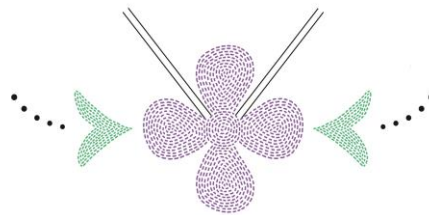


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
Radisson Hotel, Ambassador A Room
Winnipeg, Manitoba**



PUBLIC

Tuesday October 17, 2017

**Public Volume 10
Alaya McIvor, Justine Strong & Sheryl McIvor,
In relation to Roberta McIvor;**

**Community Initiatives Panel: Indigenous Determinants of
Wellbeing – Witnesses: Leona Star & Leah Gazan;**

**Barbara Houle, Sharon Houle & Alexis,
In relation to Cherisse Houle;**

**Betty Rourke, Mike Rourke, Lorna Sinclair, Elora Sinclair,
Kim McPherson, Gerri Pangman & Pierre Ducharme,
In relation to Jennifer Glenna Johnston,
Jennifer McPherson & Myrna Letandre (Part 2 of 2)**

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.

II

APPEARANCES

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

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

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**Witnesses: Alaya McIvor, Sheryl McIvor and Justine Strong
Exhibits (code: P1P03P020)**

1	Folder with 36 electronic images of Roberta McIvor (displayed on monitors during hearing).	66
2	Set of documents, stapled: one Traffic Analyst Investigation Report (two pages); one Forensic Identification Occurrence Report (two pages); 8.5 x 11 photocopies of two photographs, one of a car the other of the frame of a car.	66
3	Alaya McIvor's recommendations, five typed page unnumbered.	66
4	YouTube video presentation about Roberta Dawn McIvor (4 minutes 21 seconds) published by Rae Roulette on June 11, 2013. (Video ID / CPN: MQg9mOxOfsI / TUKRg1EPu--03OXj.) Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQg9mOxOfsI (NOTE: Link only provided to Registrar).	66

**Community Initiatives Panel: Leona Star and Leah Gazan
Exhibits (code: P1P03P0202)**

1	Digital copy of PowerPoint presentation "Manitoba First Nations Strength Base Indicators of Wellbeing" by Leona Star (Cree, Thunderchild First Nation, Treaty 6 Territory) Research Associate, Nanaandawewigamig, Winnipeg, Canada, comprising 13 colour slides.	101
2	Digital copy of text of Leah Gazan's presentation (PDF; no images included in text submitted).	101

**Witnesses: Barbara Houle, Sharon Houle and Alexis
Exhibits: (none entered)**

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NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Witnesses: Betty Rourke, Mike Rourke, Lorna Sinclair, Elora Sinclair, Kim McPherson, Gerri Pangman, Pierre Ducharme (code: P1P03P0102)		
1	See October 16, 2017 transcript for description.	185
2	Queen vs. Andretti "File details" (CR 14-01-33598) three pages double-sided.	
3	Photocopy of three pages of hand-written recommendations on lined paper, beginning with "M.H. supports for families who have been traumatized..."	185
4	PowerPoint presentation comprising 14 colour slides of Jennifer McPherson, her family, a postcard, her tombstone and her art.	185

1 Winnipeg, Manitoba

2 --- Upon commencing on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at 8:52

3 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** (speaking in Native
4 language). Good morning, everyone. We're going to start
5 in about one minute with our opening, our opening prayer.
6 Elder Annie is lighting the *Qu'liq* now. Thank you. Okay,
7 she's going to continue as we start. I've asked for her
8 permission to start.

9 So, I'm going to let the Commissioners
10 settle in, and we're going to bring in Thelma to do the
11 opening prayer, and then we'll get started. So, one more
12 minute.

13 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

14 So, good morning, everyone. I always say
15 time waits for no one but an Elder. So, we've gone to go
16 and get our Elder who's going to do the opening prayer.
17 So, please, I request your patience, but until she's here,
18 we can't start. So, thank you.

19 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

20 So, we're going to do some housekeeping
21 first, and I'm going to let Terrellyn do some announcements
22 for people in the crowd.

23 **MS. TERRELLYN FEARN:** Can I sing? Should I
24 sing? No? No, you don't want that.

25 Good morning, everyone. Good to see you

1 again. Welcome to all the new faces that are joining us
2 today. My name is Terrellyn Fearn, and I'm the Director of
3 Health and Community Relations. I'm very honoured and
4 humbled to be here yesterday and to be here again today. I
5 want to acknowledge all the beautiful families and families
6 of the heart and survivors that shared their story
7 yesterday. Very impactful, and wonderful example of
8 bravery, and courage, and strength and inspiration as well,
9 so thank you.

10 Just a couple of reminders that there is a
11 shuttle, a free complimentary shuttle that leaves from the
12 Radisson to Oodena, and Oodena back to the Radisson. I'm
13 told it leaves every 15 minutes, so please utilize that
14 service if you're wanting to travel from this location back
15 and forth to the sacred fire. A reminder that that
16 beautiful sacred fire is there, acknowledgement to the fire
17 keepers for being there to support us in this hard work,
18 day and night.

19 The other thing I wanted to mention is that
20 every morning in this room at 7:30, there is a pipe and a
21 water ceremony. So, if you're wanting to participate in
22 that, that begins at 7:30 in this room.

23 A reminder to the families and survivors
24 that on Floor T, and I can't quite figure out this elevator
25 service, but Floor T is where the Family Room is located

1 and that's where the meals are provided for the families.
2 And then also, there will be food provided here, snacks and
3 lunch provided in the back of this room as well.

4 Yesterday, some of you had shared that it
5 was quite cool in this room, so we are trying to make the
6 temperature more comfortable for you. We do have some
7 quite large blankets and quilts at the back of the room for
8 you to use. We will have our health supports, I call them
9 our purple shirt brigade, that will be in the room as well.
10 So, if you do need a comfort blanket to take off that
11 chill, please let one of them know and they'd be happy to
12 come down and bring you that blanket.

13 Finally, I just wanted to mention that there
14 are stairs in the main entrance way that lead down into
15 this space. But, if anyone has any mobility issues, we do
16 have a wheelchair ramp and we're happy to help you and
17 assist you to use that as well. So, please reach out to
18 anyone in the purple shirts, and we'd be happy to do so.
19 Thank you so much.

20 I'm going to hand it back over to Debbie and
21 have a wonderful day. Remember your tear bags, to utilize
22 those tears to collect that medicine. Remember that if any
23 of the information that you're hearing today you would like
24 to sit, you would like to be brushed off, you would like to
25 utilize the medicines that are here, we have so many

1 wonderful medicines. In addition to that sacred fire, we
2 have the sacred water that's been blessed for you. Across
3 the hallway, we have the Elder's Room with many wonderful
4 Elders and spiritual people there that you can sit with,
5 that you can work with the medicines there; okay?

6 We also have an opportunity for you to
7 engage in a one-on-one private session. So, if you're
8 wanting to sign up with -- we have a Reiki Master here if
9 you would like to sign up for a 1-hour Reiki session. If
10 you would like to sit with an Indigenous therapist or
11 counsellor to walk you through a process, at the
12 registration table you can sign up as well. If you have
13 any questions about who those people are, they'd be happy
14 to answer your questions at the registration table; okay?

15 So, remember our breathing today. Breathe
16 in, breathe out to keep the conscious of where we're at in
17 our presence. So, I wish you all a beautiful, wonderful
18 day, and if there's anything you need, please let me know.
19 I'd be happy to check in on issues as well.

20 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Thank you, Terrellyn.
21 Okay. For those of you who are new here today, I'm Debbie
22 Reid. I am the new Executive Director for the Inquiry.
23 And, I'm from The Pas, Skownan First Nation, so Manitoba's
24 my home. When people say, "Where are you from?" It's
25 never Ottawa, it's always Manitoba.

1 So, our Elder is here. So, now we would
2 like to begin. Elder Thelma, if you would like to come and
3 do the opening prayer?

4 **ELDER THELMA MORRISSEAU:** *Bonjour.* Good
5 morning. Sit down. Sit down. I just want to say a few
6 words first; okay? Is that all right? Where's the boss?
7 Where'd she go? I want to say *bonjour*, good morning. My
8 name is Thelma. My spirit name is (speaking in Native
9 language). I'm Bear Clan, and I'm (speaking in Native
10 language).

11 I just -- we just had a pipe ceremony in the
12 room next door, my husband and I, and we were sitting
13 there, just the two of us, and I said, "Well, we have to do
14 it." I said, "Grandfather is waiting for us. Even if it's
15 just the two of us, we have to do it, to light our pipes
16 and speak for the water." So, then two more people came
17 in, so there was four of us. I thought, "Oh, progress." I
18 was waiting. "Where are all the people? Where are they?"
19 And then he reminded -- where is he? He's around here
20 somewhere. Oh, there he is.

21 He started -- he said, "This reminds me of
22 a teaching," and I won't say it the way he said it, but
23 I'll try and -- it took him back to a time of creation when
24 it is said that when our people forgot to do our work, when
25 our people forgot to do foundational stuff like lift our

1 tobacco, say *migwetch* for today, lift our water, say
2 *migwetch* (speaking in Native language). It got to that
3 point where *gichi-manidoo, matay-manidoo* (phon), Spirit
4 God, however you recognize that to be, looked upon creation
5 and was going to get rid of everything, going to just get
6 rid of everything. But, it was Megazi (ph) that flew and
7 came in, and said, "Wait, Pega (ph), wait. Let me go and
8 fly throughout creation. Let me look before you do
9 anything." And, he did that. That Megazi flew all through
10 creation looking, searching for Anishinaabe, and finally, I
11 think it was on that fourth day, he saw a grandmother, a
12 grandfather and their grandchildren, and he saw a small
13 little fire, and he was happy because he knew he could take
14 that back to *gichi-manidoo* and tell him, "You don't have to
15 destroy the Earth because there are still those who
16 remember."

17 And, that is what he thought about today,
18 and when he was talking about it, I thought, "Yes. You
19 know, it's just us, but we're going to do this." We're
20 going to do this work because this is what we're supposed
21 to do when we wake up, we greet grandfather; right? We
22 give thanks for grandfather. We give thanks because we
23 have been able to stand up. Look at all the things I can
24 do right now. I can talk, I can stand, I can look, I can
25 see, I can smell, I can hear. That's a gift and we never

1 take that for granted, ever.

2 So, I would like to this morning -- I have
3 my sister with me. It's really important. I want her to
4 come up and stand with me, Mary. Mary, Asinikwe (phon), I
5 was going to give her a new name. Asinikwe has been doing
6 her work forever it seems like. As far as I'm concerned,
7 she's been doing her work forever, and she shared with me
8 something really, really, really incredible that happened
9 very recently. And, I just -- I really believe -- when I
10 get this feeling, I feel that it's spirit driven, so I'm
11 going to respond to that by saying that I think it's
12 important for the rest of us to hear what she has to say.
13 And so, I'm going to ask her to talk about her dream, and
14 then I'm going to ask her to offer that song. So, that's
15 going to be our prayer today; okay? *Migwetch.*

16 **MS. MARY CRATE:** (speaking in Native
17 language). Good morning, everybody, and I'm happy to see
18 all of you here to come and support our families and
19 blessings to the families that are going to be sharing
20 today their stories. About a week before I was called to
21 come and be a helper here, I had a dream. I dreamt about
22 the Oodena Circle by the river there. I was sitting by the
23 river there. And, I was looking out onto the water and I
24 was humming the water song in my heart, in my mind. And,
25 all of a sudden, I started to see these little bubbles

1 coming up out of the water. You know, little bubbles
2 coming out of the water. And, I was looking at those
3 bubbles, and each bubble, when it popped, I heard a word,
4 and then a little puff of smoke would come -- would pop out
5 and it would spiral up. All of a sudden, there was a whole
6 bunch of them and those words kept popping out of those
7 bubbles and those puffs of smoke spiralling up. And, those
8 words were a song, and it really touched me so deeply, you
9 know? Those words, what they had to say, the message they
10 brought.

11 And, at one point, I was sitting there in my
12 dream down below the Oodena Circle, and then in another
13 part of my dream, all of a sudden, I was sitting by the
14 river in Thunder Bay, and then I was taken to four
15 different rivers, four different directions and that same
16 thing was happening from that water. Those bubbles were
17 popping up, and those words were coming out and those
18 little puffs of smoke were spiralling up. A whole bunch of
19 little puffs of smoke spiralling up.

20 And, today, I want to share that song that
21 was -- that came from the spirits that are in those waters
22 still. They are calling out, and also at the same time,
23 the Creator is calling to them too, and the families too,
24 calling out to those ones that are still not found, that
25 are still missing. I want to share that song today. *Agose*

1 (phon). *Migwetch*.

2 This song talks about the words to the song
3 is (speaking in Native language). You don't have to stand
4 up if you don't want to. It's okay. (Speaking in Native
5 language), we're coming to call you. (Speaking in Native
6 language), I am calling you, Creator calling. (Speaking in
7 Native language), come home. Come home now. That's what
8 those words mean. (Speaking in Native language), we love
9 you, we love you. Come home, come home. That's what those
10 words mean; okay? *Agose. Migwetch*.

11 (MUSICAL PRESENTATION)

12 **MS. MARY:** The Creator is calling for our
13 relatives to come home from that water. These puffs of
14 smoke that were spiralling out, those words that came from
15 those bubbles from the Water Spirit. *Agose*.

16 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** *Agose. Migwetch*. First,
17 I'd like to recognize that Commissioner Eyolfson had to
18 leave the room. He's in hearings, private hearings, and he
19 didn't want the family to not wait for him for too long.
20 So, just -- he sends his apologies for leaving in the
21 middle of the opening.

22 I'm now going to ask Annie if she would like
23 to do an opening prayer.

24 **MS. ANNIE BOWKETT:** Thank you. Welcome to
25 our traditional *Qu'liq* all of you. If we have a break or

1 something, just come up and see it, and -- or ask
2 questions. You are more welcome. This is -- this *Qu'liq*
3 is the part of our gathering and being in one together.
4 Thank you.

5 I will say a prayer in my dialect, in
6 Inuktitut, and to the Creator. We have one who help us
7 through our life and the Creator looks after us for
8 everything, and right now in these families and all of us,
9 I'll ask him to help us in my own dialect. (Speaking in
10 Native language).

11 Thank you. Thank you, Creator. Be with
12 these families as they will tell their own stories, and be
13 with us all. Creator, we thank you. Amen. Thank you.

14 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Thank you, Annie. So, now
15 I'm going to turn it over to Christa, but before I do, I
16 would just like to remind you that this is now part of the
17 hearings, and if you have cell phones, please remember to
18 either turn them off or put them on vibrate. Thank you
19 very much. Christa.

20 **Hearing # 1**

21 **Witnesses: Alaya McIvor, Sheryl McIvor and Justine Strong,**

22 **In relation to Roberta McIvor**

23 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

24 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

25 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. I
2 believe that might be the Commissioner's. Good morning,
3 everyone. Good morning, Commissioner Audette. I would
4 like to introduce the next family that will be providing
5 testimony. Today, we have with us Alaya, Sheryl and
6 Justine, and they will be talking about Roberta McIvor.
7 And so, what I would ask Mr. Registrar to do would be to
8 ask them for their promise statement.

9 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good morning, Alaya and
10 Justine and ---

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sheryl's in the
12 middle.

13 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** --- Sheryl. Good
14 morning. Thanks for coming. Do you promise to tell your
15 truth in a good way today? Yes? Okay, thank you very
16 much.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. And so,
18 these three will be the three that will be providing you
19 the story of Sharon, but they do have support people behind
20 them. And so, what I have asked -- what I ask is that
21 their supports just indicate their name so that the
22 Commissioner also knows who's here, and I'm going to give
23 you the microphone. So...

24 **MS. CHERYL:** I'm Cheryl.

25 **MS. EVANGALINE:** Good morning, my name is

1 Evangaline.

2 **MS. INEZ:** Good morning, my name is Inez
3 (phon).

4 **MS. MELISSA:** Good morning, my name is
5 Melissa.

6 **MS. LESLIE:** Good morning, my name is
7 Leslie.

8 **MS. BELINDA:** Good morning, my name is
9 Belinda.

10 **MS. MARY CRATE:** *Bonjour*, Mary Crate.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Alaya, is it
12 okay if I start with asking questions? Alaya, can you
13 please tell us about Roberta and can you share her
14 strengths and her contributions? Not just to your family,
15 but to the community she's from?

16 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** (Speaking in Native
17 language). Good morning. First, but foremost, I would
18 like to acknowledge the territory that we're gathered on
19 here today prior before we start is the Treaty 1 territory
20 and the territory of the Meekee (phon) Nation. First, but
21 foremost, before I start, I'd like to acknowledge my spirit
22 names, my names that were given to me in ceremony, as I
23 think it's very important as an Indigenous Sikwe (phon) to
24 acknowledge those names first but foremost. My names are
25 "she who collects the medicine for the people" and "she who

1 works in the heart for the people”.

2 My name is Alaya McIvor. My loved one is
3 Roberta Dawn McIvor, known as Byrd within my community and
4 her friends. Roberta, when her life was taken, she was 34-
5 years-old. We had the pleasure and honour of spending
6 those 34 years with Roberta. As you can see here,
7 Roberta’s grandchildren are here also with us.

8 So, when Roberta was taken from us, my
9 niece, Justine, was carrying Azaria (phon) here. So, my
10 cousin didn’t get to meet her grandbabies, you know? And,
11 that was one of the hardest parts for me. And also, my
12 niece not having a mother anymore to grow up with, you
13 know, and to share those milestones with. So, one of the
14 things I will -- I don’t really -- I never had time to
15 mourn for Roberta. I don’t think we have had that time
16 because there’s still a lot of lack of injustice with
17 Roberta’s case when you look at it, when you go in detail
18 with it.

19 But, I would like to go back to when we were
20 children. One of the things is we used to gather and play
21 around and, you know, play house and store, and what do you
22 call it? What do you call it? You know, they -- Roberta
23 and Sheryl lived with my grandma, my Grandma Nora, and one
24 of the things, you can see the pictures there, you know, we
25 were all rambunctious and, you know, just -- we just

1 enjoyed life.

2 So, some of the girls are in the back of us
3 here and that are depicted in the picture. So, we would
4 always gather as families whenever it was, and we always
5 stuck together and we were always close knit, a close knit
6 family. And, there were -- you know, there was a lot of
7 times, like, that I couldn't remember of my childhood. It
8 was free. You know, it was free of violence, free of all
9 of that, you know? And, what do you call it? Roberta was
10 always -- she always had a spunk to her. Roberta was
11 always outgoing, and she was a people person; right?

12 So, Roberta -- also, one of the things with
13 Roberta, we used to practice dancing, you know? In -- it
14 was something -- you know, those are those memories that I
15 share with Roberta. So, we used to always practice
16 dancing, like, after school or something, then we'd go to
17 the -- we'd go into -- or we would practice prior before
18 there was school dances, and we'd have these funky moves to
19 demonstrate to the audience and stuff. So, what do you
20 call it, those are just some of the stories about Roberta.

21 And, what do you call it? And then, you
22 know, Roberta lost a number of offspring prior before she
23 conceived Justine. So, out of the offspring that --
24 Justine was one of the, like, the only baby that survived
25 through the pregnancy. So, Justine is a miracle baby, you

1 know? So, you know, Roberta -- Justine was actually
2 premature when she was born. So, one of the things to, you
3 know -- she was always around family. Roberta was, you
4 know -- Roberta was a really good mom, you know? She
5 really loved her daughter.

6 Also, too, Roberta didn't only share her
7 life with us as our family, but she shared it with Marie
8 Strong and family, who is Justine's grandma to her dad's
9 side. So, I always want to acknowledge them also because
10 they acknowledge them also because they played a big part
11 in Roberta's life and, you know, helped Roberta along her
12 journey right before she was taken. You know, so I always
13 acknowledge Marie, you know, for being there.

14 You know, and also, one of the things with
15 Roberta, you know, her mom was, you know, her rock. You
16 know, her mom really fought to the end to find some sort of
17 justice. We lost my auntie just last September. You know,
18 it's just been a year. It's very fresh. We lost her to
19 cancer. Actually, in this picture, the -- 12 hours later,
20 she was -- well, not even 24 hours later, she was -- she
21 passed onto spirit world.

22 So, what do you call it? So, with Roberta,
23 so that's just some of the stories. So, maybe I'm going to
24 pass it on so some of the other family can share the life
25 of Roberta. So, I'll pass it on to Sheryl, then Justine.

1 **MS. SHERYL MCIVOR:** Hi. Roberta was my
2 sister. She was my Irish twin. Growing up, mom always
3 dressed us the same. We were always together. We did
4 everything together. There's just so much memories just
5 rushing. She was loved. I loved her. Everyone loved her.
6 We miss her a lot.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** May I ask a couple
8 more questions? Can you tell me a little bit about the
9 community you're from and Roberta's contributions to the
10 community and the community wellness? And, just how
11 important she was in the community to not just your family,
12 but everyone?

13 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** So, one of the things,
14 you know, my family -- like I say, we have yet to mourn for
15 Roberta, so it's very hard for my cousin and her daughter
16 to speak up and speak publicly for that matter. It's hard,
17 you know? It's very hard for them. You know, one of the
18 things me and my aunts in the -- we're always the voice for
19 our family as a whole and, what do you call it? Last year,
20 losing her, we lost a pillar to our family, you know? That
21 voice, that -- not only that voice, but that voice of
22 encouragement to our relatives, you know, to speak up and
23 speak forward.

24 So, we originate from the Sandy Bay Ojibway
25 First Nation, which is 186 kilometres northwest-ish on Lake

1 Manitoba shorelines. They reside in the community. I
2 reside here in Winnipeg. So, what else did you want?

3 So, Roberta was a people's person, like I
4 said earlier, and one of the things of Roberta, she was a
5 sociable butterfly. So, she liked to socialize with
6 everybody, she liked to talk on the phone a lot. She was
7 like an operator, as you can see. She was always on the
8 phone. Yes, she was always on the phone, she was like an
9 operator. Roberta, you know, hold -- held a lot of
10 strengths within herself.

11 So, prior to Roberta growing up, she was a
12 fancy dance -- a fancy dance dancer. So, she had that --
13 those gifts instilled within her as an Indigenous woman.
14 And, Roberta was -- you know, Roberta was outgoing. You
15 know, she was -- she was -- again, she really impacted the
16 community in a positive way, and Roberta had -- Roberta had
17 a lot of dreams, you know, prior before she was taken from
18 us. So, Roberta wanted to be a social work student, I
19 believe, in giving back to her community, you know? And,
20 those dreams were taken from her abruptly when her life was
21 taken so sudden from us.

22 So, you know, Roberta also, prior before her
23 departure to the spirit world, you know, she -- she always
24 took the proper procedures in making sure she was, you
25 know, doing something good on her part. So, the night that

1 she was taken from us, she actually hired a designated
2 driver to drive her around to, you know, socialize in, you
3 know, in an adult place, I guess you can say. And, with
4 her case, it's -- you know, you guys will be very floored
5 from it when we start getting into detail with it. But,
6 I'd like to, maybe, let some of my family back here maybe
7 talk a little bit about Roberta because they have their own
8 memories of Roberta too, if that's okay? Do you guys want
9 to share?

10 So, as you can see, it's still hard on our
11 family. So, maybe I'm just going to just go forward.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay, thank you,
13 Alaya. I do know -- I know this is difficult and it's hard
14 to talk about, so I'm just going to actually say you share
15 what you need to share, and if it's too hard to talk about
16 some of the details, it's okay.

17 So, you had just told the Commissioner that
18 the night that Roberta was out, she had been responsible
19 enough to get a designated driver because she was going to
20 enjoy social company and consume some alcohol, but she was
21 responsible. So, can you please share with us what
22 occurred that night? What -- how you learned what occurred
23 that night? And, please, if you need a break, let us know.

24 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** So, I was out of the
25 province. I was off the mainland of Vancouver on Gambier

1 Island when I got that phone call. To me, I was at a
2 gathering, one of the healing gatherings for two-spirited
3 people, and I got a call really early that morning. It was
4 -- it felt like a dream, you know? A really bad dream. I
5 was sitting off the cliff looking to the ocean, and my
6 phone was ringing, and it was ringing and ringing and
7 ringing and ringing, and I'm like, "What?" And, you know,
8 I was like, "Hello?" And, it was my mom. And, she said,
9 "We can't find Roberta. We can't find Roberta." She was
10 in a form of shock. She was like, "I can't -- we can't
11 find Roberta. There's been a body found on the main road
12 that it might be her."

13 And, I was like, "Don't say that. Don't say
14 that." I was like, "I'll call you back." I was like,
15 "I'll find something out." And, I called Sheryl, and I was
16 like, "Is it true? Where is Roberta?" You know, "Where's
17 Roberta?" And, she's like, "I don't know." She was like
18 -- then I called my Auntie Cindy and it's like, "Where's
19 Roberta?" And, she's like, "I don't know, but people are
20 saying that was her that was found decapitated on the main
21 road." And, it's like, "No, no." And, I was sitting at
22 that cliff, and I was like, "Is this a bad dream?" I'm
23 going, "Am I dreaming this?" I need to, like, you know,
24 get out of this bad dream.

25 And, when she was taken, she was taken on

1 Sheryl's birthday. You know, she was taken, but also too,
2 you know, with Roberta's case, you know, she was taken.
3 So, I was in Vancouver. I finished the gathering, and I
4 went off the mainland into Vancouver, and I stayed there
5 for another night or two before I flew home. And, it just
6 seemed like a nightmare, a really bad nightmare that, you
7 know, I couldn't wake up from.

8 And then it felt so unreal because my family
9 was, like, thousands of kilometres away, you know? And,
10 the only way I can communicate with them was through phone,
11 and I was, like, immediately -- and my heart just
12 shattered, and I was like, "Oh, my God," you know,
13 "Justine," and, you know, "Justine's not going to have a
14 mom." And so, all these thoughts started running through
15 my head and, you know, and then how broken my family's
16 going to be.

17 And then I flew home couple days later, and
18 -- to see my community really split. My community was so
19 split in half that people were hiding murderers within our
20 community. These murderers were walking free within our
21 community. Those murderers are still walking free within
22 our community to this day.

