National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre
Whitehorse, Yukon

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Starr Evangeline Drynock,
In Relation to Deborah Evangeline;

Edna Deerunner, In Relation to Annie Dick;

Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard & Logan Blanchard, In Relation to Evangeline Billy;

Dorothy Hayes, In Relation to Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, & Wendy Carlick;

Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan, Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster & Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien;
In Relation to Tina Washpan

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II
TABLE OF CONTENTS

First Hearing

Witness: Starr Evangeline Drynock (Family of Deborah Evangeline)

Evidence:

Starr Evangeline Drynock with Karen Snowshoe
(Commission Counsel).................................3

First Hearing Exhibits

Exhibit P1: Three-page one-sided witness statement “My name is Starr Evangeline Drynock...”
Exhibit P2: 8.5 x 11” photocopy of photo of woman holding two young children on a couch.
Exhibit P3: 8.5 x 11” photocopy of a photo said to be Starr Drynock with daughter Nevaeh in regalia and raven facial markings.
Exhibit P4: 8.5 x 11” photocopy of a photo of a woman standing with a broad smile in a white shirt, dark jacket.
Exhibit P5: 8.5 x 11” photocopy of a photo man in a cowboy hat with arms around a woman in a long-sleeve white shirt.

Second Hearing

Witness: Edna Deerunner (Family of Annie Dick)

Evidence:

Edna Deerunner with Lillian Lundrigan
(Commission Counsel).................................11

Second Hearing Exhibits

Exhibit P1: Affidavit of Walter J. Covich; Affidavit of Edna D. Covich; two pages with respective signature, both sworn January 12, 1990.
Exhibit P2: Six-page Agreement dated April 29, 1958 (see second page) on letterhead of Nielsen, Enderton and MacWilliam, barristers and solicitors, dated May 1958 Whitehorse and on legal paper.
Exhibit P3: 8.5 x 11” photocopy of a photo of a woman in hat and dark jacket holding a boy.
Exhibit P4: Two-page Presumptive death certificate, Alaska Department of Health, for Robert Martin Simmons, presumed date of death March 27, 1964.
Exhibit P5: One-page photocopy of Whitehorse Star news report “Man has taxi stop, jumps to his death” by Chuck Tobin. No date of photocopy.
Exhibit P6: Four-page photocopy of text and images, some double-sided, stapled top left corner. First page: photo of group in front of a cabin with the caption: “At Ross River, Y.T 1923 or 24...” Funeral program for Kazoa’ Frank Dick and group photo on subsequent pages.

Third Hearing

Witness: Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard (Family of Evangeline Billy)

Evidence:

Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard with Wendy van Tongeren (Commission Counsel)........... 23
Alex Carlick speaks.......................... 26

Third Hearing Exhibits

Exhibit P1: One-page “Family Tree for Evangelina Billy” [Nota: contains some spelling errors]
Exhibit P2: One-page handwritten poem by Pamela Blanchard “Silence dropping... knees shaking...”
Exhibit P3: Four-page Statement of Toni Blanchard with first line “K’ama Soothan Toni Blanchard Ushi, Good morning, my name is Toni Blanchard” – stapled top left corner.
Exhibit P4: Five-page booklet of colour photographs on 8.5 x 11” office paper. First page is a full-photo of Evangeline Kris Billy; second page contains two photos, lower photo has word “Dawson” and a star inscribed above it; subsequent pages contain mix of black-and-white and colour family photos. Booklet stapled top left corner, pages not numbered.

Fourth Hearing

Witness: Dorothy Hayes (family of Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

Evidence:

Dorothy Hayes with Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)....................... 42

Fifth Hearing

Witnesses: Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan, Joy O'Brien,
Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien (Family of Tina Washpan)

Evidence:

Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan, Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien with Wendy van Tongeren (Commission Counsel).............. 65

Fifth Hearing Exhibit

Exhibit P1: Colour photograph of young First Nations woman in white coat or shirt; young woman said to be Tina Washpan, approx. 9 x 12 inches.
WANEK HORN-MILLER: Good morning, everybody. My name is Waneek Horn-Miller. I'm the Director of Community Relations for the National Inquiry. And welcome back today. Good to see all of you.

We just wanted to do before we got started with the Elders' prayer, a couple of housekeeping notes, just reminders.

First and foremost, please turn off your phones. Try not to be on your phone. If you need to take a phone or do texting or anything like that, please go on the public side because it's really important that we be attentive and listening when we're on this side of the tent. So I appreciate that.

There are cultural activities today that are happening in the Elders' Tent and I have that list. Oh, and I just dropped it. I put it down. I will get that.

There's going to be -- in the Family Tent there will be some cultural activities this afternoon, and I think there's stick-handling games and some drumming and different things for the families.

There's also, if you've noticed, there's these beautiful blankets, these quilts, these have been made by women that are in prison in Saskatchewan. They wanted to contribute something to the families. So these are all -- were made by these beautiful women, Indigenous women in prison.

We also wanted you to know that you can make your own square. On this side in the Family Tent, there's also a chance for you to sit down and do your own square, and at the end we're going to put it together in a quilt for this hearing. So if you feel like you need time to go and maybe just catch your thoughts, there's an opportunity for you to do that.

If you've noticed, there's people with yellow lanyards. They are the health supports. Any time that you need health supports, you can access -- and that's anybody. That includes
media. That includes supports. That includes tech people. If you need a health support, a time, please don't hesitate to go and access that. There's also a health support cabin that has a green door -- 11, yeah. That's the health support cabin. So please access that.

There are -- if you've noticed, these are bags that are sitting on the ground. These are tear bags, and we have boxes of Kleenex. The cultural teaching is that crying is healing, crying is healthy. It's part of the process and we honour those tears by collecting them in these bags, and they're going to be taken and put through a ceremony and -- at the cultural fire that's happening over there at the end of the day tomorrow. So if you have tissues, please put them in these bags so that we can take good care of them.

If you are feeling the need and you want to go and be smudged or have -- just sit by the sacred fire that's been burning since Monday morning, we invite everybody, including all of the media, including anybody here, anybody of the staff, if you want to go and be smudged and talk to the amazing people that are keeping that fire going, it's a wonderful feeling to centre yourself. So we welcome all of you. We just want you to know that there's no pictures to be taken while you're there. It's more of a time for you just to collect yourself. It's an amazing experience, so hopefully you'll get a chance to go meet the fire keepers that are helping us through this process.

I guess -- yes. The last one at least. There's water being provided. We would really appreciate it if you would take these water bottles with you and we want to recycle them. So at the end of the sessions when we're going for breaks, please take your water bottle with you and take them to the recycling. And if you don't know where the recycling is, find someone with a green lanyard, a yellow lanyard, and we'll help you and we'll take them for you. So we will do that for you.

And other than that, I wish all of you a really -- a good day, a strong day, and I look forward to talking with a lot of you.
Hearing Public
Starr Drynock
(Deborah Evangeline)

I'd like to ask Elder Hammond Dick to open up the session.
Could you please, everybody just turn your cell phones off. Thank you. And those of you just to know that anybody on the other side of that curtain, we have reserved seats on this side for family members, Elders, and support. So don't hesitate to come inside here and you can be in this side of things.

ELDER HAMMOND DICK: (OPENING PRAYER)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to day two of our hearings in Whitehorse. I'm Chief Commissioner Marion Buller, and this morning with me are Commissioner Qajaq Robinson and Commissioner Michèle Audette. Ms. Snowshoe, are you ready to proceed?

First Hearing
Starr Evangeline Drynock (Family of Deborah Evangeline) with Karen Snowshoe (Commission Counsel)

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Chief Commissioner, Commissioners, my name is Karen Snowshoe, your Commission counsel for today. And it is my honour to introduce you today to Starr Evangeline Drynock. And it is also my honour to introduce Starr's father, Norman Drynock, who's travelled all the way from Lytton, B.C., to be here in support of his daughter.

Starr has prepared a written statement today, which the family has kindly provided copies for the Commissioners as well as for the interpreter.

And Bryan, if you don't mind, Starr would like to affirm today with the eagle feather.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Good morning, Starr. I understand you wish to affirm with the feather this morning. Do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you will give today will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

STARR DRYNOCK: I do.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you very much.

STARR EVANGELINE DRYNOCK, affirmed.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Starr, thank you for being here
Hearing Public
Starr Drynock
(Deborah Evangeline)

today, and it's been my honour to have been
working with you over the past while. I would
like to offer you this tobacco in support of your
words today.

STARR DRYNOCK: Thank you.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Please proceed any time you're ready.

STARR DRYNOCK: My name is Starr Drynock. I'm 25
years old. I was born and raised in Merritt,
British Columbia, and moved here to Whitehorse in
March of 2007.

My mother's name was Deborah Evangeline
Edwards and she was born September 28th, 1969, in
Merritt, British Columbia. She had two children,
me and my older brother, Joseph Swakum, who is
now 28.

My mother loved music and she loved to
dance. Her hopes and dreams were to have her
family together and her strengths were wanting a
good life for her babies. Deborah was soft-
spoken and had resilient strength. She always
treated others with equality and kindness. She
made a little bit go a long way.

My dad, he had to buy her nice clothes and
shoes as she did little shopping for herself and
would wear old, worn shoes.

My mother grew up in foster homes where she
was sexually assaulted. She sought out
counselling to help take care of herself after
go through trauma and violent relationships.

In late April of 1992, my mother went
missing. My dad, Norman, was attending a first
aid course and was home for the weekend when a
local police pulled him over to see if he had
seen Debbie anywhere.

A week before she had gone missing, Deborah
told my dad to look after me if anything were to
happen.

On May 8th, 1992, my mother's body turned up
in the Nicola River. She was 22 years old.

My dad had brought up two names to the
police but they said they can't arrest people
from street talk and can't bother people if
there's no evidence, that evidence being any
traces of sexual assault. The Merritt Police
Department then put off my mother's death as a
suicide.

At the time of them finding Debbie, I was
with Winston, my brother's father. After my mother was found, I was taken in to Child Services. My dad wanted custody of me but had to prove that he was my father, so therefore went to court. My dad had set precedents while fighting for me. He was a single First Nations man trying to get his daughter back. I was two and a half when he got me back and he did anything and everything to keep me out of the hands of Child and Family Services.

I grew up an only child, often wondering why my mother was not around. I started drinking at an early age, about 14 years old. My heart was filled with anger, loneliness, and frustration. I was often jealous of girls who had their mothers. I was angry I couldn't share my milestones with my mother like they were. I was raised my entire life by my father, who had to play not only the father role but the mother role as well.

My dad had told me again at about 16 or 17 years old what happened to my mother. I remember being blindsided with anger and hurt, calling the Merritt Police Department from here in Whitehorse demanding to know what happened to my mother. They told me they could not release those records over the phone and that if I really wanted to know, I could go down to the local department in Merritt and there's a chance they might tell me what happened.

The ache in my heart felt stronger but I also felt at peace knowing the true story of what really happened. As I grew up, I told myself I'd be the mother I never had, that one day when I have a baby, I'll raise him or her how I feel my mother would raise me.

In March of 2012, I found out I was pregnant with my baby. December 2nd, my daughter was born: Navaeh Southerly Evangeline Drynock. She's now four. I often tell her of her Grandma Debbie and show her pictures that I got through my Uncle Winston. Navaeh knows she's with us in spirit and often asks about where she is, and I happily share everything that I know with her.

My mother was raised not knowing her culture. I was lucky to grow up having my culture surround me and I'd like Navaeh to grow
Hearing Public
Starr Drynock
(Deborah Evangeline)

up knowing both of her cultures from the
Nlakapamux Nation in B.C. and the Trondek
Hwech'in First Nation up in Dawson City.

During my time here in the Yukon, I have
become more involved in traditional singing and
dancing. I share songs from the Nlakapamux
Nation and the Stl’atl’imx Nation in Lillooet,
B.C.

I've learned to let go of anger and
jealously I felt towards other girls and their
mothers. Instead, I adore seeing those
relationships and hope that one day my daughter
and I can be just as close.

Within the last couple years I started
following the Missing and Murdered Indigenous
Women movement. I sing the "Women's Warrior
Song" to support the families and honour the
women and girls who we've lost.

I'm telling my mother's story to honour her.
I may not have physically known her myself, but
by the stories people tell me, I know she is such
a beautiful woman and I want to share her and her
story with everyone.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Starr. Commissioners,
Starr has sent some photos that she would like to
share with you. This is the first photo. And
first I'll ask Starr to describe this photo and
then I'll pass it to you. Starr, can you please
maybe just talk a bit about this photo.

STARR DRYNOCK: In this photo, it's my mother,
Deborah, my older brother, Joseph. He's probably
about two. And I'm not too sure how old I am
here but that's --

NORMAN DRYNOCK: Four and a half months.

STARR DRYNOCK: Four and a half months. And it's neat
because we still have this dress. It's red and
it's got white frills and my dad still has the
little headband.

NORMAN DRYNOCK: I still have her blouse.

STARR DRYNOCK: And my dad still has her white silk
blouse that she's wearing in this photo.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. Commissioners, this is
the second photo that Starr would like the
Commission to see. And again, I'll ask Starr to
just describe this photo and then I'll pass it to
you for viewing. Starr, can you tell the
Commissioners about this photo?
Hearing Public
Starr Dryncock
(Deborah Evangeline)

STARR DRYNOCK: Like I said, my mom used to like
dancing. So in this photo, I was told she was
going all dressed up to go out dancing and
have, I guess, a night of fun out.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. This is the third photo
that Starr would like to offer the Commission.
And again, I'll ask Starr if you could please
describe this photo and then I'll pass it to the
Commissioners for viewing.

STARR DRYNOCK: In this photo, it's me and my
daughter, Navaeh. We were getting ready for a
performance and she's wearing a tiny little shawl
that I made her. And the marks on her chin is to
represent the Raven Clan. It's supposed to
represent the tale. So we were just getting
ready for a performance. And I always love
taking pictures of her when she's all dolled up
in her regalia. So it plays a very important
part in our life because when we sing and dance,
it grounds me and it keeps me connected to
everything and it makes me focus on me and my
daughter's life.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. Commissioners, this is
the last photo that Starr would like to provide.
And again, Starr, if you could -- please take
your time. Just take as much time as you need,
and when you're ready, you can let the
Commissioners know a bit about this photo.

STARR DRYNOCK: So I have two sets of these photos of
my mother and my dad, Norman, here. He says this
is just before they were getting ready to go out
dancing in the town. We still have -- I've got
one copy and my dad's got the other copy of this
photo.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Starr. Starr, if it's
okay with you, I just have a few questions.
Thank you.

The first question is, have you ever
obtained any of the documents related to any
criminal investigation or coroner's report
regarding your mother's death?

STARR DRYNOCK: No, I haven't obtained any records of
any sort. We even -- my dad and I even tried
looking online for like news articles and we
couldn't find any. And I haven't thought about
trying to get any records from the coroner or
from the police back home.
KAREN SHOWSHOE: Would your family be interested in obtaining any of those records?

STARR DRYNOCK: I've thought about it. I've thought about wanting the records and everything, but I think for now, just as long as I know her story and I can share it with everybody, I think that's all she would want, just for her story to be told and have me just share her with you, have people get to know her. And I think that's all that would matter right now.

KAREN SHOWSHOE: I'd like to ask you a bit about your strength and your resilience, but just one quick question before I ask that. Were there any suspects in your mother's death, and if so, do you know their ethnicity or background?

STARR DRYNOCK: I know there were two. One was Native and one was a Caucasian. That's all I know. My dad told me more, but my mind, I think, just blocks it out. And it's probably for the best in a way. So I've just accepted that, that it's just two men. And yeah, I've grown to accept that. I don't need to know their names or where they are or who they are.

KAREN SHOWSHOE: Thank you. Starr, you mention being a dancer and you talk about your traditions and your culture. And I'm just wondering, are there any other factors that contribute to your strength and resilience as a young woman?

STARR DRYNOCK: Growing up, I always thought that my mother would want me to be like a kind, caring, loving person. And I know that -- I guess growing up without my mom, it'd have to make me strong, independent -- a strong, independent woman, and I have to learn to do things on my own. And I knew that one day that I would have a baby to look after, and I always told myself, I'm going to be a good mom for him or her. And sure enough, I've got my daughter, and so she's what keeps me going. There are days sometimes where I like, oh, I don't think I can do this. I don't think I can like keep going. But I look at her, and my dad says that she's got a lot of facial traits and even like personality traits that match my mom. And so, thinking of that, it keeps me going because I know I've got a part of my mom in my baby. So she helps me. She helps me out.

Her Nlakapamux name is Yedik Moyammen (phonetic)
and it means "good medicine." So she's been good medicine for me and definitely my dad, and she helps, like just hugging her and feeling her, she gives off a good energy, and so that's why we call her "Good Medicine." So that plays a big part in how I'm so strong and how I keep myself going.

KAREN SHOWSHOE: Thank you. Starr, my final question is about your supports, your support system. And you've spoken about how your father has been a tremendous support to you. And again, Mr. Drynock, I really express my gratitude that you're here in support of your daughter. Starr, in addition to your father, have you had any other supports throughout your life that you'd like to speak about?

STARR DRYNOCK: Some other supports of mine are friends and close family. My Auntie Loretta, she moved back down to Spence's Bridge, I talk with her a lot and she really helps me through the tough times. I've got lots of -- or a few close friends up here that I talk to. My friend Kim, she's like a sister to me, so we can talk about anything and everything. I've got supports at Many Rivers Counselling and I've got friends and family, like my Uncle Roger here. He's always there for me. So it's really good to help -- thank you. It's really good to have close and good support of friends and family that can be there to support me when I need it.

KAREN SHOWSHOE: Thank you, Starr. I don't have any more questions for you. Is there anything that's come to mind, anything else that you'd like the Commissioners to know? Or is it okay to see if they have any questions? Okay. Starr has indicated that she's open to questions from the Commissioners.

STARR DRYNOCK: Hello.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Hi. Thank you. Thank you for telling us about your mom and honouring her with your words and your memories and these photos. You have her smile and we noticed that.

Part of our work is to look at ways to honour the lost loved ones, and you've done that now. And if there's any other memories you or your dad want to share with us, I just wanted to welcome you to, if you'd like to, tell us more
about her, it would be a real honour. Thank you so much.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Commissioner, Starr has — yes, her testimony is complete about the memories of her mother. And if anything comes up in the future, she has offered to provide it to me and I’ll provide it to the Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: As for me, it's a beautiful teaching that you're giving us, as mothers, as women, and I hope that the people across Canada or on this Mother Earth see your strength, your beauty. You too, le papa. And if I may, I would like to bring a piece of your energy with me for the rest of the day -- only if you want. Merci.

NORMAN DRYNOCK: I'd like to thank you for the opportunity for my daughter to speak and all the thoughtfulness of your team to bring not only me but other family members in support. I am very grateful. (Aboriginal language spoken)

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Commissioners, any other questions?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: We're very grateful that you came and shared these beautiful stories about your mother. Thank you so much. And we have something for you.

(SEED GIFTING CEREMONY)

First Hearing Exhibits

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Exhibit P5: 8.5 x 11” photocopy of a photo man in a cowboy hat with arms around a woman in a long-sleeve white shirt.
Hearing Public
Starr Drynock
(Deborah Evangeline)

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Commissioners, in closing, Starr
would like to offer the "Women's Warrior Song."

(SONG)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: We'll take a short break.
Thank you.

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 9:47 A.M.)
(PROCEEDINGS RECONVENED AT 10:07 A.M.)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Let's resume. Ms.
Lundrigan, are you ready?
LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Yes, we are ready.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Go ahead, please.

Second Hearing
Edna Deerunner (Family of Annie Dick) with Lillian
Lundrigan (Commission Counsel)

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Thank you. (Aboriginal language
spoken), Commissioners. Good morning. I would
like to introduce to you the family member of
Annie Dick, Edna Deerunner, and her support
sitting with her today.
Edna, can you please share with the
Commissioners what you would like to share today.
We have to do the affirmation. Sorry.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: You don't have to raise your right
hand but you can raise your right feather.
Do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you
will give today will be the truth, the whole
truth, and nothing but the truth?
EDNA DEERUNNER: Well, from the point of a five-year-
old, yes.

EDNA DEERUNNER, affirmed.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.
LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Okay. You can share your story
with the Commissioners.
EDNA DEERUNNER: Now, if I get nervous, someone's
going to have to hold this for me.
I'm here on behalf of my mama, and her name
is Annie Dick. She died in 1957-58, New Year's
Eve, or around there, in our little cabin in the
woods up at Porter Creek, and she died at the
hand of my father after many, many violent
episodes toward her.

I have a picture of her. This is when she was 25. She died at 30. There were five of us born to her. Excuse me, there were six of us born to her, a half-sister that wasn't raised in our family but she was very much a part of our life, and the five of us.

Where am I going here? I'm Kaska and Slavey of the Dene. Slavey is Northwest Territory, and that was my grandmother's people. My grandfather was from the Yukon Territory. And I am Irish, English, and Scot and I was raised in the Yukon for almost five years. I left shortly after Mama died because Daddy was trying to get ahead of the law, as far as I know. He didn't ever pay for his crime -- except for he did. You know that a soul pays for those things. And I know that he did. I had to forgive him and I still love him.

The logistics of the house -- well, first of all, can I tell you why I want to talk to you? I got to hold this. First of all, my mama's remains were never found, and that hits hard on a family. I have the legal description of the location of the property that we lived on, and it needs to be translated into current terms so that perhaps I can go and find her bones, because I have a theory -- I was almost five. I have a theory of where she was buried, and I have a theory of how she was buried. Now, when she died, Daddy was a drinker. Mama didn't drink until the last, maybe year or so of her life, and I think she sort of gave up. She was his punching bag. And she was young and beautiful and then her face got -- it got really damaged.

Where was I? Well, first I should talk about how she died. Daddy was in a blackout. I'm positive of that. I've worked on this issue for 32 years of my life, which is about when I woke up. The earlier parts of my life, I was a pretty good little white girl, upper middle class. I was married. I had a career in the legal field in Alaska. I was what I thought was fairly happy. And then things changed and I woke up, and it was like, oh, there's more to life than what I thought. So my husband said, you need to go home. So I went home. And it changed my world. And -- I'm very grateful for what my
people have given to me.

So what I want is not only to find her bones and bring them home. The next part I say not with anger or legal intent or anything like that, but I would like to have the RCMP apologize to me and my family and my community for not opening a file on my mama. My mama's a very amazing woman and she was very accomplished in her way. She was a trapper. She was a great mama. I didn't see a lot of joy as a five-year-old. I just didn't see it. But she loved us with her whole heart. And the night that Daddy finished her life, she -- I woke up.

Okay. Twelve years of my life I have no memory except for these little tiny bits, and one of those little bits came out one day in Alaska, because I'd been searching for them, and I saw the whole death scene. I saw myself looking through a little slat in the crib that I was in. I saw Mama reaching over Daddy to try and get the keys out from under his pants because she wanted to leave because he was being mean to her, and he woke up and he just started on her. Now, this oldest brother -- this picture of my mama, that's my oldest brother. And that was her -- he was her knight in shining armour. He protected her. He was too young to have to do that but he did. And he tried to step between Mama and Daddy, and they laid him -- Daddy laid him out flat and he was completely unconscious when Mama died. So I think what happened is, in his rage, and unfortunately in his blackout, he just went too far. And she -- there wasn't any coming back for her. And so he took a knife and he killed her.

Now, that's my memory that came back, and those memories can be undependable. My eldest brother believes -- his memory came back and told him that Daddy took a cast iron frypan and hit her on the side of the head and killed her that way. It doesn't really matter. He killed her.

That's where my memory stops for a while. I think I must have gone into a horrible shock. I know that we did not remember -- we didn't remember that she had died in that way. I was told lies. I was told that she had committed suicide and I hated her for a while. My little six-year-old girl was just angry. And then my
mama realized what was going on, my adopted mom, and she said, well, really what happened was that she died at the hands of GIs, so then I hated GIs forever. Well, when truth really came out, it really was my father. I have very few memories but I treasure them. My mama taught me how to knit and crochet to the point where I can do it now, when I wasn't even five years old. She would read me stories from a story book, and I don't think she knew how to read. Probably one of my favourite memories is being on her back, over her shoulder watching her snare rabbits, going from snare to snare and picking up the rabbits.

We quickly left Canada and moved to Alaska. My father, I believe, called his youngest brother in and him and his wife came and got my brother and me. Now, there was five of us, so -- well, plus the half-sister. The half-sister's name is Doris and she's passed. She has a beautiful family in Ross River. Then I have my brother Joe, who was five years older than me, myself, and then my brother Bob, who was my best friend, and he was two years younger than me. And then there was Kathy, who died of alcohol-related illness in 1984, and she's -- her death is the reason I woke up. Lots of things happened in those years. And then I have Maggie, Margaret, who is five years younger than me and she was the baby.

This is Kathy. This woman would wake up in alcohol recovery places, and until two years before her death she became sober, she affected southeast Alaska. I think once we become strong, we really can't stop people in my family because we're good, strong people. Anyway, this is Kathy, and she was raised in Florida by an uncle. She had a really tough life. She had a really, really tough life. Do I have other pictures?

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Can I ask you a couple of questions?

EDNA DEERUNNER: Sure.

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: When you talked about your home and the location and what you want help finding the remains of your mother, can you please describe this document to the Commissioners.

