National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
Northwest Community College
Classrooms 122/124 (Public 2)
Smithers, British Columbia

PUBLIC

Wednesday September 27, 2017
Public Volume 7
Rhonda Lee McIsaac;
Roddy, Violet & Winnie Sampare,
In relation to Jean Virginia Sampare;
Rachelle Wilson, In relation to Ramona Wilson
II

APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations  Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)

Government of British Columbia  Bethany Estiverne (Representative)
                                 Taryn Walsh (Representative)

Government of Canada  Anne McConville (Legal counsel)
                      Lucy Bell (Legal counsel)
                      Judith Hoffman (Legal counsel)

Heiltsuk First Nation  No Appearance

Northwest Indigenous Council Society  No Appearance

Our Place – Ray Cam Co-operative Centre  No Appearance

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada  No Appearance

Vancouver Sex Workers’ Rights Collective  No Appearance

Women of Metis Nation / Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak  No Appearance

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsels are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at Northwest Community College - Classrooms 122/124 (Public #2)
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The use of square brackets [ ] indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. Amendments were completed by listening to the source audio recording of the proceeding. Rhonda Lee McIsaac – Weweshkinzhigigook provided proper spelling of her Anishnaabe names with respect to her testimony. Bryan Zandberg, Registrar for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, made these amendments on April 10, 2019 in Vancouver, British Columbia.
MS. RHONDA LEE McISAAC: Boozhoo (speaking in Anishnaabe)

My -- I’ve introduced myself in my Anishinaabe language as has been taught to me by my Elders and my mother and by my teachers at -- in Ontario and across Canada to establish a place and to announce myself to the spirits that may be around and also to establish a connection to this territory. And I acknowledge that I am a visitor here and that I have asked permission to be here and to wear my regalia and to share my truth as I know it and to represent the medicine that is in this dress and to share a story about [Weweshkinzhigigook], about that little girl who only found out her name when she was a teenager but apparently had it all her life.

And so I just wanted to acknowledge and say thank you very much for allowing me the time and the space to share my story and -- yes.

So I’m just going to sit down now,
gracefully.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCK-FLOWERS: So Commissioner, for the -- for the record, Commissioner, this is Rhonda Lee McIsaac, [Goose Eyes] girl. And I understand that by speaking those words to begin that, for the purposes of the Inquiry, will serve as the oath or affirmation according to the Anishinaabe protocol.

And Commissioner, I’ve provided the summary of evidence and, that being done, I will step back.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you.

I’m satisfied with the Anishinaabe language. Thank you.

I just need to add the parties of standing that I have on record here are Anne McConville and Bethany Estiverne. If there are any other people with standing, please provide me with your name for the record.

And the other party with standing is Lucy Bell.

MS. RHONDA LEE McISAAC: So in Anishinaabe, I said that my name is [Goose Eyes Girl] and I come from the Caribou Clan. And I am from -- I was born in Trout Lake, Ontario, and I grew up in Sioux Lookout and Red Lake and North Bay, and I now live in [Skidegate], Haida Gwaii.

And so I’ve moved around a lot. I have
lived from coast to coast, and I have moved -- I’ve moved around a lot in my life. And I always find that a connection to the water has been very close to me.

I have many -- there’s many stories told about me that I either have no recollection of because I was so young and I really -- so I was born in northwestern Ontario. I was born into the Engekeneb (phon) family.

My aunties and my grandmothers caught me at birth and they welcomed me into the world. And I was born on Christmas Day, and my mother -- my biological mother, Margaret Hill, says that I’m always -- I’ve always been her best present.

My mother, Margaret Hill, went to residential school. She was a young mother. She has had 10 children that I know of and she -- because of residential school, she suffers from alcohol and she has used that as a coping mechanism.

And in doing so, I was first placed into care when I was five months old. And my social workers have recently told me that I was found outside of a bar in Sioux Lookout and my mother was inside drinking.

And so you know, it gives me a very twisted image of my childhood, and it also makes me question, you know, just in terms of the addictions that my family faces, how that could happen.
And there are many more questions like that about how that could happen to a young girl. And there’s been many examples shared with me, and so I will -- I will go through that as I continue telling my story.

I was born to Margaret Hill and Roy Engekeneb (phon). Margaret comes from Sioux Lookout, Ontario, and she was a registered member of Lac Seoul First Nation. And my father was also a member of Lac Seoul First Nation.

My grandfather, his name is Harvey Edward Hill, and he was a giant, giant of a man.

As a kid, he was very -- to me, he was very tall and, as I’ve recently learned, indeed, he was tall. And he was very well spoken. He spoke Anishinaabe and English so well that he was a translator in the Courts in Sioux Lookout.

And he was very eloquent. He had amazing handwriting, apparently. And all the notes in the Court, you know, they were -- they were in his -- in his hand.

And he also earned the nickname “the silver-tongued Indian” in Sioux Lookout. And I had a social worker recently tell me that I probably inherited that and should carry that proudly. And I’m trying very hard -- very hard to do that.

Growing -- I wanted to show you this, and
it’s a picture that I have of my grandfather and my grandmother. And I’ve provided Joseph a copy of that so that will go into the record.

So these are my grandparents, and they’re amazing people. They both -- they both attended residential school. They had a large family.

My biological mother, Margaret, she would -- she told me, she said, “Why are you wanting to bring all of this up? Why are you wanting to talk about this?”

And she said, “The past is the past and you should leave it there”.

And that’s so hard for her to talk about her time in residential school. I can understand that but, at the same time, there are so many questions that I have and there are so many moments and memories that I wish that I had and that I could remember and that I don’t have to rely on other people to tell me those things, but I do because being called a child -- a ward of the state in foster care, I lived in -- so these are my siblings.

And this is me. I don’t know. I think I was maybe nine years old.

And this is my brother. We called him Skeegum (phon). And Skeegum was -- it was a nickname that we gave him because -- God, it’s -- I’m going to -- anyways, those who know what Skeegum means are probably
laughing right now, but he’s still known as that. And this is my little sister, and her name is Waboos (phon). And Waboos is a rabbit.

And this is my beautiful little sister. Her name is Valerie. And Valerie was 13 months when she was adopted.

They have their own stories, and I had permission to share these photos because, you know, they share the same story and they have the same kind of experiences.

And they’re -- they’re just beautiful people. And they carry a lot of the same story, a lot of the same pain. And I just wanted to really honour them because they’re my family and I’m so glad to have them.

My adopted family, my mother is Edith Doyle and my father is David Doyle. And I was adopted into their family.

They had two natural sons, Graham and Jason. And they were -- they were a great family.

They -- my father really -- he wanted a large family, and so when we came to be adopted, it was in -- I believe in 1983-84 that we were adopted. And so we moved from northwestern Ontario and to North Bay, Ontario. And so I was the oldest girl at that time.

My brother and I duked it out to see who was
actually really top dog because my older brother is three years older than me.

He won, and I concede that with him. And my -- so we grew up together.

And it wasn’t always -- wasn’t always fun. It wasn’t always -- we carried -- being adopted was very hard, and it was -- you know, it’s like losing a piece -- it is losing a piece of your identity. It is losing a piece of your culture. It is losing a part of -- a part of you and a part of your family.

I was old enough to remember where I came from. I was old enough to remember my family. And at that time, I was also speaking Anishinaabe.

And I spoke Anishinaabe. That was my first language. And my brothers and my sisters knew the language as well. And we stopped speaking the language when -- shortly after we were adopted.

And I’ve been slowly trying to regain that, and by going back to my culture and by speaking with Elders, by hanging around the tents, the sacred fires, and also by applying my culture to my life and remembering that -- that I grew up with a culture that was very strong.

And when we were adopted, we tried -- I know that my parents tried to give us the culture that we had, but again, with funding and -- at that point in time, in
the early eighties, the friendship centres, you know, they had a lot of -- a lot of funding -- they had a lot more funding than they do now. And so there was more access at that point in time to language and culture.

And then, as the years have gone by, that has changed.

And I know that, growing up, the friendship centre was a huge part of my life. And in foster care, we accessed the friendship centres.

And so that’s where, you know, when I first became a dancer I was -- I was a very young fancy shawl dancer. So dancing has been a part of my childhood and I’m very glad to be back to that, and that has taken a really long time.

And confidence -- confidence-wise, you know, that -- being away from the culture really had that effect, right. And so to be almost 44 years old now and to be going to school has been definitely an influence from my parents, my adopted parents.

They pushed all of us really hard to get an education. And it didn’t matter if it was university or college.

My father was -- he was a union representative and he supported all of us children and he made sure that he -- while he worked that he had summers
with us. And the last day of school, we’d all pack up and we’d go away as a family.

And it was -- and it was really good. But at the same time, there was also a part of me that had a really hard time accepting my family. And it took me a long time to actually call my adopted mom my mom. And she laughs -- she laughs now and she -- I remember the first time that I called her “mom” and it was at Mother’s Day. And I made her cry and I thought that I’d done something wrong.

And she said to me, like, “You didn’t do anything wrong. It’s just something that I wanted to hear for a very long time”.

And then the other part was that it took me a long time to accept my mom because I didn’t want to betray my biological mom, Margaret. And that was -- that was really hard, but I realized growing up since being adopted that it was okay because my mom -- I have two moms and I have two dads, and very lucky.

But at the same time, when I think about that fortune, being blessed in that way, I also think that I know -- I know from my cousins who grew up in Red Lake and in the Meko Saping (phon) that they have a strong connection to that territory and they have a strong connection within their family.
And the Anishinaabe really value the family. They really value that. And I -- I’m coming to terms with the fact that I had a different experience.

And ultimately, if it’s -- I can’t -- you know, part of -- I was really angry as a teenager. Really angry. And I carried that around a lot.

And I think that, you know, my family really kind of paid for that because I -- I know I stopped speaking to them. I was really silent for about five years and didn’t participate with them.

I got pregnant when I was 19 years old, and I fell in love with my children’s father. And I have two children.

They’re -- they’re so wonderful. They’re so beautiful.

My daughter is Gaga Combs (phon) and my son is Kaka Combs (phon). And my son is 23 years old. And if I get that wrong, that’s going to be just par for course because I can never remember their birth dates. I always have to check.

And my daughter just had her birthday. And again, she’s -- I hope she’s -- anyways, she’s amazing. And she has her own story as well.

And I tried, along with my ex-husband, to really raise them in a really strong, good way.
And when I was a teenager, before I had children I was really -- I drank a lot. I -- probably while I was in college, I think that I was probably sober maybe two days of the week or three days of the week because I had classes.

So it was -- I don’t know. I can’t get mad at my kids and I can’t get mad at other people because, you know, alcohol -- I can -- it can make you brave. It can make you stupid. But at the same time, you also feel like you’re having a lot of fun.

And -- but I knew that once I had my babies that I couldn’t do that any more and I had to be a better person, that I had to be a better mom. I had to be a better example because I didn’t want my kids -- I didn’t want our kids to experience that. I didn’t want them to be found out in public left alone and didn’t, you know, want the Children’s Aid Society involved in my family.

I didn’t want that because I didn’t like it growing up. I felt like nothing was in my control.

My social workers, who I’ve recently been in touch with, one of them said to me, you know -- she said, “God, you were a cute five year old. You were so friendly. You were so kind”.

And she said, “You were also the oldest five year old” that she’d ever met.
And being the oldest five year old, there’s something wrong if you’re already so old at five years old. You know, at five years old you should be thinking, you know, about, I don’t know -- I don’t even know what you would think about at five years old.

But my social worker also said at five years old that I put on my boots and my coat and I walked from Sioux Mountain across a frozen lake following my mother, who had gone to town that day. And I showed up on Front Street in Sioux Lookout, and somebody found me wandering around.

And my social worker went and we tried finding my mom, and we couldn’t find her. And my social worker, she’s -- she told me, she said, “You were -- you were just wet. You were just soaking wet just from walking”.

