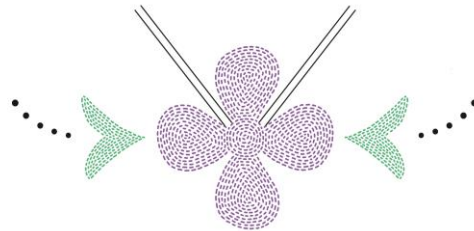


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, South Ballroom
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**



PUBLIC

Wednesday November 22, 2017

Public Volume 28

**Myrna LaPlante, Lynda Johnny-Silverfox,
Mary LaPlante & Crystal Fafard,
In relation to Emily Osmond LaPlante;**

**Barbara Badger & Sheila Ledoux,
In relation to Shelley Napope;**

Brenda Forseth, In relation to Geraldine Hanna

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.

41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2

E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246

II

APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
Advocate for Children and Youth Saskatchewan	No Appearance
Government of Canada	Christine Ashcroft (Legal counsel)
Government of Saskatchewan	Betty Ann Pottruff (Legal counsel) Trish Greyeyes (Legal counsel)
Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik (Women Walking Together)	Darlene R. Okemaysim-Sicotte (Representative)
Kawacatoose First Nation	No Appearance
Native Women's Association of Canada	Neegann Aaswaakshin (Legal counsel)
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, AnânuKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association Inc., Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, Manitoba Inuit Association	No Appearance
Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation	No Appearance
Women of Métis Nation/Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak	No Appearance

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel and representatives are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel - Central Ballroom (i.e. public hearing space # 1).

III

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Opening Remarks	1
Hearing # 1	6
Witnesses: Myrna LaPlante, Lynda Johnny-Silverfox, Mary LaPlante, Crystal Fafard	
In Relation to Emily Osmond LaPlante	
Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette	
Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox	
Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Sylvia Popowich, Florence Catcheway	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	
Hearing # 2	55
Witnesses: Barbara Badger and Sheila Ledoux	
In Relation to Shelley Napope	
Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson	
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe	
Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Sylvia Popowich	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	
Hearing # 3	103
Witness: Brenda Forseth	
In Relation to Geraldine Hanna	
Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson	
Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren	
Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Sylvia Popowich, Florence Catcheway	
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg	

IV

LIST OF EXHIBITS

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Witnesses: Myrna LaPlante, Lynda Johnny-Silverfox, Mary LaPlante, Crystal Fafard Exhibits (code: P01P06P0201)		
1	Digital folder of 54 images displayed on monitors during public hearing.	54
2	Crystal Fafard's presentation and recommendation, entitled: "Aunt Emily Osmond (LaPlante) Presentation and Recommendations to the Inquiry on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls November 22, 2017" (four numbered pages).	55
Forthcoming submission: Myrna LaPlante will share search-and-rescue materials she developed with the National Inquiry.		
Witnesses: Barbara Badger and Sheila Ledoux Exhibits (code: P01P06P0202)		
1	Eagle Feather news op-ed: "Opinion: Looking back at Just Another Indian" by Warren Goulding published August 17, 2016. (Link: http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.php?detail=2275)	103
2	R. v. Crawford, [1995] 1 S.C.R. 858.	103
Witness: Brenda Forseth Exhibits (code: P01P06P0203)		
1	Folder of two black-and-white images displayed on monitors during the public hearing.	117

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

--- Upon commencing on Wednesday, November 22, 2017 at 9:09

MR. MILTON GAMBLE: Good morning. I'm glad everybody's awake. (Speaks in Native language). I'm going to greet each and every one of you in a good way, in a humble way. I want to acknowledge Elder William Doucette and Elder Cheryl Little Tent (phon) for lifting pipes for us this morning. I want to acknowledge (indiscernible) for being there, for helping our ceremonies.

Tomorrow morning, again, we have pipe ceremony at 7:30. This afternoon we'll have lunch here in the main area, also with dinner, will be happening with the families at 6:00 p.m. All the families that are involved with the process, you're all invited to come and have dinner here with the Commissioners at 6:00 p.m., just right outside the main area.

We want to also acknowledge the health support that is also available here. You see all the ladies in purple shirts, and the gentlemen that are wearing purple shirts, you're all asked to make yourselves available for the families that are here. Please take advantage of our support team. They have a loving ear, and patience, and understanding to take the time to sit with you. And, we thank our support team for coming up helping with their services.

1 This afternoon, or maybe this morning, I'm
2 not sure, I don't have the time on this, we have a meet and
3 greet with Jaime Black. It's a Red Dress Project in the
4 Elders lounge. There's going to be activities there
5 available for the children to come up and get a little
6 history of the Red Dress Project, the story of the Red
7 Dress Project, how that whole process came about.

8 I was just sitting with my brother Sandford
9 Strongarm this morning and shared a little history of how
10 they came to recognize the Red Dress for our ceremonies in
11 recognition of murdered and missing Indigenous women was
12 there was a young woman who was found wearing her red
13 dress. So, that's a part of the story. There's more to
14 the story that goes along with that.

15 This evening, we have a round dance
16 scheduled, who is being sponsored by RTSIS FSIN Pow Wow
17 Provincial Woman Association, Saskatchewan Aboriginal
18 Women's Circle Council. They are sponsoring the round
19 dance that's going to be available at the TCU, which used
20 to be the former Centennial Auditorium right downtown. The
21 round dance is scheduled from 6:00 till 12:00. I do
22 believe they will have shuttle service available for that.
23 That's still being worked on, but we do have shuttle
24 service available for the activity that's happening at the
25 Friendship Centre this afternoon and all day for children

1 and for youth.

2 Out in front in the foyer we have the United
3 Church of Canada Anglican Diocese. They have care packages
4 for available for families. You're all asked to go and
5 just help yourself, make yourself available to those -- to
6 the organizations. We want to also acknowledge our
7 (indiscernible). As you see, we have Roland Kay (phon),
8 who's helping us here with the families. In the other
9 room, we have Rick Fable (phon) who is helping our families
10 with the smudge ceremonies, and it helps them carry through
11 the day, gives them strength to share their stories in a
12 humble way, in a respectful way.

13 I want to, again, acknowledge the health
14 support from all caregivers, families during these four
15 days. It's, I guess, so grateful that you take the time
16 out of your lives to come and support the families who are
17 sharing their stories, who are sharing their testimonies
18 with the media, with the general public, because it's being
19 televised. It's being recorded. Some families have asked
20 for in-camera sessions, and others have given the
21 opportunity to share in this way.

22 The organizations that, I guess, want to be
23 acknowledged or we need to acknowledge, they don't want to
24 be, we need to acknowledge these individuals, the RTSIS,
25 Saskatoon Tribal Council, Prince Albert Grand Council,

1 Women's Commission, Health Canada, any residential school
2 workers, the Elders Council.

3 We also want to acknowledge our Fire Keeper,
4 Ralph Arkan (phon), who is helping us keeping that fire
5 going throughout the four day process. The fire that's
6 available for us is in the teepee just down the street.
7 You're all welcome to make your way over to the fire to
8 maybe go and share your stories, go and burn your
9 offerings, and we have fire keepers there available for
10 you. I'm going to ask in a humble way for Elder John
11 Stonechild (phon) to please make your way up here, John,
12 for opening prayer. And, after John has concluded the
13 opening prayer, we're going to ask Dancing Horse to provide
14 us with another blessing, another honour song for this
15 morning.

16 So, I'll ask those of you who can to please
17 rise, remove your headgear as we do an opening prayer.

18 **ELDER JOHN STONECHILD:** (Opens with prayer
19 in Native language).

20 **DANCING HORSE DRUMMER:** Good morning. We
21 are part of the Dancing Horse Dance Troop. We always
22 respect the young lady. She was asked a month ago to come
23 down here yesterday, not to offend anybody, but we wanted
24 to have the families to tell their stories. That's why she
25 didn't come yesterday. But, this morning, she woke up

1 early this morning. She said, "I've got to do this. I've
2 got to do this," she said, "Because when I make a promise,
3 a promise is a really big thing for our First Nation
4 people. I have to come here this morning to do this."
5 "Tomorrow," she said, "I'm going to dance with my mother
6 and my friend from Toronto." The three of them are going
7 to be blessing.

8 This is a ceremony dance. Long time ago,
9 our people really respected our ways and still try to carry
10 on. Long time ago, we didn't have jingles. We had deer
11 hooves and it took many deer to kill just to make that
12 dress for the healing dance. That's what I was told from
13 the Elders. I thought I'd pass that message on. Some of
14 those history stories are getting lost. Without a --
15 there's a young girl who will bless the families this
16 morning. Mm-hmm, dancing horse.

17 **(MUSICAL PRESENTATION)**

18 **MR. MILTON GAMBLE:** *Hay-hay.* We will now
19 take a few minutes to just set up some more chairs before
20 we start the first session of our testimonies this morning.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** That was me.
22 Good morning, everybody. (Speaks in Native language). We
23 will start pretty soon. The technology is sending us some
24 of the evidence for our beautiful friend here. So, we'll
25 see what will be her decision, and just so you know, it's

1 an important day for the families, I know you know, and we
2 have to respect the process and I'm glad you're here.

3 I will not speak on behalf of Myrna
4 LaPlante, but in those moments, this is where we need the
5 support. This is where we need to be lifted up, and your
6 presence does it. And, there's some family members also in
7 this room, so I want to acknowledge your presence, your
8 courage and your dedication for justice.

9 So, I'm glad to see families who left their
10 home to be here, left their respective territory. We say
11 en français, their province. They say province. Like you,
12 you left Manitoba to be here; I left Québec to be here, you
13 can tell with my strong accent. So, do we wait, or...?
14 You're the boss. Okay. *Alors, merci beaucoup*, Myrna. So,
15 we will start and Madam -- Maître Jennifer Cox.

16 **Hearing # 1**

17 **Witnesses: Myrna LaPlante, Lynda Johnny-Silverfox, Mary**
18 **LaPlante, Crystal Fafard**

19 **In Relation to Emily Osmond LaPlante**

20 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

21 **Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox**

22 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

23 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, before we -- yeah,
24 we're going to have to have an oath. Mr. Registrar is the
25 one that's helping us with the technology. So, Myrna,

1 Mary, Lynda and Crystal, do you promise to tell your truth
2 in a good way today?

3 **ALL:** Yes.

4 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Thank you. So, Madam
5 Commissioner, I would like to begin with Myrna LaPlante,
6 Mary. Crystal is here on my right, Lynda, and behind us we
7 have Gloria, Roxanne and Berna of the LaPlante family. And
8 Myrna, we are here to talk about your Aunt Emily, and
9 perhaps you can tell the Commissioner a little bit about
10 who you are and where you grew up?

11 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Okay, we have some AV
12 slides coming. Good morning, Commissioners, Elders. Thank
13 you for those that lifted the pipes and prayed for us this
14 morning. My name is Myrna LaPlante, and I am from
15 Saskatoon, and our family grew up and our homeland is in
16 the Wynyard, Kandahar, Dafoe, Reymore, Quinton, Punnichy
17 area, and within that area is the Kawacatoose First Nation
18 and the Day Star First Nation.

19 So, our -- the territory that we grew up is
20 that area, and our family has been in that area for
21 hundreds of years, I would say. That's where we originate
22 from. But, we live here, and Mary is from Regina. Lynda
23 is from the Yukon and has recently moved to Calgary, and
24 Crystal is also from the eastern part of the province.
25 Well, she can explain further where -- her connection, and

1 it's a more recent connection to our family as well, we
2 have learned, and our support people from -- Gloria from
3 Kandahar, and Roxanne from Whitehorse and Alberta from
4 Saskatchewan.

5 I'll just describe how we are going to
6 deliver our presentation. Our aunt went missing in 2007.
7 Her name is Emily Genevieve Osmond, and her maiden name is
8 LaPlante. She went missing from the north, the property
9 that resides north of the Kawacatoose, and Mary will talk a
10 little bit about this. And, we want to talk about her
11 early years. We want to talk about her younger years when
12 she worked and married, and then living in the Yukon and
13 then coming back to Saskatchewan and her disappearance, her
14 impact -- the impact of that disappearance on our family,
15 and then we have some recommendations for the Commission.

16 So, with that, we'll proceed. So, Mary's
17 our first speaker. Lynda will be our second speaker. I
18 will come in and talk a bit more about what happened around
19 -- surrounding her disappearance, and then Crystal will
20 provide the recommendations.

21 **MS. MARY LAPLANTE:** I'm Mary LaPlante from
22 Regina, Saskatchewan. So, I'm going to be talking about
23 her early years. Our Aunt Emily is the daughter of Michael
24 LaPlante and Hazel Capakwan (phon). Those are our
25 grandparents. She was the fifth child of a family of

1 seven, and she was from the Kawacatoose First Nation. The
2 family then moved to a Métis settlement on the border of
3 Kawacatoose First Nation.

4 As a child, she received her schooling in a
5 little country schoolhouse called Edgebrook.

6 Our aunt had many interests. She was an
7 excellent seamstress and loved gardening. She loved and
8 enjoyed all types of music. She played in a band formed by
9 all her siblings. She was able to play all type of
10 instruments such as the guitar, fiddle, banjos and
11 accordion by ear. They were taught by ear.

12 She was a very agile and flexible horse
13 woman. She was an expert to ride horses and was able to
14 ride the horses without -- with saddles and bridles and
15 without saddles and bridles, just by using her knees and
16 hanging on to the horse's mane.

17 As teenagers, our Aunt Emily and her sister,
18 sisters Evey (phon) and Helen, were awesome to watch as
19 children when there were roundups, horse roundups, cattle
20 roundups. I was always impressed as a child when I had to
21 stand outside a fence and watch my aunts do their thing.

22 In her early 20s, she moved to Brenin,
23 Manitoba, and worked as a nurse aid. Met her husband,
24 Gerry Osmond, fell in love and married shortly after. She
25 loved to travel. She loved nature and she loved the

1 outdoors.

2 She eventually moved to Edmonton, Alberta,
3 received her education as a red seal chef and worked as an
4 instructor at Siase (phon). She loved people. She adopted
5 many nieces and nephews from an immediate family of ours,
6 including other children.

7 When she was in her mid 20s, her and her
8 husband moved to the Yukon where she continued her career
9 as a cook. She was a hard worker; always tested her limits
10 on her own endeavours. Along the way, she passed her
11 knowledge down to family, friends and co-workers. Thank
12 you.

13 **MS. LYNDA JOHNNY-SILVERFOX:** Good morning.
14 My name is Lynda Silverfox. I'm the adopted daughter of
15 Emily, so she was my foster mother. I came into Emily's
16 care in -- before I was four years old, so somewhere in
17 late '67 I went into her care and into her home. I don't
18 remember -- there's a lot of gaps in my memory as to I
19 don't remember the first day I went there, and certain
20 times throughout the time that I lived with her. But,
21 today, for me, is about shining the light on Emily and the
22 person that she was, and how I want her to be remembered
23 and how I remember her, and just some of my experiences and
24 memories of her.

25 She was very strong, smart, very

1 independent, hardworking First Nation Cree woman, and she
2 was one of the mentor's in my life that always encouraged
3 me to live a -- to live a good life. And, I just remember
4 a very busy household because she had adopted all of her
5 seven nieces and nephews. And so, it was a busy household
6 and there was oftentimes that she worked two jobs.

7 She was a red seal chef and she worked in
8 some very high-end restaurants throughout Yukon and B.C.,
9 and likely Alberta as well, and she was a natural
10 caregiver, a very nurturing person, and she really invested
11 in her family. Family was very important to her. She
12 always told us that we needed our education and that we
13 needed to get that little piece of paper, that's how she
14 talked about getting a degree or a certificate, that we
15 needed that paper because one day you aren't going to be
16 able to get a job without that certification.

17 And so, I really hung on to that and I did.
18 I went and got my bachelor's degree in social work, and I
19 think she was really the person in my life that really
20 pushed me and kept -- and when I wanted to give up I always
21 thought about her and what she had said, and that I needed
22 to do that to make a better life for myself and for my --
23 for my family.

24 Emily really loved travelling. She loved
25 being out on the land. There was oftentimes we went for

1 drives and we'd go pick driftwood along the Yukon River and
2 -- or not -- we'd pick driftwood from around Marsh Lake,
3 and she always liked to go along the Yukon River to pick up
4 the lava rocks that are along the riverbank for her flower
5 bed.

6 Her husband, Gerry Osmond, was also an
7 important part of our lives and he always took us out
8 hunting. He liked to hunt ducks and go fishing and things
9 like that, so we spent a lot of time on the land that way.

10 There were different times throughout our
11 life, like I said, she worked two jobs. She worked for --
12 in Whitehorse in what they call the Edgewater Restaurant
13 and the Airport Chalet, and she also ran a concession at
14 the Jim Light Memorial Arena, which is no longer there, and
15 she also ran a concession in the Qwanlin Mall, which I
16 believe was called the Malt Bar.