EDNA DEERUNNER: Are you going to give it to them?
Hearing - Public
Edna Deerunner
(Annie Dick)

1 LILLIAN LUNDRIEAN: Yes, I am.
2 EDNA DEERUNNER: This is the document of transfer of
3 property between my father and another man, and
4 this shows the location of the property that we
5 lived on when I was a child. We lived north of
6 Ross for most of -- well, for some of the time.
7 That's where I was born. And then we moved down
8 here.
9 LILLIAN LUNDRIEAN: And you mentioned when your mother
10 passed away that you were all brought to the
11 Mission home, Lazy Mountain --
12 EDNA DEERUNNER: Had I gotten to that yet?
13 LILLIAN LUNDRIEAN: I think so. I'll present this to
14 the Commission as well.
15 EDNA DEERUNNER: Yes. She's got an affidavit from the
16 home that we were placed in for seven years. It
17 was an extreme Christian home. It was abusive,
18 and not. There were good people there; there
19 were really horrible people there. There was a
20 minister who was a pedophile and many of us got
21 caught by him. There was -- I was raped by one
22 of the fellow -- I want to say inmates, but
23 that's not exactly -- how would I say that?
25 But we did have good people there too. I
26 have to say that. But the extremism of the
27 Christianity was what probably affected me the
28 most, and certainly at eight years old I said,
29 no, and that was my -- one of my earliest and
30 strongest decisions, I think. But the best part
31 of the children's home was that we had 75
32 children to play with.
33 We weren't fed properly. I have a lifelong
34 problem with filling up my refrigerator to the
35 max. So that is something I carry with me in my
36 life. I was neglected, had a really tough time.
37 If you really needed help and the people weren't
38 willing to help you, you were pretty much on your
39 own as a little child. So we sort of took care
40 of each other too.
41 Anyway, seven years there, and then Daddy
42 died in 1964 in the Seward Harbour. He was one
43 of the very few people who died in the '64
44 earthquake in Alaska. There was like under 200
45 people and he was one of them. At that point
46 then I was adopted or taken by his youngest
brother, who was a real estate appraiser in Alaska, in Anchorage, and his wife, who was a mover and a shaker. Nothing slowed her down when she wanted to do something and she was very political and active, and I got -- I got the bones of my personality from her because I didn't get them in the children's home, and I bless her every day.

LILLIAN LUNDGRIGAN: If you can just describe that to the Commissioners. I will be presenting it to them.

EDNA DEERUNNER: I don't hear you when you speak.

LILLIAN LUNDGRIGAN: Oh. If you can describe this document to the Commissioners, I will be giving it to them.

EDNA DEERUNNER: Okay. This is the presumptive death certificate of my father, Robert Martin Simmons. He also had a pretty tough life, and I know that he came to the Yukon running away from an addiction to speed back in those days, and he became a trapper and a drunk. There was parts of him that were really, really good and he admired my mama for the -- I don't know how long. But he spoke very highly of her in a series of letters that he sent to his mom in White Rock, B.C., and talked about how she could track and trap and hunt, and he would say, she's better than me, she's teaching me a lot. And so she did. She did. My mama was a kind, kind person, and if there was something that she saw -- and these are memories that I'm getting from my family and my community members. I don't have these memories, not all of them. They said if she saw that someone needed something done, she would just do it, and I like that. I do the same.

I wrote letters to the Yukon. I wrote letters to the RCMP asking for documents, asking for files, and I didn't get them. I got that "Our records don't go back that far." But really, what I came to, my conclusion was back in those days -- and I'm saying that kindly toward these days -- is that we just weren't cared for. We weren't respected. We were just Native women. And we need to change that because we are amazing.

LILLIAN LUNDGRIGAN: Edna, these are the letters you're describing?
EDNA DEERUNNER: Okay, she's going to show you the letters that I wrote. Thank you.

So my goal is to -- well, I'm moving here. I'm coming home. I've been in B.C. for the last six or seven years, and I'm -- someone gave me a pair of snowshoes not too long ago, and it was like, okay, Spirit wants me home, I'm going home. Now, I'm scared to death of 40 and 60 below because I haven't been in that in a long time, so I'm thinking Costa Rica for about a month every winter. (Laughing) I know.

So my goal also with the RCMP is to build a relationship, because we certainly aren't getting anywhere the way we have been. I'm finding out that there are some that are willing to listen to us, some that are willing to work with us, and those are the ones that I want to build a relationship with.

Next are some pictures of -- an old picture, 1923 or '24, and right in the front sitting down is my grandmother. Her name was Margaret -- you don't have it yet.

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: I will give them copies.

EDNA DEERUNNER: Okay. Margaret Jules Dick (phonetic). And she is the woman that came from Fort Simpson. That's where she was born. And this is her funeral flyer. And then next is my grandpa. Margaret's Native name is Magedi, and that is the name of our safe house in Ross River. She was quite the woman. And this is my grandfather, Kasowa (phonetic) and his name is Frank Dick, and Kasowa was named after the snow, the kind of snow that was on the ground the morning he was born. And I loved my grandpa. My grandma comes up to here on me. My grandpa -- you just look around the room and you see these hands going away. He always talked with his hands and he had the biggest hands. He knows. So -- and you know what, they both tell me I was their favourite grandchild. (Laughing) They were kidding. He told all of us that.

This is our Dick family taken by Margaret Thompson in the '80s. You know who Margaret Thompson is, hey? She was a really powerful woman who we were blessed to have live in Kaska land with us, and she is -- that's how we named our social services building, is the Margaret
Hearing - Public
Edna Deerunner
(Annie Dick)

Thompson Centre. She was a really beautiful lady. And so she took this picture of us, and I am in here with my son and my Auntie Josephine and her husband, and their children are in here. My Uncle Harry's three children are in here. Don't let me forget anyone. My sister Doris -- my half-sister Doris, and at least one of her children are in here. Alan (phonetic), yeah. So there you are. I'm in the back standing there with my brother, my dear brother.

Okay. In terms of damage to my family, I just want to quickly say that there were five born to my mama -- six born to my mama, and there are two of us living. We died of alcohol-related deaths, we died of violent murder, we died of being beaten by a cop, we died of a second brain injury, and finally, my dearest one jumped off a bridge in Whitehorse. He stopped the taxi and he said, I can't do it anymore. So I lost my brother.

Thank you.

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Thank you, Edna. Do you want to share the recommendations that you want to share with the Commissioners today, if you have any recommendations.

EDNA DEERUNNER: I gave you my recommendations. I want to find my mama's bones and I want to establish some kind of a relationship with the RCMP. I think it would help us so much to have an apology to our people. I really think that would be powerful for us. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: For the apology, what is it that -- the apology that you seek. What would you like the apology to be for? You said --

EDNA DEERUNNER: For not responding to the death of my mother. She disappeared. They actually didn't know if she died, but she did. I mean, the priest even told me that he knew that Daddy had killed her. So the RCMP were negligent, in my opinion, in not even opening a file.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Okay.

EDNA DEERUNNER: And I'm sure there was a request at some point for there to be a file opened. I'm not asking for anything else. Anything else. I just want an apology.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: You said an apology for your people as well.
EDNA DEERUNNER: Absolutely.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

EDNA DEERUNNER: Can't it be in the same form?

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Yes. I just want to know what's in your heart and your mind in terms of what it should --

EDNA DEERUNNER: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: -- what they should acknowledge.

EDNA DEERUNNER: Yeah. I want it to be a thorough one.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Yes. I'd like to know what you want them to acknowledge.

EDNA DEERUNNER: Well, it's a fact that we were treated terribly. We are still being treated terribly. So somehow we need to rebuild some kind of a relationship where the communication happens. And that's part of why I come home. I want to help. I'm not a scrapper -- usually.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was going to say [indiscernible] you have it in you.

EDNA DEERUNNER: I might. I think what I bring to my people is a strong voice, but it's not a mean one.

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Any more questions from the Commissioners? I'm just asking if there's any more questions from the Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: I wanted to --

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: You need to put it closer to you.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Okay. I'm notoriously soft-spoken. Lillian knows that. So thank you for the reminder. This one reminds me all the time.

I just wanted to clarify a couple of points just so I understand more clearly your family's history, you and your siblings. After your mom passed, after she was killed, how long before you guys left Ross and went into the home?

EDNA DEERUNNER: We were not in Ross River. We were in Porter Creek.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Okay, sorry.

EDNA DEERUNNER: And I don't -- I can't tell you specifically, but it was still winter when we left. I can tell you that and I know it was the same year. I know we were illegally taken through the border in Skagway. But those sorts of things don't matter to me.
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: I asked because -- you know, the death of your mother had a profound impact on you and your --
EDNA DEERUNNER: I can't hear you.
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Your mother's death --
EDNA DEERUNNER: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: -- clearly had a profound impact on you and your siblings. And I just wanted to better understand a little bit the timeline of when you guys were --
EDNA DEERUNNER: Certainly. I --
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: -- ripped apart.
EDNA DEERUNNER: -- understand that completely. It's just that -- you realize I'm a -- I was a five-year-old child. I wasn't even five. I think that Daddy killed Mom. I think that he called his brother right away and they came and got us. We went through the border, that was just my brother and me, so there's the older brother still and the two younger girls. I think they all came to Alaska. I don't know which part of Alaska they came to, but likely Skagway since I have an auntie that lives there on my father's side. And the middle one, Kathy, who was between Bob and Maggie, she was shipped to Florida and raised there under grim circumstances. Her mother -- her so-called mother, my auntie, would try and wash her, try and tell her not to tell anyone that she was Native. I don't know the whole story, but Kathy lived a tough life.

And then the youngest sister -- this is just a guess, now, but she and I have talked about it and we think Daddy sold her because she was raised by a very wealthy couple who were too old to have adoptions, in those days. And they were in the same social group as my mom and dad. And when I switch from "mama" to "mom" or "daddy" to "dad," that's my second set of parents. So that's what I know.

And some -- we did stay in a mission in Skagway -- it's called the Pius X Mission -- for a few months. I don't totally understand how long it was. I have some memories there. They were mostly pleasant. I mean, the nuns could be a little tough sometimes and it was scary to run past those statues that would glow in the dark type of thing when I was a kid. I remember that.
But I had my two brothers. I think in some ways I got lucky to have the boys with me. The girls didn't have that, and I feel sad for that. Does that answer your question?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: [Indiscernible - off microphone]

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: So if there's no further questions from the -- I think there's more questions from the Commissioners.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: I just have a couple of questions for you about your mother's bones. You said that you want to find your mother's bones?

EDNA DEERUNNER: Yes, ma'am. They did bring a woman's body to my Aunt Josephine -- or to our family, and my Aunt Josephine told me -- she's passed now, my Aunt Josephine told me that they weren't Mama's bones. They weren't Mama's body because she had gold teeth, and Mama didn't have gold teeth. So they did eventually bury her in a cemetery in Whitehorse, but we did not claim that body as far as I know.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Oh. So --

EDNA DEERUNNER: So my supposition is Daddy -- this is the best I can come up with as a five-year-old kid, and I'm a pretty strong, intelligent little five-year-old kid. I mean, I paid attention because that's what kept me safe. I think -- in that old shed there was a stove, and I think he must have heated the shed on the inside and the ground for maybe a couple of days until he could work the ground, and I think that's where he buried her.

Now, I have talked to wise people about it, and one of them said, you will find her burial -- her grave, and it will be covered with our medicine. So I'm really hoping that's so. If it isn't, I'll deal with that.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Okay. Thank you. You've said you'd like to build a relationship with the RCMP. Can you tell us more about that?

EDNA DEERUNNER: No, because I -- it hasn't begun yet. I have traditionally worked with -- I worked in the prisons in Alaska. I brought Native way into -- for Native people. So I've worked with structure many, many times. I've done a lot of -- okay, sorry. I'm trained in healing. My first teacher was Inupiak in Alaska. He was a healer
and a shaman, and he taught me how to move
energy. And I just went from there. I had one
teacher after another. You just put your foot in
front of another, right? And so that's who I am.
That's my life's joy. I make medicines. I work
with people. I do -- I don't really call it
workshops. I just go and sit with people. You
know, we have circle or whatever. I worked with
an Elder when we went to the prisons, and his
name is Walter Austin. He's passed now.
Walter was probably one of the most amazing
Elders I could have had in there, and they didn't
want him because he was an old street drunk, or
he'd been an old street drunk. And they said,
no, we don't want him. I said, if you want me,
then you have to take him too. And they did. So
the last time I saw him, he goes -- well, first
of all, he was eating strips and he wanted more,
and then the second one was he called me the
woman who got him into jail. (Lauging) He was a
magnificent man to work with.
And then the young man that we went in --
there was a team of three of us. His name is
Buzz Daney and he's a lovely man. I think he's
Chocktaw. But he lived in Alaska. He's one of
the singers and musicians in what's called
Medicine Dream and it's a beautiful Native
American band that is much loved by Alaska. And
Buzz is now helping to run the tribal doctor
program in Alaska for the Native hospital.
So we did good work, and we built a good
foundation there.

LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Thank you, Edna. There's no
further questions from the Commissioners.
EDNA DEERUNNER: Thank you very much. I appreciate
you letting me be here today to talk about my
mama.
LILLIAN LUNDRIGAN: Thank you, Edna.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Edna, because we're so
grateful that you came to talk to us today, we
have some small gifts of seeds for you.

(SEED GIFTING CEREMONY)

Second Hearing Exhibits
Edna Deerunner (Family of Annie Dick)
Exhibit P1: Affidavit of Walter J. Covich; Affidavit of Edna D. Covich; two pages with respective signature, both sworn January 12, 1990.

Exhibit P2: Six-page Agreement dated April 29, 1958 (see second page) on letterhead of Nielsen, Enderton and MacWilliam, barristers and solicitors, dated May 1958 Whitehorse and on legal paper.

Exhibit P3: 8.5 x 11” photocopy of a photo of a woman in hat and dark jacket holding a boy.

Exhibit P4: Two-page Presumptive death certificate, Alaska Department of Health, for Robert Martin Simmons, presumed date of death March 27, 1964.

Exhibit P5: One-page photocopy of Whitehorse Star news report “Man has taxi stop, jumps to his death” by Chuck Tobin. No date of photocopy.

Exhibit P6: Four-page photocopy of text and images, some double-sided, stapled top left corner. First page: photo of group in front of a cabin with the caption: “At Ross River, Y.T 1923 or 24…” Funeral program for Kazoa’ Frank Dick and group photo on subsequent pages.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: We’ll take a break until 11:20, please.

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED)

(PROCEEDINGS RECONVENED AT 11:30 A.M.)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Ms. van Tongeren, are you ready to proceed?

Third Hearing
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard (Family of Evangeline Billy) with Wendy van Tongeren (Commission Counsel)

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yes, thank you. We are ready. I apologize for being a bit late. There was another matter that also required my attention in the in camera room. Thank you.

My name, for those of you who don't know me, is Wendy van Tongeren and I am one of the lawyers with the inquiry. And I feel very, very honoured
Hearing – Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

to present -- oh, a Commissioner is sitting in the middle. A wonderful sight.
So I've been working with this family for this event today, and the first person that I met from the family is Bella Bresse, B-r-e-s-s-e, and we met -- s-e. And we met -- we're on first-name terms so I wasn't quite sure of the second, but I apologize for the misspelling. And we met in Carmacks. And so I'm hoping -- I wasn't here, but did you have a smudging? Okay, good. Thank you. I'm glad you did that.
There will be three people who are presenting today. The first one is Bella, and then -- do you want it in the same order, do you want to do your poem first, Pam? You do. So Bella and then Pam and then Toni, okay? Okay, great. So that's what we're going to do. But not to forget Logan, who is the glue of the family. So we're happy that everybody is here. Thank you so much.
So Bella has been asked -- are you still going to swear on a Bible or --
BELLA BRESSE: We're going to use the feather and all my children are going to hold the feather while we do the affirmation.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: That's a beautiful idea. Let's do that.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Good morning, Toni and Bella and Pamela and Logan. I'll just ask you all the same question. Do you all solemnly affirm that the evidence you will give today will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
ALL: Yes.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you very much.

BELLA BRESSE, PAMELA BLANCHARD, TONI BLANCHARD, AND LOGAN BLANCHARD, affirmed.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Bella, you're going first. Did anyone talk to you already about offering you tobacco and would you like tobacco? There you go. Thank you.
Okay, I feel a little bit like a, you know, a show host, and so I've got this first big question for you, Bella, and I know you do well. So here we are, the second day of the inquiry,
Hearing – Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard,
Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

and you made a choice to come and to speak from
the heart, to tell Commissioners and others about
things that have occurred in your life. I'd like
to start with you by asking, could you just name
the topics as if they're chapters in a book, just
the topics that you're going to cover today.

BELLA BRESSE: Good morning. My name is Bella. I'm
from the Crow Clan from Little Salmon/Carmacks
First Nation. What we are going to discuss today
is about my daughter, of how she was found and
what the investigators have come up with. And
I'm going to tell you a little bit of all what
I've been through emotionally and the impact of
losing my daughter. And also I'm going to tell
you a little bit about the courts, the system,
and other agencies that we have applied to.

I have my children here with me: Toni,
Pamela, and Logan. Logan is a big support for me
and so is Toni and Pamela. My youngest daughter,
she couldn't be here with us because she has her
little family and it's far away for her to come,
so -- but she keeps us in her prayers and it's
very difficult for her too, so she's not ready
yet. But once she's ready, she'll be coming into
the family gatherings. And also I'd like to tell
about my healing path since it happened.

And also I'd like to tell you about my
daughter. Evangeline Kris Billy was born March
the 7th, 1980. She was five foot, nine inches
and she was 150 some pounds. She's a very
beautiful, beautiful woman. She left us three
grandchildren. Her oldest is now and will be
graduating from Grade 12. She couldn't be here
with us today because she's musically inclined so
she's doing a little concert in Carmacks. I say
concert. She's -- she also written a song for
her mom, but I didn't have time to get together
the song, but hopefully when you come back and
visit us, I will have that song for you and I'll
have her here with us.

WENDY VON TONGEREN: So before you start to talk about
those things, I wonder if you would like to talk
about yourself first a little bit.

BELLA BRESSE: I just introduced myself.
WENDY VON TONGEREN: Is that all you want to say about
all the wonderful accomplishments that you have
had, who you are?
BELLA BRESSE: When I heard about my daughter, it broke my heart. It felt like a big void. I couldn't -- I couldn't -- find anything to help me. It was difficult. My grieving path led me everywhere. They say your grieving cycle goes around in a circle, but mine was all over. I was angry one day and the next day I feel good and the next day I'll be angry again, and it just seemed like my grieving just went out of whack. And I turned to alcohol, and I think the alcohol took away my pain, the pain, the void I was trying to fill because it was still there, the void of losing my daughter. And with my children, I had to tell them, wherever you go, please let me know, let me know where you're at, let me know who you're with. I don't want nothing to happen, so I'm like a mother bear. Anything goes -- happens, then grrrr.

I started working out at Exploration Camp and tried to take my mind off losing my daughter and never seeing my daughter again, thinking about my grandchildren, how my grandchildren's going to grow up without a mom. I had my two youngest grandchildren -- I have not seen them for five years until last year for less than an hour. They brought them to see us, and I haven't seen them since. They didn't know who I was. They didn't know. The only thing they remembered was the house and they asked me, "Do you still have that picture?" And I asked them, "What picture?" "Of Mom."

So I do believe that they know who their mother is, and they know that we're family, and if they do want to come home, they'll come home to open arms.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. Do you recall that we put together a -- I've got to change the spelling here.

BELLA BRESSE: It's okay. I forgive you.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So this is a family tree?

BELLA BRESSE: Yes.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: I wonder if that helps to just introduce the children, who are here. And also perhaps when you speak about Evangeline, who was your eldest daughter, tell us about her children, how old they are now.

BELLA BRESSE: My oldest daughter, her name is
Hearing – Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard,
Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

Evangeline Kris Billy. She was born March 7, 1980. She has three children, Azul, Ileana (phonetic), and Elijah. Ileana and Elijah are the twins I was just telling you about a few minutes ago.

My second oldest, Georgina Billy, November 5th, 1981. I just recently -- she just recently passed about five months ago from illness.

Toni is my third oldest. She was born May 11th, 1983. And Pamela --

Oh, just a minute. Georgina leaves me with three grandsons, Bodacious (phonetic), Lane (phonetic), and Evan. Evan was named after his Aunt Evangeline.

Toni has two children, Raina (phonetic) and Petra (phonetic).

And Pamela, May 3rd, 1984, and has two sons, Arkin (phonetic) and Bobby.

And Logan, February 1st, 1987, still single.

(Laughing)

Any my youngest daughter, Tara, she was born March 4th, 1981 (sic), and has two girls, Avery (phonetic) and Henley (phonetic).

So in all I have twelve grandchildren and I'm very proud of my grandchildren.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. But you can -- I understand that it needs a few amendments but -- Okay. So you named those areas that you're going to cover today. You talked about Evangeline and justice and your healing path.

ALEX CARLICK: May I say something?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Who are you, sir?

ALEX CARLICK: Alex Carlick, Wendy Carlick's son.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Okay. And are you feeling okay?

ALEX CARLICK: What?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Are you feeling okay today?

ALEX CARLICK: Yeah.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Okay.

ALEX CARLICK: I think it's better that you just give me the -- I'd just like to say that I feel everybody's pain right now. My mom was like the greatest person ever, and every day I'm crying because she was tooken from me just like my sister. And I see no cops around here because they never did nothing for anything that I went
Hearing – Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard,
Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

through. I lost everything, closest family that
I had: my grandma, my mom, and my sister. And I
feel everybody's pain around here. It's pretty
hard that you have to go through these
situations. But I'm still not alone. My mom was
a mother to a lot of people, and I know that
she's always going to be with me. And I feel you
guys's pain that everybody that left you lost.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Thank you very much.

Everybody okay?

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay, everybody, we're going to take
a ten-minute break right now and then reconvene
ten minutes from now, okay? At the request of
the family. Thank you.

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED)
(PROCEEDINGS RECONVENED AT 12:01 P.M.)

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So why don't we start with a
celebration of your family with some photos that
you've brought. And maybe what we could do is --
look at Mr. Glue over there. He's already got it
and he's showing his picture, and so perhaps we
should do it like the way he is. So show your
picture and we'll pass the mic down and you
basically say what is in your picture. These are
all pictures of the family. You can start,
Logan.

LOGAN BLANCHARD: Hello. My name is Logan Blanchard.
I am younger brother of Evangeline Billy. And in
this picture she just had her twins, on the left,
Elijah, and on the right is Ileana.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you.

PAMELA BLANCHARD: In this picture there's Evan. Then
there's me here and our youngest sister, Tara.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Pamela, tell them about the
twirly dress.

PAMELA BLANCHARD: I liked dresses like this because
it furl ed out and I could turn in it. Yeah, it
looked really nice.

BELLA BRESSE: This is a school picture when my
daughter attended the Tantalus School in
Carmacks. She was 16 -- 16/17 years old at this
time. She's very beautiful, as you can see, and
she always had that smile where if you see her
smile you just automatically have to smile too.

TONI BLANCHARD: I have two pictures. I have two
Hearing - Public  
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard,  
Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard  
(Evangeline Billy)

photos. One is when she just had her twins,  
Ileana and Elijah, and her eldest daughter, Azul,  
and our Auntie Candace is in the picture, in this  
one. This one here, we were in Dawson, and  
there's myself, my younger sister Tara; Evan's in  
the middle; my mom and my nephew Arkin.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So Bella, is now the time to talk  
about what happened to Evan?  
BELLA BRESSE: The RCMP called me late at night and  
told me that they found my daughter. I didn't  
want to believe it at first. And my niece came  
to see me and she said, "Auntie, Auntie,  
something happened." And right away I knew  
something -- right away I knew when something  
happened to one of my children. And I had some  
people from Carmacks with me. They stayed with  
me, they made some tea for me, made sure that I  
was okay.

The RCMP didn't really tell me the whole  
story over the phone, but when I got to  
Whitehorse, the RCMPs met with me and my family.  
They told me what had happened. They told me  
that my daughter's ex was there to identify her  
body and made sure that it was her.

   We met with the RCMP and they told us what  
had happened, that the accused had hit her in the  
head, side of the head, with a blunt object.  
When we saw the autopsy pictures, you can see the  
big gash on the side of her head and down in her  
lower jaw area, and there's bruises all over her  
body. And that they found her body half in the  
Yukon River and the other half was still on the  
ground and that she was naked from waist down.  
   I -- I didn't know what to think. I didn't  
know what to say. It just seemed like I was  
starting to -- to close. And I'd start thinking  
about her children and I'd start thinking about  
my children, and I kept praying and praying  
somehow we'll get through this. It was difficult  
for everybody because everybody knew my daughter.  
Some way, somehow their paths crossed. She's  
very kind, considerate, and respectable of other  
people, especially Elders. She'd do anything for  
Elders, her aunts, her uncles.

   They had to ship her body to Vancouver for  
autopsy, and we couldn't make any arrangements  
until her body came back. Two weeks later they
Hearing – Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard,
Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

ship her back up here. We couldn't -- we
couldn't get family members or support to come
and see -- see her at the wake because her head
was all caved in on one side and on the other
side of her head. I notice a mark right by her
left -- her right lip looked like a knife wound,
and I asked the RCMP, I said, was there any knife
involved, and they said no. They said it was
just a blunt object, either a stone, big rock, or
a two-by-four. I just so happened to walk to the
area where they found her and I was looking
around, see if I can find anything they
overlooked any kind of evidence. And I sat there
and I cried.

The day of the court -- the preliminary
hearing, we had to go through picture by picture
from what the pathologist had taken. We had to
listen to jurors. We had to pick out jurors. We
had to -- we sat in the court from day one 'til
it was done. And again, they set it off -- they
set the courts off to October 2009. Two days was
set for the jurors, picking out the jurors, and
we started on the third day with the hearing.