And she said, “I think you said something like I just wanted to see my mom”.

And so my mom eventually found me and -- but not after I’d had lunch and not after I had, you know, been given a new set of clothes to be dry.

And so you know, social workers aren’t that bad. I’m having -- I’m learning that what I remember as a kid is not always as bad as you remember it.

And growing up, I really, really hated
police and I really, really hated social workers. I’ve lost friends who’ve become social workers because I had so much anger towards -- towards that profession.

And -- and now that I’ve been in touch with them, I’m -- my social workers, in finding out a little bit more about my childhood, I’m -- I’ve had to re-look how I see them and realize that they were working under policies that they also had no control over and that, as a 10 year old and as a five month old or as a five year old, that that’s not always necessarily explained to you so well.

But at the same time, I think that when you’re growing up in foster care that you’re so vulnerable to the messaging that you hear.

I have an adoption book.

So when I was adopted, I was given a book. And I hadn’t really looked at it. I hadn’t really looked at it. And so these photos that I’d showed you come from this book.

But what I really -- what really bothered me was some of the messaging in this book.

And I don’t know who thought of this book. I don’t know who -- you know, how it was, but it says here -- you know, it has photos of me, you know, basically when I was eight or nine. There are no -- I don’t have any baby photos of myself.
And when I had kids, I made sure that there were lots of photos of my kids, and they probably dislike now having a camera shoved in their face. But they have a lot of photos of themselves.

But what got me about this book was when it says, “This is what your case worker first told your foster family about you”.

And I was in, like I said, at least 23 different foster homes. And what this says here -- and it’s in my own, like, nine year old handwriting, and I can actually read it. And it says, “You were nice” and that I needed a family because my mother got drunk and never took care of us.

I really want to swear right now. That’s a really hard truth, and that’s a really hard truth that you -- that I wrote at nine years old.

I don’t -- I don’t know -- that’s not a very positive message for a nine year old. And it’s hard. It’s a hard truth, and -- but at the same time, it’s -- there’s reasons for that.

And the -- part of the reasons are, you know, my mom attending residential school and my mom being abused and, you know, not having my grandparents there with her and all the suffering that she had in her life. And then she tried to have children and she tried to make
everything better. And she tried so hard.

And I really -- you know, I really disliked her for the longest time. I’m still a little angry at times with her because I have so many questions, but she doesn’t want to talk about it. And so it’s taken me a long time to sort of ask those questions.

And I think that being -- being adopted at 10 years old was -- was amazing, and it allowed me the opportunity to not have to think about, you know, my parents and what they might do or, you know, if I had to walk from Sioux Mountain to Sioux Lookout to get help, to take my brothers and sisters and flee our house because of the parties that were going on.

And -- but also being adopted also meant that my status was frozen. And so I was a frozen Indian.

And it took -- it took -- I remember it took a lot of work. I remember my parents going through their adoption files and trying to find out the information. And I remember being told that I -- you know, that I didn’t exist at that point in time.

And it was confusing because, you know, all I wanted was my status card. All I wanted was to -- because all my friends, you know, they had those cards. They knew who they were. They knew where they came from, and they could identify themselves.
But at the same time, it was like it was frozen, and so I had to wait. And then finally, after applying and, you know, my parents and myself calling and writing letters that -- to find out that I’d been not only frozen, but that since my mother had transferred Bands, somehow our names were also transferred along -- along with her. And so that’s how we moved from Lac Seul Band to the Ojibwe Nation of Saugeen and Savant Lake.

And you know, that’s my -- because I always said to myself, like “I’m from Lac Seul. I’m from Lac Seul”.

And then to find out that I’m actually from the Ojibwe Nation of Saugeen. You know, you have to think in your mind that you have to change -- you have to change that.

And being from the Ojibwe Nation of Saugeen, it’s a small Band and it’s independent. And they fought really hard to be recognized and to have their reserve where it is.

And it’s -- you know, it’s -- so that’s where I’m from.

And I’ve been home there because my mother lives there now. And my biological mother, she -- despite her addictions and -- she speaks her language, and she’s a -- she taught in the school. So some of the young children
have been educated in Anishinaabemowin.

And that makes me really happy to sort of be able to sit in my mother’s house. And when I returned home at 19, my father accompanied -- my biological -- or my adopted father -- my dad accompanied me. And he made me work for it.

He, you know, said “You have to -- you have to be able to pay your way. You have to be able to do that”.

And so I worked. I worked in a restaurant, and I worked in the back and -- because I remember the manager saying to me, “Well, I can’t actually put you up front”. And I remember thinking to myself, “Well, why not?”

But maybe it was -- I don’t know. I want to say, you know, it was kind of racist. It was they didn’t want to see a brown face up front.

And so it -- that was -- that was my first kind of run-in with just, you know, not being good enough at that point in time to be out front and to serve people and -- even though that’s probably where I was more comfortable.

But I had a lot of friends. You know, I had a lot of friends. We had a lot of good times. Good times.

My girlfriends in North Bay, they got me
through a lot. They got me through high school and I think that my friends really -- they’ve really carried me. They’ve really raised me up. And I really -- I’m very blessed to have so many good friends and so many good people because I’ve travelled across Canada and I’ve taken my family with me.

And again, we’re spread out. My daughter and my ex-husband are on the east coast and my son is in Vancouver, and I’m on Haida Gwaii. And we’re all following our passions. We’re all, you know, finding our way.

And I think that a lot of the inter-generational issues that my siblings and I have are also issues that my son and my daughter are having to face, so I tried raising them, you know, without drugs and alcohol.

And now that they’re adults, they’re making their own choices and I have to trust that what I’ve taught them and what their father has taught them and what our teachers have taught them will carry them forward.

And so I am slowly learning that even though those four little kids grew up in the bush and grew up in many different foster homes that we had -- we were also rich. And as poor as -- as poor as we were and -- but we were also so rich.

And that my adopted family did very well, and that we -- that we all survived. We survived the
poverty. We’ve survived racism. We’ve survived abuse.

And when I talk about abuse, it’s all the abuses. It’s mental, spiritual, physical, emotional and definitely, you know, in terms of sexual abuse as well, it’s -- it was something that we grew up with.

And we made choices to not continue that, and we made choices that were passed on to us by people who were also abused. And that we’ve had to overcome those things.

And when I started this process, when I started thinking about doing a statement, somebody said to me, you know, “Oh, you’re a survivor​”, and it’s something that I’d never really described myself as. And it’s not something that I actually really thought about.

This is just part -- you know, this is my story. This is my experience.

But as I’ve gone through school, I’ve also learned that, you know, this is also the experience of many, many other people and that this is, unfortunately, a path that a lot of indigenous people still continue to go through today.

And that since our family was adopted out, Tikinagan (phon) started in northwestern Ontario because our family said that they didn’t want to lose any more children to non-indigenous families and that children
should stay within their own families and within their own
culture because -- because of the loss of identity, because
of the loss of culture and the loss of family ties that
happen when you're placed in care and when you're adopted
out.

And if you're not lucky enough to have a
family that valued your -- your identity, that you can lose
that.

And I think that that is, I think, important
as we go ahead, that those policies need to change and that
there needs to be access for children to have that access
to their culture and their language and to be practising
that and to be very proud of that.

And I think that in terms of education, I've
been very lucky, very fortunate to have had Elders in my
life from the time that I was in foster care until the
time, you know, when I went back to the friendship centre.
I was 16 when I met a fabulous indigenous woman who has
been my best friend and has shown me the pride in being an
Anishinaabekwe, in wearing regalia, in knowing who (Native
language) is and in having a place in ceremony.

And I just want to acknowledge my friend,
Celina Kada (phon). And she's definitely a strong role
model, and she continues to be a strong influence for me.

And also, other women have been influential
and they've -- they've really taught me to be strong, they've taught me to tell the truth. They've taught me how to stand in -- in my culture. And I really am proud to have those sisters. And I call them sisters because I've chosen them, and they've chosen me.

And my good one is sitting over there, and she's an amazing young woman and I'm very proud to have her here with me.

And we first met -- God, we were in school together and then we worked together when I went to the Yukon and applied and got a job with Indian and Northern Affairs.

And what a learning curve that was. But at the same time, it also speaks a lot to the education that I worked very hard to get.

In Grade 5, I had a horrible math teacher. He said to me that I was pulling down his math average. He wanted me to go in to remedial math.

And my mother, bless her, she got mad at him and went up and down his body and got the principal involved and said, "How about you try teaching?"

So she was fierce. My mother was really fierce and so protective. And then -- I learnt that. I learnt that from her.

And God, there were kids in school who --
they sent me a hate letter and they signed it with my best friend's name. And then -- so I had to confront that. And I learnt that my best friend, indeed, hadn't signed the letter.

And she apologized, and that was really formative. Like that really had an impact because, you know, it was a -- it was done by a group and it was mostly non-indigenous students. And you know, it -- bullying was horrible growing up.

And you know, thank goodness for my family standing up and being there for me and -- but also educating me at the same time to actually stand up for myself and to speak against bullying and racism and to work in an -- towards being non-oppressive and balanced because a lot of people, you know -- a lot of it is ignorance and they don't know any better.

And so going through that, you know, really taught me a lot and it also taught me how to forgive those people because they don't know any better.

And sadly, it still happens, you know. You still have hate, you still have racism, you still have ignorance. And I think that a lot of Aboriginal communities also have a lot of lateral violence. And it makes a difference if you have somebody who can speak up and who is a role model.
And I try really hard to be that person.

And I also try really hard to be balanced and to come from a -- from a good place. And I realize that I haven't always been that way and that it's been a learning curve.

And in terms of the education that I've gotten, it has been both experiential, cultural and academic. I've learnt -- it took me 13 years of part-time study while I was raising my children to get my Bachelor’s in English literature and a minor in the Arts of Canada from the University of Victoria. Shout out.

I learnt a lot there. And I also learnt that I'm smart enough.

It took me a really long time to get that and to really understand the value of education.

When I was at Trent University and first studying Canadian history and indigenous studies, I met a professor, John Wadlend (phon), and you know, he took us out into Temagami and we hiked into Lake Temagami and we took our canoes. And we had an awesome amazing class in the middle of Lake Temagami.

And if you can imagine, you know, like a canoe rafted to 12, 14 other canoes and you're floating and you're learning about history and you're learning about Temagami and you're learning about activism. What an
amazing experience that is and how that impacts you not only in your mind, but also your spirit.

And that continues today because I'm doing a Master's in Education through the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George. And that has taken me a very long time to complete.

I started it after my term ended with INAC, and I realized that in my term at INAC I wanted to tell the stories of indigenous people. I didn't really want to tell Canada's story because it wasn't my story, and -- but I wanted to tell the story of four Yukon First Nation women Chiefs.

And that is -- has been the most amazing story that I am trying to wrap my head around. And part of that has to do with what I'm wearing today. It is actually a huge part of why I'm wearing this -- my regalia today.

Education, like I said, has really saved me. When I started my Master's, I -- it was hard. It's not a field that I actually thought that I would get into, education, and not like in a teacher sort of -- I'm definitely not a teacher in that sort of sense. But I like telling stories. It's what I do for a living. I'm a writer in Haida Gwaii, and I write a lot of poetry as well. And I do a lot of -- you know, my -- I'm responsible for a lot of my regalia and a lot of my beading.
And it's taken me a long time to get there and to do that. And I think that cultural education and that experiential education has a lot more value than a piece of paper or the BA or the MEd or the PhD that -- that I really want to get but, at the same time, you know, I also really want to continue on with my regalia and I want to continue learning in that way, but -- so I want to show you my regalia and I want to explain to you what it means.

And it also gives me impetus to like, you know, complete my -- the last few chapters of my project, of my Master's project.

And yeah. So I really want to honour that, and I want to honour those teachings that are inside me.

