National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
Membertou Trade & Convention Centre, Kluskap A
Membertou, Nova Scotia

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Clayton Saunders, Audrey Saunders, Delilah Saunders, Miriam Saunders & Paula Saunders,
In relation to Loretta Saunders;

Monique Fong Howe;

Rebecca Moore

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**Note:** For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsels are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre - Kluskap A (i.e. the main public hearing space).
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| Witness: Rebecca Moore<br>Exhibits: none entered. |
--- Upon commencing on Monday, October 30, 2017 at 10:21 a.m.

**MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS:** Commissioner, my name Joseph Murdoch-Flowers, and today I have the honour of working with the Saunders family from Happy Valley, Goose Bay, Labrador, and originally from Hopedale in Nunatsiavut.

To begin, you know, in preparation for this we went over some -- some things about protocols, and so on, and I understand that three family members wish to give the oath and the -- the oath on which they will -- the -- the Bible on which they will give the oath is -- is actually the -- the Bible of Loretta Saunders. And so I'll let the family speak more about Loretta, but it's -- it's Loretta's Bible. And -- and then one will affirm and another will hold a Feather, so perhaps we can start with Clayton Saunders.

**MR. REGISTRAR:** Helps if it's on. Okay, good morning, Mr. Clayton Saunders, I will...

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Excuse me, he's a little hard of hearing.

**MR. REGISTRAR:** Is he, okay. Yeah, I can speak up a little bit.

Good morning. If you'd like to take the
Bible in your right hand, there.

MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS: (Indiscernible).

MR. REGISTRAR: Yes, please, yes.

CLAYTON SAUNDERS, Sworn:

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Next Miriam Saunders will give the oath as well.

MR. REGISTRAR: Good morning, Miriam.

MIRIAM SAUNDERS, Sworn:

MR. REGISTRAR: Okay, thank you, thank you very much.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Okay, Miriam. Audrey Saunders as well will provide the oath.

MR. REGISTRAR: Very well. Good morning, Audrey.

AUDREY SAUNDERS, Sworn:

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Delilah Saunders will solemnly affirm.

MR. REGISTRAR: Okay, good morning, Delilah.

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: Good morning.

DELILAH SAUNDERS, Affirmed:

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: And Paula McDonald is holding the Eagle Feather. Is there anything else that you'd like to say about that, or are you content to hold it? Okay.

And I would ask Commissioner, that, that
satisfy the requirements of the oath or affirmation. Okay.

MR. REGISTRAR: Okay, I believe your name is
Paula? Okay. Welcome this morning.

PAULA SAUNDERS, Affirmed:

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: We talked about a lot in preparation for today and I really enjoyed talking with you. It's -- so I will enjoy talking with you again today. And I'd just like to start with the question, what would you like to tell the Commission today? And who would like to begin?

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: I'd like to tell you I came here in hopes to continue my daughter's passion. Loretta, she was murdered in -- in -- in Halifax, by roommates, and prior to her -- her being murdered she called me, and she was working, and she had a lot of passion for our family, for our people, so I'm hoping that some of the things that we spoke about prior her to being taken I'd like to try to continue and to help my people, our people, to prevent from what's happening to them.

So I just want to be able to try to continue her work because she had a passion for our people and the way our people are being treated. And then -- and, and she also had a passion for the murdered and missing.

And that's why I'm here. I'd like to be
able to try to see -- try to find out myself, for myself
why. And I'd like to prevent -- you wouldn't be able to
say -- I couldn't talk in front of people before, but
because of my passion that she handed on down to me I would
like to be able to continue her work.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Can you tell us
about her work that you want to continue?

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: I'd like to be able to
-- see we talked a lot about residential schooling because
my parents were in it. I was in residential schooling,
plus child welfare.

My daughter said to me when she went --
first time she started talking about it, she said, “Mom, do
you know our people are being killed off by our own
government -- our own” -- and she -- she had a big passion
for it. And I'd like to try to not get right in, but I'd
like to be able to see if there's anything in her work --
is this going to be able to -- for me to continue on
because this is new to me. Well, it's three years now.

And I guess you're all wondering too, why
I'm out here and not down -- down to my own community?
Because you people were here. You're like my own family.
You people were here for me when I first lost my daughter.
And to me you all are family because you are the people
that -- only people that helped me understand and helped me
to be able to get to where I am today. So that's why I'm here. I'd like to explain that's why I'm here in Nova Scotia. I'm not going to be attending the -- like not -- didn't stay to attend my people -- my own -- in my own territory.

So I'm here because I didn't know nothing about murder -- I -- know about murdered and missing people. I mean I heard of people murdered and missing because this is my third murder in my family. And when my -- my other two family members were murdered I never had the support that I have from you people.

So I'm hoping to learn and continue my daughter's work, and I thank you all for being here -- the First Nation people for being there for our family. And in -- I was ashamed of being who I was. I'm -- I was ashamed to be Inuk.

And my daughter, Loretta, when she came to university in Nova Scotia she started getting traditional ways, and started talking to me, and telling -- like she said, "Mom, do you know we're being killed off by our own government?" By, by the Newfoundland, Labrador government.

And I'd like to be able to -- to -- to continue and I'm asking you people to help me, because like I said, this is -- this isn't -- I really don't know where to start. I need -- you -- a lot of you people been doing
it for years, and you have -- fighting for your children
that you never got. I don't want that to happen to my
children and my -- that I have with me and my
grandchildren. I want to make a better life for my
grandchildren.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Did you want to
add to that, Delilah?

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: Today I came here --
before I start, I -- I want to echo what my Mom said. My
sister did go missing, and was found in Mi’Kmaq and the
Ilnu, they -- they came together and really helped my
family. And they taught me a lot of ceremonies which
helped me -- helped me connect with my own culture. And I
-- I do consider this place a home as well.

I want to talk today about a lot of things
that my sister taught me. She taught me a lot about the
things my Mom was talking about. She spoke about -- you
know, her white privilege -- our white privilege and --
well, not white privilege, but like, white passing, and she
was really aware of all of those things.

And she was writing her honours thesis on
missing and murdered Indigenous woman and girls, and how
colonial constructs design that fate for Indigenous women
and girls.

I -- I want to share a lot of the things
that she taught me, and I -- I saw how things played out
after she went missing and she was found murdered. I saw
how her white passing privilege -- it, it helped -- like,
it helped the situation. And I've met thousands of family
members across the country who, who haven't had that and
I've carried a lot of guilt because of that.

But I -- I've seen the other side of it and
I -- I want to share that today.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: How did you see
that play out? Sorry.

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: I think my Mom can
speak to this a bit more too, in the sense that they did
have her listed as a -- a white woman at first, and -- do
you want to say something about that, Mom?

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: When my daughter first
went missing they had it white woman missing, and I started
to -- I started to clap because they called her white
because I knew they were going to start looking -- when,
first when they said she was a white woman I would call --
I call to the investigators and they would answer me. I
would talk personally to the investigators and they -- and
then they started -- after they started -- when they
started calling her Inuk I had start swearing, and
everything, at them to get -- to get answers. They had --
I didn't get to talk to the investigators after that.
I started talking -- and having to talk to this go-between, like, I called -- he was a go-between. And when I asked him questions, he said, “Oh, I can't answer that. I can't --” and I -- I had to start cursing and I could -- I knew my father was rolling over in his grave because he didn't like me cursing. I found -- I found I was (indiscernible) cursing.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Loretta and I, when we lived in Halifax together, we got pulled over by the police and we were, we were buying drugs -- this was a number of years ago -- and we got pulled over by the police and they were really, really sweet to us. They were -- they were kind to us even though we were buying drugs.

And Loretta said to me after that incident, she said, “this would have gone completely differently if we looked more Native or if we were black.” And she made me really aware of those situations.

And I -- she -- she also -- I helped her with an assignment on missing white women syndrome. And that's one thing that really sticks with me, all of the things that she taught me about, and then I saw with her case, when a white woman goes missing there, there's so much more effort put in to investigating. There's so -- there's more public outcry. And I've -- I've seen stories of Indigenous woman and girls who are painted in such a bad
And the media -- the media tends to -- the media is considered one of the most powerful institutions in the world, and there's no denying that. And the words they choose are so careless and not just careless, but cruel, they're cruel.

And I, I saw, I saw that play out in front of my eyes. The things that she taught me about it -- it just unfolded in front of me. And the evidence is there. You know, I've seen it.

And I was actually travelling across the country, I'd only been moved away from Halifax for a couple of months. I was taking the Via Rail, Greyhound, and I was hitchhiking to B.C. My sister -- she was like, “Delilah, what the F are you doing? Like, what's wrong with you? You don't realize -- like, do you not realize this isn't just happening to one Native woman. This is happening to thousands.” And she -- she said this is being considered a national tragedy, a national epidemic, and it -- it did help me be more -- more cautious, but I didn't realize how big of an issue it was until it happened in my family.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** I can remember -- I can remember when she was hitchhiking, I'd be on the phone crying to Loretta because she was -- see -- that -- it's -- the thing about my children is they look white. And by our
own -- by -- when we lived in Goose Bay it's more white --
it was more white than when, before the -- the
(indiscernible) cards come out and you -- you were getting benefits.

Because when we were -- we've -- I first moved there I was always -- I -- I grew up and I -- as a dirty 'skimo and my children, while they lived in Goose Bay they were picked on by children -- by the people there as dirty 'skimos, but when they tried to travel to my own community, they were called white people, so we've -- I've had a struggle wondering what -- what -- I guess, they really did too, because -- especially my older children, but when the younger ones come in all these benefits was in, so everybody was a 'skimo.

People even who -- who -- who call me a 'skimo -- now they're -- they're LIA members theirself (sic). And, and they're, they're the ones who's -- who's being the head ones. The head ones are the people who had us degraded and called dirty 'skimos, to a point my father used to work down to Iqaluit, and mostly Frobisher Bay and Sanikiluaq, so we -- the weather where we live, you could go weeks without -- without any income waiting for your cheque. And my dad's cheques used to come. And there -- the people who -- who -- who are running us and being our leaders now are the people.
My mother would ask me, “Can you go see if we could charge a piece of seal meat until dad's cheque come?” I go up and they say, “No.” And guess what, you go down to the dock, and down at the dock -- I dare say you go down now and the bones are there. They'd rather let it rot, and now that's the people who's telling us.

Even to my sister -- my sister -- she's my sister by blood. She may have been adopted, but because she became a Winters (ph) only her oldest granddaughter is considered a member.

So it's not -- it's not our blood, so there's another thing I'm -- I know. I may lose my job for this, but guess what, I don't care anymore because I'm tired seeing my real Inuk with the full blood being killed off. Like my daughter said, “We do not have to worry about anybody else killing us off. Our own government is killing us off.”

And I think that's why my husband didn't want me to talk because -- public -- because, guess what -- Loretta put her spite and her -- her fight for her people in my heart and there's no one taking it out. And who, but the Creator, God is the one who has done, and enabled us to be able to fight for our children.

Enough is enough for me. I'm tired of seeing my people treated like animals while the ones who
treated us like animals now -- now are our leaders.

**MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS:** You told me, when we were preparing, about some of the things you do in helping Inuk in Nunatsiavut; do you want to talk a bit about that?

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Yeah. I'll just start. I -- like, hard to believe it, I was a real quiet woman, or girl. I was. But my passion -- and I worked -- I started off -- like, I worked -- I went to school. I went -- I left home. I was scared. I -- I was frightened to death, even in Goose Bay because we're such a small community. And then I got into -- back into school. I don't think I even -- I didn't even talk. I think it was two people I talked to really in school.

One is gone, bless her soul, and she was murdered, Sarah Opid (ph). I want to remember her too, Sarah Opid from Nain. She was my friend. And she was murdered, but guess what? She was -- they claimed it was self-protection. But she was always beat up, so how could it could have been self-protection? She was always beat up in the beginning, but of course, you know, it wasn't -- hers was in self-defence, but to me it's murder. Once you take a life regardless, there's no -- no excuse, when you murder a person you murder them.

And then I -- I started working in the fish
-- but then I started working in child protection. I worked in child protection for 15 years. And the -- I end up out of there. They even went to accuse me. I did a -- I made out the cheques. They even went to accuse me, because I had some children with me, but I had to write the cheques out, but the social worker -- I'd like to find out the truth because I never did it. But they even accused me of writing a cheque to myself and signing another person's -- another person -- another social worker's name.

And the reason they claim I stole was because I was on my way to St. John's with one of the children. What -- that was my husband's relative -- I was on my way to take him to a hospital and I was allowed to write out my -- I said, "Okay, I'm going to write out the cheque because I need it for in St. John's." They signed it. I threwed -- I didn't even have time to file it -- "Oh, yes, you did because it was thrown in your filing cabinet." Have you -- any of you -- anybody ever done something in a rush and then planning to file it after.

But I never ever -- but I think that was a way to get rid of me. Because I -- I worked in child protection 15 -- for almost 15 years. I fostered hundreds of children and then all of a sudden I'm no use to them. And then I can see that. I can see why now.

Our children are being taken away, even
after my daughter was murdered -- my son -- he -- my son, James (ph), he's -- he -- he -- his brother, Edmond (ph), said, “Come on, we have to go look for sister.” And when he did his girlfriend, at the time, they had one girl, a little girl, they said -- she said, “If you go, don't come back.” And he never. And apparently, I didn't know, she was pregnant again.

But while he was out searching that baby -- my granddaughter, who -- who I had -- was very close to -- when I lost Loretta I lost grandchildren. They didn't even approach us. Approach us to -- to see if we were interested. I -- I, I never had -- I wouldn't have been able to at the time, yes, but at least they could have approached me and said, “Your -- your -- your granddaughter is going into care. You know, do you want anything?”

But like I said, at the time I never had the energy. I had just lost my daughter. She was pregnant. I lost a granddaughter there. I says granddaughter because so many people -- three people, including my husband, came and said it was a little girl, and they described her in a white dress, long blond hair, and white ribbon. How -- so I know the Creator let us know it was a little girl. In our hearts we believe it's a little girl.

So my, like -- and then I worked, like there, and the difference in it, we did not take children
if there was someone sober, someone reliable with that child.

    In fact, I worked at -- as client liaison worker for then -- for them then. They, they approached me and asked me to apply for this job. And not -- not very often a child went into care. I would go -- if I had to I would find a babysitter and take them, because I knew, the people, take them to a babysitter and then talk to the parents next day. We gave them a chance. We didn't just take them.

    Now, if they see you out -- if they see a couple out drinking, they, “Oh, they got children.” But yet, you can go into the same bars, see the social -- some social -- not all because some hides away. I worked with them. Some social workers in the bar, loaded drunk, next day, they're down telling parents how to raise their children, and they don't even have a child theirself. How can you support and try to tell the mother, and then...

    Like my granddaughter, the one who my granddaughter, her mother never ever drank. She was a good little mother, right. Yeah, you know, they, they might have been two childless little couples together, which they could have worked on and they turned around -- no. And then -- and they didn't even see if they needed help.

    Prior to that he was married for two weeks.
They had a stillborn baby, and the day the little -- the day that -- the -- the -- when she -- the girl, when she went in labour she came to me and she said -- she called me, and she said, “Mom, I need to go hospital. I'm paining.” So we took her up -- or we took -- I got my husband take her up. They done -- they done -- the, the doctor at the time -- every time she come -- I could tell you, I -- you could tell when a pregnant woman, they're glowing.

But I -- when I seen her that last few weeks, or month even, you could see the darkness in her eyes. You couldn't see the spirit of the -- you know -- I don't know how to explain it, but a pregnant woman they blossom. But then -- and then when she got sick, she got the pain. She went in the hospital. Come find out my grandchild was one month dead in her body.

And the doctor -- because I -- every time she come, because I could see -- the last time I seen her, I said, “Did you” -- I said, “Did the doctor -- did the doctor feel you? Check?” “Oh, no”, she said, “She never do check me.” She said, “But she -- she -- she let me hear the heartbeat.” The baby was dead a month. How could she hear the heartbeat? All that time she was hearing her heartbeat.

And that's another thing -- like, they're
put through that, and it's -- and after he going through all that, and her -- his sister -- his sister was just murdered. They took his daughter and they didn't even offer supports. They treat our people like dog. And then they take them out to Newfoundland.

This -- this place that's supposed to be -- huh? In Roddickton, Newfoundland, that's supposed to be -- that place was going to be closed down, closed. They were going to close it down. The, the social workers weren't going to be there anymore. Instead they took two social workers -- two social workers from Hopedale and Nain, and they kept them, and guess what? All our children is gone. New little industry.

And that's where my daughter was talking about, they're killing off our people. They're going to take them out there and they're going to try to make them white.

I've seen that with people my age. They were taken away. Brought out of our communities and you show me one normal one. You show me one normal one without issues or -- even like they were -- oh, it makes me so mad, I don't know.

And then so I -- so I -- I -- I resigned from social services and I started working at the hospital. And this is where I get to hear and see a lot of my --
used to be homesick, but now I see my people every day --
every day. And you know what, you see certain ones
blossoming.

But you see my age, and people my age,
they're still the little shy woman. They're still the --
there's, they're scared to speak up. They're scared to
speak up because the same people who had us way down low is
the big ones now.

Because I asked for support. Is there -- is
there anyone coming here with me? And you know what? They
got no money. No funding. No funding. If it -- if, if it
was -- if they had any compassion for us they would have
had somebody here. I'm just -- I'm too damn -- I'm just
someone to keep quiet. And guess what? I don't need to
stay quiet anymore. And I told them, "I'm coming. I'm
coming. One of these days I'm retiring and I'm coming."

And I tell you no more seeing my people
hurt. I want to speak up for the ones who cannot speak up.
And that was my daughter's passion. Was to speak up for
the people who cannot speak up, like I was. I know there's
a lot of smart people out of there, but guess what? We
cannot -- there's no -- there's certain positions cannot be
filled by my people because they don't have the education.
Yeah.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: You -- when we
Hearing – Public
Clayton Saunders et al
(Loretta Saunders)

were talking earlier too, you talked about medical travel. People going from Nunatsiavut to St. John's.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Yes, that's another thing. That's what really ticks me off. People on social assistance, and where we're living too, it's very -- like meeting Goose Bay is cheaper than on the coast. Down on the north coast the people -- you see the price, people -- I give an example. There was a watermelon -- what was it, $188? So they check to see why the watermelon was so high. Oh, they made a mistake. I think it was something like $80, was the right price. For a watermelon. And then they take our caribou away.

So poor people on social services, they have to travel for medical reasons. Right. I told them I was coming. They -- we just -- this was just done to them. They -- they -- they have to travel from Goose Bay, from the coast, Nain, or Hopedale, like on the coast, they travel to Goose Bay, then they have to travel to St. John's. One thing -- it -- it started off $20 a day for one of them to stay in the hotel for their meals, for the full day, in a city where they don't have a clue.

I didn't -- I didn't have a clue when I went to the city. I don't think I went out for two or three weeks. I wouldn't even poke my head out the door. I wouldn't even do that in Goose Bay, leave alone St. John's.
So the poor people, they come out of
Hopedale. They get there about 10:00 or -- Nain, the
coast. And they get out, they get to the airport. They're
at the airport. And they got to catch a flight. I'll take
an example, one got there about 11:00, 10:00, 11 o'clock.
They got on the flight about 9:00. Some of them don't have
breakfast, or anything, and some -- a lot of people are
diabetics, so they get to -- if you're on welfare you will
-- you have to come -- you go -- you have to come and you
go to the airport. Lucky enough Nunatsiavut cuts in now,
but we shouldn't have to because -- like, we shouldn't have
to.

What they're doing is putting
(indiscernible) or they get to Goose Bay. Say their flight
is 4:00 or 5:30 or something, they have to stay at the
airport and wait. They used -- they would have to, but
thank God Nunatsiavut cut in with the van. We have a van
so they take them to, to friendship or somewhere.

But if we didn't get involved with the --
with the people on the assistance, they would have to be at
the airport, stay there, probably didn't have breakfast.
No money to buy -- no money to buy a lunch or -- or -- or
dinner, what they call -- I call supper and -- dinner and
supper, but out here they say lunch and dinner. I'm
learning. So they have to wait at the airport. No money.
Maybe children with them, hungry.

And then they get -- they, they get to St. John's, they'll -- they'll let the van take them to the, they'll let the van take them to wherever they're staying. If they're staying at the Health Science in the hostel, it's perfect because their appointment is there. But if you've got an appointment, other than in that building, they'll give you a five-dollar voucher to get on the bus. Well, we don't know how to get around on buses.