The RCMP had arrested the accused two
days -- two days after they found my daughter's
body, and they put her in jail. But she pleaded
not guilty. We were in Whitehorse for almost
three and -- three to four weeks. We had to stay
in hotels. And our First Nation, the Little
Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, were a big support
and financially supported my family. They
supported us with counsellors, and also support
people came and supported my family during the
courts.

I don't know how I sat through the court and
can remember all this because I was crying and
crying.

We built a relationship with the DA where he
would come into a room and we'll talk about the
case, and if he left anything out, we'll let him
know. We write down things for him, tell him ask
her this, ask them this.

My granddaughter was so afraid of sleeping,
thinking that the accused would somehow break
jail and come and get her. She was just afraid.
And she would have nightmares about it.

On the fourth week, the jurors found her
Hearing - Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard (Evangeline Billy)

1. guilty of second degree. At first they were going to with first degree, but they lessened it to second degree murder, and was sentenced to 25 years without parole. No, no, that's wrong. I'm sorry. Fourteen years -- she has to do 14 years before parole, but she was sentenced to 25 years.

2. In that time, I was still angry. My feelings was so hurt. There are times when I see a young woman with long hair that looks just like her, and I'll go, ah, oh my God, is that her? And I stop short and the young girl would turn around and I'd say, oh, my goodness.

3. The accused went to jail for -- 'til two thousand and -- two thousand and -- no. Two thousand and fif -- fourteen? Two thousand and sixteen she was set free. But the year before, 2015, she had applied for appeal. She won her appeal. And a few months later she applied for bail. And her family came up with $13,000 bail to get her out, and she won. And in May of 2016, she -- we were supposed to go back to court, but we didn't know that the two lawyers got together and they made a deal with the accused and she agreed to take a lesser charge of manslaughter, and she was set free because she had served her time.

4. I was so angry. I walked out of that courthouse and I stood outside and I screamed and screamed and cried. But -- ah. During the court the lawyer had mentioned to the judges about the Gladue report. I looked up the Gladue report right away on -- I googled it because I had no other way of getting information. So she -- I believe that her sentence was lessened because of the Gladue report.

5. And I don't mind -- I don't want to say anything bad. I don't want to offend anybody. I don't want anybody to think that I'm against them because of residential school. But Gladue report has to be used in a good way but not misused.

6. My healing path. I try to find ways. I ask my -- I asked the DA if it would be possible for my family to go and to counteract in civil court, and he says, you wouldn't get anywhere because she doesn't have no money. I said, well, if she won her bail and can get $13,000, can't she get something for my granddaughters? It wouldn't --
he just said, no, it would be --
My healing path led me to meet one of the
Commissioners that's supporting me now, Michèle,
Jennifer. I -- Krista, Amanda. I start
attending the family gatherings in Ottawa,
Winnipeg, and Carmacks -- we started. I want to
tell everybody, every family, that we are here to
also support you in any way we can because we've
been through it. We know what it's like.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you. Bella, I'd like to
ask you a few questions, if that's okay.

Bella Bresse: Okay.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So when you received that phone
call from the police, was that in about June of
2008?

Bella Bresse: Yes.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And when you talked about a DA,
was that the lawyer who was taking the case for
the Crown?

Bella Bresse: Yes.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. And I'm just wondering, in
terms of your experience, of going through the
court process, other than the Gladue that you've
already talked about, what else, if you were to
do it over again, would you do differently, and
what do you think the people around you should
have done differently in supporting you after
your daughter's death?

Bella Bresse: [Indiscernible - away from microphone]

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: I'm sorry?

Bella Bresse: I don't understand that. What did you
just say?
Hearing - Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Just when you think about from the day that you received that phone call from the police --
BELLA BRESSE: Mm-hm. Yeah.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- until the end of the case when the manslaughter conviction was registered, when it was done, the case was done --
BELLA BRESSE: Mm-hm.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- first of all, what would you have done differently if you knew then what you know now?
BELLA BRESSE: I -- what I know now and what I would change is the process of the courts. I would change -- I would change not letting the judge know about Gladue report. The judge should be well aware of the Gladue report before he gets on stand, right?
I would be more stronger to handle anything. I would give support to my children the way I'm supposed to. What we need is counselling, grievance -- more into grievance and how to grieve for our loved ones the proper way, and let people know that we're here. We can stay strong together, be together.
And if I can change anything, the accused would still be in jail. If I was a judge sitting there I would put her in jail for the crime she did. She took away my daughter. It wasn't my daughter's time.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you. Now, when you were talking about the sentencing part, I gave you -- it was actually a judgment from the court that was published, to refresh your memory about the date. So do you remember that? I handed you this.
BELLA BRESSE: Yes.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yeah. So I just wanted to refer to that. That is a case that is reported at 2016, YKSC 48 from the Supreme Court of the Yukon, and I have copies for others.
One place that we haven't gone yet is before Evangeline died, you tell us that you got the phone call from the police. But when had you last seen Evangeline before the incident?
BELLA BRESSE: The last time I saw my daughter was in the picture we just showed you of all of us standing in Dawson. But she would call.
Hearing - Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: I've got a copy of the package. Could you just find that picture and I can just put an X beside it. Okay. Or put "Dawson" -- maybe write "Dawson." Thank you, Toni.

Okay. And in that picture I see Toni and there's Evangeline and there's Bella and -- and who is this woman again?

BELLA BRESSE: Tara.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Tara. And the little boy?

BELLA BRESSE: Arkin.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. Thank you. So what was Evangeline's -- what was she up to? What was her life like with her kids and all that back in June of 2008 before she died?

BELLA BRESSE: Evangeline loved her children. She always talks about her children. Her children were taken and put into care -- and put into foster care. She come to see them any time she wants and the visitation rights were open to her so -- she lived in Whitehorse most of that time. She was going out with her boyfriend. They stayed in Whitehorse while he worked out in Watson Lake, travelling back and forth. But she -- she had a home here in Whitehorse and her home was spotless. There's always a cup of coffee -- hot cup of coffee for me when I go and visit with her.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Anything else?

BELLA BRESSE: No.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. Now, one thing in our discussion before coming to speak to the Commissioners, you had expressed some concern about violence in the Yukon Territory. Is that something you want to talk about at this time?

BELLA BRESSE: My daughter died by violence. I'm very much against violence. I'm very much against bully in schools. What I would like to see for Yukon is education in violence. Violence takes away a lot of things. Violence can make you vulnerable to other people. Violence can take the strength, take your identity.

And for us, us First Nations, we are strong. We are, I think, about the strongest people nationally. We can stand up. We can say, okay, you hear my voice, you listen to me. We need to do something about violence. Stop the bullying in school. Stop it now, and instead honour and
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And there is a story about rings. Would you like to tell that story, or not so much? About rings, Evangeline's rings.

BELLA BRESSE: I --

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: It's up to you.

BELLA BRESSE: Three weeks ago, I had my granddaughters with me and the RCMP came and they said, I have your daughter's belongings, your daughter's rings. And I looked and I said, who are you, you have what? Like nine years later, he came to the house in Carmacks. He said, "I want to personally come and give you this." So I was saying a little prayer, and I thanked him, told him that it was very nice for him to come all the way. I went into my room. I put my granddaughter down, let her sit with their uncle. I went into their room. I sat down and I held that little white box that had my daughter's rings and her bracelets, and I held it in my hands and I just started crying and crying. I just started crying. I could feel what she had gone through because those are the rings she had on when they found her body.

And today I have her rings on, and it's given me strength to sit and speak with you and tell you my story. And it's not going to stop here. I'm going to continue telling her story. and now I think I should give time for my daughters to say something.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you. Pamela perhaps, with the phone.

PAMELA BLANCHARD: Yes.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you, Pamela.

PAMELA BLANCHARD: Hi. My name is Pamela Blanchard, daughter to Isabelle Bresse and Harold Blanchard, sister to late Evangeline Kris Billy. My Native name is Jessia (phonetic) after our great-grandma, Jessie Alfred (phonetic).

I'd like to share my story the way our sister liked poetry. There are many poems I wrote but only a few that she related to. So I took some words and sentences and integrated it into this one poem. I was asked to read two, but I feel this one poem is everything that I want to say. She always told me to keep writing and that one day she hoped to read one of my poems in a
published book. Every other day she'd ask if
there is anything new and she always made me feel
like -- she always made me feel good about
writing.
When I had my first son, she always made --
she always wanted to make sure that I had
everything, milk, diapers. She loved her
nephews, and I know in my heart if she met her
nieces, she would have gone head over heels for
them because they're so beautiful.
Even though she's looking down on us still
she's still missing out on a whole lot. She was
taken too soon. Our mom always says God works in
mysterious ways. Mysterious for sure, but why
that way? No one deserves to go in that manner.
So I'm going to read my poem now.
Silence dropping, knees shaking. Did I
really hear a mistake? No, she was taken
and found. I remember always wanting to be
around her, to learn from her. She was
happy and about to start over.

I remember she was saying something about
staying sober. When I was told, I didn't
believe -- I didn't want to believe,
blocking it out and drinking more. I never
thought of self-harm before. It didn't
cross my mind. Shockingly, I went for the
knife. I cut my pain and cut my sorrows. I
grieved in a way that was horrible. I
cried. I fought. I raged. I drank 15
years of my life.

Finally reality smudged my dreams, waking me
up to say, "Enough is enough." And look
what happened. I've been sober for one year
now, recently grieving for another beautiful
sister. There's nothing like a broken heart
with sadness too much to bear. So much hurt
when you care, knowing there won't ever be
another like her. There was only her.

Our lives put on hold while our feelings
balancing on a scale. We need to heal, heal
our hearts, heal our minds, heal our
communities. Trouble forming left and right
from the impact of despair.
Sorrows filling the air. Family and friends keeping it at bay, sending love and prayers our way. Strength being passed along the line. We all see the signs to break the cycle, change the future, minimize the violence, minimize the shadow it casts.

Our women have something special to bring: strength, love, compassion, and the power to create. A brightness in the heart that shines like a star. Beauty like the Yukon sunset. Happiness that can be felt afar.

That last bit I just wrote. That's everything.

Thanks.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you, Pamela. Toni, are you ready?
TONI BLANCHARD: Yes.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you. I understand that both the women, they created a piece and then you added to it. So those who have a piece of paper with something written on it, there's added material.
TONI BLANCHARD: K'ama Soothan Toni Blanchard Ushi. Good morning, my name is Toni Blanchard, daughter of Isabelle Bresse and Harold Blanchard, sister to late Kris Evangeline Billy, who liked to be called Evan, was brutally murdered in 2008 here in Whitehorse.

I would like you to know that Evan was all about family. She had three beautiful children, Azul Billy, who is graduating this year; and twins, Elijah and Ileana Morrison (phonetic), who we have seen only once since 2009. Evan loved them. She always talked with them and loved them with all her heart and never stopped thinking about them.

Growing up with my sister Evan was an experience. She always had a smile. She was always laughing, singing. I remember when I was young we would stay up to all hours of the night playing cards and board games. She was always here for us when we needed her.

I would like to tell you guys one funny story that I recall of my beautiful sister. One evening we were having dinner, and where we were
living we have a mirror mural on the wall so it was like the whole wall's covered in square mirrors. And Evan was beautiful, as you could see in her picture, so she always liked to look at herself while she was walking by the mirror. And she grabbed her plate of dinner and she was walking along the mirror and she was looking, making sure that her hair or makeup was okay, and she tripped. And she fell forward and her hand went out, and when she landed her portions on her plate was in the same place, and she just got up and fixed her hair and her clothes and she walked to her room. (Laughing) She was always doing crazy stuff like that.

As my mom said, she always had to make sure she looked good and presentable, even if she had to just throw the garbage out. Evan was compassionate, caring, loving, and again, family was everything to her.

When I heard the news of her passing, I went into shock. I didn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. After her funeral I went into a very destructive state that filled my days with depression, drugs, alcohol, and many suicide attempts. I was numb. Even -- even though we were all going through some sort of depression, we tried to make sure we had time for our family.

I couldn't believe that someone could harm such a beautiful loving soul, so I started telling myself -- telling myself that she was still alive somewhere in Whitehorse. I thought it so much that I started believing it and the hurt in my heart started to ease. I lived my life thinking that for a long time. In that time, I met my fiancé, Daniel, and was blessed with two daughters, who are two and four years old. I am so sad that my daughters will never be able to meet her lovable auntie.

Just recently our family had to witness the passing of our older sister, Georgina Billy, in February of this year, which opened old and created new wounds. I started heading down that dark path with depression and alcohol in my life again.

I got a call a few weeks ago by a constable in the Crime Unit telling me that he had my sister Evan's rings and bracelet and that he
wanted to return them to my mother. I went into shock again as this was telling me that in fact my sister was indeed gone and that she's not coming back. It hit me very hard, but this time -- this time we have more support people. One in which was with us from the beginning of our journey with Sisters in Spirit is Amanda Buffalo, then Krista Reid, her sister. We have many support family, friends, in Carmacks with the health and social department and chief and council, and many of the women's organizations -- Joy O'Brien, Doris Anderson, who has been with us.

We always look forward to the family gatherings that are hosted by the women's organizations here in Whitehorse as it helps us in our healing journey to be able to interact with other families that understand what we are going through and vice versa.

I think the way for the National Inquiry to honour the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is what families and you are doing right now by telling our stories and putting faces to the women and girls, to let people nationally know what these women and girls were daughters, mothers, sisters, grandmothers, granddaughters, and they were loved by all of their loved ones.

Mussi cho for listening to my story, to our story.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you. Are there any questions from the Commissioners?

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: I'd like to know why Evan's body had to go to Vancouver for the autopsy. Do you know?

TONI BLANCHARD: Because Evan's body was in the water, it was so bloated that they couldn't do a proper autopsy here.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Okay. Thank you. The three children -- Elijah, Ileana, Azul -- do you know why you don't see them?

BELLA BRESSE: We have contact with Azul. She lives in the same community. But Ileana and Elijah were living with the father and after my daughter had passed on he remarried someone else and his wife wouldn't let us see my grandchildren after they saw the Cinderella movie, where Cinderella
Hearing - Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

had an evil stepmother. They thought I was
teaching my grandchildren how to not like
stepmothers. And so we were cut off with
visitation rights, and we could not see my
grandchildren. I saw them at the store, but as
soon as the stepmother saw us, she'll take them
and go out of the store. So we had no contact
whatsoever, no phone calls, nothing.

And I went to see the grandmothers --
because they said grandmothers have lots of
rights. Uh-uh. Uh-uh, they don't. I don't have
no rights, or I could have had my grandchildren
with me.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Who does Azul live with?
BELLA BRESSE: Azul is living with my younger brother
and his wife, who are foster parents.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Do Azul and the twins see
each other?
BELLA BRESSE: They did. They secretly -- I shouldn't
-- they secretly contact each other. But I
believe they do have contact with each other.
Not anymore.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Thank you. I have some
questions about the court case. Did the lawyers
explain to you why they didn't have the retrial
and why they negotiated the deal?
BELLA BRESSE: The lawyer had met before telling us
that the accused agreed to the lesser charge. We
had no contact with any lawyers at that time, and
she won the case and they let her go. Usually
when there are courts, we show up to every court
sessions, every meetings with the lawyer. If I
have questions, I said, I'll come in to
Whitehorse and I'm going to ask you a bunch of
questions, so be prepared. But they didn't
contact us. It was after the fact when he came
to Carmacks and he met with us and told us that
they met and she agreed to a lesser charge.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Was all the court in
Whitehorse or court in Carmacks as well?
BELLA BRESSE: Because they found my daughter in
Whitehorse, they automatically have the courts in
Whitehorse.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: And how did you and your
family get to Whitehorse to be a part of all that
process?
BELLA BRESSE: We travel from Whitehorse. Like I
41

Hearing – Public
Bella Bresse, Pamela Blanchard, Toni Blanchard, Logan Blanchard
(Evangeline Billy)

said, Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation was a very big support financially for us, and the health and social department director who's supporting, sitting in with us, had helped us and supported us all the way. So that's how we get to Whitehorse.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Is the support that they give you part of normal support they provide families, or did they provide something special to you. And that's special in that it's -- I want to know if those services are available for all families as well?

BELLA BRESSE: In 2009, the third week of the court that was happening, the court worker had mentioned to me that Victim Services is available and would be able to assist us financially for food and to pay for the rest of our hotel. But the court worker -- I filled out -- she helped me with filling out the forms because I was -- I was just out of it. I couldn't do it, so she -- she asked me questions and I answered, and she wrote it -- wrote them down. She took it over to the Victim Services, and the Victim Services had refused us finance because they needed -- they needed to see documents on guilty charge, and at that time we didn't know whether she -- how the court was going to turn, so I contact the health and social director and we came up with something, and remain here in Whitehorse for the rest of the court.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Thank you. And thank you for your readings, and your poems, and the photos, and sharing with us your memories. Just, thank you so much.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yes, thank you. So I want to express as well my gratitude to all of you, to Logan, and Pamela, and Bella, and Toni. I'm going to miss you and your words of wisdom and courage, and I wish you the best. And I thank you as well for showing us once again what it feels like to be a human being fully participating in life. Thank you.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Because we're so grateful that you came today, we have some small gifts of seeds for you.

(SEED GIFTING CEREMONY)
Fourth Hearing

Dorothy Hayes (family of Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya,
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick) with Christa Big Canoe
(Commission Counsel)

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Commissioners, I'd like to introduce you to Dorothy Hayes. Once Dorothy's actually sworn in she would like to stand throughout her testimony.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Good afternoon, Dorothy.
DOROTHY HAYES: Good afternoon.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Good afternoon. So welcome, and I'll just walk you through the oath right now.
DOROTHY HAYES: Okay.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Do you swear that the evidence you give this afternoon will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?
DOROTHY HAYES: I will.

DOROTHY HAYES, sworn.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, Dorothy, can you please introduce yourself to the Commissioners and tell them what you're here to speak about today.
DOROTHY HAYES: Hello, my name is Dorothy Hayes. I grew up in Lower Post, B.C., and both my parents were in residential school. I did attend some day school residential myself, and during my time growing up in the household that I grew up in was extremely violent in no uncertain terms. I've been dragged around by the hair, kicked, beat up, strung up by the refrigerator by the neck with a butcher knife in my hand -- in my dad's hand.
And I fought back. I was always, I guess, a born fighter and our whole household -- I have five -- I have eight siblings, five brothers and two sisters, and they've all -- all had the wrath of our dad at all points when he was not happy, and it didn't take nothing to make him not happy.
And we also had our aunties. I had three aunties, and also an uncle. The uncle lived away in another community, but I had aunties that would come over, and their life was filled with abuse, too, 'cause they had extremely abusive husbands, and they would come over with my cousins and be living in the house, and we usually at most all times had an extremely busy
Hearing - Public
Doroty Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

They've all seen violence in every which way, shape and form in no uncertain terms. If you could imagine every available abuse that could be done to you, yeah, it's been done, so all my family members have had violence.

And through all that, at one point in my life I started talking to RCMP officers about the way our life was at home, and that I needed some help. And this was when I was getting to be an adult and I wanted to see justice for what torment and hell my brothers and sisters had to see and endure, and I took him to court and I gotta a say, much to the dismay of my siblings. And out of my eight siblings, one of them in 2001 took his life, and it's probably due to the life that we grew up in. Not probably. Probably more so absolute. And I got physically attacked by my brothers and sisters outside the court, so then was -- the RCMP were forced to provide 24-hours of protection on me.

And then unsoundly the night before the trial was to start, I guess they say blood's thicker than water, some of my brothers came and decided -- brothers and sisters decided that they would come there on my behalf, in which they did. But during the trial, as you can't take away from all the disaster and abuse, what they seen and things that happened, there's always that blame -- blame of everything and protect the parents, and I didn't believe in that. What's right is right is when you grow up, you shouldn't have to be beaten up or abused as a kid, doesn't matter under whose hand, in what country, in what generation of people, no matter what you grew up in, don't do it to the next generation.

And so during trial, they did speak up to what they had to, four of them. The others didn't. But he was convicted. I did send him away. I was praying he would have got more. Had the other ones spoke up, he would have got 24 years, but -- and the Crown prosecutor -- I've gotta say this RCMP officer was fantastic. I went through seven of them before one would believe me, and I don't think that's right. I mean, he just said to me, nobody can give me a story like that unless it was true, and he was
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

gonna look into it, and he did. Bless his heart to this day. I love this man. Thank God that he was ever even sent to me.

And the Crown prosecutors from Vancouver were very good. They were ladies, and I'll never forget them. I have pictures of them, and I have pictures of the RCMP officer, and I'm so happy that one of them believed me, but it shouldn't have to be that -- the first officer you talked to should have to believe you or look into something. And so she did -- the Crown prosecutor did say to me, we have an all-white jury, and I said, that's okay. She said, well, you might not make out well. I said, well, it's what is the truth, I will be telling them the truth.

So we went into court, the trial went on. When it was done, they said, they're out -- the jury did come back three hours later, which the Crown prosecutor was quite devastated, and she said to me, this might not be good. I said, well, that's okay, whatever, as long as my story is out there.

So we went in. Well, the jury -- the judges asked them on every count, I believe there was 30 counts, they found him guilty on each and every one of those counts. I just about jumped out of my seat. I was so happy. And as he was being hauled away into a door to be hauled away to prison -- he was sentenced to 12 years but got out in, I think, three or six, and I wasn't notified, but before he walked in that door to go to prison I told him, I forgive you for everything you done because this isn't mine to carry, I didn't do it, not me, it's for you, and when you leave this earthly plain you got somebody to face, and that goes to everybody that walks this earthly plain, and I walked away.

But after that I've only still had one family member that talked to me, and he's my younger brother, and he talks to me every day and tells me what I did was right. The others are still angry on and off. I have a sister who suddenly just came and started talking to me three months ago, so I can still see her pain. I can see all their pain and it'll never go away.

And as my -- for my brother who committed
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

suicide, he was in a lot of pain, and they all
still are, and I just hope they're doing so well
with their children.

The abuse we suffered just is unbearable.
My mom was in residential school for 18 years, so
pretty much all her life. They came and took
them from my grandfather and threw them to --
them to residential school, and I would always
jump to my mother's aid. Sometimes my brothers
would be sleeping. God, they would sleep through
a bombing, I'm sure, but I came to my mom's aid
when my dad was beating the hell out of her, and
I've done that many times, and she said, don't do
that, you get beat up. I said, I don't care,
I'll leave this earthly plain but I'll leave a
fighter, I won't leave here without fighting for
my life, and I still have that in me.

And I see the pain of all my relatives. I
have aunties. I see -- my auntie that stayed at
my house with the two broken arms, her three sons
are gone. The other daughter is gone, too, and
it's all due to this. They've all either drank
themselves to death or drugs.

Personally, when I was growing up and
fighting back being strung up on a refrigerator
at five with a butcher knife to your throat, I
landed my feet in the air and knocked my dad
right on his ass and I said, from that day
forward nobody -- and it was a constant battle,
the fight was on. And I just want people to see
that you shouldn't have to endure that growing up
in a house. But I understand also the other side
of them growing up in the residential -- now the
residential school part on my dad's side, in
school -- I would often wonder where he was from.
He said he was from Newcastle, New Brunswick.
Well, it wasn't until just maybe a year ago I did
some checking. Checked back and can trace my
father back to being back -- he's been in six
foster homes. I do know that he apparently has
15 brothers and sisters, so as to which age he
was taken from home, and checking the three
foster homes back so far, his name may not be his
name, so I -- the name that I have now, Hayes,
may not be my actual true name for what his
family name may be. But he said he was from
Newcastle New Brunswick, so -- and he did end up
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

in residential school there. He did go to
residential school there.

He came across Canada this way. I don't
know if he was running away, but he met my mother
here, and my mother did have 15 kids all
together. I'm not the oldest girl in my family
or nor is my older brother the oldest. Had an
older brother, Georgie and an older sister,
Gloria. They were murdered and, not quite sure,
possibly at the hands of my dad. I tried to do
some checking, but there was just not enough --
thanks to that RCMP officer again, they did a lot
of checking, and those two kids were from my
mother's first husband and something happened,
don't know the story, but I would definitely find
my mother crying at the table at times and go
over from -- come home from school and just hug
her, like, is everything okay, but I know that's
what she was crying over. I know that she had
all these kids, I guess, trying to replace what
she had lost, I'm not quite sure, but our mother
ended up with cancer at a young age. My brother
was five when my momma died, my youngest brother,
and she battled cancer for three years. She's
been gone now over 30 years, and I guess my dad's
living somewhere in Kelowna, not sure where. I
don't think as I really care.