As a -- as a young girl, I delivered newspapers. That was one of my first jobs. And I lugged around the Toronto Star. And I don't know if any of you have, you know, picked up that heavy newsprint -- and I think we delivered over 200 copies, and then also the North Bay Nugget.

And I always read the front page. And as a writer, I went to journalism -- I went to school for journalism and then got my English literature BA. And so writing has always been a coping mechanism and it's been a way to tell my story.
And so now I'm branching out and I'm learning how to tell stories in different ways. And this is one way that I can tell a different story.

And you know, I acknowledge the four Yukon women Chiefs that told me their stories, and I tried to blend the western academic and my Anishinaabe ways. And I'm not sure if I've been successful in it. I'll see.

And -- but I think I've done the best that I can with what I've been taught and with what I've been sharing, and so I'm just going to explain that to you.

So when I think about indigenous education, when I think about all the grandmothers who have come ahead of me and those grandmothers that stand behind me and the grandmothers that stand in all the directions, I think that they're leaders and that, as leaders, as water carriers, as women that give birth to the next generations that they all have those leadership qualities in them.

And so the grandmother print that I wear, that my mother chose, she -- she chose it and she chose the colours that -- I told her that my traditional colours are red, white and black, and with yellow accent.

And so she chose a nice blue print, and so it's a grandmother print because it's a floral.

And so when I think about women in leadership, I think about all the various forms of
leadership. It doesn't have to be -- you know, you don't have to be called a Chief. You don't have to be called an Elder. You don't have to be called a judge. You don't have to be called a lawyer. You don't -- you know, everybody's a leader.

And our women are strong leaders. Our women, you know, are -- they're just so important.

And so I chose to -- I choose to honour them in that way.

And the four stories of the Yukon First Nation women, they all had individual paths. And so those paths are described here in the bias tape, in the ribbon that I use on my dress. And you'll see that it goes all the way around in a circle, and it's because they're always learning. They're always sharing the knowledge that they -- that they've learnt. And so these four women shared their stories with me.

And so in the academic sense, I've had to find ways how to transfer that knowledge so that, you know, the academics can understand it, so that other people who come behind me and want to study the work can understand it as well.

So each tab represents -- the black or the red tabs, those are my terms. Those are my themes.

And what's attached are the jingles, and the
jingles are -- have been made by my auntie, Karen Daneman (phon). And they're a -- they come from -- and we rolled these. We cut these ourselves.

And we did it, gosh, many, many years ago now. We did it at a literature conference in Winnipeg, and we sat in the back of the room. We tried not to make noise. But as you can see, we probably made more noise than usual, but -- so we rolled them. And these ones are made out of Carnation cans.

And Carnation cans honour my grandmother because that's -- that's the milk that she had. That's the material that she had, and that's what sustained us when we were growing up.

And so you know, when you go to Nanny Kukum's (phon) house, you know, there's always Carnation milk on the table. And so that's what these are.

And so as the maker -- and I had help making this dress, and it is -- the ladies are Marcia and her daughter, Celeste Pedry (phon), Dr. Celeste Pedry, helped make this dress. And they made it because I needed to heal while I was in university because I was going through a separation and a divorce. And I really lost who I was.

And so in order to help me, they helped make this dress. And the red cuffs are a form of protection for me as a dancer because when you're dancing the jingle
dress, you're not just dancing for -- I'm not just dancing for myself. I'm dancing for everybody in that circle.

I'm also dancing for those who cannot dance. I'm also dancing for those who could never dance, for those women who were told that -- that this wasn't proper, that this was not healthy, that they were heathens if they danced, and those women that were hurt because they couldn't speak their language.

And so this is where this dress came from, and I dreamt about this. And when I -- when I was gifted this dress, Robin Celeste -- they took me to a powwow in Yaletown in the round house, and I danced there for the first time in many, many years. And it was an honour to wear this dress, and it's been an honour to wear this dress. And this is my education.

And yes, it blends western and it blends Anishinaabe teachings, but because I am Anishinaabe, the work that I do is Anishinaabe centred. It is women centred. And it is strong academic work.

And I think that the education system really needs to honour the cultural ways. We need to place that at the forefront. And I'm so thankful that there's many people that are working towards that, that there are many people calling for that, for that change, that our Elders should be paid the same as tenured professors, that you
don't need a PhD in order to teach at university, and that they've earned that education, that they've earned that right to be there in that classroom teaching people like me who want to learn, and that the western way isn't the best way. It is not the right way.

And I'm so glad that I get to do the work that I do because it places being indigenous at the forefront, and that's so important because growing up, I didn't see a lot of that. I didn't see a lot of the -- in the textbooks, I didn't see a lot of that -- those examples in school and high school. And that's really important, and our kids needs to see that. My kids need to see that.

And we need to go back to having our culture and we need to go back to speaking our language, and we need to go back to walking gently on this earth and not taking things like resources, disrespecting that.

That's really important because we need fresh water. We need our traditional medicines. We need that connection to the land because it makes us stronger. We need that connection to our language because it makes us stronger.

We need those connections to our families because it does make us stronger.

We need our women to be valued. We need our children to know that they are valued, that they matter.
because that little girl, that five year old girl, that 10
year old girl, all those little girls and those little boys
need to know that they're valued, that they're not
disposable and that they don't deserve to be hurt the way
that they've been hurt.

Migwetch.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Wow,
Rhonda, what a great education you've given us in this room
today, and people watching. You're a real teacher.

I think that even though you might not think
you are, I think you're a fabulous teacher. Maybe some day
I can come to your class.

Thank you for sharing your story with all of
us. I've learned a lot, and humbled by your experience.

A couple of things. I can see the beautiful
child is still in your face, and I hope you never lose
that.

We believe, of course, in the principle of
reciprocity, and so in order to thank you for sharing your
sacred gift, your story, with us, we want to thank you by
giving you some seeds. They are from here because we don't
want to introduce foreign seeds, of course, a fire weed.
And they're so resilient, those plants. They're amazing,
just like you.

So please accept this on behalf of all of us
for sharing your sacred story with us today. Plant the seeds, please, and let us know what happens.

**MS. RHONDA LEE McISAAC:** So if you note just on our photo, there's fire weed.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** And then the matriarch from Haida Gwaii instructed some people to harvest eagle feathers for us to give to families and survivors. We know we don't argue with the matriarchs of Haida Gwaii.

So I don't have to tell you the importance, the significance of an eagle feather, but it's important for us. So on behalf of the matriarchs, but also from all of us at the National Inquiry, thank you so much for being with us, for sharing your story.

--- Exhibits (code: P1P020205)

**Exhibit 1:** Colour digital photograph of prompt “This is what your caseworker first told your foster family about you” with response written in dark blue ink.

**Exhibit 2:** Colour digital photograph said to depict Rhonda Lee McIsaac’s little sister as a toddler.

**Exhibit 3:** Colour digital photograph of prompt “Your caseworker asked your foster family to take care of you…” with handwritten response
“because my mother drinks” in dark black ink.

Exhibit 4: Colour digital photograph said to depict Rhonda Lee McIsaac’s grandparents.

Exhibit 5: Colour digital photograph said to depict Rhonda Lee McIsaac as a young girl.

--- Upon Recessing at 11:04
--- Upon resuming at 1:45 p.m.

Hearing # 6

Witnesses: Roddy, Violet and Winnie Sampare

In Relation to Jean Virginia Sampare

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller

Commission Counsel: Breen Ouellette

Clerk: Gladys Wraight, Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: (Speaking Native language)

Ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to thank you for coming to support us this afternoon. I’d like to thank the Wet’suwet’en Chiefs for allowing us on their territory to talk about my sister that went missing in 1971. I’m very thankful.

And it’s our tradition to do a lament song for the people that are gone on before us so I’ll ask my sister to do that part.

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: (Singing in Native
CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: And I’d like to thank you, Breen, for doing this, and I’d like to thank the Commissioner for coming to hear our story.

Thank you very much.

(SHORT PAUSE)

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you, Chief Commissioner.

For the record, my name is Breen Ouellette and I am counsel for the National Inquiry.

It is my honour to introduce the Sampare family. From my right, I present Roddy and Violet, husband and wife; and to the right of Violet is Winnie. Winnie and Roddy are siblings.

I also want to recognize that their sister, Anna, was unable to attend today, and our thoughts and prayers go out to her.

And then we have family members in the back. So if you would like to introduce them, Roddy.

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: The one sitting right behind me is my daughter, Virginia, and her husband, Jim Woodward. And Violet’s niece, Marilyn; our niece, she’s here to support us this afternoon.

And another thing that I forgot earlier was to thank the family that made time for us to have this
spot. We’ve been having a rough time in Smithers here, so
I’m very thankful to that family that gave us their spot.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you.
So Ms. Registrar, the Sampare family has requested to affirm using an eagle feather.

MS. GLADYS WRAIGHT: Thank you.
So my name is Gladys; I’m the Registrar with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. So I just -- I understand that you wanted to affirm with the eagle feather.

RODDY SAMPARE, Affirmed:

VIOLET SAMPARE, Affirmed:

WINNIE SAMPARE, Affirmed:

MS. GLADYS WRAIGHT: I just wanted to mention today that the parties in standing that we have are Lucy Bell and Taryn Walsh; identified themselves.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Roddy, I want to offer you this cedar tie in support of your testimony today.
CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Thank you.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And Violet, I want to offer you this cedar tie in support of your testimony today.

And, Winnie, I want to provide you with this cedar tie in support of your testimony today.

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: Thank you.
MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And in honour of the family members that are sitting here, I want to offer them cedar ties in honour of their support.

Roddy, for the benefit of everybody present, would you please explain your role and the role of your family in the community?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: I am Hereditary Chief of the Frog Clan in Gitsegukla. I look after the Frog Clan in my house, the house of (inaudible), and that would be my sister and all their kids.

So it’s -- we have one house that I look after in the community of Gitsegukla. And we all work together at peace to do what we need to do to bury or to have a baptism or a wedding; we all work together to do that kind of work.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you.

Roddy, would you please tell the Commissioner the name of the family member you have come to speak about today?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: We lost my sister on the highway in October 14th, 1971. Her name was Jean Virginia Sampare. And today we have never found or heard from her. We keep looking; whenever there’s a possible sighting, we go and check it out. We always look for her. We’re hoping that she’s still alive somewhere, but 46 years
ago is a long time and I don’t think she was that mad at us.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Roddy, could you tell the Commissioner the name that your family commonly referred to your sister?

**CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE:** She was always called Virginia because there was other Jean names in the community, so Mum and Dad just called her Virginia.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you. And how old was Virginia when she went missing?

**CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE:** She was 18 years of age when she went missing. She’d just had a birthday, 18th birthday in September.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And how would you describe Virginia, as an 18 year old?

**CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE:** She was a pretty quiet kid and she was strong, very strong. Our Mum and Dad made us do a lot of work, and we weren’t allowed to go and play out after 9 o’clock at night, we were -- we had to be home. They were really strict on us.

She was a fair-headed girl. And we were always taught that suicide was never the answer to any problems that may arise. So I feel bad when I hear people say now, “Oh, she committed suicide.” That was not the -- I think she was probably one of the first ladies that were
taken in 1971 on the Highway of Tears.

   MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Was Virginia involved in any of these so-called high-risk activities?

   CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: No, she wasn’t. She was -- we were kept a close eye on by our parents. She -- we usually walked to the store at the Skinner Crossing, they called it; it’s about a mile away from the Reserve, where they had a little restaurant and a store for food and mail that came.

   MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So she was just a normal, healthy, 18-year-old girl?

   CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Yes, she was.

   MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Where was Virginia residing at that time?

   CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: She was living with Mum and Dad, and we were living with Mum and Dad too, in Gitsegukla. I was working in Terrace at the time. We had already gotten the rent and she was supposed to move with us later that -- during later that month. But we spent a lot of time searching instead.

   MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And why had Virginia returned home to live with your parents?

   CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Her boyfriend drowned in Cashore (phonetic) Packing Company where she was working. She was working at the cannery, and her boyfriend
was fishing; and they drowned in the cannery, in the water there on the Skeena.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And you were at your parents’ at the time as well, you and Violet. And what was your situation?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: I’d just gotten back from fishing and my boss at Pauley Lumber had called me back to work at the sawmill. Like, I drive forklift for them, and one of the kids had to go to -- go back to school, so I was called back to go to work at the mill. And we hadn’t really found a place to rent in Terrace yet, so that’s what we worked on and -- before we moved to Terrace, we had to stay with Mum and Dad.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And Roddy, am I correct in my understanding that you had just recently married and you had a new baby?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: That’s right. We got married on August 27 and our boy was born September 4th. So I worked pretty fast.

(LAUGHTER)

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Violet, I have a question for you. I understand that among the family testifying here today, that you were the last person to see Virginia. Is that right?

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: Yes. I was at home the
night she left the house. It was late at night. My mother-in-law had just come back from Hazelton, or wherever they were, just her. My father-in-law didn’t come in with her. My sister-in-laws [sic]; there was two of them, the youngest one is Sandra and the other was Virginia. They were in a bedroom to the back of the house.

When my mother-in-law came in, she just greeted me and I greeted her as well and then she proceeded to go to the kitchen. And then the kitchen is also located to the back of the house. It’s a very small house so not a whole lot of rooms. And I guess from there, she went to see the girls because they were in the bedroom that they share.

And not long after she came home, Virginia came out, and I’m assuming she was crying; like, it looked like she was crying and she -- I just looked at her. And she didn’t even look at me. I tried to ask her what was wrong, and she just went straight to the door, opened the door and walked out. And I tried to call her and I asked her where she was going and my mother-in-law came out and then I told her, I said, “I’ll go and get her, I’ll ask her where she’s going.” And then she said, “No, you stay here because -- baby.” She said, “You stay here. She’ll come back.” She said, “She’ll come back.”

So we didn’t do anything. And that was the
last time I seen her, when she walked out of the house. And this was, like, between 10:00 and 11:00; like, it was quite late in the evening.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Did anyone else you know see her that night? Yes, Violet.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: Yeah.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Did anyone else see her that night?

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: I heard people talking and I guess her cousin -- my husband’s cousin, Alvin Hyrams (phonetic), was another person that had seen her later that day, or that night. I’m not certain of the details of that, just from what I read and -- because it was just recently that I learned that he was one of the last ones to see her, and she was on the road. So ---

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So does -- who here knows the details of what Alvin saw the best? Is it you?

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: I don’t know.

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: (Speaking Native language)

Somebody told us, to get a bike.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: I don’t know who actually got the information; I don’t even remember.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: But you’ve heard information?
MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: But there’s information that Alvin Hyrams (phonetic) was one of the ones that’s -- I don’t know who gave the information that he was walking with her and he decided that he was going to go back and get his bike so that he can ride his bike and -- because she mentioned that what Roddy said, thinking that she was going to that store which is down to the railway crossing bridge. There’s a railway crossing bridge, and by that -- close to that bridge there used to be a store; mailboxes and whatnot were in the same area. And I think just up the road from there, there’s this train station.

And he didn’t want to walk, I guess, all the way to the store so he decided -- well, he said -- he told her that he was going to go run back and grab -- because he was just below his house, because their house was just up the road from where the bridge was. And he wanted to go and grab his bike.

So he rode his bike back down to the highway and when he got back to the area where he last seen her, he had heard a vehicle door close but she was nowhere to be seen.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Violet, do you know when the family first tried to report her missing?

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: My recollection was that my in-laws went to the Band office right that morning
because she didn’t come back. My Mum -- our mother-in-law thought that she would come back in, because they didn’t lock the door. They thought she would come and go back -- you know, go to bed and -- but she didn’t. She didn’t. And so they decided they were going to go to the Band office.

And their -- I’m not sure who at the Band office they spoke to and they were told that they had to wait a certain amount of time before they could report it to the RCMP, but we learned that’s not true; that there was no such waiting time to report someone missing.

But what they did from there, they went to Hazelton -- or to South Hazelton where Winnie resided. Winnie lived in South Hazelton at that time because she was married then, had her own family. And my other sister, Anna, was living with her partner and they lived in Kitamaat. So they decided they were going to go and check to see if Virginia had gone to their homes and she wasn’t found there.

And then they decided they were going to go to the RCMP after they checked all the friends. I think they believed that she had friends in Kispiox as well, which is where I’m originally from. And they didn’t find anything or any information at all, if she was seen by any one of her friends; or even Winnie and Anna, she didn’t
show up there. So they decided they were going to go to the RCMP and they did their missing person’s report.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So, Winnie, do you remember your parents coming to look for Virginia? Could you just speak into the microphone?

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: Yes.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Do you remember the date?

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: Well, they’d taken time to go look around first and then they said, “We’re really worried. Virginia didn’t come home.” And that was like two days after she got missing on the 14th. And then after Mum and Dad told the police that she didn’t come home, that’s when the police started the search going; and village people helped out, they searched all over, yeah.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you.

So, Roddy, Winnie mentioned a search. Were you involved in that search?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Yes. Whenever I come home from work, I would help the village searchers search, and we did it till the snow fell, even after the search and rescues had completed their search in a week or two, then we kept going for -- till the snow fell, the whole village.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So as a matter of time, did the village start searching first or was it the
RCMP that started searching first, and how long did each of those searches last?

**CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE:** I think the village people started the search when Mum and Dad were really worried, and then the RCMP joined in the search. And then they called it off. They wanted us not to touch anything in the bush or near the rivers. They had a police dog from come from Peace River and they did the week search with the dogs that they had brought with them from Peace River.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so that was a week-long search. Did they find anything?

**CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE:** No, they didn’t.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And then when you said the town searched for -- until the snowfall; that was a restart up until the police left?

**CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE:** Yes, that’s right. They started up again because they seen Mum and Dad going out, checking.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And, Winnie, did you participate in the search as well?

**MS. WINNIE SAMPARE:** Yes. I was up at the camp where people were fed; people were bringing food and stuff like that, and walking around in the bush -- bushes, looking. Even Captain Douglas was there. He’s from Glenvale. Yeah.
MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And, Roddy, would you call the search thorough?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Oh, yes, it was thorough. They did the bush and they did the river search, checked along the banks right from Kitselas Canyon to (inaudible); nothing was ever found.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And after those searches concluded has there ever been any progress since?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: No, there hasn’t. We’ve just been hearing rumours that she’s been sighted, and Violet and I would go to Vancouver and check it out. Usually come to a dead end.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And just for clarification, why were you going to Vancouver to check it out?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: We got a phone call that my sister was sighted at the PNE, so we decided to go down the next day. Got our kids ready and we went to check it out. And our cousin, Melvin was down here, he was helping us check it out.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And, Winnie and Violet, I know that -- this question is aimed at both of you; what communications have you had from the RCMP in recent years?

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: When they come to take
the DNA and they said there’s nothing -- “No news yet for you but we come to take your DNA so that when something comes up, then we’ll call you and let you know if we have something for you.”

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And do either of you remember the name of the officer you spoke with?

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: I don’t.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: We had -- because of my work in the community, I knew this one officer; his name was Don Wrigglesworth. He was a very kind and compassionate RCMP that I have gotten to meet and he was really good in our communities. And when the whole Penticton issue came up, I think this is why some files were -- from my understanding, our sister’s file was closed and it got opened up again with some information about trying to find connections or if there was any connections to the Pickton case. And I think this is why the whole DNA thing was started, just to ensure that her DNA wasn’t found in the area.

So Don came knocking on our door and mentioned it to us so he wanted to collect DNA from all of the siblings, which included my husband and my sisters -- all my sister-in-laws [sic]. So that was done.

And just recently, I guess, someone from the RCMP detachment in Hazelton contacted Winnie and wanted her
to bring in a copy of the photo so she did that. And I think we gave you copies of that yesterday, the clipping -- Winnie kept clippings from the newspaper about our sister going missing. And she also had a picture that was taken around the time she had a birthday. Like, her birthday’s in September, early September; September 10\(^{th}\).

**MS. WINNIE SAMPARE:** Tenth (10\(^{th}\)).

**MS. VIOLET SAMPARE:** She had just turned 18 in September and she went missing in October. And the photo that we have, which is -- which the Missing and Murdered Women have, and within their group and it’s this photo here. And this is an old high school picture. This is one of the best pictures we ever had of her.

**MS. VIOLET SAMPARE:** And then just a few days ago we also seen a picture that Winnie had, and that was actually taken by Virginia’s own camera, because she went to visit Winnie. So I’ll let Winnie explain that.

**MS. WINNIE SAMPARE:** It was about three weeks before her birthday, and she came and she was happy. She’s happy to come and see me and Sandra, my sister. And she took pictures of my son. He was only three years old then.

**MS. WINNIE SAMPARE:** I was like a mother to my younger siblings, Anna, Virginia, and Sandra, when Mum and Dad were busy working the boats and fishing. I was the
young mother till I turned 16 and I started working myself. I loved to look after them when they’d get sick of having measles. I pretend to be a nurse for them and put blankets up on the windows to keep them in the dark. That’s what we’re supposed to do when people have measles, I told them, and they listened to me. My poor little siblings.

And they still look up to me as a Mum right now because Mum and Dad are both gone, yeah. And whenever they have a question, they ask me and I’m there for them all the time.

Thank you.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And Winnie, I’m just going to pass you the two newspaper clippings that you provided as well.

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: Do I read it?

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: You could just read the headline or you could read any part of it that you want to read out.

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: Okay. This one says:

“Search Continues for Girl. The search continues in the Hazelton area today for 18-year-old Virginia Sampare, missing from her home since October 14th. Poor weather conditions restrict the use of helicopters in the search,”
but with the aid of the people of the area and a police dog from the Peace River area, Hazelton RCMP are still scouring the surrounding hills. Nothing concrete has yet been discovered that might lead the searchers to the girl, although a number of footprints found scattered over areas yesterday led the searchers to believe the girl was in the area.” (As read)

And this one says:

“Search Called Off. Hazleton RCMP have called off the search for 18-year-old Virginia Sampare who went missing from her home at 11:00 p.m. October 14th. No conclusive signs were found in the two-week search, although a police dog had been brought in from the Peace River area. RCMP said that no doubt the villagers will continue the search indefinitely.” (As read)

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you.

Winnie, Roddy mentioned earlier that they had gone to Vancouver looking for Virginia. When you
travel, have you found yourself preoccupied with looking for her?

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: Yes, everywhere I went. We went for a trip to the Yukon, I’m looking. Anyone that looks like her, I will try to follow them and see if it’s her. No. Then I worked here in Smithers at -- what do they call that beer and wine restaurant over there?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Twin Valley.

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: Oh yeah, Twin Valley. And I was taking -- those towel tops off the tables go do the laundry and I thought, “Hey, that looks like Virginia.” But then I had an armload of -- so I thought I’ll take them downstairs, come back and check it out. I should have checked it out first and then -- yeah. I’m always doing stuff like that, trying to find her in any way. Just keep looking.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Right to this day.

Roddy, can you describe for the Commissioner the other impacts on your family that have happened because of Virginia’s disappearance?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: I remember one time -- Mum was still alive -- on the Band list they had her as deceased. So Mum got a hold of me and said, “The Band is having a meeting tonight. You have to come with me.” I said, “Okay.” So she asked the Band, she said, “If my
daughter is deceased, can you take me to where she’s at so
I can bring her home and put her to rest?” That’s what my
Mum said to the Band Council at the time. And today on the
Band list she is just listed as missing. They’ve changed
it from deceased to missing.