We don't -- you know, leave -- how are you going to put a sick person, for an example I had -- my son had escorted one of his uncles out. He had cancer, okay. Lucky my son lived in -- in St. John's, when he was with his ex-wife there, Paula (ph). Sorry, not -- don't mind me, I could collar her -- but you know he had to get on a bus. He just finished chemo. He got on a bus and -- and there was no seats, probably had to stand up. And the poor man started throwing up. Just imagine if he was by himself, or my son wasn't used to travelling like that. And, and you know, I -- I've heard them get talked to like dogs.

And I know, I was on assistance myself. And they're like I was. I was quiet to a point where I had -- I had -- I was only 17. Can you imagine -- and I had a filling out. And later that dentist, he said, "Oh, you
needs a filling. We'll fix that.” And he said -- he said, “How you going to pay?” I said, “When I” -- we called it welfare cheque, “When I gets my welfare cheque.” He said, “Oh, let me look in your mouth again.” I was six months pregnant with her, and he said, “Let me look in your mouth again” -- with Audrey, so that one, and I (sic) said, “let me look in -- he said, “Let me look in your mouth again,” and I let him, and he said, “Oh, my you got gum disease” and I was thinking, no, I don't. I was too scared to say no because he was a dentist. A white person. That's how we grew up. We had to -- the dentists, and the nurses, and the cops, and the doctors -- they -- you had to look up to them.

And we did. We were even taught by our own parents to do it because they knew. They were in the real residential schooling. I was in, what they said -- called residential schooling, but I, that's what I'm trying -- but you know, I sat there and he said, “Oh, you got a gum disease.” And I was trying to -- I was too scared to say, “No, I don't.” I sat there, six months pregnant, and he hauled every one of my teeth out. And I -- that's how quiet and scared a person I was. And I don't want to see that happen to my people any more. So that's -- you know, and that's what's -- they're being treated like.
I wonder, do social services get $20 a day for their meals when they go on meeting. Is that their per diem? I hope so. I wonder, do their insurance cover only -- that our people -- they don't -- on social assistance, they do not get fillings covered. Automatically, if you're on assistance your teeth is out. And that's why they took mine out. I suppose he got -- he wasn’t going to get his little whatever for his one teeth, but he figure, "Oh God, I got a good quiet one."

Oh, that's another thing, I'm tired getting called the quiet ones. I get -- I've -- I've been introduced as the quiet one. Guess what? We're not quiet anymore, thanks to my daughter. She left something in me that I will never let go, never.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Loretta brought this out in you, this...

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: Yes.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Do you want to talk about -- about Loretta?

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: Yes. My girl. She -- she -- she was a very petite -- they may want to fill in too, but she was really tiny little girl, really petite. And I don't even know where to start, there's so much, but you know what -- I let her father and them talk about her too. I want to talk about when she was in university. Why
-- why I'm like this.

And when she was in university she -- she knew of my background. She knew of my background. I was very very sexually abused at a very young age by family, and by the community people. There was a few community people.

It was -- it was so normal. It was so normal. That you got to a point you even start playing boyfriend and girlfriends, it was so normal. And I've had -- I've seen many in court who assaulted women or boys, and they've said, “Oh that's our tradition.” That's not our tradition. It is not.

It was so much going on that it was -- it was -- it was normal, but you still couldn't go to your parents, although you knew it was bad because your mother was say, “If you ever do anything bad you're going to get a licking.” But it was -- and then the predators would say, “If you tell your mother she's going to beat you because this is bad.”

And -- so you -- you -- you grew up -- I -- I was -- that's why I was a very sheltered person, and Loretta seen that, and she -- I -- I took up drinking. I was never a drinker. I took up drinking. And I think that's what brought it out of her -- out -- brought it into her, for the passion, because I wouldn't -- I wouldn't
remember what -- as all I talked about was my sexual abuse. I'd bawl about my sexual abuse to them. My poor old husband and them -- I mean they had to live through it.

And what pisses me off is that one who sexually molested me did the same to my -- he did -- he did -- he did to my mother. He did it to me. And he did it to his children in his first marriage. His family, and I know family’s against it for me, but you know what, I don't care family or no family, if you haven't got the courage, I'm going to do it for my grandchildren, and my girls, and their children, and for all the little children that I've been around.

I fostered a lot of -- a lot of -- a lot of children, and then I've got a lot of people who call me mom, a lot. And a mother takes care of their children. So my -- I'm taking care of those -- I want to take care of those and help those who's going through it.

And that same person who molested me, he molested his children from his own marriage and guess what, he's in jail for his own grandchildren now. But guess what, he going to be out again, and I think after coming here and hearing stories of girls who were raped, young girls -- I think of friend all the time, Pamela Fildear (ph), her and her daughter, like murdered and was already by someone who was already a pedophile. I really believe
the pedophile’s home, if they could they could -- a lot of those people would be killed. I believe it.

Because the same person who molested me -- he -- and he, right in front of our eyes, he took a hammer and he killed our dog. If, if you can do something as cruel as that there's -- you can do it because really, I think they do it, either to their dogs, you can imagine that -- sure you do -- don't listen, you get -- but that's how you think.

And I like to be able to -- and this is the way I -- I have to heal. My daughter wanted me to heal. And when she was in university she brought all this out, see, she seen it. She heard me drunk and crying, and bawling about it. To -- on the end of it my relatives that come, they don't come around anymore now because I used to cry, and drunk, and bawl about, and a lot of them was -- that's all the same family. It's to a point, it started of childhood. It started into my teen years. And it's still happening today, and I'm going to it tell you, enough is enough. I have to speak up. Yeah.

And Loretta was the one who got it out in me because when she started her thesis she would call me. She knew I was sexually molested. She knew I was in residential schooling.

And -- and like I said, I always say, I had
the good part of the residential schooling because my parents, my father, I have an uncle in my living room, who's been there for ten years. He was in the residential schooling where he was taken as a little child. He was beaten. But he don't get no residential schooling money, guess why? He was late putting it in. Because we had a, a worker from my organization supposed to be doing it, and we were out to getting my daughter's award, but something come up with her, and instead of someone going and finish, he is not getting it because it wasn't put in time.

Mine was put in time only because my husband and my son, they -- they took me to the courthouse. I signed the papers. And he express mailed it, and that's the only -- I just made it, the deadline. But I didn't want to apply for it. Loretta got me to apply for it. She made me understand I deserved it. Because to be honest, even though incidents happened to me, when I was in North West River -- that's where I went to school, that was the best and safest time of my life. That was the best and safest -- and I've -- and -- and I feel sorry because -- and I didn't feel I fitted into the residential schooling.

But Loretta said, Mom, you know what, the things that you go through, the way you are, is because your father and your mother was in the real -- real residential schooling. And they were taken as little
children. They were beaten. I wasn't taken and beaten. I
was -- you know it does -- to me it was different. And I'm
-- I don't know -- the apology we were going to get is --
hey, we were the ones sexually abused, or put in the
hospital. Where is it about my parents and my father and
my uncle and my grandma, where is it about they took our
language? I don't agree with the, the apology, because
it's nothing to do with our -- with our culture. Nothing
to do with, with our language. It's all to do with, if you
were sexually assaulted or beaten.

And -- and Loretta was the one who brought me
-- brought it out to me and Loretta was -- then she said,
"Mom, guess what? I'm learning." They are now using child
welfare to -- to -- they're even using child welfare now to
make -- to -- instead of residential schooling. And even
like with my daughter they've -- they've put her through a
lot too. You know, so I -- I think there's a lot she's a
bit nervous about talking, but I'm trying to fill in so --
give her a little bit more courage to be able to talk about
it. But -- I don't know what -- like I need a vent.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Do you want a
break?

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: I think
(indiscernible) I think -- do you want to take a break, or...
MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: I wonder if we might take a break, five minutes? Is that okay?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We'll take a five-minute break.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Thank you.

(SHORT PAUSE)

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: If I could ask everybody in the room to -- to quiet down. The Saunders family is ready to continue.

Mr. Flowers, I, I don't see our registrar.

I -- I'm really sorry, it's really important that the recordings be on because this -- as you share with us, this is to speak to the country, and it's, to us, forever in -- in the records of this country, so I don't want any of your words to be lost, so if we could just -- once Bryan's back and presses the record button, which I am -- don't let me touch computers.

Mr. Flowers, as we wait for the registrar to come -- there's photos on the monitors behind us. Will we have an opportunity to hear about those, or...

Do you-- we'll wait till Bryan comes, I'm just -- I've noticed them, and I just wanted to acknowledge them, and hopefully we can hear more about them.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: And did you want to show more of those too?
MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: We have more. Mom?

Mom? Do you want to show those photos too?

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: Yeah, photos, yeah.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: We'll -- we'll proceed.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Okay.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: We'll -- it's -- it's being recorded, and -- and -- we won’t miss anything.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Okay. Audrey, did you want to -- you wanted to add something? You want to speak? All right. I think Audrey was going to speak.

MS. AUDREY SAUNDERS: My name's Audrey Saunders, and I'm a survivor of violence. I've been in a few relationships where it was really violent. I was living in Lab City with my two boys. And I got beaten up pretty bad. I broke my collar bone -- broke my collar bone. And I went back to Goose Bay to live with my mom and dad. It was recommended that I do that by Child and Family Services in Goose Bay. There was a social worker that was taking my ex to court for child support, for my second child, that he owed. And -- well, she when she was going to court for child support she started having an affair with him, and I found out and the charges got dropped.

And I lived in Goose Bay then and I moved to
Hopedale and I started seeing another guy and he started being very abusive to me so I left him. And one night he broke into my house and beat me up pretty bad, where I wasn't recognizable. It took the cops -- the RCMP -- it happened about three o'clock in the morning -- it took the RCMP pretty much 24 hours to come see me.

After that I had a social worker show up at my work -- where I was working, and tell me they were going to take my two boys permanently.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Well, listen, she was going out with this feller, and they broke up. They were broken up. Then she was home in bed and he went in and he beat her door down and he beat her up.

My cousin was in the apartment next door, and she called the RCMP that when he beat her up. They never even come to see her until she -- till about 3:00 or four o'clock the next day -- like the afternoon. And she was beat up pretty bad.

She had called me to see if I could take the boys. I couldn't take them at the time because I already had a son with a mental illness and my second son at the time -- my husband was in hospital and they told him that -- told us that he had cancer, and our first son together -- he went out with some friends drinking and they had given him something. He didn't tell me to this day if it was a
pill or what and he got sick.

So at the time of her beating, I couldn't take them because they were both sick with mental illnesses and one used to cut himself up. I didn't -- I couldn't let my grandkids go through it.

So she had asked other grandfather and his girlfriend and they -- they decided they would take them, and our understanding it was just till -- because she was beat up pretty bad.

I didn't see her, but her brother told me she couldn't get out of bed. He didn't recognize her. Her face was all beat up.

And somehow the kids end up in care and we were in agreement with it because they went -- he -- they went to the grandfather, and they promised they weren't going to separate them, and next thing you know they were separated and given up for adoption. No -- we were never ever -- again, we were never ever approached to see if -- if we -- had any interest in taking them.

See there was -- like I said, I work for them, but there was an incident at one point, and I know -- and then, like, my daughter, she said -- well, Loretta, she says something that we -- she said, we were passed out, and she was sleeping in between us, and her friend was there, but that's -- that wasn't true, but she couldn't have been
sleeping with us because she wasn't there. So this feller, he went and he tried to get at her, right. And they used that against me for what -- for -- for what this guy had done to -- huh?

No -- no -- no. About, like about Loretta, that's including with Audrey -- that's because -- that's -- that's -- that's excuses that they're using because of an incident that happened with Loretta. She was 19. There was no children under the age of 16 in the house at the time.

So we didn't start drinking, me and my husband, till the children got older, so we stayed sober for 25 years for our children, so.

And she -- Audrey, her -- she was beaten up, and they didn't even -- when they decided -- they told us they weren't going to separate them, and they weren't going -- like, they weren't -- they weren't going to be separated, but we weren't even notified.

And I was told by the adoptive parents and by them, we weren't allowed to see them. In fact, they came to where I worked with Nunatsiavut at the time, they were going to a children's program, and the lady who had him when -- said, “I'm not bringing him here.” I said, “You have to bring him here. He's Native,” because she's non-Native, right. “You have to. You have to keep his --
him -- let him know that he's -- he's Native.” And she said, “Well, I promise to bring him here, if you promise to let him you was Miriam and not -- not your Nana” -- and I did, I did it. For their sake. They do have -- and I kept away because I knew they had good homes, but that wasn't the point.

We had -- we -- we -- I had to make a promise that I would have -- you -- I see them all the time, but I didn't -- they never did know I was Nana until Loretta's been a blessing. Maybe I'm starting to see a lot of blessings since Loretta has gone home to heaven.

My grandsons -- they -- they in-boxed me, in fact, her youngest boy that was in care, he -- he in-boxed me and he said in his class to had to -- they were given three names of people to write about and Loretta's name was there. So he knew he was Saunders's, and he got a hold of his mother, so we are starting to have a bit of contact.

I don't know, I let the mother -- the adoptive mother know, but I haven't heard from them -- maybe, I don't know she said, no or yes, but every now and then he'll pop up. He's 14, and he's coming back hopefully. I love him, and he knew -- I love my grandkids.

And it's something we need to -- I need -- I want to stop -- yes, if they're adopted out to -- if the next family's white, just at least don't completely take
them from us.

I want to -- you know -- I, I -- it's hard seeing your grandchildren there and not being able to hug them the way you were when they were -- because they were older when they went into care. How old were they? Three, four, five, something like that, but they -- they do -- they did know us. So that's another thing they -- they -- three and five.

So another thing I see that's happening to our people, grandparents who aren't able to take care of the grandchildren -- that -- don't give them -- I don't think that should give them a right to completely taking them off -- out of our lives because we still love them. But there are circumstances that we are unable to take them.

Had my sons not been sick at the time I would have taken them. And I didn't want them to live through the fear and scare of seeing my son cutting himself up all the time. Thank God he's over it now and was through medication. They put him on Ritalin because he was a high -- you know, high -- hyper child, and now he's a 32-year-old with a 12-year-old mind, and -- and we got to live with it. You know. I just wanted them to know about that. What -- what do you want to tell them?

MS. AUDREY SAUNDERS: I have another child,
Mariah (ph), she lives with me. She's nine. After Loretta got murdered the doctor put me on Ativan and a sleeping pill to help me sleep, and not long after I was asked to leave my home because of my prescription.

I wasn’t put in a safe place. While I was at that place they put bars at my windows and they were videotaping my bedroom to see me coming and going. So I called Mom, and told them, my brother had been come in town, in St. John's, and he come down, and seen it was true. And he got -- they got me into the friendship centre in Mi'kmaw.

They wouldn't let me see Mariah for a whole month. And then they made supervised visits, and I was begging and asking to do drug tests. They wouldn't do it for like four months. There was no court order.

I was just told they might -- when the drug -- they finally did drug tests because my mom come in and made them do it, and it came back negative, nothing in my system and they just said I could go home.

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: She was kept away four to six months, just because -- yeah, she was kept away. She had been given -- she -- prior, she was -- like, she was a user. After she lost her children. After she'd lost her children she got into painkillers, and then she had to go -- she went and got help for it after -- went onto the
methadone problem.

And when Loretta was taken, that's what she -- they put her -- the doctor put gave her a prescription to help her with it and then they accused her of using even though it was prescribed for her. And when they said, “Oh, you're using.” They put her in a very, very bad place. There was people using and she was -- she was just -- you know, she was on the methadone trying to -- keeping herself clean. And they tried to say -- I know they tried to set her up.

But once they found out that she had never ever applied to -- for membership with our -- with our organization -- with Nunatsiavut, she never ever applied because of her fair, for how she was treated.

And they would not believe that she -- that her daughter wasn't Inuit. Or she is Inuit, but she's too scared to apply because of what's happening. She's too scared to -- she was too scared to apply because it seemed like the Native children were getting taken away, and brought.

And when -- when they took her she begged them to give her the drug test. They cut -- they used to cut her hair. They refused to do it for four to -- was it four months or more?

MS. AUDREY SAUNDERS: Four.
MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: They had her in this real bad place. People shooting up. And she called me crying.

So I -- me and her brother ended up going out. And we had some help from the -- we got her into the friendship centre, and she started getting help with -- from Emilia (ph) and them then. But -- and then I went back -- I went out to healing centre myself. Then after I knew they were okay, right.

But she -- social services has been giving her a really hard time. And I believe her because my sister, she also is a social worker, and once they found out she was in residential schooling she's been getting a very hard time.

Yeah, they even -- they went to visit my daughter and them and they were questioning about their co-worker, my sister, a social worker, right. So she's getting a rough time too, because she was in residential schooling. Thank you.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Delilah, when -- when we were talking and preparing for this too, you -- you -- you spoke about some of the -- the -- the the deep connection that -- that you and Loretta had, and, and how that relationship developed. Do you want to talk a bit about that?
MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: Yeah. Is that on?

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Yeah.

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: Yeah. Loretta was my -- my best friend. She was my other half. And she -- she was my closest friend. We didn't hide anything from each other and we helped each other through a lot.

I lived with her in Halifax. I -- I moved to Halifax about a month after she started her first year of university. I went there to go to a treatment centre. And I chose the treatment centre in Halifax because it was close to her and I ended up just staying there until I was about 21.

And she -- we -- we told each other everything. We -- we hung out all the time. There was never one without the other. And we -- there were a lot different facets of our relationship.

We -- we really wanted bigger, better lives for ourselves that what we saw back in our communities. And a lot of these situations that we had seen ourselves in, be it substance abuse, or toxic relationships, and we would always say to each other, “we're going to take over the world.” And we had -- we had big plans for our futures.

She wanted to go to law school. She wanted to be a mother. She wanted to be a wife. She wanted --
she wanted to help our people. And she -- she was on that path to do that.

    I was looking through some pictures last night when Joseph had asked me for some, and there's one, I don't know if it's too appropriate to share, but it -- it will give you a little insight to her sense of humor, and I'm just going to hold it up.

    Okay. So the funny thing about this picture, it's on Facebook, and someone had commented on my, my push-up bra, but they didn't know it was a push-up bra. And Loretta started a big rumor that we didn't -- we didn't fix, I suppose, she started a big rumor that I got breast implants. And so there's a huge thread on Facebook and she was -- she was really silly.

    She had the best laugh. She had the best laugh. She -- it was just full body. Sometimes almost cackling -- like her whole body would...

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Her belly would jiggle.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Yeah. She had a little Buddha belly, it was -- it was cute. And this picture -- me, and my parents, and my sister, and Garrett (ph) was there; wasn't he? We went to -- we went to some amusement park in Nova Scotia, Clements Park, or something along those lines.
Loretta loved driving fast. She loved driving fast. And my mom started crying, and I think she was scared, but she said it was because Garrett was in the car.

But that -- that was really a beautiful day and she loved spending time with friends and family and she had a really big heart. She -- she helped me with a lot of -- a lot of my own stuff, in guiding me to find direction in my life.

We -- we did support each other a lot. She sent me an email, out of the blue -- from this picture. I don't remember what that was from. I think it was New Years Eve and me, Loretta, and our friend Amy (ph) showed up. We're all wearing a bit of sparkle. And this woman was kind of catty with us because we were all matching, or whatever. And she's like, “Oh, these rich girls.” We were like, “Oh, yeah, with our Swiss bank accounts,” and we -- we -- we were always laughing and having fun, and...

But back to the story about -- what was I talking about? Before the picture. What was I talking about?

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You were talking about the (indiscernible).

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Oh, she, she was at the university. She went to St. Mary's, and she wrote me
an email out of the blue. She's like, "Hey, D, I just want
to let you know that I'm very proud of you." And it's
something that I still read. I was starting to go back to
school. And she's like, "This is your year, like, for
school," and she's like "thank you so much for helping me
make sense of the chaos in my life and being there and
listening to me," and that's something I -- I still read
quite often.

You know, we were always sending each other
messages. We were talking all the time, whether she was
lecturing me about my poor decisions, or we were talking
about things like colonialism and about abuse.

And for a long time Loretta had difficulty
talking about her own traumas, but near -- near the end of
her life, when she was working on her thesis she began
really digging into those difficult things. She -- she
moved out when she was about 15?

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS**: Fifteen.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS**: About 15.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS**: Sixteen.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS**: And she moved to St.
John's and she got on CHOICES for youth, where you like get
emancipated and you get -- you receive social assistance.
I ended up doing the same when I was 15.

But she moved to Montreal after St. John's,
and she became addicted to drugs, and she was being exploited at the age of 15, sleeping on park benches. And she ended up moving home -- when, mom?