17 So, I just remember that she was very
18 hardworking. We had a busy household. Mealtimes were
19 really -- I remember mealtimes for me because she was a
20 really good cook and everyone -- we had this great big, big
21 green table, because there were so many of us. There was
22 seven -- I don't know. There were quite a few of us
23 anyway, because Emily had also taken in, at some point,
24 along with me, I don't know if they -- my two siblings,
25 three siblings actually. My sister that's next -- three

1 years to me, and then my brother and my other brother had
2 also come into Emily's home, but I don't know if they came
3 in at the same time I did. So, they were also in the home
4 for a while, and she also took in other foster children who
5 were a couple of my other relatives. So, she really had a
6 big heart, and she was a person that was always giving of
7 herself. I think she made a lot of connections in the
8 Yukon.

9 I remember Christmas and New Year's, there
10 was always a really good spread of food, and all these
11 snacks, and different musicians would come and play music
12 in the home. I always remember music, and I didn't know
13 until Myrna and Mary and other family members shared some
14 of the history, because I don't some of the early years
15 about her. I only know from what I remember of her being
16 in the Yukon. So, this is a really good way for everybody
17 to come together and kind of really shine the light on
18 Emily and who she was, and the loving person that she was.

19 Throughout the years, even though -- after I
20 left her home, I don't remember. I know when she divorced
21 Jerry, when her and her husband were going through a
22 divorce, I think at that point I actually went to live with
23 my older sister for a while, I think, and I never did see
24 her -- interestingly, I never seen her depressed or crying
25 or angry. If she was, she never showed that. I'm sure she

1 was going through something because at that point I went to
2 live with my sister for a while, and I ended up coming back
3 to her.

4 And, even throughout my adult years, I kept
5 in touch with her, she met all my -- she -- well, my two
6 children, and she met my granddaughter as well. And,
7 through the years, we kept in contact by letter, and she
8 often sent gifts. And, one time, she sent three crazy
9 quilts. I couldn't believe it. Those things just take a
10 lot of time to make, and it's a lot of just random pieces
11 of cloth that are sewn together. So, she had made one for
12 myself and for my kids. And, she just continued throughout
13 the years to send care packages because that's who she was.
14 That was her way of letting you know that she loved you,
15 and she was thinking about you.

16 There were also times that I came back here
17 to visit with her, and there was times -- I remember we
18 came down here together. Her and I drove down to
19 Saskatchewan because she wanted to visit her family. And,
20 when she left the Yukon, she came down to Saskatchewan to
21 look after her mother, which she -- her mother, Hazel,
22 which she did until her mother's passing.

23 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Lynda, thank you. Lynda,
24 I'm wondering if you could perhaps share with the
25 Commissioner a little bit about some of the famous people

1 that your -- that Emily cooked for that you're aware of?

2 **MS. LYNDA JOHNNY-SILVERFOX:** It's not
3 actually me that's -- I heard through Mary, so I'll let
4 Mary share actually.

5 **MS. MARY LAPLANTE:** We went and visited her
6 on a weekend, and we were sitting outside, my mom was still
7 alive, and she started talking to me and she said, "You
8 know what?" I think she lived in Edmonton at that time,
9 but she told me that she used to cook for Prime Minister
10 Trudeau, and they would come and they'd go and get a
11 chauffeur and take her to the airport and put her on a --
12 on a jet and fly her to Ottawa. And then she never had to
13 -- she had all the equipment there and all the staff there.
14 All she had to do was cook, and the staff would serve all
15 the different courses.

16 And then she never had to clean up. Real.
17 And, she told me when she was done all that, she said, red
18 carpet people and black tie affairs, she was always -- she
19 told me, "You would never believe all the dignitaries I had
20 to -- I came and fed," because she was that well known.
21 And then they would take her back, take her back to -- in
22 the chauffeur, take her to the airport and bring her back
23 in that same night and take her home.

24 And I always remembered that. She said
25 country singers, princess, prince from all over the

1 country. She said, "You'll never believe how many people I
2 had to serve," you know, for her big meals, prepare that
3 big meals, and I was so, just totally amazed with her.
4 That was one of her stories that she shared with me and I
5 was really impressed. Thank you.

6 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Some wonderful
7 memories. It's interesting, as we put our stories together
8 that some people, our family in Saskatchewan, I'm just --
9 I'm sorry, I'm just watching for a photo that's coming in,
10 the poster. Our family in Saskatchewan maybe did not know
11 her life in the Yukon. Similarly, some of the family in
12 the Yukon didn't know her life in Saskatchewan. So, this
13 is a real coming together of our family to get to know our
14 aunt.

15 Some of the children that she adopted, and
16 uncle, our Uncle Mike -- just excuse me for a moment. This
17 is our photo of our aunt. I hope we can see that. Yeah,
18 that's good. That was provided to us by the Native Women's
19 Association of Canada.

20 So, we're piecing the story of auntie's
21 incredible life together and, you know, we do have some
22 gaps because, you know, we do have family who do have some
23 information. And, you know, we're trying to get this story
24 together. So, we have more truth to the story, perhaps,
25 that'll be shared by some of the other family members at a

1 later date, and maybe some of the hearings in B.C. or, you
2 know, that might be scheduled in the future.

3 So, I want to talk about the coming home,
4 residing in her original home area and then what happened
5 with her disappearance and the impacts of that
6 disappearance.

7 So, at the -- when auntie's marriage ended,
8 and her children were then growing -- grown up and, you
9 know, starting their own families, she started her journey
10 home, back to Saskatchewan and back to the Kandahar and the
11 property north of the Kawacatoose First Nation. Do we have
12 the slide with the location available? There were two
13 slides that showed...

14 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** There's pictures of the
15 -- there's a map.

16 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Yes.

17 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** That's part of the
18 collection of pictures.

19 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Yeah. So, if we can
20 pull that up? We can refer to that. So, as Lynda said,
21 one of the reasons that she returned home was to care for
22 her mother, our *kokum*, Hazel, and they resided at my
23 parents' family farm, which is just north of Kawacatoose
24 and is now owned by my mom, Ann LaPlante. My mom is -- has
25 come to the city to attend the language keepers conference.

1 And so, she was a neighbour of aunt when she disappeared.
2 So, this is where the area that aunt came to and resided
3 for a while.

4 So, we have a map here. I'm not sure if we
5 can zoom in at all on that, but you'll see the Kawacatoose
6 First Nation is the shaded area, and if you can zoom into
7 the red dot there, okay, yeah, there we go, the red dot is
8 north -- just immediately north of the Kawacatoose First
9 Nation, and that property is owned by our cousins Mary and
10 her brother Francis LaPlante, and that's where auntie
11 resided. Just north of that red dot there is our family
12 farm, and our mom's family farm and my dad has had, who has
13 since passed on, has had that farm for probably 60, going
14 on 70 years. 70 years.

15 So, that area is right in the middle of
16 Dafoe to the north. I'm not sure how -- what, what that
17 map -- how far north that map goes. Dafoe, Kandahar,
18 Wynyard and then to the south is Reymore, Quinton,
19 Punnichy, all this stuff in my brain here. So, that's the
20 area that we have. That's our territory. That's the
21 LaPlante territory. And, further to the -- I don't know if
22 you can see on that map there, further to the east is the
23 Day Star First Nation, and that's where our mom's roots
24 are. So, our roots are Day Star and Kawacatoose First
25 Nation.

1 In that general area is where our Uncle Mike
2 and his wife, Pearl, had resided, and that is where auntie
3 -- the marriage was ending, and the children needed to be
4 cared for, and that's when auntie and Jerry, Uncle Jerry,
5 took the children and then -- the seven children, and cared
6 for them.

7 So, we must have been like eight, seven
8 years of age when that happened, us older children, and two
9 children remained in the care of -- kokum raised our
10 cousin, Celeste, and Mary's family raised Alan. So, there
11 was -- the children that she took were Wayne, Karen, Lloyd,
12 Brian, Loretta, that was five, right? Five. Glen. So,
13 yeah.

14 Okay. So, she's returned -- returning to
15 Saskatchewan, and for about the next 10 years, her activity
16 was that she purchased a home and resided in Regina, and
17 then she moved to Kandahar and lived in several surrounding
18 rural areas.

19 During this time, she travelled back to
20 Prince George and Prince Rupert and worked as a chef at
21 various restaurants and camps. She finally settled on our
22 cousin's property, which is on the map, to accommodate her
23 animals and her love of nature. She told her family that
24 she wanted to continue to be physically active. She didn't
25 want to live in an old folks' home, which would have been

1 easy, you know, running water and everything, all the
2 amenities. She wanted to be free and she wanted to
3 maintain her independence.

4 On September 20, 2007, I received a call at
5 my desk. I worked here in Saskatoon. And, one of our --
6 my sibling said, "Auntie Emily's missing." I said, "What
7 do you mean Auntie Emily's missing? She can't be too far
8 away. She must have walked somewhere. Maybe she fell."
9 And I left to go, and a lot of us gathered within the next
10 couple of days to help search for auntie, who was 78 years
11 of age at the time of her disappearance.

12 The RCMP were called, I think it was that
13 late morning of September 20th, and they conducted a
14 thorough search of the property. The search was September
15 20th to September 22nd. A search by the RCMP of the
16 property, her van was still there, yielded no clue as to
17 her disappearance.

18 Now, auntie walked with a cane. She had
19 arthritis in her hip. She could not have walked very far.
20 They examined a lot of potential, like, bones and -- she
21 had dogs and the dogs, of course, would bring, you know,
22 whatever they would eat and there would be, you know, some
23 bones that were on the property, and there was no evidence
24 that she was on the property. There was no DNA found on
25 her, you know, on the land that would indicate that she

1 might be somewhere in that, you know, on her land.

2 So, on the third day of the search, the RCMP
3 were done. There were a significant number of people that
4 wanted to help from the local area that wanted to help with
5 the search. They came as soon as they heard auntie was
6 missing, and they were kept away and kept, I guess, at bay
7 by the RCMP. Well, I guess I can understand that the RCMP
8 want to preserve, you know, any evidence that may be on the
9 property, but these are also people that really know the
10 area. They know the land well and they were basically
11 turned off, I think, by the RCMP response to their offer of
12 help.

13 So, on the third day, the RCMP were driving
14 away. They were leaving her property. I saw them driving
15 away. I had to go stop them, and they said they were done.
16 They would continue to search. If any clues or evidence
17 came in, they would -- they would get back to us.

18 So, I became in a panic, like, okay, what do
19 we do now? Where do we go? Who do we see? Who do we talk
20 to? Who will help us? Who's out there? We just knew that
21 we had to continue the search. There were lots of people,
22 of course Gloria and her family, and all of our cousins and
23 relatives that were, you know, what do we do now?

24 So, we were thrown into a situation totally
25 unfamiliar with having a missing person and a missing elder

1 and an urgency to get out there and find her, because maybe
2 she did wander away from her property. Maybe she was out
3 there and we must, we must find her, and I'm totally
4 convinced that we're going to find her in, you know, a
5 fairly short length of time.

6 The following week, oh, this would take us
7 to about the beginning of October, we organized -- we
8 decided, okay, we're going to search on October 4th and 5th,
9 and a family search was organized. So, I'm thinking, you
10 know, well, we can get this information out. We can make
11 it public. We can call out for searchers, and people will
12 come and contact me. And so, we have a week to get this
13 search organized and, you know, so I'm like hyperactive,
14 you know, we got, we got to find her, we have to, we have
15 to. She's got to be out there and we must find her. Not
16 very many people responded to my callout.

17 So, I'm sitting on Wednesday, and it is
18 Friday October 4th that we're going to start that search,
19 and I'm not a search manager. I don't know what to do.
20 I'm not -- I don't know what we're supposed to, you know,
21 what is the process here? I don't know.

22 In my foggy memory, I remembered a person by
23 the name of Darryl Naytowhow from the Montreal Lake Cree
24 Nation who was a professionally trained search manager. I
25 called Darryl and I said, "Darryl, I need your help." He

1 said, "What do you need?" I said, "We need searchers.
2 We're searching for our aunt." "Yes, I heard something in
3 the news about that." And he says, "Give me half an hour."
4 Within a half an hour he called me back, he says, "We'll be
5 there on Friday, and I've got 13 searchers coming with me."
6 And from there we -- we were able to, to have the first, I
7 guess, official search.

8 We had support from the Kawacatoose First
9 Nation who allowed us to use their hall as our command
10 centre. See, I know these terms after the fact. To use as
11 a command centre, and Darryl is also a search and rescue
12 trainer. So, he just went into action and he knew what he
13 had to do. We knew what we had to set up. We knew that we
14 had to have a, you know, a secluded area for, you know, if
15 we found any information.

16 Interestingly enough -- okay, when I was --
17 that week when we were preparing for that search, I knew
18 this organization, the Saskatchewan Association of
19 Volunteer Search and Rescue Personnel. I phoned them. I
20 phoned several of those chapters. They're on the website,
21 and they will not participate and help us with a family
22 search unless they're activated by the RCMP.

23 So, here we have this resource, this
24 wonderful resource, but it was not an RCMP search that I
25 organized, it was a family search, so they would not help

1 us, and people professionally trained searchers in the area
2 would not, would not help us because they were not
3 activated by the RCMP. Fortunately, Darryl and the
4 Montreal Lake Cree Nation search and rescue team were on
5 reserve and they were the group that responded. That --
6 during that weekend, Carry the Kettle First Nation, which
7 is in southern Saskatchewan, also came out. I didn't know
8 who they were. They came out with their search team that
9 weekend and joined us. When the RCMP knew that these
10 search and rescue teams were coming out, they decided to
11 join us that weekend and they activated Regina Search and
12 Rescue.

13 So, these other people joined us, including
14 the RCMP. So, yeah, it was because we had Darryl Naytowhow
15 and that professional search and rescue team is when the
16 RCMP decided, okay, we're going to help, we're going to
17 support this search this weekend. So, it was because of
18 Sherry, Sherry Runsfound (phon) and her team from Carry the
19 Kettle, and Darryl Naytowhow from Montreal Lake Cree
20 Nation, that we had a really incredible search that
21 weekend. Unfortunately, the search results were negative.

22 This search, and I -- as I've been doing a
23 lot of the coordination for the search for Aunt Emily over
24 the years, and it was one, like a real learning, huge
25 learning curve for us to be able to conduct searches going

1 forward.

2 So, of course, it's the fall, it's October.
3 I remember that weekend, it started to snow, and it started
4 to freeze. And, during that time our family members and
5 our cousin Francis, they walked, they searched, they --
6 hunters were out, quads, horses. They continued to search
7 in that area, and we were not able to find any information
8 that would bring us to where she is, and that remains the
9 same today. We don't know where she is.

10 So, as I said, the medical records did not
11 reveal any medical conditions. Of course, they want to
12 know about Alzheimer's, dementia, all this kind of stuff,
13 and we don't know -- I shouldn't say medical records.
14 People in our family and that would have known her medical
15 history, would know that she was, you know, of sound mind
16 and that she was capable of making her own decisions and so
17 on.

18 She was on medication for her arthritis and
19 had her arthritic hip and I said would walk with a cane.
20 So, she could not have walked any distance. Her cane was
21 at her house. She couldn't have walked very far. So, over
22 the next -- that was the first year, winter came. Spring
23 came, we started doing some searching again. For the next
24 three years, it was the same, maybe not quite as formally
25 organized as that first search, but people that would come

1 out, would, you know, would be able to come out. I believe
2 Sherry Runs came out. I'm not sure if Darryl -- I can't
3 remember. I don't think Darryl came, but he certainly
4 provided us ground work in terms of how to conduct the
5 search. And, over the years, the searchers have walked,
6 rode horses, quads. Hunters are out, always on the
7 lookout. Our family just in that territory always out on
8 the land. The kids are always out, hunters, real dedicated
9 to their hunting, and so on.

10 In the last couple of years, there was a tip
11 where a vehicle was found in a slough on a property owned
12 by a new owner north of our farm and south of Kandahar.
13 The RCMP were activated and it turned out that that was --
14 it was not connected to auntie's disappearance. That was
15 one of the more recent contacts.

16 So, the file continues to remain open at the
17 -- with the historical case unit with the RCMP. One of the
18 things that we had to establish was a communication
19 process, because we have family living -- auntie's family,
20 immediate family, is all out of province. They're in --
21 well, now in Alberta, they're in B.C., the Yukon, and the
22 older sister, Karen, lives in Ottawa with her family.

23 So, we had family all over and I wanted to
24 make sure that we all received the same information. So, I
25 set up a -- the email and included as many family members

1 just to keep an update of the progress of the search for
2 auntie, and of course, over the years, it's kind of
3 dwindled, you know, because we had nothing, nothing more to
4 share. But, I also had to establish a communication
5 process with the RCMP. So, we agreed that he would email
6 or we would email on a regular basis, and for the first
7 maybe year and a half it was regular, and then I guess we
8 had nothing more to share. You know, the emails became
9 less and less.