It’s really impacted our family quite a bit.
No matter where we go, we’re always looking. We named our
oldest daughter after her; we named her Virginia. And then
she was worked in Toronto and in -- doing files for health
and she looked, trying to find if she had applied for
medicine or anything back in Toronto, and she didn’t find
anything. She worked in the big office in Toronto.

We’re always looking. We’re not going to
stop till -- and like my Mum said, the only time we rest is
when we put her to rest and we know that’s she’s resting.
But right now she’s still missing.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: Like Roddy and Winnie
shared, you know, everywhere we went. Roddy was a
commercial fisherman and we’re down the coast every summer.
We both work; he fishes and we worked in the cannery.
Winnie worked in the canneries.

And after fishing, we’d take our children
and we’d go to Vancouver. Most of you know that they have
the PNE in Vancouver, so we always like to take our kids
shopping as well as going to the PNE every summer. Like,
after fishing was done we’d take a trip. And during those trips we always, always -- you know, were always looking. Roddy and I would go in bars and look, even on the downtown east side, which wasn’t really that bad back then. We’d go into the bars down that street, the main downtown area on the east side there, and also on Granville Street there’s bars. And we’d walk in those bars and look.

His cousins were with us because we always seem to travel together; his cousin, Melvin. Because he’s so close to his cousins and being a fisherman, like, we always went on holidays after fishing was over. And we’d always go to Vancouver and there we were always looking, and they were looking. So we had a lot of people have sightings and they’d tell us, “Oh, we seen someone that looked like her.” So we’d always take off and go investigate ourselves. And it’s hard. You know, we may look like we don’t -- we’re not doing anything but whenever were out of our community, in a different community, we’re looking at people, you know. We’re looking at people that may look similar to her and we make sure that it’s not her. So -- and it’s so hard because our children, like even Sandra, our youngest sister, she has three boys. She never got to meet them. She hadn’t met them. She hasn’t met our children. She got to meet Winnie’s son because he’s the oldest of all the grandchildren.
So it’s very hard. I can imagine how my own daughter feels being named after someone she doesn’t even know. All she knows is that it’s her auntie.

So it’s hard a really, really hard impact on our whole family.

Thank you.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: How -- for our understanding; you’ve alluded to it, but for our understanding how do you describe the pain of having a family member disappear into thin air?

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: It’s just like going to a funeral and crying over your loved one, how it hurts. The pain is terrible. It’s always there, that pain. Every October 14th, and it’s coming again. My sister, Anna, said, and Sandra, my baby sister, “We should go and have a candlelight (inaudible) was last seen, maybe we’ll feel a little bit better doing stuff like that,” she said. And I said, “That’s a good idea. Let Roddy know.” Because he’s our Chief, we always let him know what we plan.

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: The pain doesn’t go away. You know, I was sitting in the other room there and listening to the people that lost their loved ones through murder, you know. At least some of them have had the chance to buried their loved one. We didn’t get that chance. It really hurts inside, and still does today. It
doesn’t go away. We pray and hope that we’d have a peaceful ending one way or another. If we can find her, lay her to rest if she’s dead; if she’s alive, we’d love her.

It’s hard to lose somebody that you love to begin with and it’s harder and harder each year goes by. Mum waited for her. Before she died of cancer, she waited and waited. They gave her a week to live in Vancouver. I asked them to fly her back to Hazelton on a mercy flight, and she got transferred back. And she lasted three months. They gave her a week in Vancouver but she lasted three months because she was waiting for her daughter to come and see her before she left. That never happened.

I didn’t tell Breen that earlier when we had the interview but that’s what Mum did, she waited and waited because she thought Virginia was going to come and see her before she died. That didn’t happen.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you.

I understand that your family has recently had an opportunity to talk with the RCMP about their file. Can you tell me about that?

MS. VIOLET Sampare: I’m not sure how that was -- that came about, but Roddy got a call at our home -- because I work at the health centre. And Roddy got a call at home just a few days ago before we were actually told
what day to be here. And RCMP wanted to meet with him and
his family, and we actually met with them yesterday and he
shared with us -- he managed to get a copy of the file, and
he shared that the file was closed in 1995.

I guess back then they only keep the file
open for so long and -- but when the whole Pickton case
came up, the file was opened up and it is still open again.
So -- and they do have -- one of the good things that came
out of that meeting was that they now have DNA that’s on
file and in case there is some findings and they can do
some testing, and that if -- like I said, if something
comes up, they’ll contact us.

And the other shocking information for us
was that he shared that our Chief Councillor and others --
I’m not sure who the others were; there were no other names
mentioned -- had gone to the RCMP detachment and told them
that there was footprints found at the Gitsegukla River and
they believed that it was hers.

And the reason why I say it’s shocking
information is that information from the Chief Councillor
wasn’t shared with the family. Like, this was new to us
yesterday; that information wasn’t shared to the parents or
to the rest of the family back then. Why was that not
shared? I guess, assuming that the RCMP figured that the
Chief Council and whoever he took to the RCMP detachment
had told the family before they went.

So we didn’t even know about it. So this is something that really, really shocked us yesterday and was very upsetting to find out that your Chief Councillor gave assumptions to the RCMP that our sister had gone in the river. To me, that’s assuming that our sister went in the river and drowned. And they never, ever told the family that.

So when we’re home tomorrow or whenever we’re done here, Roddy is going to go and talk to this Chief Councillor, who is still alive; he’s no longer Chief Council but he is still around, and he’s going to question him about that and find out more information of why this was brought to the RCMP and not to the family.

So, to me, that sounds like maybe that’s why they closed -- they stepped the search. We don’t know. So we’ll get to the bottom of it ourselves. Like, Roddy’ll get to the bottom of this because that’s his family, and this is very serious.

This is very serious, why he did not confront the family first before he went to the RCMP and gave that information. So that’s something that we learned about the file that’s in -- that was at the Hazelton Detachment. But the good thing about it is the file is open now and will remain open until she’s found or
CHIEF RODDY SAM Pare: I can’t understand what the RCMP were saying to us yesterday. They said that the file had been closed in 1985, and then they come up with a news clipping that the Chief Councillor had said at the time back in ’71.

So somebody’s pulling our leg. They’re saying that the file is closed, and yet they have clippings that come back from 1971. So I feel that the RCMP isn’t telling the full story when they talked to us and tell us that the file has been closed. And I asked for a copy of the file and they wouldn’t give it to me.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Were you allowed to view the full file?

CHIEF RODDY SAM Pare: Yes, he gave us the one where Kenny had -- Kenny Russell had made a statement that they seen footprints going into the river. And I can’t see it because the whole area is just rocks so you can’t leave footprints on the rocks unless you had muddy feet, I guess. So I don’t know what’s happening there.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So were you able to review any police officer’s notes that were in the police file to see how much weight they put on what was said by that Band Councillor?

MS. VIOLET SAM Pare: No. All we did was
Hearing – Public
Roddy, Violet & Winnie Sampare
(Jean Virginia Sampare)

read the information that was put on the file. We didn’t
-- I didn’t see the dates and times of when that was done.
I never even thought to check to see what ---

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Dates.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: --- date was put on it
and who took the statement.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Do you feel like you
had enough time and access to the file to get answers out
of that session, the answers that you would want?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: No, we didn’t. That’s
why I asked for the file and they wouldn’t give it to us.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: As a matter of the
shocking information in the file, do you believe that you
were adequately prepared for what you were about to see in
that meeting?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: No, we weren’t.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So overall, how do you
feel about the meeting with the RCMP so close to the
hearing today?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Well, I find it very
surprising that they contact us so close to the hearing,
and how they knew that we they were going to be part of the
hearing is -- we thought that you guys had cut the brain
and the Commissioner had contacted the RCMP to do that to
us and I found out later when I was talking to Breen that
he said, “No, it’s not part of our job to do that.” We
don’t know how they did it.

MR. BRENN OUELLETTE: Okay. Thank you for
that. Can we take a five-minute break?

Thank you.

--- Upon recessing

--- Upon resuming

RODDY SAMPARE, Resumed:

VIOLET SAMPARE, Resumed:

WINNIE SAMPARE, Resumed:

MR. BRENN OUELLETTE: Roddy, would you let
the Chief Commissioner know what you hope will be the
outcome as a result of your testimony today?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: There’s a lot of
things that I kind of hope to see happen from this inquiry,
where they would have cell phone services right from Prince
George to Prince Rupert. There’s a lot of dead areas.
There is cell phones along the way but there’s a lot of
dead areas where people can be taken advantage of. Even if
they have cell phones, they can’t call for help.

So I want to see the whole area right from
Prince George to Prince Rupert get cell service of some
kind.

And I know the transit is working on the bus
that comes from Prince George to Vancouver, I think. But there should be one coming from Prince Rupert to Prince George and connect with the other bus that’s going on further.

So I’d like to see the bus service, the bus transit -- we have, in most of our communities in the Hazelton area, and I don’t know about Terrace and Prince Rupert, but the Hazelton areas are mostly 99 percent unemployed. And even today, I pick people up when they have their little SA cheque because they can’t afford to get somebody to drive them into town to cash their cheque and get a bit of groceries. Because living in the Reserve, you get very little. You live in town, you get the maximum amount of SA dollars that is awarded to people that are living in town.

And Reserve, it’s not like that. They get 100 and some odd dollars to live on in the month. And they pretty well have to shoot moose and can fish to stay alive in the summer months. If they don’t do that they won’t make it through the year.

It’s tough. We’re discriminated on as living on Reserve; it still happens today. I’d like to see that -- our people get treated the same as the neighbouring people where they can get full benefit that they can catch a bus. I know some bus rides in our area is $2 to go to.
town, $2 to come back, and they can’t even afford that. They have to hitchhike.

So something has to be done in the communities. And there's no jobs. And I never, ever had to depend on Welfare. I worked all my life. Back then it was nice going and everybody was working. Now it’s really tough. And I feel for the people, my kids. My daughter has to work at Smithers here. My other daughter, she’s trying to get a truck driving ticket. My son works in Terrace in Graydon Security.

So we had to move our kids off the Reserve in order to get educated. And they’re feeling sorry because they’ve lost their language and their tradition a bit. My wife is trying to get them back on track, and our little ones are learning.

But the main thing that I want to see -- it’s not just for us, it’s for everybody, even some of the -- our neighbours in South Hazelton, they’re hitchhiking because they don’t have enough money to get around, and they’re not first Nation. It’s all race; all the race that’s living in the north. It’s not like living in the city where you bus runs every eight minutes or ten minutes. You have a bus; lucky to get one bus a day; one in the morning, one at night. They quit at 5:00, I think, 5:00 or 6:00 (inaudible) the bus quits running.
MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: It only runs on certain days.

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: And it runs on certain days. (inaudible) usually gets two days, (inaudible) gets two days. And it’s a sad, sad affair that we have to live in. We’re still not people the way they looked at us. And they’re bringing in more people that they’re treating better than us. Thank Trump for that.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Roddy, we’ve spoken on the issue of what you would hope would come from your testimony, and I just want to ask you also about cameras at intersections.

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Yes, that’s what my wife was saying in her thing there that, you know, cameras should be at intersections because a lot of the people that stand to hitchhike, they stand in the light where the intersection is. And if somebody’s getting picked up at least it’ll be on the camera; not just in the Reserve but in towns, just out of town there should be cameras.

Like, you see cameras now where they have monitoring the highway when it’s snow, and they have cameras all over the place. They should do that to every place where there’s potential hitchhiking to be happening.

Now they have signs on the road saying it’s illegal to hitchhike but if they know what kind of reason
why they’re hitchhiking, I don’t know if they charge them but...

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: I will now ask the Chief Commissioner if she has any further questions.