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Two -- two years, three years, then she was -- she left about 16 --

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** She was like 17.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** -- she was about -- coming back about 18, I think.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Yeah, she -- she came back to Goose Bay when she was about 18. And I remember when she came home, she -- she -- you could tell that she -- she had been using and she wasn't in a good place. And she struggled with that, but she did end up getting sober, and she finished three years of high school in eight months.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** On my God.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** And she -- she -- her determination, and her -- her drive -- she was -- she is still one of the strongest people, and I think a lot of that comes from my mom. She -- she was -- she was my role model. She was my best friend, you know. We could be fighting one minute and then, you know. But we never turned our backs on each other. We were -- we were best friends.

She finished three years of high school in
eight months, and then she did a transition year to go to university, and she did that in Goose Bay. And then she went onto St. Mary's University.

And I remember one thing she talked about quite often was a girl -- she told a girl that she went to high school with, not the eight-month like, adult high school, but that she actually went to high school that she's going to St. Mary's, and she said to Loretta, “Don't you have to be smart to get in there?”

And -- but that -- that's just stuff that some people face, you know, when you're trying achieve your dreams. But Loretta -- Loretta used that as fuel. She used her trauma as fuel to -- to really -- to really -- like, propel herself forward. She -- she never wanted to live in victimhood. She never wanted to use her trauma as anything. She -- she used as a strength because she -- she was -- she didn't just -- she wasn't just resilient, she overcame things, and she -- she thrived.

She -- she's someone that I still look up to and that I feel really guides me. And someone who -- who's still teaching me today through the conversations that we've had and the things that she's lectured me on. But she -- she's still very much in my heart.

And I think for a long time I -- I had difficulty calling on her because I, I was really bitter
that she was gone. I was achieving things, and I wanted her to be there. And I wanted her to see that I was in a good place because I know I did make her worry. I made my family worry. And she never wanted my mom to worry about anything because my mom is already had a lot on her own plate.

But I think for a long time I had a hard time calling on her and sitting with her -- her spirit. But I went to a healing centre just recently, in September, in Kitigan Zibi, the Ôde Widôkâzowin Centre. And I got to distance myself from a lot of things that I had going on in my life, you know, priorities, responsibilities, that sort of thing, and really sit down with fears and stuff that I had hold, held onto, assaults that had happened to me, traumas that had happened to me.

But one night -- everyone was too scared to go out by the fire by themselves, but one night I had been sitting with things; my fears, my insecurities, my pain, and I went out to the fire by myself and I, I closed my eyes and I was crying and I -- I called on Loretta and my Anânsiak, and Atâtsiak, my grandmother and my grandfather, to come and sit with me and my cousin Tina (ph), who committed suicide. I called on them to come sit with me and help me -- help me carry it. And that's the...

I'm finally able to sit with her now, and
while I was bitter that she hasn't been here to be able to experience life with me and I could be an auntie to her baby. And I remember -- while I was bitter about that -- I -- I'm able to experience her presence in a different way now.

I remember when Loretta told me she was pregnant. I was on a beach in Tofino, B.C. I had moved away. It was my first time really away from family. And I -- I was really enjoying it out there. And she made plans that after graduation she would come visit, and she texted me, and she's like, “Oh my God, D, it's a positive.” And I remember like, squealing on the beach because like, she would have been an amazing mom.

She -- and she had that in her. Like, no matter what she had been through she can still carry that love and that like, she -- she had such -- she -- she would have been an amazing mom.

And I told her, “Like, just say the word, I'm on a plane. I'm back. Anything you need.”

And I -- when we lived together on Cowie Hill, where she was murdered, I used to blast the heat, but leave a window open and put my feet outside because that's one thing we had in common, we hated when our feet were too warm. But she, she hated the heat in generally. Oh, my God, she would storm out and she'd be like, “Why do you
have the heat so high?” And she -- like she'd say --

anyway, she hated being way too warm. And we lived on the
tenth floor so the summers were -- were bad.

We -- Halifax was -- was our city. And
we -- we did everything together. Went shopping, we would
go out dancing. And another thing about Loretta, she loved
to dance. I was an awkward dancer. And one thing she
would still laugh about right up to when she passed away.
We went out dancing at Reflections in Halifax, and we had a
friend named Gustavo (ph), and we went Merengue dancing,
and he was -- he was flinging me around -- flinging me
around and she -- she said that I looked like a little rag
doll, a little wet rag doll being flung around. And that's
one night that we went out. So it was something she
always still laughed at. I was like, “Oh, he's a good
dancer.”

But we -- we did have some difficulties
together, especially when we were drinking together. I
think there were a lot of unresolved things that we had
experienced that brought out a lot of anger in us. So we
have gotten into fist fights, and -- but she -- she's --
she's the huge part of my heart, and a part of who I am.
She -- she has helped guide me and helped me become the
person I am along with everyone in my family.

Since losing her we lost a huge part of our
family. And you see it in -- in how our family has broke
down in many ways at certain times because she -- she had a
very important role in our family. She was very supportive
of every one of us, and she understood -- she understood
why we had the pain and the hurt that we did. And why we
hurt other people, because hurting people hurt people. She
was very compassionate. Very -- you know, she was -- she
was my best friend.

**MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS:** Thank you.

I -- you know, I -- I -- we -- when we were talking and
preparing for this, it was -- it was so wonderful to hear
that, and it's so wonderful to hear it again. Thank you.

When we -- when we were talking and
preparing for this too, we -- we also talked about some --
some of your experiences with -- with the media, and with
the -- and with the police investigation when Loretta went
missing, and later when she was found. Do you want to talk
about some of that and the court processes and so on?

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Okay. I think the
media were extremely insensitive in how they -- they
handled my sister's case, even though we were fortunate to
have the media coverage that we did. And that's something
that -- that's -- it's difficult to -- I don't know. It's
-- it's good that we had the media coverage that we did,
but it's difficult when you deal with people who just view
your loved one as a story, or the...

I'm going to start with how I found out Loretta's case had turned into a homicide case. We had just finished doing an interview with CTV, I think, and Kelison Dahl (ph) she -- she was extremely kind and I -- she was good.

We were driving back to the Rice residence at St. Mary's University because St. Mary's University had donated a room for us like, as the hub. And I think we were going to go meet with the detective and -- Yelchin (ph), Taylor (ph), and his partner at the time, and you know, I thought maybe they just had questions or something. You know, I -- I still it very much in mind that we were going to find Loretta and she was going to be fine.

While a part of me, knowing the research that she was doing and the stories that we talked about, and everything -- while a part of me knew it was unlikely, the logical part of me knew it was unlikely, I pushed that away. That was my sister. That was my best friend. And I got a text message and it was from -- it read, “Hi, this is Basel (ph) from CBC Toronto. Sorry, this is turned into a homicide case, but would you be able to speak to us this evening?” And that's how I found out that my sister was murdered.

And I -- I looked at my phone. I -- it was
-- it was absurd. I almost chuckled at it because, you know. But once we got -- we -- we went around -- we were just around the corner from meeting with the detective too. 

Oh, the way that they knew so early is because they were there filming Loretta being dug out of the snow. And I, I did end up going to meet the detective, and Yelchin -- Yelchin collapsed, and I -- they didn't really have to say anything. They didn't have to say anything.

And then I just turned into a beast. I -- I -- I became an animal. I don't know what it was. And my friend, Amy, said, “Like I saw Loretta's fierceness come out of you then.” Because like I -- I just like stormed through. I could feel like, rage and stuff pulsing through my veins. I could, like I can almost feel it now, like tingling of like -- I was vibrating.

And because that's -- that's not what I wanted to hear. They -- that's not -- that's not the way that I wanted it to end. And that's not the way that I should have been approached with the news. So that was -- that was a really difficult thing to deal with.

Another thing that I've -- I made a point to do -- like during the appeal hearing, I had mentioned that you know, while we're lucky that my white passing sister received some level of justice, or what Canada considers
justice, there are families out there that don't -- don't receive the same level of justice. And that's something that Loretta -- Loretta made sure that I was aware of that. Because she was -- she was very aware of that.

And that's -- that's one thing that I want to really bring forth and really emphasize because I've seen it. I've seen it play out. I've seen families -- even I was speaking with Bernie, and she -- she -- like the things that are going on in Salmon Arm now. How the women are just being painted as prostitutes. And the families' truths aren't being brought forward. I've seen that. I've seen that very stark contrast. That dehumanization that is very -- very prominent. It's -- you can't -- you can't miss it. So that's one side of the media.

I -- I did see them as a useful tool to be able to -- to call -- to appeal to the public to -- to ask if they had seen Loretta's car. To see if anyone had seen her, or had any information.

And with the police I -- I do understand why they couldn't give us a lot of answers. Because when I landed in Halifax I immediately went to the police station. They did ask me a couple of questions, like "Did Loretta own a white purse?" Loretta owned a lot of purses, but I knew which one they were talking about. And I -- they did ask some weird questions. They asked about the text
message that I got from Loretta's -- no, I got a Facebook message, and it just said, “Hey.” It was on Valentine's Day, so it would have been Victoria or Blake, her murderers, messaging from her phone. And so they -- they did ask those questions.

They told me to stay away from the apartment, but I -- I didn't. I had to go see that her car wasn't there. I had to go see that she wasn't there. I expected to see her on her bed, surrounded by papers, surrounded by books, studying. It was reading week, so I figured, you know, she -- her phone might have died. She might have -- like her phone might have been cut off. She was going through financial issues.

And there was a cop sitting on a chair outside of the -- outside of our apartment door. And the -- the cop, I said, “Hey, like this is mine and my sister's apartment. Can I -- like what's going on?” And she called the detective who told me to stay away, and she said, “Are you going to come talk to the family?” And I think they knew at that point. I think a part of me knew at that point too, but I wouldn't -- I wouldn't acknowledge it.

The police -- we did switch investigators a few times. I don't know, I think -- I think they'll want to talk more about like the police interactions. I was
more so on the ground with posters, dealing with media, and
sometimes the police, but media was where I have the most
issues.

MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS: I'd just like to try
to -- to say a few things. Talk about Loretta just for
about a couple of minutes, not very long. I hope I don't
break down.

Well, my little girl, she was really a smart
girl, really smart. Well, she had five brothers and two
sisters, and really they were all smart. They were all
really good in school, you know, getting good marks, and
everything like this. And they got along with everybody at
school most of the time. Well, except for a few people
that -- well, we all know what's school’s like.

Anyway, you know, but my girl, she was --
and like I said, she had five brothers and two sisters.
And besides that we had -- we practically reared up two of
my brother’s children, two boys. And we had quite a few
foster children coming and going, you know.

And (indiscernible) and not one of them
foster children or brothers and sisters could -- they
couldn't say nothing wrong with Loretta. Because you know,
she could get along with anybody. And anybody -- and she
made friends wherever she went to really quickly, like,
hey. Well, excuse me, and Loretta too, same as -- same as
the rest of her family you know.

Me and my wife, we didn't drink while they was all growing up. We didn't do no drugs while they was all growing up. And that was just wasn't allowed in the house simply allowed. And nobody was allowed to come around with it. Things like that. And except for the last two of my children I got to say I've had a beer with them, Delilah and Cameron (ph). You know, they seen us having beer and that in the house when they got a little bit older, and things like that and -- and...

Anyway, Loretta, she went to Sunday school. She went to Sunday school with her -- with her brothers and sisters. And not only, not only her brothers and sisters, me and her mother would go, you know. That's how ...

And I got to say, you know they were pretty smart too. They could read the Bible at a very early age, and that.

Delilah -- you take Delilah here, and her brothers they could even read before they went to school, and we get a lot of credit to that because they sat down at the table, read the Bible, and every week they used to have to remember a little Bible verse and get up and say it in Sunday school, which, you know, they all done very well. Sometimes they wouldn't -- might need a little help once in a while to get the verse out, but they all managed to do it
anyway.

So, you know, that -- that was the -- the way that -- that was the way that we reared up our children, and those who stayed with us.

But you know -- but all good times got to pass, hey, and our children they grow older, make their (indiscernible), they grow older and make their own decisions.

Sometimes -- sometimes, you know, when they're still too young, and I believe that's what -- the beautiful social services comes in when a kid turns 15, 16 and they think they know everything. You know, that's where the wonderful social services people kick in and start to listen and that you know, and I would say that the wonderful social services -- I got to say that they draws them away from family. You know, you try to -- we tried to rear the very best, yeah.

Now, I must say too, that, you know, that the teachers in school was no help at all. All -- a kid got to go no matter what. And they complain to a teacher and the teacher runs to the social services and the social services comes down hard on the parent, and they don't know what the fuck they're talking about.

And the social services, I do believe run around that like so bad because they got the RCMP to back
them up. All they got to do is run to the RCMP and the
RCMP threaten to press charges against you. For what?
Trying to -- you know, trying to take care of your kids the
best way you -- they can.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** You're doing good,
love, you're doing good.

**MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS:** Yes. Well -- well,
you know, my little girl, when she got very -- when she was
young she -- I guess she just wanted to go out and explore
the world, I guess like any other teenager who shouldn't --
should be still home. What could you do? If anybody could
tell me.

What could you do when you got the mighty
social service woman, a little snotty-nosed kid just
going out of university or something. Going and telling
parents that three (indiscernible) kids who almost reared
up and ready to go, and them little snotty-nosed -- that
little snotty-nosed social services kids ordering you
around. What could you do? You don't want the RCMP
throwing you in jail because you're trying to look after
your kids.

We never ever hurt our kids. Never ever
did. Never ever drank around them. Never ever smoked any
dope around them. What could you do when the little
snotty-nosed social service worker knocking on your door
and the RCMP standing on your back. Your kids have told them something. Well, was nothing bad they told them about us anyway, but maybe a little smack on the butt or something. What they needed -- what they really deserve. That was enough for them to come run down, you know.

   Anyway, my girl, she decided to wander off and go ahead and got a boyfriend, I think, when she was maybe around 16 years old, or whatever, 16 to 17 years old. She -- yeah, she got into a few things after that, after she got out. She got into drinking and drugs. You know, and wanted to travel across Canada, I suppose.

   But anyway she -- she met this certain guy who was no good for her and you can't tell them that anyway, you know. No good for her. They runs off to Montreal. And she lived out on the streets and that, and after a little while she come to find out that it's a horrible -- horrible place out on the streets.

   I think she told her mother that too, that you know, on the streets out there, and she could see how they -- the people was living there. Especially the girls. Especially the Aboriginal girls. She seen them on the street. She seen them on the -- living -- and how -- how they was treated.

   I think, I think too, that she was in heavy drugs at that time; my girl was. But you know, anyway her
mother took her out to rehab, and all this, and out around there and she seemed to be doing fine, but then that must have waken her up I think that she -- she wanted to go and have a -- a better life. She wanted to make a better life. She wanted to -- she wanted to make her father proud of her. Her mother proud of her.

And then she decided to go back to school. But she wouldn’t go to school in Goose Bay. She -- I guess she wanted -- didn't like it but, she wanted to go to Hopedale for school. She wanted to go down there and get her education, so that's what she done. She went down there, and she was very smart down there. She got her education very fast because all she done was study and work.

And I mean she was a real -- real model to the -- the -- the ones that were -- who was going to school down there. And how -- how she got through so fast. And that -- that encouraged a lot -- a lot of young people in -- in Hopedale.

Yeah, they were, they were doing better. They started doing better in school down there. Anyway the rest of the kids they started studying, you know. Then our -- our (indiscernible), you'll think -- I think they're still doing good down in school.

I -- I don't have that little
(indiscernible) but I likes to show off, I don't think about what the kids made -- made for her after she was murdered. Send a little booklet, but -- the -- the little children made from the school and they send it to us. To encourage us, you know, and -- and help us to get over her death. Well, I wouldn't say just an ordinary death, she was -- she was murdered. Well, here's her -- here's her little pad -- book what they made up for her.

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: The languageness (ph), okay.

MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS: Oh, and -- and my wife reminded me. That's the little eagles that --

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: That's the languageness that is in Hopedale, from my home community.

MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS: Yeah.

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: They take them from newborn to till they get to school and all day long, like they get just talking Inuk to them. So that's the little class who sent it to us was the little languageness that -- that's where, where we lost our language, so they're trying to -- they're using that to try to bring our language back to the younger generation.

MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS: So that was quite encouraging, hey. Yeah.

Well, my daughter anyway she got -- she got
her diploma finished, the rest of her education in Hopedale, and she was very happy. She applied for university, St. Mary's, and she got that and she was even happier. She was glad that she will go.

But I told her, “You got to be careful out in the city, my girl. You don't know who you -- what's going to run across.” But she pretty well happy. And she still started in university.

I mean she was settled down, settling down really good. And she was doing really good in school. She was really happy. She was -- she was getting good marks in university because all she done was study most -- that's the most thing that she would do, studying.

The reason for that is because she wanted to get something done in her life. She wanted to make her father and mother proud of her. And she was really doing that because she was a really smart, hard worker.

I -- I remember when she first started writing her thesis, I think it was her mother encouraged her to write her thesis on the Aboriginal people. And she put her heart in that.

My -- my -- as far as I know my girl, when she started writing her thesis, she -- she didn't just pick stuff out of the books, I don't think, or got newspapers clippings, and all that, and, and looked at it -- wrote it
in her thesis. She really had interviews with people, real live people. And she interviewed them. I do believe her professor said it was one of the longest thesis that he ever had, and one of the best written ones. I mean, that's what my little girl was like.

And children, she really loved children. I know that. She'd go a hundred miles, and she did, and even farther just to visit kids, children.

Well, anyway, my -- my little girl -- I think I might have called her Loretta once or twice, maybe three times in her lifetime because she was a princess and that's what I called her. And she knew that she was one. And that's all I ever called her.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** (Indiscernible) called her Loretta (indiscernible) called her.

**MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS:** Yes, she used to be -- she'd get upset with me anyway if I called her Loretta. I had to call her princess, or I had to call her girly-girl. I used to call her girl because I was in the delivery room with her, and I used tell her the story too, and she used to like it, yeah. I was -- I was in the delivery room when -- when she got born and you know, when she was born the doctor picked her up, hold her upside and smacked her bum when she -- and she peed. And then the doctor said, “It's a girl.” And that's how I called her...
girly-girl ever -- ever since then. She was a girl. And her mother said to me, “That's your baby.” And I said, “Yeah.”

And, and I took her and she -- and you know, I practically raised her up -- well, my wife was there. You know, I didn't do all the work, like changing diapers that much. But you know, I took care of her most of the time.

And, yes -- yeah, she was -- she was quite the girl, and we all miss her. We -- we all miss -- we all miss Loretta, our girly-girl, our princess, we all miss her.

And anyway, she -- she was -- everybody was -- it's just so bad things like this got to happen. As I -- as I say, you know, she -- Loretta wasn't murdered because of her thesis. She wasn't murdered because she was a Native. She wasn't murdered because she was Aboriginal. Loretta -- Loretta was murdered for I believe, just a little bit of rent money, or something, but I do believe too, that those cold-blooded killers. I might as well add was cowardly -- cowardly -- cowardly cold-blooded killers, murder a -- I don't even know if it was for -- for money. I think it was for being jealous. They were jealous, cowardly, cold-blooded murderers; that's all they was.

Those cold-blooded murderers had no thought
for anybody's life. From what I hear those people that my
daughter let stay in her apartment. She took care of them.
She brought them to restaurants and paid for the food.
Took them to movies and paid for it.

What could you say about cowardly, cold-blooded murderers? I mean my girl, she wasn't a big woman.
She was about the size of my -- my wife. And this big
cowardly, cold-blooded murderer of what -- what he calls
his self a man, doing that to a little woman for.

And that woman what called herself a woman
didn't -- is nothing but a cowardly cold-blooded murderer.
If that thing couldn't stick up and say something to my
girl, who was bigger than my girl, bigger around than my
girl, then what could you say about people like that?

All they -- all of the -- you know, they
were just cowardly cold-blooded murderers. And you
don't -- the people, or the women and girls that my
daughter was writing about, what could you say about all
those men who kill women? What are they? They're nothing
but cowardly cold-blooded murderers. They're scared. They
will run away from a real man; I bet you. But they will

And my daughter, you know, wanted change. I
do believe in her thesis that I didn't read it all, but she
had things wrote in there. She wanted things changed, the
social services stuff. She wanted the RCMP -- she -- she was getting ready to give that to the university, and maybe then they would have let the -- the -- the RCMP and the -- the Government -- Government of Canada to look it over and really see what this country -- this -- this big mess this country is in. About letting men murder women.

Yes. And my wife just reminded me that pregnant women, pregnant women being murdered. You don't think -- you know something about a pregnant woman being murdered? The cold-blooded murderers are allowed to get away with murdering that little child what's inside of a woman. You know I asked women before -- after my daughter was murdered, and I said, “When you get pregnant do you consider that little thing what's in you a human being?” Every one of them said, “Yes, it's a human being.” Once a woman gets pregnant that is a human being growing in there.

