladies and gentlemen, all serious and
24 everything put aside, thank you very much for your
25 beautiful words, all you three commissioners. We're very
26 pleased to have with us the minister, the territorial

1 government responsible for the status of women, I'd like to
2 call upon the Honorable Caroline Cochrane.

3 --- CLOSING REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE COCHRANE:

4 THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE COCHRANE: Good
5 afternoon, family members, commissioners, and everyone here
6 supporting the families at the closing ceremonies for the
7 Yellowknife community hearings of the national inquiry for
8 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. It was
9 extremely important for me to attend the closing ceremonies
10 and I'm honoured to be able to speak at this event.

11 I will begin by acknowledging the family
12 members here today. Your voices are critical for this
13 inquiry. The strength that you've shown by coming forward
14 will be the foundation within the final recommendations
15 brut forward by the commission. Recommendations that will
16 set in motion real change. This inquiry is not about
17 politics or others speaking for you. This inquiry is for
18 you and it is about hearing your pain, your experiences,
19 and your solutions to begin the healing. Words cannot
20 express gratitude, empathy, and sincere respect for each of
21 you who have come forward.

22 I want to also acknowledge the Native
23 Women's Association, family support liaison unit, the
24 Government of the Northwest Territories, family information
25 liaison unit, and the counselors from the territorial
26 health authorities. These individuals work collaborately

1 [sic] with the inquiry staff to provide information and the
2 critical emotional support for everyone at these hearings.

3 I take a moment to recognize the
4 incredible dedication of the Native Women's Association of
5 the Northwest Territories in finding so many creative and
6 culturally respective ways to support the inquiries and the
7 families. Their beautiful beaded heart project is a
8 powerful symbol of support from the people of the Northwest
9 Territories. And the events they organized in the evenings
10 allowed everyone to draw upon our shared cultures, music,
11 and languages for strength and healing.

12 And I also want to thank the commissioners
13 for taking on the difficult task of hearing people's
14 stories and carrying them forward into recommendations for
15 change. No matter what you hear, your work is critical and
16 cannot be put aside for any reason.

17 Today, today I dress to represent my
18 thoughts when I think of this inquiry. Today, today I wear
19 red. Red to represent the thousands of Indigenous women and
20 girls who have shed their blood on our soils for reasons
21 that do not make sense, that are not just, and that are not
22 comprehensive. These are our sisters, our mothers, our
23 children, family members and loved ones, and it is
24 important that we recognize and honour each and every one
25 of them.

26 Although they may have been murdered or

1 still missing, they shall not be forgotten and we'll carry
2 them in our hearts forever.

3 Today, today I wear black. Black to
4 represent the loss and the grief that family members carry
5 throughout their lives. Although the names of their loved
6 ones may not be spoken every day, the dark grief is carried
7 in their hearts and souls of those left wondering what
8 happened and why it happened.

9 Today, today I was going to wear my
10 traditional Metis sash to represent the Indigenous people,
11 but I decided to wear the sash gifted to me by the Women's
12 Council of the Metis Nation of Ontario for its yellow. The
13 sash I wear and the earrings made by an Indigenous woman
14 from our territory have yellow in them. Yellow for me
15 represents the sun and provides us with a sense of hope.
16 The hope that each of us carries, hope that this inquiry
17 will answer some of the questions family members have. Hope
18 that systems that impact Indigenous women and girls will be
19 challenged. And hope that society's perceptions of the
20 value of Indigenous women will change and we will not be
21 seen as less than. Hope that one day Indigenous women and
22 girls will be able to walk freely and not fear for their
23 lives.

24 As stated at the beginning, attending this
25 closure was extremely important for me because that is what
26 we seek. Closure in learning what happened to our loved

1 ones, and closure of the racism and injustice that
2 Indigenous women and girls still face today.

3 Thank you, merci, mahsi cho.

4 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank you
5 very much, the Honorable Caroline Cochrane, minister
6 responsible for the status of women, Government of the
7 Northwest Territories.

8 Over the last few days we've heard a lot
9 of the survivors. Sandra Lockhart was also one who shared.
10 I would like to ask her to come forward at this time to
11 acknowledge all those that have shared in the Yellowknife
12 edition of the inquiry.

13 MS. SANDRA LOCKHART: There's teachings
14 that were given to me, and they're coming to me right, so
15 I'm going to, with your patience, share it.