23 And so, one of the things, going forward, as
24 you can see on the display that we were calling out
25 publicly to people within our First Nations community to

1 come forward on the murder of Roberta McIvor. Nobody came
2 forward. Nobody really did come forward to this day. You
3 know, to this day, you know, Roberta, you know, would have
4 loved to see her grandchildren grow up. She would have
5 been a good grandma, you know? But, that was taken from
6 her.

7 So, one of the things -- so Roberta, you
8 know, again, Roberta, you know, hired a designated driver
9 to take care of her that night. You know, she hired
10 somebody she -- she believed in somebody that failed her,
11 somebody that helped murder her. So, if you look into the
12 clippings in news articles, her designated driver, the
13 guilty conscience caught up to the designated driver. The
14 designated driver had contacted media immediately days
15 after Roberta's death, and started making a statement with
16 media. And, it didn't add up. It didn't add up to us
17 families. There's still a lot of unanswered questions.
18 And, if you were in the legal department, you would be
19 wondering how these people -- you know, where -- who is all
20 responsible? Who's responsible within Sandy Bay who
21 murdered Roberta? You know, who really did murder my
22 cousin, Roberta Dawn McIvor? Who did that, you know?

23 So, one of the things, you know, in one of
24 the news clippings articles where the designated driver had
25 contacted media was one of the things she said, "Oh, I left

1 the keys in the ashtray." Well, why would you leave the
2 keys in the ashtray with my cousin, you know, sleeping and
3 the door is unlocked? That doesn't make sense to me. It
4 doesn't make sense to us family. You know, if you're going
5 to leave keys in an ashtray, you know, you would be sure to
6 lock the door.

7 So, the people whom got sentenced for
8 Roberta's case only got sentenced for one year. So, you
9 know, moving forward with Roberta's case, you know, these
10 two people whom are responsible for murdering Roberta, you
11 know, are adults now, you know? They were youth, you know?
12 And, one of the things, you know -- there's a lot of
13 stories. You know, a lot of stories within our community,
14 you know, that there's more to the story. And, one of the
15 things, what do you call it, you know, because Canada
16 doesn't support victims or those whom are testifying, you
17 know, any leniency of, you know, helping them, helping
18 support those people are coming forward with evidence, you
19 know? Especially tangible evidence that could have
20 possibly helped Roberta's case, solving Roberta's case, and
21 getting the proper justice for Roberta.

22 So, the youth, Justina Richard (phon), who
23 was one of the people who was responsible, it doesn't
24 matter they're murderers. But, yes, so these murderers,
25 you know, are free within our communities. You know,

1 they're still walking free, and one of the things with
2 Roberta, you know, our community was supposed to BCR them
3 off the reserve for a lifetime, I believe it was. Those
4 people are back in our community not even a year later, you
5 know, walking freely, taunting my auntie, you know?

6 And, during the trial of Roberta, the Crown,
7 you know -- the Crowns and the defence lawyer, you know,
8 were really taunting my family and giving them a real hard
9 time. I have never seen a murder case go through the
10 justice system so quick, you know, in Manitoba. You know,
11 within -- what was it, a few months? A couple of months
12 the most? And, like, I've never, ever, to this day, seen a
13 murder case go through a justice system so quick and just
14 fail families completely.

15 So, with Roberta, you know, the family would
16 tell my auntie she's going to hell, you know? And,
17 continuously, you know, just taunt her and bully her, bully
18 my family out of that courtroom, you know? So, what do you
19 call it -- so we were, you know, victims to a crime by
20 being victims to, yet again, those people responsible for
21 murdering my cousin. And, the courts -- you know, my
22 auntie tried to bring it to, like, the defence lawyer -- or
23 to the prosecutors and stuff, and the prosecutor was
24 literally swearing at my auntie. Like, literally treating
25 her like as if she was nothing, you know? Because she was

1 Indigenous. And, little do you know, in Manitoba, case
2 loads are pretty high when you come to being a Crown
3 attorney because there's so much people being represented
4 in those systems.

5 So, it seems to me with Roberta's case that
6 they wanted to, you know, get this case over and done with
7 as quick as possible, you know, to move onto the next one.
8 They didn't -- they didn't go in detail with Roberta's case
9 and they bargained pretty fast. They bargained pretty fast
10 without, you know, coming to us.

11 So, these private deals, when it comes to
12 prosecutors, really needs to stop. And, again, with the
13 Canadian justice system, it needs to be dismantled. You
14 know, it really needs to be dismantled and destructed and
15 reconstructed from the victims of these crimes because, in
16 my case, in our case, you know, the justice system didn't
17 do nothing for us. They completely failed us, and the
18 Canadian justice system should be ashamed of themselves,
19 you know, for all I care.

20 So, the night -- you know, that morning --
21 and one of the ironic things is my cousin was murdered two
22 driveways to a police station, and her body laid there for
23 hours with, you know, her head on one end of the -- one
24 side of the road and her body on the other. She was found
25 naked. You know, and one of the things the young lady who

1 stumbled across her on her walk home really -- it really
2 affected her and still affects her to this day. The young
3 woman, you know, is so traumatized and still lives in that
4 trauma. And, one of the things with the trauma comes
5 addictions.

6 She is very addicted. She has lost the
7 ability to care for her own loved ones, and that was
8 something we never, ever wanted for -- to happen to her, to
9 lose her children due to the circumstances of coming across
10 some -- Roberta's body.

11 One of the things we asked ourselves too
12 was, why was Roberta found naked? Why was she found naked?
13 What really happened to Roberta? You know, why was it that
14 these people responsible for Roberta, why were they going
15 to our neighbouring community, you know, telling people,
16 "Oh, I decapitated," -- or "We, you know, decapitated
17 Roberta. We decapitated that girl in the next community."
18 So, they were boasting in the next -- in our neighbouring
19 community, which is Ebb and Flow. And, we came forward to
20 the Dakota Ojibway Police Service, who is a failure to us
21 families, failure to the systems.

22 So, also to this day, we still haven't been
23 able to obtain Roberta's I.D.'s and purse. So, where are
24 those? So, also, too, the place that supposedly where
25 Roberta was taken, it was kind of ironic because during

1 this whole time that these murderers were walking freely
2 within our community, and still are walking freely within
3 our community, a house burned. And, rumour had it that
4 that's where her purse was, in that house.

5 So, you know, I come -- when I came back
6 home, you know, I really -- you know, I started asking
7 questions, you know? I was starting to ask detailed
8 questions within my community, and I started looking at
9 everybody because there was murderers within my community
10 and those murderers were in the same room as us, you know?
11 So, I started, you know, looking at everybody, watching
12 everybody, you know? So, you know, I started, like,
13 looking at people, you know, because there's things that my
14 cousin would have done if she was in danger, you know,
15 watching people for scratch marks or anything.

16 So, one of the things, you know, there was a
17 few people that stood out to me during her wake service.
18 So, these murderers, you know, these people whom are
19 responsible, you know, for taking -- or being a part of
20 taking my cousin's life were, you know, sitting in the same
21 room as us. You know, sitting in the same room as us.

22 There's a lot of stories, too, on how and
23 which places they went to, to wash clothing, where -- you
24 know, everything that was brought to our attention, we took
25 it to the Dakota Ojibway Police Service without them

1 investigating -- doing a proper investigation into the
2 death of my cousin, also in partnership with the RCMP.
3 And, I hate to paint the RCMP with the same brush because
4 they have been getting painted a lot with a brush, and I
5 have a story, which I'll share later, that depicts one RCMP
6 that's done tremendous, amazing work with myself and
7 another family member directly affected to the issue of
8 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

9 So, I'm going to pass the mic on to Sheryl
10 and Justine just for them to share a little bit.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sheryl, can I ask
12 you a couple questions about some stuff you shared with me
13 that I can share with the Commissioner?

14 **MS. SHERYL MCIVOR:** Yes.

15 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes. So, I'm just
16 going to hand a copy to the Registrar. And so -- and we
17 don't have a picture to put up on the screen, but what we
18 do have is a picture of a car. And, can you tell me what
19 that -- the car is?

20 **MS. SHERYL MCIVOR:** That was my sister's
21 car. Like, we had heard so much rumours in the community,
22 but after so-called investigating, they said that it was
23 the cause of my sister's death.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, we can help you
25 flip the page. There's one more picture. So, you've just

1 described the picture of the car, and there's another
2 picture that's inside the car. Can you tell me a little
3 bit about that?

4 **MS. SHERYL MCIVOR:** These pictures were
5 given to my mom. A lot of stuff went through my mom. They
6 took apart my sister's car, and they took out the seatbelt,
7 and that's how they said my sister was decapitated.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, thank you. I
9 just -- I know that you wanted to get this paperwork in.
10 The first page is the Traffic Analyst Investigation Report,
11 and this is the report that describes how Roberta -- how
12 the investigation believes that Roberta became decapitated.
13 And, I'm not going to ask you detailed questions about
14 this, but why did you want to share this document?

15 **MS. SHERYL MCIVOR:** There's -- I can't
16 really talk.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. Maybe I can
18 help you. This is the -- as far as you're aware, this is
19 the extent of the investigation that was undertaken that
20 you believe -- is it true that you believe the police
21 looked at this but not the other issues that Alaya was
22 talking about?

23 **MS. SHERYL MCIVOR:** Yes, because there's,
24 like, so much gossip back home and, like, so much stories
25 that we've heard, and we just don't know what to believe.

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. Was
2 there anything else that you wanted to share about what you
3 knew or what you understand happened? That's okay. Thank
4 you.

5 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** Justine, do you want to
6 share?

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Justine, can you
8 maybe share with us a little about the impacts? Like, not
9 the details of your mother's death, but the impacts having
10 lost her has had on you?

11 **MS. JUSTINE MCIVOR:** Well, it's, like,
12 really tough, like, not having someone to go to. Like, the
13 morning I found out that something happened, I didn't find
14 out from -- it was all over social media before I even got
15 to a family's house. So, I got picked up at 6:00 in the
16 morning and I was wondering where I was going, and I got to
17 my grandparents' house from my dad's side, and I was
18 wondering why my grandma was crying, and I was, like, so
19 shocked, and I all I wanted to do was go home and check if
20 she was home.

21 So, I went home, and the door was locked, so
22 I was like, "Okay, maybe she's home." So, I went inside
23 and, like, I had to break into our house to get inside, and
24 she wasn't there and there was -- like her clothes were all
25 over from her getting ready. And, I was out visiting that

1 night. I seen her, though, the night before because I went
2 to the store and she was with her friends or with some of
3 the people that were supposedly involved, and I stopped and
4 seen her because I hadn't seen her for, like, a day or so.
5 And, she was being her usual self. She was being crazy,
6 and she always used to, like, make fun of me and
7 everything, and I was her -- she used to call me her baby
8 all the time. That's my nickname.

9 So, when I seen her, I was 3-months pregnant
10 with my first daughter, Azaria, and she was telling me how
11 excited she was to be a grandma, that she was going to be,
12 like, the most fabulous grandma ever, and she's like
13 walking all funny, like, moving her arms, and she kissed
14 me, and then she hugged me, and that's the last time I
15 talked to my mom. She -- it's like really hard on me
16 still. I still sometimes cry myself to sleep at night, and
17 it's like hard not having someone to go to, like to tell
18 them everything that you've accomplished in life, like
19 graduating and being in university. And, it's, like,
20 really hard because she's not there to tell me how proud
21 she is and it's just, like, so hard. I try my best to be
22 the best mother just like her, because I know everything I
23 did with my life, she would be very proud of me.

24 I remember having a dream of her. I never
25 had a dream of her for the longest time, and it was such a

1 scary dream. And, she was, like, yelling at me to lock the
2 door in my dream and telling me to hide her from people,
3 and I was, like, wondering what was going on. I always,
4 like, feel so scared. Like, I don't feel protected in,
5 like, the community when I was living out there. It just
6 doesn't feel like home anymore out there. It's, like, not
7 safe. I don't even go to the Pow Wows or anything out
8 there anymore. I don't like anything. I forced myself to
9 finish school out there and got away from there as fast as
10 I could.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. Alaya,
12 can I ask you some questions? You had just said to the
13 Commissioner that you wanted to share some information or
14 stories about good (indiscernible), or did you want to
15 share some of your recommendations and ideas and walk
16 through them as a family based on your experience of this
17 loss?

18 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** So, prior before that, I
19 would like to thank Justine. This is the first time she
20 has really publicly shared about her mom. You know, thank
21 you for that, Justine. It's very important, you know, to
22 hear your -- hear her story, also and how she was impacted.
23 And, one of the things I have always addressed was, you
24 know, this young girl, we are so proud of her, you know?
25 You know, there's a lot of families out there that, you

1 know, lost, you know, their loved ones and their offspring
2 is motherless and that never pursue because of the trauma,
3 pursue in education and, you know, Justine has really beat
4 the odds that were against her, you know? At a young age,
5 you know, losing a mom, you know, losing that pillar.

6 But, prior before I go to the
7 recommendations, I would just like to kind of go back.
8 Also, just recently, within the past two years, somebody
9 had come forward with some information leading up to the
10 death of my cousin due to -- like, again, it was on echoing
11 back to when I was saying, you know, the Canadian justice
12 system doesn't, you know, support the victims coming
13 forward or those people who would testify. So, the family
14 is this one individual who was living in one of those
15 houses behind where Roberta was murdered inboxed me one day
16 on social media and said, "I just want to let you know that
17 what happened to Roberta, there's more to it." And, what
18 do you call it? There's more to that and there's more
19 people responsible.

20 So, if you look at this picture here, one of
21 the things we do each year on the death -- on the
22 anniversary death of Roberta, we go within our community
23 and draw awareness to missing and murdered Indigenous women
24 and girls because in that house in the back, then there's
25 another house in the back of that house, what do you call

1 it, the woman -- the person that contacted me lived in one
2 of those houses and, what do you call it, told me that
3 there was more to the story, more people responsible for
4 the death of Roberta.

5 And, you know, years later -- you know,
6 Roberta was murdered July 31st; right? Thirtieth, 2011.
7 So, that's, like, six years ago, and four years after the
8 death of my cousin, they're coming forward now. So, it's
9 continuous. And, I gave them, the individual, the platform
10 to continuously inbox me, you know, with information, you
11 know? And, because the person, you know, felt that they
12 were sharing a little too much, backed off. They backed
13 off due to their own safety.

14 So, one of the things, you know -- you know,
15 one of the things moving forward with Roberta's case and
16 this document, this document didn't come to my family. You
17 know, a lot of documents didn't make it to my family.
18 Those documents within the court process have never come,
19 you know, to the hands of my aunt. You know, one of the
20 things prior before my aunt departed to the spirit world
21 was she held the coroner's report to her heart.

22 It was -- the coroner's report that we got
23 didn't make no sense to my auntie nor my family because,
24 again, it was just, you know, rushed through the justice
25 system so fast, so fast. This coroner report says that it

1 was a clear laceration to Roberta, stating that there's a
2 seatbelt. I don't know how they came up with this
3 information that it was a seatbelt that decapitated my
4 cousin, Roberta. That's bullshit, I feel, because in our
5 jurisdiction, in our neighbouring community where her body
6 was taken, her body sat there for hours and hours and
7 collected -- was starting to collect maggots. Her body sat
8 in the scorching heat that day for hours, you know, not
9 being covered in the investigation.

10 I would like to go into detail with
11 Roberta's coroner's report, but I don't want to traumatize
12 a lot of people. But, one of the things -- when Roberta
13 was taken, she was taken on the anniversary death of Tim
14 McLean, who was brutally decapitated on a Greyhound bus
15 also. And, these individuals whom were convicted for the
16 murder -- or for -- actually, they didn't even get charged
17 for murdering my cousin. Pretty much they got charged with
18 stealing her car, which is pretty ironic if you ask me
19 because again they failed us, the justice system failed us,
20 family. They pleaded out to manslaughter.

21 So, there was a lot of plea bargains, you
22 know, before anything and, again, you know, one year -- you
23 know, one year, you know, you can sell crystal meth and get
24 seven to eight years in this country, and you can murder
25 and get one year. What does that tell you? What does that

1 tell you to -- as a victim, you know, to this crime, you
2 know?

3 And, really, you know, this, again, justice
4 system just completely fails victims all around. You know,
5 and one of the things, back in 2011, you know, back then,
6 you know, within our community, there was a walk happening
7 across Canada for missing and murdered Indigenous women
8 that walked into my community and gave my family a little
9 bit of hope in moving forward.

10 You know, Bernie was one of them, the lady
11 behind you, and one of those walkers who walked in our
12 community gave my family in my community a little bit of
13 hope. And, one of the things that I vowed to Roberta in
14 her casket, one of the things -- we didn't even get to
15 clothe Roberta, properly clothe her, you know, dress her,
16 you know, for the last time. We weren't able to even look
17 at Roberta. You know, she was a sealed, closed casket.

18 So, to this day, you know, our loved one was
19 taken from us. We didn't even get to see our loved one for
20 the last time. We didn't. They sealed that casket shut.
21 We didn't even get to clothe her, we don't even know if she
22 was wearing clothes when she was, you know, put in that
23 casket. We never had that time to -- we never had that
24 opportunity, so all those opportunities were taken from us.

25 So, those walkers walked in our community,

1 and one of the things to Roberta's casket, I vowed that
2 Roberta's case would never go silent, you know? It would
3 never be swept under the carpet just like the previous
4 murders that happened within my community.

5 So, in that same ditch, there was another
6 lady who was murdered years ago prior before Roberta, you
7 know? And, you know, we're the only family within my
8 community that's speaking up on the issue of missing and
9 murdered Indigenous women and two-spirits. I'd like to
10 include them because not only has it been my cousin who was
11 murdered, there was a two-spirited individual who was tied
12 to a tree, years prior before Roberta's death that was
13 brutally murdered. And then there was an elderly lady
14 within where my mom lives, down the road, who was a hit and
15 run. So, there's a lot of murderers within my community
16 walking free.

17 So, one of the things I vowed to my cousin,
18 that her case never be like theirs, and one of the things,
19 you know, is to hope to -- to help those families come
20 forward, you know, because they have never had that
21 platform to share publicly the way we do on the case of
22 their loved one due to animosity and/or, you know,
23 retaliation. You know, and because there's a lot of, you
24 know, retaliation, what that looks like is all different in
25 different communities. I think that's what they fear for.

1 And, you know, there's a lot of unsolved cases within my
2 community when it comes to missing and murdered Indigenous
3 women, girls and two-spirits, you know, and it's very
4 historical.

5 So, in 2011, we never had time to really
6 mourn for Roberta. So, one of the things -- well these
7 walkers walked through our territory. You know, me and my
8 auntie -- I looked at my family, and my family was hurting
9 so much, and it really hurt me. And, I sat there for a few
10 days and looked upon my family and asked myself, "What
11 could I do to help ease that burden of pain to my family?
12 What can I do to inspire my family to continue on with
13 their lives? What can I do to, you know, help in some way
14 to heal a little bit of that pain?" And, my auntie was so
15 hurt from her daughter being taken, you know? Also, too,
16 you know, I'd like to acknowledge Mikey who's not here
17 today, he's at work, you know, and -- who's Roberta's
18 brother, you know? He has a big role too to play in
19 Roberta's life, you know?

20 So, in 2011, me and my auntie, you know,
21 we're like talking on the phone every day, and one of the
22 things about my auntie, she was an activist within my
23 community. So, one of the things that really drove me
24 prior before even, you know, even being labelled as an
25 activist, what do you call it, you know, back in the day, I

1 think I was 11 or something, she really fought for our
2 community's roads because there was no way to get in and
3 out of our communities at times, and she really inspired me
4 at a really young age to kind of, like, stand up for our
5 people, you know?

6 So, one of the things, we had that
7 conversation in 2011 on how she inspired me and why I just
8 don't let things settle, you know? And, I just continue
9 fighting and fighting. And then I was like, "What can we
10 do?" I was like, "Our family's hurt. They're hurting."
11 And, one of the things we did was we asked our community at
12 the time and our Elders -- so we went to an Elders meeting
13 and sat with our Elders and asked our Elders if they would
14 support us in joining the walk. And, one of the things,
15 right away, within not even 5 minutes after sharing that
16 with our Elders Council, they were like, "We support you.
17 We support you." It was (indiscernible) we had our Elders'
18 support within our community, and we had the backing of our
19 Truth and Council at that time.

20 And so, we had met the walkers of Toronto
21 and continued on to Ottawa in 2011, and continued on with
22 the walk, and walked into Parliament Hill with six caskets
23 of thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and
24 girls' names on them. And, to me, I -- walking across --
25 walking that part, meeting family members directly affected

1 to this issue really impacted me even more, you know? And,
2 that because it's only been years that this subject has
3 been brought forward publicly, you know? And, the numbers
4 just keep getting higher and higher on a daily basis, you
5 know, continuing on with this National Inquiry, you know?

6 So, one of the things with this National
7 Inquiry, you guys have \$53 million, and if you look at
8 these chairs today, we're paying \$871,000.00 to these
9 Commissioners when there's only one sitting here. So, then
10 -- from our family members' perspective, I'm asking, well,
11 you know, is it kind of pointless sharing my story to one
12 Commissioner when we're spending \$871,000.00, you know, for
13 these Commissioners to be sitting here hearing our stories?
14 That's a lot of money. That's a lot of blood money. A lot
15 of blood monies on the backs of my loved one.

16 I really acknowledge you for being here, but
17 where's the other three that are paid for on the backs of
18 our loved ones? You know, it's really disheartening from a
19 family member, you know? And, one of the things, you know
20 -- one of the things, when my auntie died, she really
21 believed in a National Inquiry. I don't believe in this.
22 I'm sitting here because of my auntie.

23 I walked across Canada in 2013 for this.
24 You're failing us. This is not what family members picture
25 as a National Inquiry. You know, I spent three months -- I

1 put three months aside of my life to walk across Canada,
2 hear hundreds of stories, you know, calling for a National
3 Inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and
4 girls.

5 One of the things -- you know, some of the
6 things that I heard from families, you guys don't even
7 implement here. You guys haven't. And, when I asked
8 family members when I walked across Canada, you know, what
9 they would entail -- what they would like to see a National
10 Inquiry look like, it sure isn't this. You guys really
11 failed us. You really failed drastically. You know, where
12 are those other three Commissioners, that Head
13 Commissioner? That Head Commissioner that's making
14 \$271,000.00 on the backs of our loved ones?

15 You asked us, you know, for recommendations.
16 Well, I put a lot of recommendations forward, very tangible
17 recommendations to you, to your Head Commissioner, that
18 haven't even been implemented. Very tangible
19 recommendations; tangible recommendations that could have
20 been met prior to your guys' visit here. You know, one of
21 the things leading up right to the day to this inquiry
22 being housed here in Lake Treaty territory, you know, I was
23 doing the work that your liaisons from Manitoba should have
24 been doing. You know, and this is the work that I will
25 continue doing. You know, to this day, the family I was

1 advocating on two family members, they're -- still to this
2 day, that family isn't sitting here. They lost their loved
3 one into the Child and Family Service system last year.
4 You know, they should be here. They should have a space
5 here to share that story.

6 Then, I asked again, you know, I contacted
7 Christa Big Canoe about Divas Boulanger, who is a two-
8 spirit woman, whose other family should have been here but
9 was denied. You should not be denying families to partake
10 and/or house them here or in any other city across Canada.
11 This is not what this inquiry -- that's not what I walk
12 across Canada for was the continuously denying family
13 members those services, or giving them an ultimatum of
14 that, you know, "Oh, we might come in again some other
15 time." That was something I didn't envision when I walked
16 across Canada for a National Inquiry, and no family should
17 be left behind. This is supposed to be our inquiry, not
18 your inquiry.

19 So, some of the things that I would like to
20 put forward moving forward -- hold on one second. So, one
21 of the things, I feel like I'm being rushed here, and we're
22 always being rushed through his process. You know, it's
23 continuously being rushed, you know? And, you know, I --
24 sometimes it's kind of pointless. Like, rushed always.
25 We're always rushed when it comes to this issue. You know,

1 whether it's AFN, you know, we're put on the backburner,
2 the last hour or the last day, you know, then this. Like,
3 I'm being rushed and I'm being forced to share my
4 recommendations, so I will share them with you. Why?
5 Because I speak from my heart all the time.

6 So, she's trying to help me find a paper,
7 and I know where the paper is but, what do you call it --
8 so I'll share the recommendations moving forward. I'll
9 share the recommendations -- the 30-something
10 recommendations that I came up with last night while I was
11 at work on my spare time walking around my work trying to
12 put these pieces together. So, these are recommendations
13 that I put forward. Some of them prior.

14 So, education on the realities of missing
15 and murdered Indigenous women and girls in First Nations
16 communities for First Nations; education to police forces
17 and different jurisdictions on missing and murdered
18 Indigenous women and girls; courses prior before being
19 recruited into the front lines with the police forces and
20 jurisdictions; having the accessible Missing and Murdered
21 Indigenous Women and Girls toolkit available for families
22 across Canada; having school bursaries available for
23 families to further and advance their education on and off
24 reserves; have a financial fund available for families for
25 missing searches of their loved ones; support for families

1 on reserves, that's lacking; having Missing and Murdered
2 Indigenous Women and Girls hub offices in core communities
3 across Canada partnered with existing sister community
4 stakeholders; having available funds across Canada for
5 vigils, yearly vigils in honour of the disappearance or
6 murder of a loved one and/or to travel to Ottawa on October
7 the 4th gatherings; having ceremony/healing houses for
8 families in cities and in First Nation communities across
9 Canada; implement new housing policies and public housing
10 in each city for victims of exploitation and human
11 trafficking a priority in jurisdictions across Canada;
12 dismantle -- again, dismantling the Canadian justice system
13 that repeatedly fails the families of missing and murdered
14 Indigenous women and girls and survivors, and reconstruct
15 it from a victims' perspective.

16 Leading up to the hearings, again, when
17 you're going into another community, let's team up with
18 their health supports in advance in each community to do
19 follow-ups prior, during and after the visits. Nobody
20 followed up with me. Nobody has followed up with me to
21 date with your inquiry. Nobody. None of your support
22 team. You failed again there.