And yet because of this stupid -- stupid abortion law, you know, it's not considered a human being. And not only that I've got in mind to tell yous not only that I think my wife looked it up in -- in whatever, you know, about pregnant -- well, yes, if -- if a woman wants the baby you know, and don't have abortion, or whatever, if a woman wants the baby that you -- that's a human being.

My daughter wanted a baby. I wanted it. And -- and my wife did too, wanted it, wanted that baby.
And my daughter wanted it. So there's no reason why -- no reason why, I think if the lawyers looked up that law and saying that's a human being, those two cowardly cold-blooded murderers they should be charged with a double murder. They should be charged with a double murder. I don't...

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Because in the -- it said in the law abortion is illegal unless a mother and the doctor approve of it, and she didn't approve of her baby being killed with her, that's what he was trying to get at too.

**MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS:** Now I'm going to tell you something might be hard for some of you to -- might be something hard for you to hear out there, but I only -- I do believe in my heart that only somebody who had somebody murdered in their family you know, in such a -- want to -- do believe things are going to happen, you know. I often said, or said you know, if my daughter was in that apartment and they got into an argument and maybe you know, and one of them just pushed her. You know, not intentionally to hurt her, but just pushed her and like if she fell and hit her head of the coffee table or something you know, then -- then I would -- you -- I wouldn't think -- I would be sad about it, but then I know it wasn't intentionally.
But those cold-blooded murderers they --
they went right to the length of putting her in a hockey
bag, dragging her and throwing her in a car, and taking her
and dumping her. Now, if that's not a cowardly cold-
blooded murderer, I don't know what is.

And I really do think that Canada should
have the death penalty for those cold-blooded murderers
like that. I think they should have the death penalty.
And I know some of you don't even want to hear or speak of
the death penalty, but those cold-blooded murderers,
something got to be done about them. The killings are
not going to stop. This is going to keep on going, no
matter how (indiscernible) try to make it and -- and fix
it, and all that.

They only knows are -- the one who got 25
years, well, he got life. After that, he can get parole
after 25 years. Twenty-five years is almost gone, four
years anyway. And he's still be only a young man getting
out of that jail. He'd be only in his 50s; that's all.
He'd be walking free. That -- so what's he's doing? Out
walking around looking for another victim maybe. Another
Aboriginal girl. Another white girl. Another coloured
girl. You don't know. He's just a cold-blooded murderer.
A cowardly one at that.

And my daughter, in her thesis, she wrote
about a good many of them. Some of them not even found.
Some of them probably going on yet.

I hope I -- I hoping this, speaking for my daughter here, not -- it's coming from me, but I hope it's her, I hope that's the way she would think that these -- these killers -- these killers, you know, they're going to go on. They're not going to stop. Girl after girl after girl is going to be murdered unless you got really --
really tougher penalties. The penalties are -- or they got -- they got put in some prison out on some island where they never see the light of day again.

I suppose I said too much to yous, but I -- I think I just give it up now. Thank you.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Yeah. Thank you, thank you, Clayton.

One -- one other area that I think that we talked about in preparation for today is the court process, the -- the trial and preliminary hearing and the appeal and your experience in that. Do you want to talk about that? And also, your experience with victim services, I think you talked about.

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: I -- one thing that really came up is while we were in the courtrooms, and stuff, and the -- and Blake and Victoria were there -- well, we -- me and my mom and my eldest brother, Edmond, we
Clayton Saunders et al (Loretta Saunders)

couldn't go into the -- the courtroom during the preliminary hearing because they called us -- they had us written down as witnesses, and that was pretty difficult.

But throughout the court process, and stuff, it was -- it was hard not being able to live our emotions. It was hard not being able to -- it -- that, that part was difficult, but with victim services I think they need to have a more culturally competent -- culturally competent process. I found -- they -- they just gave me a list -- sent me a list of counsellors.

And the counsellor that I got actually he -- he was kind of creepy. He kept talking about how attractive Loretta was. He -- he was the only one on the list that had a homicide grief on there. He spoke about how attractive she was, and stuff. And I wasn't in a good place. I -- I don't really want to go into any more detail with that part.

There -- there's some other stuff that made him really inappropriate. But I think -- I think having culturally competent processes is really important. One thing is they're -- they're so -- they're very triggering.

They sent -- I -- I unsubscribed from the updates. You can get updates about the -- the two murderers about whether they're going -- leaving the prison for a hospital visit or if they're being transferred to
different prisons. If -- just up-dates.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You said subscribe.

Is it electronic?

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: No. Well, you can get in the mail. I just like, completely -- I -- I just told the victim services worker that we dealt with that I didn't want to be a part of it because it was very triggering for me. And it's -- it's very triggering for everyone in my family, I think.

I -- I -- I feel like -- one thing my mom brought up earlier, how -- how when a family -- a family or an individual goes through an experience like this, these services look at you as if you had never been through anything else. They don't look at the culmination of issues that you faced.

I -- I mentioned earlier that I went to a treatment centre, Mi'kmaw Centre and they -- they had a very holistic approach in terms of addressing like your four aspects and working with you on different -- different levels of your aspects, and really incorporating ceremony. And while sweat lodges and stuff aren't my traditional like, my ancestor's ceremonies, they -- they still really helped me, and have -- I've also been learning a lot more about like, Inuit culture and spirituality and ways of healing.
But I think -- I think that's one thing that really needs to be addressed is they expect you to go in and not act human and not react to your emotions or your -- your -- your experience. And when you're hearing these really horrific things...

When I was reading my victim impact statement -- I -- I -- I prepared something, but I -- I couldn't read it from the paper. It -- it wouldn't come out. And I -- I kind of rushed off the -- the -- the witness stand, and I screamed at them. I screamed at Blake and Victoria, and then I stormed out. They did end up letting me come back in to read, but I -- what else did I mention? I'm kind of blank.

MR. JOSEPH MURDOCH-FLOWERS: Do you want to tell us...

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: Oh, well the -- I can say it, I guess. The counsellor -- the counsellor I got with victim services, he -- he was the one that spoke about Loretta being attractive and like, talking about her a lot, and it was -- it was weird. I had only met with him maybe a handful of times and I was with in a really bad place. I was homeless. And I -- I didn't end up doing it, but I -- I -- I spoke to him about, like me thinking of like, stripping and stuff, and doing sex work. I didn't end up doing it.
But he like, started touching my leg and
stuff. And that -- like, I was trying to confide in him as
a counsellor, like trying to get out of that state of mind,
and this is someone that's recommended by victim services.

He also -- his name came up, I got a duffel
bag full of case files of Loretta's case, like tips and
stuff that were sent in because Blake's cellmate, he -- he
convinced Blake to write a so-called -- convinced Blake
that he could write a chapter in his book and make money
off of it if he wrote about Loretta's murder. And that
became a piece of evidence because he didn't address it to
his lawyer he addressed it to his cellmate and then you
know, they ended -- they ended up finding it because cells
got tossed, or whatever.

Anyway, that was submitted. The old
cellmate, he -- he got me a bunch of these -- he ended up
reaching out to me and my family and he gave us like, tons
of case files. I still have them. And in one of the tips
the, the counsellor's name comes up, and he had called in,
said that he saw Loretta's car and that a black guy was
driving it, or something.

But it's his name that's like, you know, his
number and stuff on there. And that's, you know, that's an
experience with the victim services counsellor.

And I was very fortunate. I don't know
where she is now, but Sandra Miller (ph), I met her at one
of the MMIWG pre-inquiry engagement sessions, and she's
been absolutely amazing. And yeah, you guys have got a
gang around you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did you want to talk
about the court stuff? Court and victim services?

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: I was too hooked up --
I'm more -- I'm more worried about what's going to happen
and -- no, not right now. I'm not.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Thank you all
so much. This is not the first time we've met, and talked,
and I just thank you for sharing with me, with the inquiry,
with the country. I have a couple of questions if that's
okay.

It's -- I also know it's into lunch hour and
I want to make sure our Elders are okay if we continue a
little bit. Everyone in the room --

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: My dad's diabetic
too, so he probably has to eat.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Okay, so we
could pause now if that's better for everybody. I just
have a couple of questions, mostly about recommendations
and -- and what we do moving forward, and about Loretta's
thesis. I'm hoping we can get a copy. So I leave it to
you. I don't -- health is important, so let me know what
you'd like.

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: For recommendations,
I -- I know that journalists have some sort of code of
ethics. I -- I know that they have to follow some sort of
code. I'm not sure what it's called. But I feel like
there -- there has to be a revision. There has to be
something in there in terms of dealing with families and
you know, I've -- I've come across journalists who have
been so amazing, so compassionate, and like they're --
they're dealing with the situation appropriately and could
definitely be models for other journalists, but I feel
there needs to be something that -- that should be adhered
to officially.

Because as I mentioned earlier, the media is
one of the most powerful institutions in the world. We
live in a very media driven society, and I feel that --
well, it's not just that I feel it -- it's -- it's the
right thing to do to stop dehumanizing our women and to --
to respect these families and their truths and not label
women as less than because of something that they do to
survive.

I -- I really feel that they need to do
something to -- to better that system.

Oh, and I -- I mentioned earlier the
culturally, culturally competent -- the need for cultural
competence in victim services. Because you do have a lot of -- you have a lot of Indigenous families going through the system dealing with situations like my family has. And you know, the support wasn't there from the Nunatsiavut government. We wanted to go to one of their camps on the land, for healing on the land and they -- they denied us. But you know, we're -- we're not getting that level of healing from anywhere. You know, it's very inaccessible. What else was (indiscernible). And -- and the triggering stuff with victim services. Okay.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** I don't even know the question that I --

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Do you have any recommendations?

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** For what? For --

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Oh, for healing centres.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Oh, yeah, we need -- we need better access to healing centres. Like -- like she said, we -- we asked for -- if I -- me and my -- we were falling apart. I was practically very -- I got very violent with my husband. And I realized I'm capable of murdering too, given -- putting me in certain circumstance that's how bad it is -- it was with our family.

Recommendations that we do -- when we do go
to our people or do, we have access to our healing centres, thanks to you First Nation people I would -- I went to Eosegoundtowes (ph) -- I mean they paid for it, but how was -- how was I going to do reach out to our people if we're not healing -- in healing centres together and dealing with it together?

Like I said, this is not my first murder and they -- my cousin and my parents, my dad and them went through -- my dad's brother was murdered. They had to deal with it and then my cousin's son was murdered, and the people wasn't in jail very long though. Now they're in the same -- they're in the same community.

I know when we were growing up if people got into trouble in the community, the, the community had Elders who dealt with it, and they kicked them out the communities if they didn't continue. We need more traditional ways back into our -- in our -- into our communities where we -- we have our traditional ways of dealing with them.

We did. I don't know what's going on with them now because I -- I haven't been invited to any of the meetings. Maybe they have it on Facebook, or on -- on -- in -- in some media, but I don't look at stuff. I'm in work, and that's all I do at work, then I'm home. So we need more -- more healing centres or more access to it.
And I recommend that people that got children, who's being involved with child welfare too, that I -- I know because like I said, my son was out looking for his sister and his girlfriend had the child apprehended and -- and then he met up with another girl and they got two children and they're in care now.

And my son was -- he wasn't even in Hopedale when -- like I mean he was in Hopedale, but he -- he didn't even touch the girl, but all she said she was scared and her brother called the cops. Next thing you know he was kicked out and the kids were apprehended.

So I'd like to -- I'd like to have an Aboriginal, like more -- because I used to be there as an Aboriginal liaison worker before I went to work with the hospital where I'm to now. And I would recommend -- recommend that they have a Aboriginal person there that knows -- knows this --

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Like an advocate.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Yeah, advocate and who got children and knows what they're talking about. Like my husband said they come out -- they come out of university and they don't -- and -- and they don't even have children of their own, and same as social services.

Those people they're already far enough put down, having to be on assistance and in our -- in our
community, like I said, the prices are different and we're in Labrador and in Newfoundland is way cheaper, they should look at the rates for our people that's on the coast compared to the rates that we're getting in Newfoundland. You could get probably a cartful -- in Newfoundland to -- maybe two little Co-op bags or two little bags full in our communities. I think that needs to be looked at, why it's so high rate because they're not eating proper. Then they're going to hospitals, they're left with go on a bus pass, some of them end up on, down the road on the street.

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: (Indiscernible)

problem.

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: Yeah, and to Ottawa, and like they go to Ottawa. Well, I don't -- I've never had to. I don't -- I can't speak -- but I guess it's familiar. Yeah. But like to me, like they need to see that what those people who are on assistance, and how they're treated, I can tell you they are treated just like when I was a young girl, and you do this, and you do that. Right. I think they should -- it's gone back to the old way, the way -- when they first come in and start taking us over, and for a while it was going good and then all of a sudden the residential schooling come, and that's finish, and now they got to have something else to keep us -- and to have our...
See we're Inuit. And there's Innu. The Innu -- our -- and our people are dying off. The Innu are allowed to have so many caribou for their Elders. Our people -- like we're allowed to have -- they get it for the Elders. Our people are not allowed to (indiscernible) permanent, and now they're -- they're on low income they got to try to -- and if you look at the food in our stores they're in -- on the coast, they're old, that's, and I wonder why the government is saying by 20 what, there's going to be how many Aboriginals dead? I seen them dying, a little girl with ten-year -- six years old, her uncle, my -- that's my daughter-in-law told me, her uncles -- her little niece, little girl was six years old, had -- she kept -- they kept bringing her to the hospital for bad chest -- chest infection. They said, "Oh, just a cold." She was six years old. She died with TB. And before the -- the father could do anything about it, he was given a cheque for $4,000. I guess that -- I guess he signed the paper not to sue on.

And so people are done with TB now, and my mother was cut up with TB. She was experimented on, I believe, for two years, and you never heard of TB and all of a sudden my people are dying with TB, this day and age? And why? Like, why all of a sudden, right? So I'd like to see recommendations and child welfare being looked in. And
why our children, all of a sudden with -- when our
government -- like we're getting so much money, they say,
for preventing it, but I know from experience they do not
help the families.

My son is -- he's told, “Keep away from her.”
Now they -- like I said, his second lot is gone in --
second lot has gone into care. He got four kids in care
with two different women, and each time they said, “they're
not allowed together. Break up.” You know, instead of
saying okay, do...

He should -- they should have done that with
the first relationship because he's FA. He's adopted. I
had him adopted, and he's -- I know he's FAE. So instead
of working with him, they turned around and they just take
the kids and say -- they don’t work to you -- with you.
When they -- when he had his second little girl born,
because he had the first -- my first grandchild, the second
little one, they wouldn't even let her breastfeed her. She
wanted to, and they said, no. So I knew then forget it.
They're not even -- they're not even going to try to get
her back.

Because when I was working in -- in -- in
child welfare a mother even -- if even if we apprehended a
newborn, if they wanted to breastfeed we had to let them.
Now, they're not even allowed to do that. Yet the
government is paying money to teach them to breastfeed.

You don't even need to teach a puppy how to breastfeed. You don't have to teach animals. Why they going to -- why don't they spend money on the prevention?
And you know, that's money going into places where people is getting paid to help put our breast in a baby's mouth. When that should helping prevent the kids from going into care and putting supports for the family, not just saying, “Okay, you two got to keep away. Which one of yous of you wants the children?” And that's what happening to my son.

They want to know, okay, this one is not working, but really, and then they're trying to sneak around together because they want to be together, but they're told they're not allowed to be together.

So I think child welfare and social -- I think there needs to be a stop on our families and our girls having to live like little cheat -- and then be sent to the hospital with $20 a day to eat and -- and if they're not going to do that, I think they should cut off their insurance. They should have the same coverage as what they're -- they're giving to my people.

The -- they'll get their insurance cut off or they get -- or they up their -- up our people's -- like the medical with the social services. They either give -- I know back then I got quite a bit when I went on -- on
meetings. If they're going to get $75 a day -- the -- the patients who go to the hospital should get $75 a day. You know what I'm saying? They wouldn't have jobs if they didn't have people on assistance. And I think they need to remember that. Yeah.

And I think -- isn't that when they become social workers for child welfare don't they promise to make -- promise to do their best to do -- to help the families, but they don't. I think they really need to -- child welfare really needs to be looked in big time.

Oh, one more thing, one more. And where we were from Labrador, when the RCMP tried to coordinate the things for us, instead of we having to call and say -- like when my daughter was found in a bag, I heard -- I didn't -- I didn't hear from them. I called up and I said, “Is that true? My daughter was found in a bag?” And, “Can't tell you.” And I said, “I wants to know if my daughter was found in a bag,” because then I -- then I really freaked out. I thought oh God, she's cut up. They got her all cut up.

They had to go to a point -- the family was looking for a bag to try to fit -- fit herself in, so one of his sisters tried to go look for a bag so she could show me you didn't have to be cut up to be in there. So I think, especially where we're out the province, I think
they need to have more coordination with our police, so they could get, get and bring it to us or we could -- you know, they -- we -- they could tell us face-to-face, you know. They need to work more together from province to province. Like Loretta was murdered in Nova Scotia, but they wouldn't work together with the police that -- the RCMP that was in our community.

Not that I like the RCMP because another thing. I told you, said that was that. But another thing is after -- when my -- before my daughter got murdered my husband asked me -- I -- I was put on a sleeping pill because I -- me and she was dealing with my alcoholism. And they put me on a sleeping pill, and my husband was having a few beer and he said, “Mom, can you go buy me a six pack?” And I said, “No, I'm --” I -- I too tired I had my -- well, it was earlier, I had my sleeping pill, and so I called taxi.

But it was wore off, this was around eight o'clock because I was on-call till eight o'clock. I was charged for impaired. And I wasn't even drinking. And I pled guilty because I put that Loretta was helping me to plead not guilty and I was too -- because I was -- didn't know what to do, so she -- but after she was taken I needed the retainer money for to get my sister out to come to the court with me, so I plead guilty because I -- Loretta
wasn't there and I never had nobody to give me the courage to go through with it.

And he said, I drink seven to nine beer. I can't even drink three and I'm drunk. You know. So like there's another thing is we have to -- they lie. He lied. He lied about me. And they lie. They get away with it. And they lie. And I just want to put that in.

(Indiscernible) suicide as well.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Oh, and checking into suicides and suspicious deaths. There are -- there are a lot of -- a lot of deaths that seem really out of character and the police aren't doing proper investigations.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** And accidental (indiscernible).

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Yeah, or a ruled as accidental.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Oh, yeah, I have one more. Yeah, because when my niece committed suicide, there was six or seven -- six or seven of them that -- in that month or -- and when my niece -- when my cousin's little girl died in the -- in the -- in the foster care all they told her -- but that's how quiet our people are. And they do, they do introduce us as quiet people, and I'm hoping to take our people out, and not let them be quiet, not let them be scared to show them. People who know me, knew what
I was like. And they can be just like me. They don't have to be scared anymore.

**MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS:** Lots of suicides down there.

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Lots of suicides.

**MR. CLAYTON SAUNDERS:** When they have a suicide they don't report it like (indiscernible) you don't hear that on the news or radio. If you did it would be steady -- steady care (indiscernible) it's like that. It's like that. One person down there commits suicide look -- it's like two or three follows, you know. It might happen every -- once a -- once every year or something, or once every six months, but there's -- there's -- there's a lot of them. And it's -- it's young people too. Really young people. So I think that should be looked in pretty good.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** Do you want us --

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** Do you want to say anything else? Because I'm going to start talking again.

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I see that the qu’liq is starting to dry up as well. So I think it needs fuel and -- and everybody here does too.

Is there anything else you wanted to say?

**MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS:** We're good.

**MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS:** No, we're -- we're good.
COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Okay. I wanted to -- I don't have any other questions. I want to express my gratitude, and part of the -- what you've given us is a gift. A gift of knowledge. A gift of understanding. A gift of sharing with us and, and allowing us a window into what you've experienced in helping shine light on what needs to be done.

We've got some gifts that we want to give to you recognizing the gift you've given us.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And their courage too, so thank you.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Very much.

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: It's only her qualities, the Lord and God and He gives us.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You're not quiet, darling. You're taught to be humble. That's the pillar or foundation of our culture is humility. Right. And when we break off from being humble we're not being ourselves and that's why -- that's what -- that's a barrier for us.

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: And that's -- that's a gift Loretta gave for me learning from you people. If it wasn't for you people I wouldn't -- probably wouldn't be here today. And I thank you all because it's your people who gave us the courage. And it started off with Loretta in university -- coming -- I met the lady who, group she
MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: Mom.