And today, after the court I did move away.
I moved to Niagara Falls, Ontario. First job I
got there -- I had a little girl and I said she
won't grow up here. I want her to see that
there's a different life out there. My daughter
was a year and a half when I moved away. I moved
to Kelowna, spent a little stint there, didn't
like it, picked her up one day in February, I
think, of '89 and just booked it down the
highway, went to Niagara Falls, Ontario. Stopped
in, in this hotel in Niagara Falls, said to the
lady there, where's your unemployment office, I
want to see about getting a job? She said, oh,
well I have a full-time bartender's job here open
and -- open right now if you wanna start now. I
said, okay, let me change my clothes, started
working as a bartender. I did that here, too, as
well in Whitehorse when I worked here as a
waitress. I waitressed and bartended at the old
T&M Hotel.
And so in Niagara Falls, I was a week there working, seen some construction workers and I heard them over talking how one guy couldn't show up for work 'cause he didn't wanna go up on the high beams to put trusses on a big building they were building. So I said to this guy, I said, "Hey, what, somebody's afraid of heights?" He said, "Yeah," I said, "Well, I'm not." I said, "I don't have a tool belt but I'll gladly get up there and shank up those trusses for you." He said, "You will?" I said, "Yup." So here I was, told my bosses, yeah, I'll be here later on in the evening if you can switch my shift from 3:00 to 6:00. I said, I'll construction all day and bartend all night, not a problem. So that's what I did. I built many buildings, churches, malls, you name it. Went from there to framing, to drywall, installer, finish taper, stucco, concrete, I can do it all. And then my family back here needed some help. A sister that I didn't really talk to, found out she had a hip replacement so she was having trouble getting up and walking. And I came back for my one auntie's funeral. This was five years ago, and I seen my sister and she was in bad shape, so I went back to Niagara Falls and told my bosses there, I said, look, I gotta drop everything here, I gotta head back home and help my sister. Of course they were, oh, my God, you can't leave us, but I extended my stay with them for an extra two weeks but said, I gotta go. I came back. I helped my sister. And once again that pinpoint of all the disaster that happened in the family and me taking the dad to court came to the surface, out the door, doesn't talk to me. And a lot of family members -- well, I don't think it was right, and they just gotta stop and look that you gotta grow up in a normal household.

I saw normal families when I went to Niagara Falls. I befriended this family that I worked for, for a long time, an Italian family and they were very good to me. Their family household was well rounded, and when I was growing up at five years old, I said I will grow up in a household totally different than this. And I still see that today. And when I see that family, whom
I call my family out there in Ontario, I look and go, I was sent here and blessed to see how the other side lives when you live in just humanity. And so I came back here and now I'm here. I tried so hard to get a job from my community and stuff. I managed to land a flagging job. I have all my tickets for the mines, everything, you name it, not that I didn't have tickets for scissor lifts and all the heavy equipment that I needed to do already, but try and get a job in my Band or where I live right now is an absolute not happening. So I applied at the RCMP detachment as a guard, been there two years now, do very well, and --

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can I ask you -- can I ask you some -- a couple more questions?

DOROTHY HAYES: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. Thank you for everything you've shared.

DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I understand that you also want to talk not just about the violence that you survived but about a death of a particular auntie and other cousins. Can you please share what the story is to the Commissioners about that?

DOROTHY HAYES: Yes. I had an auntie, the one I said came and lived with us many times. Her husband would brutally beat her and she's come to our household with broken arms and black eyes and, like I said, her kids -- three of her kids are lost, two of them are still alive but I don't know for how long. I guess she left that abusive husband and she partnered up with somebody else who was probably more abusive than the first one, unfortunately, and she ended up being shot. We say it was him, but I don't believe there was enough investigation done to clearly see that that was a pretty big rifle and I don't think my auntie had that long of arms. I don't think there was a good enough investigation in that situation.

He did try to come to her funeral. My brothers picked him up and tossed him right the hell out, and as they should have. He had no right being there. If you take somebody's life, you got no right being at their funeral. If you didn't respect them in life, don't think that you
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

1 can be there at their funeral, ever.
2 And I do have another auntie that was
3 missing and murdered.
4 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Sorry. I don't want to interrupt
5 you --
6 DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah.
7 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- but can you tell the
8 Commissioners the name of the auntie you were
9 just talking about?
10 DOROTHY HAYES: My Auntie Elsie Tibbet (phonetic), my
11 mom's sister.
12 And I had another auntie that was missing
13 and murdered, too, quite long ago, Rose Boya
14 (phonetic). I'm not sure about the circumstances
15 of that one either. Like I said, I don't think
16 there was really particular investigations into
17 anything really good that had to do with our
18 people.
19 And also, my cousin, Angel Carlick, and her
20 mother, Wendy Carlick, they're my family, too,
21 also murdered.
22 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, if I understand, you've now
23 listed about four other family members that you
24 believe have been impacted by violence or
25 murdered. Can I just ask you a couple of
26 questions for clarification?
27 DOROTHY HAYES: Absolutely, no problem.
28 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. Your Auntie, was it Tibbet?
29 DOROTHY HAYES: Yes.
30 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. So you had stated that her
31 partner had shot her, but you're not aware of any
32 proceedings or was he ever criminally charged?
33 DOROTHY HAYES: I'm not sure that he was. I'm not
34 sure what the circumstances around that are, but
35 I'd like to find out.
36 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So is it fair to say in any of the
37 deaths you're talking about with your relatives
38 that you really want to find out more information
39 and learn some more answers?
40 DOROTHY HAYES: I certainly do. That would be a real
41 help and something that I could relay to my
42 cousins who are their -- who are their daughters
43 and sons, so that I could see if I can help them
44 to stay with us as opposed to going down a
45 disastrous trail. I don't wanna see any more of
46 them dying at a young age, and we've had a lot of
47 funerals, eight of them to be exact in a matter
of a couple of weeks, that relays to my family, and it's sad really. I guess they feel like they have no hope, and I guess sometimes it stems down, too, in your communities, your leadership, that's what I believe. I believe if you have good leadership people you care for your people.

Where I work as a guard, I see lots of people with mental health issues, serious FAS, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, serious, because it just doesn't seem to click in their minds that they're doing anything wrong, so there's an issue there. And a lot of them are very, very illiterate. If you can't or were never taught properly in the education system, the basic skills of read, write, spell and count money, all the education system has done is failed all of our people. I do have relatives who have graduated and under a no-fail policy, and I can't fathom they can't even spell the word "the". I mean, that's just the basics of kindergarten, I believe. It's disastrous to them. I think that is a harsh situation.

And what I mean by "leadership" is a lot of these people have no fixed address. That means they have no home. I -- that's another disastrous thing to them. And I do -- in each community, Stematoo (phonetic), their leadership has to really be there for the people. You have to take care of your people.

And it's like anything else, I understand the residential school, the systems, I guess that you would say they're used to. I just grew up and just wanted to look outside of everything that I grew up in. What I seen in life, if anybody doesn't think that I don't know anything, believe you me all these poor people who are being abused and everything, trust me when I say I know everything about it. Been there, been there, been there. But I know it's hard when it's family members in your communities, but you have to step up to what's right. I will always walk alone if I have to, but what I did by putting my dad in jail for what he's done is the right thing to do. These people who go around and abuse other people, they need help in some manner. There's gotta be some source of something when they're in jail to, why
are you doing this, what happened to you, there's gotta be a bottom underlying issue. Like, I guess I wouldn't have said I would have thought, oh, now, I know what's wrong with my dad, had I known the things that I do now, but still you -- when you grow up don't inflict that on -- upon the ones growing up and the generation. It just doesn't belong. It just keeps continuing.

Continuing isn't right.

I believe any people in leadership in this country, I feel and see that it's wrong for you to be standing as a leader if your people have to come up to you and beg you for the most simple thing in life, to give them help, to help them to be where they need to be. I mean, this is 2017 and we're looking at people who can't even speed the word -- read the word "the", I'm sure the countries around the world there, those third-world countries, can read better than some of my people can, and how is that possible? This is Canada. I mean, some things really have to be changed for these people who come in, and not just for the paycheque. I see a lot of them come in for the paycheque. They don't really care who's in front of them, ain't got time for them, yeah, I'm just here for my time and my paycheque, oh, it's a long weekend. I've seen a lot of that, and I myself, I see the ramifications from that as working as a guard I see the people -- I've been there, so I know it. I see pain in people's faces. I see pain in my family, 'cause working where I do that's my family. I'm related from Watson Lake right straight across to Ross River, and people all over -- all over I'm related to.

So the bare bones of anything is people have gotta start looking outside of the box. Just because something is doesn't mean it has to be. You have to use a different conventional way to do something, try it. You don't know 'til you try it.

And then we have the justice system. Well, we have a justice system in Watson. I have to say my -- myself needed some help just before Christmas. My partner and I split. He came down my street probably 15 times a day. I came out, got called to work in the evening about 8:30 and
who's sitting behind my vehicle. I was very angry and upset so I told the officer, so he had a talk with him.

   Next day, back there, the same thing. Then it went from that to stalking, started stalking me, following me. Told the cops. Then where I live -- I live at a women's shelter, and he blocked me in the one side of the garage three times on the women's shelter property. I think that's wrong. Most men who live in that town know you don't go on that property. Not only was I in danger, he endangered the people that were living there. So got papers and stuff done by the RCMP and went down to the JP to get an order --

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do you mean restraining order?

DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah, for him to just stay away from me. The person laughed in my face. I grabbed the documentation, looked at this person, said, "You're a disgrace to the justice system, an absolute disgrace. How dare you say you stand -- don't -- you stand for justice," and I walked out, ripped up the documents handed it to police, went home. Hm, I'm a guard at the jail and don't deserve to be protected, how interesting. So I gotta talk about does the justice system look at what these JPs do in the communities once they've lived there long enough to become biased, because I know these people that live in that town there that are the JPs are biased. Young girls go to them beat up, whatever, they don't get help. I think that's wrong. Then they just give up. Then they don't trust the RCMP. Then the trust is gone, and the next thing you know the young girl is dead. And for this to be happening today, I don't know. I live there, I seen it. That's what I got. I thought I could have gotten a little deserving piece of justice, but I guess not, so this tells you there's something wrong there, and highly.

And that points me back to some of the people that I see, like I said, young people, it's just sad to think that they've got no fixed address, no one probably I guess who steps up for them. If they need help from the justice system they don't get it, and that is the harsh reality, and a lot of them are hopefully stepping forward
and can be strong enough to know that they do have rights and a right to justice.

I know it took me quite awhile to get my justice, but did I really get my justice with that sentence? I guess what I have in my heart is, like I said, when he leaves this earthly plain that'll be his to own up to. You have a maker that you have to answer to. What you don't receive here I guess you'll receive there.

I do hope -- have hope, hope that when there's murders or something happens to people that they don't have to beg to get help by RCMP or justice or anything like that. I believe that's owed to each and everyone. And they always say -- they say First People, we are the First People, First Nations, correct me if I'm wrong, is that like number one, you're number one in line, number one in line, right? I actually wanna know why it seems like the First Nations, your First Nations, your first people, they always seem to be in the back of the line. They need to be brought forward because all these people from every area here, including the non-Natives, they're Canadian and first people. They shouldn't be back behind anyone else that comes into this country. Them all here should be first. And it says First Nations, first. We are first.

I just -- and I wanna see all these young women, girls, whoever's out there, young men, boys, I want them to stand up and see, you know, you have somebody who thinks about you. And for the rule of justice, and the right of law, I truly believe in it and I wanna believe in it, but it has to change at the levels above us. We should not, as a Canadian person, or any person, have to beg to any leadership for what is your rights at all, basic your right in Canada, and I just don't wanna see any more people dying and thinking someone does not care about them. I certainly do on all levels, all levels of the people as I believe, like I said, in the rule of law and justice. You need to change some factors in there. If you have to have JPs, have them moving JPs around the communities, not one who become biased in a community, and those young girls and young men and stuff can't get help that
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

they deserve, or the people that need it there
can't get it because that person likes that
person, and that family is connected with that
family, and that is a contingent to, as I'm
saying, with the Native people, too, is that pick
at that group of people and pick at that group of
people, 'cause I know it goes on. I'm in it.
I'm in it. I see it, and they really need to, as
leadership, any leader, any Chief across this
country they absolutely need to step in place for
their people.

And even our leader, Justin Trudeau, don't
make your people in Canada beg for the basic
needs and their rights. It's just wrong. Don't
call yourself a leader if your people have to beg
for you, and you're doing everything for any
other country except your people, you don't hear
the voice of your people. That's what the RCMP,
the justice system, they need to hear the voice
of these kids and people what's going on in their
lives, because it is what is the problem in their
life, and they're trying to tell you and it does
not seem like anybody wants to listen. It's
called "falling on deaf ears", and I had that
many times to be able to take my dad to court, so
I know it well. If any of them out there doesn't
believe, trust me when I say I've been to hell
and back, and still I'm seeing it when I see my
family dying when they should have had help at
certain levels and never got it.

I will say to our top Canada justice system,
you know, start putting money into helping these
people. Start giving the money where it belongs.
You're giving out funding, well, start the
funding with these people. Start helping our
lawyers, our justice people who want to help the
people. Stop keeping these people down here --
what I see is what I call keeping all these
people down here. If you're not letting the
Natives get a proper education, you're keeping
your thumb on top of their head; you're setting
them up to fail. That's just wrong that there
can possibly be failure of education anywhere in
Canada, and yet they can say, oh, I'm doing this
and that. Well, all to your glory of giving
money to this and that and helping these people
out there, what about your own? Don't forget
about your first Canadians. The change of justice has to come out of that. It's gotta be up at the top, and if I have to talk to Justin Trudeau, I will. Your people should not have to beg for anything, and I think that's sick to think that if you're somebody in power on any level that somebody has to come and beg to you, no. No, will not as a Native person in this country will I beg for the most basic things, basic human rights, the rule of law and justice for anybody in Canada, anybody.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you, Dorothy. The Commissioners may have some questions for you --

DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- but I have only one more question.

DOROTHY HAYES: Okay.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can I please ask, why did you want to stand today to provide your evidence to the Commissioners?

DOROTHY HAYES: I stand here today because I have a lot of family that are gone and lost. I stand for all the Elders around -- across Canada, around the world. I stand for all the women, men, young boys, young girls. I stand for them all who have missing family and nobody -- you just take a look at the stats in Mexico, you take a look at South America, North America, all around the world, it's not only here, but I'm standing up here for all the people that are unable to have the strength and force to stand up and tell their story. And if my mom was alive today, I can guarantee you she would have been standing here, and you stand up for all the people you respect, and I respect all of those, all the people, and I miss them all.

My grandfather -- let me just tell you this about him, he grew up in our family. He was -- he can speak English. My grandfather was Amos Alec (phonetic). He was a pretty good guide, mining camps and -- or I mean at guiding camps and stuff. He's pretty well known. I used to hunt with him, and this one time we were walking going fishing and I was about ten, and he said -- we're walking a long and I had a pack and a fishing rod and a .22 in my other hand, and we were walking along and I heard this noise and I
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

said, "Grandpa, what's that?" and we looked over and there were these two cubs, black bear cubs over -- I said, "Oh, oh, Grandpa, there's a mom somewhere," so me and him stood there and turned around. We heard this big growl from behind and Momma black bear is angry and coming at us. He said, "Grandpa," grabbed me by the hand, he said, "On three just step back three steps." He said, "Three," I stepped back three steps. This charging black bear just put on the brakes. The moss and dirt was flying in the air. She ran the other way. The cubs -- she made out a weird growl, and the cubs came running between us, and off they went. My grandfather looked at me and said, "Grandchild, when you panic you die." I said, "Okay, Grandpa."

Then he lived with us, and I really love my grandpa. Actually, a few times when we were out camping he pretty well saved me from my psychotic father. He put my dad on his ass for as small as he was, and he said, "Don't you ever touch my grandchild while I'm around." Off we went hunting, and one morning we were gonna go out early and it's still dark out. I'm like, "Grandpa, I'm tired. It's dark." He said, "There's bannock and tea there. You got lots of time to sleep when you're dead." I said, "Okay, Grandpa, okay," and up I had to get.

We went out on the trail out hunting. And he also said to me when -- he said, "You're gonna cry when I die," and I said, "I sure will, Grandpa, you better stay around a long time." He said when that day comes you're gonna cry a lot, and I understand that." I said, "Yes." He said, "But I'll tell you this, after I'm in the ground don't cry for me no more." I said, "Okay, why is that?" He said, "Because I want you to leave me at peace." He said, "When I'm gone you leave me at peace," but he said, "Grandchild, when you're in danger I'll come to your aid." So I want people and young people to know and anybody who's lost a loved one, as my grandfather said, cry for them, but once they're in the ground don't cry for them. Don't put yourself -- don't drown yourself in a bottle. Celebrate the fact that you had that person for that long in your life and be happy about it. He said, "Don't cry for
them because when you do, you down yourself in sorrows. They would not want that for you. They want you to step up and be strong and go on." So that's a message to a lot of people out there when you have lost loved ones, leave them at peace, don't cry for them. Be happy for the time that they were with you, even if they are missing and murdered. It's a harsh thing, but don't drown yourselves in sorrows and take your life away. We've had too much of that, and when you take your life away you've already set it up for another family member for that to happen to.

So, you know, if we can do changes to anything, I hope and pray that it can come with just the most minute -- you know, the most little changes in the world, they mean a lot to some people, and the change to justice is a need, justice and the law.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: So thank you so much for your words and the strength that just oozes out of you as you speak. Thank you, thank you. I have a question about when you were a little girl.

DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Did anybody know how badly you were being beaten, nurses, teachers, social workers, school principals --

DOROTHY HAYES: No.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: -- neighbours?

DOROTHY HAYES: No. No. We lived out of the towns, like, out in tents out -- not close to the communities, like --

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.

DOROTHY HAYES: -- you know what I mean.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: So nobody could see you.

DOROTHY HAYES: What do you call -- hang on, we -- I don't know if you know the area on the McDame's Post. That's where my mom was grown -- born in out that area, and before my grandpa, Amos Alec, when they closed down Hudson Bay they moved them as the first family into Lower Post, and then my cousins, Zaoyas (phonetic), Aboos (phonetic) and Porters and, yeah, we -- do I think they really cared? It just seemed to be the norm because most of them went to residential school, right, at that time.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yes.
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

DOROTHY HAYES: So I don't really think --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yes, that was my question was
it normalized?
DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah, I don't really -- I didn't have
anybody coming to my aid, if that's what you
mean.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: That was my question. So you
said you went to day school?
DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Did you ever go to day school
beaten up and have somebody say, what happened to
you?
DOROTHY HAYES: No.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DOROTHY HAYES: Like I said, I don't think they really
cared.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DOROTHY HAYES: I just know I got cracked over the
knuckles with a yardstick all the time, and there
was actually somebody who just brought that to my
attention. When I went to take a computer course
they had the page like you have there, straight
up, and I was, like, "Can you let go of that page
so I can sign it, I can't sign it this way?" and
she said, "Oh, okay," let go of the page, so I
turned the page this way and I could write my
name, and she was, like, "Oh," she said, "Did
they force you to write right handed?" and I
looked at her and said, "I don't know, possible,"
'cause it's strange I text with my left hand and
I can't text with my right hand, and I can use a
computer, but I -- unless -- it's strange, I have
to have the computer sideways before I can use
it, and I can only use it with one hand 'cause I
can't twist my left hand around. So that was
brought to my attention, so I remember a
yardstick, a yardstick across the hands and the
back of the head, and I can't stand the sight of
a yardstick. Yet, it's strange, a friend of mine
gave me a yardstick from -- an old office
yardstick, it's older than me, and I look at it,
and I'm, like, I can't throw it away because it's
older than me and it was special to this person,
so I have it, but maybe it's in a way good
therapy. I look at it. I can move it around.
Nobody can hit me with it.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Thank you. A couple more
questions about your aunt --

DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: -- I'm just thinking about --

or your two aunts, I'm just thinking about if

there were any documents available, any court

records, that kind of thing, do you have -- do

you know when your aunt died? Do you know --

DOROTHY HAYES: I'll see about getting that

information and getting it back to --

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Christa?

DOROTHY HAYES: -- and see what happens out of that.

It would just be good for my cousins. That was

my mom's sister, so for my brothers to toss him

out of the funeral, well, that says it all there.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay. Thank you again so much.

Anybody else have questions?

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup. Thank you very

much for your courage and your strength, and to

conclude on my side I have to say that we have

this inquiry, the mandate, I guess we say, to

hear also what the women and young girls went

through on just all kind of form of violence --

DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: -- and --

DOROTHY HAYES: Extreme.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Yeah.

DOROTHY HAYES: It was extreme in both of -- both being

-- my parents both being in there, and I think my

mom really felt beat down. When she could defend

herself, oh, yeah, no question, but it just got

to a point where I believe she just took so much

over the years, but she just had enough and just

-- I don't know if it was gave up, I'm not sure.

Maybe getting sick had a lot to do with it, and I

know her pain from losing my older brother and

sister. And, like I said, she had 15 kids, but

the other ones were stillborn, so I think that

was pain to her. She loved kids, and she pretty

much fed everybody in the neighbourhood and

everything we lived, and she did say, no

matter how poor you are whatever you have give it

to somebody. She said, you know, something

happens to you tomorrow you can't take it with

you, and I'm in firm belief of that.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Mm-hm.

DOROTHY HAYES: And I -- we all watched her suffer for

three years. We all took care of her at
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

different times. It was a battle, but I could see all her pain, pain of losing her kids, pain of being beaten, the -- just ruthless --

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Mm-hm.
DOROTHY HAYES: -- ruthless. I used to call him Charles Manson. I mean, it was just -- but that's what I mean by no matter what you grow up in don't inflict it upon the next generation --

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Mm-hm.
DOROTHY HAYES: -- don't. This is -- it's gotta stop at some point, just stop the violence --

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Mm-hm.
DOROTHY HAYES: -- against all. [indiscernible] should [indiscernible] men and boys, no. But I understand the residential thing. Trust me, I see both sides. I see the pain of all my family members even now. Even now I see it all.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: That was my question, you talked about it seemed -- my understanding that it was normalized --

DOROTHY HAYES: Yes.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: -- back in those days?
DOROTHY HAYES: Yes.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: But today in 2017 or this --
DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah, it's --
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: -- or this generation, do you think it's still normalized?
DOROTHY HAYES: It's still -- it is still absolute, no question, no question.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci.
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: I want to thank you as well for your words and your strength. "Oozes out" is a very good description. It's -- I can feel it. I wanted to ask you if you could share with us some thoughts you have about the help that's needed. You said that, you know, people should not have to beg our leaders for help --

DOROTHY HAYES: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: -- and also with the normalization of violence in the community now, what do you think is needed, sort of, some specific things you would like?
DOROTHY HAYES: Number one thing --
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Right.
DOROTHY HAYES: -- for these people who come in here to give any help to any of our people, do not shove those Bibles down their throats. The way
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

of Jesus is not gonna help them. I mean, if
that's the first words out of their mouths to
them, wrong. You're talking residential people
here. All I have to do is read their history --

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Yeah.
DOROTHY HAYES: -- read their history. And they --
when they come in, don't come down here just for
the big old, woo-hoo, look at the big paycheque
I'm getting --

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Mm-hm.
DOROTHY HAYES: -- and not actually care for the
people. And I see a lot of that, too. Like I
said, it's all about the holidays and the money,
you know, and it's about -- it's about the people
have to be -- I mean, they go to Corrections,
they must see that the person has FAS.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Mm-hm.
DOROTHY HAYES: They must see the person has mental
health issues. I'm not even in any of those
categories and I can see something's not right,
probably because where I was in Niagara Falls I
had friends of mine who had -- and they had kids,
and they just told me, oh, yeah, this, this,
this, oh, okay. I knew they weren't acting
normal, but they -- now I see. And then I come
here and I see it. Like, I'm seeing it and I'm
not even -- how is it possible that they cannot
see that where they are incarcerated. There's
something
-- how's that not possible? But see, that's what
I'm saying, where's the caring?

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Mm-hm.
DOROTHY HAYES: Oh, yeah, you're here, hm, just
another number, just another number. There's a
number on them. There's a number on our status
cards when we were born. We were born with a
number but it's never first, and I hear we're
First Nations. That's first. I believe I can
pretty well spell right and count money in that
factor, and I wanna see that addressed, 'cause if
you don't address those bottom-line issues -- and
then the issue of having somebody come in and
talk to these people about what's their
underlying problem, but don't throw the Bible at
them. That's outrageous to me. Find out what
the issues are, then once they get better if they
want to go to a church then so be it, but don't
Hearing - Public
Dorothy Hayes
(Elsie Tibbett, Rose Boya, Angel Carlick, Wendy Carlick)

tell them that, oh, the Bible is the end-all and
be-all. It wasn't in residential school, was it,
or we wouldn't be here today.
So --

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Thank you.

DOROTHY HAYES: -- I believe that when it comes down
to justice, they don't get enough funding from
the higher up. Would that be Justin Trudeau and
his people? I guess if I have to talk to them, I
guess I will because everyone deserves their
rights, law and justice in this country, each and
every person that's in Canada. We're supposed to
be first, so that brings the Canadian people that
are living here, they should be first. If you
can send billions of dollars out there, you can
first put it in your country to first help your
people, because what we have here -- even my
community's homelessness, no fixed address, how
does that help somebody to even do anything when
they've got no home? And because there's no
housing, I've been in and out of that women's
shelter probably for three and a half years.
How's that possible? I really can't tell you.
That's a good question. I mean, this country
could do really well if there was actually
housing for people. And they can't keep bringing
people over here, and over here, and keep
bringing people over here and there's no housing
for them, it doesn't even make one ounce of sense
to me. So, you know, it's a matter of those, it
starts stemming right from the bottom bare bones.
And education is the other thing. How it is
somebody can graduate from school and be
absolutely illiterate is beyond me. Don't call
yourself an educator or a teacher, don't. No-
fail policy, get a grip on your lives. That's
just wrong. You're setting all these poor kids
up to fail as everywhere you go you gotta use a
computer. If you're unable to spell you
certainly can't punch what you need into that
computer. It's logical. You go to a job, you
certainly want your family members and whoever to
be able to see if they're not being ripped off by
their boss, you know, and stuff like that. Those
are the bare bones of making something work.
Once they're educated they're able to -- you
know, and they find out the issues that's
bothering them. It's like a building, if you keep doing this, this and this and it ain't working you gotta try something else, because if you've got that foundation and you got one footing keep giving out, keep giving out, the second one's gonna give out and you're still gonna be back to square one, right back to square one. It's the matters of immediate mental health issues, education and definite funding to this country for the people, for the lawyers and whoever they need, 'cause everything's a mess from where I'm sitting, I don't know about anybody else, and I think I did pretty well for the life I grew up in, 'cause I said I was not going to grow up in that life, I was going to have opposite. But is it really opposite? I am not sure. When I still see all these poor people dying, young people, young, whether they're my family or not, right across the board, there's an underlying issue, certainly an underlying issue. Until you kind of address under those underlying problems to get the steps up, it's just gonna fail, you're just gonna keep -- it's like a building foundation, collapse.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Do you guys have any other questions? Do you have anything else you want to say? [indiscernible].