10 Now, we hadn't heard from the RCMP in the
11 last -- for about the last seven years on this case. I did
12 receive a call about the week after the Whitehorse National
13 Inquiry hearings. I had a call from an RCMP member, "Hello
14 Myrna, just checking in, how are you doing?" I said, "I'm
15 fine." He said, "We're calling just to let you know that
16 the file is still open and we want to let you know that,
17 you know, if any new evidence comes we will share that with
18 you." Fine. Thank you. That's lovely. Good. Have a
19 good day. So, the communication with the RCMP has
20 basically been nil for the last seven years.

21 Approximately four years after her
22 disappearance, our family had another disappearance in our
23 family. My brother's 17-year-old son, Cody Ridge Wolfe, 17
24 years of age, went missing at the Kawacatoose -- I mean --
25 I'm sorry, at the Muskowekwan First Nation, which is

1 further to the east, east of Punnichy, or in the Lestock
2 area. Again, we went into crisis mode. Cody's missing and
3 at that time, we shifted our energies and resources from
4 missing Auntie Emily to search for our nephew, Cody.

5 The response to Cody's disappearance was
6 massive at the community level from the First Nation. We
7 had excellent resources. Chief and Council provided
8 excellent resources. The RCMP were very much involved.
9 But Cody is a child, 17 years of age, and there was quite a
10 lot of energy, resources, put into the search for Cody.
11 Again, it was -- it was mostly the First Nations community
12 that responded.

13 Cody was in grade 11 at that time. That was
14 a really hard time. It was really hard with auntie; it was
15 hard with Cody as well. So, we've had intense searches for
16 the last -- 2007, and then again 2011, and then up until
17 about a year ago, we have intensely searched for Cody and
18 both remain missing. Again, we have no information as to
19 -- to bring us to where these people are. We don't know
20 where they are.

21 Auntie's case, I believe that there could be
22 foul play because she couldn't walk very far. Cody's
23 disappearance, I believe, is undetermined because we just
24 don't know. We don't know. He was close to a slough,
25 which is not a big body of water, at the time that

1 pinpoints us to the last time that he had contact with a
2 friend of his. He was at a slough and it was very, very
3 cold, so we don't know if he ended up in that body of
4 water. They've searched that water numerous times. Or, is
5 he the victim of foul play? We don't know.

6 The cases are not connected. They're two
7 separate cases. They're not connected. Some people say
8 that, oh, you know, somebody's out there taking people
9 away. Well, that may very well be, but the cases are not
10 related.

11 Going back to auntie's disappearance and our
12 panic, because we're all of a sudden thrown into the
13 situation of having a missing person in our family, and who
14 do we talk to? Our friend Gwenda Yuzicappi, who is in the
15 audience, was one of the first people to reach out to me to
16 -- because her daughter was missing at that time. And then
17 either I made contact with our missing women's support
18 group here in, in Saskatoon, Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik,
19 Women Walking Together, and we have some -- we welcome some
20 of them, are members here this morning.

21 So, it's been 10 years with Iskwewuk. Ten
22 years with our friendship with Gwenda and other family
23 members. We have a huge family, don't we Gwenda, across
24 Canada? It's not the way that you want to develop a huge
25 network and friendship, but the issue of missing and

1 murdered Indigenous women and girls has brought us
2 together. And, so many people in this room supported us,
3 and walked with us, and joined us in our, in our life.
4 This is our life now. This is the life that we live. We
5 try to have a happy family. We try to -- we try to be, you
6 know, live a somewhat normal life, and it's really, really
7 hard. We -- our family has been forever changed by this --
8 these events.

9 So, thank you Gwenda, Iskwewuk, Angie Bear
10 sitting in the room, our victim services people. We have
11 done -- it's been a long road of raising the awareness,
12 calling out for information for both auntie and Cody, and
13 many others that are missing in, you know, in our circle.
14 We have had -- we're fortunate that we've had, well, Darryl
15 Naytowhow; we've had Sherry and Carry the Kettle, and
16 they've walked with us for the last -- also with the last
17 10 years.

18 Another person I want to talk about is Lloyd
19 Goodwill. He's a 30-year RCMP member who has retired, and
20 he has volunteered his services to help coordinate the
21 search for Cody. He wasn't -- he knew about Aunt Emily,
22 but was unable to join us at that time, and Lloyd is now
23 the head of the Regina Volunteer Search and Rescue. So,
24 when they do come out to search they cover up their Regina
25 SARR badges because they're not representing Regina SARR;

1 they're representing -- bringing their skills and their
2 expertise, profession -- professionalism to help us search.
3 So, Lloyd has also been on our -- with our family for --
4 more so when Cody went missing.

5 So, there is no blueprint, no resources,
6 nobody to go to at that time on September 20, 2007. When
7 the RCMP were driving away, they didn't say, "Here's your
8 next steps; here's what your family might do." Victim
9 Services were not really a resource for us. They're based
10 in Fort Qu'Appelle for that area. That's where they are.
11 The resources were more of our family, our friends, people
12 that lived in that area talking about what was happening,
13 being together and so on. I know that Victim Services
14 plays a really, really important role in many cases, but
15 for our family, they weren't really key. I know that they
16 played very, very important roles in some of the other
17 cases of our friends who are in the same situation as us.

18 So, a little old lady, 78 years of age, not
19 many people respond. There are no resources, no resources
20 for a reward, no resources even to -- for search and
21 rescue. My employer, as soon as we discovered that she was
22 missing, they made a donation, or my employer did, and I
23 really want to acknowledge the Saskatchewan Indian
24 Institute of Technologies where I worked for years, who
25 helped us and provided time for me to be away. My manager

1 at that time was very caring, as well as the president at
2 that time was very supportive of me having to take time
3 away and so on.

4 So, there was no resources, and same with
5 Cody. I mean, we did have some donations, more donations
6 for Cody, and that was excellent. But, I think of a young
7 white male child who was a teenager down east, had a fight
8 with his parents. He ran away. There was a huge, huge
9 response, huge media, great big media trucks, search, RCMP
10 or the police, many people out there with a \$10,000 reward
11 for information from Microsoft.

12 The issue with the parents and this child
13 was that he was spending so much time as a gamer, and that
14 was the issue and he ran away. Microsoft stepped forward
15 and gave \$10,000 to that case, which is wonderful, that's
16 great, you know, it's great that these organizations will
17 step forward. What about the Auntie Emily's of the world?
18 What about the Amber Redman's? What about Danita Faith
19 Bigeagle? Some of our other families are still in this
20 situation.

21 Nobody has stepped forward to -- some of the
22 families have given up their residential school money to
23 offer these rewards. We didn't have that. What do we do
24 with our Cody case? You know, we've talked about maybe
25 we're going to be doing a reward but, you know, where do we

1 get funding? I'll have to offer, perhaps, some of our own
2 funds.

3 At that time -- since then, there have been
4 several well-developed resources in terms of response to
5 search and rescue. Now, people can hand out the package.
6 You know, here's a process. There's one that was developed
7 in Manitoba, really, really well developed, and there's
8 other ones that are around. I developed my own plain
9 language search and rescue document, and I've shared it
10 with other families, and some other organizations and
11 agencies that are developing resources for search and
12 rescue.

13 The media, it has been reported erroneously
14 that she lived on the Kawacatoose First Nation. She lived
15 on the north edge of the Kawacatoose First Nation. I've
16 had to correct that several times with the media. It's
17 always and continues to still be confused. However, the
18 Kawacatoose First Nation has played a key role in the
19 support of, you know, our search for auntie. You know,
20 we've used the -- like I said before, we've used the
21 community hall, and their personnel and individuals that
22 have come forward to support us and our friends and our
23 relatives and the Day Star First Nation have also
24 contributed, because I am a member of the Day Star First
25 Nation. Some of our -- my siblings are members of

1 Kawacatoose First Nation.

2 Before I go into some comments, Gloria, do
3 you want to share any of that time? Okay. Do you want to
4 talk during that time of the search and whether -- do you
5 want to add?

6 So, I guess the -- one of the challenging
7 parts was, of course, auntie and her -- the places that she
8 lived, and the family being in different parts of Canada,
9 and being able to, you know, bring people together and, you
10 know, getting information. We had to go back out in the
11 early part of her search to get some information from the
12 family members and so on. So, it was a huge undertaking, a
13 huge task to be able to find out all that, you know, some
14 of auntie's background, and so on, and we're still -- we're
15 still learning.

16 **MS. MARY LAPLANTE:** I just wanted to say I
17 phoned a psychic in Edmonton for the Auntie Emily search,
18 and my cousin came down from B.C., Glen LaPlante, one of
19 the children that she raised. And, he was telling me he
20 was coming down. And then the psychic -- we went down to
21 the land there and then psychic told me, "You've got to
22 find three items."

23 So, when my cousin came down, we went back
24 to the land where she was gone missing, and we found her
25 white running shoe, and her glasses, and a lucky rabbit

1 foot. A lot of people back then used lucky rabbit foots.
2 And, these were the three items she -- that the psychic had
3 told me to look for. But, I didn't tell cousin Glen and he
4 was -- and we where there. Some of the family members went
5 out and looked for these things. And then that psychic
6 told me, "Tell the family I'm not far. You find those
7 three items and I'm not far from where you're going to find
8 them." And she also said, "You're going to find these
9 three items."

10 So, we gave these to Glen and I think he
11 handed them over to Punnichy RCMP. I don't know what
12 happened to those three items, but this is what that
13 psychic told us we are going to find. And, she also said
14 she was not far from there, kind of in a little water
15 trickling stream under the -- there's lots on that land,
16 lots of little streams that -- and we still can't find her.
17 That was one of my ways to try and help.

18 We also went to Berna's brother. Dennis and
19 I went to Little Black Bear. We went traditionally on that
20 one and we went down -- they followed back to the land
21 there and that Elder said, "I feel that spirit here."
22 Yeah. So, we had a little feast for her. So, I still --
23 my own thoughts are she's there. Like, what's going --
24 like Myrna said, she can't walk very far. She was using
25 the cane. So, I -- in spite of the psychic and the

1 traditional Elder we got, they more or less told us the
2 same thing, like, she's there. That was another way of my
3 trying to find her, but they also -- the Elder also told us
4 people that go missing are hard to find. So, that was my
5 -- like a lot of our energy went walking that land, a lot
6 of money went walking that land, going there and walking
7 and walking.

8 I remember my brother had blisters on his
9 feet because he was walking and walking and walking. A lot
10 of my nephews came out, and when we'd go back to Regina,
11 they'd be just -- their feet would be just sore from
12 walking, like walking and walking and my daughter and -- so
13 we spent a lot of time searching for her on foot, and
14 still, nothing with all the rescue teams and still nothing.
15 The Elders, the psychic, and it's really still in the air.
16 Like, I personally believe she's still someplace on that
17 land. Thank you.

18 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** So, as I said, our
19 family has been changed, the way we interact. We don't
20 have a lot of the laughter that we had. Our mom, of
21 course, was the neighbour of missing Auntie Emily. She
22 would be -- lived by herself, you know, for short periods
23 of time. And so, we were always concerned about her
24 safety.

25 My mom still lives on the -- out there, in

1 the same area. Huge impact on her and has always worried
2 about what happened to her sister-in-law. We know that
3 it's taken the disappearance of auntie and, of course, her
4 grandchild has taken an immense toll on her and all of our
5 family.

6 Last night, we were saying how -- I was
7 talking with our niece, Jessica, who has joined us here,
8 how do we come back to a happier place? What does our
9 family need to bring us to this new way of being with the
10 missing family members? We need, you know -- we should,
11 you know, be having, you know, a therapist or a facilitator
12 come bring our family and talk and share about the --
13 because how do -- how does our brother cope, you know?
14 Being our family, you know, we don't share deep feelings
15 with each other. You know, how does our family cope? I
16 mean how does the mom and dad with a child that's missing,
17 how do they survive? How do they go on? I'm just so
18 amazed at our network out there of families. They go on
19 somehow. They go on. How do we care for ourselves as
20 families?

21 You know, huge. I'm just -- I just jotted
22 down, I guesstimated the financial tally would be well over
23 \$100,000 for the Cody search. You know, all the resources,
24 if we tallied up all the resources, the RCMP, including the
25 RCMP, the resources that came in, the contributions to the

1 community was great, you know, the gas, the travelling back
2 and forth, people travelling back and forth, the food,
3 anything we had to buy, would be well over \$100,000 for
4 that search.

5 The cost is huge. There's no fund to turn
6 to, to say, hey, you know, we need \$15,000 or \$1,000 this
7 weekend because we're going to do a search. It's our
8 family; it's impacted on people's credit. It's impacted on
9 people even having their utilities having to be
10 disconnected because the money has to go towards the
11 search. We're not going to pay -- we can't pay this bill
12 right now.

13 People have lost their valuables because of,
14 you know, having to direct that money that they were paying
15 on these. These possessions were taken by the -- whoever
16 company that they're buying them from. It is huge.
17 I want to say to the people who might know or have any
18 information on where Auntie Emily is to do the right thing,
19 to step forward, to own up and say I have some information
20 on where she is. You can call Crime Stoppers, you don't
21 need to be identified.

22 Please help Lynda find her mom. Please help
23 us find our aunt, and if Cody's disappearance involves foul
24 play, please step forward. Do the right thing. Help
25 families that are suffering, and that applies to all of our

1 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.
2 You have information? Step forward. We need your help.
3 We need your love. We need your prayers. We need, we need
4 your involvement. We need to come together as a country to
5 end this, these disappearances. I'm pleading to the people
6 out there that may have information to please step forward
7 and help us.

8 There's many ways that people can help with
9 the National Inquiry that, you know, contact as well, you
10 know, the National Inquiry. I want to say thank you to the
11 National Inquiry as well to give us this opportunity to
12 tell our truth about our missing aunt and Cody, and we do
13 have some other family members that are murdered and not --
14 well, we do have a cousin that's missing, and I hope that
15 our other families will tell their truth as well in some
16 way, the ones that have other missing Indigenous relatives
17 here, and we thank you for this opportunity.

18 We might never be able to tell our story to
19 a court, so this is our court. We're telling you, and if
20 the perpetrators, if there are perpetrators, we want
21 justice. We want justice for our family members.

22 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Anything else?

23 **MS. GLORIA:** I just want to thank everybody
24 here, thank the dancers that did the healing dance. We
25 need that. We need that healing dance for us to start

1 healing. I want to thank the Elder for praying. I just
2 want justice for Auntie Emily, for Cody. I see my family
3 suffering. We are crying for help. It's too long, 10
4 years to bring justice for Auntie Emily. This is not easy
5 here standing here and begging for that. The family has
6 searched and searched for both family members. We can't
7 find them. Yeah, it is very scary because my mother-in-law
8 lives just a mile from where Auntie Emily went missing.

9 Auntie Emily was a strong woman. Whatever
10 happened to her, she put a good fight. She lived out there
11 in the country by herself. She chopped her wood, hauled
12 her water in the wintertime. Hauled snow. She loved her
13 pets. It's not easy for me driving by her house. Everyday
14 I go to work, I pass by there. I miss that smoke of her
15 wood stove. I can't think no more, but please help bring
16 justice. RCMP got to get more involved. They can't
17 overlook us Natives. I can't think anymore, thanks. I'm
18 sorry.

19 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Jessica?

20 **MS. GLORIA:** I was here to talk and I'm -- I
21 cry so -- I'm so emotional.

22 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Jessica, do you want to
23 -- no? Okay. So, we're going to go over to Crystal, our
24 cousin, who in this -- during this time, we've found
25 Crystal, our cousin as well. There's so much historical

1 stuff on reserve, off reserve, Bill C31. There's much,
2 much historical stuff, and Crystal will speak to some of
3 those points as well, so Crystal.

4 **MS. CRYSTAL FAFARD:** Thank you, Myrna. I
5 also want to thank the Elders and the support people here,
6 the dancers, all the protocol folks who brought everything
7 together for the families here today.

8 I am from Saskatoon, I'm from Yellow Quill
9 First Nations. My Nation, I'm Treaty 4. I'm a lawyer here
10 in Saskatoon, I've been practicing for approximately 18
11 years. I got to know Myrna many years ago, and I'm just
12 amazed by Auntie Emily's story. She's an amazing woman.
13 Some of my comments are specific to Aunt Emily, some of
14 them are more of a wish list, and some of them are specific
15 to Indigenous women and girls. So, I'm just going to go
16 through this, and these recommendations are primarily aimed
17 at the Government of Canada and those who have the ability
18 to make a difference in that regard.