MS. MIRIAM SAUNDERS: Yeah?

MS. DELILAH SAUNDERS: Can I go next, or...

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: Okay. So the gifts we -- we want to give, some are gifts from other communities and Nations we have some manittak, the wick for the qu’lıq, also some Labrador tea, and the matriarchs of Haida Gwaii for the last few months have been gathering Eagle Feathers from their territory to give as gifts to families and survivors who have spoken and shared, so we would like to give you these gifts now.

MR. JEFF WARD: Just as they're wrapping up with the gift giving, we just wanted to remind the next family is at 1:40, 1:40 is the next family, also lunch is being served in Goose Cap B, which is the room right next door. So if anybody is hungry, lunch is next door, and the next family be at 1:40, 1:40. Thank you.

Wela’liqo.

-- Exhibits (code: P1P04P0101)

Exhibit 1: Folder of electronic images displayed on monitor during the public hearing.

--- Upon recessing at 1:08 p.m.

--- Upon resuming at 1:59 p.m.

Hearing # 2
Witness: Monique Fong Howe

Heard by: Commissioners Qajaq Robinson & Michèle Audette

Commission Counsel: Fanny Wylde

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers: Catherine Martin, Louise Haulli, Skundaal Bernie Williams, Jane Meade

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Good afternoon, Commissioners. Before I present to you our next witness she asked Elder Cathy Marten to share a song and I would like to ask the audience to stand as she sings the song. Thank you.

--- OPENING SONG

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Migwetch. Thank you, Catherine. Commissioner Audette, Commissioner Robinson, before I introduce you to our next witness I will ask Mr. Zandberg, registrar, to swear in Monique Fong Howe, and she will give oath with an Eagle Feather.

MR. REGISTRAR: Good afternoon, Monique.

Good afternoon.

MONIQUE FONG HOWE, Affirmed:

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Thank you. So Commissioners, I would like to introduce you to Monique Fong Howe. She will be sharing her story as a survivor of different types of violence throughout her life, but she's here today showing us how resilient and strong she is.
So Monique, I would ask you to introduce yourself to the Commissioners. And what would you like to share this afternoon with the Commissioners?

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** Okay, hello. My name is Monique Fong Howe, and I'm a mother, and a grandmother. I'm also a survivor of violence, many forms of violence. And I want to share a little bit about my -- my history and how far I've come. And when I first walked up here and noticed all the empty chairs, and it was reminded to me that there's many women sitting around me even though they're not here physically. They're here with me. So that's very comforting for me.

I -- I thank for allowing me to come in and share with you and I hope that you'll be able to take some of it -- of my life and hopefully make it better for our children and our grandchildren.

I went to -- I heard about the inquiry, you know, through the news, and I noticed on Facebook one day that it was going to be held in Halifax. I was at work -- I work for the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, and I thought, I'm going to go over there. I just like -- on a whim, just decided to go over there and -- because I wanted to be supportive to -- if there was any women who were living with HIV or Hep C. I wanted to be supportive for them.
So I went there and I was not expecting to share my story at that time. Kind of caught me off guard, but it was -- it was -- it was time. I guess it was time that I -- that I do that. So I -- I -- they asked me if I would come in and talk to them and then I decided I would do that. And I talked for two hours. Sharing my life with these women that I'd just met. And it was very overwhelming because for a long time I have never -- I haven't shared my story.

So I know a lot of people, I’ve been living here in the Maritimes for about 30 years now, and many people see me in my role now as an advocate and a worker, but they don't know my -- my history. Why I decided to do the work that I do. So it's -- it's kind of strange for me to share with people who I know, my story, but I will do it.

So I was born in Saskatchewan, I'm Cree. And I've been here, like I said in Mi’kmaq territory for 30 years now. I'm married here. I started -- I started -- when I was very young my parents separated and divorced and from a lot of that trouble I had to take care of my brothers and sisters, like we all kind of took care of each other.

My father was working up in the -- up in Fort McMurray, so he was working. My mom was -- had left for
some time, and we stayed with my father until my mother, I guess got set up and then we split -- they split us kids up. There's four of us. And so that was when I was quite young, maybe about six or seven I guess. My youngest sister was a baby, maybe two years old. And so we -- we pretty well just had our own -- our own way of doing things with our family and we just kind of took care of each other until I moved in with my father, my step-father and my mother. And my two other siblings moved with my -- stayed with my father. Me and the youngest went with my mom.

During that time I -- it was very hard for me knowing that our family was not going to be together. The one, I think really good thing was that my step-father is still with us. We didn't have a lot of different men in our -- in our lives with our mom, so it was pretty consistent, so he -- he became like our father as well.

And when I was younger I -- I also experienced sexual abuse and the combination between that and my parents' separation caused me to have loss of my memory. So I don't really remember very much from -- like some families and some people can remember right from when they were a baby, their childhood, and I can't remember.

The -- the trauma has taken those memories from me, which was really hard because sometimes I just wanted to remember the good things about our family. You
know, so the fact that I couldn't remember it. Like I would remember like, bits and pieces of it, and sometimes I can -- you know, I'll be sitting and I'll -- I'll remember something, but I'm -- I'm -- it's been you know, it's -- a lot of my memories are gone.

When I was around -- I don't (indiscernible) young -- young person, I -- I started to experience sexual abuse and that was really hard for me to understand why that was happening. And living that life -- living that -- that story was -- was very difficult because I always believed that you know, your family is supposed to take care of you. There's no doubt in my mind my -- my abuser loved our family, but it was just very confusing for me.

So I guess from a young age I started to realize and -- and understand that I linked it -- a very unhealthy link -- linkage was that sexual abuse, or sexual, anything sexual meant love. So as I continued to -- to grow up, I lived a very promiscuous lifestyle and I lived a very unhealthy life. The abuse went on for -- for a while. It seems like forever. In my mind it seems like it happened for a long, long time. And it really messed me up. It really -- it really stole a lot from me.

I left home when I was about 13 years old and I went to go hang around the streets. Became -- I lived on the streets for many years. A lot of the people that I
hung around with then have either been murdered, been -- or
missing, or -- you know, died from drug overdoses. They're
gone. You know, and that was really -- that was our
reality you know, our, our street life was a reality that
people who -- who've never seen it or never lived it, don't
understand.

You know, like -- you know, I heard -- heard
earlier about you know, sleeping in parks, you know, I've
done that. I slept, you know, with people for a place to
live, for a place to stay, for food. But that is what
survival does, that's survival for you, right? You -- you
do what you need to do in order to continue to live and to
continue to survive.

I was very fortunate in -- in one aspect, I
had a street mother. And I haven't been able to find her
yet, but I wanted to thank her because she helped me learn
how to survive on streets when I was only 15, 14. That was
not the kind of life you ever want to see a young girl
living -- living in, and Mary (ph) really took good care of
me. You know, she helped me a lot. She guided me.

And I see that missing now with a lot of the
young girls on the street. I -- I see -- there's that
guidance missing, that caring, and that love. You see a
lot of girls on the street now and they're lost. You know,
if I could go and take each one of them home I would.
I still do that. I still talk to the girls on the street if I see a young girl working I go give her condoms, of course, because that's what I do. I do HIV education and prevention. I give them condoms and I talk to them and I tell them that they're loved because a lot of them don't feel that. A lot of them don't feel that love. I don't know what their stories are, but you can feel that pain from them. And sometimes that's all they just want is someone to acknowledge them. Someone to care about them. I know that's what I wanted.

So I grew up living on the street. Being involved in drugs. Being involved in drinking and partying. We hitchhiked all over the place, that's how we got around. We would hitchhike from Regina, to Saskatoon, to Edmonton, to Calgary, didn't matter where. We would always go. Me and my -- a couple of girlfriends, two of them are -- are gone now. One died from complications of a car accident. She was my best friend. We did everything together. She's my angel. Her name -- her name, Donna (ph) like she just was a good person. And the other girl, she committed suicide.

And that's another thing that we don't talk about. All the women that have killed themselves because of the violence. Because of the pain that they feel in their families. That's something we need to acknowledge.
Like those are women that are -- have given up, thinking that life is over because of their stories and their -- and their history. I felt like that many times. I think, so we would hang around. We would go all over the place and -- and it was -- it was always...

I always was in violent relationships when I was younger. It seems like the most violent men I was attracted to. And I would get lickings after lickings and live in -- live in fear all the time. I remember you know, being beat up with my young son in my arms.

My son wasn't always with me. I had him when I was 17 years old. For the first three years of his life he stayed with my sister and my -- I still call her my mother-in-law, they would take my son and take care of him when I was not able to, so I would see him maybe once a month, maybe -- whenever I could, like whenever I was sober. I would go see him. So he -- he had to grow up without me for the first three years because my drugs and my alcohol were a priority.

The violence that I experienced in my life has made me I think, more understanding to the women that I work with. A lot of them don't realize when I hear their stories, I hear myself, so when I was -- when I was younger and on the street it was very -- very difficult.

I remember seeing girls getting beaten up all
the time. Shooting up. Living that lifestyle. Always fearful of what was going to happen next. And I was scared even though I may not have acted scared, I was scared.

I remember going into bars and I used to be one who would shoot up all the women in the washroom, so my cousins, some of my cousins and friends were not very good people and they had threatened me that if I ever started shooting up when I was younger they would break my legs. And I truly believed them. So I didn't shoot up until I was older. Till I was about 18. But I was always the girl in the bathroom that would shoot the other girls up, so that was part of my role. I learned how to inject people with their drugs very young. Even though I was under age in the bar, it didn't seem to matter. No -- nobody seemed to matter that I was there and that I was so young, but that was a part of my role.

So from a very young age I learned -- I learned all these survival skills, I call them, like even though that -- like, you know, who wants to brag that they know how to shoot people up on drugs? So I started to -- I started to -- I always wanted a different life. I always wanted a different life for me and my son.

And even though I -- I remember the last time when I was in Saskatchewan, when I was younger, and still using and still drinking, and still being in violent
relationships, I went into the house for battered women, so I must have been around in my 20s, I guess. And my step-father and my mother moved here -- moved to Nova Scotia. And they came down to visit. I hadn't talked to my mother in a long time because she didn't -- of course, she didn't agree with what I was doing. She didn't like what I was doing. She knew I'd been on the street I think -- I know it was very shaming for her. I can't take back all that pain I know I caused my mother.

So my father, my step -- my step-father and my mother came down to Saskatoon and I was in the house for battered women then. And my step-father told me that I had one month. That he wasn't going to leave without me because he knew that I was in a bad place. He knew I wasn't taking care of myself. He knew that I was using drugs. I was -- by then full-blown injecting. Drinking every day. Putting myself at high risk for everything. And as I said, like, years went on and I would see more and more people go from being murdered, and -- and killed, and drug overdoses, and I wanted a different life.

So my -- my step-father came and told me I had a month. I kept saying, "No, I'm, I'm not going anywhere. I'm not going anywhere. I'm going to stay here." And as time went on, for that month, I realized that I needed to get away from there. So I phoned one of
the pawnshop guys that I knew, because with my life I knew
a lot of people and I asked him, I said, “Come and buy
everything that you -- that I have, and get me a ticket to
Halifax.” And he did. He took all my stuff and he gave me
a ticket. I know that I did not have anything worth any
kind of money, but I think he seen something -- the
potential of me living a different life and he gave me the
break that I needed.

My mother hardly spoke to me that month. But
my step-father kept telling me, you know, “You've got to
get out of here. I can't leave you here. You're going to
die.” So I packed up and I took my son and we moved to --
he was only three years old, and I had, you know, all
intentions of staying here for six months, and here I am 30
years later still here.

And I -- when I -- when I moved here one of
my boyfriends came from -- from Saskatchewan and he lived
with us. He had been in and out of jail again that's part
of that history that I had with men. They were violent.
They were in and out of jail. They were controlling. They
were possessive, you know. Get beaten just for looking at
someone you know, just terrible people.

And he came to live with us, and AJ (ph), my
son, was young, he was like four, five years old, and when
I was working that man was abusing my son. I trusted him.
And he took my son's spirit away from him. My son still struggles because of that. I have seven children. He's my oldest, and he's, he's the one who struggles the most. Because I was still using and drinking when he was young. My other kids not so much because I never had that life around them.

When I found -- I didn't even know he had done that to my son till years later. My son told me when he was in his teens, what happened. He got mad at me one time and he said, “You must have known,” and I didn't know. I knew what my son had went through because of what I had went through. And I blamed myself -- blame myself for trusting that person. I haven't seen him yet -- that man, but one day I know I'll see him and I'm going to tell him how I feel and what he's done to my son.

My son's going through that same cycle of going in and out of jail. But all I can do is pray for him and hope that he finds the help that he needs and guide him and most importantly love him.

So that man left, and I -- I got married to my first husband, and I had two more children, two more beautiful kids. During my relationship it was -- a lot of people would -- and I'm -- you know, we made it look so easy, married life, but it wasn't. I ended up leaving my marriage. And when I did leave my ex-husband would not let
me see my children for four months, including my oldest son, wasn’t even his child. During that time I tried to take my life because I couldn't be without. That was very hard being away from my kids.

He charged me with assault because he had grabbed me and I kicked him and he charged me with assault for kicking him. So I had a no contact order. I wasn't allowed to go to my house. I wasn't allowed to see my children. And that was not a good -- not a good thing. It really hurt, and that's how he wanted to hurt me. He wanted me to feel pain. And I felt it. I fought in court because -- and I lost. He had full custody of my children because of the assault. I couldn't see them all the time. I had to pay him child support. But that was all. Was it worth leaving? It was worth leaving. But it was not worth my kids being taken.

I see some of the pain still with Michael (ph), Megan (ph), but I know that they know I love them, and I know that they may not know the whole story because I never wanted them to feel that stuff.

But we don't -- that's another thing we don't talk about. We don't talk about how people use children as a way to cause pain. A way of controlling people to make them do what they want, so they dangle your child. That's got to stop. We got to start listening to women. We got
to start believing them and what they're saying. It's important that we believe them. If they're saying that something's happening in the home and that they have to leave -- don't give the power to the people, the abusers, don't do that. Don't let that happen. Don't let that continue to happen. There's too many of our kids living -- living in homes, and with people who just use them, and that's not fair. It's not -- it's not fair to them.

I left my -- I left my husband, and people would always accuse me of, you know, I -- soon after -- soon after I met my current husband, we had been working together and people used to always accuse us of fooling around, but we never did. We just -- we -- we fell in love. And we're still together. And he helped me during that time. He helped me when I didn't have my kids. He helped me. And he helped take care of me. I know that I trigger him sometimes.

After I finished doing this speak in Halifax I got triggered real bad and there was days where I wouldn't get out of bed and he would -- he'd say, "Honey you can't do this. You can't lay in bed. You got to get up. You got other kids that you got to take care of.

You've got to continue moving on." He gave -- he helped me see the strength inside of me that I didn't know I had. And I -- and I thank him for that. I'm very grateful for
my husband.

I've been working in HIV for many, many years about 19, 20 years, helping women, be an advocate. I was telling my girls today, I said, “You know I could speak in front of hundreds of people, but doing this is very different.”

So I met my husband and we end up having a daughter, Emily (ph). Emily is my little angel. She's -- she was a sick baby. She would always be in the hospital and I was working for an agency here in the Atlantic and I had to go, one of our clients of our agency passed so I went to her community and I became -- I just spent time with them 'cause I knew her. Joslyn (ph) was an amazing woman, and she -- she went through a lot. You know, she died of AIDS complications at home and I went there and I took, you know, I helped the family and I helped take care of them.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: If I may, Monique. I have a few questions for you, and you give me permission. I would like to ask you when you were abused as a child did you tell it to anyone in your family? Your parents?

MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: I didn't tell any of them because I was scared to tell them. And I -- I didn't even know if they would believe me anyway. I ended up telling my mother years -- years later, and she really
didn't take me seriously, you know, she didn't -- like, she didn't. I don't know if she really believed me, or she wanted to believe me because it was one of her -- it was one of her family members, one of our family members, so I think she didn't really want to acknowledge it.

And you've got to remember too that my -- my mother was in residential school, so I think it -- every -- when I told her it probably triggered her from when she was in school. I remember one time I had to do my, I had to tell -- when she went to court for the residential school she wrote down her story. She said, we need to type it up for her. She never talked about being residential school. She never talked about it at all with us, and I remember she -- I was reading, and it took me like three hours to type it up reading all the stuff that they did to her. You know, they used to cut her open with a scalpel, across her back. She had the scars across her back. Who does that to people?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Can you tell me how it was to -- what was the environment in the home with your parents and your siblings?

MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: What was that, sorry?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: What was the environment, home, when you were a child?

MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: It was, like I said,
my parents had separated when we were young and I remember
-- I do remember it being good. But again, you know,
because my parents hid a lot. My father drank a lot. He
was always gone out, and he was always working, or
drinking, or partying. My mother was not like that. My
mother, as far as I remember, she was not, she always --
always at home taking care of us. I don't really remember
her being, drinking. I remember sitting outside of bars
waiting for my father, with my chips and my -- bag of chips
and my pop, you know. Sitting out there waiting all day
for him to come out.

My father was an alcoholic. It's not
something that he would have done intentionally to us. I
think my father was never a mean drunk. He was always
happy, happy drunk. Was happy and singing songs and we
never got any violence from our parents.

So when my mom -- when I told my mom she
didn't really react that way. And then when I read her
story it made sense. She didn't teach us about sex. She
didn't teach us about protecting ourselves. She didn't
teach us what's good touch, what's bad touch.

You know. She -- she got taught something
totally different about being in residential school and
listening, and I -- I -- my mother now has dementia. I
think that it's because of all the abuse she went through
when she was young in that school. She goes away. I want her back. I want her back. I remember this one time I went to go see her when I went home to Saskatchewan and she called me baby. That was the first I had ever heard her call me baby. She was always so prim and proper. She never ever talked to us like that. It was just -- we knew she loved us.

But now she goes away, and she doesn't make sense, and I'm grateful for my sisters and siblings, they take care of her. She's in a home. Because they can't, my step-father has a hard time taking care of her. She gets delusions. She thinks people are coming into the house. My step-father called me one time and said, “Your mother made supper for us at five o'clock in the morning.”

He -- she went to go wake him up, and she said, “Come and eat supper.” And he was saying, “No, darling it's like five o'clock in the morning.” And she goes, “No, it's not. It's suppertime.” She said, “Go get the kids, they're playing outside.” And my father said, “Well, who? Who's outside?” And he said, “Monique, Andrew, and Yvette (ph),” and so he went to the door and he played along and he said, “Okay, everybody come inside for supper.”

She had made us all our plates, to feed us, but we weren't there. We were already grown up and gone, but in her mind we were still those little kids, and she
was sitting there watching, waiting for us to finish eating our supper. Telling, giving us heck. Saying that we wouldn't get dessert if we didn't eat our supper. We weren't there, so my father just played along with it. So we have to do that. We have to play along with it, with her.

But I think that trauma that she experienced when she was young has made her go somewhere else, and there's not, like I've been looking for people to help me make that linkage between trauma and dementia. I've met one lady who's doing her PhD, who's looking, and exploring that. And I'm going to work with her because I need to know where my mom is, and I need to help other moms who are gone because of that. And that makes me angry knowing that they took her -- her childhood away from her.

My aunties and uncles went to residential school. They have similar horrible stories.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Can I can you, Monique, how -- why did you leave home? You said that you left home, you were about 13 years old and you ended up on the streets. Can you tell me how did you end up in the streets? Why did you leave home? Did something happen?

MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: Well, because of the sexual abuse that I went through and not really feeling like anybody would help me or, I -- I -- I left. And I
didn't want to look back. I wanted to just escape from all of that pain and all of that stuff. I don't know what you want to call it. I just wanted to run and get away from it and it just took me to a deeper level of sexual violence. A deeper level of violence that I was not expecting. You know, many years -- many of those years being on the street I was raped a number of times. Drugged, raped.

And I tell this story today because I never want that -- my daughters and my granddaughters to ever go through that. I'm very protective over my daughters. Probably too protective. But I pity anybody who comes and hurts them.

But -- so, when I -- so I met my husband, and I was working here in the Maritimes, and doing work, and I went to spend time with the Paul (ph) family, and when we lost Joslyn they were very welcoming and they've actually adopted me into their family.

Joslyn, when she was -- when they had her funeral home -- like when they took her to the funeral home they told the family that had to be a closed casket and they -- their mom -- her mom didn't get to say good-bye to her. So she said, “I want you to open the casket, and I want to see my daughter, and I want to say good-bye to her.”

So they opened the casket.

And they had -- the family had brought
outfits and a blanket for Joselyn to be wrapped in. So they wanted to see what clothes they put on her and when they lifted up the blanket she was wrapped in a plastic bag and she was naked. She wasn't dressed.