23 Support national gatherings for families of
24 missing and murdered Indigenous women across Canada. And,
25 when I say "support", financially support. Support

1 national gatherings for survivors of exploitation and human
2 trafficking. Again, financially support across Canada.
3 Build partnership with First Nations communities along with
4 stakeholders that work frontlines with families and
5 survivors.

6 So, as many of you know, there's a lot of
7 people whom have been working on the issue of missing and
8 murdered Indigenous women and girls for quite some time,
9 and one of the things with this National Inquiry into
10 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is I see a
11 lot of disconnect and a lot of divide and conquer, and I'm
12 not okay with that as a family member. And, one of the
13 things is trying to -- for me, is trying to bind community
14 in those partners, you know, that stand alongside with us
15 and championing this as one voice.

16 Building partnership with the gay, lesbian,
17 bi, trans, two-spirit, queer community across Canada. It's
18 very important because those people tend to be forgotten
19 about when it comes to the issue of missing and murdered
20 Indigenous women and girls and two-spirits. Financially
21 support missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls'
22 monuments designed by families of each First Nation
23 community; meeting victims and survivors to hear their
24 testimonies in a safe place outside of each city removing
25 them from all forms of violence. One of the biggest ones

1 is the National Inquiry's family's family advisory
2 committee needs to be reconstructed and dismantled moving
3 forward for equality and transparency to all families.

4 There needs to be a process on how families
5 and survivors are selected, not hand-selected from your
6 Minister Bennett, Hadju and Raybould. The process would
7 have to be a nomination process from community along with
8 family members, and that each region and territory is
9 represented from survivors and family members.

10 So, I talk on this issue because you have a
11 Manitoba survivor that isn't Indigenous sitting in that
12 circle, and I brought that to your attention when you guys
13 visited here again few months -- few weeks back. How did
14 that person get into that circle? In August. How did that
15 person and why is that person still sitting in that circle,
16 taking up space from an Indigenous survivor? That person
17 that you have representing Manitoba as a survivor is
18 Caucasian.

19 Survivors need to be included just as
20 equals; the National Inquiry's Elders need to be replaced
21 due to their openly gossiping about families and survivors;
22 the National Inquiry needs to produce with stakeholders a
23 memorandum of understanding as soon as possible across this
24 country; proper investigations leading up to the
25 disappearance and murder of -- or murder of missing and

1 murdered Indigenous women with the police force; employing
2 -- I would like to see more families employed, and
3 survivors, in the duration of this inquiry; removing
4 policies and practice around when a woman needs safety and
5 wanting to access women shelters if they're sexually
6 assaulted, sexually exploited, human trafficked. They
7 should never be turned away, which they're continuously
8 turned away here in this province; 24 is youth supporting
9 and financially supporting and funding a 24/7 safe place
10 for those entrenched in sexual exploitation and human
11 trafficking with an Indigenous-led approach and some
12 Indigenous-led and survivor led approach; financially
13 supporting the motherless children.

14 So, one of the biggest ones here also, too,
15 today was the families, you know? And, one of the things I
16 kept getting from your team was, "Oh, well, there was a cut
17 off date." There should never be a cut off date. There
18 was never a cut off date. What I mean -- I'll get to that,
19 just hold on.

20 So, one of the things is there was a cut off
21 date to have family members be financially supported, and
22 one of the things moving forward is families and survivors
23 need to be accommodated financially with gas rooms to and
24 from each First Nations community to partake in these
25 hearings, you know, and not waiting three months, you know,

1 having that money accessible. And, one of the things
2 moving forward for your next future visits is that you guys
3 be aware that families are just going to show up. They're
4 not going to phone you. It's because you guys are very
5 hard to get a hold of and you guys don't return calls. You
6 know, being financially aware that those families will walk
7 into those doors and that you best be having something for
8 those families to supporting them when they walk into those
9 doors.

10 Again, one of the other things that you guys
11 lack tirelessly is the National Inquiry needs to inform and
12 share with the grassroots people in organizations and
13 grandmothers. Support systems need to be in play, again
14 I'll stress this, prior before and after within the city or
15 whatever city you're going into. Assuring that those
16 support systems are in play in First Nations communities
17 also is very key. My cousin and my niece here will be
18 going home Friday. There's no -- nothing there for them.
19 No supports. Nothing.

20 Information should be released in advance,
21 not a week or two prior before a visit. So, one of the
22 other things you can do as a National Inquiry can have
23 face-to-face meetings across this country with
24 jurisdictions that you are visiting to inform them on the
25 realities of your visit and the families being a part of

1 the duration of that -- of those meetings. No closed door
2 meetings, no teleconference meetings. You know, face-to-
3 face. Those mean a lot. Also, this National Inquiry needs
4 to be more respectful to us family members and us
5 survivors. It's key.

6 So, it seems that there's a couple of papers
7 missing here of my -- so I had these photocopied, and
8 they're now everywhere all of a sudden. But, yes, so
9 moving forward on recommendations. Our Elders too, one of
10 the things, you know, that I seen with you guys' last visit
11 here in August was the lack of, you know, the lack of care
12 for our Elders. Those are our pillars. You know, those
13 are our knowledge keepers. You know, it really bothered me
14 that they were on hard chairs, that you moving forward need
15 to -- need to really take good care of them. You know,
16 they need to be taken care of really good, you know?

17 So, I'm missing some of my recommendations,
18 which one of the things I've sent to photocopy, they were
19 all in that document. So, I had something like 36
20 recommendations that were coming forward. How much
21 recommendations is that I put forward? And, do you guys
22 have anymore recommendations to put forward?

23 So, some other recommendations will come
24 forward, you know. So, that's one of the things why I
25 didn't want to, like, send that because I knew they were

1 going to get mixed up.

2 So, those were some recommendations that I
3 came up with just last night. So, family members, you
4 know, survivors, you know, should really give it some good
5 thought, you know, prior before these hearings come into
6 your jurisdiction of your communities, and you'll get some
7 good thoughts on what recommendations that you would like
8 to see.

9 Also, too, moving forward, I would like to
10 see action on these recommendations immediately. You know,
11 more action put into these recommendations as of today, you
12 know? There's \$53 million that was announced to this
13 Inquiry. Have some of that \$53 million can actually meet
14 these recommendations, and one of the biggest things here
15 in Manitoba that you can financially support is the 24/7
16 safe place for adult women to utilize. There's a lack of
17 services for those women in this province, and that's one
18 of the things you can financially support moving forward
19 immediately.

20 And, one of the things is partnering with a
21 First Nations organization in leading that initiative.
22 And, one of those partners would be Ma Mawi. Ma Mawi is a
23 good organization to build off of. You know, the executive
24 director there has nothing but mad respect for survivors,
25 and also Ka Ni Kanichihk. You know, Leslie's been at that

1 table for many years. You know, that can be one of those
2 partners.

3 So, again, you know, you guys want to talk
4 about making an impact on missing and murdered Indigenous
5 women? Well, since this inquiry had started, there's been
6 numerous, numerous missing and murdered women's cases. You
7 know, there -- every day, I go online, there's a young
8 woman missing. You know, just yesterday, I believe, there
9 was -- or the day before, there's two young Indigenous
10 women missing from the Brandon area. Under age, you know?
11 You know, and then again when I talk about that 24/7, you
12 know, there's no place -- there's no supports for women
13 whom are exploited, women whom are human trafficked. No
14 services for them. From 4:00 in the afternoon till 9:00 in
15 the morning, there's no services for them to access. So,
16 if they're being sexually assaulted by perpetrators, they
17 have nowhere to go. You know, and this place that they
18 utilize continuously fails them and rather see them very
19 oppressed than trying to help them and better their lives.

20 So, that's things that you guys can make a
21 difference in, in financially supporting with that \$53
22 million. Otherwise, we're going to have more families, you
23 know, during the duration of your guys' inquiry that's
24 supposed to be our inquiry. You know, you're going to have
25 more family members coming forward each day, each week, you

1 know, here in Manitoba, you know, coming forward on missing
2 and murdered Indigenous women and girls. You know, if you
3 want to say you want to help, well that's a first step in
4 the right direction, you know, moving forward. If you guys
5 can't meet these recommendations, I would kindly ask you
6 guys, like I've asked you before, to resign your positions
7 because, again, yes, you can laugh at it.

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm not laughing.
9 I'm listening.

10 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** Just like I've asked you
11 at the AFN, you guys don't hear us. You guys just bulldoze
12 through this, you know? This is not what I walked across
13 Canada for, you know, is to just be bulldozed through, you
14 know, when it comes to this inquiry. You know, I would
15 really, really, really hope that you and your colleagues
16 would really support that here in Manitoba, you know, and
17 support the family members. You know, those family members
18 continuously searching for their loved ones. There's no
19 support for them, financial support for them who
20 continuously go out, you know, and search for their loved
21 ones. Nothing. So, those are some things you can help
22 with if you guys want to, you know, meet us half way, sort
23 of thing.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** May I provide them
25 the list?

1 that, so thank you.

2 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** So, one of the other
3 things that, you know, I'd like to acknowledge is Roberta's
4 friends and Roberta's friends who are still Roberta's
5 friends now, you know, who help us share the memories of
6 Roberta and keep Roberta's memory alive within us.

7 So, then, the other things, you know, is,
8 what do you call it, you know -- you know, one of the
9 things, you know, after losing my aunt, you know -- you
10 know, just one of the things that day, because my aunt was
11 never able to share Roberta's story the way she did that
12 day that -- you know, her last day with us. It was kind of
13 weird for me because I, you know, talked with my auntie and
14 shared with my auntie all over across Canada of Roberta's
15 story. You know, and just the way she told it that day,
16 there's going to be a documentary called 1,200-Plus Missing
17 and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Part 2 going to be
18 released in the days to come or weeks. It's just going
19 over a voice over right now and a voice remix.

20 So, one of the things -- I've seen a little
21 clipping of when I did some voice over a month ago with the
22 producer. You know, my auntie is in there sharing my
23 cousin's story, and the way she shared it that day, she's
24 never shared it the way -- in that format that she did it.
25 It was so -- it was like as if she shared that story for a

1 long, long time.

2 One of the last things, one of the last
3 conversations leading up to my auntie, you know, departing
4 this physical world was she was like, "Let's go to the
5 graveyard," you know? And, we were filming Roberta's
6 headstone, you know, and one of the things prior before on
7 our arrival, like, we stood at the gates of the cemetery,
8 and those gates -- those doors opened and it was like as if
9 -- like to think about it today and after she departed to
10 the spirit world, it was like as if, like, she knew she was
11 going to go, you know? And, my auntie was battling cancer
12 and, what do you call it, she had hats, you know? She had
13 hats, and -- you know, to make herself feel pretty and look
14 prettier. She took her hat off.

15 At Roberta's grave, we have this one stand
16 for flowers when we would take flowers, and she took off
17 her hat, and she tied it to that stand, and she's like,
18 "Byrd, this is for you." And, we sat there and we talked
19 to Roberta, you know? We talked to her and she was like,
20 "This is for you, my girl. I'm ready to go."

21 And, we were there for about half an hour,
22 and we left, and she was talking about how she wanted to
23 see all the family. And, what do you call it, we were
24 dropping her off at home and, what do you call it, she was
25 just -- yes. She was so normal, but there was -- just to

1 think about it today, it was like as if she was preparing
2 herself.

3 And then she gave me a hug and she told me
4 she loves me, and I told her I loved her too. And, one of
5 the things, because my aunt, you know, and my cousin who
6 like dogs, they love their dogs, and my aunt had lots of
7 little dogs and, what do you call it, her dogs, when she
8 came home, they used to be so happy. So, they would be,
9 like, jumping and my auntie is short; right? So, these
10 dogs are jumping and she's walking, and she's like, "Get
11 out of here," and what do you call it. These dogs are
12 just, like, jumping as high as her. And, I was like, "Bye,
13 auntie. I love you," and then she walked and she's like,
14 "I'll phone you later. I'll phone you when you get back to
15 Winnipeg," and it was just like, "Okay."

16 And, what do you call it, I had went -- you
17 know, I had went -- came back home, and that next day, I
18 was -- actually because I was working for an organization,
19 what do you call it, that on the backs of our young
20 Indigenous women of why this Inquiry was called, Tina
21 Fontaine, just like that organization started on
22 organizations on the backs of her name and forgot about her
23 half way or during the duration, which is the 24/7 safe
24 space for youth in the west end here in Winnipeg.

25 So, it's taking youth out to Roseau River

1 First Nation, and again, just like the death of Roberta,
2 you know, I got that phone call and they're like, "They're
3 rushing Auntie Cindy to the hospital. She's unresponsive."
4 And, it just -- it struck me again. It's like, "Not this
5 again," you know? And, one of the things leading up to my
6 auntie's death was one of the things she made pretty vocal.
7 She was like, "You're always going to be Roberta's voice."
8 I was like, "No, we're all going to be Roberta's voice."
9 She was like, "Well, you're like the head person." I'm
10 like, "No, we'll all be the head person." And, she really
11 demonstrated that and, you know, in the love that she
12 showed for us, all of us, she really impacted all of us,
13 you know, in the fight that she fought for her daughter,
14 for justice, you know, with Roberta's case, you know.

15 Again, you know, like other family members
16 across this country, we would like that case reopened and
17 relooked at, you know? Why? Because there's more to
18 Roberta's case than what was just put through the justice
19 system, as quick as it was. You know, and that's one of
20 the hardest parts. I will never accept it with the justice
21 system games. You know, we will never accept that. That's
22 not acceptable, you know, that the justice system failed us
23 as a family, you know, and worked against us rather than
24 with us, you know?

25 So, I think I'm going to end off at that. I

1 want to share a song with you guys with the drum. So, then
2 I'd also like to just maybe share a bit of my bundle and
3 how it was gifted to me.

4 So, this is drum. It was gifted to me in
5 and around -- so this drum was gifted to me. So -- at a
6 gathering. So, the year Mildred Flett had went missing,
7 what do you call it, her sister had come to the gathering
8 and she designed this drum with me, and I sat there, you
9 know? And, she's like, "I want you to take that drum and I
10 want you to carry it and sing for missing and murdered
11 Indigenous women."

12 So, that's how this drum came to me. I sat
13 there with elderly ladies, and they wanted this design on
14 it, so I designed it and tailored it to their liking. So,
15 I use this drum and I had this drum for in or around six or
16 seven years now, somewhere around that time. So, I'll sing
17 a song with it.

18 And, also, too, I I'd like to, you know -- a
19 lot of people, you know, have a lot of these feathers, you
20 know, that were gifted to me on behalf of missing and
21 murdered Indigenous women and girls when I walked across
22 Canada, you know, personally given to me for the work that
23 I continuously do. The majority of these feathers, you
24 know, were given to me speaking on behalf of survivors of
25 exploitation, human trafficking and, you know, missing and

1 murdered GLBTTQ folk, you know, because we tend to forget
2 about that issue.

3 And, one of the things, you know, one of
4 these feathers are given to me from a young -- you know,
5 one of -- it really, you know, inspired me to keep moving
6 forward was Delta Augustine in Nova Scotia. Her young
7 daughter came out of the room, we were having breakfast
8 right before our departure, and to true Nova Scotia, she
9 came out with this eagle feather, this 2-year-old. And she
10 was two at the time, and she was -- she couldn't really
11 speak, but she's like, "This is for you." And, you know,
12 it's an honour to receive that from a young child, you
13 know, to continue on the work that needs to be done, you
14 know? And, just continue doing what needs to be done and
15 speaking up for the families and the survivors, you know,
16 because at the end of the day, you know, it gives them that
17 voice and that, you know, hope, you know?

18 So, I want to share a song prior before if
19 you guys have -- if you have a question. Yes. How about
20 we -- you should, then I'll end it off with the drum.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.* Thank
22 you. *Merci beaucoup.* Thank you very much. And, before I
23 go for comments or question, I may -- what you just did
24 there, Alaya, that your niece for the first time you're
25 talking? It's healing. That is huge. That is huge. And,

1 for all the years that I know your uncle, auntie, Alaya, I
2 know it's a strong voice you have across Canada. I know
3 that. And, I know how -- huh? *C'est quoi ça?* Sorry. I
4 don't ---

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I said, we call her
6 Aunticle.

7 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Aunticle?
8 Okay. See, I'm learning. *Merci.* I'll ask them what does
9 it mean in that box over there.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** My daughter was
11 trying not to be so rude when she was small, and because
12 Alaya is two-spirited, I brought her up to -- how can I say
13 it? Not judge anybody, any gay person, and she knew Alaya
14 was gay, and she said, "Mom, we have to come up a name for
15 Aunticle -- for -- or well Auntie." And then she said, "Do
16 you know what it will be? Auntie and uncle, so see,
17 Aunticle."

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Oui, merci.*
19 And, we -- I have -- I received and it's in my hand, and of
20 course, I can respond to you if you have many questions.
21 Always open to that, Alaya. Always. Any time. But, now,
22 what I want to -- just want to say is how I am, I'm sitting
23 here with you, honoured, to witness, to listen and to
24 receive your truth, your collective truth. And, your
25 family is blessed to have a strong voice coming from you.

1 And, I'm sincere, very sincere because many
2 of us across Canada don't have that voice. Many of us
3 across Canada are speechless or we can't or we're too
4 afraid. So, that voice that you have, it's helping many
5 women and men that can't do it. So, this is what I wanted
6 to tell you, and I'll listen carefully (speaking in French
7 language).

8 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** So, what do you call it,
9 I was actually supposed to share my survival story here,
10 but one of the things that they keep getting mixed up was
11 that my cousin's story and my survivor story also are two
12 different stories. So, they insisted that these stories be
13 combined, which I don't think it's really the case here,
14 that these are two different stories.

15 So, one of the cases, moving forward, I
16 really would recommend that I'm able to share my story,
17 have a break, and then share my survival story. Yes,
18 because this is just my cousin's story, and my cousin's
19 story is completely different to my own story.

20 So, I'll share this song with you. This
21 song was -- really resonated with me during my journey.
22 You know, it's a song that was gifted to me in a circle
23 from, you know, one of my sisters, you know, and it sings
24 of this song of this person singing to the drum and, what
25 do you call it. So, I'll share that with you.

1 (MUSICAL PRESENTATION)

2 MS. ALAYA MCIVOR: So, again, one of the
3 things -- so the lack of understanding with this Commission
4 is the lack of understanding us family members when we
5 speak, and I speak very direct and I don't know how they
6 can continuously, you know, not hear me properly when I --
7 prior before I, you know, accepted, otherwise I wouldn't
8 have even accepted to share this story today, you know,
9 and/or, you know, bring my family here. If my cousin's
10 story wasn't shared and my story, these are two separate
11 stories.

12 So, one of the things, you know, in the
13 duration of leading up to this inquiry and this visit here
14 was assuring that those are two separate stories that will
15 be shared publicly. So, we'll have a break, and we will
16 come back and I will share that component.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, there is a
18 separate hearing. I understood that there would be two
19 separate hearings because you wanted them separate, but it
20 wasn't scheduled to follow immediately. It was -- because
21 I understood you wanted them to be separate.

22 MS. ALAYA MCIVOR: Okay, so when is it ---

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, yes ---

24 MS. ALAYA MCIVOR: --- for the public
25 record?

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay, well, in its
2 -- it was my understanding you wanted parts of it to be
3 private as well, so...

4 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** I didn't say that it was
5 private. I told you it was public.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay, and this is
7 absolutely something we can discuss and we do have a second
8 hearing for you.

9 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** Can you please let the
10 public know?

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sure.

12 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** So, can we have it
13 after the break?

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** We have other
15 scheduled matters after the break.

16 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Then, we have to find
17 a solution.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, we do have a
19 public hearing time, but it's -- it wasn't immediately
20 following. So ---

21 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** So, when is the public
22 hearing?

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** --- the public
24 hearing time is 3:30, Wednesday, October 18th.

25 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** I won't be here. I'll be

1 out of town.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Right. And so --
3 and I just learned that, actually, the other day. And so,
4 I am -- I'm looking at switching it to the Thursday. Yes.

5 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** Thursday?

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, we did briefly
7 discuss that, but it hasn't settled because I wanted to
8 make sure you could do the good work you're doing tomorrow
9 so the witnesses we had yesterday that said they were doing
10 that good work ---

11 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** So, Thursday, what time?

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** At 9:00 a.m.

13 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** At 9:00 a.m.?

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes. So...

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Not tomorrow?
16 Thursday? Can that be clear for all of us?

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, we can -- yes,
18 we can announce it. We just hadn't had an opportunity
19 because I literally learned that there was no availability
20 tomorrow because of travel for -- and so, it's Thursday at
21 9:00 a.m. and it's public. Yes. And, the only thing is it
22 hasn't been determined if it's in this public space or the
23 second public hearing. So, there's two public hearing
24 spaces both on this floor, so -- and it was just a matter
25 of being able to sort it out, but I always understood that

1 you wanted to separate the story between -- yes, between
2 Roberta and yourself.

3 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** Yes, because it is two
4 separate stories.

5 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** So, it is my
6 understanding -- so Thursday, 9:00, and it's very important
7 that people come back because I -- you want to talk about
8 your experience, yes, and it's very important.

9 We have eagle feathers for families who come
10 here and testify. They were a gift by people across
11 Canada. It started in Smithers, when we walked with the
12 families on the Highway of Tears, and some grandmothers
13 from Haida Gwaii. It started from Haida Gwaii, and it was
14 a beautiful -- a beautiful thought from there -- from them,
15 and because it was so nice that the grandmother said we
16 should do that across Canada. And, we put it up -- we put
17 up a call, and many people responded and sent us those
18 eagle feathers for you, for families, each time somebody
19 come here. So, it's on your behalf, of course. So, *merci*
20 *beaucoup*, and I'll ask our beautiful Elders to...

21 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can we please get
22 the picture up of the family, the large group? No, not the
23 large group. The first picture where the children were
24 laughing, if we can have that pulled up? When they were
25 children.

1 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** That one.

2 So, I would like to know who's who because when that
3 picture came, everybody was giggling and I want to know
4 why.

5 **MS. ALAYA MCIVOR:** So, the one in the blonde
6 hair is my sister, Cheryl. She was going through a phase.
7 So, the one in the glasses is my sister, Evangeline. The
8 one on this side of her is Sheryl, and that's Roberta on
9 this side. And then Hazel, who's not here today, and then
10 my cousin, Crystal, and then our other cousin, Jenny, who's
11 -- we haven't had contact with her in a number amount of
12 years, since she was 4-years-old.

13 So, in or around 20 years, again, what do
14 you call it, we lost our auntie to cancer, the mother, when
15 she turned 4. And then the disconnect with her, you know,
16 because the father didn't want to engage. So, also, too,
17 with Crystal, she finally came back to us when she turned
18 18-years-old after a number amount of years that my auntie
19 had departed on to the spirit world to cancer. So, that's
20 them. They're all grown up now.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
22 *beaucoup*, Alaya. Aunticle.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** At this time, I
24 request that we call a break and I request a 15-minute
25 break, please, so that we can set up the space. So, we'll

1 be taking a 15-minute break. Thanks.

2 --- Exhibits (code: P1P03P020)

3 **Exhibit 1:** Folder with 36 electronic images of Roberta
4 McIvor (displayed on monitors during
5 hearing).

6 **Exhibit 2:** Set of documents, stapled: one Traffic
7 Analyst Investigation Report (two pages); one
8 Forensic Identification Occurrence Report
9 (two pages); 8.5 x 11 photocopies of two
10 photographs, one of a car the other of the
11 frame of a car.

12 **Exhibit 3:** Alaya McIvor's recommendations, five typed
13 pages unnumbered.

14 **Exhibit 4:** YouTube video presentation about Roberta Dawn
15 McIvor (4 minutes 21 seconds) published by
16 Rae Roulette on June 11, 2013. (Video ID /
17 CPN: MQg9mOxOfsI / TUkRg1EPu--03OXj.) Link:
18 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQg9mOxOfsI> (N
19 OTE: Link only provided to Registrar).

20 --- Upon Recessing at 11:11

21 --- Upon Resuming at 11:47

22 **Hearing # 2**

23 **Community Initiatives Panel - Indigenous Determinants of**

24 **Well-being: Leona Star and Leah Gazan**

25 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette and**

Hearing - Public
Community Initiatives Panel -
Indigenous Determinants of Well-being
Leona Star and Leah Gazan

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1 Commissioner Brian Eyolfson

2 Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe

3 Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

4 MS. AIMEE CRAFT: Good morning.

5 Commissioners, I hope we can start now and we'll ask people
6 to take their seats. You have heard from some families
7 over the last day-and-a-half, and this morning, we have a
8 community-based initiatives panel for you with two
9 interveners that will be presenting some PowerPoint
10 presentations and speaking with you this morning. And,
11 this is also meant to be an opportunity for members of the
12 audience, those who are watching online, and for families
13 and survivors to hear about some of the work that's being
14 done in the community, and how the National Inquiry is
15 taking those things very seriously in its work and in the
16 recommendations that will flow from the National Inquiry.

17 First up, we have Leona Star who is from the
18 First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba,
19 FNHSM or Nanaandawegimig, who will be sharing with us on
20 Manitoba First Nations-based indicators of well-being.

21 And, second up, we will have Leah Gazan who
22 is an instructor at the University of Winnipeg who will be
23 speaking on social media and advocacy. Both of them have
24 PowerPoint presentations that we'll share, and they will be
25 doing their presentations followed by some questions; okay?

Hearing - Public
Community Initiatives Panel -
Indigenous Determinants of Well-being
Leona Star and Leah Gazan

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1 So, I'll ask Leona Star to begin. *Migwetch.*

2 **MS. LEONA STAR:** Good morning, everybody.