DOROTHY HAYES: Okay. Well, good. It's been nice talking to you, and I've gotta say I've spoken for all the Elders and those people who couldn't and are unable to speak 'cause of their trauma. I've been there, know it very well, and I just want them to know build up that strength in the middle of your gut, step up and don't go down that road. Don't go down that road to alcohol and drugs 'cause you wanna know what, you got a lot of power. You really do. You got a lot of power. You had power enough to struggle through everything you went through growing up. You can make it. Anybody can. And I just wanna thank definitely each and every Elder. I just love Elders because if my mom was alive today she would be 74, and I just wanted to know -- she's been gone over 30 years. I just thought to myself, I look at Elders and I just say, I wonder if my mom would have been like her, or I wonder if my mom would have been like
that one over there, so I just want a lot of them
to know heads up, stand tall, you're first, that
means number one, number one in this country, not
last, and I stand for that in a rule of law and
justice, number one in the rule of law and
justice. And that's for all Canadians, but the
first people, First Nation, we are number one,
number one. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: To honour the laws of
reciprocity, you've given us a gift of your words
and your teachings, and we'd like to give to you
some seeds, a small gift of seeds, and thank you.

(SEED GIFTING CEREMONY)

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Commissioners, could we just call
a recess?

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Yeah, just going to figure out
what time we'll be back. We'll have a quick
break, and we'll come back at 4:10. Thank you.

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED)

(PROCEEDINGS RECONVENED AT 16:37 P.M.)

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: So we're going to get started,
and we're going to start with a prayer from the
family.

(PRAYER SPOKEN IN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE)

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: So any time you want to get
started, Counsel, maybe introduce some people to
us and let us -- so we're going to get started,
and we'll start with talking about who's in the
room, and then we'll do the oath, and I
understand you have some people selected to speak
and so we'll do some oaths with the people who've
been selected.

Fifth Hearing
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan, Joy O'Brien,
Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien (Family of Tina
Washpan) with Wendy van Tongeren (Commission Counsel)

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yes. Yes. Thank you. So the
primary speaker is Diane Lilley, L-i-l-e-y, and
I've canvassed with the people in attendance,
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

others who anticipate speaking, and there's a
Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien, O-b -- O, apostrophe, B-r-i-
e-n, and Florence -- oh, sorry, Judith, is it
Kuster?

JUDITH KUSTER: Yes, it is.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: K-u-s-t-e-r. Florence Washpan,
W-a-s-h-p-a-n, Joy O'Brien spelt the same way, O,
apostrophe, B-r-i-e-n. And some participants are
prepared to be affirmed together holding a
feather, and that is Florence and Diane and Joy,
and so I think we could start there.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Here's the -- here's the eagle
feather. I'll pass that to you, Florence. Okay.
So we've got Florence, and we've got Diane and
Joy. Okay, so Florence, Diane and Joy, do you
solemnly affirm that the evidence you will give
today will be the truth, the whole truth and
nothing but the truth?

DIANE LILLEY: [inaudible].

FLORENCE WASHPAN: [inaudible].

JOY O'BRIEN: [inaudible].

DIANE LILLEY, FLORENCE WASHPAN,
JOY O'BRIEN, affirmed.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you. You can hold the
-- you can hold that. You can hold the eagle
feather if you'd like to, during -- okay. Thank
you.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien and
Judith Kuster have told me that they basically
are relying on an understanding that they will
tell the truth, or would you like to speak on
your behalf?

JUDITH KUSTER: Our creator is watching as we gather
here. Our creator is our judge. He will guide
us. He will stand with us and hold our hands,
and we know we have to speak the truth, and we
will speak the truth in front of our creator.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Great. Thank you.

JUDITH KUSTER: (Aboriginal language spoken).

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And so is there anything you'd
like to say, or you're basically with Judith
in --

SA-NA-KERRI O'BRIEN: [no audible response].

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. Thank you so much. Okay.
And you have your sage?
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

DIANE LILLEY: Yes.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. And we need a microphone for you as well, Diane. Hi, Diane. Is it all right if I call you Diane?

DIANE LILLEY: Yes.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you. So we've met before?

DIANE LILLEY: Yes, we did.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Mm-hm. Back -- it started in April, April 13th, in the Sacred Room?

DIANE LILLEY: Yeah. It was, yeah.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.

DIANE LILLEY: Yes.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And I feel honoured to be able to actually sit beside you now and hear you speak again. So I'm going to ask you a starting question --

DIANE LILLEY: Yes.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- which is, I know that you've decided to be part not only of this inquiry but of a very large conversation about bringing justice to Indigenous women in Canada, and I'd like to ask you what is it, what are the topics that you are going to touch upon when you speak to the Commissioners today?

DIANE LILLEY: One of my topics, well, number one will be my sister because she was taken (sic) from us violently, and another one will be the history of our upbringing and a little bit of history about our past and how we got taken. And I have some recommendations to bring forth, too.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Recommendations?

DIANE LILLEY: -- recommendations to bring forth, too.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: All right. So we can start right in with this, or if there's anything that you would like to start by way of kind of a context or a background of who you are, maybe, you know, where you live or a little about --

DIANE LILLEY: Okay.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- your history.

DIANE LILLEY: Okay. My name is Diane Lilley, birth name -- maiden name, Washpan. I'm a member of the Carmacks/Little Salmon First Nation. My given name is Hugluwah and it means Little Mouse. And I'm a Wolf Clan, part of the Wolf Clan, and I reside now in Marsh Lake, at Marsh Lake, by the lake there, and I stay in Whitehorse now.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. So just reiterating what
you said, you're going to be talking about your
sister and history of the upbringing of you and
your sisters, and the history of the past and how
the children were taken away, and then making
recommendations?
DIANE LILLEY: Yes.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So are you ready to begin?
DIANE LILLEY: Yes.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So you -- you've been with me
before, so you know how I do this. I -- it's
important to me that you do most of the talking.
DIANE LILLEY: Yes.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: So when you have finished talking
I'll either try to sort that out, or you just
glance at me and that's a signal to me.
DIANE LILLEY: Okay.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And if you need any help with
anything, as well, then I'm here to help.
DIANE LILLEY: Yeah.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay?
DIANE LILLEY: Okay. I will be starting with our
history. I can remember as far back as when we
used to live in Carmacks with our mom, and at
that time there was -- like the whole community
was drinking, not just my mom. There was -- a
lot of people had drinking problems in our
communities and all over, and one day the social
workers came and they took us from our mother.
They came in an orange car and with the RCMP from
the cabin we lived in that our stepdad and my
brother built, and when they came to get us they
took myself -- I'm the eldest of the smaller
ones. There was my sister, myself, my sister
Vivian, my sister Hillary, my sister Janelle, and
my baby sister Tina. They put us in the car.
And then I had two older siblings that was there
with us, which was Barbara and David, and when
they would put us in the car because we're -- I
can't remember how old I was, but we were young,
and then when they put us in the car my older
siblings, Barbara and David, took off. They ran.
And when they were chasing my sister through the
bush my brother, David, came back around and he
opened that door for us to let us out, and then I
took my younger sisters and we ran, and we made a
fort. We made a little fort in the bush there,
and we ran and we went there, we hid away, and we
tried to hide so that they wouldn't take us.

And they found us because Tina, she was a baby, she was just tiny and she started crying, and that's how they found us. And then they came and got us and took us again. They put us in the car, and we never saw our mother after that.

They told us that we were -- we would -- they're taking us to a safe place.

So they brought us into Whitehorse and they split us up, and that was the last time they put us in different homes, and that was the last time I ever saw my sister, Tina.

And then they took Janelle away from us, too, and -- because my sister Vivian was next to me, and my sister, Hillary, was next to her, and everywhere -- they put us in -- the first place Coudert Residence, which is a residential school, and we -- the first thing they did to us was I call sterilizing because -- I say that because they cut our hairs off and washed our hair with low shampoo and washed our body down and really scrubbed us hard, and that was -- that was the introductory, the beginning of a -- what I call a bad, bad situation, a bad mishap because they put us in school, we went to school, but all the time I kept asking for them, for my younger sisters, where did they go, where are they, and they said, they told me not to worry about my sister Tina and Janelle.

And so I had these two, Vivian and Hillary, with me all through everything and I used to take them and I used to -- instead of going to school I'd wait for them and I would run away with them to go -- to try and go home to my mom, to find my mom. I wanted to go home, and we would always make it just to the bridge, then there would be cops waiting by the bridge there in Riverdale, and they would pick us up and bring us back to school, and then we'd be punished. So they talked to us and they told us that we would be going home in the summertime when school was over. So I hung on and kept close with my two younger sisters there, Vivian and Hillary.

And after that, we went -- they put us over to Yukon Hall because Coudert closed down. So we got moved over there, and in there -- but, you know, it -- when we went over there and then
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

school was over, we never went home. We never,
ever saw our mother. Not once did we see our
mother since they took us. And my younger
sisters would always cry to me and say, I wanna
go home to Mom, and I'd tell them, we're gonna go
home pretty soon, schools almost over, but that
never happened.

They took us and they started putting us in
group homes, and we've been -- there was a lot of
abuse we went through. In Yukon Hall we were --
like, there was, like, quite a bit of other kids
there and it was, like -- it was really awful to
be away, to be taken from our mom, and my younger
siblings kept crying all the time, and I wasn't
allowed to be with them. I wasn't, because in
Yukon Hall there was juniors, intermediates,
seniors and I can't remember what else there was.
Like, it was different levels of age groups, so
my younger sisters were put in with the juniors,
and I was in with the -- I can't remember if it
was --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Intermediate.

DIANE LILLEY: -- intermediates, and we weren't
allowed to be in contact. Well, we did at
lunchtime, breakfast and stuff like that, and we
got to go outside and play. But nighttime,
because at home they slept -- we all slept
together, you know, and we sleep by each other,
and at nights was the worst because my younger
sisters would get up and they would walk down the
hall and look for me because I wasn't there with
them, and they would get in trouble. They would
get spankings. They would get hit, and a lot of
things -- like, a lot of bad things would happen
with them, and a lot of it -- and one time one of
the workers, I -- like, I was rebellious, I
guess. I was starting to -- it was starting to
sink into me that we weren't going home, we're
never going home, and that we -- I started being
rebellious and I started talking back to the
supervisors, and I started doing things with the
other kids. Like, I started being -- I learned
how to swear. I learned how to -- you know, I was
learning all these stuff from other kids like how
to -- you know, to talk back, how to swear, how
to -- you know, if they say, do this, I wouldn't
do it. I would tell them, "You do it," you know,
and then I would, you know, mouth-off, as they would say, and then they would hit me.

One of the supervisors there, she would, like, always -- like, she was really mean to everybody, and she would hit us so hard sometimes we'd fly to the ground. And I saw her one time did that to my sister, Hillary, because she was out of her area. And she came, she saw me and we met in the hall, and that supervisor came and she just grabbed my sister and dragged her. And then my sister was fighting, being resistant. She was resisting her and she was crying for me, and I tried to go and grab her, and then she turned around, this lady, this supervisor, she hit my sister so I went running -- I saw this and I went running to her and I just -- I pushed her, and then I grabbed my sister, Hillary, and I held her and I said, "You're gonna be okay. I'm here, I'm here." And then she had called -- this woman had called the other workers there, and they came and they took me. They took me away, and they took her in her room and I never saw her for at least -- like, about a couple days I never saw her.

And then from there, we went into group homes on holidays. Christmas Holidays, any kind of a holiday, summer holidays, we never ever went home. And some of the workers, too, at the residential school would tell us, well, you're here, you're in a better place, you're being cared for, you got a better life, you got -- you're clean, you're -- you know, you're clean and you're fed three meals a day, and all this kind of stuff, and they said, you should be grateful for that, you should be happy, your mother is a drunk and she doesn't care for you, she only likes her drinks, that's why we took you, that's why you were taken away. And this was the beginning of things I would hear for -- you know, up until I've become an adult.

We would be put in group homes, but they tried to break us up. They tried to put my two younger sisters -- they took them away from me. And when they put me in a group home I wouldn't eat. I stopped eating. I stopped doing everything. I wouldn't drink any water. I wouldn't -- I would stay in a room and I wouldn't do anything. I refused to eat. I refused
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

everything because they took away my younger
sisters, Vivian and Hillary, from me. I said,
you guys already took away my other two sisters,
you took us away from my mom, and now you want to
take away my two sisters that are close to me, I
said, no.

And so the foster parents, they had -- they
phoned the welfare -- the social worker. I can't
remember her name, but I can always remember what
she looked like today. I'll never forget her
face. She came and met with the parents or the
caretakers of us -- of me, and so they told me
that they were gonna bring my two sisters to me
and they would be staying with me, and I was
really happy for that because, you know, they
were the only two that I had. And so I waited,
and that same evening they came, and soon as they
saw me they just ran right to me and they were
crying, and they said, "We're scared, we're
scared." They said, "Why can't we go home to
Mom?" That's all they kept saying to me, and I
said, "We can't go home to Mom. They're not
gonna let us see our mom again." I said -- and I
said, "You have me. I'm your older sister. I
will be there." I told them, I said, "I would
never leave you. I would never let them take you
away from me again," I said.

And so they kept us in this group home, and
it was all right, but these people were getting
paid for us. To look after us they were getting
money. And they had their own kids, too, and
their kids would get everything brand new.
Everything would go for their kids. They would
good -- get everything, and we were like
Cinderellas in this group home to this family.
We were -- had to do all the chores. We had to
do -- as young as we were we had to do dishes, we
had to sweep, we had to do everything they said.

And all our clothes were not brand new. All
our clothes we got from these people secondhand.
We never ever, ever got anything new, and
everything new went to their own kids. And their
kids would taunt us. My younger sisters -- they
had, you know, brand new little Barbies. They
had, you know, brand new little, you know, shoes
and dress clothes and dresses and stuff, and they
would haunt us -- they would taunt us about it.
They were, like, oh, yeah, you guys are -- you
guys get all old stuff and we get everything
brand new, that's because that's my mom and dad
that's looking after you, and your mom or your
dad don't care and that's why you're here. Like,
even the kids were telling us this, their kids.
And then we would tell them -- talk to them and
tell them, and they would say -- they would say,
no, you're lying, you know, and things like that.
They wouldn't listen to us and, you know, it was
really hard. I had a hard time, like, coping and
yet I had to be the grown up one for my younger
two sisters that I had with me. This would go on
for awhile until they took us again.
The foster parents couldn't handle me
because I was what they call a troublemaker. I
was fighting. I started learning to fight, so I
was a troublemaker, and I would beat up -- every
time their kids would taunt my young -- and fight
and bother my younger sisters, I would beat them
up. I learned to fight and I would beat them up
all the time, and so they called the welfare
again and they removed us from this place into
another one.
I think we'd been -- in that summer I think
we'd been through -- one summer about ten
different group homes, foster homes and foster
parents we had. And, you know, some of them were
very, very good, and some of them were really,
really bad, and I kept asking the social worker
when are we gonna go home, when am I gonna see --
where did you take my younger sister, where did
you take my baby sister, where are they, are they
here, are they -- are they okay? Like, you know,
for a young girl at a very young age to have to
worry and -- about their younger siblings, you
know, that's -- I must say, I never ever had a
childhood. I was a parent before I was a child.
I never had that. I never ever had a real
enjoyment of play and just being a kid. I never
had that. I was always worried about going home.
I was worried about my mom, where is my mom and,
you know, things were going through my head and
yet I had to be strong and had to be -- I kept --
I was building walls up, I guess, against --
around me, defensive walls to protect my younger
sisters that were with me, and I would, you know,
always tell them -- I always told them but they
would always cry, especially at nighttime. And
we were in group homes, we had to sleep in
separate beds and sometimes my younger sister,
Hillary, she -- and she would get up in the
middle of the night and she would come to me and
crawl in my bed and I would hold her. And she'd
be crying, and she'd be saying, "You think Mom
miss us?" like, you know, and things like that
they would ask me, and I said -- I'd tell her,
"Yeah, Mom probably wonders where we're at and,
yes, she did -- she does miss us," and I said, "I
know our mom loves us, I know." I said -- you
know, I told them, I said, "We're going to go
home one day." I said, "We're going to go home."
I said, "They told us, they told us that we're
gonna go home to our mom." I said, "Just wait,"
I said, "Mom will come and get us," but that
never happened. It never happened. We kept
going removed, placed in homes, group homes,
and all the time I was the one that was the
troublemaker. I was labelled a troublemaker.

And then it -- and then we went to Yukon
Hall and kept that up for quite a few years. And
then in one group home -- I was there in a group
home, and I was a little bit older, and same
thing, we had chores, and I wouldn't do the
dishes because it wasn't my night, it wasn't my
night on the list because they had other kids
there, and I wouldn't -- I refused to do the
dishes because I said, it's not my night, it's
not my night for dishes. And the guy of the
group home, the caretaker, the man, he grabbed me
and he grabbed me by my neck back here and he
just walked me, he held me up like this and
walked me like this to the kitchen, and he pushed
me, and I went flying against the counter, and
then he said, "You're gonna stand there, even if
it's all night, you're gonna do the dishes, you
understand?" He said, "I am your -- you're here
with my family and me, and you're going to do
what we say and you're told to do," and I turned
around and already by then I have learned to
swear, learned to fight, I learned all this, so I
turned around and I looked at him. I told him,
"Fuck you." That was the first words that came
out, and he grabbed me and held me and just
started hitting me. And then I learned to fight
by then, and I looked at him and I -- when I did
that, I was -- like, I turned around and I tried
to get loose from him, and I started fighting
back with him, and it somehow ended up that he
was sitting on me in the kitchen and holding me
down restraining me down, and I was, like, really
fighting. I lost it, I think, with him, and I
was really fighting him. And this guy was
sitting on top of me, and then I said, "You F'in
asshole, you wait 'til I grow up, I'm gonna find
you, I'm gonna find you, and you're gonna pay for
this. I'm gonna -- I'm gonna do everything to
you that you will regret what you done to me." I
told him that, and I said, "I know who you are.
I know your name" and I said, "and you wait up,
you wait up," I said, "I will be back." I said,
"When I grow up, and I will grow up, I will come
back for you," I told him. I said, "And if you
ever touch my sisters I will kill you," and this
is, like, a little kid thinking this, and that
was the anger, it's in me.

And then from there, instead of going back
to Yukon Hall, to anywhere, they put me in
juvenile home because then I was -- I was
labelled -- I was labelled an angry,
uncontrollable troublemaker. And this is what I
was told when I went to -- it was then Wolf
Creek. They sent me there, and that was what I
was labelled. And they put me in there, and they
took my two younger sisters, Vivian and Hillary,
and put them in another -- they moved them from
that place and put them in another home, and they
did not tell me where, so I started -- like, I
went to this place, and it was like a jail, and I
found out it was a jail actually for children and
youth, and that was what it was for. And I asked
them -- the director, he sat us down and -- sat
me down and talked to me and said, you know, this
is why you're here is because you're
uncontrollable, and then they started me on --
they were giving me needles in there. I don't
know, it was to keep me calm. They started
giving me needles to keep me calm because I was
-- like, I was always mad. I was always mouthing
off back to them, and no matter where I would be
I would get angry.
And then finally, they took me out of there, or I ran away, actually, from there. And then when the RCMPs found me this time I told them, I said, I'm not going back there, I don't want to go back there. I said, that's a jail, I didn't do anything wrong, I want my sisters, I want to be with my younger sisters. So they actually put us in a home, and it was summertime. They sent us to Kluane Lake because there we had no contact with any family members or anybody that the welfare would say influenced me. And so they took us to a home there, and from there the people were really nice. Like, they were awesome with us. They owned RV park, a restaurant, a motel and a gas station, and they were really good to us. They looked after us like we were their own kids.

And by that time I was unaware what the social workers had done or any contact with our mother, and I was not aware of any of that. We were never told anything about our mother. We were never ever -- you know, we were never told anything about any of our family, and I'd ask again, where is my sister -- my baby sister, Tina, and my other sister, Janelle, where are they, and they said, they're okay. That's all they'd keep telling me. They wouldn't tell me anything else. They kept telling me, they're okay, they're gonna be good, they're in a well -- they got a really good family now. And I looked at them and I said, a really good family, I said -- I said, that's not their family. I said, our family -- our mom is in Carmacks, my family, my sisters are here, I have older brothers and sisters that are at home. That's our family, that's our family, that's where we belong, we wanna go home. And they said, no.

And then this young couple from United States came, and my two younger sisters they befriended first, and they took them into the RV -- in their RV and they -- you know, the lady, her name is Leslie, and his name is Jim Warner, and so they stayed there, and they -- we got to know them, and they were really awesome. Like, they really were good with us, and then I guess they fell in love with us, and when they were leaving we cried. We said, you know, we'll never
see you again. We cried. And then here I guess there, and then I guess at that time I wasn't aware that my mother had signed -- my mother was illiterate. She cannot read, write or speak English. She only spoke her language. And there was no translators in them times, and she understood a little bit of English but not a whole bunch, like, not a whole lot, and I guess -- when we were there I guess the social workers had a meeting with her, and they had told her that if she signed these papers for her kids to be in care, and it was only gonna be for one year, if she went back home and cleaned up her life is how they told her, cleaned up her life meaning sober up and, you know, sober up so that she can get us back in one year, and that's what the welfares and the courthouse has told her in Whitehorse, and so they told her this before they gave her that piece of paper to sign, and because she could not read or write they said to her, well, you're gonna get your kids back in one year, so can you sign this, and she only put an "X" there. That was all. That was her signature, an "X".

So she went home, and in the process, in the meantime, while she was doing her healing we were still at -- in Kluane Lake. And then summer came and went, and we went -- we left. The welfares came and got us. My two sisters and I, they came and got us, and then they took us in and I thought this time we're gonna go back to the school, to residential school, but we didn't. They took us and they brought us in, and they brought us to the airport. They took us to the airport, and they said to us -- I said, I thought we were gonna go back to school, I thought we were gonna go, you know, back to Yukon Hall, and I said, why are we here, you know, and they said, well -- and this is how they got me on the plane with my younger sisters, they said, we're going to -- you're gonna go on holidays, you remember those young couple that you met, Leslie and Jim, in Kluane Lake, and I said, yes, I said, they were really good people, you know. I said that to them, and they said, well, I'm glad you feel that way because we're gonna take you and you're
gonna go down -- they live in the United States, St. Paul, Minnesota -- Minneapolis. And so this is what they told me, that we're gonna go down there for holidays, two-week holidays to spend with them, and then we were gonna come back, they were gonna bring us back. And I was so happy, you know. I told my two younger sisters, I said, they're gonna take us on holidays, they're gonna take us on holidays, and then we're gonna come home, we're gonna go back to school and then we're gonna go home to our mom, you know.

And when we got down to the States, Jim and Leslie were waiting at the airport for us, and they had, like, gifts and everything for us, eh. And then my two younger sisters recognized him, and they looked and they ran to them and they hugged them, and then they came over to me, and then the social worker came with us, and we all jumped in a vehicle and then we went, and we went with these two, which is to be our adopted parents, and we were never told that we were being given up for adoption, that they were adopting us. We were never told that. And that's how they got us on the plane, they said that we were gonna go on holidays. Welfare again lied.

And so when we got -- we went with these -- this young couple. They brought us to their house, and they had our bedrooms and everything made up like -- and they said -- and then they sat us down. They cooked and everything, and I said -- and I said, oh, when are we gonna go home, I wanna know when are we leaving, when are we going home, and she said, oh, well, before you guys -- before anything -- she said, before, you know, we eat or anything, and she said, I want you to know, I have to tell you that you're not going home, you're never going home, we adopted you. And at that time I didn't know what adoption was. I didn't know, you know, that anyone could actually sign a piece of paper and have someone else's child as theirs as a legal -- you know, I never knew that. And I asked her, what's adoption, what are you talking about? And then she explained to me that we are legally -- we're -- I'm your mother, so you call me Mom, Jim is your dad, that's your dad, that's what we're
talking about that we're your new mom and dad,
and you're never ever gonna go home, you're here
with us, you're -- we're gonna be your new
parents. And I looked at her, and I got up, I
jumped up off of the kitchen table and I looked
at her and I said, no, no, no, no. I said, that
welfare lady said we're here on holidays, how can
you be my mom, how can you be my dad, I don't
even know you people, you're not -- you're not my
mom and dad, I have a mom, my sisters and I we
have a mom, we don't have our dad, but we have
our stepdad, we have a mom and dad, that welfare
lady told us that -- by then I was breaking down
and I was crying, and I said, no, no, no, no. I
said, no, and I looked at -- and then she started
putting plates for dinner, and I looked at her
and I just went, wham. Everything went flying
off of the table, and Jim got up and he said --
he grabbed me and he said -- he didn't like, you
know, really grab me, like, he just, like, held
around me, and he said -- he said, it's okay,
you're gonna be okay, you're safe. He said,
we'll look after you now. He said, you can't go
home, and this is what they said to us. I said,
why can't we go home, why? And this is their
answer to us, or to me that I can remember was
that they said, your family back in Canada, your
mom and the rest of your family, your mom is a
drunk and the rest of your family are all drunks,
and they're all drug addicts, they don't want
you, that's why we took you, they don't want you,
they love their alcohol and drugs more than you,
and that's why we adopted you. And I said, no,
no, no, no. I said, that welfare lady, that
caretaker, that welfare lady, she said that we're
only gonna be here for two weeks, and it never
happened, we never ever came home. I never ever
saw my mom until I found my way back.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Should we take a few-minute
break, Florence? Are you -- would you like to
have a few minutes to just get up and go outside,
and --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yes. Let's take a ten-minute
adjournment.
DIANE LILLEY, FLORENCE WASHPAN, 
JOY O'BRIEN, witnesses recalled.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay. So if everybody would 
like to take a seat, and I'll just ask if you're 
comfortable proceeding and you're prepared to 
keep telling your story, are you good to go 
again?