19 With respect to Aunt Emily, the family
20 wishes that the RCMP would engage a little more with the
21 family, to renew the efforts to find Aunt Emily, and to
22 ensure justice is served. To take serious the evidence
23 provided by the family, such as the fact that she would not
24 leave her purse or her animals or her cane behind. She
25 couldn't walk far. There was no evidence she had dementia

1 and did not just wander off.

2 They would like them to consider programs to
3 ensure safety for elders who are vulnerable; Myrna's mom,
4 elderly men and women who are living alone on an acreage,
5 for example. Support-based community search and rescue
6 programs as the communities intimately know the land and
7 are willing to help. The resources are there, and we need
8 to do more to be able to access those resources. That was
9 somewhat ignored and overlooked in this case with Aunt
10 Emily.

11 The wish list for Aunt Emily is that the
12 funds are provided to memorialize and honour her special
13 acreage, the area that she lived that meant so much to her.
14 They would like some consideration for the legal status of
15 Aunt Emily and the family, and the fact that she was going
16 through the process to get her Treaty status. We don't
17 know whatever happened, if she actually got that status or
18 not.

19 They would like funds dedicated for a family
20 genealogy research because the family has lost an important
21 matriarch, the holder of stories, valuable information and
22 family pride. The family has lost important linkages to
23 the family character and identity.

24 Some of the systemic recommendations that I
25 am going to talk about are Canada needs to make

1 considerable efforts in publicly educating Canadians on
2 this country's role in subjugating the First People of
3 Canada, and how this in turn has led to the devaluation of
4 our Indigenous women systemically, socially, politically in
5 our own communities, economically and culturally.

6 Indigenous people, and in particular women,
7 battle social misconceptions, stigma, stereotypes,
8 violence, in Canada, just for being an Indigenous woman.
9 Indigenous women and girls are -- Indigenous women are the
10 carriers of life and teachings meant to be passed on to the
11 next generation, and this pivotal role has been nearly
12 destroyed by the colonial actions of Canada through the
13 Indigenous -- Indian residential schools; the Sixties
14 Scoop, which was a direct attack on Indigenous women,
15 parents and their children; the current Indigenous welfare
16 system regimes; and the continued "active disengagement" of
17 this country at many levels.

18 Women are the backbone of our communities
19 and if they are destroyed, the community is ultimately
20 destroyed, and the families are destroyed.

21 Canada needs to support Indigenous women at
22 all levels of their life, from cradle to grave.

23 Blame has been put on the victims and Canada
24 has done very little to correct this at the social level.
25 For instance, the court systems have been a venue to see

1 Indigenous women further victimized, and there are many
2 examples of that.

3 The RCMP have failed Indigenous people,
4 Indigenous women, as detailed in the Robert Pickton
5 inquiry, the Manitoba Truth, or sorry, Justice Inquiry, the
6 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and now the Murdered
7 and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Commission and
8 Inquiry.

9 We need to see *Criminal Code of Canada*
10 amendments for greater punishments for those charged with
11 violence against women and children, and to see that it
12 makes it a criminal offence to those who actively use
13 social media to perpetuate hatred against Indigenous people
14 and women.

15 We would like to see Canada fund socio-
16 economic policy research on the betterment of Indigenous
17 women so that this might inform future policy development
18 that will build inclusiveness for Indigenous women into
19 society so that women like Aunt Emily do not become a
20 statistic.

21 We need funds immediately set aside for the
22 empowerment of Indigenous women and children for health and
23 safety, so they can thrive and have social support.
24 Funding should be for Indigenous women and girls
25 empowerment fund, for example, that's just an example, for

1 education and entrepreneurship, family connections and
2 development, social and family development, employment
3 opportunities for marginalized Indigenous women, for
4 example, those who live in remote and isolated communities.
5 There's lots that happen in the city, but what about those
6 living in communities that are not anywhere near a city?

7 We need engagement in "change making"
8 positions in our society, such as judges, Supreme Court
9 Justices, academia, political institutions and public
10 policy institutions.

11 There must be more community-based justice
12 programs across the country, decentralized, meaning within
13 the communities. Not something run out of Ottawa, not
14 something run out of the cities.

15 We need to provide more protection and
16 preventative measures to vulnerable Indigenous women and
17 girls, protection for women and support for women leaving
18 relationships so they can do so in a safe way. The police
19 will not respond unless there's an incident; we know that.

20 Protection for, and support for women and
21 girls who are forced into prostitution or are otherwise
22 sexually exploited because of poverty, social conditions,
23 human trafficking, mental status and addictions.

24 Protection and support for women and girls
25 who are addicts, victims of violence and various abuses who

1 need treatment and reintegration into their communities, so
2 the cycle can stop. Again, this has to be at the community
3 level.

4 Funding to address sexual abuse in
5 communities. Funding and tools to provide and address
6 suicide crises nationally.

7 Healing programs to support Indigenous
8 families impacted by the loss of their family member, and
9 memorial funds to honour their family member in a
10 meaningful way.

11 Support for Indigenous art, writing, which
12 are key ways of expressing who we are, garnering social
13 empathy, which is lacking in Canada, through common shared
14 human experiences as well as unique experiences of
15 Indigenous women. I personally love the work done by
16 Connie Walker and those at Aboriginal CBC, the programming
17 done by APTN that gives a dedicated voice to Indigenous
18 people, and who highlighted Aunt Emily's case, in fact.

19 Development of a key memorial at the
20 community as mentioned, and then, finally, programming and
21 funds to address civic and police development, to educate
22 our civic and community leaders on real issues faced by
23 Indigenous women, and how they can help rather than hinder
24 the process on the basis of personal bias or opinion.

25 Regarding any funding programs, I would

1 recommend the delivery of such a program be run through not
2 for profits or charities rather than, you know, just money
3 thrown at the community. It has to be set up in a really
4 good governance way so there's accountability at that
5 level. So -- and that's everything I have to say.

6 *Migwetch, hay-hay, and all my relations.*

7 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** When we were meeting
8 last night, it was the first time that the four of us were
9 able to sit together, coming from different parts of, you
10 know, Canada and getting input from our cousin Hazel in the
11 Yukon. So, it's been a real team effort, but we only came
12 together last night.

13 We wanted, because of auntie's love for
14 music, we weren't able to connect our link, because we
15 wanted to play a fiddle tune and as we -- for a start and a
16 close. So, just, you know, just think of a fiddle tune in
17 your mind and you'll think of Aunt Emily. And, one of the
18 things that I came across as well when we were packing up
19 some of her stuff, I came across her writings. She
20 actually started writing a story, her story. And so, we
21 found the start of her story. And, also, there was a
22 specific writing that -- about young Indigenous women,
23 right, and Indigenous women.

24 She wrote here, "Only young ones wear bright
25 colours," wear bright colours, and, you know, she talked

1 about this red suit that she wore as a young woman, and how
2 everybody loved it, because we were really raised in our
3 traditional way, cover up, don't wear -- don't draw
4 attention to yourself. You know, don't wear anything
5 that's going to, you know, be too short or revealing or
6 anything like that.

7 Then when you saw some of the pictures of
8 her in her shorts, like, she was really very much ahead of
9 her time, you know, just in some of the clothing. She was
10 always well dressed. I mean, she -- her presentation of
11 herself was just immaculate and -- so anyway, we'll end on
12 the note that, you know, wear bright colours, celebrate who
13 you are, get your education, all these wonderful things
14 that she taught her children, and just honour and just, I
15 guess, just keep Aunt Emily in your memory and, yeah, and
16 we thank you very much.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
18 *beaucoup.* Thank you so much. You said in your
19 presentation you share the truth, you share something not
20 easy but very powerful and amazing, and I have to say, I'm
21 blessed to be the one sitting here. I know Qajaq, I know
22 Brian, I know Marion, they're here with their spirit, but
23 we're sharing. They're in other rooms and I'm very humble
24 to be here.

25 Also, because Myrna is one of our mentors

1 for many, many years, but I've learned so much just today,
2 things that I didn't hear before when I was listening to
3 you and thank you. Thank you all of you. Thank you for
4 the family that are here and people in the room with you
5 and for you.

6 We all know that it's difficult to heal when
7 we don't have the answers. It's hard to -- for the
8 closure, if we can have closure when a loved one disappears
9 or is killed or we don't know where they are. So, it is
10 hard for the healing process, but you gave me hope when I
11 was listening and receiving your truth, and to see how the
12 support is huge and important in those moments, that Canada
13 heard today, the people who are listening, they heard that
14 the support is fundamental. It's a must. We need that and
15 I have to say thank you for the communities who supported
16 you. I have to say thank you for the former RCMP, Lloyd
17 Goodlord I think? Lloyd?

18 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Lloyd, Lloyd Goodwill.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Goodwill,
20 okay. Goodlord I was calling him. Thank God.

21 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** I hope he's watching
22 online.

23 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** I hope. He
24 just became a lord for us. You better help them; that's
25 what it means. Thank you and if we have people like him in

1 communities to do that across Canada, this is the hope, you
2 know, that we all have. But, also, the moment that you had
3 here, I hope that it was also heard by the institutions, by
4 the governments across Canada, and the federal also,
5 government.

6 You showed us, again, because we've heard it
7 when we were with NWAC or in another capacity, but in this
8 inquiry, how our Canadian brothers and sisters, when they
9 lose a loved one, how the social response, institutional
10 response, is way different to our reality. So, you brought
11 this proof, so thank you. Thank you, because they need to
12 hear. They need to see because when we don't see, do I
13 bother? Maybe not. But, you gave us that. You gave it to
14 the country. So, that is huge and amazing, and we have to
15 make sure that it's well shown in the report how things are
16 treated differently. But, we don't deserve to be treated
17 differently.

18 Also, the importance of the role that, yes,
19 communities do their best. They're always in crisis mode
20 so it's not easy to ask them, you know, everything. But
21 the institutions, the municipality, the research for rescue
22 and search, they all have a role to play, to collaborate
23 with us family members and Métis, Inuit and First Nation,
24 Indigenous people.

25 So, I hope they're following this. I hope

1 they will implement what we already propose, like your
2 recommendation also, and when we present the official
3 report. Again, thank you for showing the differences
4 because this is also the role of this inquiry, to prove
5 that there is a huge gap or a huge difference between how
6 it's treated with Canadian and Indigenous people.

7 Also, for the closure and the healing, the
8 ceremony is very important, so thank you. Gloria, you
9 mentioned it's very important that we have it here during
10 this process. It's our protocol that we respect everywhere
11 we go, but we go home after when we finish a hearing. So,
12 I hope the community also will make sure that -- and the
13 system, that we have the proper -- you mentioned
14 therapists. Some will be a traditional healer, some will
15 be a psychologist, some will be another family member, and
16 we don't hear a lot when family members come here that the
17 importance of that new family we have when we become a
18 family member. That is huge.

19 When we lose a loved one, we don't know
20 where to call. You mentioned that. It is huge. So, if it
21 was possible for you to give us your document that you
22 reorganized or put it in your language and other provinces,
23 you mentioned Manitoba, if we can get those documents so we
24 make sure that it's available, it's there, we have a -- I
25 hope soon, a better website, I'll be frank with you, but --

1 so we can put it there, because when it happened to people
2 that we know we didn't know where to go, we didn't know who
3 to call. So, thank you.

4 And about this -- I'll finish with that
5 question to you and to your family. When that Canadian
6 family, and we all -- it doesn't matter where we come from.
7 When we lose a loved one, we want answers, and they deserve
8 answers, even my Canadian brothers and sisters. But, why
9 do you think they had so much covered with the media,
10 support, dogs, helicopters? Everything was there. And, I
11 even hear it -- heard it in Quebec. So, the media in
12 French covered that story, but never about Cody or other
13 people from our community. Why you think it's like this?
14 You.

15 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Well, I think there's,
16 again, the gap between traditionally how little has been
17 paid to any story of the, you know, of Indigenous
18 happenings. It's changing, you know, with the -- like
19 coverage, like, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network,
20 but that's really recent and I -- you know, there have been
21 programs that, you know, smaller programs like Indigenous
22 Circle here in Saskatchewan that have dedicated a half an
23 hour once a week to stories in Saskatchewan. So, it's
24 slowly changing and evolving again and, you know, but I,
25 you know, there are -- actually, Cody's story was covered

1 more and, again, because I think he's a child and a youth,
2 and I think, again, for Auntie Emily, she's, again, an
3 elderly lady and it's not going to make, you know, the top
4 news. There was coverage. I was actually more impressed
5 with the media with the Cody story than with the Aunt Emily
6 story, yeah.

7 I think it is changing but it had to come,
8 again, from, you know, the Indigenous people that would --
9 Indigenous journalists, Indigenous programming, Indigenous
10 TV. You know, it's not the mainstream that's going to make
11 those changes.

12 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay. Okay,
13 *merci beaucoup*. When you talk about the APTN, are you
14 referring to Taken? Okay, they do an amazing ---

15 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Yes, (indiscernible)
16 great story.

17 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Great story.

18 **MS. MYRNA LAPLANTE:** Yeah.

19 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** And thank
20 God, not Mr. Goodlord, but thank God for -- or thank
21 Creator for those who make sure that we indicate Canadians
22 and the rest of the people across Canada. Thank you again,
23 and *merci beaucoup*. We have gift and you can explain.

24 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** I will.

25 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Oh, she will.

1 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Myrna, thank you very
2 much. There are two types of gifts. The first gift is the
3 matriarchs of the Haida Gwaii, when the hearings were
4 happening in Smithers, had called out in the Haida Gwaii
5 for the harvesting of eagle feathers, so that each family
6 would be given an eagle feather for their strength and for
7 their story once they had told their stories. So, there
8 are feathers wrapped in red cloth that signifies the Red
9 Dress Project and that.

10 There is also a gift from the Inquiry, from
11 the Commissioners and the staff, and those are little seeds
12 and what the Commissioners have asked other families is if
13 they can plant those seeds and send us pictures of what
14 grows? Because the seeds are significant of new life and
15 new growth. So, we hope that, as the Inquiry, that there
16 will be new life, new growth for you after you have come
17 and told your truth. So, please, send us pictures if you
18 do have anything that grows from those seeds.

19 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Mr. Registrar, if we
20 could adjourn or conclude this matter, and we'll take a 15
21 or 20-minute break and the next matter will resume around
22 11:30. Thank you.

23 **Exhibits (code: P01P06P0201)**

24 **Exhibit 1:** Digital folder of 54 images displayed on
25 monitors during public hearing.

1 **Exhibit 2:** Crystal Fafard's presentation and
2 recommendation, entitled: "Aunt Emily Osmond
3 (LaPlante) Presentation and Recommendations
4 to the Inquiry on Murdered and Missing
5 Indigenous Women and Girls November 22,
6 2017", four numbered pages.

7 Forthcoming submission: Myrna LaPlante will share search-
8 and-rescue materials she developed with the National
9 Inquiry.

10 --- Upon recessing at 11:11

11 --- Upon resuming at 11:47

12 **Hearing # 2**

13 **Witness: Barbara Badger and Sheila Ledoux**

14 **In Relation to Shelley Napope**

15 **Heard by Commissioner: Brian Eyolfson**

16 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

17 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Good morning.

19 Commissioner Eyolfson, I'd like to introduce to the next
20 family members that will be sharing their story. Right
21 beside me is Barb Badger, and beside her is Sheila Ledoux.
22 Both Barb and Sheila would like to make a promise with an
23 eagle feather.

24 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good morning Barbara,
25 do you promise to tell your truth in a good way today?

1 **MS. BARBARA BADGER:** Yes.

2 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay, thank you, and
3 good morning, Sheila, do you promise to tell your truth in
4 a good way today?

5 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yes, I do.

6 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay, thank you.

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Commissioner,
8 Barb and Sheila will be sharing with us today the story of
9 Shelley Napope and Shelley's murder. And so, I would like
10 to actually start with Sheila, and one of the questions I
11 would like to ask is if you can start with either a fond
12 memory or sharing some of Shelley's strengths with the
13 Commissioner? So, sorry, I'll ask that again. If maybe
14 you can share some of Shelley's strengths?

15 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** My late niece, Shelley,
16 was born July 31, 1976. We don't know the particular day
17 Shelley had passed, but she passed in 1992. Shelley's
18 remains were found in 1994. The relationship I had with my
19 late niece was an open-door policy between the two of us.
20 Shelley was a child that could not be controlled. She was
21 very strong minded. If she was going to do something, she
22 would just do it, but the relationship I had with my late
23 niece was memorable.

24 I remember coming in, in 1989, from
25 Edmonton, Alberta, and my two late nieces came to see me at

1 the bus depot and it was six o'clock in the morning. And
2 that morning, I could feel the love because both of my late
3 nieces came and hugged me, and I was eight and a half
4 months pregnant with a big belly, and to feel that love and
5 knowing that I was missed.

6 Shelley would come and stay with me off and
7 on at my apartment on Confederation Drive. In 1991,
8 Shelley was a very -- she liked to laugh. She had a very
9 caring heart and she would do things and say things that
10 sometimes would just ease the moment, but I know that she
11 carried a lot of hardship.