Just because she was HIV positive they thought they could get HIV from her after she was gone. That was very hard to know that our women are, are not even respected after they're gone. It really -- it really hurt me knowing that people could be so fearful of people living with HIV. And we just provided as much support to the family as we could. But that was very harmful. That was very hurtful. I remember we went to go back there to visit the family one time. This is hard.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Monique...

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** Then we went to -- we went to the community, we were driving back, me and one of my co-workers, and we were driving back, we got to Nova Scotia and -- and he was driving and this car passed us, this purple car, funny how you remember smallest of details. This purple car passed us and I notice that there was a man and a woman in the car afterwards, but when they passed us they were driving really fast and I told my -- my co-work, I said, “They're driving really quickly, that's crazy.”

And all of a sudden we seen the girl's head
pop up and he made a comment of, “That's probably why he
was driving fast 'cause he was getting, you know, sex from
this young girl, or this girl that he was with,” and I just
thought that was weird observation that he made. And he
said, “I'm going to drive faster, I'm going to pass them.”
I said, “You're driving, go ahead.” So we drove past them
and when we passed him he grabbed my head, put his -- put
my head down to his groin, and this is a man I trust. He
was in the delivery room with me with my daughter.

I couldn't believe he just did that. He held
my head down and I couldn't get up. I couldn't believe he
was doing this to me. Here I am in my 40s getting still --
you know, still that dirtiness. I felt all of those times
come up. I tried to get my head up, but he wouldn't let my
head up right away. He held my head down. And I told him,
finally I just yelled, I said, “Let my head up.” He let my
head up and he -- all he did was laugh at me. Telling me I
looked funny. I was in disbelief. I didn't hardly say
anything to him.

We came to this town and I asked him, I said,
“Do you mind if we pull over for a sec?” And he said,
“Okay.” Because I was scared. I had known his man for
many -- many years. He was my best friend. And I was
scared to death of him. I shut down. I felt myself shut
right down. I felt myself shut down. And I -- we pulled
over and I, I jumped out of the car and my, I was trying to call my husband and he always falls asleep early, so he wasn't there and I called my sister and I told her what happened and I said cried and I was upset and I said, “I just got to get out of here. I got to get away from him.” I said, “I feel like leaving him here.” My sister said, “Just leave him.”

And you know, and I'm the type of person that wouldn't leave him. I took him back to Halifax with me knowing what he'd done to me. I went and found him in there. Gathered myself up, went inside the store and I said, “Okay, let's go. And I'm driving.” And I said, “I'm turning on my music and I'm drowning everything out.” And all he did was laugh and make fun of me.

And it was very hard to drive home knowing what he had done to me. It was hard driving home with him because he was trying to make jokes and he was trying to -- told me how funny I looked. Anyway, I drove -- I drove home. I dropped him off. As soon as I dropped him off I started crying, and crying, and crying until I got home. And I crawled into bed with my husband. I told him, I told him, “I just need you to hold me. I don't want you to do anything. I just want you -- I just to hold me.” He did. He held me and he said, “Let's go back there. Let's go over there. I want to see him.” And I said, “No.”
I went back to work and I phoned the board and told them what happened and they didn't support me. They didn't -- I asked them. I needed time off because they weren't going to give him a suspension. I had to ask them, pretty well beg them to give him like a suspension. They suspended him for three months with pay and that to me was just, that to me was just a -- I couldn't believe that they -- we were doing work with women who are sexually violated all the time, who were positive, who faced family violence all the time, and they're supposed to be leaders in the community and this is how they treat leaders (sic) -- like, as leaders this is how they treat women. I was so disgusted.

I ended up leaving my job and I got a text message, “Thank you for your work.” After working there for 14 years that's what I got. A text message.

My partner, many people were encouraging me to charge him and I couldn't. I was scared, even though I knew he couldn't hurt me anymore than what he'd done. I couldn't charge him. I tried one time to go to the Halifax Police and they said, “You have to go to the RCMP office and you have to report it there, and they have to deal with it.”

So my husband kept asking me, you know, “Do you want to charge him? Do you want to charge him?” It
took me six years, and I finally -- took me that long to go in and tell them what happened -- what happened to me. And the cop, the RCMP was just, “Do you realize what you're going to do to his life if you charge him?” And I'm like, looking at this police officer and I'm thinking, what he's done to -- what I'm going to do to his life? This man was a social worker. This man did -- worked in the community with young people. And they were more worried about what was going to happen to him than they were about me and the trauma that it caused me.

And I told my husband, “See, I knew that they would not take me seriously.” Just like the board did not believe me. They told me, “Get over it. He was joking.”

I've seen one of them since I left my job. And he told me that he believed me and that he was sorry. I felt so good when he told me that. I thought one person believed what I said. The cops didn't believe me. They investigated -- because it happened so long ago they still investigated and I told you I know what he's going to do. I know. I told them exactly what he was going to say. I told them exactly what he was going to do. And that I believed nothing would ever happen.

But I said, “I need to come here, and it took me this long. I need to tell you what happened. And I need the truth to be out there.” They ended up not
charging him. They ended up just dismissing it.

So he worked -- he worked with -- back at the agency, after I left the position, as executive director. They hired him back after I left to do -- continue doing that job. How messed up is that? Knowing when he had done to me. They still hired him back.

I had -- didn't talk to him for a long time. He ended up committing suicide. I still hurt because of that. No matter what he had done he was still a person. He still had people who loved him. And I guess that just shows the kind of person I am, right? I still cried for him when he died. I still -- there's days where I still miss him because he was my best friend. But that's -- he's gone now. And he can never hurt anybody like that again.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Can you tell me, as we were preparing for this moment you said that when you moved to Halifax you changed your lifestyle. You became sober. Can you share with the Commissioners what triggered that decision? That life changing decision in your life?

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** Probably about a year-and-a-half after I moved here I had been going through a lot of the DTs and a lot of the withdrawal from the drugs and the alcohol. I was going to school at the friendship centre and I was -- I had a lot of really supportive people up round me, Noel (ph), Shirley (ph), Gordon (ph), and they
-- they kept encouraging me to you know, get in -- finish
my grade 12, and to get sober, and so I decided -- I
decided to quit drinking. And I've been sober now for
what? Twenty-eight years, 27 years.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** What keep -- what keeps you
going in that lifestyle? In that sober life?

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** Well, a lot of tears.
A lot of counselling. I went to counselling -- I went
counselling -- for the first two years I went every week
and I -- I don't even know how I managed to pay for that.
I don't -- I don't -- can't even remember, but I went to
counselling every week for two years, and then the third
year I went every -- once every two weeks, and I worked
through that pain and I worked through that abuse, and I --
as I went on I got stronger and I realized that I had so
much more to offer.

Mainly because I was trying to -- I wanted to
-- whenever I go home to Saskatchewan I go downtown and I
think about all those people that I knew that are gone, and
I walk and I pray for them. I used to always think -- I
was telling Andrea (ph), I used to think, “Why did I get
out and they didn't? Why did I live and they didn't?” I
believe that, that's part of the reason why I'm here. When
I think my friends like Valerie (ph) and Donna, Shirley,
Ursula (ph)-- one -- one of my friends was found beheaded
in the downtown Eastside. One of the girls that we knew. I go back and I remember those -- those women, and my friends and I think I got to continue life.

And as time goes on and my children are getting older and I'm becoming a grandmother I continue on my work because of that.

This month has been crazy hard. My father got diagnosed with stage four cancer. My grandchildren got apprehended. My daughter-in-law went missing Thursday. They found her Saturday, so she's safe. I don't know, sometimes where that strength comes from. I honestly don't know because right now I don't feel strong.

I'm sharing this story because of my friends who didn't make it. A lot of people that know me in this room have never heard my story. They just see me, how I am now. They see me as sober, been married for, with my partner for 16 years. I've got seven children. They see my life now. They don't know how I've come here, and I was really scared of that today. I was scared that I would lose friends because of what I'd tell them today. But I know -- I know that I just have more -- more to do. More work to do.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** I believe also Monique, that you would like to share with the Commissioners some recommendations and suggestions.
MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: Part of -- part of my work -- part of my work I do -- I work with women who are HIV positive, and I work for CAAN, and I’m very grateful that they have not given me a hard time for being here, but I also sit on a number of committees and boards, and like I said, when I sit is in those committees and boards I think of the women, and I think of the people that can't be here with us anymore.

I think of the transwomen who get murdered because people find out that they're trans. People find out that they're HIV positive. And I don't hear people all the time acknowledging them. At CAAN what we did was we invited the transwomen into our circle, into our women's circle because we wanted them to feel like they belonged because they do belong with us. And that was a really powerful ceremony when we invited them into our circle.

I want to -- one of our -- one of our documents that we use still today that was developed in 2009, it's not there. I'll give it to you later. It was, a research project called: Our Search for Safe Spaces. And it talks about the link between HIV and sexual violence.

So one of the recommendations is culturally and gender safe HIV health services. We need a place where women can feel safe without having to worry about their
story. That where they can feel -- they can walk into the
door and they can feel not judged.

We need increased awareness by HIV and
healthcare providers of the role of violence in Indigenous
women's lives. We need women to be believed. We need them
to be heard. We need them to be accepted. We need more
opportunities like this where you can learn from their life
stories.

We know that there's many women that when
find out they're HIV positive some of the families don't
want to have nothing to do with them. They're kicked out
of the reserve. They're kicked out of families. We can't
do that. We can't do that to them.

We need culture appropriate and gender
specific counselling. We need that.

You know, like even with what's going on with
the, with this inquiry, one of the things that happened to
me was I was triggered big time the last time I met with
Andrea and Fanny, I was like -- I was really messed up for
about a week. I really shut down. I put -- like I was
telling you earlier, I had put this big wall around me and
my husband just let me live like that for a little while.
He just knew that I needed my space. But he said, “You
know, you should go to counselling. You should get back in
there and -- or go to ceremony.” So that's important that
we -- we don't just walk away from here, leaving us raw.
Not that that would happen, but you know like there's -- we
need to make sure that the women know and the families know
that they're not going to be denied counselling by FINIB,
or by agencies that they should be able to have counselling
paid for, and that they're taken care of. That's really
important to me.

They should provide opportunities for women
to help themselves and help one another. You know like,
even -- even here you can feel the energy. I was telling
Andrea, "You can feel the energy. When you came into the
community when I drove into the community yesterday you
could feel the power here." We need to continue that.

This is only one community out of, you know,
endless across Canada. We need our women to feel that
power no matter where they are. And that it's a safe place
to do so.

There was a statement made by one of the
ladies that says, "Violence makes women vulnerable to HIV
and HIV makes women vulnerable to increased violence." We
know that there's a lot of women who face violence when
they become HIV positive. There's a lot of women living in
fear. We need to make sure that they know that there's
help and support for them.

For those -- for women who prefer not -- not
to go to counselling, but maybe through ceremonies, one of the things that FINIB could do is to recognize the need for healing ceremonies, and getting to healing ceremonies, so that they pay for the mileage or -- or getting the Elders to them or them getting to Elders, so we need FINIB to recognize that there's more -- there's other ways than just mainstream therapy and counselling that -- I have -- you know, around me right now many women -- you know, strong women and healing -- healing women, who can provide more to me than a lady sitting across from me with a PhD. And we need FINIB to realize that that's something that's valuable and maybe the inquiry can make that happen; let's hope.

Mandatory trauma informed care training in the government. You know, going through your agencies and seeing what could trigger a woman or a man who's faced violence in their past. What are things that are around the room that could trigger a person. How do you make it safer for them, how do you make it more open for them to -- to share.

I went to -- we had a -- a conference this past summer. A lot -- in September, one of the ladies told us there's 275 Indigenous women in prison right now, 70 women, Indigenous women, in healing lodges. A lot of those women have faced violence in their past, through family violence, sexual violence, and what are we doing them women
that are in the prisons? Are we providing them with services and programs that can help them begin their healing journey? Are there Elders in the community who understand that relationship between violence and them being incarcerated?

That's really important for us to acknowledge and have people in the prisons who are going to be trained who can -- who can help women and men through that. The Elders in the prisons are essential, right, to the healing. You know, I know that there's sweat ceremonies in the prisons, we can't -- we can't let them take that away from -- from our people who are inside. And remember PS -- post traumatic stress disorder is a reality. And we need more programs to address that in our communities. I live with post traumatic stress disorder every day. I cope with it in my own way.

But I -- I -- I would like for more people to understand what it can do to you. How sometimes I can't get out of bed because of what I've lived through. It's not because I'm lazy. Not because I don't want to work. It's because I just get stuck in those thoughts.

More -- really important, we need to be believed. I think that if I was believed when I was younger. If I was believed by the police officers. If I was believed by my work. Things would have been different.
I know we talk a lot about reconciliation and we talk about healing. We need to start within the government as well when it comes to healing. I just want to share one final story. I went to -- I was in Toronto when Stephen Harper apologized. My husband was in meetings and I was -- I went to Tim Hortons. I was sitting -- sitting in there waiting for him -- for the day to end, there was of course, it was all over the front page news, Stephen Harper apologizes. A lot of controversy. And I was sitting there, and there was these two ladies sitting not far from me, these two ladies who worked for the government, I seen their government passes.

And I -- minding my own business and then they -- you know, they started talking and I could hear what they were saying. They said, "What more do they want? You know, they're getting the apology. What more do they want?" And they just kept on and on about how we get free education. We get free housing. We get -- and I'm sitting there and I'm getting really upset. So I stand up and I go and talk to them and I tapped them on the shoulder and I said, "You women should be more careful about what you're saying and who can hear."

I said, "If my mother-in-law and my mother were here they'd be ashamed. They'd be crying. You would traumatize them all over again because of what they
experienced in those school -- in those schools.” I said, "Here you are sitting here just acting like it's no big
deal, but my mother would be upset.” I said, “And that
would hurt me. It hurts me now. Thinking about what
you're saying, you're just dismissing.” I told them, I
said, “My mom used to get cut. You think apology is going
to take away that scar from her? No, it's not.”

I didn't yell at them. I didn't curse at
them. I just told them, “Be careful, your words hurt
people.” And I said, “As government employees you should
know better. You should know better than to hurt people.
You are representing the government. You work for us.”
They didn't know what to say to me at first. They just
looked at me. And then guess what they said? “I'm sorry.”
I said, “How ironic. You girls are telling me you're sorry
and you're complaining about this.” I said, “So please, be
more aware of what you say and who is around.” And I went
and sat back down, finished my lunch and I left. And I
thought -- I walked out and I cried because I thought about
my mom and my mother-in-law and all my aunties. And I
said, “I hope I did you good.”

So we need to make sure that that happens.
We need to make sure that the government understands that
this is not just a word about reconciliation. This is not
just a word about making these band-aid solutions. This is
about people's lives.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: And I believe, Monique, that you would like to share two documents with the Commissioners. Can you explain what are those?

MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: So one of the documents is: Indigenous Women HIV and Gender Based Violence, it was done by the Canadian Legal Network. They support women and men who have been charged because of their -- not disclosure sometimes, and different situations. Another one is just the stats on HIV and Indigenous people in Canada.

Again, the more knowledge we have -- and I don't have the other document right now, the research document that I was talking about earlier: Our Search for Safe Spaces. I wanted to give you a copy that too, and those are available through me.

But I -- I want to thank you for listening to me. And I want to thank them for being here. And I want to thank my mom for giving me life. So thanks.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Thank you, Monique.

I will ask -- I will leave with the -- if the Commissioners have questions or any comments, I will invite you to do so.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. There is a bird. We found it. Merci, (speaking native language)
thank you.

And last night when I was saying good-bye, or good evening to the families and survivors at the supper I had the privilege to sit beside you for a moment -- short -- too short I found, but -- and when I came here and I saw you in this room, I said, we were meant to be.

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** M'hm.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And I'm so blessed, so honoured, so thank you, thank you. And you know, when a mother says, “I think I'm overprotecting my girls.” I'm a mom too, and I'll -- I don't think we do. Fanny is a mom too. Many women here are mothers here. In the world that we're living, and in this country, like Commissioner Robinson said in her opening remark, it seemed like there's two Canada --

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** M'hm.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** For our Canadian sisters and the Indigenous women it's not a same. Many of you, many of us don't feel safe, so it's okay that we want to be over protective. But also what I -- I see in you, it's the -- the strength of many women that we met so far across Canada; amazing warriors like you. The one I have in mind and in my heart is Rachel (ph), Rachel in Winnipeg. A strong woman. Strong. And I heard her voice through you, and I can hear you when I'm listening what she
Monique Fong Howe

gave me, you know, the -- the gift, and I see that out east
you're that voice too.

Your own -- your own voice and we -- we are
our own voice, so Rachel was one of them and you are the,
the one that is telling me that the strength often we don't
feel it. We don't see it, but it's there. We block, but
there's something that is pushing us back for our girls or
our son.

And there is lots of recommendation. I know
I tried to take, wrote them down but we have technology
that will bring exactly what you said to us, and like we
said this morning, some recommendations can be already in
action --

MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: M'hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: -- we believe,
in this country. We don't need to wait a final report.

MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: That I'm very
transparent. But we want to make sure also that we will
bring what you said in this report, and I have to say the
work that you want to do for your mom about what -- her
trauma and the result today -- you have all my respect --
all my respect, and I hope we'll stay in touch.

MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE: M'hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: That you tell
me, or you share with me where are you with this, and I have to say to conclude I -- it's always one of my question, what help you do change another path? What made you the woman that you are today? And I know in your truth you're telling us that there is lots of cause, systemic cause.

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** M’hm.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** You know, and many of us across Canada don't want to say, or denounce what this man, or those men did to us.

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** M'hm.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** What -- what gave you that strength that day, that's it. I have to say it?

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** Ceremony, you know, love that I have, like, that I've gotten from different people. My children. My grandchildren. I'm going to get them. I know I'm going to get them. We're applying for custody of my grandchildren. That was one of the things my grandmother always had us -- a bunch of us kids at her house ever summer. I told my sister the other day, I said, “My -- our grandmother set us up so that we'd always take our grandchildren.” She taught us that from a very young age, always take care of your grandchildren. So I'm going to get them.
But I think one of the -- the main things, is
going back home and walking those streets again, that's
what made me strong. That's what makes me continue going
on this path that I'm on now. Hearing the stories of the
woman that I work with. They lift -- they lift you know,
you know, they give you so much strength. I try to give that back to
them all the time.

I'm a true believer in giving love, even to
the men who hurt me. I pray for them all the time. I
don't blame that. I just hope that they get healed. I
hope that -- who knows their life story. They could have
been abused in their life. I don't know.

So I'm just going to continue to pray. That
was one thing that my grandparents always taught us was
prayer. My grandfather was a very traditional man. My
grandmother used to make us do our rosary eight o'clock
every night. We learned to respect both ways, and that's
what I think has really kept be going, was knowing that I
had that Creator's love in my heart, God's love in my
heart, that I needed to continue it on.

So when I think about how I've made -- made
it through -- those are the main ways, remembering, never
forgetting what I've gone through, always praying and
always pray for the people that hurt you. Always pray for
them. It's hard at times. At times I did not want to pray
for him. For them, but I did because I can't carry that anger. I don't want to.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Well, to conclude on my end, it's -- I have to say that you said, “Thank you for listening.” Well, I have to say thank you for you for opening to us and sharing to us. And also educating, if you were saying in my -- over here my bubble, what I -- how I see educating in capital letter, very big. Those two women who worked for the Federal government, instead yelling at them or being mad you shared them your truth, your belief, and how it should be and that's what I say for me to my girls, you know, if you want to build bridges with the -- we have allies, we have Canadian, we have women with us that believe that if we want to make that change it's by educating, sometimes it's --

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** Yeah.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** -- but you did it so well so you're teaching me too. Merci beaucoup.

Thank you.

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** I want to thank you as well and I want to ask a question, thank you so much for -- for sharing with us and the recommendations that -- that you shared. I'm thinking you know, you talk about going back home and walking the streets and there's still so many women there. How -- how do we reach them? How?
It's -- you -- you had -- your -- your --
your step-father, you had -- and your convictions, what are
some steps we, as service providers, as friends, as
neighbours, as a community, can do to help women take those
steps that they need to take?

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** Talk to them, go to
them. You're going to meet them, you know, through harm
reduction. Philosophy is meeting people where they're at.
So if it means you walking the street, you know, we -- we
-- sometimes when we go have conferences in B.C. we go down
to the downtown Eastside, we see people, we talk to them.
We acknowledge them. You know, peer mentorship is amazing.
You have, you know, many people out there who will, who
will work with people.