DIANE LILLEY: Yes, I am.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Thank you very much, and just 
in the future as well, like, if people need a 
brake, just -- if anybody needs a break, please, 
please feel free to ask about that, okay?

DIANE LILLEY: Okay. Okay, I left off at -- I forgot 
to mention one era. I didn't wanna mention it 
because my older sister was here, and she is 
sick. She was diagnosed with cancer and I didn't 
want to mention anything very stressful because I 
don't want her stress level to go up and her 
getting more sick and I lose another sister. I 
forgot to mention that when I was in residential 
school in Yukon Hall I was molested. I was being 
molested by a woman caretaker that would come and 
get me in the odd hours of the morning and take 
me down to the infirmary, and she would put me on 
the table and she would -- she would strip me 
down and she would tell me that she was checking 
me, but she would make me touch her, touch her 
breasts, touch her private, and she would do the 
same to me, and she would be putting her hands in 
my private between me, and I wouldn't -- I didn't 
understand what she was doing to me. I didn't 
mention that because of my sister.

I'll go back to my story. When I found my 
way back from the States, I went looking for my 
family, and the welfares came and met me at the 
airport again, and they put me in a home, another 
home here in Yukon, and then I took off, I ran 
away. I went to find my mom, and I went walking 
around downtown and I saw these people from 
Carmacks and they said that they were going back 
to Carmacks, and I said, well, I wanna come with 
you. By then I was a runaway from the group 
home, and I said, I wanna go with you, I wanna go
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

-- I wanna go see my mom, I want my mom to -- I wanna see my mom. So the said, jump in, then.
So I jumped in with them and they gave me a ride to Carmacks, and they took me right to my mom, where my mom lived then. It wasn't in the same area when we left.

By then she had straightened out her life. She had quit drinking, and she was living with a guy she had met. His name is Gunter (phonetic), and she had a little -- she had a baby, a little boy. They had a little boy, Delainy (phonetic), who is today my baby brother. But when I came home I knocked on her door and I walked in, and I looked at her and I said, "Mom?" and she looked at me and she just started crying, and I started crying, and I held her and I said, I found you, I found you. I said, all these years, Mom, I often wondered -- I wondered if you were still alive, if you were okay, if -- you know, what you're doing. We all talk of it all the time. And then she was so happy, so overwhelmed that she couldn't stop crying. And then I didn't see my little brother then. He came out of the room.

He heard Mom crying. Like, she just [makes vocal sound], like, you know, and just, oh, thank you, God, you bring my baby girl back home, and she just held me, and -- and when we were crying, and then she'd tell me, sit down. So I sat down on her couch, and I sat there, and then I saw this little boy come running out, and she was crying, and crying, and crying.

And my stepdad then, I just met him then because I never knew him, eh, and he was there, and he was holding her, and then she told him who I was, I was one of her kids that got taken away and now I'm home, she was telling him. And then in the meantime, this little boy, he was I think about four years old, he came out of the back room and he came right up to me and he just kicked me in the shins right here, and he said to me, "I don't know who you are but you made my mommy cry. You leave right now. You get out, go," he said, "and don't come back, and never make my mommy cry again." And I looked at him and I looked at my mom and I said, who are you babysitting for, Mom, who's the -- and then I -- and then it dawned on me he said, "Mom," and I
looked at Mom and she said, "This is your baby brother, your little brother that's still -- his name is Delainy." And I looked at him, and I leaned down. Then she grabbed him and she said, "That's your sister. Don't treat your sister like that. That's your big sister." And she said, "I told you, you have bigger sisters that, you know, are gonna come home one day and you're gonna meet them," and she said, "This is one of them, the oldest of them all," and then she said, "You've gotta love your sister," she told him. And I leaned -- he didn't want nothing do with me, but he -- I leaned down and I said, "Hi, I'm your bigger sister, Diane," I told him, and he went back and he looked at me and he said, "I don't know who you are," he said, "but my mom says you're my sister." I said, "Yeah, I'm your sister. I got taken away," I said, and, "I was given away," I said, "but now I've come back. I found my mom. I found my family."

And then I found out different -- I started meeting the rest of my family, my relatives, and I stayed here. The welfares -- I ran away again to stay with my family and my mom. They were never gonna take me away this time, and so I ran away. And they did actually -- the cops and the welfares came to my mother's. They took me again from there, and then they brought me back into Whitehorse. They put me in a group home again, so I jumped out the window and I ran away. About three o'clock in the morning I climbed out and I ran, and I was determined this time that they were never ever gonna bring me back to any homes anywhere, and so I stayed on the street and I met another girl who was in similar situation, and we became best friends, and today we are still best friends.

We lived on the streets. We made -- at that time under the clay cliffs there was a lot of bush up there. We made a bush camp, and that's where we would stay at nights. At daytime we'd go there and sleep, and then we'd wake up nighttime and roam around nighttime, so that nobody we know -- the social workers' office closed at 5:00, so we wouldn't -- they wouldn't be looking for us at that hour, so -- and we would shop and get our clothes off of
clotheslines, and we'd steal from -- to get our food we'd steal from Food Fair (phonetic). It was then down in the Horwitz (phonetic) Mall in them days at the waterfront -- near the waterfront on Main Street. We would go in there and steal so we could eat.

And then when I got older after all this, I was of age and I continued -- I started like drinking and getting into drugs. And then I met -- I met my husband. I was 17, going onto 18. I met this -- I went to Carmacks, Tina and I, and we started partying around, and I met my husband in Carmacks. And then after that, we went around together for a couple of years, and we ended up getting married when I was 20. And then 19 I was pregnant. I found out I was pregnant. So I went up to him. He was sitting in Sunset, and I said, I'm pregnant, I'm gonna have a baby. I said, and it's up to you if you want to be responsible and be with me or you can leave, it's your choice. I said, I won't hold anything on you. And he got up right in the bar and he started, "Yahoo," jumping around. He said, "We're gonna -- I'm gonna have a baby, I'm gonna have a baby," and I looked at him. And then after that, like, that's what he said, "I'm gonna have a baby, I'm gonna have a baby."

So I went down -- I was really scared. Twenty years old, I turned 20. I was really scared. I went to see my mom, and I sat down, and my cousin, Darlene -- her and Darlene, my cousin, were really close, and they were there. Darlene was there, and then I came in and I, "Hi, Mom." I peeked in the door. I said, "Hi, Mom," and I looked at Darlene. I always called her "Dash", eh, "Hey, Dash," I said. And they were, like, "Why are you --" she's, like, "Why are you peeking around?" I said -- okay, so came in, and then I ate. I sat down at the table. Then I sat there. My mom was busy. She always loved to bake, eh, and she baked -- she still didn't read or write, you know, English, but she would taste the cake and she would go home and make the exact same cake, exactly. She was such a wonderful woman, and I got to know her when I came back. But, you know, when I told her I was -- I sat down, and I looked at her. I was scared. I was
20 years old. I said, Mom, I have to tell you something, and she turned around and I said, I think you better sit down, and she sat down, and Darlene was on this side, and I looked at her, and I went over and I was just shaking. I put my hands on hers and I said, Mom, you're gonna be a grandma, I'm pregnant. And she looked at me and she said, I knew you were pregnant. I know, she told me, she said, but I was just waiting for you to tell me. And then by then Ed came in the door, and he -- right in front of my mom and everybody he kneeled down and he said, Diane, he said, we're gonna have a baby, and I wanna ask your hand in marriage, and I looked at him and I said, is this -- like, are you kidding me or is this for real? And he said, mo, I want you to be my wife. I wanna marry you, he said. So I said, I'll have to think about it. So I asked Mom, I talked to Darlene, and Mom -- I said, you know, Mom, really I was really scared to tell you I was pregnant, and she looked at me, she said, well, I guess you're old enough to have a baby, you're 20 years old now, and I said, yeah, Mom, and then I said, well, I think I'm gonna marry Ed. So I got married 1980 -- what year we got married? 1981 we got married.

And then I kept in contact. We moved to Carmacks. I stayed there for awhile. I stayed there. We bought property and everything. I had my baby, who I named her Judith. She's named after my auntie, and I named her Judith, Judith Marie. And my mom, she really cherished my kids. She was really close to them.

And then all of a sudden we're talking and I said, you know, I wonder, Mom, I said, you know, I wonder where Janelle and Tina are at, I wonder if they ever, you know, if they ever, ever want to find us, I wonder, you know, if they know they have family here and that you're still well and alive, Mom. I said, you know, I said -- I said, do you ever -- do you know -- and I started questioning her then about, you know, our -- what happened, why were -- I said, Mom, I asked her, I said, I wanna ask you one question, and she said, yes. We were by the campfire and she was working. She does moose hide. She was tanning -- doing her moose hide, her skin, working on it,
and I said, Mom, I said, I wanna ask you why you
gave us away for adoption, why you gave us away
and you kept my older ones, the other rest? And
she said, I didn't give you away. I did not give
you away, she said, and that's when I found out
about the story where the social workers and the
courts told her to sign the paper. That's when
she told me that.

And then we started talking away about Tina
and Janelle, and I often wondered, like, it
always crossed my mind where are they, you know,
if I'm ever gonna see them in my life. And then
all of a sudden, we were sitting down -- this is
like after Judy, I think she was born, and then
about -- Judy, I think, was about three or four
years old, I think. No, she was older. But
anyway, I can't remember how old she was, but
this phone -- my mom's phone ring, and it was
Tina. It was Tina. When I was there I answered
it, and she didn't -- she didn't call herself
Tina because when they took her away and legally
adopted her they changed her name also. They
changed her name to Cynthia Burk, Cynthia, and
her adopted family's last name were Burk, so they
changed her name to Cynthia. And I think my kids
were pretty well grown up by then, but anyways, I
said, who is this, when I answered it. Mom said,
answer it, and she said, hi, she said, I'm
looking for -- is this Dorothy Washpan? And I
said, no, I said, it's -- I'm Dorothy's daughter,
can -- my mom's very busy. I said, she's my
mother. I said, can I -- can I ask who this is?
She said -- she said, my name is Cindy, and
Dorothy Washpan is my daughter (sic), and I said,
what, what? Cindy. Cindy. And I said, I don't
recall having a sister named Cindy, and then she
said -- she said, well, my adopted mom told me
that they changed my name, but I'm so used to
calling myself Cindy, I grew up being called
Cindy, but she said, my name is Tina, and I just
cried. I looked at Mom and I said, Mom, Mom,
it's Tina, it's Tina, she found us. I said, my
baby sister, I said, she found us.

And then she was phoning from somewhere down
south. I don't know where, but --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Saskatchewan.

DIANE LILLEY: Is it Saskatchewan? Well, she was
phoning -- but I said, Mom, come here, come here. I said -- I said, talk to her, tell her you're here, let her know, you know, you're okay, you're alive. And so Mom talked to her, and Mom was crying, and I sat down and I was just crying 'cause we were just talking about her and Janelle, and she said, I'm gonna come up, I'm gonna come up to the Yukon, I know you're in Carmacks, but I'm gonna come there, I'm gonna find my way there. And so was it between that call -- not even two weeks, I think, she was -- she was with us. And she had blonde hair. She had blonde hair and a little packsack, and she hitchhiked up to us.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She took [indiscernible].
Diane Lilley: Or she took the bus? Okay, well, she took the bus, and she came to us, and she came right to Mom's, and I just cried. I held her. Mom couldn't believe it. Mom -- all Mom did was just cried and cried and said, thank you, thank you, you're bringing all my kids home to me. She said, they're coming home, then she held onto both of us, and I was holding onto Tina. And I was calling her Tina because that's all I knew, and when I would call her Tina she wouldn't respond because -- and then I'd finally say, Cindy, and then she'd respond right away. And then I said, you know, I said, when you were taken from us, I said, your name -- your real name is Tina Selena Washpan. I said, your name Selena come from our grandma, my Grandma Selena. I told her about our past, our history and what happened, and Mom talked to her.

And then she sort of -- like, you know, she hung around. She stayed for awhile in Carmacks with us, and then she had met a local guy in Carmacks and she started going out with him. She started dating him, and they dated each other I think for, what, a couple of years, or a year, or six months or something. And so he got a job in Fort Nelson, and she said, I'm gonna move with him. And he was very abusive, really abusive, controlling, abusive, jealous, all that, but she wasn't telling us that. She was covering up, and she said, I'm going -- we're moving, he's got a job in Fort Nelson Mine, I'm moving down with him. So they left, and we never saw her.
And then when she was down there -- and she came back, and then finally she spilled the beans that how abusive and how he was treating her, and so she stayed for awhile again and she got into drinking and -- you know, and I guess, you know, like myself I always felt like, you know, I didn't belong. I always -- even today, I still have a sense of not belonging to any place, to anyone because I was always handed around, and I guess she's been feeling that way and to her because she was brought up in Regina, her adopted mother died, and when I was talking to her at that time I asked her, I said -- you know, because she looked so good, and I thought she had a really good life, but when she had turned 11 or 12 her adopted father sent her adopted siblings away and the mother was working, and she would work nightshift, and he would send her sisters and brothers away, his biological, and then he molested her, he raped her. And then it started then, and so this went on for awhile, and he would threaten her, and he would give her money and buy her stuff. And she would -- every time her mother would go he would -- she would lock her door, and he would put money -- he would unlock the door, molest her, and then he would give her money to keep her quiet, and he'd tell her if you ever told anyone I would kill you, I'm gonna kill you and I'm gonna tell your sisters and brothers that you ran away and we don't know what happened to you, you vanished. So she kept it quiet. She never said nothing, even to her adopted mother. And finally she broke down and she brought it out. She couldn't take it anymore. It finally overwhelmed her, she said, and she finally told her adopted mother.

And then that caused their marriage breakdown. So the mother took all the kids and her and left and divorced the father. And I don't know if he's ever, ever been charged or anything like that. I don't know what -- she never mentioned none of that. And then her mother was diagnosed with cancer, and she passed on, and this is what she said, she said, this is why I knew I had family, but my mother told me to go back to your family and find them in the
Yukon, that's where you belong, from Carmacks. Her mother did tell her that, and then her mother passed on.

So she couldn't go back to her adopted dad, and her brothers and sisters, they all disowned her. All -- everybody disowned her because of the marriage breakup and everything, and they said, it was your fault, your fault that, you know, all this happened. And so she -- that's how she found us. She phoned and she found us.

I don't know how, for the life of me, she got a hold of my mother's phone, her number, but that's when she -- we first got the first call from her, then she found her way.

And then after that, she came back to us when she left her husband or her boyfriend because of abuse. Then he came back up and then they went back down. And I told her, I said, phone, phone every week where you're at, phone us, you know, every week we want your call. And I guess she went down the highway to escape her deal -- her abusive relationship with this guy, so instead of coming home to us, she was hitchhiking south again back to Saskatchewan, and on the way there she never made it. The phone calls stopped, and then I started getting worried because two weeks came and went, there was nothing. And Mom was getting really worried, and she said -- she said, I wonder where Tina is at, I wonder how she's doing, how come she didn't phone? And then she started telling me, phone the cops, phone the RCMPs there in Fort St. John (sic) and find out, see if they can go and check on her, look for her.

So I phoned the RCMPs there, and they said because of her lifestyle, which is -- she was taught to survive, and the only way of her survival was hooking, and she was, you know, hooking and stealing and things like that to survive, and that was -- she was taught that by her adopted dad, that was a way to make money to sell her body.

And she never phoned, she never phoned, so the cops in Fort Nelson said because of her lifestyle -- so they went up and they talked to her boyfriend, I guess, at the mine, and I guess he knew -- she told him -- she trusted him and
she told him everything about her upbringing and
everything, and then the guy told the RCMPs, oh,
well, she's probably out selling her body, she's
probably out hooking, and that was what he said.
So the cops phoned us back and they said, well,
we had -- his name is Stuart -- and we had
contact Stuart to find out about her, and this is
what he told us, so they told me the exact words.
I said, no, no, no, I said, there's something
wrong, I said, there's something wrong. And then
they said, no -- I said, you guys gotta, you
know, look for her, put out a search warrant or
something, she's a missing person, I know
something happened, and I said, because she was
supposed to phone us.

And then when they got back to us it was
already pretty well a month when the RCMP got
back to us. They had gone up to the mine to talk
to Stuart, and that's all his response was. And
so they phoned us about -- it was a month, and
then that's what he told me, he said, and because
of her lifestyle, you know, being a streetwalker,
being a hooker, you know, she could be any place,
she could be in Vancouver, she could be in any
cities. And I said, no. I said, you know, I
told her to phone my mom, and I told her to phone
wherever she's at every week, and I said, well,
can you like, you know, at least put out a
missing persons report or something on her, and
he said -- he said, no, we can't do that yet,
maybe give her another week or two and see if she
contacts you, and I said, okay.

So I told Mom, and we sat, and sat, and
waited. Mom didn't wanna go -- Mom didn't wanna
go away from the phone. She sat there, and I
kept checking on her every day, and I was working
at that time, too, for the government. She kept
-- we kept checking on her -- or I kept checking
on my mother, and there was nothing. I would
ask, did Tina phone yet, did Tina phone? And she
said, no -- she said, no, phone the cops again,
it's been two weeks, phone them and tell them,
put up -- you know, look for her, and I said,okay.

So I phoned the RCMPs back and they said,
oh, okay, then, it's been like pretty well now
then a month and a half, and then they said -- I
said, our two weeks is up and there wasn't one phone call for my mother, there wasn't one phone call from her, something happened, something I know is wrong. I said, you guys gotta put up a missing persons report for her, look for her, let every city and RCMPs in all the cities know, like, you know, we need help to find her, something's happening. And then we never heard back. We never got any response, nothing from the RCMPs.

And then she was missing for about -- was it six -- six months. There was nothing for six months, and nothing, no calls back from any RCMPs, no updates on anything. And then I guess I get this call -- my mother and I get this call six months later from the RCMPs in -- it was then in Dawson Creek, and they said -- they asked for my mother, and I said, why are you wanting to talk to my mother for? And they said, well, we're really -- we have to tell you then right now, they said, we found -- we found remains and it's -- we don't know, we're sending it out for autopsy to see if we could identify this body, and we don't know if it's your sister's. So -- and so they sent her remains out, I guess, for autopsy. Then I handed the phone to my mom and I was in shock, and the first thing I said, I looked up -- I held my mom and I looked at her and I looked up. It was like I was in shock. Ice cold water went through my body like somebody threw ice bucket on me. And they told my mom about -- they told my mom what they told me, and they said, we can't really -- we can't -- the body is so -- so unrecognizable because we found the remains in a shallow grave, and in a field in a part which is called --

JUDITH KUSTER: Kiskatinaw.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You better say it for her.
JUDITH KUSTER: Kiskatinaw, just outside of Dawson Creek off the old Alaska Highway on the edge of a farm.
DIANE LILLEY: And when the RCMPs told me and my mother that they had found the body in that area, but the remains were so unrecognizable that it was already -- like she was decomposing really badly. And how they found her was that the lady who owns the farm, her and her dog, she said they
decided to go for a walk, and I don't know, she said -- I had met her in court, and she said to me, when we found the remains, she said, for some reason I had a strong will and strong feeling to walk to that corner, and then my dog went running over and started barking like crazy and scratching. And then she called her dog. She thought her dog was, you know, scratching for like, you know -- you know, what do you call them?

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Big rodents?

DIANE LILLEY: Groundhogs or rodents, and that's what she thought. So she called her dog, and her dog didn't come, and he kept standing there and barking, she said. And then she went over to see, and then she saw he dug up partial part of her arm. She scratched it up and he was barking and barking. And then there she went, she went running all the way with her dog back. She threw her coat down there so she knew the spot. And this is what she said, she said she phoned the RCMPs, and then they came, I guess, and the forensic and everybody came, the M Division, they all came I guess and they didn't really tell me about when -- you know, they never talked about when they first found the remains and -- you know, and all they talked after that was when they -- they did their thing there, their investigations and forensic investigations and everything, and they talked to the lady. She did her statement.

And then when they could not identify her, they didn't know who she was, and they had -- the city or the town of Dawson Creek, they bought her a casket and because she was unidentifiable that they buried her remains in Prince George under "Jane Doe". And just by luck when this happened -- just by luck that we were phoning with the RCMP saying, you know, is there any way, like, -- you know, I know for a fact they can identify through dental and fingerprinting, and I told the RCMPs, and by then it was transferred to Dawson Creek, the case, and -- excuse me -- and when they said we had buried the remains in Prince George under "Jane Doe", I said, well, you know what, I said, my sister is still never found, my sister still never contact us, I know -- I am
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

sure that might be her. I said, I know -- is
there any possibility that we can find out, and
they said, well, we'll have to exhume the body
and do a DNA and also -- and thank you, thank you
for, you know, whoever invented the computer
fingerprinting, because when they exhumed her
they did DNA, and then also the United States
sent the computer over -- the fingerprinting, the
computer fingerprinting over, and thankfully they
looked at her fingers really good and there was
one finger, one finger that wasn't decomposed.
It still had prints, and so they said, well,
we're going to try this, and this is the very
first time it's ever, ever been introduced in
Canada. And so they did that with her, and they
ran that through the computer for ID and, yes, it
turned up to be my sister. It matched my sister,
Tina.

Then they phoned us and they told us, and
then because she was legally adopted to the Burk
Family, the investigators phoned, and M Division,
they phoned her adopted dad, who was still alive,
and they said, we have found your adopted
daughter's remains, and we would like to know,
you know, if you're gonna -- if you want her
remains back home with you so that you can bury
her, give her a proper burial. And what he told
the investigator that talked to him, he just
said, I don't give a fuck what happens to her, I
never gave a fuck, she ruined my family, she
wrecked my life, and I don't give a fuck what you
do with her body, far as I'm concerned you can
throw her in the dump pile, don't ever fuckin'
phone me again, and he hung up, slammed the phone
down. So they found out that she was our
biological -- my biological sister, so they
phoned my mother and I and my cousin, Darlene, in
Carmacks, and then we said, yes, bring her home,
bring her home where she belonged.

And then comes the financial problem because
when -- they put her back in the casket, but to
bring her home we had to fly her on the plane,
and we had to get a special sealed casket, a
steel one made up because she was already, like,
really decomposed, and they were putting her
under in the cargo on the plane. And with that
our family -- and thank you, you know, for -- my
family for this, and we had to get money together
and pay for a regular person that's travelling on
the plane, we had to pay for that, and then plus
cargo, the space and the weight of her casket,
and it was over -- was it over 12,000, wasn't it,
to transfer her back here from -- from -- I can't
remember the amount, but I know it was quite
high. And the First Nation of Little Salmon,
they helped us and they supported us financially,
and we had to get money together to bring her
home. And we did it. As a family, we did it, we
brought her home.

And then we had a traditional burial for
her, and then we put a spirit house on her. And
then I had to research her date of birth, and
then from the time her date of birth -- we didn't
know -- nobody knew the exact date she died, but
what we put on there was when she was found,
right. That's the date, we marked it her death.

But, you know, when we were taken away we
were told we were going to a safer place, and my
family were all split up. I never ever knew my
family, and it really broke my mother's heart.
She was so devastated when we buried her, and
then I spent all that time with my mother, and my
mother, she had -- she had -- she had a lot of
hurt, mixed emotion. She was angry, and she was
hurt. It was all different jumping all over, her
dimensions.

And then my mom, she had quit drinking for a
long time, and then she started drinking. She
started drinking -- after all this, she started
drinking, and she drank for awhile. And then in
'94 she was diagnosed with cancer, and on her
deathbed she told my aunties, my cousin and I to
keep phoning, keep phoning the cops, keep phoning
every week, keep phoning, and that's what her and
I did after we buried my sister. We kept
phoning, we kept phoning the investigators, and
then we got a contact. We found out the lead
investigator was -- his name is Bob Blahun, and
we started talking and communicating with him on
the phone, and we told him, any little thing, any
little -- any leads, anything different, please
phone us and let us know, but -- and he kept
phoning us, kept phoning us, and then when my
mother got sick and passed on in '94, she told
us, don't give up, keep phoning, keep at it, keep
on them 'til they find her killer, and she had
passed on not knowing if they ever found the
killer.

And then from the time her remains were
found there was quite a span, and then I -- I'd
started drinking heavily after my marriage had
broken up. My kids were with their dad, and he
kidnapped them away from me, and all this was
falling down, so I started drinking real heavy,
and that's all I did for a long time was drank,
so I lost contact of everything because there was
no more calls, no more leads or anything, and I
thought like, you know, to myself I said, they
don't care, they don't give a shit, nobody cares.
You know, I said, my sister, you know, she's
gone, I just got to know her for a little time.
Nobody cares, I said, so what the hell's -- why
am I -- you know, why am I here, what's going on,
why am I -- you know, why am I here, why am I
going through all this stuff, what's happening
with my family? And I was drinking. I started
drinking real heavy. Every day I would get up.
My day would start 5:00 in the morning with a
bottle in front of me. It would end, I don't
remember because most times I would be so, so, so
drunk that I would be in the blank stage.