(SHORT PAUSE)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I have a couple of questions about the DNA samples that were taken. Do you remember roughly when it was; what year it was that they came to take those samples?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Two thousand six (2006) or ’7 when the Pickton Farm was being dug up.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: When the police officers asked you for your DNA samples, did they give you any indication of why they wanted your DNA samples?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: Well, the guy that talked to me was -- he said there’s a lot of DNA that’s been collected at the farm and we -- and I said, yes, we would ---

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: But they didn’t say, “We have” -- something along the lines of, “We have reason to believe that your sister was at the Pickton Farm and we’d like your DNA”?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: No. He said that there was just some DNA that they haven’t been able to get
a hold of in their research that they were doing so they
asked if they would give -- if we’d give the DNA. So we
did, just in the case that our sister was one of them that
was there.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Did they
tell you what would happen with her DNA; that they would
keep it private, or look after it so that it wouldn’t be
used improperly?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: No, he didn’t. They
just took it, and we just kept hoping that something would
come out of it.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: And I
just want to be sure on dates. Pardon me; I got so wrapped
up in what you were saying I can’t find my notes now.

(SHORT PAUSE)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: So you
heard from the RCMP just a few days ago, but how long was
it before then that you heard from them? I didn’t phrase
that very well.

(LAUGHTER)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: But
before you heard from them just in the last couple of days, when
was it that you heard from them?

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: When the Pickton Farm
was happening, was the last time we heard from any RCMP.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay.
When you met with the RCMP officer just yesterday, did the
RCMP officer just show you the file or -- just open it up
to you? What happened?

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: Roddy asked for a copy
of the file, where it mentioned the statement that was done
by the Chief Council at the time and he just said that we
could not have -- I don’t know if it was that copy that he
had or if we were privy to any of the copies on file. He
just said that we couldn’t have that file.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: So I’m not certain if
it’s the paper he had on hand at the time or if we are not
allowed to have the file at all.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay.
And so I’m just imagining the scene with the police
officer. Did he just -- or she, I suppose -- open up --
just open the file and say, “Here, this is the file that we
have”?

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: Yeah, when he asked for
that. He took it out of his binder and he -- because he
didn’t want to read it again, he handed us a copy of -- he
handed us that piece of paper. He says, “You can read it
for yourself.”

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I see.
MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: Because we questioned him about, like, why weren’t we given that information back then that this man had gone with several other people -- we don’t know how many people but he said that there were others that went with him to the RCMP detachment and gave that information. So we asked why, at the time, that Chief Councillor didn’t go to the family and share that information with them.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay. I understand.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: So he just gave the sheet and he says, “You read it right there,” and that’s what we did.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I understand now.

Thank you.

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: And we didn’t know if there was anything else in the file. All we were shown was that one thing from Ken Russell.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you very much.

Last word to -- well, last word to you. Is there anything else that you’d like to tell us this afternoon?

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: From this inquiry, I’m
-- I personally would like to see that a lot of the things that were mentioned with all the hearings that I've attended and heard family members talk about, and a lot of it is repeated, but I'm hoping that -- to see some of those things come to light, especially in regards to the transportation, and also the surveillance in intersections. Because -- and then this information that Greyhound may be cutting their service to our area, like, Prince George to Prince Rupert, that we're hearing that service is going to be cut. I don't know if it's because the BC Transit now has service, and it's only on certain days, once a day from Smithers here to Prince George and we do have locally BC Transit in the Hazeltons. We have the transit come to our community but it doesn't go on to Kitwanga, which is the next community, and then up north a bit to Gitanyow. Like, we have the three western Gitsan areas and two of those communities do not get the BC Transit.

So I'd like to see that extended to their communities and also to extend the BC Transit all the way down to Prince Rupert.

I think I'm feeling that is why Greyhound is changing their service only to -- what are they called, where they ---

CHIEF RODDY SAMPARE: (inaudible)

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: Yeah. You know, just
to -- and not for transportation.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: M’hm.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: We do have for health, the health bus, the northern connections. We do utilize that; some of the communities do utilize that and because it’s only for medical we cannot use it for public transit. So the public transit should really look at extending their service to Prince Rupert.

It’s a beginning, and I know it may expand and have more buses available. So that’s something I would like to see, is that BC Transit does extend their service all the way to Prince Rupert, and to all the communities, like, even up to the Nass River. There’s communities up in that area as well. They don’t get transit but I know they do provide some from their communities to Terrace, and that’s something we’re not -- we don’t have. Like, we just don’t have the funding to buy buses and hire drivers to have community buses going in different places like Smithers, Terrace, or Prince Rupert.

MS. WINNIE SAMPARE: I would like to see that those that travel to travel in twos or threes, not by yourself. It’s dangerous.

(SHORT PAUSE)

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: The family is done.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Okay.
Well, thank you all very much.

**MS. VIOLET SAMPARE:** You’re welcome.

**CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** I’m so grateful that you were able to come today, and that we were able to listen to your own language for a little bit, too. That was lovely, thank you.

Because you’ve shared your important story with us about your lost sister, we have some gifts for you. I’ll try not to trip or spill any water.

Everywhere we go we want to give families and survivors a couple of little gifts. And the first one is some seeds, and it’s always local because we certainly don’t want to bring in foreign seeds. So we have some fireweed seeds for you, and we know how resilient and tough those plants are. And we hope that they give you some strength as well. And please plant them and tell us what happens, what grows. So I have those for you.

And I also have another gift from Haida Gwaii. I’m going to ask you to help me with that.

When the matriarchs on Haida Gwaii learned about the hearings here in Smithers, they directed some people to go and collect eagle feathers to give to the families and survivors, to comfort them, to give them strength and courage, and just to acknowledge their loss as well.
So this is a gift from the matriarchs on Haida Gwaii in recognition and to honour your strength and courage, and to recognize your loss. It’s also from us, for the same reasons; we’re so very grateful that you’re here and that you shared your stories and your recommendations with us. It’s very important.

You’ve already made a difference so thank you; and you’ve changed me. Thank you very much.

And I think we’ll just stop for a little bit because we have to set up for the next family. Okay?

Thank you.

MS. VIOLET SAMPARE: Thank you.

--- Exhibits (code: P1P020206)

**Exhibit 1:** Black and white copy of photo of Jean Virginia Sampare (high school photo) on 8.5 x 11 inch paper.

**Exhibit 2:** Black and white copy of photo of Jean Virginia Sampare on 8.5 x 11 inch paper.

**Exhibit 3:** Newspaper article entitled "Search continues for girl" (undated / no publication information).

**Exhibit 4:** Newspaper article entitled "Search called off" (undated / no publication information).

--- Upon recessing at 15:05

--- Upon resuming at 15:25
Hearing # 7

Witness: Rachelle Wilson

In relation to Ramona Wilson

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller

Commission Counsel: Joseph Murdoch-Flowers

Clerk: Gladys Wraight, Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Chief Commissioner,

I have the honour today of working with Rachelle Wilson, who is coming before the Inquiry to speak of the disappearance of her cousin, Ramona Wilson, in 1994.

I understand that Rachelle will be beginning with a song which, for the purposes of the Inquiry and the oath or affirmation, I ask satisfies the requirements of the oath or affirmation.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Yes, it does.

JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Thank you.

And after that, Commissioner, I expect Rachelle to launch into her story and to share with us her story.

So with that, I'll just pass the microphone over.

And I should also acknowledge, Commissioner, that there's a number of support people here as well. Perhaps I'll leave you to introduce them.
MS. RACHELLE WILSON: Good afternoon, Commissioner. This is my cousin, Brenda. She's the older sister of Ramona Wilson.

Just to give you a little update that we have had two deaths in our family, one in Prince George of our 22 year old cousin, and our uncle that just passed on Saturday. So these two deaths have affected our family.

Brenda and my aunt were supposed to speak and I was supposed to be the support person, but because this has been devastating having two losses in our family, they had to step back. And as a support person, I wanted to support them.

I was asked to be a witness, so I've gone through the process in July for the interview, so I've stepped forward as the witness to speak on behalf of Ramona Wilson's family.

So right now, we are Gitxsan, and that's where Ramona comes from, from the Gitxsan Nation. And we belong to the Wolf Clan. And I am one of the Wing Chiefs of our house.

My Gitxsan name is Simkanosen (phon). Simkanosen is the Wing Chief and the medicine woman name that carried down from my grandmother, Maggie, to my mother, Alison, and to me. So the song that I'm going to sing is very ancient song of our house, and we call it our
limkholi (phon). Our limkholi is a morning song.

So the reason why I chose to open up and to swear that I'm telling the truth is that, in our law, that when somebody passes on to the spirit world is that we have to set their spirit free. And through this song today, we are going to set Winona's spirit free 'cause we have gone through this for 23 years since she has gone missing on June 11th, 1994.

We have honoured her all the years, but I feel, Commissioner, that we have hung on to her, that we need to let her spirit free.

So this song is our ancient family song, and I'm going to stand before you to swear in that I'm telling the truth and I'm going to sing our spirit song, our mourning song.

--- OPENING SONG

MS. RACHELLE WILSON: That song that I just sang is (Native language) and it was a ceremony of letting Ramona's spirit free.

And we've been very selfish the last 23 years to -- it felt like we were hanging on to Ramona. But Ramona was taken from us on June 11th, 1994.

And that evening, before she went missing, she had dinner with her mother, Matilda Wilson, my aunt.

And she told her mom that she was going to see some friends.
and her boyfriend at the time, who lived in Moricetown.

And on June 11th, that was the weekend of the grad in Smithers, graduation. And Ramona left that evening.

And the next day, Ramona didn't come home. And my aunt started getting worried, and she called my mother, Alice, her sister. We live in Hazelton.

She called my mom and she said that she was worried 'cause her baby girl didn't come home. Ramona was 16 years old.

And so my mom was feeling really distraught and told us that we had to go to Smithers to go see our aunt and to try to help look for Ramona. And so our whole family came to Smithers, and we all gathered together.

And in the meantime, my Aunt Matilda was phoning all over. She was phoning all of Ramona's friends to ask if they had seen her, and nobody seemed to know where or -- where her whereabouts were.

And we knew that it was out of character for Ramona to go missing. We all became very concerned.

I asked my aunt if she had called the RCMP, and they told my aunt that they had to wait 24 hours, which I thought was pretty precious time in that 24 hours. I felt that if the RCMP would have responded in that 24 hours, who knows if we would have found her alive. That's
always a question that our family has always asked.

A week gone by, and still the RCMP did not do nothing. So all our friends and family from Moricetown, the search and rescue, they were friends of Matilda's. And they stepped and came to Smithers to say they would help search for Ramona.

So that whole week, family and friends were searching for Ramona. But in the meantime, we didn't know why the RCMP didn't respond. And we didn't understand why it seemed like nobody was listening to us, our family.

Like we tried to get missing posters. And our family didn't know where to go to access service to get help for missing posters or anything. And my uncle, Frank Sampson, is an artist, an Indian artist. And he had painted some -- some of his artwork.

And my cousin, Brenda, did bead work. And my aunt also did bead work, but she also baked and cooked.

So we had to raise money on our own to try to get money, reward money. And it felt really heartbreaking because we had to stand in the mall with Ramona's picture trying to ask people in public that if they ever saw her or if they seen her around.

So we tried to have bake sales. We tried to sell jewellery. We tried everything to raise money, and the money was very little.
It seemed like we didn't have any support.

Even trying to get the media, like the interior news or any kind of radio station, somebody to hear us, but our family had to chase after the media to say, "Hey, wait a minute. You guys have to listen to us because our family member's gone missing".

And it seemed like it was just dead ends everywhere trying to look for Ramona.

Two weeks of searching and looking. And during that time, for myself, the last time I had seen Ramona was probably a week before she went missing.

And Ramona was a 16 year old that was in high school, and she was very brilliant. She wrote poetry. She did very well in school, and her dream was to become a psychologist. She wanted to help children and families and be a psychologist.

She was very good at her writing, and she had poems that she wrote, and very artistic in her words.

So she's the youngest of my aunt's children. She's -- my aunt has six children, and Ramona was the baby.

They lived on Railway Avenue in Smithers, and she had older sister here, Brenda, and her brothers and her being the baby girl.