12 Shelley was a joy to be around and she was
13 loved. She was loved by her family. She was loved by her
14 extended family. In our family it's not just your
15 immediate family where you have a husband and a wife and a
16 son and a daughter; in our family, we have an extended
17 family and we parent each others' children. So, our
18 extended kinship is greater than just a version of an
19 immediate family.

20 When Shelley lived with me, she was in and
21 out of solvent abuse. She was in and out of drugs,
22 partying, but I never ever judged her. I always took her
23 into my home because that's the relationship I had with my
24 nieces and nephews, that open door, that they could come
25 and talk to me whenever they needed.

1 There's one time when I had this old couch,
2 because I was a single parent moving back from a broken
3 relationship, and my late -- my late niece had come back,
4 and she was having a shower, and I told her, "Feed
5 yourself", and the boys were playing on the floor with
6 their toys. And, we had went to bed and I had this old
7 couch, it was a green couch that you had to fold it up and
8 click it and then push it and it would become a couch, and
9 that's where Shelley -- that was her bed.

10 And, I got up that morning and I couldn't
11 believe it that my son, Evan, and my son, Jonathan, and
12 Shelley actually fit on that little couch, and she said
13 that Evan got up and he went and woke her up and he said he
14 was scared. So, she lifted up the blanket and she let him
15 sleep with her on this little couch.

16 And then my other son got up, John got up
17 and he went and slept with her on that couch, and when I
18 got up that morning, I was -- I went to go check on my
19 boys. I went and looked and I was thinking, oh my
20 goodness, how all three of them fit on this little narrow
21 couch, and I told her if she was tired that she could go
22 sleep on my bed.

23 Shelley had a very kind heart, and she had
24 this smile on her face. When they found her remains in
25 1994, they had contacted Ernie Walker and he had -- he had

1 photographed the place where my late niece was laid, and he
2 had the job of removing Shelley's remains, and we didn't
3 see those pictures until the court proceedings.

4 The other one was the sketching that they
5 did, the sketches from the -- the skulls from the women,
6 from my niece. They did sketches of them and they were put
7 into the paper. And, at this time, there was no
8 communication between the families and the police at that
9 time because it was in the 1990s. There was no
10 communication at all. We had no -- we had no support back
11 then. There was nothing. There was no -- there was no
12 liaison, there was no caseworker, there was nobody there to
13 help us or even let us know what was going on with their
14 investigation or to even communicate to the family what was
15 happening. So, like I said, it was through media that we
16 would find things as we would go along.

17 We come from a family of 10. There's 10
18 siblings in our family, and Marilyn is the second oldest in
19 our family. When these sketches came out, I remember
20 looking at them and not really making a connection to them,
21 and not even knowing because we had no communication.
22 There was a lack of communication with the ongoing
23 investigation between the Saskatoon City Police, the RCMP.
24 So, there was no communication between those two -- like
25 ourselves and the police services.

1 It was later on in, in the years that we
2 figured out that Victoria Crawford ran a care home, and
3 that was after the fact. After the fact when we were in
4 the court proceedings and everything like that. We had
5 learned after the fact that it wasn't brought to our
6 family's attention that Victoria Crawford lived a block
7 away from my parents' home, and that John Crawford resided
8 at that residence, and we did not have any knowledge of
9 that.

10 With the ongoing investigation, there was a
11 lot of times where we would have to rely on each other. We
12 would have to comfort each other and console each other
13 because we didn't have that support. We didn't have any
14 counsellors. We didn't have any health support that they
15 do now. Back then there was basically nothing. It was our
16 family going through this system alone, and the best way to
17 describe it is being in a room, being entered into a room
18 that's pitch black, and they tell you to try and find your
19 own way out, there's another door on the other side of the
20 room, and that's my best way of explaining how our family
21 went through this process, was going through blindly and
22 not knowing what the next day was going to bring.

23 The other part that was hard was having to
24 ask for her remains and not getting them right away. That
25 was a big struggle for our family, was trying to get that,

1 her remains, so that we could have a burial, a funeral,
2 some closure. But for me, I think there'll never be
3 closure on this because this man took three people that
4 were loved. They were somebody's daughter, somebody's
5 niece, somebody's granddaughter, somebody's cousin.

6 I feel that with everything that has gone on
7 in the 1990s, there were so many things that were lacking
8 that we had to somehow come together as a family to get
9 through this tragedy that happened to us. And, our
10 matriarch, our mother, was the one who was able to, through
11 her faith, pull us through this and be able to -- always
12 telling us that revenge, hurting another person would not
13 bring Shelley back and her strong faith. She used to say
14 the Rosary everyday. Even when we were at the courthouse
15 she would say Rosary. She was the one that pulled us
16 through that court proceedings, the trial, because like I
17 said, we had zero support when it came to the court and it
18 came to the lack of sources and support for us at that
19 time.

20 We were able to finally have Shelley's
21 funeral, but with the media hounding us, that was one of
22 the toughest things I think a family has to go through,
23 when it's this -- being so sensitive and having the media
24 being on the contrary, the opposite, wanting a story,
25 wanting to know how we're feeling, what we're feeling.

1 At that particular time with everything that
2 was going on and the chaos that was happening with the
3 court and the police and our family, with the lack of
4 communication, it was so chaotic because there was no
5 supports. But, then we always had the media wanting to
6 know how we were feeling, or in regards to the person that
7 had taken the life of my niece, what we were feeling, and I
8 don't think at that particular time we could put words to
9 how we were feeling.

10 The other thing that I wanted to touch on
11 was I took care of my parents. I didn't live too far away
12 from my parents, and when we were in the trial, when we
13 were going to court, there was a particular time my mom had
14 phoned me and I had just dropped them off from court, and I
15 had went home and mom had phoned me and was talking about
16 the court proceedings. And, she was speaking English, she
17 wasn't speaking Cree because normally she would speak Cree
18 and English, and she was asking me a question on what the
19 lawyers were talking about because she didn't quite
20 understand what was happening.

21 So, I was trying my best to help my mom to
22 understand that part in the court proceedings because my
23 parents were having a hard time with the court and
24 proceedings that happened in court, they way the lawyers
25 speak back and forth to the judge, the way the lawyers

1 speak back and forth to each other. For the longest time,
2 Mark Brayford and Hugh Harradence would call my colleague,
3 and back then I didn't understand what that meant. I was
4 assuming that they meant John Crawford. I finally figured
5 it out that they were calling the Crown prosecutor their
6 colleague. I was able to figure that out.

7 So, some of that was trial and error on our
8 family because, like I said, we had no supports in the
9 court system. And, when we were talking on the phone, my
10 mother and I, somebody came on the phone and stopped our
11 conversation and told us that we could not talk about this
12 on the phone, and said to us that it is in a court
13 proceeding and that we had to stop talking about it and to
14 talk about something else and not that, and they got out of
15 our conversation on the phone. So, that was another thing
16 that happened to us that I was, like, questioning. Why
17 would they come on the phone when my mom was asking me a
18 question about the court?

19 That happened twice to us, and the second
20 time it happened to us I just told my mom (speaking in
21 Native language). I told her to speak Cree. I said they
22 won't understand what you're saying anyway because you're
23 speaking in Cree. They won't understand what you're
24 saying. After she had talked to me in Cree, I said I'm
25 coming over and I ended the conversation and I drove over

1 to her house.

2 And the other thing in 1996 that really was
3 very disturbing was the way the courtroom and the hallway
4 were set up at the courthouse here in Saskatoon. Back
5 then, when the judge would say "recess", we would come out
6 of the courtroom, and there was a bench along the wall.
7 And, on the other side of the corridor, the hallway, the
8 corridor there, there was another bench there that had a
9 metal thing on it and that's where Crawford sat.

10 So, Crawford was able to see us, and we were
11 able to see him throughout the court proceedings, because
12 -- I found that very disturbing because when we would come
13 out sometimes we would be very emotional with what was just
14 said in court, and there was no area for our family to have
15 privacy. There was no area for us to go at that time, and
16 John Crawford's mom sat with him at this bench and he had
17 two guards that would stand with him.

18 The other thing, too, is the informant had
19 two guards, and he was in the same hallway as us, and
20 sometimes it was really difficult because we had to endure
21 this during the court proceedings. So, during that time,
22 we would sit -- we would sit in the hallway and he could
23 see us, and we could see him. And, sometimes I used to
24 stand in front of my mom and dad because I was trying to
25 shield them from him because he could see us. So, at that

1 time, every day during court, he would be there, and so
2 would the informant would be there too. So, that was a
3 really hard thing to go through and trying to console each
4 other during that time was very difficult.

5 The other thing that was the -- the
6 informant, I did not understand about Corrigan's deal with
7 the police. So, that was another area that was very, very
8 harsh and very hard to take, was the deal that he had made
9 with the police in their investigation, finding out about
10 the monetary that was given to him for his testimony and
11 his lengthy past also that was brought up in the trial.

12 That was really very questionable coming
13 from a family that wanted questions answered but didn't get
14 anything and trying to -- trying to understand the whole
15 term of what his part was, and not being -- that not being
16 brought to our attention until later on. So, that was the
17 -- that was bittersweet. That was really hard to absorb
18 that and digest that. I still have problems with that
19 today.

20 The other thing was the interaction between
21 the lawyers during the court proceedings. That was another
22 part where I think we had to try to understand with the
23 terminology. Back then, like I said, there was no supports
24 in the court system. We had to try our best to get through
25 the court system and try to understand conversations

1 sometimes between the lawyers, between what was being
2 brought forth and what was being -- when the witnesses were
3 coming up, because they had -- they had Ernie Walker, the
4 anthropologist, from the time he had recovered the remains
5 and the graph -- the graphic pictures, the tape recordings
6 were really hard to do, hard where we had to collect
7 ourselves.

8 Sometimes we had to leave the courtroom and
9 go out of the court and just collect ourselves emotionally,
10 physically and mentally because when you see something that
11 you're unprepared for it -- you kind of keep that image
12 here and it stays here, and it doesn't go away.

13 Also having her -- the way they handled the
14 releasing of her remains. That was -- it took our family a
15 hard time to get her remains. It seemed like we had to
16 struggle with the police, with the investigators to try and
17 get Shelley home, and that was one of the biggest hurdles
18 for us.

19 When we went to court, we went to court with
20 our late parents, my mom, my dad, my sister Barb,
21 Charlotte, Marilyn, and we always went together. My late
22 mom was in a wheelchair, so I used to push her into the
23 courtroom. I feel that our mother was the one who helped
24 us get through the process of the court. She was a very
25 strong woman and was able to tell us and talk to us in a

1 gentle way by telling us that revenge and saying something
2 hurtful to John was not going to bring our -- my niece
3 back. That wouldn't fix it. That wouldn't make it better.
4 So, having her there with us through this process was her
5 way of leading her children in a respectful way, in a
6 humbling way, in a caring way because that's the lady she
7 was.

8 Also, the Crown prosecutor, Terry Hines,
9 tried his best to help us with some of the court
10 proceedings that were happening. He would kind of prepare
11 us and say tomorrow is going to be a difficult day, and to
12 also try to answer some of our questions, like what was
13 being said between them. He would help us in that
14 situation and that capacity when the court was -- when the
15 trial was going on.

16 As a family, we had no knowledge of what was
17 ahead of us when it came to the media, when it came to the
18 interaction with the police, with the RCMP, when it came to
19 the court system, and I think that that lack of
20 communication, that lack of compassion, that lack of
21 empathy for a family that was going through something like
22 this was not there at that time.

23 There were times where I would question the
24 justice system because of their lack of informing us or
25 preparing us, and when I say that, I say that there was no

1 guidance. There was nothing. And later on, knowing that
2 they went all the way to the Supreme Court with this,
3 Victoria Crawford really trying to get her son freed from
4 what he had did. It -- I still -- I still think about it.
5 It's still there, the "what if", the "I should have", the
6 grief that goes along with that.

7 I have my recommendations. I hope that with
8 this Inquiry that families have a better relationship with
9 the RCMP and the city police, and that they show more of a
10 gentler compassionate side to families that come forward
11 for their loved ones that are missing, that they don't make
12 allegations of, oh, they're shackled up. Oh, they're
13 partying. Oh, they'll come back in a couple of days. And,
14 taking our missing people seriously because back then we
15 didn't have anything, we didn't have people to help us
16 through this.

17 The other thing is -- the other
18 recommendation that I hold very dear to my heart and that
19 you take into context is a liaison in the courtroom,
20 language interpreters, because there's a language barrier
21 there that was overseen in our case, that was overlooked.

22 The other one is an interpreter. To have an
23 interpreter for our older people, like my parents, to have
24 somebody there in their -- in their Cree language, their
25 Saulteaux language, their Dakota language, their Dene

1 language, to interpret for them what is going on because
2 that is their loved one that is going through this court
3 proceedings, that is their family, and I think they need to
4 know exactly what's going on because there was nothing
5 there when we went through this. There was nothing. A
6 person to help and assist families through the court and I
7 don't mean just the linguistics of the court, I'm talking
8 about emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally.

9 By the grace of our upraising through our
10 parents, we were able to console each other. We were able
11 to comfort each other. Listening through the recordings,
12 the graphic pictures, we were able to help each other.
13 But, there was times when, when it was unbearable and it
14 was difficult.

15 To keep the family -- when they're doing an
16 investigation, to keep the family included, not to be able
17 to hear bits and pieces of it through the media, or through
18 what the police are saying, or what is being leaked through
19 social media. To keep the families involved because that
20 is their loved one. They need to have that empathy. They
21 need to have that compassion, and to be able to support
22 those families, because what we went through there was
23 nothing. We had nobody.

24 There were days when, when I was numb. I
25 felt numb. I felt sick because I didn't know how to

1 release some of that, what was being said in the court. I
2 had to try and interpret and understand and digest what was
3 said in a court proceedings for one day and know that
4 tomorrow there was going to be another court day, and
5 another day of getting through the media, and just knowing
6 that I was going to be sitting in that hallway and I know
7 that the person that killed my niece would be sitting
8 across looking at us.

9 There was no shelter for us in the court
10 proceedings from him. There was nothing and that was the
11 one thing that really -- that really -- I hated that. I
12 really truly hated that because I had to see him every day,
13 sitting across from us.

14 I hope that with these recommendations that
15 I've made to you that no other family will experience what
16 we experienced in the 1990s, in 1996 when we went to court,
17 because when we went to court, it was us going alone. And,
18 I hope that -- back then it was a family going to court
19 alone. It was a family trying to get through this system
20 alone, and there are many times when I would look at it and
21 think, really, you're not taking into context what a family
22 is saying to you. You're not taking into context what
23 we're saying is valid. You're not taking into context our
24 feelings.

25 So, there was a lot of barriers, there was a

1 lot of red tape I felt like our family had to get through
2 just to be heard, just to be listened to, and it seemed
3 like -- it seemed like we were just shuffled from one thing
4 to another thing and not having that understanding between
5 what was going on and what was happening. Some days it
6 felt like I was there but really not there. And, the
7 language barrier, that was really difficult for not just
8 myself but for our family going through the court systems
9 and not understanding some of the things that were being
10 said.

11 So, those are the things that I'm bringing
12 forward, and I thank you for listening to me, and I thank
13 the grandma for sitting there.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Sheila, can I ask
15 you just a couple of questions to clarify some points?

16 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Okay.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Now, when you shared
18 with the Commissioner, you were talking about a couple of
19 things during the -- the fact that you learned during the
20 trial Corrigan's relationship to being an informant. And
21 so, if I can just take a step back and talk briefly about
22 John Crawford? I understand that the family doesn't want
23 to spend any time publicizing his name more than is
24 necessary, but you had mentioned to the Commissioner that
25 he was convicted of three murders.

1 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yes.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes. And are you
3 familiar with the, the other two who he also murdered, the
4 names of the other two who he murdered?

5 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yes.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, it was Eva
7 Taysup and Calinda Waterhen that he also murdered.

8 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yes.

9 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Were the trials for
10 them separate from the trials for Shelley?

11 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** When we went to trial,
12 it was just for my late niece. It was just for Shelley.

13 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** When John Crawford
14 was convicted, did they do the sentencing of the three
15 together or separately, do you know?

16 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** I just know that with
17 the court proceedings that they had with the jury, they had
18 each of the jury members stand up and make their guilty
19 plea and they had the one person talking.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, at the time,
21 the jury found him guilty?

22 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yes.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Okay. Do, do you
24 have any familiarity -- I know that you're familiar with,
25 with a book...

1 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yeah.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** ...and an author,
3 Warren Goulding.

4 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yeah.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, has he talked
6 with the family or worked with the family as he was writing
7 the book "Just Another Indian: A Serial Killer and
8 Canada's Indifference"?