I remember this young man one time. I was
working in the prisons doing workshops, and he told me, he
said, “Monique, when I get out of jail use me.” He said,
“Give me the information. Give me the needles, and I will
meet you somewhere, and I will give out that information
because they trust me.” If they -- if -- yeah, if you walk
up to some girls on the street they're going to be looking
at you, like, “Okay, why are you coming over here looking
at me like this?” Right.

But once they see why you're there, and once
they feel why you're there, if you're going there with the
right intention they're going to feel that from you and
they're going to want to listen to what you have to say.

You know my -- my -- my deceased mother-in-
law, Maddy, she -- I never got to meet her, but I hear so
many good stories about her, about her talking with women
and her really representing women, listening to them, and
figuring out ways, if it meant you know, fundraising for
years to get a women's -- she started the Native Women's
Resource Centre in Toronto. There's a house built for her,
Maddy Howe (ph), Harper-Howe (ph). I think it's Maddy
Harper House (sic), yeah, in Toronto.

She really got down to the ground level of
helping people so you know, meeting people where they're at
is number one, and continually to do this. You know, make
it so that the women feel welcome to come here and share.
Don't make it -- don't make it so that they can't. You
know, having childcare provided, having Elders, having
people that they know in the community, yeah. So there's a
lot that you can do. It's just a matter of -- of you know
meeting them where they're at.

COMMISSIONER QAjaq ROBINSON: Thank you. I'm
Michèle’s translator sometimes. I won't try and speak
French.

As a -- as an expression of our gratitude for
the gift of -- of -- of your experience, your knowledge,
and for the time you've spent with us we want to extend a gift from us and -- and our team to you. Included are Eagle Feathers from the matriarchs of the Haida Gwaii Nation who gathered to give to families across the country as well. The seeds --

**MS. MONIQUE FONG HOWE:** Thank so much. It means to me so much.

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Also, a gift of seeds to represent new life and growth. And I'm going to stop talking now.

--- **CLOSING SONG**

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** So Commissioners, I will ask to adjourn this hearing.

**COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON:** Yes, hello? We'll stand down for a bit, ten, ten minutes, and then we'll reconvene with the next family, thank you.

--- **Exhibits (code P1P04P0102)**

Exhibit 2: PDF of “Indigenous Women, HIV and Gender-Based Violence,” published by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, March 2017 (28 numbered pages)

--- Upon adjourning at 3:44 p.m.

--- Upon resuming at 4:21 p.m.

Hearing # 3

Witness: Rebecca Moore

Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette

Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers: Catherine Martin, Louise Haulli, Skundaal Bernie Williams, Jane Meade, Katy McEwan

Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Do I have to stand up?

MS. JENNIFER COX: No.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Okay.

MS. JENNIFER COX: I'll just hand you the microphone to you.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: And then I'll just talk with it.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Once -- once -- once you're finished with (indiscernible) you might want to talk, right:
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible)

MS. JENNIFER COX: -- and then

(indiscernible).

Bryan, whenever you're ready.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

(Indiscernible) where's the Feather?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right there.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And the red box. Okay, all right.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So this is Rebecca Moore.

And Rebecca's come to tell her personal story to the National Inquiry of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

So Mr. Registrar.

And lift up your microphone.

MR. REGISTRAR: Okay, good afternoon, Jennifer, welcome. I understand you wish to affirm with the Eagle Father.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M'hm.

MR. REGISTRAR: Okay. Good.

REBECCA MOORE, EAGLE FEATHER

MS. JENNIFER COX: And sitting beside Rebecca is her sister, Sarah (ph), who also may speak to the inquiry, so we can have her also sworn, please.

MR. REGISTRAR: Okay, good afternoon, Sarah.
SARAH MOORE, Affirmed:

MS. JENNIFER COX: So Rebecca -- yeah, it's quite loud.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So if you want to just start to tell your story and maybe we'll start with a couple of questions from me.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Okay...

MS. JENNIFER COX: The first question that I would can you is, where are you from? Where were you born?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I'm from Halifax, Nova Scotia. I was born and raised in Halifax. I'm a member of Pictou Landing First Nation.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. And what family do you belong to?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: The Cope (ph) family, yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And where -- did you live in Pictou Landing at any time during your lifetime? No.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: No.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So you always lived in the city?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.
MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M'hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And your family members, did any of them attend residential school?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah, my grandmother was a survivor.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Of the...

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Shubenacadie Residential School.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M'hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so I'd like to you tell the Commissioner what your childhood was like, so starting from when you were little, who you lived with and what it was like at home for you when you were a young girl.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Okay. Growing up I lived with my whole family; so mom, father, sisters, and mostly raised by my grandmother, where my parents worked full-time, and stuff. My mother ended up leaving us when I was about ten years old. And she left the family to go -- like, party basically, and so we wouldn't see her for months at a time; things like that. And my dad was still working full time and so we didn't really see much of our parents after that. Just our grandmother and then she
passed away when I was 15. M'hm.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** So up until the age of 15 what kind of role did your grandmother play in your life? What kind of things would she do for you?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Everything. So my grandmother was basically the closest thing we had to a disciplinary. She was the only person who made sure that we had like, clothes and things for school. She was the only person that we had to disappoint; do you know what I mean? She was the only person that made sure that we were fed and -- and taken care of, so, m'hm.

And I was also really close to her too, so like, in her last years I would make sure that she had everything she needed. Like, you know, I would do -- I would take her blood sugar, give her her insulin needles. Her hair, foot massage. Always visit her in the hospital every day if she was there, that kind of thing, so we were very close. M'hm.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** So you have a sister that's sitting beside you, Sarah.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Yeah.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And how many other siblings do you have?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** I have two other sisters, so there's four of us all together.
MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M'hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And did -- so when your grandmother passed what was life like for you?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: When our grandmother passed away, it was almost like -- like, things got really rough after that. Things were rough before that, but they just got worse after that. I would say our childhood was very great -- good up until about the time my mother left and then things started getting difficult there. And -- because when she went, she went and partied, and she partied with these like, violent type of people.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Um-hum.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: And stuff so, there was that. And then -- so after my grandmother passed it felt like our family was almost hit by like -- like -- I don't know. We went through a lot of stuff after that time. It was just difficult. We didn't have our main support person around anymore.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Um-hum.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: And almost felt like -- like an orphan, but not. Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. So during that period of time when your -- after your parents split up, I think you said -- how old were you when they split up?
MS. REBECCA MOORE: I was about ten.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: They got -- their divorce was finalized when I was about 12.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah. And --

MS. JENNIFER COX: And after they split who did you live with?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Our dad.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: We had a choice, through the divorce we had a choice of whether we wanted to go live with our mother or our father. Our mom was fighting for custody because she wanted to keep us, mostly for alimony purposes, and we didn't want to go with her because it was a really dangerous environment where she was drinking all the time with these -- they were mostly Russians, and -- and so we knew for a fact, because we were just -- we were still little girls, and we knew for a fact that if we went with our mother the chances of us being sexually abused was very high by these -- like men that she had around partying all the time.

Like, I couldn't trust my mom to keep us safe so -- so when we had a choice between choosing -- between who to live with, it was you know, unanimously we're going
with dad, you know, not with you, because our father was
not the one who was you know, he was just working and --
and absent.

MS. JENNIFER COX: M’hm.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: But we didn’t have the
same threat of having strange people around.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: But your grandmother would
come and sort of, do the extra things that --

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: -- dad didn’t have time to
do?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah, my grandmother was
more like a mother, like hands-on and took care of us
almost, and my mom’s almost more like -- like a friend.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And that was your mother’s
mom, right --

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: -- your grandmother? And
that was the same person that went to residential school,
correct?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.
MS. JENNIFER COX: Right.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So after she passed

what -- what did you do? Did you continue to live with

your dad?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah -- yeah. Lived with
dad. I remember one of those men, Yuri (ph), that my
mother used to party with, he actually raped my mother when
I was about 12 years old. So, like, I knew what kind of
group she was with, so I know that for a fact that that
would have happened to us.

But -- so we didn’t go with my mom, and she
ended up being raped by one of those men, and she took it
to Supreme Court. It went all the way to highest court, or
whatever. She didn’t win. I forget why. But I -- I
remember watching her go through all this like, court
process and stuff. And I remember not being surprised
because I knew what kind of people were around, and -- and
that sort of thing. And I remember feeling, like, you
know, just reaffirmed like, you know, this is why we don’t
live with her, and things like that.

MS. JENNIFER COX: But -- but one -- one of
the things that happened as -- after your grandma died you
changed the place that you were living; didn’t you?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah -- yeah. After she
passed away I left home. I was in between living
arrangements for a long time, so technically, like
homeless.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm. And how old were
you then?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Fifteen.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Yeah. I was homeless
from 15 to 16, and I got into -- I had my guardianship
terminated so that I became my own legal -- became legally
independent at the age of 16, and I guess when you have
your guardianship terminated and you become you own --
like, legal guardian, or whatever, legally independent,
then you become an automatic ward of the province because
you’re still a minor.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** So then I was a ward of
the province, and I went and I lived in Phoenix Youth
Programs in Halifax.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** And Phoenix Youth
Programs is a youth organization that has -- they have
shelters. They have group homes. They have supervised
apartment programs -- like what I lived in.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And -- and what -- who are
the people that live at Phoenix, or (indiscernible) youth services? Are they just youth?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: That -- that lived there?

MS. JENNIFER COX: Yeah.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Oh, yeah, youth between the ages of 16 and I think, 24.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So when you went to live with Phoenix what happened?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Well, I finally had the environment to be able to go to school and volunteer, and I ended up getting involved in a lot of community things, like activities -- and like, the youth centre at the Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre, or the Gigabou (ph) Youth Centre -- I was -- started getting involved with them. And then I started being the president of their youth council and -- and I was given a lot of good opportunities through -- through them.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Through the friendship centre?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Through the friendship centre, at -- their -- their youth centre, but they don’t have a youth centre anymore.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.
MS. REBECCA MOORE: So they -- so that support for urban Aboriginal youth is gone; it’s not even there, so -- in Halifax.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so the -- the Phoenix -- did -- did you live by yourself, or did you live in a -- in a group home, like...

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I lived in a house.

MS. JENNIFER COX: A house.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: So like, the supervised apartment program.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I lived in a house with three other girls and a supervisor.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: A staff member.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And that worked for you? You were happy with that?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah -- yeah, m’hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. Why don’t you tell the Commissioner what are the things that you liked about that?
MS. REBECCA MOORE: The things that I liked about that was -- well, I made a deal -- I had a deal with the social workers at the time, and it was if I proved myself responsible in this program for a year then they would fund me to -- to have my own apartment, so that’s what I did.

And, so by the time I aged -- like I turned 18, I was like, “Okay, I’ve been here for a year and I’ve proved myself responsible, and whatever.” And then they -- they actually tried to keep me in that program because they thought that I needed more support for longer and stuff, but I was really just itching to -- to be out on my own because I had a little sister, and she was under the age of 16 at the time, but she couldn’t visit me because of different -- like -- like insurance things, to do with -- in the system.

And so -- so for reasons like that -- like because -- like, younger people couldn’t come visit, and whatever, I really wanted to be on my own, so when they tried to keep me after I proved myself responsible for a year, and they tried to keep me in that program. I basically told them that, “I’m leaving anyway, you know, whether -- you can help me transition out on my own, or -- or not,” but I was leaving. So that’s how I left there.

But they were really supportive for me, for
that time though. And then they did end up -- community
services did end up funding me when I was younger to -- to
be out on my own.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Yeah.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And what types of things
did they help you with? What was Phoenix good with helping
you with besides providing you a place to stay?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** They have -- Phoenix,
they have PLEC, Phoenix Learning Education Centre, which
helps you do things like resumes, and look for jobs, and
they can give you -- they provide different programing
around education.

Phoenix also has extracurricular activities.
They have art programs. They have -- they even provide --
like, they provide everything, like -- like, they have
their own little food bank. They have -- like, in the
building -- so a place where you can go do laundry -- like,
they have a drop-in centre where you can go and do laundry
if you need to. You can go take some food. They have
like, clothes they you can, like, go through, if you need
them. It’s for most -- mostly street youths.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** And -- and then they also
have, like somebody come in -- that comes in and does like,
free haircuts, like, once a month, like that kind of thing.
So basically, all your basic services for...

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.
MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so then after you left Phoenix did you have -- did you -- were you able to get housing?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.
MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay, and where did you go from there?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I moved into an apartment with some friends of mine that were roommates, they were also a young Indigenous couple that I was close with. And I lived there for awhile, and they helped me move my things. But then I eventually went out and got -- I stayed there for a few months and then I went out and got another apartment, so, yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And did you live within one of the housing programs? Was there...

MS. REBECCA MOORE: No, no. Like then -- oh, then after that I went into Tawaak, yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Housing?
MS. REBECCA MOORE: (Indiscernible).

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay, and for the -- for the benefit of the Commissioners, why don’t you explain a
little bit about Tawaak Housing is.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Tawaak Housing, that’s
Native housing in Halifax, so it’s like public housing for
Native people. And -- and they’re really slummy. They’re
like slum lords, so they have a lot of problems. The
apartment -- me and Sarah lived there, we lived there for
five years. The back door was -- like the wind could -- it
was insecure, so like the wind could blow it in, and stuff,
and it was like that the whole five years.

From before we moved in to after, and it
eventually lead -- so it was insecure the whole time, and
even though I stressed to them, “You know, it’s -- it’s me
and my sister, my younger sister, like, we’re young women
and we live on our own, and you know, it’s really unsafe,”
they never fixed it.

There was one time when I caught -- we caught
somebody trying to break into our place, and -- like, I
chased him down the road and everything. And then I called
Tawaak Housing, flipping out, because our back door wasn’t
secure. And they sent someone in and they just -- I said
they put an Indian lock on it, because they cut a two by
four and then they put it between the back stair and the
back door and they left it like that.

They said that they were going to order
another door and -- and it never came, never showed up.
They never did anything about it, so needless to say they didn’t really give a -- a crap about me and my sister’s safety at all.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm, so during that period of time as well, did you have relationships, romantic relationships?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Yeah.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** M’hm.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And how did those go?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** I had two domestically abusive relationships in -- in that apartment, but the last one, and -- and that back door being insecure is essentially what made me eventually move away and leave town.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Because that person was really violent and they -- their violence escalated really -- really quickly, and really fast, and -- so that person was in jail for breaching and things that had to do with our domestic, like, situation.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** And so I kept on having nightmares of that person breaking in to my house because they knew where I lived. And so I couldn’t really sleep
well there, so when they were -- they were in jail for a month, until their court date. And during that time, because I was really worried about what this person might do when they got out, I ended up just skipping out on my rent because I didn’t -- like, the apartment wasn’t safe anyway, and I ended up moving to the other end of the country. So I moved to Vancouver --

MS. JENNIFER COX: M’hm.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: -- for almost a year, yeah. Just to get away from the person and that whole --

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: -- thing.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And when you were younger you also -- you talked a little bit about being involved in the youth programs at the friendship centre.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: What types of things -- opportunities were you given?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: At the friendship centre? Well, I was involved with a lot of -- basically all the youth organizations in the city, in Halifax. But I find the friendship centre -- like, where -- where I was the president of the youth council there. I went to like, you know, my first national networking opportunities were -- were through the friendship centre, so -- like through the
NAFC AGM and things like that. So...

MS. JENNIFER COX: And what did those opportunities do for you? What kinds of things?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I think they just, sort of, like, they build character, you know. Like, you go and learn and you network, and you meet people from all over the country, like other Indigenous youth and it strengthens, like your community base, and -- yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Did you learn about culture as well?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Oh, yeah, yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I learned how to -- like I learned drumming and singing at the friendship centre, and I’m still a drummer and a singer. And -- yeah, that kind of thing.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So when you were in British Columbia you stayed for a year, you said?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay, but then you did come back to Nova Scotia?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And when you came back to Nova Scotia did you have a place to stay?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: No.
MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: No, I didn’t. So I was -- like I find -- like housing security is a big issue for a lot of the Indigenous women that I know back home. So, like, for me and my family, we’re always sort of, like teetering on whatever.

Yeah, so I think that housing security -- well, I can only speak of Halifax really, but that’s a reoccurring issue that I always see our women struggle with. And it’s for all kinds of different reasons, you know. It’s not always just financial, you know. Like, a lot of the times I have a full-time job, or I’ll have the money, but it’s just either difficult to get one, find one...

MS. JENNIFER COX: So difficult to find a place to live, like an apartment?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah. Or -- or you have to leave one that you’re at for whatever reason. Like, it could be, like I said, domestic, or it could be -- it could be unsafe in some way, or -- or it could have like, problems, but housing is -- is a big issue.

MS. JENNIFER COX: In -- in Halifax?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah. And...

MS. JENNIFER COX: What about in British Columbia? Was it easy to find housing out there?
MS. REBECCA MOORE: It was not as much an issue for me because I stayed with the same people the whole time.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah. But I find it is back home, where I’m at, because I don’t have -- I don’t have family that I can just really go stay with. Like, they don’t really have room for me, so I can’t like, go back and live with my parents, or something like that.

MS. JENNIFER COX: M’hm.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah, so housing is always difficult.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so at this point in time in your life, Rebecca, what are you doing? What -- how do you take of yourself?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Right now I pretty much pay the rent doing a lot of different community events, and like facilitating and -- and gigs, or openings, drumming and singing; that kind of thing.

So, like I’m lucky enough to have been involved enough in my community and to get enough opportunities to be able to support myself that way.

MS. JENNIFER COX: M’hm.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: But that’s not -- I’m -- like, that’s unusual. That’s like an unusual situation --
exception, you know, like, not every Indigenous woman in
Halifax is like me, that can do that sort of thing. But
that’s how -- that’s how I support myself at the moment.

I’m also still working at the Ecology Action
Centre on some climate job round tables. I do a lot of
stuff about green energy. And -- yeah, so I have a
contract in with them as well, and -- m’hm. I’m --

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Do you --

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** (Indiscernible).

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** -- did you have any other
struggles when you were younger?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Yeah, I struggle with an
alcohol addiction for most of my life, from the ages of 12
to about 25.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** So this winter will be my
second year of sobriety.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** M’hm.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** But you did a lot of
things when you were still...

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Yeah. I was a very
functional alcoholic --

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** -- when I was younger,
yeah. And I kept -- like, that world very separate from --
from my community type world -- like my extravert, like
whatever. Like, they were very separate. So there was --
there was -- there was the -- my life that was really good,
and I had a lot of opportunities, and whatever, and then
there was the -- the side where I struggled with my
addiction in private, and stuff, yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so were you -- was
there any services that helped you overcome your addiction?
No?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: No. I did that. I kind
of isolated myself for like a year almost and kind of dealt
with that on my own. But it was just out of pure
resentment that I quit drinking, basically.

And it’s also because -- while my belief
shifted and I think that’s why. Because I simply didn’t
believe in -- in doing that anymore.

MS. JENNIFER COX: M’hm.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I don’t believe in -- I
look at it like self-harm; do you know what I mean? And I
had so much resentment for how much it weakens people, and
how much it weakened myself, my family and everybody I
loved and all the -- all the problems that it was, you
know, keeping going, that I just -- I hated it so much that
I just stopped it. I chose not to partake in it anymore.
I chose not to -- not to weaken myself, and to have a
different mentality of where instead of harming myself. I
just don’t believe in doing things that...

Like with this whole -- like Murder and
Missing Indigenous Women thing, and being -- being an
Indigenous woman in Canada, like I know that I am like,
statistically speaking, I know that I am larger target for
violence or -- you know.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Why don’t you tell the
Commissioners about one of your experiences when you were
walking down the street in Halifax?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I’ll get to that in a
minute.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: But -- so with that --
with that knowledge of just recognizing that as an
Indigenous woman in Canada we are -- like, you know, way
more likely to experience violence and -- and whatever.

And then also when I was younger and having
an alcohol addiction, and a very active alcohol addiction,
and just how susceptible to violence I was. Especially
when you’re two sheets to the wind and you have your guard
down, and anything can happen.

I just shifted my mindset. I don’t believe
in doing that anymore. I don’t believe in taking part in
that anymore. And almost like having more of -- more of a
warrior mentality that way because the only person that can
not drink for me is me. And the only person that cannot --
like, I really believe that I’m only person that can
protect myself. And so that’s why I just don’t do that
anymore. But -- yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So the experience that
you had in Halifax, you want to talk about that?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: There’s a bunch of
different experiences in Halifax. Halifax is a very creepy
city. We have a lot of johns driving around all the time.
We have a lot of sexual harassment on the street happening
all the time.