3 (Speaking in Native language). Thank you for inviting me
4 to present on some of the work that we're doing with the
5 Nanaandawegimig, and because, really, the importance of
6 that work is really shifting the conversation; shifting the
7 conversation from a deficit Western way of doing things to
8 strength-based indicators of change, indicators of well-
9 being that will celebrate who we are as First Nations,
10 Métis and Inuit people and drilling further down as, like,
11 who we are as Anishinaabe, as Nehiyawak, as the Dene Dakota
12 people and Oji-Cree people within this territory of
13 Manitoba and all across Canada in terms of how we celebrate
14 who we are and what, really, truly will bring wellness back
15 to our communities and really defining for ourselves how we
16 define our own indicators of well-being. Because as
17 Nehiyawak, as a Cree woman, I'm not trying to be a
18 Canadian. I'm trying to be who I am as a Nehiyawak, as an
19 *equay*, as a woman, and right now a lot of indicators that
20 are out there really measure the assimilation of our people
21 into Canadian society, and how do we make that shift?
22 Because right now, the -- that assimilation is really
23 killing us. It's really killing us and it's killing our
24 spirit, and it's, like, creating that pathway for our
25 children and things need to -- are at a really pivotal

1 moment right now. Things need to shift.

2 So, that's -- sorry, I can't see my
3 PowerPoint. Okay. Sorry. All I could see was myself on
4 the screen. So, if you can go right into it. A lot of
5 times, when information is collected about First Nations,
6 Métis and Inuit people, it's always collected under the
7 term "Indigenous", under the term "Aboriginal". There's
8 dangers of collecting information based on that because it
9 really hides realities and the important histories that
10 each of our original nations have always lived under and
11 have always sustained ourselves under.

12 And, it doesn't -- it continues to overlook
13 strengths of our nations in terms of being able to pass on
14 who we are, being able to celebrate, those ceremonies that
15 have always carried us that have always sustained us, that
16 we talk about what it takes to bring wellness back to our
17 communities.

18 And, oftentimes, when we think of wellness
19 or interventions within the health care system and trying
20 to bring that forward, we often think of, "Oh, we need more
21 investment into the hospitals. We need more investment
22 into certain programming." However, it really fails to
23 really recognize those things in our communities that have
24 always carried us through.

25 At one time, all of us were born in our

1 communities, and we had ceremonies that accompanied the
2 bringing of life of our children into our communities and
3 being able to celebrate that. Now, it's -- we're told that
4 it's far too dangerous to bring -- to bring birthing back
5 to -- into our communities when -- while we should have
6 been extinct long time ago if that was true.

7 And so, the importance of really celebrating
8 those successes -- can you go to the next one? Because
9 right now, the way we're really identified and within any
10 kind of system, we're counted as deficit white people.
11 We're counted as deficit Canadians. And, really, some of
12 the work that we've undertaken with Nanaandawegimig, and
13 previous to that, the Assembly Manitoba Chiefs within our
14 health and social and researching was to really define what
15 our own indicators of well-being are and to really pushback
16 against that deficit orientated way of counting who we are
17 and how we fare within this overall Canadian population.
18 Next. Next slide?

19 So, when we brought First Nations people
20 together, we gave them a blank slate in terms of, like, how
21 -- how do we want to define our own indicators of well-
22 being? So, they identified these four criteria in terms of
23 moving forward to ensure that it was the things that we're
24 identifying were culturally relevant because a lot of the
25 questions that we answer in any type of surveys, especially

1 Stats Can surveys, which that's how we get the majority of
2 our funding is, like -- it's very far from our own
3 realities. They really measure wellness around income,
4 around educational attainment while how we're contributing
5 to the overall workforce. Next slide.

6 So, as First Nations, they identified these
7 eight indicators of well-being. And, a part of -- I won't
8 talk about -- go into great detail around each of them, but
9 these were indicators of well-being they identified at a
10 regional level. And, to give you some additional context
11 in terms of providing -- I guess recognizing that First
12 Nations at the nationhood level, we -- within Manitoba, we
13 have five different First Nations language groups within
14 Manitoba. So, these are just to start the conversation
15 around what it means to have our own indicators of well-
16 being that would measure our wellness. Next slide. And,
17 how did we do that? How did we actually measure these
18 indicators of well-being? Next slide.

19 There's a national survey that was called
20 Regional Early Childhood Education and Employment Survey.
21 It measured -- because it was national in scope, it
22 measured very -- it was a real focus on the Western way of
23 doing things in terms of, again, focusing on something that
24 was comparable, something that was comparable to the
25 overall Canadian population. So, we drilled down. We used

1 our -- we added a regional component to actually test these
2 indicators of well-being. Next slide.

3 So, some of the questions that we asked and
4 some of the questions that were identified by First Nations
5 in terms of -- they talked about how often our families
6 were able to hunt for their traditional foods, whether or
7 not our people who live off reserve come back home, how
8 often they come back home to have that connection back to
9 our lands, and waters and the territories that we grew up
10 in, and whether or not our communities, how often they
11 practiced their ceremonies, sang their songs or whatever
12 that looked like to them in terms of that way of life.
13 Next slide.

14 They talked about identity and language, and
15 the importance of that kinship with one another and how
16 important that was to know your history and know who you
17 were connected to, who your kinship was, who your relations
18 were. Next slide.

19 They also talked about, like, whether or not
20 we had our own cultural spaces to practice who we are and
21 how important that was. And then we need to do a bit more
22 work, and even us, like when we're collecting information,
23 we always need to ask that question, are we actually
24 capturing what's needed? Is that data actually true and
25 reflective of the amount of people who volunteer in

1 communities? I think that number is wrong, but I'm going
2 to show it and share it anyways because it's a conversation
3 starting piece. Because when I go back home, we have,
4 like, so many people who volunteer and give their time to
5 one another, but it's also the way we capture information,
6 because when I go for -- if any one of us go back home for
7 a funeral, how many people come out and help our families?
8 Next slide.

9 So, some of this work we're continuing to
10 move forward on, but we're also challenging. One of the
11 calls to action, No. 19, it talks about collecting
12 information around Aboriginal people and be careful how
13 that information is collected. And, be careful about how
14 we measure wellness because, right now, all those
15 indicators that they have identified, I don't see wellness
16 in any of those and how do we shift that conversation?
17 Next slide.

18 And, just to pose the question, how are we
19 creating spaces to facilitate and to acknowledge the
20 strengths of the original peoples of these lands within
21 Turtle Island? How do we create that space, and are we
22 taking up more space? And, if we are taking up more space,
23 then we should -- maybe we shouldn't be in those spaces.
24 Maybe it's about creating space, and then stepping back.
25 And, being careful about whether or not we continue to

1 perpetuate those stereotypes about First Nations, Métis
2 people and whether or not it's a continued measurement of
3 assimilation of our people or whether or not you're
4 actually helping us to celebrate who we are. And, that's
5 it.

6 **MS. AIMEE CRAFT:** Thank you very much,
7 Leona. Are you able to share a bit about how you think
8 this flip in framework can assist the National Inquiry in
9 its work?

10 **MS. LEONA STAR:** I think a shift in the
11 framework in the way we do things, and the way we create
12 space and take a step back for things to happen, and to be
13 respectful of each other's time, and -- even this morning,
14 watching what occurred this morning, it was really -- it
15 was hard to watch. And, a lot of things that we do within
16 -- within research -- like, we hold a lot of events, and if
17 we were so bound by time, a lot of the most -- the biggest
18 teachings would not be able to be brought forward.

19 We took time for ceremony, we took time to
20 listen, we took time to listen, actually, and that's, like,
21 one of the biggest things in terms of providing that --
22 that space and creating -- honouring those relationships
23 that we have with one another. It's like one piece of it.

24 **MS. AIMEE CRAFT:** I do want to underscore
25 that both Leona and Leah, after seeing the interaction this

1 morning, did offer to hand over their time to Alaya, and
2 that's part of how we do things in our territory. We're
3 respectful of the people that are here, and the families
4 and survivors. So, I wanted to just thank them for that
5 generous offer. And, now I'll turn the mic over to Leah
6 for her presentation.

7 **MS. LEAH GAZAN:** (Speaking in Native
8 language), Red Sky Woman, (speaking in Native language),
9 Wood Mountain, Lakota Nation, Treaty 4 territory,
10 Saskatchewan. I'm very humble to be presenting today
11 because I know that my time is taking away from time of
12 others. And, I just wanted to acknowledge the Elders in
13 the room, the Commissioners, certainly, but most, the
14 family -- families of loved ones and all Indigenous women
15 in the room that have survived any sort of violence whether
16 it be emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual violence. I
17 want to acknowledge you as well today.

18 So, I was asked to come here today to
19 present about my #WeCare Campaign. I have a more formal
20 presentation than Leona, who spoke so eloquently. I have
21 to write things down. I get lost. I don't know if you saw
22 me running around. I get distracted really easily. But,
23 anyway. But, about my #WeCare Campaign that was started
24 with another woman, Rain Hamilton, in 2015, and the purpose
25 of that campaign was to educate the broader Canadian public

1 and Indigenous peoples and offering to support immediate
2 actions in the National Inquiry to address the crisis level
3 of violence against Indigenous women and girls,
4 transgendered and two-spirit in Canada.

5 The #WeCare Campaign was comprised of
6 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who stood together in
7 solidarity to send a clear message that Indigenous women
8 and girls should be given the same fundamental human rights
9 to be loved, to be able to wander on our Mother Earth
10 safely, free of violence, the same level of safety enjoyed
11 by other Canadians, something that's still not happening
12 today as we make our way through the National Inquiry.

13 It is a direct attack on our life givers,
14 the same kind of attacks we see happening to our Mother
15 Earth by aggressive resource extraction companies who bring
16 workers into our nations, inflicting violence on our women
17 and girls. It is an attack on our bodies, our spirits, our
18 minds, our emotions and our emotional well-being as we
19 fight for our survival within the imposed colonial
20 framework that is rooted in patriarchal structures that
21 have legislated violence against Indigenous women and
22 girls.

23 This violence has been affirmed through the
24 *Indian Act* where even, today, we see the current Liberal
25 government fail to make amendments with Bill S-3 to end

1 discrimination against Indigenous women and girls residing
2 into what some refer to as Canada. We have been raising
3 our concerns to deaf ears for far too long; our voices
4 often muzzled by powers of bureaucracy that have been
5 designed to silence us as we fight for our survival; a
6 story that has become all too common even at present as we
7 try and find ways to ensure our safety in the future.

8 I wanted to share a story about a young
9 woman from Norway House Cree Nation located in Northern
10 Manitoba. A beautiful young woman loved dearly by family
11 and friends, a young woman with dreams and determination
12 which led her to leave her home to pursue an education to
13 become a teacher so that she could return to her community
14 to share her knowledge.

15 She went to a residential school called Guy
16 Hill for two years until, unfortunately, her life
17 tragically ended on November 13th, 1971 at 19 years of age.
18 She was brutally murdered, kidnapped, raped and left to die
19 by four young men in The Pas. It took 16 years after her
20 murder to have these men convicted for their crime. This
21 is in spite of the fact that many individuals in the town
22 of The Pas knew what happened, even individuals in
23 positions of authority knew about the events leading to her
24 death but chose not to speak up. They were too busy trying
25 to protect themselves and the status quo, the very systems

1 that are designed to destroy us.

2 The young woman's name was Helen Betty
3 Osborne, and as I'm sure you are aware, it was her death
4 that led up to the investigation by the Aboriginal Justice
5 Implementation Commission. They concluded that racism,
6 sexism and indifference were the main factors that resulted
7 in the length of time it took to solve her murder. It has
8 been 46 years since the brutal murder of Helen Betty
9 Osborne that brought to light the incomprehensible level of
10 indifference and violence perpetrated against Indigenous
11 women and girls, and things are not getting better.

12 According to Amnesty International in 2014,
13 out of the 10 provinces, Indigenous women are three more
14 times likely to be a victim of violent crime with our
15 homicide rate seven times higher. Indigenous women are at
16 war in this country. It's not safe to be an Indigenous
17 women or girl in Canada right now due to the violence
18 Amnesty International attributes to "racism,
19 marginalization and poverty."

20 They also -- if you can switch the slide?
21 They also attribute the higher rates of violence to deep
22 inequalities and living conditions, and discrimination in
23 the provision of government services, and that's in quotes,
24 resulting and pushing Indigenous women and girls into
25 "precarious living conditions". The marginalization of

1 Indigenous women and girls, transgendered and two-spirit is
2 exacerbated even further with the failure by municipal,
3 provincial and federal governments to properly tackle the
4 current social deficit.

5 For example, according to Make Poverty
6 History Manitoba in April 2017, there has been no increase
7 in EIA rates to cover basic needs, forcing EIA recipients
8 to receive as little as \$195.00 per month to pay for food,
9 clothing, transportation and other necessities. This also
10 includes a shortage of affordable housing in the City of
11 Winnipeg, where we have a zero percent vacancy rate in
12 affordable housing, placing our children and families at
13 risk. And, let's not forget the ongoing implications of
14 the 2 percent cap imposed by the federal Liberal government
15 by then Minister of Finance, Paul Martin, 21 years ago,
16 which makes impoverished circumstances all too common for
17 Indigenous women, girls, trans-spirit and two-spirit living
18 on reserve.

19 In addition to issues of poverty, racism and
20 the marginalization of Indigenous women, we've also heard
21 in recent history about issues with the various systems
22 that are supposed to be in place to protect citizens. Some
23 examples include the very young and dear child, Tina
24 Fontaine, who passed through five systems that could have
25 helped her before she was found in the Red River, a river

1 that holds many secrets of violence. This included the
2 police, hospital and child welfare system.

3 We also recently heard about the brutal
4 attack of Rinelle Harper. Her attackers left her for dead.
5 It's a miracle she survived, although she'll have to live
6 with the trauma caused by her brutal attack.

7 Or Constable Kevin Theriault who took an
8 intoxicated Indigenous woman out of her jail cell to his
9 home. It was allowed by the senior officer who stated,
10 "You arrested her. You can do whatever the F you want to
11 do." It took two other police officers going to her home
12 to convince him to drop the woman off at her house. He
13 said he took her "to pursue a relationship".

14 Or Lana Sinclair who was brutally assaulted
15 and beaten by a Winnipeg City police officer in October --
16 if you can switch the slide? October 31st, 2014 after they
17 came to her house to respond to a call, saying there was
18 yelling. She was trying to hurry her son out to go trick
19 or treating. If you could switch the slide, please?

20 Indigenous women and children deserve the
21 fundamental human rights to affordable housing, to safety
22 and food security. This is not happening in the City of
23 Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba or in Canada, and the
24 very systems that are supposed to protect us now have their
25 legitimacy and safety in question. And, in fact, in

1 regards to the case with Constable Kevin Theriault who took
2 the woman home to "pursue a relationship", he only received
3 a 7-day suspension without pay and was allowed to return to
4 work.

5 I question why policing was not included in
6 the terms of reference of the National Inquiry when there
7 has been serious issues reported by families, communities
8 and organizations about police actions or inactions in
9 relation to MMIWG2S. It's our dirty little colonial
10 secrets that keep this country sick. Secrets I, along with
11 many others, have tried to debunk through social advocacy
12 using diverse platforms that include a culmination of
13 approaches, including social media, face-to-face contact,
14 public speaking engagements and education initiatives aimed
15 to inspire individuals to act to ensure fundamental human
16 rights are realized in this place some call Canada, for all
17 peoples including Indigenous women and girls, transgendered
18 and two-spirit.

19 Dirty secrets that were noted by former UN
20 special rep that tore on Indigenous peoples, James Anaya,
21 who noted several principal human rights concerns related
22 to the state of living conditions and relationship between
23 Indigenous people and the Government of Canada, including
24 education, food security, housing, access to proper
25 sanitation and crisis level of violence met with inaction

1 related to MMWIGT2S in Canada calling for, in his words,
2 "greater and more effective action to address the problem
3 of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls,"
4 pointing toward the need for immediate action and a
5 National Inquiry.

6 This is not an Indigenous issue. This is an
7 issue for all Canadians who want to protect the fundamental
8 human rights of all persons. It will take all of us in
9 solidarity to address these issues that are keeping
10 portions of our population unsafe, including Indigenous
11 women, girls, transgendered and two-spirit; a system of
12 violence that is brought on by the misogynistic and
13 patriarchal colonization of Indigenous people, particularly
14 Indigenous women.

15 Prior to colonization, most nations lived in
16 matrilineal societies. Our women, in particular our
17 grandmothers, were the main decision makers within our
18 nations. Equality was practised as our survival depended
19 on all members fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

20 Women were powerful. This was very much
21 related to our ability to bring life in the world. We are
22 the sacred water carriers and our close connection to
23 children and our Mother Earth, we're seen as powerful.
24 This was reflected in the strong role we played in
25 governance of our nations where our participation and

1 leadership was seen as essential.

2 This rapidly changed with the imposition of
3 patriarchal power structures brought over by colonists.
4 The exclusion of Indigenous women in decision-making
5 eventually led to the cultural, social, economic and
6 political disposition of Indigenous women and girls that
7 was and continues to be enforced through the *Indian Act*.

8 In 2006, at the International Indigenous
9 Women's Forum, they noted that "the systemic violation of
10 their collective rights as Indigenous people is a single
11 best risk factor for gender-based violence, including
12 violence perpetrated in their communities." Another
13 contributing factor is how stereotyping rooted in
14 discrimination has contributed to placing Indigenous women
15 and girls at greater risk for violence. These stereotypes
16 were born out of ideologies of the colonists.

17 Emma LaRocque, a professor at the University
18 of Manitoba, stated that "the portrayal of the squaw is the
19 most degraded, the most despised and the most dehumanized
20 anywhere in the world. The 'squaw' is the female
21 counterpart to the Indian male 'savage' and as such, she
22 has no human face; she is lustful, immoral, unfeeling and
23 dirty. Such a grotesque dehumanization has rendered all
24 Native women and girls vulnerable to gross physical,
25 psychological and sexual violence."

1 She goes on to correlate such stereotypes in
2 the current level of violence perpetrated against
3 Indigenous women and girls. And, the reality is that these
4 stereotypes have been perpetuated in media and popular
5 culture that maintain the dehumanization and
6 marginalization and sexual objectification of Indigenous
7 women. A process of objectification that calls for the
8 need to educate the broader public about how the hyper-
9 sexualization and dehumanization of Indigenous women and
10 girls has placed us at greater risk. A dehumanization
11 process that has become a justification for predators to
12 commit the most despicable acts for the broader public --
13 and for the broader public to turn a blind eye. The kind
14 of dehumanization where treating Indigenous women like sex
15 objects whose purpose is to serve another sexual pleasure
16 has been normalized in contemporary Canadian society. Kind
17 of like we witnessed with Constable Kevin Theriault, the
18 RCMP officer, who took the Indigenous woman home from a
19 jail cell to "pursue a relationship".

20 It's the dangers of the single stories
21 that's discussed by Avoseh, a brilliant author and scholar
22 from Nigeria, the single story of Indigenous women in
23 Canada that perpetuates the cycle of violence. However, we
24 do not need to maintain the single story. The story can be
25 changed. As Avoseh states, stories have been used to

1 dispossess in the line that stories can also be used to
2 empower and humanize. Stories can be used to break the
3 dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that
4 broken dignity.

5 And, that was the purpose of the #WeCare
6 Campaign. It was to educate and engage individuals so that
7 we can change the story that has resulted in unacceptable
8 levels of violence perpetuated against -- towards
9 Indigenous women and girls in Canada. It is a place where
10 people came together to demonstrate our humanity and to
11 send a clear message that we will not stop until Indigenous
12 women, girls, transgendered and two-spirit are afforded the
13 same rights and safety afforded to all other Canadians.

14 It was a social media campaign where people
15 came together to post a picture on Facebook and tag it to
16 their Twitter accounts to send a message that they cared
17 through demonstrating their support for immediate action
18 and an inquiry to address the crisis level of violence
19 against Indigenous women and girls.

20 One of the main goals of the campaign was to
21 ensure that it became a main issue for the federal -- the
22 2015 federal election, including being one of the main
23 questions posed during federal election debates. And, here
24 are some photos. There are several, I think. There's like
25 21 photos if you want to click through them quickly, of

1 people that just started posting photos.

2 It gave people a place to sound their voice,
3 particularly after finding Tina Fontaine. I think people
4 wanted to do something and they wanted to act quickly, and
5 I think it gave people a place where they could share their
6 love and support.

7 And, part of it is because I often wonder in
8 my different advocacy efforts, and I've witnessed this, how
9 many individuals have been denied access to government
10 meetings across this country where decisions are being made
11 about their well-being without them being at the table
12 guiding the process? And, I think we heard that today with
13 Alaya, you know, and what she shared with the audience and
14 families. And, it seems that only individuals who hold
15 colonial titles are allowed to participate, or persons who
16 are noted as experts by others in power, often excluding
17 persons with experiential and traditional knowledge.

18 We need to find a better way, and a more
19 open and equitable way, and a valid way to engage people to
20 share their voice. Grassroots Indigenous knowledge
21 keepers, women, girls, transgendered and two-spirit often
22 have the knowledge to address colonialism, sexism and
23 patriarchal laws that have resulted in the crisis of
24 MMIWGTT2S. They need to be at the table directing the
25 process.

1 And, I also still try and understand how --
2 what -- how that happened to Helen Betty Osborne. Maybe it
3 wasn't that people had a problem with Northern Crees, but
4 maybe they were afraid that if they said something, people
5 may reject them. Or maybe people didn't want to put up
6 with the hassle of having to debate and fight over a
7 century of racism and colonialism. Or maybe it was more of
8 a hassle to speak up because her life, her end of life did
9 not have immediate impact on their day-to-day lives. It
10 was easier to stay silent. It did not affect their
11 privilege. That is the result of turning a blind eye for
12 way too long.

13 But, what would have happened at the time of
14 Helen Betty Osborne -- the time when Helen Betty Osborne
15 was brutally murdered that thousands of eyes were
16 attentively watching because we cared? And, what if the
17 systems there to protect Indigenous women and girls --
18 sorry, took extra provisions to ensure her safety because
19 they knew there would be a public outcry if anything
20 happened? Because people care. We care.

21 And, what if we started to join together to
22 recreate a new story that resulted in a safer city,
23 province and country for Indigenous women, girls,
24 transgendered and two-spirit as an act of humanity? As an
25 act of ensuring fundamental Indigenous human rights? As an

1 act of expressing we care? And, the good news is that it's
2 beginning to happen.

3 Canadians from all walks of life are coming
4 together and embracing each other's humanity to state we
5 care, and we want things to change, and we are watching.
6 The grassroots is watching. We care that Indigenous women
7 and girls are not safe; we care as fellow human beings that
8 all persons enjoy the same fundamental human rights as
9 other Canadians; and we are watching, and we want all
10 levels of government to act now because we care. And, it's
11 time to listen and respond with action. Our voices are
12 being filtered through our hearts towards realizing
13 fundamental human rights in the future.

14 I just wanted to end with a few
15 recommendations coming, some of them, through the letter
16 that was written on May 15th, 2017 by a community and family
17 members. So, if we can go through the recommendations?

18 The first one, that impacted families and
19 communities have identified numerous issues and with
20 communications. Effective advocacy requires a solid
21 communication strategy, and as noted in the open letter to
22 Chief Commissioner Buller on May 15, 2017, I recommend that
23 information about the inquiry's plan should be disseminated
24 through a recognized spokesperson or Commissioner utilizing
25 a standard format. This will help better mobilize advocacy

1 and public education efforts. Next one.

2 I recommend that the inquiry institute a
3 more robust, multi-prong approach for advocacy and
4 communications that is reflective of the messaging and
5 information being communicated by impacted families,
6 communities and organizations. This should include online
7 platforms, print media, public education forums and readily
8 available resource people who can have face-to-face
9 meetings with families and -- families, communities and
10 organizations working on this issue.

11 I recommend ensuring ways to include all
12 voices. The most marginalized and impacted individuals are
13 often left out of these bureaucratic endeavours. As
14 questioned in the open letter to Chief Commissioner Buller
15 on May 15th, 2017, how will testimonies of people engaged in
16 sex industries, persons who are street involved, two-
17 spirit, transgendered and individuals be included in
18 providing testimony? Such communication concerns need to
19 be immediately clarified.

20 Recommendation 4. I recommend that advocacy
21 campaigns for inquiry are developed in direct consultation
22 with impacted families, individuals, communities and
23 organizations.

24 Five. I recommend that the inquiry adjust
25 their advocacy efforts to more strongly reflect a

1 community-led and community-driven inquiry.

2 Six. I recommend that the inquiry allocate
3 a greater portion of the budget to fund grassroots-led and
4 already established local, regional and national advocacy
5 campaigns and groups focused on the issue of MMIWGT2S.
6 This will support a more community-led and community-driven
7 for both education and lobbying efforts.

8 Seven. I recommend immediately hiring a new
9 community relations director as this position has been
10 vacant since the beginning of August 2017. This is a key
11 position needed not only for communications, but also for
12 working collaboratively with impacted families, communities
13 and organizations engaged in MMIWGT2S to develop concrete
14 advocacy plans.

15 And, finally, I recommend that the inquiry
16 provide funding to support services, programs, as directed
17 by impacted families, communities and organizations working
18 in the area of violence prevention and support.

19 The international community is watching.
20 Canadians are watching. When the world is criticizing
21 Canada for their lack of action, it's not a time to cut
22 corners. Ending violence against Indigenous women, girls,
23 two-spirit and transgendered requires investments. It
24 should not be guided by either/or discussions. We need
25 strong advocacy now and a community-led and community-

1 driven inquiry to arrive at systemic changes that will
2 result in greater safety for Indigenous women, girls,
3 transgendered and two-spirit going forward.

4 People care, Canadians care. I've witnessed
5 care with the Drag the Red Campaign led by Bernadette Smith
6 where people came out to support her efforts in searching
7 for loved ones; with the Aboriginal youth opportunities
8 here in Winnipeg that meets in the north-end as an
9 initiative to stop violence organized by some of the
10 powerful youth in our communities; and I've also witnessed
11 the Bear Clan Patrol, a community-driven safety initiative
12 that works in consultation with police; and I also
13 witnessed it two years back during the vigil for Tina
14 Fontaine where there was over 2,000 people who attended, 50
15 percent of non-Indigenous ancestry. They cared. So,
16 thanks very much.