9 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** He, he was at -- during
10 the court proceedings, during the trial, he was there. He
11 was another person that kind of helped us in areas through
12 the court when we had questions or wasn't sure about
13 things. He was there, and yes, he did have a relationship
14 with our family.

15 He was there when everything was in turmoil.
16 He was able to help us in bits and pieces of the trial. He
17 was able to talk with us. Like I said, at that time, there
18 was -- there was no supports. We had nobody and he did
19 have a relationship with us.

20 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And I understand you
21 might have his book on your lap there.

22 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yeah.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Can I just ask you
24 to hold it up for one minute? "Just Another Indian". So,
25 he actually wrote the story ---

1 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yeah.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** --- of the three
3 women who were murdered. Did the family have any
4 familiarity or any knowledge that while the trials were
5 waiting to happen that -- while John Crawford was out on
6 bail that he was assaulting other women?

7 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Like I said, with the
8 lack of communication with the police, we had no knowledge.
9 Nothing. There was no communication with him in regards to
10 that. There was -- it was, like I said, bits and pieces,
11 us putting together bits and pieces because we had no
12 knowledge or recollection of what was happening or what
13 their investigation detailed.

14 Most of that came out when we were in the
15 court proceedings. Like I said with the informant, he had
16 a lengthy criminal past and that was later brought to our
17 knowledge. That was later brought to our attention and it
18 wasn't until those court proceedings that we were able to
19 see this informant and the type of person he was, and the
20 background that he had, and knowing that he -- that he was
21 there when my niece was killed. That he was there. He
22 witnessed this.

23 So, that was later brought on in the court
24 proceedings. That was our communication back and forth,
25 and things were unravelling for us in the court that there

1 was no information given to us. So, as the court
2 proceeded, that's how we got our information and were able
3 to put it together. Like, we had to figure this out
4 together as a family. We had to figure this out and digest
5 the hard parts of what was happening.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, essentially,
7 like, while participating every day in court, by
8 attending ---

9 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yeah.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** --- is when you, you
11 find out connections and you hear about Bill Corrigan's
12 role, he's an informant, but he was also, as you had just
13 mentioned, there when Shelley was murdered. And so, you
14 learning these details through the court process and when
15 you were talking about being shocked ---

16 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yeah.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** --- I'm assuming
18 you've also read the book. Was there things that you
19 learned in just reading the book that you weren't aware of?

20 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** This book took me a
21 while to read. Like I said, when you're going through
22 something this traumatic, you have to take it in chunks.
23 You have to digest it in chunks. Being able to read this
24 book, it took -- it took me a little over a year to read
25 this book because of the overwhelming emotions that I would

1 feel as I was reading the book. And, it would take me
2 right back to the court proceedings and remembering the
3 recordings that John Crawford and Bill, Bill Corrigan's
4 taped recordings that were played in the courtroom.

5 So, it took me a fair time to read this book
6 because it would take me right back, and it has taken me a
7 long time to be able to speak. Darlene, my cousin, knows
8 that I'm not a -- I'm not the type of person to go and
9 speak to the media or speak out about this. I'm the person
10 that stands in a background, that I -- I tend to do things
11 quietly and it's really taken me physically, spiritually,
12 emotionally and physically to come here today.

13 I thought I was doing an in-camera and it
14 got switched to where I am right now, and the feelings and
15 the emotions that I carry, I just wish back then that -- I
16 wish back then we had those supports that they have now
17 because back then, we had nothing and that was the hardest
18 thing for me.

19 So, it did take me a year to read his book
20 and it's something that I hold dearly because this book
21 wasn't given to me. This book was given to my late
22 parents. Warren had given this book to my late parents and
23 it was one of the things that I had asked my dad when my
24 mom had passed, if I could have her book, their book I
25 should say, not her book, their book, and it took me a

1 while but -- and talking today, this is something that,
2 that's out of my element. This is something that's --
3 something I wouldn't normally do because I'm the type of
4 person that's in the background, that's where I chose to
5 be, that's where I want to be, but I feel that Shelley's
6 presence is with me.

7 I feel that I'm able to say what really
8 actually happened to us as a family in the 1990s when this
9 case, and these remains, and our loved ones were found
10 under the circumstances with a lot of empty spaces that --
11 where our family was left out, where our family wasn't
12 included in the investigation, in the trial, in the court
13 proceedings, I felt that we were left out in many areas of
14 the justice system and that they need to bridge that gap.

15 They need to make a solid foundation for
16 those families. They need to have something in place for
17 them. I just hope that it never -- a family never has to
18 experience what we experienced in the 1990s. I hope that
19 they get a more -- more support in the justice system, the
20 criminal system, that they have a better communication with
21 the police service, the investigating services and that
22 they have that care, that care that we didn't have.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you for
24 providing those clarifications. One of the things that,
25 more recently, and this is already before the Commissioner

1 in his binder, Mr. Goulding actually wrote an opinion, an
2 op-ed, talking a little bit about the case and the book,
3 and he's been a good advocate for raising these issues, and
4 characterizes a lot of the treatment the family went
5 through, tactics that in his opinion reeked of racism and
6 brutality, and I'm assuming that with your comments today
7 you agreed, but you found a very eloquent and gentle way to
8 put it.

9 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** At the same time as the
10 court proceedings were happening, there was the Paul
11 Bernardo case that was happening at the same time, and
12 those were non-native women that he killed. It seemed like
13 there was also -- my sister brought to my attention too
14 that there was, at that same time in the media, there was
15 some show dogs that were killed that overshadowed that this
16 man had killed three First Nations women.

17 Shelley was the youngest. She was 16, and
18 it just -- when I think about it and I look back on it, it
19 has left a bitter taste because this person took something
20 that's irreplaceable. He took something that we won't get
21 back, and it makes me question the justice system.

22 Not knowing where he's at is another thing.
23 Our family has no -- doesn't know where he is, and for me,
24 I would like to know. I want to know where he is. The
25 last I know of him is that he's here in Saskatoon. Of all

1 places, here, and I still don't know because that wasn't
2 confirmed yet for me. That wasn't confirmed for me that if
3 he's being held here.

4 I want to know. I think it's important to
5 know, and I have no recollection or knowledge if he's being
6 held here in Saskatoon, and for me, it's bittersweet
7 because his mom lives here. I bump into his mom once in a
8 while, and all of the memories flood back when I see her.
9 And, I think that if he is here, I'd like him moved,
10 because his mom probably has -- his mom probably visits
11 him, and for our family, we go visit the graveyard. And, I
12 will always want to know where he is. If he goes up for
13 parole, I want to be there to make sure that he never is
14 released and that he never harms another human being.
15 That's what I'd like to know.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And just one more
17 question in regard to this. In regard to the article I'm
18 referring to that Mr. Goulding writes, he talks about the
19 sentence and the fact that three Indigenous murders, three
20 women murdered resulted in Mr. Crawford getting 25 years
21 concurrently, that means sentenced together. And, in the
22 article on page 5 of 7, he writes and he says, "The John
23 Martin Crawford case was not particularly unique in terms
24 of public response from media attention. There simply
25 wasn't much interest on the part of mainstream media or

1 society in those days. It certainly wasn't a Paul Bernardo
2 moment, but then again his victims were pretty white
3 girls." And in that case, there was a different, a
4 different outcome in terms of sentencing. So, he's using
5 that analogy, and you had just said to the Commissioner
6 that that Paul Bernardo case was going on at the same time.

7 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Yeah.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And so, when the
9 family -- the family felt like it wasn't fair treatment
10 that three Indigenous women's lives didn't seem to equal
11 the value of three non-indigenous women's lives?

12 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** From my opinion and how
13 I'm feeling, he took three people. He took three people's
14 lives, and the sentence doesn't fit what he did. Like I
15 said, when you're going through the justice system and you
16 have zero supports, this is what happens. People like John
17 Crawford get 25 years, and it's three people's lives that
18 were gone. It's three people's lives that he took from his
19 own hands, and I feel that he should have got more than
20 what was given to him, and that the justice system failed
21 us there in that time, in that time in the 1990s.

22 They failed our family, and not just ours,
23 but the two other girls also. They failed us. They need
24 to look at stiffer penalties. They need to realize that
25 when a person harms another person -- and it just wasn't

1 one person; it was three people. It was three women. It
2 was three daughters. It was somebody's daughter. It was
3 somebody's niece. It was somebody's granddaughter. It was
4 somebody's cousin. It was somebody's friend and that's all
5 he got. I feel like we were failed. They failed us there
6 and I hope that with these recommendations that the justice
7 system doesn't fail anymore families, families don't fall
8 through the cracks with the court system, that their loved
9 ones are looked at and recognized.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you so much.
11 Barb, I understand that you also want to share with us.
12 Before we completely finish, I'll just check in to make
13 sure we haven't missed anything or if you have any other
14 comments, Sheila, but I just want to afford Barb the
15 opportunity to share what she wanted to share as well.

16 **MS. BARBARA BADGER:** Well, it's afternoon
17 now. Good afternoon, and I'd like to first acknowledge my
18 niece. I want to say Shelley was here and they're going to
19 know that you were loved. They're going to know that you
20 weren't just another Native girl. I still recall this --
21 Shelley grew up in a very harsh family like ourselves. You
22 know, everybody has their little ups and downs in families
23 and Shelley was no different. But, like my sister said she
24 was a very strong, independent willed young girl, but she
25 loved to laugh.

1 The picture I brought today, I wanted to --
2 she's probably looking down on me and saying, "Jeez auntie,
3 I'm going to get you back for this." I remember that year
4 I took that -- that picture was taken. It was picture day
5 at the school at the residence, and she wanted me to perm
6 her hair. So, I did, and the results weren't what they
7 looked right there, because after everything was said and
8 done, she went and looked in the mirror and she goes,
9 "Auntie, what did you do to me?" So, it took a lot of
10 rinsing and trying to straighten her hair out and finally
11 able to tame it down to how that picture is now. But the
12 smile she's got on there, that's the Shelley I remember.

13 I happened to be in Duck Lake, before
14 anything started in March of 1992. It was the last time I
15 spoke to my niece. I didn't realize that would be the last
16 time I'd ever see her. I ran into her and smiled at her
17 and she said, "Auntie, did you find what I gave you?" And
18 I said, "Yeah." I said, "When did you come over?" And she
19 said, oh, she said, "I just wanted to surprise you."

20 And what she had did was she had left a
21 birthday card and a picture of herself that she had taken
22 out of a Polaroid, and she had fish lips and -- a real
23 funny picture anyways, and she said, "I told you I wouldn't
24 forget your birthday." And that was the last time I and
25 her talked and shared.

1 We had made our first missing report in May,
2 and like my sister said, I remember when my dad took my
3 sister Marilyn, and I remember Marilyn being so mad, and
4 she said, "Well if they don't do anything, we will." And,
5 and what angers me was throughout that first couple of
6 years before they found her remains, there was never
7 anything reported back to us. My dad would -- kept -- or
8 one of us would phone and see if there was any information
9 that they would have recovered or if they did anything at
10 all to try and find her and it was always the same thing,
11 "Oh, we're working on it." "Well, she's 16 years old."
12 "Well, she's going to turn 17. We can't make her come home
13 if she doesn't want to come home," and that was pretty well
14 our interactions. And then we started hearing stories of,
15 "Oh, I saw Shelley in the mall." "Oh, did you know Shelley
16 moved to Edmonton and she's staying with this guy? She's
17 doing really well," you know?

18 As a family, we fed on those, thinking,
19 yeah, well, she's going to be okay. She's going to come
20 back. When she's ready, she'll come back to us. I think
21 deep down inside we -- you don't want to go to that dark
22 place. And, I remember that night they told my sister. I
23 just happened to be in Duck Lake, and I got a call at the
24 house that I was in, and my auntie told me, she said Barb,
25 she said I'm at your -- I'm at Meryl (phon) and Dobie's

1 (phon) she said, "You better come over." And I said,
2 "Why?" I said, "What's going on?" She said I think you
3 better come. She said I -- I said, yo, I said something
4 happen to Meryl? And she said no Barb, she said they found
5 Shelley. She said, "She's gone." I remember I just
6 dropped the phone. I just fell to my knees. It took a
7 while. My husband finally was able to comfort me and give
8 me the -- he kept telling me, "Your sister Meryl needs
9 you." He said, "You got to go."

10 So, we went, and my sister was inconsolable.
11 I'll always remember her cries. So, I had to step in and
12 try and find out what happened. My auntie gave me the card
13 that the police officer had left. So, I phoned the police
14 officer, told her who I was and how I was related to
15 Shelley and he gave me -- he said that -- he asked me if I
16 had heard anything about three bodies that were recovered
17 in the Moon Lake area and Saskatoon area, and I said yes, I
18 told him.

19 And, he said one of -- one of the remains,
20 he said, "We made a positive ID as being Shelley," and I
21 said, "What?" I told him, "How?" And he said what -- he
22 said, "Did you see the pictures?" And, I said, "Yes." I
23 said, "I saw them when they first put them out on the
24 news," and the picture they had of Shelley it didn't
25 resemble her at all. And, I don't know, maybe I just

1 didn't want to believe.

2 And, the officer told us that one of
3 Shelley's friends remembered her smile and how her teeth
4 were so jagged and that because Shelley used to always say,
5 my million-dollar smile, she used to call it then. But her
6 friend remembered that when she was looking, and she was
7 the one that phoned into the police and she said, "There's
8 a friend of mine that I haven't heard from in a long time.
9 I haven't seen her and she kind of reminds me of her," and
10 she gave the cops her name, and from there, that's where
11 they got her dental records, and that's how they found out
12 that she was one of the girls. Little did I know that's
13 where our roller coaster ride was going to start.

14 Throughout the investigation, like my sister
15 said, there was no -- no interactions and it was about six
16 months after that they really started doing the
17 investigating and that, that they finally started asking us
18 questions about Shelley, like who -- where did she live
19 most of the time? Who were her friends? What did she do?
20 Where did she hang out? Where did -- all these that they
21 never even bothered asking us when we -- when we had those
22 missing reports on her.

23 They never took that time to ask us any of
24 those questions, and then all of a sudden, now they were
25 asking us, and I remember being so angry and -- but like my

1 mom -- our mom, like, was the one that kept us -- kept us
2 strong, and kept us not to go into the dark places that a
3 lot of times you can end up. And, the trial started.

4 Like my sister said, I remember walking in
5 there, sitting there, and sitting right across from us is
6 John Martin Crawford, handcuffed to the railings of the
7 bench he was sitting on. And, this is what you are to see
8 everyday. And, I always remember when he'd be sitting
9 there, he'd glance up at us, and he'd have that smirk on
10 his face. Man, it took a lot to not allow me to get up and
11 go and smack his face. And, I kept thinking, why do they
12 have him here? You know, couldn't they have him in another
13 room? Or couldn't we go some -- you know, that -- it
14 seemed like Shelley was not that important. And, during
15 the court proceedings, I've heard stuff and seen stuff that
16 will never be erased from my memory.

17 Terry Hines, the prosecutor, tried his best
18 to help us try and understand whatever court proceedings
19 was going on, or try and prepare us for the next day.

20 My title in my family is little mother. Any
21 time something happens within our family it's, "Go to Barb.
22 Barb will help you. Barb will put things together," and I
23 became the spokesperson for the family. I spoke to the
24 media, along with my sister, Sheila, and I remember that
25 one incident, how they were talking about when they found

1 the remains up in the Moon Lake area, and I remember
2 getting so angry at Brayford when he was talking about --
3 they were -- they showed up on a screen, they showed the
4 area where the bodies were found, and they had outlined
5 where each body was located. And then along that area
6 there was also some sweat lodges that were around the same
7 area.

8 And, I remember getting so angry when he
9 said, you know, he said, "How do we know that those huts
10 that where we found near the bodies weren't some sort of --
11 weren't some sort of cult people that were doing -- he said
12 -- they made it sound like Shelley, Calinda and Eva were --
13 were worshipped and were killed and -- like, they really
14 shredded our sweat lodge, and what it meant, and it just
15 happened to be there. And, I'm always grateful to Ernie
16 Walker for -- when he finally was able to talk after
17 Brayford just shredded our culture.

18 Ernie Walker explained to Brayford, "I know
19 the sweat lodge you're talking about," he said, "because I
20 helped build it. I work in Wanuskewin," he said, "and I
21 come and sweat out here with First Nation people because
22 that's where I'm -- I'm interested in their culture and
23 those aren't -- that's not a hut," he said, "and those
24 girls weren't" -- he said those girls weren't there for
25 what he had said.

1 And I thought my God, are you that naïve
2 about -- for a man that's educated, you sure don't educate
3 yourself too much on First Nations people, because you
4 didn't -- you never even took the time to find out what the
5 sweat lodge meant. You just made it sound like -- he made
6 it sound like these girls were sacrificed, and that they
7 were part of devil worshippers, and those were the words
8 that he used. And, you know, you're sitting there and
9 you're thinking, you know, like you want so much to want to
10 correct them, but you know that you couldn't.