Ramona was very strong in her words and what she said. And today I often think as I sit here as a Wing
Chief and a matriarch of our house, I often wonder what Ramona would have become because of her strength.

Unfortunately, days have gone by and we couldn't find Ramona. And I remember sitting at home, I was pregnant with my youngest son, but I -- last time I had seen Ramona, she was sitting at Mr. Mike's -- what they used to call Mr. Mike's. It's now a steakhouse on Main. And she was a waitress at Smitty's restaurant.

And we had dinner and we saw her at the Mr. Mike's restaurant. And she was rubbing my tummy and asking me when I was having my baby. And I told her November.

And she said she couldn't wait to meet my baby. And I was teasing her and I was telling her that I couldn't wait to go over to Smitty's so she could serve me as a waitress. And I told her I was going to harass and really tease her.

And she giggled and she says, "You better not", she said to me. And I laughed and we parted our ways. But that was the last time I had seen Ramona alive.

To have our family and friends from Moricetown searching for her, our family went out. And I don't know why night time was the worst 'cause I didn't know where she was. And as an Aboriginal woman, I felt really unsafe.

I felt that whoever murdered her was -- was
watching us search for her. And I felt that -- as an
Aboriginal woman, I felt fearful that I would be murdered
next or -- I had nightmares about being murdered and trying
to get away.

The trauma of our spirit, worried about who
was going to be next, just having night terrors about
Ramona being murdered, where she'd be, is she cold laying
somewhere. Does anybody care in this community? Do the
RCMP care? Does the media care? Is there anybody out
there that knows what it's like to just sit back and feel
so helpless, the helpless feeling of feeling so alone even
though there were people standing forward and searching for
her?

I think in the wintertime and the fall time
that came, we were so lonely and we tried to keep each
other's spirit up. But Ramona was always on our mind
through Christmas holidays.

I remember my mom and my auntie lighting
candles and praying that she would come home. The trauma
of our spirits and our family was so broken.

I was sharing with our family today that the
alcoholism in our family increased, the pain was so great.

She went missing June 11th, 1994, and then
10 months later, there were two young men that were on an
ATV just outside of Smithers, by Yelich Road, just behind
the airport in a wooded bush. They were looking for -- I
guess they got their ATV stuck in the mud and they were
looking for a stick or something to try to pry their ATV
out of the mud. And they came across remains.

We -- of course, again, we didn't -- we
didn't hear from the RCMP. We just heard through the word
of people saying there was remains found. But one of the
things that I really want to stress was when the RCMP were
contacted, why didn't they take our family serious?

And the other thing is that I think what
should have happened -- because what was happening was the
RCMP had so many different people taking on the case there
was not one solid RCMP to actually -- actually communicate
with us. It was us chasing after the RCMP and asking
questions.

Same with the media. Where I felt that we
should have had a person like an Aboriginal liaison RCMP or
somebody that could be more sensitive to our Gitxsan
culture so that we wouldn't have to feel that we were just
harassing people to try to get any information, 'cause
that's how it felt.

I felt that we were just a thorn in the
RCMP's side for asking questions in regards to our loved
one missing.

So these two young boys found these remains,
and we weren't really contacted by the RCMP. We weren't told, but my aunt phoned my mother and said that remains were found and that we had to prepare ourselves just in case it was Ramona.

It didn't come from the RCMP because they never really seemed to talk to us. We had to talk to them. There was quite the process when Ramona's remains were found. We were told that we had to be prepared for what was -- whatever was to come. But all they could tell us that the remains have been sent to Vancouver to forensics.

We weren't told whether it was a suspicion that it was Ramona.

So we -- they found her remains in April of 1995, and that was 10 months after she went missing. And when they found the remains, they said they were sending it to Vancouver.

And I remember our family having a family dinner, and it was just around Easter time, in April. And I remember the stress of all sitting in a circle trying to have an Easter dinner and crying and breaking down because we didn't know if it was Ramona. All my aunties and uncles and my cousins were all very sombre sitting there waiting.

And about three weeks later, the RCMP contacted my aunt and told her that the remains have been
brought back to Smithers and that she would have to come
and identify to see if it was Ramona.

And I remember going to the police station
from Hazelton driving here to stop off at my aunt's, and we
were all told to meet at the Smithers RCMP detachment.

And I remember that there was three people
selected to go in, and there was my mom Alice, my Aunt
Matilda and my Uncle Frank, and Brenda.

And we were waiting outside, and we have a
really large family. But the thing that I had felt was --
they went in to identify her. There were no counsellors.
There was no support. We were left outside.

And all I could remember was my Aunt Matilda
and my mom and my uncle and my cousin, Brenda, all coming
out screaming. And all I could hear my aunt screaming is
"My baby. That's my baby".

And our whole family -- our whole family was
just screaming and crying.

I thought how insensitive. Where is --
where is the support? Why did we have to be standing
outside? Why didn't we have any counsellors on hand? Why
didn't we have an RCMP to -- to give us some sort of word
or comfort or something? Everything seemed handled so
insensitive to our -- our culture.

We were to identify Ramona and then to plan
her funeral, something that took a real big toll on our family.

Who would have murdered her, and why? Why?
Why didn't we get that support? We didn't have the police to rely on and we didn't have any support.
The process was so painful just feeling so unprotected.
I felt like whoever murdered Ramona is still out there. Whoever murdered Ramona could be watching us.
The RCMP knew that we were planning Ramona's funeral, and one cop came over and said to us, "When you guys go plan her funeral, we will be at the funeral but we want you to watch out for any suspicious behaviour. Anything that -- you look at anybody in the crowd and if they're acting suspicious, let us know".
I thought again how could -- how could they say that when we were grieving. I couldn't even see through my tears.
I looked around and I just -- just felt like I couldn't even live. I'm pretty sure that 95 percent of our family didn't want to live through this.
The guilt of having to be alive when our loved one was taken, this has plagued our family for a long time. We feel guilty because we're still alive and she was taken at 16 years old.
I need some Kleenex.
So we planned Ramona's funeral. Ramona had many friends in Smithers. She attended school here, so we thought, to ease the pain of our aunt, that we would allow Ramona to be buried in Smithers and not take her home to Gitanmaax to have a ceremonial Gitxsan funeral. We thought that because of our aunt living here and the many friends and her home here that she made in Smithers that we would take Ramona home one day to Gitanmaax and then to bring her remains to lay her to rest in Smithers.

So there were so many things that we had to do. I remember preparing for everything. It was just a time of chaos and a time of anger, a time of tears. Sometimes I wondered when it was ever going to ease up 'cause I could think about all the fundraising our family had to do alone, not feeling like we had support or anyone to really talk to. Just drowning ourselves in sorrow.

And the day of the funeral for Ramona came, so we brought her remains to the St. Joseph's church over here. And when we brought her there, it was our immediate family.

And I think that's when our spirits left 'cause I was never the same and neither was my aunt, neither was my cousin, and my other cousins, her brothers.

The trauma of going to her funeral and wanting to open her casket but knowing that it was just her

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remains was very hard, to try to accommodate what was happening and trying to work through everything.

Coming out of the church, the -- I guess the tears that were coming through was -- were so great, but when we finally got Ramona's remains into the vehicle as we were heading to the graveyard, we were heading on to Main Street to make our way to the Smithers cemetery and there was a lot of RCMP around, and I wondered why.

Why now are they all around now that Ramona's remains are going to be buried? Where were they when we needed it?

And they're the ones that are supposed to be vigilant and looking after the public. We shouldn't have had to worry about suspicious behaviours or anything because, like I said, we couldn't even see through our tears, let alone anyone that had suspicious behaviour.

So when we brought Ramona up to the graveyard, you think nobody cares. You think you're alone. But there were hundreds of people standing all along the Main Street.

So many people probably thought about us but were scared to come forward.

There were so many people right from Main Street all the way down to the graveyard, people, strangers and people sending cards and giving us things. It just
seemed so overwhelming because for those 10 months of not knowing.

    I really don't remember going to Ramona's grave and burying her remains. I don't remember that part because it was too traumatic.

    There were a lot of people that came forward after, and my aunt -- my aunt said, "There's people sending sympathy cards that I don't even know, but I must thank them".

    So in our culture, after we do the burial, we usually go to the area that person died. And as a medicine person, as a Chief, as a person to stand up for your family, we had to go to that area where they had found Ramona, which was that Yelich Road.

    So there was myself, my mom, my aunties. There was two of my aunties, Esther, Matilda. And the purpose of us that we were going to go to the area after the funeral to bless the area, our ceremonial purpose is to brush the area and to cleanse the area where her life was taken or where they laid her to rest.

    So we were told that we couldn't go there because of the investigation the first time, and we were told that the forensic team from Vancouver was there. And they had a sister there, so we couldn't go there.

    So this was after that fact that they said
that they had did their investigation and they were finished.

So we went to that area. And where that area is, you go down Yelich Road and you turn to your left and there's a big field there. But in that big field, there's a little walking place on your left-hand side. And my auntie said she knew where the area was where they found Ramona so that we would head to that area.

So there was all women that were walking the trail to get to where they found Ramona's remains.

And I remember walking with my aunties and my mom, and I remember saying, "Mom, I don't know why I feel this way, but I feel like that murderer's in the bush. He's watching us, and I'm scared. I don't feel safe here. I don't feel like this is the time we should be doing this. I think we need to let people know where we're at and have some men with us".

And my aunt said, "Well, I'm going to call my son and his friend, and then we'll come back and do this".

And I said, "Well, we're already pretty well here", I said. "But just keep an eye out in the bushes". I said, "Make sure you're vigilant about who's around and what's around". I said, "I don't know why I feel so fearful like we're being watched".
And we got to the area, and I was talking to my aunt. And I said to my aunt, "What did the police ever tell you about where she was laying and how she was laying?" Because there was this big tree -- as you end the trail, there was this big tree and it had branches. And the branches that was like this was sort of like a little fort. And the area under the tree was all clear, and then they laid Ramona's body right here under the tree so perfectly aligned.

And all they told us was that they found Ramona's -- some of Ramona's belongings folded very nicely and her body lay naked. That's all we were told.

And we also were told that her shoes weren't around anywhere. Her shoes were never found.

So I was fearful when I went there, and I was very distraught. And so when I got there, I could only imagine my cousin laying there for months as we all searched for her.

I thought how inhumane, how anybody could murder someone and just leave them laying there as we searched so hard and we prayed for a good outcome.

I was so distraught I fell to my knees and I just started crying. I took -- as I was on my knees, I just took the soil and I grabbed it and I was just hanging on like God, why? Why? Why did our cousin have to die
like this? God, please help us through this because this is just killing us.

My aunties surrounded me and I just looked up and I was crying so hard. And I opened my hands, I looked at the soil, and I said, "This is what you laid on my baby".

I opened my hands to let some of the soil fall through and what I saw was hair and pieces of cloth. I stopped crying. I looked at it. I was like "This is hair in the soil. What is going on? There's hair in there and there's bits of -- of clothing, of fabric".

It was purple, purple fabric.

I screamed really loud. I said, "This is the investigation? This is their investigation and there's hair? What if this is the murderer's hair? Whose clothing is this?" that I screamed out.

And my aunt said, "It looks like Ramona's purple jeans. She was wearing purple jeans".

I said, "I'm really upset. I want to go to the RCMP now". I said, "Get me an envelope so I could put this hair and this fabric and this -- this evidence, more or less, into an envelope and let's go back to the RCMP and ask again. If they said they did a thorough investigation and that they had done their part, then why is this hair and stuff here?"
I said, "This could be the murderer's hair and this clothing is Ramona's". And I said, "It really bothers me and I'm pissed off".

So we drove out of that area and we headed out and we went to the RCMP detachment.

And me and my aunt walked in and I took the envelope from my aunt and I looked at her and I asked if we could speak to the RCMP to turn in some evidence of where Ramona Wilson's body was laying.