17 **MS. AIMEE CRAFT:** Thank you very much to
18 both Leona Star and Leah Gazan. I want to note also that
19 this is the first part of panels on community-based
20 initiatives and that we'll be hearing from James Favel, who
21 is the executive director of Bear Clan Patrol, tomorrow
22 afternoon, as well as some other initiatives that are
23 community-based, including art that will be created at the
24 Forks at Oodena Circle with Jamie Black tomorrow and on
25 Friday, and which will be presented and part of the closing

1 ceremony that we'll have on Friday. So, at this point, I
2 will ask the Commissioners if they have any questions for
3 our first two panellists on community-based initiatives.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
5 *beaucoup*. Very, very dynamic. I have to say that the
6 translator did a good job. I don't know if you gave her
7 your text. Oh, she had something? Okay. No. She said
8 no. She followed you very well. I have one French, one
9 English. (Speaking in French language). Thank you so
10 much.

11 The first comment is, can we have the copy
12 of your PowerPoint and your presentation? Sure, *merci*
13 *beaucoup*, because there's important information and it's
14 something that we need to have when you talked about the
15 framework or how can we improve or do things. So, I need
16 to bring that proof with me.

17 And, when we talk about the research,
18 because research is a good -- an important component for
19 this inquiry, for this work, I'm from a place where, for
20 me, research is -- it's more powerful when we have the
21 people. We say in French, "qualitative", "*un recherche*
22 *qualitative*". Qualitative research. I don't know, did you
23 experience that? Do you see that it's more?

24 **MS. LEONA STAR:** Any initiative, whether
25 it's research or projects, is always improved when you

1 actually listen to the people that you're engaging with.
2 The entire process should actually be led by them and for
3 you to facilitate, to create spaces for their voices to be
4 heard. And, the outcomes of any initiative, whether it be
5 research or a project, the outcomes will always be greater,
6 and they will be improved because of it.

7 As a First Nations, Métis and Inuit people,
8 we've always done research. We just didn't call it
9 "research". We've always searched for those ways of
10 understanding; otherwise, how else could we sustain
11 ourselves? We've had our own medicines, we had our own
12 ways of doing things, and we continue to do so and that our
13 traditional knowledge and medicines continue to sustain
14 ourselves.

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
16 *beaucoup*. And, there's a beautiful diversity, as you know,
17 across Canada, how we do things over there, and over there,
18 and over there. What would be, for us that we have to work
19 across Canada or Turtle Island or, in my language,
20 (speaking in French language), how would -- what would you
21 recommend to us to make sure that these indicators, that we
22 don't become a pan approach, everybody fits all, or
23 something like that?

24 **MS. LEONA STAR:** Decentralize your
25 processes. Decentralize and give that voice back to

1 communities so that they can actually bring forward,
2 really, what works for them because what works in one area
3 or one territory may not work for the other because, like,
4 we're -- we are so diverse. We have common threads that
5 bind us together, but then there's also those unique
6 histories and realities in terms of what brings us
7 wellness, what we each bring based on the different
8 territories that we come from.

9 So, the more you start to decentralize and
10 really recognize the uniqueness of each of the different
11 nations that you're working with, your process will have
12 better outcomes because their voices will be at the
13 forefront in terms of this is a process that really works
14 for us, whether or not it be within our territories, like
15 the Anishinaabe, the Dene people, the Dakota and even --
16 like, there's differences even within those language
17 groups.

18 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yes.

19 **MS. LEONA STAR:** So, it's about taking the
20 time to have those conversations and not really -- not
21 rushing into it and forcing people to subscribe to a way
22 that's so foreign to them because it is trying to push
23 forward a pan-Aboriginal, pan-Indigenous agenda.

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Right. *Merci*
25 *beaucoup.* And, the beauty of this event, it's -- people

1 are listening, so I hope that your voice resonates far,
2 far, far, I don't know which way, but somewhere over there
3 because it's one of many concerns that we have with the
4 Commissioners or the people that we work in this inquiry
5 that some will say when we meet people, "Make sure that you
6 have few recommendations." And, I'm like, it's because if
7 we go that way, my feeling, we'll miss the beauty of the
8 diversity or the realities across Canada. So, I like your
9 presentation, or your comments and recommendation.

10 And, of course, in your presentation, Leah,
11 very powerful, very strong and very, we say *en Français*,
12 *éducatif*. Very strong -- educational? Very important to
13 remind that Canadians are part of this -- part of the
14 solution, part of the problem -- part of the solution.
15 That's how I listened to your presentation. And, since Day
16 1, communication is a very big struggle in this great
17 journey. So, Recommendation No. 2 hit me right away that
18 we're -- we have to be more out there. I come from a
19 grassroots organization, so I understand the importance of
20 educating and telling what we do and sharing what we do.

21 But, one where I like also is No. 5, and I
22 would like you to explain more about community-driven. How
23 do you see that in this process?

24 **MS. AIMEE CRAFT:** And, can I ask that
25 Recommendation 5, the -- one of the last slides in the

1 presentation be pulled up?

2 **MS. LEAH GAZAN:** Well, I think it's very
3 much what Leona was talking about, research. There's
4 regional differences. I know, you know, there's been -- in
5 terms -- I mean, the inquiry started a year ago, but
6 there's been people involved in this process for many, many
7 years that have the insight and the information to help it
8 move forward. I think, you know, on May 15th with that
9 letter being released, they provided a number of
10 recommendations.

11 So, one part is reading the recommendations,
12 but the other part is actually acting on recommendations
13 coming from community. And, I think when you start acting
14 on recommendations coming out of community, it becomes a
15 community-led process.

16 I've heard -- and, you know, that, for
17 example, even in terms of funding for this event has been
18 an issue for families; right? So, how are they supposed to
19 drive the process if they don't even have a way to get
20 here? And, I think, you know, making sure there's space
21 for community but also providing the resources so that
22 community can be present so that, you know, that happens.

23 I've -- you know, sitting -- when I heard
24 that, sitting as a panel member here knowing that some
25 family members aren't here because they couldn't afford to

1 be here, that doesn't make me feel very good. In fact,
2 that really doesn't feel good because they should be
3 sitting here because they've said what their needs are. I
4 think, you know, it's about listening, it's about
5 community, who has said something, and then you listen
6 through action.

7 I know that there's been a lot of sympathies
8 that have been given, I know there's been a lot of
9 apologies about wanting to move forward in a positive way,
10 but you're only as sorry as the actions. So, I mean, we've
11 heard these kinds of issues over and over again. So, I
12 think the community voice is there. I think it's very much
13 what Leona was talking about. It's the listening piece
14 that I question still, and I think if people really start
15 listening in positions of power, I think it'll start the
16 more community-led and community-driven. Yes.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
18 *beaucoup.* Thank you so much. So, beautiful women, I found
19 you very empowering us, and if you had hope for those -- a
20 message of hope or how you want to say it that they don't
21 want to speak because many reasons, safety reason or
22 they're shy or afraid, they -- when message -- I want to
23 speak French. It's very English. What would you say to
24 them, so they can come to us? We have -- we're accessible.
25 I found I am. So, they can come to us with no fear. What

1 recommendation or -- what would you say to them?

2 **MS. LEONA STAR:** I would recommend going to
3 them, first and foremost. In terms of my message, and it
4 wouldn't necessarily be for the families, it would be for
5 you as Commissioners and the work that you're undertaking
6 the work that you have been tasked to do, something needs
7 to shift. Something needs to shift because the lives of
8 our children and families depend on it, and those coming
9 after us, their lives depend on it.

10 And, you have -- just right now, you're
11 sitting in a place -- you're taking up space right now in
12 terms of your power and privilege, and how are you going to
13 create space so that the voices of our families and our
14 survivors of the trauma that's been afflicted on our men
15 and women and families so that their voices can be heard,
16 they could be at the forefront? And, their recommendations
17 -- the recommendations that Leah's been -- has so clearly
18 outlined that you hear them and that you create space, and
19 you -- maybe sometimes even taking a step back.

20 And, if you're filling space, are you
21 intentionally filling space for the sake of filling space?
22 And, if you are, then maybe you shouldn't be there and
23 maybe certain people shouldn't be there. And, listening
24 to, I guess, the people who are trying to -- who have been
25 doing this work for so many years, and it's come to a

1 forefront. Yes, that's it.

2 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*

3 **MS. LEAH GAZAN:** I have a very similar -- I
4 think it's not so much about, you know, focusing on
5 convincing people to be here. It's about questioning what
6 -- what needs to shift so that people want to engage and
7 that they feel safe. Even things like, you know, knowing
8 plans way ahead of time, having the resources so that
9 people know that when they come here, they'll be safe.
10 Like, basic needs, housing, food, emotional supports,
11 ability to bring their loved ones.

12 So, there's reasons why people don't feel
13 safe, and when you don't provide and nurture people at the
14 most basic level, the most basic levels that have resulted
15 in many women ending up in precarious situations of
16 violence or without choices, if we can't do that as an
17 inquiry; provide those basic needs, food, shelter,
18 clothing, if necessary, transportation? I mean, that's the
19 basic things that you need to feel safe. Plans. And, I
20 think if those things were provided, going to communities
21 face-to-face and saying, "What do you need?" Not, "Come to
22 us, and then we'll see if we can provide for your needs."
23 Say, "What do you need? Okay. Are you hungry? Okay."
24 It's nurturing. Like, I think sometimes we forget how to
25 nurture in bureaucracies, you know, on a very basic level.

1 So, I mean, that's been an ongoing concern.
2 I hope that it's addressed, you know? I think if it's
3 addressed, I think you're going to have a lot more
4 participation, a lot more involvement, you know? And,
5 probably a lot more faith in the inquiry if you're
6 providing space through the resources so that they can
7 actually be here in this space.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Well, if I
9 may, I can answer to that if you want.

10 **MS. LEAH GAZAN:** Yes.

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** We are very
12 sensitive about the -- when we receive concerns. Sometimes
13 they're not public because we travel and meet people in
14 communities or through their respective place that they
15 choose that they want to meet with us or share their
16 concern. So, we try to apply or to put in place what they
17 propose, and like your beautiful example, I would say that,
18 yes, they have their meal, they have their space, they have
19 the spiritual support, they have grandmothers, they have --
20 we're there every day with them having the lunch or the
21 supper.

22 So, it is because we've heard, and we make
23 sure that when we come back to a territory that they have
24 concern. So, we changed that because of the voices and
25 concerns. Is it perfect? No. It's -- how do we say?

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1 (speaking in French language), so -- and when we come back,
2 Northern Manitoba, we will make sure that we respect the
3 protocol and what family needs and like this across Canada.
4 *Merci*. You want to add something?

5 **MS. AIMEE CRAFT:** Okay. So, thank you very
6 much to Leona Star and Leah Gazan, and we'll now ask for a
7 break for lunch. I think I can smell the food, so we
8 should probably go out and feed ourselves and each other.
9 Okay. *Migwetch*.

10 --- **EXHIBITS (code: P1P03P0202)**

11 **Exhibit 1:** Digital copy of PowerPoint presentation
12 "Manitoba First Nations Strength Base
13 Indicators of Wellbeing" by Leona Star (Cree,
14 Thunderchild First Nation, Treaty 6
15 Territory) Research Associate,
16 Nanaandawewigamig, Winnipeg, Canada,
17 comprising 13 colour slides.

18 **EXHIBIT 2:** Digital copy of text of Leah Gazan's
19 presentation (PDF; no images included in text
20 submitted).

21 --- Upon Recessing at 12:43

22 --- Upon Resuming at 13:48

23 **Hearing # 3**

24 **Witness: Barbara Houle**

25 **In Relation to Cherisse Houle**

1 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

2 **Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren**

3 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

4 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Are there some
5 matters that need to be done before we begin? Okay. Thank
6 you very much. My name is Wendy van Tongeren. The last
7 name is spelled, V-A-N, T-O-N-G-E-R-E-N, and I am one of
8 the Commission lawyers and will be asking the questions in
9 this particular session.

10 Just so that everybody knows who's watching,
11 we are now in the afternoon of Tuesday, October 17th, 2017
12 in the Winnipeg sessions -- hearings for the Missing and
13 Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry. And, this
14 session, which was scheduled to start at 1:30, I take
15 responsibility and apologize for the lateness,
16 Commissioner.

17 The family that joins us today starts with
18 Barb Houle, H-O-U-L-E, and eventually, she is going to
19 affirm on the feather that she is holding, using that as an
20 icon that represents spirituality and things that are
21 important to you. But, I would like to -- actually to pass
22 the microphone now to each of the members who are here with
23 Barb to identify themselves and perhaps just very briefly
24 identify the role that you're playing today. So, for
25 example, Barb is the witness, and others will have other

1 roles.

2 And, because we have interpreters and a lot
3 of people who are recording this to look at it in the
4 future, I would ask kindly, please, that you also spell
5 your name, particularly if it is one that you pretty much
6 know that we won't be able to spell on your own, kind of
7 like my name. I know that, always, I have to spell it
8 because people don't get it; okay? It's kind of
9 complicated.

10 So, Barb, I'm going to give the microphone
11 to you, and then you can pass it to the person beside you
12 when you have identified yourself, and then we can carry on
13 from there.

14 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** My name is Barb Houle.
15 I am the mother of Cherisse Houle who was murdered in July
16 2009.

17 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, it's B-A-R-B...

18 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Oh, sorry. B-A-R-B, H-
19 O-U-L-E.

20 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, your daughter?

21 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** My daughter is Cherisse,
22 C-H-E-R-I, double S, E, Houle, H-O-U-L-E.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you.

24 **MS. ELEXCYUS KRAMBLE:** Hi, my name is
25 Elexcyus Kramble. I'm Cherisse Houle's cousin. This is my

1 Auntie Barb. My name is spelled E-L-E-X-C-Y-U-S, K-R-A-M-
2 B-L-E, and I'm here to support my family and all missing
3 and murdered Aboriginal women, as well as the Aboriginal
4 boys who we need to help grow up to be strong, protective
5 men. Thanks.

6 **MS. SHARON HOULE:** Good afternoon, my name
7 is Sharon Houle, S-H-A-R-O-N, H-O-U-L-E, and I'm Barb's
8 sister, and I'm here to support Barb.

9 **MS. MYRA SINCLAIR:** My name is Myra
10 Sinclair. I'm from Manitoba Moon Voices. There's a group
11 of us. We're here to support Barb and be with her. M-Y-R-
12 A.

13 **MS. NAHANNI FONTAINE:** *Migwetch.* I am
14 Nahanni Fontaine, and I am here to support Barbara Houle,
15 who I've had the privilege of working with and calling a
16 sister for many, many years. And, that is N-A-H-A-N-N-I,
17 F-O-N-T-A-I-N-E.

18 **MR. CURTIS:** Hi, my name is Curtis. I'm
19 here to support Barb. I'm her partner. My name is spelled
20 C-U-R-T-I-S.

21 **MS. LESLIE SPILLET:** (Speaking in Native
22 language) Leslie Spillet, L-E-S-L-I-E, S-P-I-L-L-E-T-T.
23 I'm here to support Barbara.

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you very much
25 everyone for going through that little practice so that we

1 can address you properly, and also for being here. Thank
2 you. The next step then, Madam Commissioner, is an
3 affirmation which will be on the feather which Barb Houle
4 is holding at the moment.

5 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good afternoon, Barb.
6 Do you solemnly affirm to tell your truth in a good way
7 this afternoon? Thank you.

8 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, Barb, I know
9 that besides the feather, you also have some photographs on
10 your lap. Did you want to address those now or should we
11 ask you to present them or describe them later on? Okay.
12 So, here's a microphone. Okay. I know we're not used to
13 this, but we need to talk into this black thing here.

14 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** This is my daughter,
15 Cherisse right here. I believe she was 16 at the time.
16 She was pregnant with her son. And, this is my other
17 daughter, Jessie, and Cherisse, they were inseparable.
18 And, yes, it's been hard on my daughter, Jessie.

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

20 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** That's why she's not
21 here today.

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, that's
23 Jessica, J-E-S-S-I-C-A; is it?

24 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Yes.

25 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you call her

1 Jessie?

2 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Jessie, yes.

3 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Now, do you mind if
4 I hold the photo for a moment? Okay. So, again, could you
5 just point so that other people can see? And, I think a
6 camera might be able to pick this up. There, you see?

7 MS. BARBARA HOULE: This is my daughter,
8 Cherisse.

9 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Yes.

10 MS. BARBARA HOULE: This is my daughter,
11 Cherisse, and her sister, Jessica.

12 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. So, the
13 photograph on the right-hand side is Cherisse, and the
14 bottom -- the photograph on the left-hand side is the two
15 sisters ---

16 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

17 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: --- when she was
18 younger.

19 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

20 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. And, how old
21 is Cherisse in this photograph, the one on the right?

22 MS. BARBARA HOULE: This one? She's
23 probably about 16 there. She was carrying her son.

24 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. And, her son
25 was born in...

1 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** November 5th, 2007.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Great. Okay, thank
3 you. So, I think everyone can see this a little bit better
4 now. Okay, thank you. And, you wanted to hold this while
5 you speak? So, we've met -- spoken a couple of times about
6 your presentation to try and make sure that you feel
7 comfortable about how we do this together.

8 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Yes.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes. So, the first
10 thing is that you have already indicated to the
11 Commissioner that you are here to speak about your
12 daughter, and you have also already indicated that she is a
13 lost loved one. She was actually killed.

14 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Yes.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So, perhaps
16 to start, would you like to -- we see some of the members
17 of your family here, but perhaps you can just go through
18 the family, your family, starting with your partner at the
19 time that Cherisse was conceived and born, and the other
20 children that have been born; in other words, these
21 siblings or your offspring.

22 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Okay. I was with
23 Cherisse's father for nine years, and we split up around
24 1998, and it was a very violent, abusive relationship. So,
25 I made the choice that I had to leave because I didn't want

1 my children seeing that violence anymore. And, after that,
2 about a couple years after that, he came back into their
3 lives and he asked me if he could take them to Calgary,
4 Cherisse and Jessica. So, I agreed to that, and when it
5 was time to -- for them to come back to Winnipeg, I
6 couldn't find them.

7 So, it was about three to four months after
8 that I finally found them. My daughter Jessica happened to
9 phone my other sister's place and told me where they were.
10 I asked to speak to their father, and he came on the phone,
11 and then he said, "The girls want to go home." So, my
12 brother and I, we went to Calgary. Well, before they --
13 before my daughter Jessica phoned, there was more than one
14 occasion where me and my brother Lyle, we went to Calgary
15 to look for them, but we couldn't find them. So, when
16 finally we got a hold of them, they told us where they
17 lived and we went and picked them up.

18 And then they stayed with me for a while and
19 went to school and stuff, and then their father came back.
20 And then he was talking to the girls that he wanted them to
21 stay with him. So, then they did stay with him for a
22 while, and then there was I guess a physical altercation
23 between him and his partner at the time. The police were
24 involved. And then the police asked them if they wanted to
25 come back to my house and they said no.

1 So, I went to meet with CFS about my
2 daughters, and they told CFS they didn't want to come home,
3 and then they asked why, and then I don't think they gave
4 them a reason why. But, what I believe is because I was
5 very strict with my children. I made sure they went to
6 school and stuff, and were in at a certain time. And, when
7 they were with their father, they didn't have that. So, I
8 think that that's when it all started, you know, crumbling
9 our family unit, I guess you would say. The family unit
10 started crumbling.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, now, Barbara,
12 I would like to ask you some questions about what you have
13 told us already. Are you ready for that?

14 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Pardon?

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I'm going to ask
16 you some questions about ---

17 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Sure.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- what you had
19 told us already. What is the name of the father of
20 Cherisse?

21 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Dennis.

22 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** D-E-N-N-I-S?

23 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Yes.

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, his last name?

25 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Contois.

1 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: I'm sorry?

2 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Contois.

3 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Can you spell that
4 for us, please?

5 MS. BARBARA HOULE: C-O-N-T-O-I-S.

6 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay, thank you.
7 Contois. Do you actually pronounce the S?

8 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes, I guess.

9 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. And so, you
10 had indicated that you were with him for some time.

11 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

12 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And, where were you
13 living during that time?

14 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Mostly in the West
15 Broadway area here in Winnipeg.

16 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. So, always
17 in Winnipeg?

18 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

19 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And, you had
20 children between the two of you?

21 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

22 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Starting with
23 Jordan?

24 MS. BARBARA HOULE: No, Jordan -- they had
25 different fathers.

1 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Oh, I see. Okay.

2 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

3 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Starting with
4 Jessica?

5 MS. BARBARA HOULE: They're the same father.

6 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: I'm sorry?

7 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Same father.

8 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. So, which --
9 Mr. Contois ---

10 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Cherisse and Jessie.

11 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Cherisse?

12 MS. BARBARA HOULE: That's their father.

13 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And Jessie.

14 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

15 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Thank you. Okay.
16 So, who's the older?

17 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Jessica.

18 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And, was she born
19 on November 28th?

20 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

21 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And, was that in
22 1989?

23 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

24 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: And then Cherisse
25 was born not far after that?

1 MS. BARBARA HOULE: No, 1991.

2 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay. And, what
3 was her birth date?

4 MS. BARBARA HOULE: July 7th.

5 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: But, we can't
6 forget Jordan because he still lived in the house ---

7 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

8 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: --- with you;
9 right?

10 MS. BARBARA HOULE: July 17th, 1988.

11 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: July...

12 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Seventeenth, 1988.

13 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: Okay, thank you.

14 So, I've made up a little chart. Do you remember that? We
15 made up this chart that's got the birth dates on it so that
16 we can kind of look here and see what ages are ---

17 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes.

18 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: --- in certain
19 years to make it a bit simpler? Now, the -- how long had
20 you been with Jessica's [sic] partner before she was born?

21 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Like I said, I was with
22 him nine years.

23 MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN: You were with him
24 nine years.

25 MS. BARBARA HOULE: Yes. Can I say

1 something?

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes, go ahead. Oh,
3 you don't like these questions? Okay. So, I'm just -- oh,
4 you feel like you're being interrogated. Okay. So, I'm
5 asking these questions because I wasn't sure whether or not
6 it was clear what ---

7 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** I would just like to
8 tell my daughter's story.

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

10 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** You don't need to know
11 about, you know, when I was with this partner or that
12 partner.

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

14 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** I just want to tell my
15 daughter's story.

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay, I apologize.
17 So, go ahead.

18 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Okay. Like I said, she
19 was -- she was the youngest of my four children. She was
20 taken from us in July 2009, and how I found out is I was at
21 my friend's house, my best friend, and my sister happened
22 to phone me there and she says, "I have to talk to you." I
23 already knew what she was going to tell me because in the
24 news, they said they found -- they found a body, and I
25 haven't heard from Cherisse in about a week, and I already

1 knew that was my daughter. I felt it.

2 So, my sister came and told me and, I don't
3 know, I don't remember much after that because I was, I
4 don't know, I was in shock I guess. But, prior to that, my
5 daughter was taken. She was -- she was on the street and
6 she was addicted to drugs. And, there was one time there
7 when she said to me, "Mommy, I need help." This was after
8 she had her son. She was still doing drugs, and then she
9 finally realized that she wanted to get the help she needs
10 so she could be a good mom. So, she said to me that she
11 needed help, if I could phone her CFS worker so they could
12 place her in a locked facility so she doesn't have to run
13 to the streets to do drugs. I guess she used drugs, too,
14 to cope because they took her son right at birth.

15 So, I phoned her worker, and her worker said
16 to call back. So, I called back and she said there's no
17 facilities that could take Cherisse, and I guess that she
18 -- I guess she felt let down or -- you know? So, she went
19 back to the street, and a week after that, that's when --
20 couple weeks after that, that's when they found her body.

21 And so, she's -- I know if she would have
22 got the help she needed, she would have been a really,
23 really good mom to her son because she loved that little
24 boy so much. And, I don't like how the media portrayed
25 her, saying that she was a drug addicted prostitute. She

1 had family that loved her. It just seems like, you know,
2 it's like -- just happened yesterday for us all the time,
3 especially when we have to come to these inquiries or, you
4 know, gatherings and it opens up all the wounds again.

5 And, we're not only mourning Cherisse, we're
6 also mourning her brother, Jordan, that was taken from us
7 too in 2012 three years after Cherisse. He was also
8 murdered, and that was just, like, him being in somewhere
9 -- wrong place, wrong time the police said. And,
10 Cherisse's murder is unsolved, but my son's murder, they
11 found who did that to him.

12 But, I want people to know what kind of
13 person Cherisse was. She was always smiling. She always
14 wanted to smile all the time, you know, even when bad
15 things -- like, you know, when we're having a rough time,
16 she would be sitting there smiling, telling her corny
17 jokes, but we weren't laughing at her jokes, we were kind
18 of laughing because they were corny. And, she loved to
19 dance, roller skate; she loved her sister very, very much.

20 Her sister, Jessica, has a hard time coping
21 still, and I, too, had a hard time at the beginning to
22 cope. I did turn to drugs and alcohol, and I was -- and I
23 was -- there was a time when I wanted to take my own life
24 after Cherisse was gone, but my son, Jordan, the one that
25 passed, he was my rock and he told me that I can't be like

1 that. He said, "Mom, you can't be selfish. What about
2 us?" And, he took me out of that depression; now he's
3 gone.

4 And, now, her son, he's starting to ask
5 questions about her, but I have a family member that took
6 him since he was 3 months old and he's been with her ever
7 since, and I'm so grateful for that family member because I
8 wouldn't have been able to care for him because the way I
9 was going with my life. But, yes, the other day, I had
10 him, and he says to me, "You know what, *kookoo*?" I said,
11 "What my, son?" He said, "If I can have one wish, I wish I
12 could see my real mom one -- for one day. My parents,"
13 because his father, too, passed away a year after Cherisse.
14 Cherisse's partner. He was in a car accident. He died.
15 He drowned, like the way they say Cherisse drowned, but I
16 know for a fact somebody took my daughter to the outskirts
17 and killed her.

18 My daughter didn't get to live her life.
19 She was only 17. She had dreams, goals. And, someone's
20 walking around out there who took that from us. What
21 really hurts me the most too is now my grandson, he won't
22 ever see his mom or his father. But, he's aware -- right
23 now, he's living where that -- he's very loved, so I'm very
24 thankful for that. I thank the Creator for that.

25 And, my son, Jordan, the one that was also

1 murdered, he was always standing with me when we would come
2 to these gatherings. He would speak out about missing and
3 murdered Indigenous women and girls also. He was an
4 artist. He loved to play -- do his own music, and he
5 actually wrote a song for missing and murdered women and
6 girls. Also, him, too, his life was cut short. He was
7 only 24. I believe my son would have went far in life. He
8 was very intelligent, funny, handsome.