11 But I was so grateful. Like I said, Ernie
12 Walker was able to clear that up, and I just felt like
13 telling Brayford, "There you go. Maybe you should get a
14 little bit of teaching yourself from Ernie Walker about
15 this." But, like I said, you know, my mother always,
16 throughout the whole proceedings kept telling us don't get
17 angry, don't ask -- don't revenge she said. She always
18 said, "Leave it to the Creator (speaking in Native
19 language)," she said and, and she was telling us that leave
20 it to the Creator that he'll take care of us and
21 everything.

22 Throughout that whole proceedings, you know,
23 we're sitting there, and then all of a sudden, they tell us
24 that the -- he said the first body that they had found was
25 -- it had been removed because it wasn't buried low enough.

1 He didn't bury her low enough that probably the wolves and
2 whatever animals out there were able to dig her up, and the
3 first body that was located was Shelley's.

4 And, I remember that screen and then all of
5 a sudden you could see what was left of her. We had to
6 endure stuff like that right through the whole trial.
7 Nobody prepared us. Nobody told us what was going to
8 happen, and that's what angers me.

9 I thank God now today, there's a little bit
10 of changes starting to happen, and in those -- in 1992 to
11 1995, like my sister said, there was no help from anybody.
12 We had to go through the trial, the investigation,
13 everything on our own. And, to top it off, if it wasn't
14 bad enough that we were dealing with the trial of Shelley,
15 and it seemed like they were downgraded as if they didn't
16 mean anything, because at that time Paul Bernardo and that
17 case where he killed his girlfriend's sister, Shelley ended
18 up during the trial that nothing -- the only time anything
19 was ever reported was at the beginning when they first
20 found the remains, and then when they finally made the
21 identity.

22 But in regards -- because they categorized
23 Paul Bernardo also as a serial killer, so was John Martin
24 Crawford. He wasn't any different. But, because they were
25 Native girls, I guess they weren't that important. That's

1 the way I looked at it. And, here this was a young white
2 girl that was killed, and they kept saying she came from a
3 good family, she came -- and they just really, really shone
4 -- really brought her out as somebody very special and
5 that. But, so were Shelley, Eva and Calinda. They were
6 special also. They had people that loved them. The only
7 difference was we were Native and that was a downfall.

8 That just angers me. I just wish -- when is
9 this going to stop? When is -- when is this, as First
10 Nation people, when their loved ones go missing, we're
11 always categorized as, "Oh, they come from a dysfunctional
12 family." They kept saying in the media Shelley was a
13 working girl. They kept saying Shelley was a party girl.
14 They were giving her all these different images of her and
15 nobody took the time to find out who the real Shelley was.

16 The media concentrated only on the negative
17 stuff. They never took the time to come and ask our family
18 how Shelley was growing up, who the real Shelley was. They
19 never took that time. They just took it for granted and
20 kind of made their own decision of what they were going to
21 say about them, and they didn't know who they were.

22 And if -- I give a lot of credit to, and
23 thanks to Warren Goulding. He was the individual, a non-
24 Native person that took the time to come and sit with each
25 and every one of the family members, not only with Shelley,

1 but with the Waterhen and the Taysup family. And, what he
2 wrote in that book about each of the girls came from our
3 families. He took the time to find out who the true
4 Shelley, Eva and Calinda were, and I am so grateful that he
5 was able to put that in writing. But, the sad thing about
6 it, you know, when it first got released, maybe a day or
7 two you'd hear something about, yeah, this new book called
8 "Just Another Indian" written by Warren Goulding, and then
9 after that, nothing.

10 I was -- I always said how sad it was that
11 our own Province of Saskatchewan wouldn't even recognize
12 him for trying to find a true identity and find a true --
13 of what happened to these three girls. Instead we had to
14 go to Edmonton, I and my sisters, and they awarded Warren
15 Goulding the Human ---

16 **MS. SHEILA LEDOUX:** Justice Award.

17 **MS. BARBARA BADGER:** The Human Justice
18 Award. And myself and my sister, along with the Taysup
19 family, we gave him the award. It took Alberta to do that
20 and our own home province wouldn't even -- wouldn't even
21 take a handshake to him or anything, and that's the sad
22 part of it.

23 Like I said, as First Nation people, it
24 shows that they don't see the good side, because we are
25 good. I think I am. I've had my problems, but I think I'm

1 a good person. And, also, at the same time, the guy that
2 killed those dogs was more important than -- than the three
3 girls that were found.

4 You know, it was a hard struggle and it
5 still is. 1995 was very difficult because we were finally
6 able to know where Shelley was. September, when we finally
7 was able to put her to rest, we didn't even have time as a
8 family to start grieving for her because three months down
9 the line, I lost all of my kids in a car accident. That
10 particular year, '95, I saw my parents age so drastically
11 because they had to bury four of their grandchildren.

12 I get comfort knowing now that Shelley is
13 with my children. Her and my daughter, Leora (phon), were
14 close. They used to always go and hang out with Auntie
15 Sheila and, God, the things they used to do to my poor
16 sister. But, that's the Shelley I want people to remember;
17 not the one that was depicted in the media as being a
18 working girl or a party girl; not the person they said that
19 she came from a dysfunctional family. They made it sound
20 like nobody cared for her, but we did.

21 And like my sister Sheila, I had an open-
22 door policy with Shelley because I knew if I tried to hold
23 her down or I knew if I tried to lecture her she would shut
24 down and that's not what she needed. What she needed was
25 somebody to hear her and to listen to her, and someone to

1 not judge her. And, she had a rough life, but I promised
2 her and I will hold that till the day that I'm gone, I
3 promised her I would never reveal some of the stuff she
4 told me.

5 I just want to remember her for the happy
6 times, and there was a lot of them. I just wish people
7 knew that. And, before coming to the hearing here, I was
8 sitting with my husband, and he asked me how I felt. You
9 know, I said, "I'm looking forward to this. I'm looking
10 forward to being able to share a little bit about Shelley
11 and what we went through."

12 The sad part about it, I said, is look at
13 the media today. I said every time you listen to the six
14 o'clock news or the national news, rather than talking
15 about the families that are hurting like us, and wanting to
16 be the voices for our children, for our nieces or our
17 sisters, they're not even concentrating on that. They're
18 concentrating on, oh, did you hear another -- another
19 member quit? Somebody else got let go. And, they were
20 talking about the negative side of internal stuff that
21 didn't concern us. They forgot -- they forgot about us.

22 The whole idea -- I was looking forward to
23 these hearings because I thought we will finally have that
24 opportunity to share the real Shelley and what we went
25 through as a family. Man, when I crossed my fingers, my

1 toes and even my eyes hoping this would become reality, and
2 people -- like I said, it, it just angered me when all I --
3 when I kept hearing all this negative stuff about the
4 Inquiry, and the hearings, and the Commissioners, and I
5 thought, my God you guys, what about the families? It's
6 there for us. We have that right to finally share
7 something that nobody wanted to even talk about.

8 We as the families here have that right to
9 tell people what we went through, and like my sister said,
10 we never had that support. And, God forbid, I will -- for
11 the rest of my life, I will always be there for families
12 that are going through the loss of a loved one because
13 every time we hear something on the media or the paper or
14 the news, another person has gone missing, that retriggers
15 everything for us because then it takes us right back to
16 when we went through that with Shelley. But with us, we
17 had some -- a little bit of closure which was the
18 individual that took their lives was found. I don't agree
19 with the sentence he got. It's just like a slap to the
20 family. 25 years for three girls lives he took. 25 years.

21 It's going to be 22 years since my kids left
22 and since we buried Shelley. Three more years, John Martin
23 Crawford is going to, what, be released? That's just --
24 where's the justice in that? That's what I want you guys
25 to think about.

1 Any time a loved one is gone missing, I want
2 you to remember the families that are hurting. I will
3 never stop talking about Shelley. I'll always advocate for
4 her. I'll always advocate for the murdered and missing
5 women, but I ask, remember, these hearings are for us.
6 These hearings are for our loved ones. That's what you
7 should be looking at. And, the recommendations that are,
8 that are being given out, for me, what I would like to see
9 is have that liaison in the courtroom. What I'd like to
10 see is the RCMP and city police take some kind of cultural
11 training when it comes to First Nation people because we
12 all have our different ways.

13 I'm from the Cree family, and if you would
14 have heard of how they tore our culture apart in that
15 courtroom, and how they were saying we were devil
16 worshippers, and that these girls were being -- man, this
17 is our culture you're talking about. That's what I say,
18 you know, like -- very important that any type of
19 individuals that are dealing with anything in particular
20 like us or through the courts that they should have that
21 sensitivity to at least try and find out a little bit about
22 -- take some kind of cultural training.

23 I know that we had offered to help a couple
24 of times and they said, yep, we'll doing it. We had
25 offered our services to go and help with the city police

1 and do some cross culture training. They said, yeah, we'll
2 take that into consideration. That was 10 years ago. They
3 never called us. As far as I know, they never did.

4 Just recently in the last little while I
5 know that they have a First Nation person working there,
6 but to me, it seemed like whoever was there wasn't really
7 working with the families but the one that was talking to
8 the media, trying to smooth things out and that's not what
9 the families need.

10 What the families need is a liaison person
11 to help with the investigating so at least to try and make
12 the families understand where the case is at and where it's
13 going and where they're having difficulties, because as we
14 -- we were not given that, nothing. Nobody said anything
15 to us and Terry Hines, the prosecutor, tried his best to
16 try and smooth things out for us. And that was it. That's
17 all we had was him. And, you know, you need that. You
18 need that because there's so many barriers, and you need
19 those people in there that -- to help the families.

20 My God, I know that if I had somebody there
21 to explain the terminology of a lot of the court stuff that
22 was happening, maybe I'd have a better understanding of why
23 what happens in court happens that way. Nobody told us
24 that. And, you know, it's so important and I think a lot
25 of those barriers would be broken if we had that

1 communication starting right from the beginning of after
2 you first report your loved one missing.

3 You know, at least make an effort of trying
4 to -- try and do what's asked of you and that. And, like I
5 said with us, it seemed like we were a bother every time we
6 would go and see and ask if they heard anything. And,
7 towards the end that's all they'd say to us, "Oh well,
8 she's 16 years old, we can't make her come home. She's 17
9 years old, we can't" -- and here they weren't even looking
10 for her. I don't think they were because they never asked
11 about her anywhere.

12 And then the media, man, if anybody needs
13 any kind of cross cultural training or human training, it's
14 them. Sorry to say that, but it's how I'm feeling because,
15 man, we were hounded. And, I remembered when we were able
16 to finally lay Shelley to rest, I went and talked to the
17 media and I asked them, please, for the next few days, can
18 you just let us grieve and say goodbye to Shelley the way
19 that we need to? And I -- and I told them, "We promise you
20 after all of this is said and done, we will come back, and
21 we will talk to you guys." Pretty well everybody agreed,
22 we thought.

23 So, the day we brought Shelley home, brought
24 her into the hall, they brought my sister in, Meryl, and
25 because Shelley's casket had to be closed, I remember my

1 sister coming, getting there, and she just threw herself on
2 the casket, and I remember just yelling and crying and we
3 were trying our best to console her.

4 Little did we know, one of my aunties --
5 well, my uncle, my mom's brother, came to that wake and he
6 was mad. I asked, "What's wrong uncle?" "I was listening
7 on the news," he said. "And?" He said "How come you guys
8 let those reporters videotape everything?" And I said,
9 "What? There was no reporters there." I said, "Nobody was
10 there," we thought. And, one of -- I guess there was a
11 reporter there, but we didn't know who he was and he didn't
12 have the camera so I don't know how in the hell he took
13 that picture. And, what they did was on the six o'clock
14 news, they had showed the picture of my sister throwing
15 herself on the casket.

16 I remember being so angry because after the
17 wake and the funeral, I approached that particular
18 individual that did that, and I told him, "From this day
19 forward," I said, "I don't want you near me, I don't want
20 you talking to me." I said, "I will answer the other
21 media." I said, "You stay away from us," I told him,
22 because I -- we asked you and begged you to let us grieve,
23 and what do you do? What if that was your sister? I said
24 is this what you want your mother to see on the six o'clock
25 news, her throwing herself on a casket?

1 He couldn't look at me. He just had his
2 head lowered. And I said, "That's what I thought," I said
3 but -- I told him, "From this day forward," I said, "I have
4 no use for this particular TV station," and I said, "and
5 especially you." I said, "Just stay away from us," I told
6 him, and he did. I think he knew he did something wrong,
7 but that's what I mean, you know? That's what happened to
8 us.

9 We didn't have any of the supports that
10 should have been there and I'm glad today now that they're
11 starting to help the families, but I sure wish we had that.
12 But, I know in my heart, Shelley is happy. I know she's
13 with the Creator. I know she's with my children. There's
14 not a day that goes by I don't think about them, and I will
15 never stop advocating. I will never stop talking about her
16 because I don't want anybody to ever forget what John
17 Michael Crawford did to these families, not only to us but
18 to the Taysup and Waterhen families. I don't want -- I
19 don't want people to ever forget this is what happens when
20 your loved one is taken away from you in such a horrific
21 way.

22 This is what happens when your life -- your
23 loved one's life is not -- is not important to them, and
24 this is what happens to the First Nation people. And, like
25 I said, I will continue to advocate. I will not keep

1 quiet. I will continue talking about my niece. I'll
2 continue supporting all the other families because things
3 need to change; we need that change. There's too many of
4 our loved ones that have not even yet been found. Like I
5 said, we have a little bit of closure to know that the
6 individual that took my niece's life was found and
7 convicted, and I really hurt for those families that are
8 still waiting, those families that still don't know where
9 there loved ones are.

10 I just ask each and every one of you here
11 today, remember these hearings. Remember the families that
12 are sitting here and sharing. That's what this is all
13 about. This is what the Inquiry is about. This is why
14 they put this together; us, the families that are hurting
15 and we want to be the voice of our loved ones. Not the
16 negative stuff or whatever internal conflict or
17 misunderstanding is happening. That's what they're putting
18 out there.

19 They're not even talking about the families
20 that are hurting. Instead they're talking about who got --
21 who left or who got let go. That's not what the Inquiry
22 and the hearings are about. It's about us, the family
23 members and our loved ones. That's what it's all about.
24 That's why we wanted this to happen.

25 I just ask each and every one of you,

1 remember my niece, that she was loved, and remember us, the
2 family, that continue to hurt, that continue to be re-
3 traumatized over and over and because another family has
4 just lost or reported another loved one missing. And, it's
5 not just here. When you look at it all across Canada, my
6 God, what more needs to happen before they finally realize
7 that we matter and our lives matter, that our loved ones
8 matter? It does matter. Because we're First Nation,
9 doesn't mean we're that less important.

10 So, I'd like to thank each and every one of
11 you for allowing us to grieve, allowing us to release some
12 of those tears because we're still taking those baby steps
13 of walking down that path, and if anything -- anything --
14 just really listen to the families and take the
15 recommendations that they give to you because we're the
16 ones that went through this. We're the ones that are
17 experiencing this. And, I don't want another family to go
18 through what we went through during the court, the
19 investigation, because we were alone. And I know there's a
20 little bit of change happening, but we need a lot more than
21 just a little change, and I think this is going to help
22 other families and I hope it does. And that's what I want
23 people to take from these hearings, is what the families
24 are needing. (Speaking in Native language).

25 Go on, my niece. Shelley, I did it. We did

1 it, Shelley, and we're not going to stop. (Speaking in
2 Native language). *Hay-hay*.

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** *Hay-hay*. This is
4 the point where I just want to make sure that we haven't
5 missed anything, or if you want to add anything else before
6 the Commissioner asks questions or makes comments?

7 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** So, I just --
8 I just want to thank you both so much for coming here, Barb
9 and Sheila, and sharing with us about Shelley, telling us a
10 bit about who she was and her strengths, but also for you
11 having the strength and the courage to come here and share
12 what you went through. And, I also want to thank you so
13 much for your thoughtful recommendations, and your
14 reflections, and we have -- before we wrap up, we have a
15 couple of small gifts of reciprocity to thank you for
16 coming here and sharing that we'll share with you before we
17 close.

18 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, the
19 Commissioners and the Elder are going to just be gifting
20 you with feathers. These are eagle feathers. The
21 matriarchs of Haida Gwaii, the grandmother circle, had
22 directed that each person who shares a sacred story of
23 their loved one be gifted a feather for strength and
24 gratitude, and there are also some seeds.

25 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** We can adjourn

1 this session.

2 **Exhibits (code: P01P06P0202)**

3 **Exhibit 1:** Eagle Feather news op-ed: ""Opinion: Looking
4 back at Just Another Indian" by Warren
5 Goulding published August 17, 2016. (Link:
6 [http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.ph
7 p?detail=2275](http://www.eaglefeathernews.com/news/index.php?detail=2275))

8 **Exhibit 2:** R. v. Crawford, [1995] 1 S.C.R. 858.