And the person that was there said there was no RCMP and they'd get an RCMP to call me, and they just took the envelope like it was no big deal that we found Ramona's -- some evidence where Ramona was laying.

We never did speak to the RCMP. They just took the envelope.

And I went home and I remember driving home, and I was crying. I said, "Man", I said to myself, "if I don't hear back from the RCMP, I'm just going to keep bugging them. I'm going to keep phoning them every day until I get some sort of response if they don't respond. I've had enough".

Thankfully, one of the RCMP contacted me the next day by phone and they said that they understood that I had brought an envelope where Ramona Wilson's body was laying.
And I -- I agreed and I said, "Yes. And I'm wondering if this thorough investigation of Ramona's laying there and you guys doing the investigation of why there would be still hair and why there would still be fabric there and I'm wondering what you guys are going to do with this hair and what the procedure is if you find any evidence".

And they said, "You'll have to report to the RCMP first thing tomorrow morning and there'll be an RCMP to escort you out to that area".

So I did exactly that. The next morning, I got up, I went and drove to Smithers. I drove to the RCMP, and I went to meet an RCMP. And then there was two of them.

There was them escorting me out to Yelich Road to where they found Ramona's body.

And I remember walking back out there feeling again just like "What am I doing? Why am I having to go through this? Why is this happening?"

And they took me to that area and they had these little yellow cards with numbers on them. And the RCMP said, "Ma'am, is this where Ramona Wilson's body was laying?" And I said yes.

"And can you tell me what happened?" And I said yes, and I told him what I just finished telling you,
is that her body was laying there and that the -- they
found her remains and we've done the funeral and were going
to bless the area and that I got very upset and I fell to
the ground. And I grabbed some dirt and I was crying, and
that's when I found Ramona's hair and bits of her clothing.

Well, that's what I assumed, but I wasn't
quite sure, but my aunt said that it was her jeans that she
was wearing.

So they told me to kneel down and to point
to the -- where I grabbed the soil. And where I grabbed
that soil, you could still see where I grabbed -- the
imprint of where I grabbed the soil from.

So I pointed it out and I pointed to where I
was kneeling. And they just put numbers by the area that I
had found these things.

But the thing that I think is really
important here is that we were switched from cop to RCMP,
from RCMP. And they never, ever got back to us.

Neither did forensics. They never got back
to us.

We were never given cause of death of our
cousin, Ramona. We were never told by forensics. I
thought that my mom and aunt didn’t want to tell me because
I thought they were trying to protect me from any kind of
pain, but I directly asked my aunt. I asked my Aunt
Matilda, "How did Ramona die?"

And she looked at me and she said, "I can't tell you that 'cause I don't know. I was never given anything".

So back when Ramona died, there was no Itana (phon). The RCMP in the north probably weren't even prepared to how to deal with a crime scene or how to deal with a murder.

I felt that everything that was done was done in a manner where there was just rookies that did not know how to do the investigation or they did not know the procedures because of all the stuff being in the north.

I mean, you -- at that time, there was a death in Vancouver. The Vancouver police department -- when Melanie Carpenter went missing, she was already found even though she had passed and they found her body right away. The investigation was done.

In reality, why wasn't that done for our family? Why wasn't it done properly? And that's something that we'll have to ask questions and advocate for, that if someone ever goes missing and murdered, why is there not an alert?

There needs to be things put in the system where don't wait the 24 hours for someone when they go missing. Take them serious and listen right away. Have an
Aboriginal liaison officer so that they can listen to you.

Don't wait for a week before you act on it.

A week later, they were checking her bank statements to see if there was any bank activity. There wasn't.

We knew it was out of character. They thought that she was a 16 year old runaway, and we knew that she wasn't a runaway. We knew that Ramona would be upfront and let us know if she was with a friend or something.

There are so many things that I could say that I would like to see changed, is our culture. Our culture is important to us.

Aboriginal women are not disposable.

Aboriginal women have strength. And I'm going to speak that and I'm going to let Canada know and British Columbia know that we are not disposable. Women, we're at risk.

The Aboriginal women that have been murdered along Highway 16, why have we normalized that when we know that there's terrible people out there that are murdering women?

I don't want Ramona's life just to be a statistic. I want changes in Canada and British Columbia so that I can grow old and that I could say that I did my job that I felt that I needed to do for my family.

I just feel that -- I hope and I pray that
there are changes made so that our family -- and there are other families, if their loved one's going missing, that it's taken seriously so that you don't have to chase after the media or the RCMP to get any help or support from them, because Ramona's life mattered. It mattered to us.

There are -- those are the things that I have thought of of 23 years. There's got to be changes made so that other family members don't have to endure the trauma we have endured.

There's effects in our family from this death that maybe one day when we see the results of this missing and murdered National Inquiry that I hope that we could find some peace.

That's all I want in my life, is peace. I want to be okay with what I said today and I want to honour Ramona and Ramona's life because we loved her very much, and she's very dearly missed.

You could see up on the wall that she was our Gitxsan princess, and she'll live on through us. And I know that.

From the time she went missing in '94 to the time now where I've just come full circle to be a grandmother, and I'm doing this in honour of all my grandchildren and grandchildren yet to be born. And I hope that this Inquiry comes with good results.
Thank you. Thank you for listening.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCK-FLOWERS: You talked about changes that you want to see, and you mentioned some of the recommendations that you have like having perhaps a point person within the RCMP who is on a missing persons file or a murder file.

You also talked about the difficulty you had in coordinating resources for publicizing her disappearance and so on.

MS. RACHELLE WILSON: M'hm.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCK-FLOWERS: Do you have any recommendations about how these resources might be available in the future for anyone else who unfortunately faces the same situation that your family faced?

MS. RACHELLE WILSON: Yes.

I'm a nurse and, as you know, nurses do care plans. And my idea was that if someone were to go missing that the RCMP have an Aboriginal liaison to do the work as well as having a person in the RCMP detachment to help navigate -- navigate what the process is, that there is a place you can go to get help for the missing and murdered or missing, and how to access reward money, how to access services for mental health, to find that support within your own circle with your community.

I felt that there's got to be some
navigation through this whole process, not all the chaos
and feeling at loss and feeling you're alone.

And as so many families have said,
transportation. Transportation -- we did not have bus
services. And then the other day, as I was listening to
the radio, they said Greyhound bus service is cutting their
services in the north. And then they put the medical bus,
but you have to be medically sick to catch that bus, so
you're out of luck there.

And then they started this new bus, but it
only runs on those certain days.

You're still seeing young women hitchhiking
because the bus services is very slim that you're going to
-- when you need it that it's not going to be there, so
there's got to be that put into place.

But I also think that there's got to be some
sort of alert, you know, what kind of -- how are we going
to alert? Because you know what; I think within that 24
hours when someone goes missing that time is of the
essence, that there's got to be an alert put into place so
that the RCMP will say yes, we'll act on it, yes, we'll
look for them and yes, we'll have more result in bringing
that person home alive. Not wait 10 months like we've had
to.

There's just -- like there's just so many
things that I think all those little details of navigating
-- this is where I'm going to go. I'm going to the RCMP
and hopefully the RCMP will believe you and they will help
you.

But to have an Aboriginal liaison RCMP to
stay on your case and be that bridge between the two
cultures because there is the thing called systemic racism
that, unfortunately, has happened to us.

When nobody believes you, it's a really hard
angry thing, you know. Like I don't even know how the RCMP
handled us. It was more or less being ignored. So there's
got to be an Aboriginal liaison person that would bridge
the gap between the two -- the native and the non-native
because I work in the health care system and I work for
Northern Health. We have an Aboriginal liaison that helps
people in the hospital.

That needs to be put in place with the RCMP.

Also, the RCMP need to really take seriously
that their word against ours is that they need to have
cultural sensitivity. They need to learn when they come
into a native community that they need to learn about the
cultures and respect our cultures because there has been no
respect. And I feel I'm going to speak the truth today
saying that because that happened to us.

It was really hard watching my auntie and my
cousins and trying to fundraise.

At a dance to raise reward money -- we did a fundraiser for Ramona to raise money. We did a dance. And that turned out a flop.

We did everything to try to uplift ourselves but, you know what, that shouldn't have ever happened. We should have been told off the bat that you can access this.

There are services in the community that need to be created to say if this person has gone missing, this is what you need to do 'cause you're not thinking straight. You're first going to report it to the RCMP and if the RCMP don't believe you, then you're going to need money to fundraise and we'll start you off and help you with posters and then you go to Missing to apply for a reward. And then over here, we have our counselling services and there's the psychologist that could help you through your grief and trauma.

But alcohol in the family has taken place because of the trauma, and our spirits were very broken and has been broken for a very long time.

I would have liked to guide my aunt and say, "Auntie, can you please come with me and there's accessing services over here and we can get you some help" because the trauma is so great. I would not wish it upon anybody.

I'm not only talking about my aunt being
traumatized. I'm talking about my cousins. I'm talking about my aunties, my uncles, the children of Brenda, the grandchildren and how they handled it because, you know what, they watched us. They watched us go through hell.

So it rippled down right from Ramona being murdered to all my aunties and uncles, to Matilda, to Matilda's children. All the children, the grandchildren. It rippled right out to our whole entire family.

And you know what; that's a really bad way to be.

Right now -- when I spoke today, I prayed that our family would feel the ripple effect of us healing and us speaking out and us telling the truth of what really happened so that we could come together as a family and feel that ripple effect of healing because it's been a long time coming.

There is many deep layers, really deep-rooted dysfunctional behaviour in our family because of the trauma. And I could only pray for healing.

That's something I think that's really important for our family to go through. We have a ceremony to do after this process is over to start really digging in and really pulling out the stuff because I must tell you, in preparing for today, for two weeks I've been just in excruciating pain.
I had to have a counsellor come in to my office twice in one week. It's either that or my life is done because I was very, very suicidal. I felt this deep-rooted feeling of just letting go.

My sister came home in 1996 or 1995 after we buried Ramona, and she went back to Vancouver and she committed suicide. And we didn't understand why.

We -- at that time, we were all very sick in our own spirit, and I often wonder today if my sister committed suicide because she couldn't cope with the death and the murder of our cousin.

It's very keeping a close eye on my aunt, always trying to make her live so that she doesn't harm herself. There's so many times we had to talk on the phone so that she wouldn't harm herself, and it's been really hard to watch my cousins and all of her family going through this trauma.

But I would like to make those recommendations in regards to building this gap and bridging the RCMP and have a navigator to help you through. Maybe that navigator could come through the Missing.

If they know that the RCMP have contacted them and say "We have a family here that has lost a -- a missing or murdered loved one" that that person can step forward and say, "We'll help you".
This is the steps that we need to do in order to get the money for reward money 'cause we didn't know that. We were trying to fundraise on our own, and that was really pathetic. It was hard. It was frustrating. It was excruciating trying to put our monies together and start a little pot so that we could at least get missing posters.

There was a disassociation that happened when Ramona went missing. We knew her as Ramona, our cousin, and Ramona, our sister, and Ramona, my daughter, but when her poster went up in town it was -- that felt to me like that -- looking at her picture, it made me think that this can't be happening and this isn't -- this isn't our family. This is not happening to us.

And people would stop and look at her picture and walk, and I would walk around Smithers. And I remember thinking, "I hate looking at these pictures. I can't believe this is happening. This is not what I wanted" so that I became dissociated with who Ramona was.

And in the last few years, I had to do a lot of healing work to connect with Ramona's spirit and remember who she truly was and who she was to become. And I really hope that a lot of the changes come forward and that we could see -- see the results.

That's all I want to see.
Is there any other questions?

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCK-FLOWERS: Not from me. I just want to say thank you. Thank you for sharing. I have no questions, Commissioner.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I don't have any, either.

Thank you.

--- Upon adjourning at 16:24
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

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

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Marie Rainville

October 3, 2017