9 And, during the -- after Cherisse was gone,
10 like I said, I was in a dark place, and there was these
11 organizations, like Medicine Bear helped me. I thank the
12 therapist there. Her name is Colleen. She really helped
13 me a lot. And, also, too, I met Nahanni Fontaine, and that
14 woman helped me tremendously. And, also, Leslie Spillet, she
15 always helped our family every year with feasts and
16 that to keep Cherisse's memory alive and Jordan.

17 I'm so grateful for these women that were
18 with me because they bring us together every year. It's
19 called Wiping Away the Tears. And, Nahanni was there for
20 six years, I believe, and she went out of her way to make
21 sure the families were comfortable and, you know, there was
22 all like -- we'd have Christmas parties and stuff, and
23 they'd have to buy presents for over 110 kids, but she
24 always made sure that those kids had presents, and we had a
25 good dinner and the families were together just to, you

1 know, just to show that we're not alone. So, yes.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** On the topic of
3 organizations and people you had contact with after to help
4 you when you -- things weren't going too well, can I just
5 refresh your memory and look at the document we prepared?

6 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Sure.

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Go ahead if you
8 would like to talk on any.

9 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Okay. The first one is,
10 like I said, Medicine Bear. They helped me with
11 counselling and stuff to, you know, talk to somebody about
12 my daughter and my grief, my depression, and I suffer from,
13 like, mental -- my mental health I guess. It's not the
14 same as it was before. Like, you know, I have anxiety,
15 depression. I try to isolate myself. But, talking to some
16 of these people there -- that were there, like, I'm not as,
17 I don't know, I guess, stuck as I was before. And, back in
18 Ottawa, they invited me three times to travel across Canada
19 to tell my story, and I found that healing also. And, I
20 met other families there that were going through the same
21 thing so, you know, you don't feel alone anymore.

22 And, like, the RCMP, there was one -- his
23 name is Corporal Salves (phon). I felt him in my heart
24 that he really wanted to find out what happened to
25 Cherisse, but he's no longer working in that division.

1 And, Victim Services' Project Devote, I have
2 Shannon. She calls me, like, every three months, maybe
3 less than that now, to give me updates on Cherisse's case,
4 which is always the same and there's nothing to tell me.
5 But, Nadia was working with us because of my son Jordan's
6 case, because she was helping us with that too also.
7 During the trial, she was with us.

8 And, the New Directions program. I go there
9 to see my Elders. Elder -- she's Elder/therapist. I go
10 see her and she's very, very helpful to me because I went
11 through three psychiatrists, one psychologist, and -- and
12 then I met Colleen at Medicine Bear. I felt like she knew
13 what I was going through. And, also the one at New
14 Directions, her name is Lesley Russell.

15 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, I don't want to
16 offend you, but I just want to make sure that people get
17 some of those names. So, I would like to spell them if
18 that's all right. It's okay? You're going to get it?
19 Okay. Okay. So, the program with Devote, with Shannon,
20 what sort of things did they do to make you feel better?

21 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Well, I haven't -- I
22 never met the investigators from Project Devote till maybe
23 four years after my daughter was gone. I was the one that
24 reached out to them saying that I wanted a meeting with
25 them. And, when I had the meeting with them, I didn't

1 feel, you know -- because they can't tell me nothing. So,
2 you know, you're walking away from there thinking that
3 they're not doing anything because they can't really speak
4 on what they're working on I guess.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. So -- but
6 the idea of the program was to get the information about
7 the investigation and new leads, and that type of thing?

8 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Yes. And, I think
9 there's only, like, maybe -- they're only investigating a
10 handful of these missing and murdered women; meanwhile,
11 they should be investigating a lot more.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, the New
13 Directions program, can you give a little description of
14 what that program was about that encouraged you to feel
15 better again?

16 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Well, I go see an Elder
17 there, and I talk about my grief, and she helps me a lot
18 with that.

19 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now, did you want
20 to speak about this?

21 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Oh, yes. Yes, those are
22 my recommendations.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. There was
24 one other thing here. Right here. Was there a situation
25 where someone was charged with an ---

1 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Oh, yes. Sorry, now I
2 know what you mean.

3 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay, go ahead.

4 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** There was -- there was
5 this lady -- well, before that, Cherisse had told me that
6 there was this lady, that she was going to her house, and
7 sleeping there when she was running away. So, I didn't
8 think anything of it. Right away, I just told her how come
9 she's not at her CFS placement. But, she was a chronic
10 runaway, and I thought maybe that's just one of the places
11 she ran to.

12 So -- and then I happened to -- after my
13 daughter passed, I happened to read the newspaper, and it
14 said there that, I can't remember her name, Peggy Lemay
15 (phon), I think her name was, was being charged with two
16 counts of sexual exploitation of a minor. And, right away,
17 that clicked in my head that's Cherisse's -- that's the
18 lady that was exploiting my daughter.

19 So, I happened to run to the courthouse, and
20 sure enough, they told me that that was the lady that was
21 charged with my daughter's -- exploiting my daughter. So,
22 they said in court there since my daughter has passed, the
23 witness had passed, that it's time served and she only
24 served one month behind bars for exploiting my daughter.

25 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Anything ---

1 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** And, for them to not
2 tell me that this lady is going to court for doing that to
3 my daughter, like nobody told me. I had to read it in the
4 newspaper.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, you might have
6 a recommendation about that?

7 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Yes.

8 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, we can get to
9 the recommendations now if you would like that you had
10 thought of.

11 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Okay.

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

13 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Okay. My
14 recommendations is that it should be mandatory for all
15 police agencies across Canada to take cultural awareness
16 sensitivity training. And, No. 2, every province should
17 have a special advisor on Indigenous women and girl issues.
18 Example, the NDP government here in Manitoba had one in
19 position, the very first one in Canada here in Manitoba.
20 That was abolished by the PC government. That should be
21 reinstated in every province throughout Canada. That was
22 in 2010 to 2016 where families would work with Nahanni
23 Fontaine.

24 I think that's very important because, like
25 I said, we were the only province that had that, and when

1 we would have these gatherings -- we had a national
2 gathering, and I think people were, you know -- I don't
3 know how to say it, but they were surprised that they had
4 that, like, somebody there to work with us. And, I think
5 everybody -- every province should have that.

6 No. 3 should be funding needs to be
7 allocated to families that are still searching for their
8 loved ones. The example, Jennifer Catcheway's family are
9 still looking for their loved one.

10 No. 4, funding for Missing and Murdered
11 Indigenous Women and Girls, like for billboards,
12 newspapers, ads, flyers, like, in restrooms, hotels, in
13 event centres. There's an example that myself and Nahanni,
14 we had in June 2011 with, also, other families. It was an
15 8-week, I guess, program. Not program. It was called
16 "What if she was your daughter?" It was a public awareness
17 campaign. They were -- pictures of our loved ones were on
18 buses, and that was only for eight weeks. I think that
19 should be, like, all the time.

20 And, also, too, funding for shelters,
21 treatment centres for our Indigenous women and girls. And,
22 I think also, too, funding for all the provinces to have,
23 like, what we have, Wipe Away the Tears. And, we had one
24 national Wiping Away the Tears where we invited families
25 from across Canada to join us in 2015. Like I said, we had

1 -- they hosted a Christmas party, and we had -- like, I
2 guess, just to be with each other. And, Nahanni, she
3 arranged outings, like ballet, movies, just to maintain
4 support and contact throughout the year. And, because I
5 think, you know, when you have people that really, truly
6 listen to you, great things happen. Like, we were having a
7 conversation again, me and Nahanni, and that's how -- and
8 other families here in Manitoba about -- and that's how the
9 monument came about.

10 And, my last one is, the media should
11 release the names and photos of these men who exploit these
12 women and girls.

13 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Are there any other
14 topics that you would like to speak about in terms of your
15 thoughts? For example, when there's a teen who's a
16 runaway, how, basically, the system can respond to that to
17 keep her safe?

18 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Well, there should --
19 there should be, like, a 24/7 shelter where they can go to
20 instead of being on the street, you know? Well, at least
21 they'll have somewhere they know they will be safe instead
22 of -- like there's a lot of these young girls and men also
23 that are being exploited because they don't have anywhere
24 to go. And, I think it's important where they should have
25 a 24/7 for women, girls and also our boys and men.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. And, what
2 about this? As a result of the tragedy in Canada with so
3 many women and girls being missing and murdered that there
4 is a large number of abandoned children, their children are
5 left because of these deaths and there's a huge void. Is
6 there anything you would like to say about perhaps what the
7 agencies or governments should be doing to assist the
8 children whose mothers go missing or are murdered?

9 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Well, I think -- like I
10 said, my grandson is already asking about his mom, and they
11 should put in place where -- that they have programs where
12 he can seek help when he's ready for it, and also other
13 children. And, I don't think it should be when something
14 happens and then start talking about it. It should be
15 right now because these children -- these kids, these
16 children are going to grow up soon and they're going to
17 need that help.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, in your vast
19 experience, not only with your own situation, but speaking
20 with NWAC and being part of organized activity to deal with
21 this issue in Canada, what have you recognized to be some
22 of the issues for children who are left because their
23 mothers are murdered? What are some of their issues as
24 they grow up?

25 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** I think it's going to

1 be, like, a cycle because, you know, your mother -- your
2 mother is the only one that's going to give you that
3 unconditional love and, I don't know, like, they might not
4 get it from the people that are raising them or they might
5 just, you know, grow up in the system and they'll fall
6 through the cracks also like my daughter did.

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now, you have
8 people here supporting you around you. Is there -- have
9 you had discussion with any of them about any who would
10 like to speak to ---

11 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** My niece would.

12 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Okay. Are you
13 ready for that then? Okay, go ahead. Go ahead.

14 **MS. ELEXCYUS KRAMBLE:** So, first of all, I
15 just want to talk about -- I was also very upset and so was
16 our family that Cherisse was instantly marked as "just a
17 girl on the street on drugs". It wasn't put out there that
18 she's my cousin, she's her niece, she's that little boy's
19 mom. I changed that little girl's diaper since she was
20 only portrayed as nothing and that was horrible. That's
21 horrible to our families, that's horrible to these children
22 who are going to read these in the paper, and that's all
23 they're going to know. That was very, very wrong and that
24 needs to change.

25 Cherisse is a wonderful, wonderful girl.

1 She was completely crazy. Like, we would laugh all the
2 time at her. Like, her laugh was contagious, her energy
3 was -- like I'm telling you, you can be in the worst mood
4 and she walks in and just this giant smile with her big
5 eyes and you forgot what you were upset about, you know?
6 And, that's what needs to be remembered.

7 The very last time I spoke to Cherisse, I
8 was coming out of, I think it was the building with New
9 Directions, the Rice Building. And, she was so happy to
10 see me and she gave me a big hug. She goes, "I heard you
11 stopped drinking and doing drugs." I said, "Yes, I did."
12 And, she's like, "Do you think you can take me to where you
13 went?" And, I almost cried, I was like, "I absolutely,
14 totally can take you there," and then I hugged her and I
15 never saw her again.

16 And, that's just, like, so close she was
17 there to wanting to make a change, like right there and now
18 she's gone and dumped like she was nothing, and that needs
19 to change, this cycle of abuse that we're in. I mean,
20 we're looked at like we're such bad people. But, I mean,
21 we only lived what we knew, and they only lived what they
22 knew, and their parents lived what they knew. We don't
23 wake up every day going, "Oh, yes, we're going to, you
24 know, neglect our kids and go do drugs and, yes, this is
25 great." We don't do that. We need a change to happen and

1 that's why I spoke about the men.

2 Like, I'm raising three boys, and honest to
3 God, I have no clue how to do that properly because we're
4 not taught that, and Cherisse's little boy is going to grow
5 up to be a strong Aboriginal man. So, we need some kind of
6 help with that as well. You know, I'm proud to say I'm
7 finally breaking the cycle with my boys, but there's so
8 many girls out there who just don't have that opportunity.
9 They want it just like Cherisse was right there, but we're
10 just looked at like we're nothing and that's -- that needs
11 to change.

12 These girls, I know a lot of these girls
13 that died, and they could have been amazing, but they're
14 never going to have that and these kids are never going to
15 know that. I'm really glad this stuff is finally
16 happening, but like my auntie said, it always takes
17 something bad before something changes. Let's get ahead of
18 it before more starts happening. Cherisse was a wonderful
19 soul and Jordan was too, and now these two beautiful,
20 beautiful people are gone because of this cycle we're in.
21 So, we need that to change. Thank you.

22 **MS. NAHANNI FONTAINE:** So, Barb would like
23 me just to talk a little bit about Jordan, and who ---

24 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Could you just
25 introduce yourself?

1 **MS. NAHANNI FONTAINE:** Oh, sorry. I'm
2 Nahanni Fontaine. And, Barb has talked a little bit about
3 Jordan, and actually the first time that -- I don't know,
4 was that your first time at Cherisse's funeral when we got
5 to meet Jordan? So, Leslie and I went to Cherisse's
6 funeral, and Jordan got up to speak and to honour his
7 sister. And, we just looked at each other and we thought,
8 "Wow," like he was extraordinary. He was so articulate, he
9 was so passionate. He loved his sister, he loves -- he
10 loved both of his sisters. He was so protective of his
11 sisters.

12 But, what was so interesting about Jordan
13 was, first off, how articulate he was, but also his
14 analysis; his analysis in respect of violence against his
15 sister, but also Indigenous women. And, we had the
16 opportunity -- from the funeral, we had -- we started to
17 develop a very good relationship with Barb and with Jess
18 and with Jordan.

19 So, I'm going to just tell two stories about
20 Jordan. Every year here in Manitoba, we have -- it's a day
21 conference on the sexual exploitation of children. And,
22 every year when we were part of it, we would have a family
23 member, an MMIWG family member to come and speak to the
24 conference. And, sometimes we had upwards of 300 people
25 that were in attendance, and that was a range of people

1 from, you know, psychologists to school counsellors, to
2 just everybody.

3 And, one year, Barb and Jordan came to
4 speak. And, again, Jordan just blew everyone away with his
5 analysis. And, he wrote that letter; right, Barb? He
6 wrote a letter to the individual who took his sister, and
7 it was so powerful, but it was also a moment to understand
8 the impact that it has on each and every family member
9 through Jordan.

10 And, he was very funny. There's a funny
11 story about Jordan, but I won't talk about that one. But,
12 I just want to illustrate in respect of -- there's such a
13 negative social construction of Indigenous men; right? In
14 fact, we used to have a federal minister here that blamed
15 Indigenous men for the epidemic of violence against
16 Indigenous women. And, you know, Jordan is a perfect
17 illustration that our men love their sisters, they love
18 their mothers, they love their partners and Jordan was a
19 perfect illustration of that. And, today, in this space
20 with his mom, I just lift up both Jordan and Cherisse.

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you. Leslie.

22 **MS. LESLIE SPILLETT:** One of the things that
23 you talked about was about, you know, how our people are --
24 are so stereotyped and so racialized -- stereotyped. And,
25 it's just endemic in institutions, in European

1 institutions. It's not -- it's not just the media, it's
2 just not in the policing agencies, it's not -- it's
3 everywhere. It's everywhere in every institution.

4 And, one of the things I'll never forget
5 about -- so, after there's a death of a child in care,
6 there's immediately an investigation, and I know Thelma,
7 our grandmother, knows this very well. And, we, at Ka Ni
8 Kanichihk, we're -- had some association with Cherisse and
9 we had a part of her file. And, her file -- she was 17
10 years old, but her file was a couple inches thick. And,
11 before the -- the investigator from the Children's Advocate
12 came and picked that file up, I had a chance -- I wanted to
13 read it.

14 And, you know, it was heartbreaking that
15 every -- every social worker, every authority figure that
16 had any interaction with this family could only see the
17 negative things in that family. And, in everything that,
18 you know, in that file contained with all their diagnoses
19 and all their problem identification, the only thing that
20 they saw -- saw positive about Cherisse was that her eye
21 sight was normal. Everything else about her was in a
22 deficit, was a negative.

23 And so, it's not -- you know, when I -- you
24 know, when I saw that, it's -- you know, this is -- to know
25 the families, to know the -- the amazing strength and

1 beauty and love and all of those things that families have,
2 the courage of families and living in these communities,
3 there's -- there's so much work that has to get done in
4 terms of -- now they talked -- they talked a little bit
5 about it this morning on the panel, but to -- it's still --
6 you know, our families are still held in such a negative --
7 in negative space and it's still continuing. It's not
8 something that just -- it didn't stop happening. But, in
9 every interaction with the families in terms of the
10 criminal -- or the systems, it's from a negative place.
11 It's from a place we're not mirroring, you know, what their
12 expectations are, then there's something inherently wrong
13 with us.

14 So, there's something so deeply inherently
15 wrong with these systems that -- that we interact with that
16 -- that, you know, they see the families as the problem,
17 they see the individual family members are the problem, but
18 it's really not the families that are the problem. It's
19 these systems that are so -- they're so racist and so -- so
20 thoroughly problematic that is the problem.

21 And, I'll never forget, ever, the day that,
22 you know, Jordan was taken. And, you know, it's -- it's --
23 you could just see the love in that room; hey? The love in
24 that room that nobody can see that. You know, we need to
25 kind of -- kind of -- well, you know, when Leona was

1 talking today, just kind of scrap the whole system because
2 it's not -- it's so flawed that, you know, you can't repair
3 something that's so flawed. And so, you know, the -- the
4 love that these families have, the love that Jessie and
5 Barb and her family had for their loved ones, it's -- you
6 know, it's -- that's what's real. That's what we need to
7 hang on, and I know that's what -- that's what's reflected
8 in this space here.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** These things that
10 have been raised about the negativity and the stereotypical
11 portrayal, just -- you told me of a story, I don't know if
12 you want to share, where an effort was made to try and
13 improve that somewhat. Is that something you would like to
14 talk about? Thank you.

15 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Like I said, my daughter
16 was dealing with a drug addiction. She had no help.
17 People that were supposed to, you know, be there for her
18 besides myself and my daughter, my other daughter, Jessica,
19 I believe that we let her down. I always wondered, like,
20 what if that worker did say, "Yes, we have a placement for
21 Cherisse," if she would have still been here? And, if she
22 was, I know she would have really turned her life around
23 for the better for herself and for her son. But, now we
24 don't have that.

25 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Was there a

1 reporter who actually wrote a more positive story about
2 her?

3 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** We -- well, there was so
4 many people coming out, like people I didn't even know
5 talking about my daughter like they really knew her, and
6 I've never heard of these people before because we didn't
7 talk to the media. And, also, too, that the media was, I
8 guess, exploiting my daughter also saying, like, she was,
9 you know, drug addicted, on the street. Just saying the
10 negativity about her, all negative stuff.

11 And then we finally -- we -- my sister had a
12 friend that her niece was murdered, and they told our story
13 to a Winnipeg Free Press reporter. At the time, her name
14 was Gabrielle Giroday, and she did a really nice story on
15 Cherisse, and I was thankful that, you know, she did it the
16 way she did it and not, you know, how the other ones were
17 doing it.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Like, what you were
19 describing about the positive side?

20 **MS. BARBARA HOULE:** Yes.

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Yes. Okay, thank
22 you. Anything else, Barb? Thank you, Madam Commissioner.
23 Do you have any questions for the witnesses?

24 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
25 *beaucoup.* No question, more a comment. Yesterday, a woman

1 came, an Elder said, "You know, I have been listening and
2 women are taking their space speaking up or -- you know,
3 that's empowerment." And, you just showed it, how you want
4 this to be conducted in order to honour your daughter, so I
5 was so proud that you stood up for you and for your family.
6 So, *merci beaucoup. Merci.*

7 And, also, that the message by the two
8 wonderful women behind you saying that people -- the spirit
9 of your families were so lovely and so, you know, powerful
10 and all of that. And, I know the two women behind you.
11 They were the first one who introduced me to Missing and
12 Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls long time ago to a
13 vigil. Where I came from, from Quebec, we've heard about
14 it. It was very out west, out west, very -- you know,
15 media didn't bring us the real image or the real reality,
16 and they brought me to a vigil.

17 So, it is very acknowledged. *Merçi beaucoup*
18 and you're well surrounded, and you seem to be very -- very
19 active also, so more we are, better it is. And, the change
20 has also to happen at the grassroot level, so I'm walking
21 beside you and with you. *Merçi beaucoup, beaucoup,*
22 *beaucoup.* Thank you.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, Barb, it's --
24 it's been a wonderful teaching for me to work with you, and
25 I also acknowledge what Commissioner Audette has described.

1 It's very important that you told me that you didn't like
2 the way that I was asking my questions, so thank you for
3 helping teach me a better way. Thank you.

4 --- Upon recessing at 14:46

5 --- Upon resuming at 15:49

6 **Hearing # 4**

7 **Witness: Betty Rourke, Mike Rourke, Lorna Sinclair, Elora**
8 **Sinclair, Kim McPherson, Gerri Pangman, Pierre Ducharme,**
9 **Coralee McPherson, Laurie Anderson**

10 **In relation to (Jennifer Glenna Johnston, Jennifer**
11 **McPherson and Myrna Letandre) part 2 of 2**

12 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

13 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

14 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Good morning,
16 everyone. I hope you're all well. You know, there is
17 beautiful things happening behind the scenes in this
18 journey, the National Inquiry, and the other day, I was
19 having lunch with two beautiful persons and got a call and
20 said, "Would you like to come and eat turkey?" So, it was
21 a day with lots of emotion, but also beautiful surprise.

22 So, after the lunch, we went to the family
23 and had turkey. I think it's turkey time this weekend.
24 And, I was having the turkey with the family because it was
25 a feast for their loved one, and this little boy, you know

1 when you're a mom and a new grandmother, when you see a
2 kid, you go, "aww". You do that. So, yes, he touched my
3 heart. But, where he really, really touched my heart is
4 when he started to sing for Jennifer, drum for Jennifer.
5 It was so beautiful.

6 So, yesterday, I went to give him tobacco
7 and asked him, would you do us this honour to come and see
8 us, light the day for us? Because this journey is heavy.
9 This journey is with lots of emotion, and you, we say in my
10 region, kids were stars before they choose their parent.
11 And, this little star -- star? Beautiful children,
12 beautiful son, and he said, "Yes, I will." So, there he
13 is. Maybe, Pierre, you could introduce your son?

14 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** Hi everybody. This is
15 -- I just want to say hi to everybody here. This is my
16 son.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** For me. Just
18 for me. Close your eyes, everybody.

19 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** Here, you can -- who
20 are you?

21 **PIERRE JUNIOR:** Pierre.

22 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** Say, hi everybody.

23 **PIERRE JUNIOR:** Hi everybody.

24 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** What are you going to
25 do, Pierre? Are you going to sing a song?

1 **PIERRE JUNIOR:** I'm going to sing a song.

2 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** Which song, Pierre?

3 **PIERRE JUNIOR:** The Turtle Song.

4 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** Okay. So, you take
5 your drum, and then you sing your song. Stand up and I'll
6 be with you; okay?

7 **PIERRE JUNIOR:** Okay. Okay.

8 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** Are you ready?

9 **(MUSICAL PRESENTATION)**

10 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*

11 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** That was good, Pierre.
12 Yes. Good job, Pierre.

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Thank you.

14 **PIERRE JUNIOR:** You're welcome.

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** You're
16 welcome. *Bravo.* So, it was for -- when you sang, it was
17 for who?

18 **PIERRE JUNIOR:** You.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. *Merci*
20 *beaucoup. Merci.* That was beautiful.

21 You want to tell me your name?

22 **ROBERT:** Yes, I'm Robert.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** What do you
24 want to do?

25 **ROBERT:** Sing the Bird Song.

1 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Do you need a
2 drum?

3 **ROBERT:** Yes.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** He needs a
5 drum. He needs a drum. There's a drum coming.

6 **(MUSICAL PRESENTATION)**

7 **ROBERT:** That's how far I can sing.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*
9 *Merci.* Thank you. Oh, there you are. *C'est beau.* I'll
10 keep it.

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
12 Audette?

13 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Oui?*

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I would like to open
15 with the continuation from the hearing yesterday with the
16 families that's with you today. I know that we already
17 have done a quick introduction, but what I'd like to do is
18 just pass the microphone down so you can say your name
19 again. And so, if anyone is just starting to watch, they
20 know who is speaking.

21 **MS. BETTY ROURKE:** My name is Betty Rourke.
22 I am the mother of Jennifer McPherson, and the sister of
23 Jennifer Johnston.

24 **MR. MIKE ROURKE:** Hi, I'm Mike Rourke. I'm
25 Betty's husband, and these are my children over here,

1 Pierre, Kim, Gerri and Jennifer.

2 **MS. ELORA ANDERSON:** Hi, my name is Elora
3 Anderson. Myrna Letandre was my auntie.

4 **MS. LAURIE ANDERSON:** Hi, I'm Laurie
5 Anderson. And, Myrna Letandre was my cousin/sister. My
6 grandmother raised us as sisters.

7 **MS. LORNA SINCLAIR:** Hi, I'm Lorna Sinclair,
8 and Myrna Letandre was my sister.

9 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** Hi, my name is Pierre
10 Ducharme, and Jennifer McPherson was my sister.

11 **MS. KIM MCPHERSON:** I'm Kim McPherson, and
12 Jennifer McPherson was my sister.

13 **PIERRE JUNIOR:** I'm Pierre.

14 **MS. BRENDA:** Hi. My name is Brenda, and
15 Pierre is my husband, and Jennifer is my sister-in-law.

16 **MS. ANGIE HUTCHINSON:** Hi, I'm Angie, and
17 I'm here as a support for the family.

18 **MS. NAHANNI FONTAINE:** I'm Nahanni, and I'm
19 here for support for the families.

20 **MS. LESLIE SPILLETT:** *Bonjour*, Leslie,
21 support for the families.

22 **MS. CORALEE MCPHERSON:** Hello. I'm Coralee
23 McPherson, and Jennifer McPherson was my auntie.

24 **MS. GERRI PANGMAN:** Hi, I'm Gerri Pangman.
25 Jennifer McPherson was my sister, and Jennifer Johnston was

1 my auntie.