9 --- Upon adjourning at 13:38

10 --- Upon resuming at 14:37

11 **Hearing # 3**

12 **Witness: Brenda Forseth**

13 **In Relation to Geraldine Hanna**

14 **Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson**

15 **Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren**

16 **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Sylvia Popowich,
17 Florence Catcheway**

18 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

19 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Mr. Commissioner,
20 my name is Wendy van Tongeren, V-A-N, T-O-N-G-E-R-E-N, and
21 now at this time, November 22nd, 2017, this is the first
22 session after lunch at the Sheraton here in Saskatoon. And
23 so, as with all the families, I'm honoured to introduce the
24 next family who will be speaking. We're anticipating there
25 will be one speaker, and that will be Brenda Forseth. This

1 is an in-public hearing.

2 So, I'd like to start by actually passing
3 the mic now to Brenda, to just introduce herself in terms
4 of her name for the record. And then it will go to her
5 sister, Karen. And then there's a support person who is
6 also going to help us, who is with the Health Unit. Let's
7 start with the introductions.

8 **MS. BRENDA FORSETH:** My name is Brenda
9 Forseth.

10 **MS. KAREN LONGMUIR:** And, my name is Karen
11 Longmuir.

12 **MS. DAWN MENTUCK:** My name is Dawn Mentuck
13 (phon).

14 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you. And,
15 Ms. Forseth has asked that she affirm before she makes her
16 presentation.

17 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good afternoon. Ms.
18 Forseth, did you want to affirm with an eagle feather? Or,
19 we can do it without an eagle feather, too. Eagle feather?
20 Okay. There's one right beside you there. Do you solemnly
21 affirm to tell your truth in a good way today? Okay, thank
22 you.

23 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, it's been some
24 time since we met back in Regina, and it's lovely to see
25 you again today. Thank you for coming. So, since we met,

1 you've done a lot of preparation to be able to come and
2 speak to the Commissioner and others today; is that
3 correct? And so, I think the design here is best that I
4 hand the microphone to you, and you tell the Commissioner
5 what you'd like to say. And, if at any time you need any
6 assistance of any nature, or you feel you need a break,
7 just let us know. Okay, thank you.

8 **MS. BRENDA FORSETH:** Good afternoon,
9 everyone, Elders, Commissioner, dear friends, Wendy. It's
10 nice to see you again. I'm here to talk about my mother,
11 Geraldine Prest, who is a missing woman. I'll talk about
12 the circumstances leading up to her disappearance, the
13 impact on our family, and the 2001 re-opening of her file.

14 I have a couple of pictures. Yes, this
15 first picture up here is of my mother taken when she was
16 attending the St. Mary's Indian Residential School in
17 Mission, British Columbia. She would have been 11, 12
18 years old, in grade 6, 7. And, that particular picture was
19 taken with a group, and it was a dance group. In addition
20 to dancing at school, she was also in the choir. The only
21 other picture I have of her from when she was an adult,
22 she's -- we believe she was 21, 22 years old at that time,
23 included in that picture that isn't shown, but she was with
24 my dad.

25 Geraldine was born on June 18th, 1935. She

1 met my dad, Terry. Together, they had five children; my
2 brother Craig, Karen, Terry Jr., Doug and myself. I'll
3 also note right now before I forget that Geraldine is from
4 the Stó:lo Nation on her father's side. She was -- he's
5 from Canackabar (phon) Band in the Fraser Canyon, and on
6 her mother's side, from the Cheam First Nation, the
7 Sts'ailes nation in the Fraser Valley. We grew up in B.C.
8 I've been in Regina for 20-some years. I met my husband in
9 B.C. and came out here with him. I was shocked by this
10 very, very cold winter. I thought minus 10 was cold.

11 A couple of years after Terry and Geraldine
12 met, they started having children. They had five children
13 together, and Terry was 18 when our oldest brother, Craig,
14 was born. And, five years later, they had me, and I can
15 say quite confidently that they were not prepared to have
16 children. When she was carrying me, she had been
17 incarcerated during that pregnancy for child abuse, or
18 child neglect, perhaps.

19 It's not clear to us what was going on at
20 that time to cause that breakdown in the family and the
21 family care. We understand it was a very long time ago,
22 1961. I was born in August 1961, and by December of that
23 year, 1961, I was in the hospital, and I was so
24 malnourished that the doctors finally went to my parents
25 and asked them if they could provide me with last rites,

1 because they did not think I was going to survive.

2 In addition to my circumstances, my four
3 brothers and sister were also apprehended. My sister and
4 brother were found walking along the road, and some
5 neighbours -- a lady found them walking along the road, and
6 they were cold and pretty dishevelled and ragged. And, she
7 took them in and warmed them up and fed them. Once they
8 got warmed up and settled in, the oldest brother, Craig,
9 explained to her that there were more kids at the house.

10 So, he led her back to our house when it was
11 quite a considerable distance. Once she arrived there, she
12 found my other two brothers, and one of them was laying on
13 the couch trying to drink some water out of a beer bottle,
14 and the other boy was on the floor laying beside some raw
15 oatmeal, and that's all that they had in the house to eat,
16 and they had been left there for a few days.

17 I'm in awe of the bravery of my young 5-
18 year-old brother who had the foresight to take his sister
19 out and go and look for help, and to be able to tell her
20 that there were more kids there, and to be able to show her
21 the way back. He remembers. He has some memories. He's
22 blocked a lot out, but he suffers to this day. He has a
23 good life now, but it's been a long road. He's still
24 present here with me. I carry him in my heart. But, it
25 was too difficult for him to come, and that's okay.

1 So, on December 3rd, 1961, those four
2 children were apprehended and taken into the care of Social
3 Services, and put in foster homes. And, I was still at the
4 hospital at that time, and I was taken into care the next
5 day. And, we know from some records that we've read of
6 ours, our child and care files, that our mother did make
7 attempts to come and see us. She was up at the hospital to
8 try and see me, and she did make attempts to try and see
9 the children again, her other children. But, none of us
10 were ever returned to our biological parents.

11 As it turned out, five children was just too
12 many for one home to take in. So, the oldest, who were
13 Craig and Karen, were put into foster care together. And,
14 for the first 10 months, they moved around. They were
15 finally placed with a family where they remained until they
16 came of age, and the two other boys were placed together.

17 Terry Jr., our brother, was lost to us in
18 the late '70s, and our brother Doug. We've never met, and
19 we would welcome any contact from him, if he wants to
20 contact us.

21 I was in the hospital for a considerable
22 amount of time once I was apprehended, and then I was
23 placed in care on my own. We also know that Terry and
24 Geraldine were never willing to let us be adopted. Some of
25 the foster families expressed that wish, but they would not

1 consent.

2 I grew up in Ryder Lake, B.C. It is, to me,
3 one of the most beautiful places on earth. And, I never
4 knew my mother, but as a young girl, I think 11, 12 years
5 old, I started questioning who my mother was and I wasn't
6 getting answers. I wasn't even aware that I had brothers
7 or sisters. By the time I turned 14, I ran away, and I
8 ended up in Vancouver, and I was in Vancouver for a couple
9 of years with a woman who -- I was hitchhiking on the No.
10 1, and she picked me up, and she was a First Nations woman,
11 very well known in her community. And, amazingly, she came
12 from Chilliwack, and she knew my dad and my mother, and
13 she's the one who eventually introduced me to my dad.

14 She eventually moved me out to Abbotsford,
15 to one of her -- she had many kids, 21 kids, believe it or
16 not, and she moved me out to one of her daughters, and I
17 lived with her for a few years. And, when I first moved
18 out there, she was -- her daughter, Mrs. C. I'll call her
19 Mrs. C. She was in hairdressing school, and she came home
20 one day, and she said, "Brenda, you're not going to believe
21 this. I was talking to one of the students at school and
22 telling her about you, and she said" -- this woman, other
23 student that she was going to school with was telling her,
24 "Well, I've got a sister, too, and she's been missing."
25 And, she said, "What's her name?" And, Mrs. C. told her,

1 "Brenda. Brenda Prest." And, that student is sitting
2 right beside me. It was my sister. And so, that's how I
3 met my sister.

4 It was through meeting my dad that I started
5 to learn more about my family and my mom, and I met some of
6 her family as well. That would have been the late '70s,
7 '76, '77. And, even back then, there were confusing
8 stories about what had happened to her. Some family
9 members believed that she had not only disappeared but that
10 she was deceased. Other family members believed that she
11 may be in Seattle with one of her sisters. It was one of
12 my aunties, one of her half-sisters, who would talk to me
13 about that. But, she would also caveat that statement by
14 saying she couldn't believe -- she said, "I can't believe
15 that Geraldine would still be alive in Seattle and not come
16 and see us. She wouldn't just leave us like that."

17 My dad is also aware that after she went
18 missing, her grandfather, he was the last hereditary chief
19 at the Cheam Reserve. His name is Harry Edwards. They
20 went to the RCMP, and nothing came of it. So, he did hire
21 a private investigator way back then, all those years ago,
22 and there were no results. Nothing came of it.

23 We also know that in our child and care
24 file, social services had a couple of notations indicating
25 that they believed that she was deceased, though they also

1 caveat that with the fact that it was not confirmed. They
2 believe -- they received that information from a family
3 member, is how it was written, but that there was no
4 confirmation that she was deceased. But, I think it's safe
5 to say that us children grew up with no indication that she
6 was alive or that she was around.

7 For so many years, I used to have the
8 fantasy that she might show up at my doorstep one day.
9 Once I met my auntie and she held onto that belief that she
10 might still be out there, it was easy to fantasize that she
11 might come back to me, that she might come out and look for
12 me, that I'd have a knock on the door and she would be
13 there. And, I would at once feel so angry that she didn't
14 come sooner. But, then she would say, "I was looking for
15 you. I was looking for you and I found you. I'm so glad I
16 found you."

17 In the early 2000's, I received a phone call
18 from my dad, and he had been talking to some of her family
19 members, and they explained to him that the RCMP had
20 contacted some of them and were looking for family members
21 to obtain DNA sampling resulting from the Pickton case.
22 They had also heard rumours that she may have been a victim
23 of the Green River Killer, and even the fact that her
24 remains had been located somewhere in Seattle.

25 My dad and I talked about the last scenario,

1 about her being found in Seattle. That seemed like the
2 most plausible one. We wondered how in the world would
3 they have even known it was her? And, we also talked about
4 how would we be able to get her remains across the border,
5 and where would we lay her to rest?

6 For a couple of weeks, my dad and I talked
7 back and forth. He was -- of course, lives in B.C., and I
8 was here in Saskatchewan. I initially tried to get through
9 the United States bureaucracy, and I could not get very
10 far. And so, things were just left hanging.

11 After the initial two weeks of talks between
12 me and my dad, things really started to hit home. Thinking
13 back now, I think I was in shock, and any lingering
14 thoughts of anger were gone, and all I can have now is deep
15 compassion with the realization that she may have come to a
16 violent end.

17 Recently, and I mean very recent, within the
18 last number of months, we're learning more information, and
19 it's possible that she may have still been alive in the
20 1980's. It seems hard to believe. There have been recent
21 searches done in Washington State and California, and I'm
22 actually not sure what the searches involved or how
23 extensive it was, but there were no results. But, there
24 remains no body, no record of death.

25 I think in the mid-2000's, my dad and I were

1 talking on the phone, and he told me that he had a dream
2 about her. My dad was a visionary. He had visions, and
3 sometimes they would come to pass. And, he said that she
4 came to him and she was cold and naked and asking for help.
5 So, he had a ceremony for her.

6 I think that it's likely that we will never
7 know what happened. I understand that it's been a long
8 time. But, for us as a family, I think we're just starting
9 to process and acknowledge her loss. I think, for myself
10 spiritually, there are times when I feel like her loss
11 haunts me. But, I have a spiritual practice now that is
12 helping me work through that, and I believe that my mother,
13 Geraldine Prest, would have been 82 years old next month --
14 no, sorry. Next year. Eighty-two. That she lives on
15 through -- not just through our children, now through this
16 process.

17 For the other families of the missing and
18 murdered women, I acknowledge you, and I honour you, and I
19 hope that you find peace and know that your lived one lives
20 on through you. Sometimes it's been a bit confusing,
21 trying to figure out what this process is going to do for
22 my mom, and maybe even the other families. But, I
23 understand that we may not get everything we need, or we
24 may not get everything we want, but I want this Inquiry to
25 succeed. We have to have hope that it succeeds, that it

1 brings awareness to this very serious, very devastating
2 issue.

3 For recommendations, I don't have very many,
4 but I think for families of missing women and girls, it
5 might be that the only way we're ever going to know what
6 happened is through the DNA testing, and therefore, I think
7 it's vitally important that the RCMP and any other police
8 force work diligently to ensure that DNA testing for our
9 loved ones is kept current and up to date. It's my
10 understanding that DNA testing is an evolving science, ever
11 changing. And, it will be important for me that it be kept
12 up to date. It's going to be our only hope.

13 We were recently in touch with the FILU
14 initiative. I'm not sure what that acronym means. F-I-L-
15 U. I think you guys know. And, I just want to say that
16 their assistance for our family has been enormously
17 invaluable. I can't overstate that enough. I really mean
18 that. And, I hope that their funding will continue.

19 It is important as well that if there isn't
20 already, and there may be, but I will bring it up, if there
21 isn't already, that there be some policies and procedures,
22 and possibly some streamlining of contacts with Canada and
23 the U.S. I know my mother is not the only one who may have
24 gone missing in the U.S., and I know the U.S. is a big,
25 complex country, but let's give it a try. Thank you.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, I understand
2 there's something else that you'd like to read?

3 **MS. BRENDA FORSETH:** I'll just read some
4 notes that my sister wrote about her feelings about the
5 loss of her mother.

6 When you are born, you have a mother. I'd
7 like to share the emotional stress I lived with and still
8 do to this day. First, I was abandoned by my parents,
9 physically, emotionally. I grew up with fear and
10 confusion. I learned at a young age to protect myself from
11 pain. My inner-child was my safety net. My sister talked
12 about being put in different foster homes. All of us kids
13 experienced different emotions that affected us forever.
14 It's been hard, psychologically, to not remember the empty
15 void.

16 We all grew up not knowing our mother. It's
17 an empty feeling that is in my mind, my heart and my soul.
18 I have to say, of course, that I went through the stages of
19 grief, but deep down, always wondering. I knew something
20 was missing, and no one could fill that void. Day after
21 day it was on my mind, guessing will I see my mom?

22 I'd like you all to imagine no mom; no mom
23 to tuck you in at night; no mom to read you a bedtime
24 story; no mom to bandage you up; no mom to check for
25 monsters under the bed; no mom to teach you; no mom to love

1 you unconditionally. Mothers play an invaluable role in
2 our lives because they so naturally emulate a loving
3 spirit, empathy, concern, compassion, open discipline,
4 display of affection and love.

5 Our mother is a nurturer, and we've never
6 had that experience. Imagine that for one minute, and
7 remember, this is a lifetime I have experienced this, not
8 knowing whether my mom was dead or alive. Did she have
9 long hair? Was she pretty? Did she have gifts she could
10 have passed down to me? My brothers and sisters will never
11 know the fate of our mother. It affects us all to this
12 day. I try and imagine what my mom looks like. We don't
13 talk much about our missing mother. It hurts us all in
14 different ways. All I ask is that each and every mother,
15 sister, auntie, grandmother, be honoured and remembered,
16 all my relations.

17 I'll just read a little poem I wrote as
18 well. In 2008, I travelled to India on a pilgrimage, and I
19 wanted to be open to the experience. And, what kept coming
20 back to me was my mother, but the image of the mother that
21 we have as well, whether it's the Mother Land, the Mother
22 Earth.

23 To my family, my ancestors, and all my
24 relations, let us be at peace. Let us rest now. May we
25 find strength together. Love and light to all beings, love

1 and gratitude. Thank you.

2 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I have no questions
3 for either of these family members. I thank them very much
4 for the presentation, and I pass it to you, Mr.
5 Commissioner.

6 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you.
7 Brenda and Karen, I want to thank you both very much for
8 coming here and telling us and sharing with us about your
9 mother, Geraldine, and what you've experienced. It's your
10 sharing your truths that supports the work of the Inquiry
11 and moves this Inquiry forward. So, I really want to thank
12 you for coming. And, before we close, we just have a small
13 token of appreciation for you coming and sharing that we'll
14 share with you.

15 --- Presentation of eagle feathers

16 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** So, we can
17 adjourn this session. Thank you.

18 **Exhibits (code: P01P06P0203)**

19 Exhibit 1: Folder of two black-and-white images
20 displayed on monitors during the public
21 hearing.

22 --- Upon adjourning at 15:32

23

24

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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



Shirley Chang

February 15, 2018