And then in the process of all this I
started getting into trouble with alcohol. I
started again fighting, and I got into trouble
with all this. And I met my -- I met a guy in
Carmacks, and we started dating in '95, and we
lived together, and even then he was working but
he was giving me money because I would drink
every day. And he would work, and I would meet
him at his job site. He would give me money, and
first place I would go is open up the bar, and I
would stay drunk when he would come home. He
would be -- you know, I wouldn't cook or
anything. I wouldn't do none of that. I would
be just down in the bottle. I would be drinking.
I would be drunk most times when he come back,
and sometimes I wonder, you know, to myself how
he ever put up with me in those times, eh, but,
you know -- and he -- we were together for about
20 years, eh. We were together from '95. And
then all of a sudden in -- what year was that
when I was working for Kwanlin Dun when they phoned me? What year was that, 2000?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [indiscernible].

DIANE LILLEY: Hey?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 2006.

DIANE LILLEY: Okay. Him and I, we moved from Carmacks. We moved to Whitehorse. And I sobered up. I started in my healing journey then, and I got a job with Kwanlin Dun as custodian for their daycare. And this was like, you know, I -- it would stick on my mind, but I would put it on the back shelf, you know, about my sister, Tina. And I went to work one evening in 2006 and the phone was ringing, and ringing, and ringing. All that time, though, I must say in between, Bob Blahun was in contact with my Auntie Vivian and my cousin Darlene, who now are both passed on, but he kept in contact with them because at that time I was a full-blown alcoholic, and I was also into drugs and nothing mattered to me, nothing. I didn't care about anything anymore. I'd given up.

And so when I met Mike, we moved -- from Carmacks we moved to Whitehorse, and I started working and then I started sobering up, and I got a job. And then 20 years later -- it took 20 years for them to find the killer.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].

DIANE LILLEY: No, 20, because by the time they contacted me. I know. I was at work, and my thoughts were, you know, those RCMPs investigators, they don't care. They don't give a shit because of my sister's lifestyle. You know, my thoughts were -- when I had talked to the RCMPs in Fort Nelson, I thought all of them were the same. That's what I categorized. So when I started drinking I said to myself, I kept telling myself they don't give a shit, they're not even looking, they're not even doing their investigation, they're not doing their job. And then finally my auntie and my cousin, they started talking to me, and my cousin Darlene, who she was a counsellor, alcoholic/drug counsellor, and I started doing work with her and she started -- then we became close and we started -- like, I started my sobriety. I started getting out of drugs and everything, and
then I got a job at the -- and then I get this phone call. One evening, the phone kept ringing and ringing. And finally I said, ah, I said I was frustrated because I wanted to get my job -- like, you know, I wanted to finish before midnight. But anyways, I pick up the phone 'cause I thought it was my daughter, or my son, or one of my family, and here they said, "Hi, may I speak with Diane Lilley? I'm looking for Diane Lilley." And I said, "Speaking." And he said -- this guy said, "It's the M Division from Vancouver." And I said, "What, where?" And he said, "It's the M Division." He told me his name, but I forgot his name, and he said, "We found you now," he said, "We were wondering if we could fly up tomorrow and meet with you and your family," and my thoughts right away, my sister, they found the killer. And Mike was right beside me, and I turned around and I looked at him and I said, "That was the M Division," and I just started crying. I said, "They found the killer. They found someone. I know it. That's why they wanna meet."

And then I phoned my daughter and then she got in contact with -- and I phoned the rest of my family, and I said, "The M Division phoned me just not very long ago and they want to meet with us tomorrow. They're gonna fly up. They wanna meet with us with the RCMPs. They're gonna bring them up to us and they're gonna meet with us." I said, "I know they've found the killer," remember? And I was crying, and I said, they found the killer, they found someone, I know it, for my sister. That's the only reason why they would come. I said, oh -- I looked up. I said, please, I said, let them -- let them have whoever done this, that person has to pay for taking my sister's life.

And they flew up the next day, and sure enough they said, yeah, we charged somebody. And then he told -- they told -- like, they sat with our family, eh, and talked with us for that day. And then they flew back down to -- down to B.C. And then I kept in contact with them again, and by then Bob Blahun had retired.

And then after all this, we started going through -- they said the prelim was going to be
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

held in Fort St. John, the preliminary hearing
was gonna be held in Fort St. John on this date
because I guess that man was from Fort St. John.
He was residing in Fort St. John, so the prelim
went there. So the First Nations -- and at that
time I had some money, so my cousin and I, we
went down, we drove down, my cousin Darlene, her
son Shawn and myself, and my partner then was
Mike. We drove down for the prelim.

And then that's where -- I never met Bob or
any of the investigators. I just talked with the
courts, you know, the lawyers and the
prosecutors, and I had a lot of questions. I had
a lot of questions for -- you know, for all this,
you know. I wanted to know first off who was
this guy, or is it a guy or a girl, or who, you
know. And they said it was a man, and they told
me his name was Paul Deleno Felker. That was his
name, Paul Deleno Felker. And it had been, like,20-year span, and then when they picked him up
and actually charged him they -- he was already
an elder. He was older.

And so we went down for the prelim, and we
came back -- excuse me -- and then we came back.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
DIANE LILLEY: We came back -- we came back and we
went up, Darlene and I, we walked up to Tina's --
to Tina's grave and we told her, we said, we
found -- they found the killer, they found the
guy who did this to you, and I said to her, he's
gonna pay for it, he's gonna pay for what he's
done.

And then I don't know how long, I can't
remember what the span was before the next case
for her court for this guy. And then it got
moved from there I think it was to Dawson Creek
or --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
DIANE LILLEY: Hm?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
DIANE LILLEY: No. It got moved from Fort St. John to
Dawson Creek next because when they moved him was
because he was getting death threats in prison,
in jail, and plus because this man was -- he was
I guess when they were investigating into him, he
was sitting on a school board committee in Fort
St. John. He was volunteering at all the
shelters, the food banks. He was doing all this 
things for those "X" amount of years. And 
apparently when we went to Dawson Creek for the 
second -- for the beginning of the court, he 
didn't -- he wasn't there. His lawyer spoke, so 
we never got to see him, and I never ever got to 
see him until the actual trial. I don't know who 
he -- what he was or who he looked like, but we 
went to that -- again we were having problems 
again, and thank you again to my First Nations 
and family that we pooled the money together, and 
then we went down to Dawson Creek next. And I 
questioned the prosecutor. I said, why is it -- 
like, why are they moving him? And this is what 
they told me, he's been getting death threats in 
jail. And then there was a protest, I guess, 
outside when they had him in Fort St. John 
because I guess he was an upstanding guy there, 
and a lot of family from schools -- because he 
was sitting on the committee board and 
everything, and they were shocked. They said 
that there was a protest going on outside, so 
they had to take him out of there and then fly 
him out for his -- for his safety. And my 
thoughts were like, you know, why are you guys 
protecting this guy, he took my sister's life, 
she will never come back, I will never ever see 
er again, why are you guys protecting him? And 
so anyways, I let it go, and we never saw him 
again.

And in that time for the trial, the trial -- 
they moved him again. This time to Prince 
George, Prince George, B.C., and the trial was 
there. It was set. The trial was set. And so 
in that time I was not working, had no money. My 
cousin was financially strapped, too. And so I 
had a truck that -- I sold my truck. I sold a 
lot of my things, not only my vehicle, just so I 
can make it down for my sister's trial. And then 
we had the First Nations, they helped us. They 
supported us. Carmacks/Little Salmon First 
Nations supported us. And then we were getting, 
you know, donations when we were down -- we made 
it to Prince George -- or -- yeah, Prince George, 
and then we got a hotel room, and because it 
happened on the Highway of Tears her life was 
taken and stolen from us, that there was -- the
medians found out which room we were in hotel, so
they kept phoning, kept phoning, and so the hotel
owners, the hotel managers, they said, you know
what, they said, I think you guys have to move
your family because it's affecting the other --
the other customers, they're not knowing what
happened, they're not knowing what's going on, so
we had to move. We moved, and we got a motel,
but it was, like, a secured off one, and so we
stayed in there.

And the trial started and, you know, I --
and then my cousin, Joy, and where she was
working at that time -- where were you working
when you made that T-shirt for me?

JOY O'BRIEN: At Skookum Jim's.

DIANE LILLEY: At that time she was working at Skookum
Jim's, and they got a picture of Tina, and they
made a shirt for me. It had her picture in the
front here, and on top of -- on top of the top it
says, "Justice for," and her birth name, "Tina
Selena Washpan." On one side it had eagle
feathers hanging down, and on the other side it
had a wolf, and I used it right from the day --
the beginning, the first day of the trial, and I
stood right behind this guy, and all the time I
stood up, I held her picture, I held -- I pulled
my shirt straight so he could see her picture.
And when I saw him walk in that door from the
jail, I looked at him, and he looked right at me,
and I looked at him and I just pulled this -- my
shirt down -- you know, the picture, I held it
out so he can see her. And every day I sat
behind him. Every day I sat there at the same
spot. And every day we came into court we have
to be searched for guns or any weapons. And they
had him in a protected glass, sealed off
protected glass, and they also had guards around
him, RCMPs with -- and they were watching
everything we did. When I wanted to go bathroom,
I got up and I walked out, and they would come to
me and follow me. And every time we went to the
bathroom and back in we would be searched for
weapons for this guy.

And they showed everything. It was a big
screen on the wall, and they showed -- her body
was so unrecognizable. I broke down and I cried
when I looked at these pictures they were showing
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

in the courthouse. And all the time I was
watching this guy, too, to see if I see anything,
any reaction, any emotions or anything, and this
guy just sat there. He looked at her. And then
when they were talking to him, they would never
ever -- I noticed this, too, and I caught it, and
in the prelim they brought -- they used her name.
In the hearing in Dawson Creek, they said her
name right from -- right, like, in the beginning,
but it started there that they kept referring to
her as "this hooker", "that prostitute", "this
hooker". And then when we went to the trial it
continued, and all during the trial I was sitting
there listening to all of them, the prosecutors,
the lawyers, the Crown prosecutor, the lawyers,
the defence, all of them, and including him when
they questioned him, they would never ever use
her name, call her by a name. They would always
refer to her as "this hooker", "that prostitute".
I was so upset. It really, really hurt me. I
was so upset.

And finally, I got up and I put my hands in
the air, and my cousin Darlene was sitting right
beside me, and she grabbed me, and she -- I
leaned down like this, and I wanted to hear what
she was telling me. She said, you know, she
said, this is a trial, it's in Supreme Court,
it's a trial, Diane, you should sit down, you're
interrupting the court, and that -- and that
you're gonna be charged for disruptive of court.
And I looked at her, and I went like this to her,
like, you know, pulled myself away, and I said, I
don't care, she's my sister, they need to hear
this. So I stood there again, and the judge, he
looked over at me and he said, we'll take a few
minutes there, and he said, you got your hands
up, I notice. He said, may I ask who you are?
And I stood up and I said, yes. I said, Tina,
who you guys are referring to her as "this
hooker", "that prostitute", "this slut", "that
whore", you never ever once used her name, she
does have a name. I am her sister, I said, and
doesn't matter if you can charge me, do whatever
you want with me, but I would ask you to please
have respect, her cousin's here, my cousin, we're
here, we're family, she is loved regardless of
what she did for a living, that was her survival
mechanism, those safe homes they put us in taught her that, I said, and could you please refer her -- she is a human, she is loved, could you please refer to Tina Selena Washpan, that's her name. I said, I would -- you know, I would be -- it'd be more respectful for me and my family because hearing you call her and putting her down, she did not ask to be a hooker, she did not ask for all her mishaps in her life, Your Honour, and I'm very sorry I interrupted your court case, but I had to say this because I love her, my cousin here loves her, in the short span of time we had her with us at home she is a beautiful woman, she is loved, so please have respect for us. I said, that's all I have to say, and I sat back down, and I went, "Continue," you know.

And they did, they did refer to her as Tina after, you know, because for me that was so disrespectful, that was inhuman, you know what I mean, inhuman, inhumane to say stuff like that, to call -- you know, every human, especially women, they have to have respect. They have to be respected regardless of who they are, what they done. For me, it's a survival mechanism that they learned. That's the only way they knew and they were taught to survive. And lots of, lots of like, you know, discrimination, discrimination's in the court system, lots of disrespect. But that's what I did, I finally got my courage up to say that to them.

And then the guy got life in prison without parole. And then we'd been down there -- it lasted a month. The trial lasted a month. And we had supports from the Friendship Centre in Prince George. They came, and there was a lot of donations because we were financially strapped. We were down to our last few bucks, and we were trying to, you know, eat, you know, as little as possible, spend less money on food every day near the ending because we only had enough money to get home, which is from Prince George to Carmacks. And I thank -- you know, from the bottom of my heart I thank the Prince George Friendship Centre. They sent the resources over to support us. They were there in the courthouse with us.

And even then I never met Bob Blahun. Then
I've heard of him. He was the lead investigator that kept my sister's case going, and Bob Blahun was the one that kept her case going. And only once, I think, I had actually talked to him on the phone, and I'd asked him, I said, you know, I'm really, really grateful from the bottom of my heart, I owe you lots, my family owes you a whole bunch because, number one, you kept the investigation going, and then he had respect for her. And him and I started talking on the phone, and then I said, one question, Bob, and he said, yes? I said, do you mind if I call you Bob? And he said, yes? And I said, tell me something, why did you keep her case going? Even when he retired he told the new investigators, keep it going, keep it going 'til you find the killer, keep it open, keep it active, I want you -- the family really needs this closure, he said. And so when I had asked him, I said, why did you -- you know, did you keep it going even in -- you know, even after you retired you kept on the new investigators to keep it going. I said, could you -- could you tell me why you were, you know, so taken by my sister, like, to keep -- to keep the case strongly going and strongly active, that was my question to him, and he said to me, well, you know what, Diane, he said, I feel for your mother, I talked to your mother, your auntie and your cousin, and I actually never really talked to you, I mostly kept in contact with your mother, and he said, but the reason why is because I have a daughter your sister's age, and I put myself -- being an RCMP and an investigator, I put myself in your family, especially your mother, her shoes, to have a child that was taken, and I was blown away by that answer. Like, I was shocked and I said, well, you know what, Bob, I have to meet you one day, I would like to meet you, I would like to see you, meet you and thank you personally for doing this for my family because after everything was done, the trial, everything, I told him, I said, I really want to meet you. I said, I am really, really grateful from the bottom of my heart, Bob, I owe you anything, everything, I owe you, you bring closure. I said, my mother is not here, but she's with my sister, my sister.
probably told her everything. I said, but, you
know, Bob, I said, thank you, thank you from the
bottom of my heart for keeping it active and I
wanna meet you one day, Bob. I said, that would
be, you know, completion for me because you bring
closure and peace. Now we can let her go to rest
in peace now.

And after all that, it sort of quieted down
there for awhile there, and then my sister -- my
cousin, was it three years ago, she passed on?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].

DIANE LILLEY: Yeah, three years ago she passed on,
and then she stood right by my side after
everything. We buried my sister, and the trial
was over, and I started drinking again. Then she
stood by me and she helped me. She helped me and
then my healing journey began. I started getting
counselling. I started getting help, and I never
ever heard of -- well, to me I was -- I was told
-- suggested to go see a psychiatrist or a
psychologist, and I leaned over -- this person
that told me this was actually a friend of mine,
and he said -- he looked at me and he said, do
you ever talk to a psychologist or psychiatrist,
and I leaned over and I looked at him and I said,
I'm not crazy, that's only for crazy people, and
I'm not crazy. And he looked at me, he said, no,
Diane, he said, I know you're getting -- I said,
I'm getting counselling right now.
I put myself in treatment and I did a lot of
that stuff, and I was taking every kind of
workshop possible to help me heal, and then when
I ran into him I guess it was meant to be. And
then he said, no, he said, you're not crazy, you
don't have to be crazy to go see a psychologist.
He said, do you know what's wrong, he said, I'm
dealing with the same thing, it stems out from
your upbringing, your childhood up, what happened
to you in your past, everything that happened to
you, you carrying it with you, but us as human
beings we block out all our traumas, we block it
out. We have, he said, a self -- a self-
protection so that we don't actually lose and go
crazy, fall off the deep end in our minds. He
said, we have it in us to do that and block it
out, and put it in the back to never deal with
it. But now, he said, I think for my suggestion
to you is that, you know, you've gone through
counselling, I know you're taking ongoing
counselling, you went into treatment, you're
doing programs and everything, but you know what,
he said, he said to me, I really think you
should, you know, I did that, I was the exact
same way as you, Diane, I was feeling and dealing
with whatever you're dealing with, what you're
going through, always in trouble with the law,
always in trouble drinking, drugs, you know, not
caring. And he said, and then I went to a
psychologist and it helped me.

So I finally got brave. I said, well, I'll
think about it then. And he said, it doesn't
mean you're crazy. He said, you have all this
you're carrying all your life, everything that
happened to you, it happens, he said, and it's
all for a purpose, he told me.

And so I did, I started going. I made an
appointment with a -- I looked in the book and I
got referred to Bill Stewart. So I started
working with Bill Stewart, and we did -- I think
I went to see him for about three years, three
years every two weeks. And I started -- all this
started coming out in me, and then I realized
that, you know, what my friend told me was right,
you know.

And yet I still -- like, when I'm talking
now I still carry -- I still feel all that pain,
all that hurt. For the rest of my life I will be
-- it will be with me, but I am strong enough now
that I don't have to medicate myself with alcohol
or drugs anymore. I haven't drank now for 17
years, and I've been clean of actually needle --
in October will be 29 years for me.

And I still have to sometimes -- you know, I
still don't have the up and Adams in the
mornings. Lots of times I would have to make
myself do things. I'd have to push me, force
myself to do it just -- sometimes just to wake
up. And sometimes I won't even do that. I turn
on my TV today and shut it off. I leave it on
for noise just so that I wouldn't -- and then
that would help me sleep nighttime. I would
have to do that 'til this day.

I was so traumatized by my sexual abuse and
my physical abuse in residential school that when
I was a teenager I used to always run around with real baggy clothes so nobody would look at me, nobody would ever touch me again, you know. And I carried the shame, the guilt, all these hurt, everything for something I didn't do. I carried all that. And even today, I get angry when I hear about kids being abused. It just triggers me. And also for sexual abuse, because I carried that and kept it for a long time, and it was an ongoing thing in residential school, and then I started running away from there. That's the reason why I started running and taking my younger sisters. And I would ask them, too, Vivian and Hillary, if anybody would go into their room. Because they were in a separate area from me, I would ask them did anybody bother you, did anybody touch you where they're not supposed to, I told them. And they were like, no. I said, did anybody come and get you in the middle of the night and take you away from your bed or anything and from your dorm, and they would say, no. I said, don't lie to me, please. I said, tell me, tell me. I said, let me know if anybody does that. And then I said, we're gonna run away, and I started running, and -- but I was scared. I never ever told anyone anything of it, and even today I try to block it out, but it's still -- it sneaks up on me all the time.

So I do -- when I came back from the States and met my family, I went to the land -- I went -- I met my grandma and grandpa. I went to stay with them on the trap line, and started learning my tradition. I started learning how to set snares. My grandma would speak to me in our language, and I couldn't understand. I never ever understood a word she would say. And my grandpa, because he spoke English and understood it and spoke her language, he was translator for me. I would always say, Grandpa, don't go away from grandma and I so that I know what she's saying, you know.

It was a big loss to myself and my family. I still have today two sisters that are in the States. I had three. And my sister next to me, which was Vivian, I had left them there when I came back, and I told them when I left that when I get older, I'm gonna come back, I'm gonna get
you, I'm gonna bring you home. I told them that.
I said, that is my promise, and it never turned
out that way.

My sister, I have another one in Georgia.
She actually found us, too, Janelle. She
contacted us through my sisters in St. Paul.
That's how they found each other. And then my
sister, Vivian, knew -- she was, I guess, old
enough to know that -- where we're from, and she
told Janelle and somehow Janelle tracked us down,
eh, and I got to meet all my siblings and I'm
really thankful for that. Janelle did come up,
but only for a short time just to visit and meet
with us, but I didn't think she ever met mom.
No, my mother had passed on by then when she came
up. She never ever met my mother, but she did --
we told her a lot about Mom.
And my sister, Vivian and Hillary, are still
-- Hillary is still alive, but my sister, Vivian,
she got into drugs. She was -- she became a
hooker, a streetwalker and she was homeless, an
alcoholic. Her and I, though, I gave her my
phone number and she kept in contact with me, and
we were all going through the residential
lawsuit?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mm-hm.

DIANE LILLEY: Lawsuit. And I said -- my two sisters
in the States, too, they were with me. They were
with me in Yukon Hall, and so I said to my
lawyer, can they do this, too, I want them
because they were with me, and she said, yeah,
sure, so I told them and then they did it. And
then finally, you know, they were flown back and
forth from United States to Canada, but they
wouldn't come to the Yukon. The lawyers would
fly to Vancouver and meet them. They wouldn't
meet them here. They would pay for their way
from the States to Vancouver, and that's as far
as they would -- they would go, and then back
after their testimony.

And then last year they received their
money, and my sister, Vivian, who was closest to
me, she phoned me and she said, "Sister," she
said -- she said, "Ah," and she was crying, she
said, "I got my money. I got my money, girl."
She always calls me, girl, eh, American accent
street words, street talk. She says to me,
"Well, girl, I'm gonna be up there with you," she told me, eh. "I'm gonna come up and I'm gonna move back to you. I'm gonna move back home to Canada, to Carmacks, to the Yukon wherever you're at. I'm gonna come home to you. I got this money now, but --" she said, "but I'm gonna -- I put my name so I can go into rehab," and I said, "Right on, I'm looking forward to this. I'm looking forward to this. I'm so excited." I was so happy, so excited because she -- July is my birthday, July month is my birthday. And this was near the end of June, and she was doing her program down there, and she phoned me from the treatment or the rehab centre, and that's when she said, I'm in treatment, I'm going to come home, I'm gonna come back as soon as I'm done this, I want to be straight without drugs when I come home to you and see you because I know you don't drink, you don't do drugs or anything anymore, but I wanna come home to you. I said, ah, I'm so excited, I'm looking forward to -- that's the best birthday present ever, I said. If you come back to me, if you come home that'll be -- make my birthday the best and the greatest this year, I told her. And then after she said, well, I only got a short time I'm allowed to talk, so I won't talk to you for awhile, I'll phone you, I'll phone you, okay, when I'm ready. And I said, okay, make sure you phone me 'cause I wanna go right to the airport and just swing you around. I don't care how big you are, I wanna grab you and swing you around and kiss you all over, I said, on your forehead, everywhere. And she never made it home. She phoned me. I don't know, she was really distraught. She phoned me again. She phoned me again from the rehab centre and she was really crying. She was really upset, and she said to me, "Sister, please," she said, "I wanna come home, please." She said, "I don't want to die here alone. I don't wanna die here. I wanna come home." And I said, "Well, just leave there. You got your money, get on a plane tomorrow. Get on that plane. Book yourself here, get here as soon as you can." I said, "I want you to come home." And she was crying and crying, and she said that -- she said, "I don't want to die here, Sister."
She said, "Please," she said, "I wanna come home." And I said, "Well, get on that plane. Nevermind your rehab, nevermind everything, I just want you home, too. I want you to come home. I really miss you. I love you. I miss you." I said, "I wanna see you." I said, "Just nevermind all that, come here and then I'll help you. I'll be with you." I said, "I'll always be by your side, anything you need, support, anything, with alcohol." "But I'm -- I have a drinking problem, I have a drug problem." I said, "I don't care. I don't care what you have. I want you home. Come home, then." And she said, "Well, I wanna come home, but I don't wanna die here, but you know what, Sister, I think I'm gonna stay and finish my program and then I'll come home. I'll be stronger from drugs." I said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Phone me again if anything should happen," but that never happened. Two weeks after she phoned -- that phone call, she passed on in rehab. She died in rehab. I got this call from my daughter and the RCMPs. They told me that she had passed on in rehab. And now she has two beautiful daughters down there, Christine and Sarah, and they're old enough to be on their own but, you know, I've never -- I met them once. She brought them to Canada when they were, like, little girls five years old, and that was the last time I saw them. And when my sister passed on in rehab, she was -- Christina was the only one there with her mother. She was supporting her mother even, you know, on the streets and stuff. And I would be sending her money through, what do you call that?  

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].

DIANE LILLEY: Yeah, Western Union. I would send her money all the time because my sister would phone me and say, "Sister, I would need money. I need money. I'm homeless. I'm sleeping under a bridge. I need money. I gotta eat. I don't have anything." And so I would always send her money unknowing that she was right into drugs and that was where her money was going. And then finally, her daughter, Christine, phoned me and said, "Are you the aunt that's sending my mom money?" And I said, Yes, I am," and I said, "Why?" I said, you know, "How is she doing?
Where is she?" She said, "Well, could you do me a favour, please?" And I said, "What?" And she said, "Don't send my mom any more money because she's using it -- you're supporting her drug habit." And I didn't know at that time that she was right heavy into it, and so I said to Christina, I said, "Yes, I will, then, I will do this, but are you with her? Is anybody with her? Like, where is she, how is she?" And then she told me -- she keeps -- she phones me all the time, eh, and tells me this. So I quit sending her money. But she always loved cheezies, because when she came up she always -- she had cheezies, Smarties and pink popcorn. They don't get that in the United States. It's not allowed there. It's not in the United States. It's only in Canada. So I used to always send her -- she would always ask me -- phone me. Sometimes she would phone me just to say hi. My sister, Vivian, she would phone me just to say hi and tell me she loved me, and just so she could order and I would buy all this for her and then wrap it and carry pack it, and then send it down to her. And then I'd say, when you get this package you phone me right away.