2 **MR. KEVIN HART:** My name is Kevin, and I'm
3 here to support the family.

4 **MS. BRENDA BEAR:** My name is Brenda Bear,
5 and I'm here to support the families.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, yesterday, we
7 had the families share the stories of their three lost
8 loved ones. And so, today, we're not going to go into that
9 same detail of the deaths, but what we want to address is
10 the way it has impacted the families. And, also, to
11 provide the families an opportunity to provide
12 recommendations and ideas based on their experiences to the
13 Commission.

14 And so, I would actually like to start with
15 the same order we did yesterday. If we could briefly talk
16 about Jennifer Johnston? And, yesterday, we had heard from
17 the families there were a lot of impacts in relation to the
18 death, and the fact that the justice system, the family
19 felt that the justice system did not address the needs
20 because the murderer was not appropriately convicted. And
21 so, I just wanted to allow the opportunity for the family
22 to share what that impact has meant from the time it
23 happened until even now.

24 **MS. BETTY ROURKE:** I'm going to leave most
25 of the sharing to my children. But, I do want to say this.

1 For me, it's upsetting that the time we have to share is so
2 limited. For myself, I would have wanted to have more time
3 to speak and address my sister, but that's fine. It's done
4 now. I'm already a wounded mother. So, whenever my
5 children or grandchildren tell me that someone has hurt or
6 offended them, I will protect them.

7 I would like to speak to one of your intake
8 workers at the registration desk. I'll tell you her name
9 privately. (indiscernible) has hurt one of my children.
10 We're very extremely sensitive right now. I was also made
11 aware that while we were sharing our story yesterday, your
12 Elder, Bernie Williams, looked as if she was sleeping and
13 not at all interested.

14 Today, with my own eyes, I saw how she
15 reacted to Alaya McIvor as she shared. She looked very
16 agitated and kept shaking her head. I recommend that you
17 get an Elder that is more caring and fair to everyone, and
18 this is all I have to say today. As I said, I'll want my
19 children to...

20 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Betty, you
21 and your family take the time you need; okay? Take the
22 time you need.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, I also wanted
24 to offer any of the children, if they wanted to share the
25 impacts of their aunt and anything to do with the justice

1 system or otherwise, how they felt and what those impacts
2 have meant for the family.

3 **MS. KIM MCPHERSON:** I did share some of the
4 impacts yesterday of my auntie's death, and the trauma that
5 it has scarred me with. And, I know my sister Gerri also
6 shared that as well, too. You just want the impacts or...?

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** You can feel free to
8 tie it to recommendations you would have, too.

9 **MS. KIM MCPHERSON:** I don't know if I
10 mentioned yesterday that when the police were interviewing
11 all of us after my sister -- my sister. My auntie was
12 murdered, we all were in the police station, and it seemed
13 like we were there for hours. And, we were just children.
14 I don't remember being offered food or water. Police kept
15 coming in and out asking us the same questions over and
16 over. And, because I was nine, I was, like, "Why do they
17 keep asking me the same questions? I want to go home", you
18 know?

19 I remember we were all in our pyjamas, and
20 we're all little kids; me, Jennifer and Gerri, and Pierre,
21 you know, in our pyjamas in the police station. And, I
22 remember when they had the court hearing for my auntie. I
23 remember that. And, they wanted to use me as a witness,
24 but they said, "You might not need to go in there." So, I
25 remember in a room, and I remember thinking, "I hope I

1 don't have to go. I don't want to do whatever they want me
2 to do."

3 So, as a child, if children are impacted in
4 these kind of circumstances, they really need to be treated
5 differently. They need to be treated with love, with
6 sensitivity, compassion. They need to be fed. We need to
7 be clothed. If police are interviewing us, interview us in
8 a space where it's safer. I always remembered that. I
9 didn't like it, because you're scared, you're traumatized.
10 I don't remember someone coming in asking how we were
11 doing. They just asked us about, "What do you remember?"
12 Like, nothing to help us.

13 So, I would recommend that -- I don't know
14 how they do investigations now, but when children are
15 involved, you have to treat them as children, and you need
16 to be appropriate around the children.

17 Long-term impacts, as I mentioned, it
18 scarred me for life. I'm afraid to walk alone. I don't
19 like walking alone if I don't have to. I live in a nice
20 neighbourhood, and I won't even go for a walk in the park
21 by myself. Somebody has to be with me, because I'm afraid
22 I'll be a target.

23 I actually remember sharing that with a non-
24 Indigenous colleague, and she goes, "Well, I walk by
25 myself." So, I thought, well, it must be nice to feel that

1 way, you know? To not feel afraid, to not even worry about
2 being targeted, and I just don't know what that feels like.
3 And, to me, that's a long-term impact. Even going to work,
4 I try not to feel that way. So, it has really impacted my
5 self-esteem growing up. I don't know.

6 And, knowing that the murderer is free now,
7 the sentencing was inappropriate. It didn't match the
8 crime he did. That's all I can think of right now. I
9 don't know if anyone wants to share anything else.

10 **MS. GERRI PANGMAN:** So, I was seven -- no,
11 maybe six. About six, yes. And, I don't remember much,
12 but I'm just going to say what I remember is I remember
13 wearing one of my mom's shirts. And, it was big, so it was
14 like a dress, and it was my pyjamas. I remember being in
15 this white, bright, bright room, and being asked what
16 happened.

17 And, at six, I just told them that I heard a
18 belt buckle, and he was hitting her over and over with it.
19 That was my interpretation. That's what I heard. I heard
20 the belt buckle, so I thought maybe he hit her, and hit
21 her, and hit her, but she was being stabbed. And, I just
22 thank God today that we were not apprehended from -- I
23 don't know what you would call Children's Aid in the
24 eighties, right, but I'm glad that that never, ever
25 happened, because then we would -- it would be so different

1 circumstances if we were apprehended.

2 But, we weren't. We all got to stay
3 together, and I remember being in a house with Kim and Jenn
4 and me. I don't know where we went after, but I remember
5 all being in a house, and I can hear a police car going by
6 and, "Oh, they're looking for that man." But, yeah, I just
7 want to -- I'm just glad that we were never apprehended,
8 because it would have been more devastating to us. But,
9 I'm glad that never happened. Thank you.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. Although
11 we're doing this in the same order we did yesterday, I just
12 want to say, if something comes up and you want to talk, or
13 step back, or go out of line, that's okay. But, I would
14 like to actually turn to the impacts of Myrna's death now,
15 please.

16 I understand we heard a lot yesterday about
17 what it meant to have such a long period of time between
18 when she went missing and when her remains were found.
19 And, we also heard the family yesterday say that the fact
20 that it took Jennifer's death and through that criminal
21 process is how you learned of Myrna's death was
22 particularly difficult.

23 And, please use your own words when you're
24 talking about this, but just to recall from yesterday, you
25 had made a comment that you felt like if the police

1 investigation had gone better, or they had actually looked
2 for Myrna when the family asked, that Jennifer may still be
3 with the McPherson family.

4 And, on that basis, I'm offering for any of
5 you to share the impacts, whether it was when she was
6 missing, when you found out, the trial, what have the
7 impacts on your entire family been?

8 **MS. LORNA SINCLAIR:** Well, like I said, my
9 sister went missing October 7, 2006, and since she went
10 missing, we tried hard to find her. The police said they
11 had tried to look for her in B.C. or Calgary, and came up
12 with no information.

13 But, what I wanted to know is why they
14 didn't listen to me, or bring Traigo in, or investigate him
15 at his house? Because I went there on my own, like I said,
16 with family and friends. So, I'm wondering why they didn't
17 listen to me and go bring him in, question him and, you
18 know find out more about him when I told the police, like,
19 that's the last person she was with, and I didn't hear
20 anything from her in a week and I reported her missing? I
21 went to the PSB missing. My mom said, "Go report her
22 missing."

23 And, my mom was working as a school teacher
24 back home, and she was really busy, and she said, "I'll
25 come out there and be with you as soon as I can." And then

1 I waited, and I contacted all my family members, and my
2 family members, two of them had seen Myrna the last time.
3 The last time they had seen Myrna was around September --
4 end of September. And, they said she was Traigo, and she
5 was going for a walk with him, and they said they were
6 going to St. John's Park, and they said this man that she
7 was with was very weird.

8 And, I went into the police station,
9 reported that, that they thought, you know, he didn't look
10 right, and he didn't talk to them. And, they looked at him
11 and they just -- what is Myrna doing with him, you know?
12 And, Myrna says, "Oh, I'm okay. I'm all right." And, that
13 was Myrna. She was always happy, like happy go-lucky, you
14 know, always happy to see you, and very friendly and kind,
15 kind-hearted.

16 Oh, I just wonder why they didn't try more
17 to investigate this man and -- yeah. Like, Laurie, Laurie
18 has a lot to tell you about how she feels and how this man
19 could get away with this, because I repeatedly went to the
20 PSB, and I gave them more pictures of Myrna, and they said
21 that they couldn't find him.

22 The two investigators came to see me at my
23 place, and I lived close to the PSB. So, I went in there,
24 like, twice at least to find out if they had anything,
25 because nobody was contacting me back from the detectives

1 they assigned me to, and I was wondering, like, why didn't
2 they try harder? Because they kept moving my case to
3 different detectives. Like, moving -- like, switching me.

4 Two years after my sister went missing,
5 that's when they told me that they could find this guy, and
6 that's -- you know, I told them, "Well, it's up to you. I
7 told you to go to that house on Lorne. I gave you the
8 phone number," and, yeah, they didn't even go in -- what
9 I'm told, they didn't even go in and talk to him, or bring
10 him in for questioning. And, also that, like I said, my
11 sister would never take off without telling any one of us,
12 any one of us in our family.

13 This is my cousin, Laurie. She was very
14 close to Myrna. They grew up together. Like I said, my
15 sister Myrna was raised by my grandmother, and yeah, she
16 knows a lot about my sister. They were very close and
17 could share about how her personality is and how it
18 impacted our family.

19 It has affected my son deeply. Jamie was
20 very close with his grandma and when the cops or police
21 came to see me and asked me to release my sister's dental
22 records, that's when I knew something was wrong. And, my
23 son was there, and now he's messed up. Yeah, he's not
24 doing good, still not doing good to this day, because he
25 hurt from what he heard from the police. It just affected

1 him in many ways.

2 My younger son and my daughter, that was
3 their only auntie. So, it has affected our family very
4 deeply and hurt me that my mom didn't know where she went
5 missing, and my mom died September 12th, 2008. Like, she
6 asked me everyday, did you hear from her? Did you hear
7 from her? "Do you really think she'd take off, Lorna,
8 without telling us?" She even said to me one time, and I
9 said, "No, mom. She would never do that."

10 And so, they found something wrong, and I
11 repeatedly called the police and tried to find out more and
12 say, "Did you hear anything? Did you look in Calgary? Did
13 you look in B.C.?" Because I had so much hope that she
14 might be out there and not letting us know, because maybe
15 she ran away, you know? Like, I wanted to believe that she
16 was still alive.

17 Yeah, I just wanted to know why the cops
18 didn't check, because that's why I said it wouldn't have
19 maybe happened to this family, that they lost their sister
20 and daughter. Yeah, I just wanted the police to know that
21 they need to take us seriously when we go missing, you
22 know? I know if it was somebody else -- I'm not saying my
23 sister, but if it was a Caucasian woman, I'm sure they
24 would have did a massive manhunt, sort of thing, all over,
25 helicopters, whatever, you know? Us, when we go missing,

1 they just put us, like, on a file and, you know, they don't
2 go deeper to investigate.

3 And, the Winnipeg Police, like I said, they
4 didn't even really apologize for that when I went to trial,
5 and I expressed to them at trial how I felt, and I blamed
6 them. But, I'm still healing and I'm still learning not to
7 hate, and to forgive. My grandmother taught us that, to be
8 humble and to forgive. She said they will be judged when
9 they -- and I also believe in that. Thank you for
10 listening.

11 **MS. LAURIE ANDERSON:** I'm only four months
12 younger than Chickie. We played together as babies. We
13 grew up together. We were always together.

14 I'd like to share a poem. It's hard to look
15 at your sweet face and try to comprehend why your life had
16 to have a tragic end. I miss you Chickie. I miss you very
17 bad. I always remember the good times we had. You were
18 always there when I needed someone to care. Now, I don't
19 see you here on Earth anywhere. But, you're gone to
20 heaven. You're way up above. I know for sure now you're
21 with someone you love.

22 After we learned the grizzly details of her
23 murder, it was so hard. So hard. I'm done my poem. This
24 is just something I have to say. I had horrible
25 nightmares. My doctor put me on anti-depressants and

1 sleeping pills because I did not want to sleep at night. I
2 cried for her every day for two years. I could not be
3 alone. It wasn't until I went to a Wiping Away the Tears
4 ceremony and cried into sage that I was able to function
5 normally again. I have not cried for her since, but I miss
6 her so much that I still have an ache in my heart.

7 There's one more poem. Since she went
8 missing, I knew she was gone. My heart's been broken
9 since; it's hard to carry on. I miss my best friend. It's
10 so hard not to cry, but she's in heaven now; therefore, I
11 will try. I will always love, always miss my best friend.
12 But, I know she's okay, though it still breaks my heart
13 that she had to go that way.

14 This is all I have to say for now. I wish I
15 had been here yesterday to talk more about this, but I know
16 she's all right, and that's the only thing that brings me
17 comfort, is that she believed in Jesus. She prayed all the
18 time. So, I know for sure there's no place in hell for a
19 woman as sweet and loving and caring as Myrna. She's all
20 right now, but it's still so hard and I miss her so much.
21 I think of her all the time.

22 Mostly, I smile when I think of her because
23 I know that she's in heaven, and that's the only place that
24 she could have gone. I know that. During the time she had
25 been missing, many of us had dreams about her. In those

1 dreams, she was sad. She'd say, "I want to go home." And,
2 before she could say anything about where she was, I'd wake
3 up.

4 But, after she had been discovered, after
5 she had been found, the dreams like that stopped. Now,
6 when I dream of her, she's happy. And so, I know her
7 spirit is at rest and that I will see her again one day. I
8 can't be selfish and wish her back, because she had a hard
9 life, and I always think that, you know, I'm being selfish
10 if, you know, I'm crying for her. She wouldn't want us to
11 cry for her; she'd want us to be happy for her. So, I
12 smile, and I think of all the good times we had, and it's
13 just -- I'm relieved that she's in heaven. I know that for
14 sure, and I thank you all for listening.

15 **MS. ELORA SINCLAIR:** The impact that it had
16 on myself and my family was very damaging, not only
17 physically, but mentally, spiritually and emotionally. It
18 affected all aspects of our being. And, like my mom was
19 telling you all earlier, when she was gone, she used to
20 send us all messages. Like, we all received messages from
21 her.

22 Like, in my own dream I had, the last place
23 I saw her was at Jacob Penner Park, and she was sitting on
24 a bench, and she was so happy to see me, and we talked. In
25 that dream that I had, I found her, and I was asking her, I

1 was, like, "Auntie, auntie, where are you?" And, she
2 wouldn't look at me. She was sitting on that same bench,
3 and I stared at her in the back of her head, and she was,
4 like, "I can't tell you, but I want to go home." And, she
5 pointed. She pointed and that's all she told me, was that
6 she wanted to go home. And, at that point, I knew that she
7 wasn't with us anymore, and that's the hardest part that we
8 have to deal with.

9 I'm not much of a verbal person, but I have
10 a piece of work that I did, and through that, I hope it
11 speaks to you and you'll understand how we feel. So, I'm
12 just going to show you real quick.

13 This is one of the drawings that I did that
14 I had to get out onto paper. Although that image is
15 negative, I have another positive one that's helping us
16 more towards a healing journey. And, hopefully, this one
17 speaks to other survivors of missing and murdered. But,
18 this one I call -- this one is called Healing, because our
19 tears are not just tears. Our tears are going to go back
20 to the Creator, and they're going to take our memories with
21 them. So, these are for all of our sisters, all of our
22 mothers, our daughters, our aunties. Thank you.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** If I may ask just a
24 couple more questions? Elora, when we were talking, one of
25 the things that you told me was that you wanted to give me

1 a picture of Myrna, because you didn't like the pictures
2 that were portrayed in the media. Can you tell me a little
3 about what the media was showing?

4 **MS. ELORA SINCLAIR:** I'm sure a lot of
5 families have this in common, but what the media does in
6 how they portray our sisters, our aunties, our daughters,
7 it's not in a very good light. So, we'd like to share an
8 image with you that -- I emailed it to you already, because
9 the one that is often portrayed in the media newspapers is
10 not one that we want to remember her by. We want most of
11 them -- the one that has been all over in the newspapers
12 was actually a mug shot of her, and that's not how we want
13 to remember her.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Is it also fair to
15 say that it's -- when you see an image in the newspaper of
16 a mug shot or something, that it projects a stereotype, or
17 that it shows the worst part of a human being? And, we've
18 all heard how much and how important she was to you. So,
19 you want it to reflect the smiling, loving person you know?

20 **MS. ELORA SINCLAIR:** That's exactly what
21 those images do, and that's why there's so much stigma
22 against our women that go missing. And, a lot of people
23 just think, oh, it's just another Anishinaabe woman.

24 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, if you wanted to
25 make a recommendation to media about these pictures, what

1 would it be?

2 **MS. ELORA SINCLAIR:** Before you publish
3 anything, I know it's for rates and whatever, but you know,
4 reach out to the families, because we all -- we'll help
5 you. We want to portray a positive image, not just what
6 you guys want to put out there.

7 And, I know for our story, it was just, come
8 on, just be a little more sensitive, you know? Because the
9 graphic details that they portrayed my auntie in were
10 horrendous. And, that's all the public knows about her,
11 was that -- I'm not going to -- I'm not going to share what
12 was posted, what was said, but it was just dehumanizing.
13 She was -- like, we don't even know how much of Myrna we
14 actually got back. That's how bad she was taken from us.
15 And, to graphically depict that in the paper to all of
16 Winnipeg, all of Manitoba, all of Canada even, that's how
17 the public knows her now, not as the beautiful woman you
18 see in that photo there.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, something you
20 said also hit me the other day, was -- and please comment
21 on it -- was even if she was ever arrested or had that one
22 bad moment in her life, is it fair that she's now
23 memorialized to the whole country in that one mug shot?

24 **MS. ELORA SINCLAIR:** It's not fair to her
25 memory. It's not fair to, like, any young woman, really.

1 Sorry. But, it's not fair at all, because that's not who
2 they were. That's not who they should be represented as.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. Did
4 Myrna's family want to add anything else or share anything
5 else about impacts?

6 And, do you guys have any other
7 recommendations about -- based on your experience about
8 what should be done, what could be done, what's necessary
9 to make some good change?

10 **MS. LAURIE ANDERSON:** Well, all I was going
11 to say is, like, we're not asking for sympathy or pity.
12 We're making -- we are asking for justice for all the
13 families that are going through what we had to. We come
14 here before you as Aboriginal women. We are being the
15 voice for those who can no longer speak for themselves.

16 We need justice, which is a given right for
17 all those missing and murdered. We all deserve the right,
18 as human beings, to be treated as such. Though they cannot
19 physically cry for justice, their spirits cry to be loved,
20 found and remembered. That is why we are gathered here, to
21 honour their memories and do what is right for them all.

22 **MS. LORNA SINCLAIR:** Yes, and we'd like them
23 to maybe have a training course for the cops. Have them
24 look into our history, you know, how our women are treated,
25 and to have them take a course on being more sensitive

1 towards us, and not just question us and kind of like -- I
2 don't know. Just try to take us more seriously when we
3 tell you something that we can help with, and they don't
4 come -- they don't call me back and they don't try and get
5 back to me, or -- I mean, I just found it so -- after two
6 years, they come and tell me these new investigators are
7 assigned to my sister's case, and that they can't find him.
8 And then I say, "Well, what are you doing to do your job?"
9 I can't do anything. I don't have the resources. I can't
10 just go out and look for her, you know?

11 And, yeah, to be more involved with the
12 families, not just take our statements and, you know, go
13 phone the guy. Go there and actually arrest him. Bring
14 him in. You know, interrogate him. I don't know. Just,
15 they need to do more when it comes to us missing, us women,
16 children, mothers, daughters. That's all I'd like to say.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I ask one more
18 question? Because, yesterday, you actually were talking
19 about the trial, your family was talking about the trial,
20 and when you -- that you didn't feel like you had enough of
21 a role, that you weren't respected. And so, I have
22 questions about, what could happen during court processes
23 so that the families are heard better? What would a
24 recommendation like that look like for you?

25 **MS. LORNA SINCLAIR:** Someone to speak on our

1 behalf, like our people, our men, family, First Nations
2 men, you know? Someone to come talk on our behalf, and to
3 come join us in these trials, and to, you know, have more
4 people out there and aware that this is going on, and more
5 people are going missing, women. Yes, and for the men
6 missing also, too. So, yes. Thank you.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, just, again, if
8 you don't have anymore right now but you think of
9 something, it's okay to come back to it. But, I'm going to
10 actually ask, maybe, Kim, Pierre or Gerri some questions
11 about the impacts of the loss of your sister, Jennifer
12 McPherson. I don't know who wants to start, but...

13 **MR. PIERRE DUCHARME:** Hi, everybody. I just
14 want to say thank you for taking the time to listen to us.
15 Yes, I'm Jennifer McPherson's brother, and I guess what I
16 want to say is that, like, when the murder of my sister,
17 Jennifer, like, I can -- I felt there was a lot of neglect
18 in the dealing of Myrna Letandre's case that resulted in my
19 sister being murdered. And, I'm not going to sugar coat
20 it. I hold a lot of resentment about the handling of
21 Myrna's case. It really bugs me.

22 There's a lot of things that were done wrong
23 there, and it affected our family. And, one of the things
24 there, like, it's shocking and it's -- it's outrageous that
25 nobody took the time to go and see what happened to Myrna

1 when she was -- when she disappeared. It doesn't make any
2 sense to me.

3 So, I hope by bringing the neglect of the
4 Winnipeg Police Department and their handling of Myrna
5 Letandre's case, how they didn't -- like, how can they --
6 how can the police -- I don't understand. How can they
7 just let that go? They had somebody who was there with
8 her, Traigo. They knew that -- the family came forward
9 with this information. So, to me, it's just unbelievable
10 that nothing was done in that case there. It just makes me
11 so sick.

12 So, the impact of this on our family here is
13 just, you know, we're -- it's just been a lot of trying to
14 heal and get past that, but it's just something inside that
15 I just can't let go of when I hear the injustice of, in the
16 case of Myrna there, it breaks my heart. Unfortunately,
17 you know, my sister met that monster.

18 So, a recommendation would be in this
19 particular case that I would like to see -- there was
20 somebody. There were people who were handling these cases,
21 and I'd like to know, who were these people who took that
22 case and put that in a to-do later pile? Who are these
23 people? They're still working there. Who? Who was
24 passing this around? I'm sorry, but, like, Inspector
25 Gadget could have figured this out, you know?

1 That's my recommendation in this particular
2 case, and I hope everybody, you know, can find peace with
3 their missing loved ones. There's a big problem here, and
4 I really hope the dots are connected and I'm sure there's
5 going to be a lot of things here that, you know, are going
6 to come to light. And, in this particular case here, there
7 was a lot of neglect with Myrna's case there, and the
8 impact, my sister was murdered, and her daughters never got
9 to build that relationship with their mother because of
10 that, and that really, really bugs me and affects me.

11 **MS. GERRI PANGMAN:** Okay. I just want to
12 add on with my brother, because he's on this topic of who.
13 Our family, we want to know the officers' names. I want
14 faces. We don't have faces. We may have justice that
15 Traigo was convicted, but we don't have complete justice
16 because there's no names, and we need names for those
17 officers who investigated Myrna's case. We suspect that
18 there was misconduct and believe that their negligence
19 contributed to our sister's death. I blame them as well.

20 We want acknowledgement. We want an apology
21 to Myrna's family and our family. Like my brother said,
22 it's uncalled for, because if they would have investigated,
23 and her DNA, Myrna's DNA was so fresh, they would have
24 caught him right away. My sister would never have met him
25 three months after the fact, and she would be here. It's

1 the police. They didn't protect her. They failed my
2 sister. I need you not to fail my sister. I need you to
3 find me those officers and get them to apologize to us.
4 Don't fail us; okay?

5 **MS. KIM MCPHERSON:** I would echo what my
6 brother and my sister said. The impact for me is I'm
7 really angry with the police. I don't have any trust with
8 them. There's no confidence there, and they are the ones
9 investigating all these young women and girls that go
10 missing now. How can we trust them to do a good job in
11 their investigation? Like, how can we -- where is our
12 assurance?

13 There's no confidence in them, and that's
14 the impact. I mean, even before that, I didn't really
15 trust the police, because we -- we just don't have good
16 experiences with the police in our community. So, this
17 just made it worse. And, we do -- we want accountability.
18 We want to know what happened so that this doesn't happen
19 anymore. Like, that's enough.

20 And, one of the biggest impacts is that my
21 two nieces don't have their mom now. My youngest niece
22 there, Victoria, had a daughter. My sister never got to
23 meet her granddaughter. So, it affects our future
24 generation when someone is taken from us.

25 One of the immediate impacts when my sister

1 went missing, I explained that yesterday, but when we found
2 out what had happened to her, it was so gruesome. It was
3 horrible. It was the things of nightmares. And, just to
4 try and function, you function minute-by-minute just to try
5 to survive.

6 You know, thank God I have children, because
7 they're the ones that gave me the strength, because that
8 picture you did, that's how I felt. When we found out what
9 happened to my sister, that's how I felt. You just want to
10 curl up, and you just -- you're so traumatized, and you
11 can't believe that happened to your sister.

12 We don't even have all her remains. We
13 buried her. They sent her home in two parts cremated,
14 because they had to do forensics. So, we don't even have
15 our sister in her whole. So, we live with that trauma
16 every day.

17 I just can't believe that things like that
18 happen. It makes me sick to my stomach. Like, I feel like
19 I want to throw up. So, that's how it impacted me. And,
20 you just imagine -- when you hear what happened to her, you
21 have these images in your head, and every now and then,
22 you're just doing something and then, bang, it hits you.
23 You know, I've been at work where, all of a sudden, I just
24 burst out crying, and I still do that from time-to-time.