I think the time that you’re reminding me of
specifically was when one time I was walking home around
midnight. I lived by the mall. And there was this car
that pulled up, and they had their trunk open, and there
was three guys in it, and the driver got out and he cut me
off on the sidewalk and he -- and then the passenger had
his door open and his legs out like he was going to jump
out. And -- and they cut me off on the sidewalk and
there’s nobody around. And -- because it was by the mall,
and -- and after -- after the mall closes there’s like,

And -- so yeah, they -- they had their trunk
open. One of them was now on the sidewalk in front me.
The other one was -- had his passenger door open and his
legs out like he was going to get out. And he said
something to me, and I was listening to music, and I took
my earphones out and I said, “What?” And he said, “Hey.”
And then -- and then the guy who cut me off on the sidewalk
said, “Oh, he’s just being romantic,” is what he said.

And, so then like I saw the setup. I caught
the play. I didn’t let them get close enough to actually
grab me or anything.

And the street that I lived on, there was a
string of us, so like me and my sister lived down here, my
other sister lived on this end of block, and then my cousin
lived on that end of the block. So I’m just really lucky
that I had a lot of family on that block.

And so I just backed up. Like I started
walking backwards instead of going forwards, and I went to
my sister’s house and freaked out, but -- but -- yeah, and
then they walked me home after that. But -- yeah, that was
one thing.

And -- and where we lived too, it was right
on Bayers Road, so it’s right by the highway -- it’s a
highway that goes right out of the city, m’hm. So that was
creepy.

And there was also a girl that was attacked
later on that week, or later on that winter, I think, actually, and sexually assaulted in the bushes on the same area. And -- yeah, that kind of thing.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Rebecca, because of your experiences you came to the inquiry also to talk about things that you think either were helpful for you, or recommendations that you have of things that you'd like to see --

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** M’hm.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** -- right?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** M’hm.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** So what are the things that you think were the most helpful for you? Let’s start with that. The resources and programs.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Growing up what was really helpful for me was the -- the housing programs. That’s what I needed. At the time I really needed a safe space, so I think safe space is -- is huge.

I feel like there’s a lot of talk about murdered and missing Indigenous women, and -- and there’s a lot of known facts about, you know, that we are greater targets of violence statistically, and things, but I don’t see enough protective actions going on, so -- and not just preventative, but I’m talking about protecting Indigenous women because we’re Indigenous women, and because we are --
we face a lot more of those issues on a daily -- so like, housing, more emergency housing.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** What about the friendship centre programs?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** The friendship centre needs to get its youth centre back. There is no cultural youth centre for urban Aboriginal youth in Halifax anymore, as it’s -- right now.

I find a lot of my -- my networks now, so like if I have a problem -- if I have a situation, and I needed help with it, I don’t go to services. I don’t go to anything like that. I always reach out to my grassroots, like, sisters network, and -- and they’re the people that always come through for me and have my back and will pick me up if I am stuck or stranded. Will house me if I need a place to crash. Will feed me, or clothe, or anything -- you know.

If I have any issues, or an emergency, I don’t go to services too often so. I find that we just kind of have a network where we take care of each other.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And the network -- where did you meet a lot of these people?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Everywhere.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Was it through the programs, or any of the things that -- like, the
conferences?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Some of them.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Yeah, some of them.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** And how does that network make you feel nowadays? Being a part of that network?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Good. I feel the safest when I’m among my Indigenous sisters, especially the ones that, you know -- I think -- no, I think that’s hands-down where I feel the safest all the time.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** M’hm.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** M’hm.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** So supporting people to -- to have those kinds of groups would be helpful; wouldn’t it?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** M’hm.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay.

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Yep.

**MS. JENNIFER COX:** Is there any other specific suggestions that you would make to the Commissioners?

**MS. REBECCA MOORE:** Well, I want to talk about, like, thinking systematically, and thinking historically, and about colonization, and about some things that -- like there’s a lot of things that put us -- put us
at risk, you know. A lot of different things. There’s the way -- there’s stigma, and stereotypes. There’s -- you know, domestic issues. There’s addictions. There’s -- there’s creeps, johns. Then there’s colonial violence. And then there’s intergenerational traumas.

And there’s also a lot of sort of, putting yourself out there, putting yourself on the line in like, a frontlines context. So like, when you’re trying to, you know, protect the water, protect your land as well you’re also putting yourself in that type of risky scenario, so. And -- and you know, that’s -- that our duty as women. That’s what I’m taught is -- is to protect the water. And that’s our inherent duty as Indigenous women. So a lot of times that requires us to like, literally put ourselves out there on the line. And -- and you know, that’s systematic as well.

And -- and the lengths that some of these companies will go through to get you out of their way is very real. Especially if you want to look at it on an international scale and not just Canadian. But what they do to Indigenous peoples who try to protect their lands all over the world.

And so there’s -- really if you think about it, a whole shit ton of stuff, sorry, like, that could happen. And -- and I think recently too, if I want to add
and talk about stigma, and talk about like, historical
colonial violence. And the mainstream even today, even now
-- because I’m a really active person, and vocal in the
community, and I did a lot things this summer, surrounding
the Cornwallis statue and that -- that whole ordeal.

And one thing that the Mayor of Halifax
wasn’t listening to was how that statue -- Cornwallis
specifically back in -- in my city, where I talk about, and
how that actually -- it being there -- like, its physical
presence, and also what it represents, how that perpetuates
violence against Indigenous peoples, even further, even
still, even now, even like, today.

And so it’s creating currently a lot of
tension in the city, and -- and where me, and Grizzly Mom,
and Elizabeth (ph), and -- and a lot us, we’re very -- like
strong vocal advocates, so we also made ourselves very much
more visible to people, I guess you could say, with
opposing views; you know what I mean? So since that
happened and since we became even like, a lot more visible,
I feel like when we advocate for ourselves, and -- and
stuff like that, you also put yourself more at risk, more
of a target, and further danger, and whatever.

So that’s one thing that -- that the Mayor of
Halifax doesn’t take seriously. He doesn’t see how -- or
maybe he does and maybe he just doesn’t care. But he
doesn’t see how keeping that there perpetuates violence in
our communities and with us.

Like, I know -- like, Grizzly Momma has
gotten threats, for example. And other people have gotten
threats. I haven’t gotten threats, not online, but like,
in person, like people -- and...

MS. JENNIFER COX: And maybe, Rebecca, what
we should do is take a little bit of step back so that the
Commissioner understands what you’re talking about. So
what happened with the statue of Cornwallis?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: There was one thing that
happened...

MS. JENNIFER COX: Explain to her where it
is.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Okay, so on Canada Day,
so there’s a -- there’s a statue of Cornwallis, who, as the
founder of Halifax -- in downtown Halifax, and -- and this
is the guy who put the scalping proclamations on -- on
Mi’kmaq people.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Catherine...

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Oh, sorry, is that...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Scalping...

MS. REBECCA MOORE: That’s what I said,
scalping proclamations. And so for Canada Day, like
when -- when everybody was celebrating Canada 150, you
know, for us it’s not as -- as happy because -- so -- so what Grizzly Momma and I did was -- and -- and she was mourning, and she was -- like, healing, and on her own journey.

And -- and -- like we decided to have a mourning ceremony for all of the lives of our Indigenous people that have -- that has happened so -- yeah, all the lives of Indigenous people that were lost as a result of colonization.

And so, you know, naturally it was just fitting to sort of, have that there. Like, that gathering there in front of his statue because he’s still there. And so that’s what we did. And then that was interrupted by a bunch of -- The Proud Boys group, like those...

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: The Proud Boys, they call them?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: They call themselves, the Proud Boys. Basically, they’re kind of like -- they call them themselves -- they’re basically white supremacists, but they call themselves...

MS. JENNIFER COX: White supremacists.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: They call themselves some type of...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Neo-Nazis. That’s it.
MS. REBECCA MOORE: They’re like -- what are they -- something chauvinist, modern chauvinists. Anyways, only because it’s not cool to like come right out and say you’re a white supremacist these days, but basically that’s essentially what they are.

And -- and so their little group came and interrupted us and they said a lot of really rude things, like -- like how -- like when they were told that, you know, this is Mi’kmaq territory. They said stuff like, “No, it was Mi’kmaq territory. Like, now it’s Halifax,” and whatever, and they were very -- they were like actively oppressing us. And they interrupted our -- like, ceremony of mourning that we were doing. And they were chanting, God save the Queen, when we were basically mourning like, the loss of -- like we were basically, like -- like, whole like genocide of people, you know, we’re mourning that basically.

And -- and then they come up singing God Save the Queen very disrespectful. They were drunk and -- and whatever so. And it almost got -- it almost got violent, and -- and stuff. So -- so that happened because the Cornwallis statue is still there because it has a presence there. That these -- these tensions still happen in the city. And then that blew up.

And then I guess we found out that the --
the founder of this -- this Proud Boys, white chauvinist
group is this guy, Gavin McInnes, and he’s the co-founder
of Vice, and -- Media, and he’s the founder of Rebel Media,
and so some -- and anyways, so it’s bigger, and he has a
following like all over the States and Canada and stuff.

And so it blew up into this whole thing
where we got -- we got an apology from the Admiral of the
Navy, because they were all -- they were all in the Navy.
They were all Canadian Armed Forces too. So it looked
really bad on them, so we got an apology from the Admiral
of the Navy. We got an apology from the Defence Minister
of Canada.

And they said that they did an investigation
of those guys. They basically got like, a paid summer
vacation because they were taken off duty, but they still
got pay. And eventually they were re-instated back into
active duty. And so they didn’t even really get rid of
them.

And so that all happened, and -- and we
dealt with a lot of, you know, backlash and things, and --
and like...

MS. JENNIFER COX: And when you say we, it’s
you and...

MS. REBECCA MOORE: It’s me, Grizzly Momma,
our allies.
MS. JENNIFER COX: People that were there having the ceremony?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And supporters.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah. Our allies and supporters. And...

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so what did you have to say about the way the media characterized you?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Well, I’m getting into that. So -- so that happened, and then so as a result because -- because that Cornwallis statue was the center of the conflict basically. Because of that we had a remove Cornwallis event, right. Where we were going to -- well, we were advocating for the removal of the statue.

And so the city freaked out. They didn’t really know what we were doing, but they called it a hostile protest. They were going to treat it as a hostile protest, and so basically -- oh, and they called us violent. They said that were violent, as if you know, we were going to be violent to this inanimate object, or something. But -- yeah, so they labelled us violent and hostile.

And -- and -- and then like we really didn’t like that because we didn’t feel violent. We didn’t
hostile. Like, we’re just basically -- we’re like a group
of Indigenous women who just didn’t like how we were
recently actively oppressed at one of our gatherings, and
shit like that, so.

And then that put us in danger too, because
once the media and the Mayor labelled us violent then it
triggers something in people’s minds that, you know, these
women are violent, and almost sends a message like it’s
okay to commit to violence against us; do you know what I
mean? Because they already put that label on us. So -- so
that’s how they dealt with that this summer. And they
villainized us basically. And --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Threatened.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: -- threatened us, yeah.
And -- yeah, so -- so that is a little bit, and you want to
talk about the history of, like -- like how, like
Cornwallis -- he offered more for women and children;
didn’t he?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. The pay for --
the pay for one female scalp equals a year’s salary for one
officer.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah. So --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I’ll repeat that.
The value -- the most expensive scalp were the women’s
scalps, so the value of one Mi'kmaq woman’s scalp equaled a
salary of one British officer for one year. His annual
salary was the same as one Mi'kmaq woman’s scalp. And
that’s -- that’s what we had an issue with, so it was
genocide.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm. So it’s like that
history and -- and it’s still on the books, she said. The
scalping proclamation is still in the books. They never
really changed it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It’s the law.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: So -- so that’s how,
like that -- that colonial mentality is being acted out,
and -- and remembered, and still causing tensions even
still in Halifax specifically, like in -- in our territory.
And that’s how, like -- and people who are vocal about
it -- like women like me, and others, and my allies and
stuff, are being targeted for further violence.

Like, there was actually these -- now we’re
basically like heap bags for Nazis, and stuff like that.

MS. JENNIFER COX: What?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Heap bags for Nazis, I
said.

MS. JENNIFER COX: You might -- you might
want to use other...

MS. REBECCA MOORE: We’re basically like a
big -- like more of a target for -- for Nazis and white
supremacists. And -- and they even issued -- like, some of our allies are on like, Nazi and like -- what do they call themselves? Socialists? Is that it? Websites. And...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Fascist.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Fascist websites, and they even published like a list of some of us and our allies, and descriptions of our temperaments and our -- where our workplace is and -- and where we live, and stuff like that. So they’re like, publishing personal information on us and -- and stuff like that. So -- so like I would say that us, and our allies, in Halifax are definitely currently big targets right now by white supremacist as of lately. And -- yeah, so.

And then I also do a lot of stuff with like, fighting Alton Gas from branding the Shubenacadie River, so trying to save and protect the Shubenacadie River. And it’s mostly -- it’s not all, but it’s mostly Indigenous women out there on the gate, blocking that company, and so they’re out there; if you know what I mean, as well.

And -- yeah, so these are some of the some of the things -- and all those things that I just told you, like that all just happened like this past summer. And, yeah, so that’s a little bit of what’s going on in Halifax I guess.

MS. JENNIFER COX: So Sarah, is there
anything that you wanted to add?

MS. SARAH MOORE: There was the one time --

that one incident on Treaty Day.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah. Oh, she was just
talking about a time when a police officer called me a, a
savage on -- on Treaty Day. But -- and how law enforcement
deals with Indigenous peoples. I don’t think I really want
to get into that too much.

I think I’ll also talk about -- yeah, I’m
trying to think. I think I talked about some of the
history of colonial violence, some current things.
Struggling with addictions. How struggling with addictions
also puts you in more dangerous scenarios, and -- yeah, I
think -- I think that’s pretty much everything I need to
talk about. M’hm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. So I think we can
conclude Rebecca’s testimony before the inquiry.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Let me think.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay, we’ll give you a
moment.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: There is also like
different things that happened during my years with active
addiction. So when I was struggling -- because I started
drinking at a young age, at 12 years old, and I had a very
active addiction up until about 25. So that was like,
basically half my life, like, the bigger chunk of my life. And through that addiction that I struggled with, there was a lot of different violent scenarios that -- that happened and times throughout there, so like, all the -- all the shit that comes with -- with that lifestyle. I don’t know, like, now even when like my friends go out and drink, I’m like, I’m scared for them because I don’t even do it. You know, I’m like I -- I consider myself a -- a strong person and a brave person, but I’m like -- I don’t even go and put myself out there like that anymore. And so I am very worried for our people who still are suffering with active addictions because you never know where you can end up, and how you can end up, and -- well, like what could happen, it’s very -- yeah.

So with those things like, I experienced almost everything like, when I was going through those -- so -- and that’s from you know, a lot of -- I’ve been in a lot of fights because of my addictions, growing up. I’ve been raped multiple times because of my addictions growing up. I’ve been beaten multiple times by men because of -- while -- like growing up because of all of that. And -- yeah, so.

I would say that that part was probably my most -- I don’t know when I was more at risk, or if I’m any less at risk because I don’t drink. I really don’t know.
I would -- I still think about that because you know, I felt like I was more at risk -- most at risk when I was actively partaking in -- in that -- you know, like, high risk activities and stuff like -- like -- like drinking and -- and whatever, partying.

I thought I was most at risk then, but then when I started advocating for you know, like, land defence, and when I started advocating for, like the removal of the Cornwallis statue, and things like that. I think I’m just at -- in as much danger as back when I drank, being an activist in Halifax. Even actually maybe even more danger because I think I’m pissing more people off.

So -- yeah. It’s kind of like I went from being at risk and being like, a partier, and being at risk in that way to like, now I’m still -- I’m still an Indigenous woman at risk because you know, I did turn my life around, and I did turn my life around trying to make things better, and I did for the most part, but I’m still just at -- as at risk if not more, so.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: More enemies.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah, more enemies, I would say. Enemies. Yeah, so I think of -- I’ll probably leave it with that, yeah.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Well, that concludes Rebecca’s testimony.
MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’mhm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup, Rebecca. Thank you. You mention in your testimony, “I don’t go to those services. I don’t go get help through those services.”

MS. REBECCA MOORE: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Can you explain to me what are those services? And why?

MS. REBECCA MOORE: I don’t even know what those services are.

MS. JENNIFER COX: I think the question that I posed was services, so I was asking her if she utilized addiction services or --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

MS. JENNIFER COX: -- anything like that.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’mhm.

MS. JENNIFER COX: And so she’s saying that she did it on her own without help.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’mhm. So she was asking like -- like how did I overcome, like, my addictions and stuff and -- yeah --

MS. JENNIFER COX: (Indiscernible).

MS. REBECCA MOORE: -- I just did that by myself.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.
MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Well, you’re amazing. I have to say, just when I saw you just before we were here, I stopped there -- very -- you have something very powerful. And yes, probably because the work and the passion that you do, along with your sisters, is making women, and you, more vulnerable.

MS. REBECCA MOORE: M’hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And I don’t think it’s acceptable, you know, I don’t at all.

And in your presentation or testimony -- and I hope Canadian watch and listen. I hope that every level of government, including the municipalities, listen. How Indigenous people are everywhere. We are everywhere. This is -- some of us will say Turtle -- Turtle Island. My people will say nitassinan and because we’re -- you’re defending that land, or making sure that the ceremonies are alive, that your life is threatened.

We have to take this seriously and mention it somewhere that for us it never die, and it’s still there and because of you and your sisters making sure that we’re doing those ceremonies.

My last -- my last question, where can we get that book about La Proclamation du Crâne -- that scalp proclamation.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) the scalping -- it’s still law in --

MS. JENNIFER COX: Legislation.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- Nova Scotia.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Pardon me?

MS. JENNIFER COX: It’s legislation. I can get it --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It’s still law.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So it’s something we --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You should ask the Premier of Nova Scotia, my dear.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: I’ll ask Jennifer Cox.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Please do.

MS. JENNIFER COX: I will get it.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: I think he heard you. But, yes, I need to have that, please.

MS. JENNIFER COX: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: We’re in 2017. I can find it tonight on Internet, but I want to make it official that this inquiry will receive that, and I’ll read it, and I’m sure my colleagues will too.

And don’t stop. Don’t stop. Please, don’t stop. And you have strong women that don’t stop also, and
our warriors for many, many century never stopped. And --

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you, because they always try to stop us.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Don’t. Don’t. Please. And do it -- yes, you do it for you, but what you’re doing will bring also peace to my girls, to my children, and to our families. So when we have women like you across Canada, we’re strong, very strong. And you had this moment where Canada, the rest of the governments across Canada, but us here in this room to say thank you for what you’re doing. (Speaking Native language 5:18:11).

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** We have gifts. We have gifts. You want to present it?

**MS. DEBBIE REID:** So on behalf of the Commission, you’ve shared a gift of your truth and of course in our culture we exchange gifts, so Commissioner Audette has a couple of gifts for you. One is an Eagle Feather. The matriarchs of the Haidi Gwaii, of which Bernie is a hereditary Chief in waiting, sent out a call of Eagle Feathers to be harvested in the Haidi Gwaii, and those matriarchs have given those Eagle Feathers to us to give to all of you who tell your truth.

We also have for you a packet of seeds. And what we hope is that you will plant those seeds and take pictures of them as they grow and we’re going to keep a
diary of all our seeds across the country from our -- from our women who have told their truths.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Before you eat it.

MR. JEFF WARD: So as we’re concluding, and doing our gift giving, and concluding this testimony today here, a few announcements in regards to supper in Goose Cap B for the Commissionaires and Commissioners and the families who’ve testified there’ll be supper next door in Goose Cap B, and also for the communities and for the guests who come out from far distance, and the staff too, the guys behind the cameras. You guys are doing an amazing job. We’d like to invite everybody to the number 2 rink, the number 2 arena upstairs on the second floor. We’ll be having Salmon, so just to let -- let you guys go because -- we want to -- these guys behind the cameras they look hungry, so I’m going to take care of you guys. All they’re dressed in dark. You guys just look thin. I get it. I get it now.

But before we end our day we want to close with a closing prayer, and ask our -- our Elder, Katy, at this time, and if -- please, rise if you can, if you can’t it’s fine -- that’s fine. We’re going to do a closing prayer.

-- CLOSING PRAYER
MR. JEFF WARD: And thank you, everybody.

And tomorrow 8:30 a.m. opening prayer, and we’ll see you tomorrow morning at 8:30 a.m. Mi'walatl, thank you. Drive safely. Drive -- have a good night.

--- Upon adjourning at 5:28 p.m.
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Shannon Munro, 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.

Shannon Munro
February 8, 2018