And then she had a boyfriend, and she said, here's my boyfriend, we're eating the cheezies right now, and he's, like, crunch, crunch, crunch on the phone, and I'm talking to him, eh, and he said, how awesome. We're living on cheezies right now, but it's the best snack I ever had, he said. Your sister gave it to me, he said, what you sent her, everything, he said, and we don't get those down here. And I met him, but him, too, I guess I just talked to him for that, like, brief moment, eh. Then I said, well, can you put my sister back on, you know, I want to talk to my sister?

And -- you know, and -- but, you know, when she passed on, when they told me I cried and cried. And then her daughter phoned me, Christina, she got a hold of me and she said, my mom wanted a traditional burial, and because she was living on the streets she had lost all her IDs. She had no credentials. She would call it "credentials". "I'm gonna get my credentials and I'll come see you," she would say. "Okay, you
hurry up and get your credentials," I used to tell her. But she had nothing. When she went into rehab she was just in the process of applying again to get her IDs and everything so she can come home. And that never happened. Two weeks after she passed on in rehab. Her liver failed her. Her heart failed. All her organs shut down.

Then when I talked to her daughter, Christina, she said that she wanted her mom and -- to have -- and this is what her mom said, she wanted a traditional burial, but it never happened because she had no identification, she had no IDs. They put her in -- she was in the morgue, and then I asked her to find out -- phone that morgue and give me -- tell them to phone me, so I was in contact working from here phoning to the States to see if I can bring her back over the border, but that was -- no, I can't, even today. So I told Christina, I said, well, get her cremated, so I got the morgue -- mortuary to phone me and I asked them how much it is to cremate her, or how much they, you know, charge down there in the States for cremation. And everything already -- because she had died they froze everything, all her assets, everything, her bank, all her money she got, and she never even got to spend a cent out of that money. She just put it in a bank.

And so when I talked to Christina I said -- you know, it's been like already like about four days -- I think about four days that she -- they had her in the morgue, and she had passed on four days. And then the fifth day came and the mortuary man, he phoned me and he said, well, you know what, he said, we have to decide what we're gonna do, so now that -- you know, she was also -- like, you know, she's not gonna -- you know, her remains are not gonna stay intact for long, she is decomposing now. And he said, you know, you ever think about -- you know, we talked about cremation, and I said, well, how much does that cost, how much are you gonna charge? And he said, we charge $1500, and I said, well -- I phoned Christine and I told her that. She was -- she didn't want that at all, so I said, well, we're gonna have to do with her body and remains
what we did with Tina. We have to get money
together somehow and fly her back here and then
ger her through the border somehow. And, no,
that never happened. So I phoned Christine and I
said there was too much red tape, there was a lot
of red tape to go through for this process, and
then I found out that for the -- what the
mortuary said for the special casket again, steel
casket, and the casket itself, the original
casket would cost you over $20,000 to bring it
from United States back to Canada and then to
Carmacks. It would cost us over 20,000 just to
bring her back. And I said, well, you know what,
I'll talk to her daughter and then I'll get her
to phone you.

So I phoned Christine and I told her all
this, and she was -- she was crying to me saying,
Auntie, Auntie, I need someone with me, I'm here
by myself. I said, I know. I said, I'm here on
the phone right now, and you can phone me all the
time. I said, I'll always be here for you. I
said, what we're gonna have to do is because
we're financially strapped we're gonna have to
get her cremated, and then that way you go and
you get her, you keep her, and then I'll see in
the meantime -- you're the one there, you're her
child, you have all her rights for everything,
you can access her credentials, she would say,
her IDs, access all that, and then I can bring
her ashes back, and then we can spread her up by
my mother, by my mom's lake and by -- with her.
But right now I'm having a lot of trouble with
the government with the border passing with her,
and to have to sell my truck for my sister's
case, it threw me back financially. And for all
the burial costs and expenses of everything, all
that is -- I'm financially strapped.

So now I'm also in with the Sixties Scoop,
and my sister -- my two remaining sisters down in
the States were inquiring me about that, and they
said they want to know if they can do this, too,
because we were stolen from our family, my
mother. We were never given away. My mother did
not give us up. So I'm in the process of dealing
with the Sixties Scoop now, the class action
lawsuit. I'm in that now. I'm dealing with it
myself. But my two sisters in the States do not
qualify because they're not in Canada. They said to qualify for this they have to remain in Canada. Well, what about all the kids that are adopted out? Like, I've heard, like, there are children in Europe, children given away, taken away from Yukon that are residing in Europe. We were just handed around, given out for adoption like, you know, we're some -- bought on a store -- on a store shelf. And I'm having problems to bring her back now, and I would like her home, her ashes home. And this July it'll be one year, and it was the saddest birthday -- I don't ever celebrate my birthday anymore. I don't celebrate -- I never celebrated my birthday because my sister, Tina, when she was found -- was it in July? It was in July again, just a couple days before my birthday there, too, so I never celebrate my birthday. And then my sister, Vivian, now, same thing, it was in July again, and you know what, myself personally, I think the Government of Canada who freely handed us and stole us should be responsible for bringing my sister back. They should be held accountable for this. They have ruined my life, my sister's life, my whole family and the community I come from, it affected them dearly. They put -- I had and my sisters had and dealt with a lot of traumas.

Until this day I still get nightmares about my sexual abuse. I get -- I'm always on the watch, looking over my shoulder. If anyone raised their hands around me, I'd be like right away just, like, in a defensive mode because of all my abuse. It really traumatized and it robbed me. It robbed me of my childhood. It robbed me of my culture, and to send us away out of our own country, it was a cultural shock to my sisters and I. And that was the very, very first time in our life we ever saw black people, and we were scared. We didn't know. And where we were adopted out in the States -- in the States it's all, you know, black people, and my sisters were really devastated.

We were scared because, you know, we never ever, ever -- I don't know if they ever have -- like, if they're -- you know, the adopted family,
or parents, or adopted parents ever hold them. I
never was ever held. It took me a long time to
have contact with anyone or to allow anyone to
touch me because of my sexual abuse. It not only
happened in residential school at a very young
age by a woman, one of the workers, it also
happened in the group homes by other older --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
DIANE LILLEY: Hm?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Groupies.
DIANE LILLEY: Other older groupies, I would say. You
know, it happened in there, too. But all this I
kept away. I never ever, you know, talk of it.
I blanked it all out. I didn't want to face it,
but I knew one day and -- you know, that I would
have to come out and deal with it and talk with
it, you know.
And, you know, it's -- still every day is a
struggle for me, every day. I like to -- I don't
like to live in the cities. I like to live -- I
spend a lot of time -- I have two little dogs and
I call them Twenty-two and Thirty-Thirty because
they're my protectors in the bush. I spend a lot
of time fishing. I spend a lot of time back with
my traditional life again, and I speak and I
learned a little bit of my language, my First
Nation language, I learned a little bit.
And now I have two kids, a son and my
daughter, and I really, really never ever talked
to them of my past history. I didn't want them
to know what happened to me because when they
were growing up they were young, you know, and I
didn't want them to know of everything that
happened to me, so I protected them. And as they
got older, I started slowly telling them about my
history. And now they're both working, they're
doing really well, and they know about everything
now that they're older. I sat them down and
talked to them about it, and I told them about my
past.
And when my daughter started getting into
drinking with her friends, I packed her up and
removed her and moved her into town to my cousin.
And she was angry. She swore and everything at
me, and I said, "Nope, just go." And I never
said nothing -- at the time I was working for
Forestry and I never packed -- like, my cousin
just came and took her, who is Rick, and he put
her in the truck and he locked her in there and
took her, and she's like, "Mom, what about my
clothes, I have to pack up." I said, "You don't
worry about that. I'll bring it in to you. I'll
come in after work and I'll bring it to you, just
go."

So she stayed in town with him and I -- you
know, I paid rent for everything she needed. And
then she was pregnant. She got pregnant very
young. She was pregnant at 15, and I supported
her through. I gave her three options because
she was very young. Her dad phoned me and said,
"You make her have abortion. She is too young."
And I said, "Ed, she is with me and I will not
force her into anything that she's gonna have to
live with and regret the rest of her life. It's
her choice." So I told her, I said, you know, I
know you're pregnant and, I said, there is -- you
know, you can keep the baby, and by then I
registered her in that teen parenting school
here, which is for teenagers who are pregnant at
a young age but they continue their education,
and they have, like, the daycare and everything
set up there for them, so I applied for that for
her, and she got accepted so she went there and
she had baby, and I was there. I was right
there, and that was so awesome for me to see my
grandchild being born and to hold her. And the
doctor handed me the scissors. He said, "Cut the
umbilical cord." And I looked at him and I said
-- I was scared. I said, "No, I don't wanna hurt
them." "Oh, they won't feel nothing," he said.
"Come on," he said, "You're the grandma," and I
did it. I did it, and it was so awesome. And he
wrapped baby up, and it was a little girl.

And I talked to her before my granddaughter
was born. I said, you have options. There's, I
said, adoption, but if you put her for adoption I
would like her -- like the baby, if it's your
choice, I want you to get the baby adopted into a
family member, which Darlene at that time talked
about it with me, and my cousin was gonna take
the baby. That was our agreement if she was
gonna go up for -- or if the baby was gonna go up
for adoption. And I said, there is adoption,
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

I will help you raise the baby, or you can let me
have the baby and then when you feel you're ready
I can give the baby to you again, but I will not
ever see my grandchild in the welfare system, my
kids or my grandchildren. And so I said, you
think about it, you think about it, you know.
So she thought about it. She went to
school, everything, did her thing. She came back
and she said, Mom, I don't wanna -- I don't wanna
have an abortion because the baby is alive, she's
already got a -- the baby's already got spirit,
it's murder. She said to me, I'm murdering my
baby, no, I'm not gonna have an abortion, I'm
going to have my baby, and you know what, Mom,
I've decided I'm gonna keep her. So she did, and
today my granddaughter is 21 years old. And my
daughter is so wonderful. She did have mishaps.
But my son, he met a girl down -- when he
went down to Alberta. He's an insulator. He
works -- he got a job as an insulator for oil
well companies down there. And he left, and I
didn't want him to go. I even went way ahead
when he's -- when he had married -- met a girl --
a local girl from the Yukon, and then they moved
down because of his job, and he had then a little
girl with her. Her name is Taylor. And my
daughter's daughter, her name is Cheyenne
(phone). And so when he left, I dashed way up
to Carcross Cutoff and I parked there, and I
waited for him. I waved, and I was just crying,
and it was really weird because it brought me
back to leaving -- being taken from my family,
and by then I was strong. You know, I knew -- I
could sense my triggers, and I've learned about
them. And I just stood there and I cried and I
waved. And when he left, he left with one little
girl, and then next thing I know, the following
year I heard that he's had a boy, Tristan. So
they got along there.
They lived there for about seven years -- or
six years. And then his wife started going out
drinking and leaving him home and stuff with the
kids after work, and then so he -- she started
fooling around on him, started having an affair.
He found out, so he left her and he got the kids
-- custody of the kids. And then on one of her
visitations she kidnapped them back here. So now
they are here, but we don't have contact because she doesn't -- she is angry that then he met another woman down in Alberta, then she got pregnant and my grandson, his name is Jacob -- and today because the mother was very dysfunctional, she is not a First Nations, she is Caucasian, and that she -- she is a drug addict. She is into heavy drugs and an alcoholic. And from what my son -- I only -- he only brought her back to meet me when she was eight months pregnant with baby, and my son told me -- like, you know, I said, you know, there's something not right with your wife, I told him, eh. And he said, you know, Mom, he said, she had a hard upbringing, she had a rough life, hard life. And I said, oh, okay, I said, but you know, son, we all had a hard life. And then she had baby in Whitehorse General here, and then not even a month -- when he was a month and a half year old -- or a month and a half old, my son was working and she got into drinking and drugs, and my son (sic) got apprehended, and I promised myself that none of my kids or any of my grandchildren would ever have issues or ever be taken into custody of welfare.

So my daughter finds this out. The welfare phones her because my son had her number, and he told -- they phoned him and then he came back from work. And the mother -- they apprehended my grandchild. He was only a month and a half. And my daughter said, don't take him anywhere, my mom -- I'm gonna get my mom right now. And at that time I had no vehicle. I had no transportation, so she came out to Marsh Lake, Judas Creek and told me and said, "Mom, you have to come in, you have to, they're gonna take baby," so I said, "No, they're not, they're not taking my grandson, any of my grandchildren." So I came in and I took him. I said -- I grabbed him and I looked at those two social workers that were there. I said, "No," I said, "This is my grandson. My name is Diane. I'm the biological grandmother. My son is working," and I said, "I am gonna take my grandson with me home," so I did.

And then I had him for eight months then his mother in the process did 28-day program for everything, and then she got him back. Four days
later they apprehended him again from her, and
this time the social worker said that they were
putting him in a home in Whitehorse so that his
mother -- because I was -- like, I would allow
her to come and visit and stay for the weekends.
If she wasn't drinking or, you know, into drugs
she could come for the weekend and, you know,
keep that bond, but that never happened. So one
day I apprehended him again. They told myself
and my family, the social worker said, he has to
bond with his mother again, so your family can't
have any access, you can't have any visitations
at least for up to three months, you can't see
him. And it triggered me again back, so with
this I did as much as I can. I went to his boss.
I went to everywhere, and I never got him back.
Our family never got to see him.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Diane?
DIANE LILLEY: Yeah.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: How are you feeling?
DIANE LILLEY: I'm feeling good. I'm feeling all
right, but I'm -- I think I better quit here --

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: -- you know.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Do you feel you have more to say?
DIANE LILLEY: No, actually I'm just disappointed
like, you know, that right now my son is dealing
-- is going through what I've lived through, and
that I have -- but my son has full custody now --
we got full custody -- he got full custody last
month. But, you know, I'm really happy for that
but, you know, it was like a long process for --
and it threw me back to when we were taken and my
family was broken up.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yeah, I can see there being a
number of things about that situation that would
be triggering and be very emotional for you.
Now, I have been taking notes as you've been
talking and I have a number of questions, but I'm
not going to ask them now --

DIANE LILLEY: Okay.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- because it's eight o'clock.
DIANE LILLEY: Yeah.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And we -- I'll talk to you
because there might be another way that I can ask
those questions --

DIANE LILLEY: Yeah.
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

1 WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- maybe with a statement taker
2 or something --
3 DIANE LILLEY: Yes.
4 WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- so that they're on the record,
5 and they're just clarification of certain
6 things --
7 DIANE LILLEY: Yeah,
8 WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- that you've said, so -- but
9 I'm going to suggest to the Commissioners that we
10 call this a day in terms of Diane Lilley's
11 testimony.
12 DIANE LILLEY: What about this?
13 WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Well, I'm going to see what the
14 Commissioners have to say --
15 DIANE LILLEY: Okay.
16 WENDY VAN TONGEREN: -- so it's not totally my
17 decision. Hello. Hello.
18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, yeah.
20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, but it's eight o'clock.
21 WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yeah. Yeah. So you've got the
22 recommendations, is that what it is, that you
23 haven't said yet?
24 DIANE LILLEY: Yeah.
25 WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay.
26 DIANE LILLEY: But can I just say one more thing? You
27 know, when was it that we did this? I can't
28 remember. I actually --
29 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Two years ago.
30 DIANE LILLEY: Two years ago, I actually got a hold of
31 Bob Blahun. I had talked to him --
32 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That was my question.
33 DIANE LILLEY: Yes, and I actually got to meet him,
34 and I had requested for him to come up so that my
35 family and I would like to meet him personally
36 and to thank you for bringing closure to myself
37 and my family. And we had -- with Kayreen
38 Britner (phonetic) over here, with her assistance
39 they -- we got together and we flew him and his
40 wife up here, and we had a gathering with all my
41 family and him, and we presented him with gifts,
42 and it was so awesome. It was the best moment
43 I've ever had to shake the man hands, you know,
44 who kept this going and bring closure to my
45 family -- for my family.
46 WENDY VAN TONGEREN: I think there was a newspaper
47 article about that with a picture?
DIANE LILLEY: Yes, I do have it, but I don't have it here. So, yeah, yeah, there is. I actually was presented with the pictures, and the album actually was made up as a gift for me from Kayreen and the RCMPs here, and they actually told me this is the first that anyone has ever done this to any investigators. That's what I was hearing. So I don't know, but for me it was a great thing to do to honour him, and it was the best thing ever to shake his hand --

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: I bet.

DIANE LILLEY: -- and hug him. And I cried. I cried. It brought lots of tears to my eyes for this. And I had all my family there, all my family members, and some of the other RCMPs in the detachment were there, too, and the investigators, the M Division, they were all there, and I -- we invited them all, too, for this because for me it was something I wanted to do. And that's all I have to say.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Wow, that is the most amazing story. I just -- what a sister, what a sister you are. I can't even imagine the strength it must have taken to be the sister that you are, the grandma that you are, the mother that you are. I just really, really want to honour everything you've done from being a little girl.

I have lots of questions about how old you were when you were apprehended, when you were in the care in the different schools, when you went to the United States, so I'm going to make sure that your -- that counsel asks all those questions to you. We'll get those dates specifically, okay?

DIANE LILLEY: Yes.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.

DIANE LILLEY: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: I can't leave tonight without knowing about your little brother. Where is he?

DIANE LILLEY: My little brother --

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yeah.

DIANE LILLEY: -- Delainy?

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yeah.

DIANE LILLEY: He is now in Carmacks.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Uh-huh.

DIANE LILLEY: I go see him all the time.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

DIANE LILLEY: I go visit him all the time.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: But right now he is in -- he's living
in Carmacks. He's living in my mother's house.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Uh-huh.
DIANE LILLEY: He got that. Because he was the baby I
feel that it's only right that he gets it, he
gets everything from her.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: So he's doing good. And when I went
down this past weekend for -- we did -- my
cousin, Darlene, and her son, we had their
headstone potlatch --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Ah.
DIANE LILLEY: -- and that was like -- you know, it
was like bang, bang, bang for me. I've been
going. And I went down Friday and I thought,
right on, I can go see my brother and spend time
with him. But he wasn't there. He actually put
himself in wilderness camp --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Oh.
DIANE LILLEY: -- up in Pelly, in the bush, so I never
got to see him, and then I came right back Sunday
after everything was done in Carmacks.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: And, Diane, did you tell -- did
you say that your mother didn't speak English?
DIANE LILLEY: No, she was the eldest of her siblings
--
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: -- and she never spoke English or write
until later on.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: What year was it that she went to
school? I can't remember. She went to school.
They had school.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible] 1978 to 1980
[inaudible].
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: Okay.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: In Carmacks. It was 1978 to 19 --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: '80.
DIANE LILLEY: -- '80s they had classes. Like, then
it was called vocational --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yes.
DIANE LILLEY: -- Not Yukon --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
DIANE LILLEY: Blade (phonetic) School.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: It was called Blade School. And so all
the Elders there went to school --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: -- to learn to speak English.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: And my mother, she went there. She
learned to speak English, and she learned to sign
her
name --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: -- and she learned to -- and started
reading.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: And started to read?
DIANE LILLEY: Yeah, she learned to start reading,
too, but that was very difficult for her --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.
DIANE LILLEY: -- because, you know, she was an Elder
then.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: It's a hard language to --
DIANE LILLEY: But I'm very proud of her. You know,
she was a strong woman through everything.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Mm-hm.
DIANE LILLEY: She is a very wonderful woman. You
know, I always thought, you know, what goes
through my head is that sometimes I wonder what
my life would be like if I was raised by my
mother instead of going through all of this --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Mm-hm.
DIANE LILLEY: -- you know?
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Mm-hm.
DIANE LILLEY: But when I came back from the States
and I met my mother, I found her to be a very
loving, caring, wonderful woman, a great teacher
for me because the first thing I said to her was,
"No matter what I went through, Mom, I love you."
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Mm-hm.
DIANE LILLEY: "With all my heart, I loved you,
even when I was gone, I was going through
everything, I loved you. I always love you
because you gave me life. You're the one that
carried me, and that's why. If it weren't for
you today I wouldn't be here." I always told her
that. Even in her death bed I told her I always
loved her no matter what.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: So when you came to the meeting
the last time we were in Whitehorse, you told the
story about having to sell everything to get to
go to the trial and to just be able to stay
there, and I remember that story so well because
I'm thinking where are -- and do you remember I
said to you, who are the Rosa Parks of Canada?
Who -- Rosa Parks was a woman in the United
States that said I'm not sitting in the back of
the bus anymore, and she just said I demand to be
treated as well as everybody else. And the day
that you stood up in court and said I demand that
you use my sister's name, I loved her, she's a
human being, you need to address her with her
name, I just will never forget that. That's
strength, and voice, and courage, and I just -- I
just want to commend you again for that and just
say thank you, thank you for being strong enough
to say don't take my sisters, where are my
sisters, you can't have my grandchildren, I'm --
I just -- I just want the women and families
hearing this to hear that part of your story.
And the other piece that I just want to
highlight is the fact that you're talking about
the police officers that we rely on that do the
work that needs to be done, and that you needed
him, you needed him to be that person, and that
he turned it into a question, a story that said,
what would I do if that was my child, and so I
just want to put an extra thank you out there for
sharing that. Thank you so much.

DIANE LILLEY: Yeah, thank you.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Kiya (phonetic), do you have
any questions or comments.

KIYA: No, I don't. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: A lot of the questions I had
as well are questions that we can follow up with,
you know.

DIANE LILLEY: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: But I do want to thank you
very much for coming and sharing with us.

DIANE LILLEY: Okay.

WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Counsel will also deal with the
fact that there are other people here who wanted
to share and make sure that we listen to them and
find a way that that will happen down the road,
Hearing - Public
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan
Joy O'Brien, Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien
(Tina Washpan)

perhaps.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
Diane Lilley: Can I read these out?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
Diane Lilley: No, I wanna do it now.

Wendy van Tongeren: She wants to read it out.
Diane Lilley: [indiscernible] do it now because I am here now, so --

Wendy van Tongeren: It's not for me to argue with this lady.
Diane Lilley: -- and I don't wanna -- what was it you said, now?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
Diane Lilley: Okay. These are the recommendations I wrote down. I would like to read it. Number one I put on here, financial support for missing and murdered families' family members, and travel, rooms, meals and phone minutes and every other support through -- because when I was going through this I had to sell all -- a lot of stuff, my truck, everything so that I could just make it for the trial and for court. And I asked for that, for financial support for the families is because I had a hard time and we struggled, but we did it.

And another one is ongoing counselling support and 24 hours for the family members.
And a more serious investigation by RCMPs and the justice system, that's another one.
And regular updates by the RCMPs, open conversations.

I also have, c), collaborative solutions team. I have "e.g." beside that that's -- under "e.g." I have mental health, Victim Services, probation officers, [indiscernible], alcohol and drug services, social services, legal counsellors, First Nation court workers, Corrections rep, they should be all working together in this, and a liaison navigator, and respect and compassion for the family members.

And last but not least, stop using dehumanizing language during investigations, court or documents. Have respect for all people. And we, as First Nations Women's (sic), are dealing with lots, and we need respect. We need to stop the violence. We need to focus on that in Canada -- not only in Canada, it's going on
all around the world. We need to start educating
about violence in the school system. We need to
start from there. From our babies at a young
age, we need to start teaching them to stop
violence and stop hurting our women's because
women are -- they are the life -- they're the
life-givers. They give life, and they also are
the caregivers of the family. They're the
pedestal. They're what holds the family
together, and we need our women's and children
First Nation to be safe no matter where we're at.
And I'd like to thank you for being here,
and thank you, it was a long time coming, and
thank you very much for coming to hear our story.
Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
DIANE LILLEY: Oh, yeah. Now I'm going on holidays.
WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you very much, Diane.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [inaudible].
DIANE LILLEY: She was 21 -- she was 21 when her life
was taken, she was stolen from us. And this is
the only picture I have of her --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Wow.
DIANE LILLEY: And other that that, I treasure it. I
treasure it. I have it -- this picture is
sitting in my living room, and every morning I'd
get up, I'd go to look at her and I said, you
know, I'm gonna see you one day again. You know,
I pray and I believe in my creator, my higher
power, and I believe, you know, that everything
has happened for a purpose, you know, for a
reason. But I love my sister. She is loved, and
her family will always love her. We'll always
love her. She'll always be in memories and in my
heart. Thank you, that's all I have to say.

Fifth Hearing Exhibit
Diane Lilley, Florence Washpan, Joy O'Brien,
Judith Kuster, Sa-Na-Kerri O'Brien (Family of Tina
Washpan)

Exhibit P1: Colour photograph of young First Nations
woman in white coat or shirt; young woman said to
be Tina Washpan, approx. 9 x 12 inches.

COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay. Thank you so much, and
just to end, we're going -- we're going to give you ladies a packet of seeds. So we didn't get to hear from everybody, but we want to hear from everybody, and so Wendy is going to talk to you about how to get your stories to us, how we can do that.

The seeds are just the Commission's just really gentle way to say thank you for the stories, and it's our gift back to you. We're going to adjourn for the day. See everybody at nine...

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED TO JUNE 1, 2017 AT 9:00 A.M.)
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this is a true and accurate transcript of these proceedings recorded on sound recording apparatus, transcribed to the best of my skill and ability in accordance with applicable standards.

P. Kealy
 Court Transcriber

May 31, 2017