25 So, I don't think I will ever heal from

1 this, because it was so horrible. So, those are some of
2 the impacts. But, again, some of the positive things is
3 that we got to know your family. You know, because of our
4 sister's death, you guys got to have closure, and our
5 sister, I don't know. I like to think she was -- because
6 she was so generous, she gave a gift because she died, and
7 it was like a sacrifice.

8 We got to meet other people too, but it's
9 such a tragic way to have to meet people. I guess for -- I
10 guess I could read my list of recommendations? One more
11 before I do that.

12 **MS. CORALEE MCPHERSON:** Hello, everybody. I
13 wasn't really going to say anything, but just hearing my
14 auntie speak and my uncle, I just wanted to share how it
15 has impacted me, because I'm so young. I'm only 22 years
16 old, and I was about 17 when this happened, and we got my
17 auntie's remains back about July, July 4th. We had her
18 funeral July 5th, and my birthday was July 7.

19 So, being so young, only 18, I was very
20 young, emotional, I was very sad. I'm still very sad. I'm
21 always sad. And, these years go on, and I can't even go
22 out in peace. I have my mom always asking me who I'm with,
23 what I'm doing, because, you know, she's worried I'll go
24 missing.

25 I'm always in contact with my mom. She

1 knows everything. She knows where I go, who I'm with, all
2 the time. And, you know I go to school here in Winnipeg,
3 just in the north end. I walk from Salter, when I get off
4 my bus, down Selkirk every day. And, you know, every time
5 I get off the bus, I'm always thinking in my head -- like,
6 I get really bad anxiety. I'm, like, oh my goodness, is
7 something going to happen to me? But, you know, I just
8 pray. I pray to myself that everything is going to be
9 okay.

10 But, you know, being so young, only 22, and
11 I have these anxiety attacks walking around. Like, on my
12 way here, I was on the bus, and a bunch of -- like, a group
13 of men come on, and I'm just starting to freak out because
14 I don't know. Like, I just start thinking all these crazy
15 thoughts in my head because, you know, what my auntie went
16 through. I'm scared. Like, what if I'm next?

17 So, that's just one thing that I wanted to
18 share, that it has impacted my life. I can't even go out
19 in peace. You know, being 22, you should be able to go out
20 and have fun and not worry about those crazy things, but
21 I'm just very aware. I'm cautious all the time, every time
22 I go out. Thank you.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you. Gerri,
24 can I ask you one question before you read the list?
25 Because you asked me to remind you about it. And, Lorna

1 kind of talked about this too when she was talking about
2 media perception of stuff. But, you had told me, and I'm
3 not trying to get into details of the video, but there was
4 a video and there was a media outlet that actually showed
5 or aired for a while some of the worst parts in the way it
6 talked, and you were really adamant that you had some
7 comments on how wrong that was and why it's wrong. Could
8 you share those with us?

9 **MS. GERRI PANGMAN:** Can you just say that
10 again?

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, the same issue
12 that Lorna had touched on about how the media, and there
13 was a blog, and it had graphic details, and you were very
14 angry about it, and you had said, "How can people do this?"
15 Like, the blogs, and how can they do that, and you were
16 really adamant that you wanted to talk, not just to media,
17 but to people who post things and describe things about
18 your sister when they didn't know them. So, I want to
19 remind you to share those thoughts.

20 **MS. GERRI PANGMAN:** Okay, I'm not quite -- I
21 can't remember asking that, but I know when I Google my
22 sister's name, like, I'll come up -- stories will come up
23 about her. Some -- I don't know what it was, but he wrote
24 the story, like it was this murder, like it was so like a
25 movie. Like, you know, he was narrating it, and oh, if

1 Jennifer would have known she was in the hands of a monster
2 to -- if she would have known.

3 And, people would comment on news articles.
4 "Oh, she was part of it. She helped kill Myrna", you know?
5 Like, it just breaks my heart that people can be so cruel
6 out there, you know? Like, they don't even know the story.
7 They don't even know her from nothing to even have any
8 right to write anything like that. And, that has to stop.
9 It's very sad. It's a sick world where people can add that
10 it's like this horror movie. I mean, these were two
11 beautiful women. They're not a character from a movie.
12 Yeah, I don't know. That's all I have to say.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** No, thank you.
14 You've actually addressed it well. Thank you.

15 **MS. KIM MCPHERSON:** I went over the
16 recommendations that we wanted to make with my family. So,
17 I hope it makes sense. It might be out of order, but
18 that's okay. We want to recommend that there are mental
19 health supports available for families that have been
20 traumatized when a loved one goes missing or they find out
21 what happened to them. Families are in crisis during that
22 time, and they need crisis counselling; they need
23 ceremonies; they need so much help because we can't think
24 during that time.

25 So, those are like immediate supports, but

1 for more long-term supports, you need mental health
2 supports and trauma supports for children that are
3 impacted, whether they're a witness to the crime or they're
4 children of those that have gone missing or have been found
5 deceased. There need to be culturally safe supports
6 available. That's why we went to Medicine Bear, because
7 that's what we were comfortable with at the time, and we
8 still are. We need to take into account the inter-
9 generational trauma as well in that trauma counselling,
10 because the trauma is heightened. The crisis, it heightens
11 everything that's already going on in the families.

12 You also need mental health supports for
13 people that have depression, or mental health illnesses, or
14 addictions. They also need to be culturally safe. By
15 providing those supports, it will help women and kids who
16 -- to keep them not vulnerable so that they can go to
17 school, they can have supports while they're learning.
18 There's appropriate and safe housing, safe neighbourhoods,
19 because if you don't have those supports, it puts women and
20 girls at risk for homelessness, unemployment. It makes
21 them vulnerable.

22 With regards to law enforcement, I think all
23 law enforcement agencies, like the Winnipeg Police, the
24 RCMP, courts, the judiciary, they all need training and
25 education in working with Indigenous families.

1 I'll give you one example that my mother
2 shared with us when, her experience with one of the -- at
3 first, with the B.C. RCMP, the lead investigator. After
4 learning that my mother was a Status Indian, he started to
5 use foul language with her, and he started to change his
6 attitude in how he treated my mother.

7 So, it's a good thing my mother is strong,
8 because she raised it, and because of that, she -- I guess
9 they gave her a different investigator, Sergeant Misour
10 (phon), or I don't know how to say it, but -- or no.
11 Sorry. The initial investigator was Sergeant Misour, and
12 then they gave her Margo Downey from the B.C. RCMP, and she
13 took over, and she treated my mother with respect. She was
14 sensitive, and just treated her with dignity that we all
15 deserve, and that's the kind of staff that is needed in
16 police agencies. They all need to be like that. You know,
17 get rid of the -- weed out the bad cops and bring in the
18 ones that have understanding and awareness.

19 Another good example was the Selkirk RCMP
20 detachment. They actually had a staff personally visit my
21 mother and dad for about a month to make sure that their
22 needs were being met, how they were doing, that compassion.
23 This needs to be consistent for all RCMP detachments. They
24 need special investigators or just all investigators that
25 meet that standard. There needs to be a standard and

1 consistent way how Indigenous families are treated,
2 Indigenous people.

3 Manitoba Victim Services, Shannon McCorry,
4 she helped us liaison with the B.C. Victim Services in
5 filling out the forms we needed, paying for Jennifer's
6 funeral. Nahanni helped us -- sorry. Nahanni helped us in
7 getting a headstone for our sister. Also, with the
8 generosity and kindness of Brunet Monuments, we were able
9 to afford a beautiful stone for our sister's -- her resting
10 site. So, all these, these are the standards and the best
11 ways that all families should be treated, and we need more
12 people like that. So, our family is grateful for the good
13 people that have come into our lives.

14 There needs to be better coordination
15 between jurisdictions. Because our sister was murdered in
16 B.C. and we were in Manitoba, there was no funding to fly
17 family out to the court hearing in B.C., even for
18 sentencing. We didn't go for sentencing, because there was
19 no -- I don't know if it was no funding or lack of
20 coordination. So, that could be improved.

21 Returning my sister's remains home was very
22 difficult. Like I had mentioned yesterday, my mother had
23 to pick up my sister's remains through the post office, and
24 that was traumatizing in and of itself. It should have
25 been done in a better way and a kinder way. It was very

1 cold, how she was treated that way. We also had incidents
2 working with a funeral home in just getting her cremated;
3 right? So, that needs to be looked at and improved.

4 And, as I mentioned, all of her remains were
5 not returned to us and, quite honestly, I don't even know
6 if we have all her remains now.

7 I just wanted to show a picture of my
8 sister's memorial stone that we have for her. It's very
9 beautiful, and the mountains represent B.C., because she
10 loved it. She loved nature. We have the feathers there,
11 and the eagle, because she took pictures of eagles, and it
12 just symbolizes her flying in the heavens. So, we were
13 very grateful for that.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** There's also the
15 picture...

16 **MS. KIM MCPHERSON:** Oh yes. Yes. In the
17 back, the back of the stone actually has engraved the
18 mandala that she did.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, the last one
20 actually has a colour copy of the mandala she did.

21 **MS. KIM MCPHERSON:** And, this is what the
22 original looked like. So, Brunet Monuments treated us so
23 beautifully, with respect. This mandala, actually, this is
24 what our Auntie Jenn used to draw too. So, because of what
25 she did, she inspired my sister to draw this. So, this

1 monument also has the spirit of both my sister and my
2 auntie in there.

3 We want to share a nice story that when we
4 looked at the stones, it was like she picked it out for us,
5 and it was the first one, pretty much, that we had seen.
6 So, it was almost like she was with us and, like, "I like
7 this one". Yeah.

8 We would recommend more funding supports for
9 families to access more services, counsellors, whatever we
10 need for healing, whether it's crisis or long term. So, I
11 would describe it like a continuum, like crisis to long
12 term which for us will last for years, and years, and
13 probably until I die. So, that needs to be in place. We
14 need trauma and grieving counselling.

15 There needs to be funding for search and
16 rescue for families. Like I mentioned before, we weren't
17 able to go out to B.C. to help in the search, because
18 number one, we were traumatized, we were in crisis, and so,
19 we didn't think about even how to get there. So, we -- it
20 would have been nice to have somebody to kind of take us by
21 the hand and give us some guidance because you really --
22 you can't think.

23 We also hope that society responds and helps
24 more when somebody goes missing, when an Indigenous person
25 goes missing. I don't want to feel this way, but sometimes

1 when a non-Indigenous person goes missing, I feel almost
2 jealous and resentful at the huge response and support that
3 they get, whereas when one of my sisters, Indigenous
4 sisters go missing, there's just no interest.

5 We want equality. Personally, I would like
6 to see the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
7 recommendations or calls to action, and the UNDRIP
8 recommendations implemented with input and guidance from
9 families and communities. That's a whole big huge thing,
10 so I won't go into details.

11 We'd like to see safety training in school
12 in the curriculum for all young Indigenous girls and boys
13 related to internet safety. When they have to transition
14 to the city for higher education or whatever reasons, how
15 to walk safely. Like Coralee said, even just taking the
16 bus; right? Having safe relationships, and teach
17 Indigenous women to learn about, like, what a predator
18 might -- you know, when they approach them, what to look
19 for. We want to see large-scale public education campaigns
20 done in collaboration with families to educate society, and
21 also to educate men and boys on how to respect Indigenous
22 women and girls, and how to treat them equally.

23 Media needs to be educated on how they
24 report on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.
25 They need to be respectful and honourable. And, one of the

1 reasons I'm saying that is I agree with the picture. When
2 media was trying to post pictures of my sister, they were
3 not very representative pictures, and I actually phoned a
4 number of places that were posting pictures and I said,
5 "We're sending you pictures. Use these."

6 Even the way how they described my sister
7 when they first announced that she was murdered, they
8 described her as a sex-trade worker. So, I phoned them and
9 I said, "How can you -- why are you calling her that?" So,
10 media, get your facts straight and treat us with honour and
11 respect.

12 We hope that the inquiry is an awakening for
13 society, and to continue the movement of our Indigenous
14 relatives to stop and prevent future incidents of missing
15 and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and violence. We
16 want to see a world of equality. We want to have the same
17 opportunities, the same kind of economic opportunities. We
18 don't want violence, and we would like to see compassion,
19 caring and love for everybody in how they're treated.

20 We would like leadership to stand with us,
21 and we truly appreciate our Assembly of First Nations
22 Regional Chief Kevin Hart and Brenda Bear who support us.
23 We are also grateful for the former AFN Regional -- well,
24 not Regional Chief. Sorry. AFN Chief Shawn Atleo for his
25 help during our crisis, and also the Regional Chief

1 Charlene at the time, because I don't know what -- I don't
2 know if we ever would have found Jennifer.

3 Communication is also very important with
4 police and families. I wanted to share that a journalist
5 called me shortly after we found out about our sister,
6 asking about Dylan's previous location where he lived on
7 Lorne Street, and I said, "Why are you asking me that, you
8 know? He just killed my sister. Why are you asking me
9 that?" And, I said -- and she goes, "Well, we're just
10 wondering," and I said, "Did he kill somebody else?" And,
11 I said, "Is this related to Project Devote?" And, my fear
12 was that he killed many more women. And, the journalist
13 said, "Yes, there's a connection." And, I was very upset
14 again, because the Winnipeg Police, they never even told us
15 that there might be a link. It was a journalist that told
16 me that.

17 So, we recommend transparent, clear,
18 compassionate updates of investigations from the police as
19 they happen, so we're not contacted by journalists, or we
20 hear it in the news, and we hear details. You know, we
21 should be told first before anything hits the media,
22 because it re-traumatizes us, and it makes us feel -- it
23 doesn't make -- it makes us feel worthless. Treat us with
24 dignity.

25 A journalist also informed us in another

1 interview that the Winnipeg Fire Services, I'm not sure
2 what they're called, but they said that they, I guess,
3 attended a fire in a garbage bin near the home of where
4 Dylan lived, and it made me wonder, well, if they -- you
5 could smell if there's human remains. Why didn't they let
6 the police know? Why didn't they investigate it, you now?
7 So, it's almost like you're going backwards to figure out
8 what happened with why the police didn't investigate Myrna
9 Letandre's case, so then it made us wonder, like, if they
10 had done their job, our sister would be alive. And, you
11 know what? If Dylan didn't meet our sister, it would have
12 been somebody else.

13 And, recently, my sister, Gerri, she found
14 out that the mother of Dylan tried to connect with her on
15 social media. We really feel that that family might not --
16 they might know more than they are letting people know.
17 You can't help but wonder because of the way Traigo was,
18 like, did he hurt other women that we don't even know? I
19 don't know, but we'll never know.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Kim, for anyone who
21 just started watching, too, just remind people that Dylan
22 and Traigo are the same person, that they went by two
23 names?

24 **MS. KIM MCPHERSON:** Yes, and I don't know
25 what to call him, other than a monster, you know? But,

1 those are our main recommendations that we want the inquiry
2 to take away from. I don't know if anybody wants to add
3 anything.

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, I do have a
5 couple more questions, and thank you very much for your
6 very thoughtful -- very thoughtful recommendations, and the
7 fact that you are providing them sort of collectively as a
8 family I think is really important too, because I know in
9 my family, it's not often we all agree on a lot of things,
10 and to come together to think so hard about such important
11 things, it's truly appreciated.

12 I know that, Betty, you want to share a
13 story, and it touches a bit on some of the mental health
14 aspects and some of the issues that we know from these two
15 stories. But, I was going to ask if you could share your
16 interaction with Traigo once he was incarcerated?

17 **MS. BETTY ROURKE:** Yes. But, first of all,
18 I just want to address Myrna's family. I just want you to
19 know because I couldn't go to my daughter's trial out in
20 B.C., I don't know if you ever saw me there, but every time
21 there was a trial, I was there with you. And, I'm so
22 sorry.

23 I didn't want to share. I wanted my
24 children to share because I feel this is healing for them.
25 But, I do -- would like to -- what I did, how it impacted

1 me. I did my own searching. The RCMP wasn't much help to
2 me at all. As I said yesterday, it was Jude, Traigo's
3 mother, that went out to the island, got all the
4 information. She called me before the RCMP did and told me
5 what Traigo did to my daughter.

6 I kept in contact with her, at that time,
7 frequently. She shared a lot of things with me, including
8 a letter that Traigo had written to me, apologizing for
9 what he did to Jennifer. He named everybody in my family,
10 and I continued this relationship with the mother of the
11 murderer that so horrifically murdered my daughter. I
12 wanted to find out what day exactly, so I can have a
13 memorial service for her on that date, because I knew that
14 the media, the RCMP, the coroner, they were saying it was
15 May the 2nd. But, after contacting Jude and Traigo, I
16 learned he had murdered her on the 29th, 29th of April.

17 I just kept on going, and going and going.
18 That's how I was dealing with my grief. I just kept going
19 and finding out, because like Kim said, maybe there was
20 other women out there that he murdered. So, I got in
21 contact with Restorative Justice, and I met a beautiful
22 woman. Her name was Jennifer, like my two Jennifers. She
23 was very good to me. She set up meetings with me -- she
24 set up a meeting with me with Traigo.

25 So, I had some questions. I wanted to go

1 and confront him. Not a visit; confrontation. I wanted to
2 ask him. I wrote a list of questions. One of them was,
3 "Why? Why did you kill my daughter?" You know what he
4 said to me? He said, "I didn't even know I was going to
5 kill her that day. I was thinking of killing her for the
6 last five years, but I didn't know I was going to kill her
7 that day." And, he said, "I tried to kill her in the most
8 humane way." He said, "It only took her 40 seconds to
9 die."

10 I asked him, "Why did you -- why did you
11 watch her to die over and over?" Because he videotaped it.
12 He videotaped my daughter's murder, and he watched it over
13 and over. He told me -- I asked him, why did he have to
14 dismember her? Why did he have to do all those things to
15 my daughter?

16 I asked him where, because I went to visit
17 my daughter in 2010, so I was familiar. It's such a tiny
18 little area. The resort, it was very tiny. So, I was
19 familiar with this area. And, he told me exactly where,
20 because I said, "Some day, I want to go there and have a
21 ceremony and prayers with my family, whoever wants to
22 come." And, for my final healing, my journey of healing,
23 that's what I still today want to do.

24 My intentions were to go and see him again,
25 because I wanted to know if there were other people that he

1 had murdered, and if I could get some closure for any other
2 family members -- my heart bleeds for Bernie Skatchway
3 (phon), for Brenda Osborne, my heart, because my daughter
4 was missing for two days and I was -- my daughter and I, we
5 were very, very close. We were extremely close. Every day
6 she contacted me on the internet.

7 And, when she first moved out to British
8 Columbia, I loved this. It was just a postcard, but I made
9 it -- I put her picture there after she passed, and this is
10 what she said to me. "Mom and Dad, great beaches and
11 hiking trails. Getting back into shape. Eating healthy.
12 Lots of veggies and fruit. The great outdoor is heaven for
13 the soul." That's how I believe my daughter is in heaven.

14 "It feels good to heal and not just quiet
15 down. Starting to mediate as well. I send all my love to
16 both of you. Think of you often. Take loving care of each
17 other, because I care. Love, Jennifer."

18 I have another one here. Actually, I have a
19 couple. Yes. This is the last picture she shared before
20 she died. This was sent to me in 2007. I photocopied it
21 from my Messenger. It's funny, because my MSN name is
22 BadMom Betty@msn.com. She gave that to me (laughter).
23 I'll never get rid of it. I'll use it till I die.

24 But, she says, "Hello, Mother. I have been
25 praying for you a lot. I miss you, too. I hope you got

1 your gift I sent you." It was a beautiful mandala. "If
2 not, Coralee will deliver it soon. Well, love you. I hope
3 your spirits are higher. You're a super trooper. Nothing
4 can get you down, and if it did, not for long. Never met
5 anyone as strong as my MOM", M-O-M in big letters, and lots
6 of exclamation marks. Look at that. She said, "Take care,
7 because I care. P.S. I will be online to chat later at the
8 library shortly after 5-ish B.C. time, so 7-ish your time.
9 That is today. Bye for now. Jennifer."

10 And, this one is for my birthday in 2011.
11 She says, "Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you,
12 happy birthday to Mom, happy birthday to you. I love you.
13 Hope you have a fun and joyful day. I'll call you. La,
14 la, la, singing a song for you. You're the best."

15 My beautiful daughter, I miss her. She
16 loved me so, so very much. Like I shared with you
17 yesterday, my blankie, I think, was originally going to go
18 to Kim, but here it is. It's mine. So, yes, I struggle
19 with my grief, I told you yesterday. My two little
20 Jennifers, I named my daughter after my beautiful sister,
21 Jennifer. That's where Jennifer got her name, from her
22 Auntie Jennifer, and the mandala that you saw, my sister
23 drew those.

24 So, Jennifer, she loved her auntie, she
25 loved her artwork, I guess. So, she just began and it just

1 accelerated, and she made beautiful, beautiful mandalas
2 that she shared with many of the family. I think a lot of
3 our family members got a mandala. Beautiful. So, that was
4 my -- how it impacted me. Everyday I miss my daughter.
5 Everyday, I keep her picture. A lady from my apartment
6 gave me a little -- it's for a Christmas tree, but I keep
7 it on my table and, yes, I miss my beautiful daughter and
8 my sister, my two Jennifers. Thank you.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
10 Audette, I was wondering if we could just have a short
11 five-minute break, or potentially 10-minute break? And
12 then we could come back and get some closing thoughts from
13 the family, if that's possible, please? Yes? Okay. So,
14 we will be back in 10 minutes. We'll just take a 10-minute
15 break, please.

16 --- Upon recessing at 5:31 p.m.

17 --- Upon resuming at 6:03 p.m.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Hello. So, we are
19 resuming now. Thank you for your patience, and thank you,
20 again, all for sharing and your honesty. I know it was
21 difficult. My only question is, is there anything else
22 that we missed or that you wanted to say? Or, is it okay if
23 I ask Commissioner Audette if she has any questions or
24 comments?

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** I can't

1 imagine a life without one of my daughters or my child, and
2 your truth, collective truth, I pray. I had to pray when
3 we had that break. I had to pray to say I hope the people
4 who are listening right now, the people from those
5 institutions, the people that were there, or saw, or read,
6 or wrote something, that they heard you, that they are
7 hearing you. That was in my prayer.

8 And, Grandmother Thelma was doing this to my
9 hand, and my heart was -- we all know the inquiry will not
10 bring our loved one, but it is a tool that I take seriously
11 to force, or to influence, or to make sure that the
12 institution gives you an answer. I cannot promise. I am a
13 human being. It's a big, big, big, big structure in all of
14 that, but you have allies inside of this inquiry. You have
15 allies that are grassroots people or family members, like
16 Bernie beside me.

17 We have people who remind us inside of this
18 circle, this journey, why we have to push, and why we have
19 to subpoena. And, I have a question when I listened to
20 you, listen with my heart, not only with my head, where all
21 systemic causes were right there. All of it. And, I'm not
22 afraid to say it. I'm listening to your truth. I heard
23 racism. I understood or I have heard no accountability or
24 no support, so the list is long. And, until somebody pulls
25 the plug of this inquiry or until we're finishing this

1 mandate, I want to see the families upstairs, your
2 daughters. I gave them the eagle feathers, and I told them
3 we have something right now that we can push, and we'll try
4 everything to push from inside. The dialogue needs to stay
5 with the families and the inquiry, and you know how
6 accessible I am, and the relationship and the friendship or
7 the love that I have for families has to stay for me. It's
8 a commitment that I do everyday.

9 So, I don't have any questions. Your
10 presentation was so powerful. Powerful. So, in my prayers
11 again, and I hope and I invite everybody out there who is
12 listening, that we need prayers when we listen. Every
13 family who comes here or in a room that you don't see
14 because they're in-camera or private, or the people that we
15 go in their kitchen or community, we have to pray for them
16 also.

17 You shook me. I cannot lie. And, I know
18 Grandmother Thelma, or Marie, will have to lift me, because
19 it was something. And, I thank you sincerely. I thank you
20 very much. A phrase was said by the two families in their
21 own words, but my understanding is we deserve justice, and
22 that's my words. You deserve justice. *Merci*.

23 See, my heart, my brain. We have a gift.
24 We have a gift that the grandmothers from Haida Gwaii
25 prepared, and like I said earlier to another strong family

1 member, that now they're coming from all over Canada, and
2 some people prayed for those eagle feathers, and they're
3 here for you today, for the families and the people who are
4 walking with you in this journey. *Merci.*

5 --- Exhibits (code: P1P03P0102)

6 **Exhibit 1:** see October 16, 2017 transcript for
7 description.

8 **Exhibit 2:** Queen vs. Andretti "File details" (CR 14-01-
9 33598) three pages double-sided.

10 **Exhibit 3:** Photocopy of three pages of hand-written
11 recommendations on lined paper, beginning
12 with "M.H. supports for families who have
13 been traumatized..."

14 **Exhibit 4:** PowerPoint presentation comprising 14 colour
15 slides of Jennifer McPherson, her family, a
16 postcard, her tombstone and her art.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Commissioner
18 Audette, I ask that we adjourn for the day, and that we'll
19 resume tomorrow morning, again in the public hearing space,
20 at 8:30 for opening prayer.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And, we'll
22 invite people for the pipe ceremony also.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes. So, tomorrow
24 morning, the families are encouraged to and welcome to
25 attend the pipe ceremony. It will be held in the Elders

1 Room, which is also on the 11th floor. And, I'm also asked
2 to remind you about the family dinner. It is upstairs on
3 Level T. Thank you.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** We'll just wait one
6 minute for the closing prayer. I'd appreciate that.

7 **MS. MARY CRATE:** Hello. Okay, there we go.
8 Okay. So, we have come to another close of a very heavy
9 day, and a lot of healing, a lot of discovery, a lot of
10 recommendations. It's a lot of heaviness. So, today,
11 we'll close this day, and we'll give thanks. We'll give
12 thanks for all our togetherness here, for all of us coming
13 together and standing with one another, and remembering all
14 our women, and asking prayers for all our men to come and
15 stand with us and take care of us the way they should.
16 (Speaks Native language for closing prayer).

17 --- Upon adjourning at 18:16

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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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



Shirley Chang

January 18, 2018