16 You know, we come to this earth through
17 many different doorways and right now we're standing in the
18 north door. And I came from the west door, and the
19 teachings and the responsibilities that I have with that.
20 And I think that everybody has come here from a different
21 doorway and it's good that we're reminded to call ourselves
22 when we go back to wherever we're coming from, because it's
23 not good for us to leave ourselves scattered all over. So
24 and I'll be calling my spirit name so that it comes with
25 me, because I spent too many years not having my spirit
26 with me. And that's a very dark place to be.

1 The elders also remind me that I don't
2 speak for everyone when I share. So I'm no means up here
3 trying to say that I'm talking for you, because I know I
4 can't do that. It's impossible. But I do acknowledge those
5 of us that went through our experiences, and we've carried
6 them for a long time. And we had an opportunity now to
7 share it, and the way of our own words, and what we've
8 discovered from it. Because the people who heard us, you
9 know, some of them extremely hurt, some of them extremely
10 not well. Some of them walked amongst us after the hurt was
11 done.

12 But I can see that this inquiry has a
13 spirit of its own and I was sharing with Marie, and I'm
14 going to do it again, when Marie did her work with -- Marie
15 Sinclair -- with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,
16 it gave birth to a spirit that lifted us out of another era
17 of darkness. When the Royal Commission with George Erasmus,
18 he did his work, that lifted us out of another place. And
19 in our society, globally it's not a Canadian problem, it's
20 a global problem, when Indigenous women are on the bottom,
21 there's a -- I have come to understand in the last few days
22 that as much as we've been through, every time we got
23 really hurt to the point of breaking, we reached out to
24 that sacredness inside of us and around us. And it's kept
25 us going. And it's so good to know that we're not alone,
26 there's something about this spirit that is in this whole

1 thing, and it comes from us. Whether we're family members,
2 survivors, or LGBT. And that same spirit is in the world in
3 every other person, and we have a global phenomenon going
4 with climate change, and we're fortunate as Indigenous
5 women to have such a strong relationship to who we call
6 Mother Earth because she has guided us, fed us, clothed us,
7 and will continue to do so. And she's crying out like we
8 are, help me help myself. She has her own rhythm. She has
9 her way of being. She has her own purpose, like each of us
10 do.

11 I woke up this morning and I couldn't
12 identify right away what it was, but I panicked last night
13 because we get afraid when we share, did I say the right
14 thing? Did I say too much? My god, you know, all this
15 head stuff, right? But I woke up this morning and I want
16 you to know I shared how dirty I felt with so many
17 different experiences, but I feel clean today. And I hope
18 you do, too. But there's something more that I really feel
19 is both a gift and a responsibility, and I got to say it.
20 Now that I know that you know that we know, we can't
21 unknow.

22 So I had something sent to me today that's
23 not right in its language. It's not giving the right
24 spirit. And I could feel it. So I have a responsibility to
25 share where it's off, it's off centre, right? And I did
26 not support this inquiry, you need to know that. But

1 creator has always been my boss, and he speaks to my
2 intuition. And it said, get over there. So I came with all
3 my resistance, even though I fought for this inquiry, I
4 marched for it, because there's lots out there saying it's
5 not this, it's not that, right? But experience teaches us
6 in our own way and our own journey, and I have been cared
7 for, I have been loved, and I have been honoured. And I
8 have watched that happen with you. And I have seen the
9 women who have got up, because you're still living. My
10 mother's heart is there. My aunt's heart is there. But our
11 heart is still beating, and our men are with us beating,
12 because we all need balance. And we need to come together
13 as nations, and we need to get human again. And remember
14 the call for humanity, that's what it's really about. We
15 need to dismantle the lies that don't support our humanity
16 it.

17 So I want to thank each and every survivor
18 that came forward. And for the families that are surviving
19 through their grief. For the LGBT who are not here to speak
20 for themselves, we know you're here. And for the people
21 that are coming forward, I encourage you to come in here to
22 hear your own voice. Because when we go to creator, or
23 whatever you call that sacred space, it's the pain that
24 brings us there. I have never went there when I'm feeling
25 good. And I know it's really hollow of me, but it's my
26 truth.

1 And when I go to that space, I never get
2 anything that segregates. And I always get the strength to
3 respond what our elders say in a good way. And sometimes it
4 may look like it's not in a good way, but from here on in,
5 I'm going to pay attention, because we don't just
6 physically eat, we emotionally eat, we spiritually eat.
7 What am I putting in me? I'm responsible for that.

8 And because of my nature, I need lots of
9 ceremony because I can get really out there, I have to pay
10 attention to what I'm putting out for you to eat. So once
11 again, thank you for honouring me and having that space
12 that in spite of what I thought I understood, all of you
13 were there, and the staff. I want to thank every staff
14 member because they listened to me, they held me. I'm only
15 up here because I was whining away about there's nobody
16 talking to survivors, right? But we're important. So I
17 want to thank the elders, especially those with the
18 traditional perspective. I want to know those old ways that
19 allows me to see, not race, but humanity, but to be proud
20 of my ethnicity. And white privilege is a lie. It's rooted
21 in a lie. So is white supremacy. It doesn't benefit white
22 people because so many of them want to run and apologize
23 today. And somehow we've all got to move out of that. And
24 it's going to be hard because it's hard because I'm not
25 saying that there's not privilege. I'm not saying that. But
26 we have to find a way to find that gender balance and that

1 nation to nation balance again. And country to country.
2 Because with technology, the word just went flat again. And
3 globally every Indigenous women is crying out. So mahsi
4 cho.

5 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Thank you very
6 much, Sandra Lockhart. I think all that needs to be said
7 has been said. On behalf of all the bosses, I'd like to
8 draw our attention to the extinguishment of the Quiliq.
9 Maybe if you'd like to say a few words -- we'll have Rasi
10 say the last words because she's going to do the last
11 official function of this hearing.

12 MS. RASI NASHELIK: Finally. (Speaking in
13 native language). I'm just thanking my fellow Inuit,
14 especially Commissioner Qajaq, who uses my language, which
15 is part of me, to keep me strong. And I'm encouraging her
16 to use it right throughout the commissioner's travels and
17 hearings. And also I'd like to acknowledge my Inuit fellows
18 from (speaking in native language) she's the part of the
19 Commission, and also two counselors, Jean Imaik (ph)
20 (speaking in native language). And also Barb. These are the
21 people I'm acknowledging because we work together. And also
22 Kathy Meyer (speaking in native language). Thank you so
23 much, Kathy. And also I was here mostly I thought about
24 Kathy because she lives here and she goes through really,
25 really hard times of trying to find her daughter. And part
26 of the elder now that I got responsibilities in this

1 Yellowknife for anybody who like to get help, I'm open to
2 anyone, and I'm not always doing right things, according to
3 me sometimes, I forgive myself. And I'm so grateful that I
4 was part of this inquiry. Through this Quiliq, who got so
5 attachment to me, it's my traditional tool. And I have been
6 teaching people in the past three and a half days, I have
7 been teaching people. I'm so grateful for that because I
8 think everybody should have rights to learn what it's
9 about.

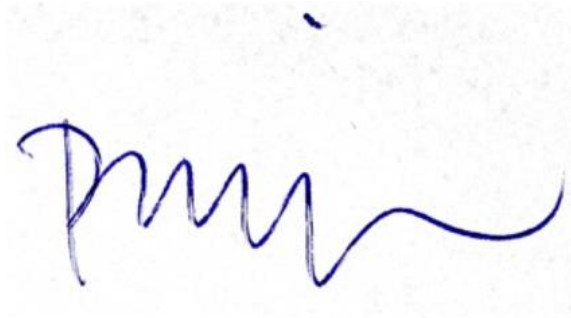
10 And thank you so much, mahsi cho for
11 letting me to sit in, right in the speck of this area in
12 the middle. Thank you so, so much. Mahsi cho (speaking in
13 native language). Have a good night.

14 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: And as the
15 Quiliq is extinguished, we'd just like to let you know that
16 there's one more function that is going to take place
17 tonight, and I know that the commissioners -- one of the
18 commissioners made mention of it. It's Metis night over at
19 the Explorer Hotel and you're welcome to come and join in
20 the final celebration. And at this time we'd like to wish
21 each and every one who has traveled many, many miles to be
22 here, we'd like to wish you a safe journey back to your
23 respective communities, and we may not be able to heal the
24 world, but we can heal ourselves, one heart at a time.
25 Thank you very much. Bye for now.

26 --- Exhibit (code: P01P09P0303)

- 1 Exhibit 1: Social Services document
- 2 --- Whereupon proceedings adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best
of my skill and ability,
accurately transcribed from a pre-existing recording
the foregoing proceeding.



Rubina Jan, Certified Court Reporter

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I have, to the best
of my skill and ability,
accurately transcribed from a pre-existing recording
the foregoing proceeding.



Jennifer Rotstein, Court Reporter

ASAP Reporting Services Inc.

(613) 564-2727

(416) 861-8720