National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
Rendezvous Room, Four Points Sheraton
Moncton, New Brunswick

Tuesday February 13, 2018
Public Volume 44(b)

Pamela Fillier and Fred Fillier,
In relation to Hilary Bonnell

Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe
II
APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations
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Government of Canada
Marie-Eve Robillard (Legal Counsel), Tania Tooke (Paralegal)

Government of New Brunswick
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Eastern Door Indigenous Women's Association
(Non Appearance)

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(Non Appearance)

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada,
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AnânauKatiget Tumingit Regional
Inuit Women’s Association and
Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre,
as a collective single party
(Non Appearance)

Government of Prince Edward Island
Ruth M. DeMone (Legal Counsel)
Public Volume 44(b)
February 13, 2018
Witnesses: Pamela Fillier and Fred Fillier
In Relation to: Hilary Bonnell (daughter)
Commissioner: Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe
Grandmother, Elder: Bernie Poitras-Williams, Elder
Mii gam’agan, Elder Imelda Perley Opolahsomuwehs
Clerk: Trudy Mckinnon
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

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CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good afternoon Commissioner Audette. I would like to present the next participants that will be sharing their story with you today. Beside me is Pamela and beside her is Fred. This is Pamela and Fred Fillier. They will be sharing the story of their daughter, Hilary Bonnell.

Just quickly, for the purposes of the video as well, I’m just going to introduce myself as Commission Counsel, which means I’m the lawyer that works with the families to help them tell their story and it’s a pleasure to be here, and a guest in this beautiful Territory. Where — what we would like is to have — a request to have the family promised in before they share their story.

PAMELA FILLIER GIVES A PROMISE

FRED FILLIER GIVES A PROMISE
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So just to start, and I just explained that both Pamela and Fred will be talking about Hilary. As we heard, Pamela this morning, was part of the opening and explained that Hilary was 16 at the time of her murder. And before we get into the details of the murder and all of the things that the family went through, we wanted the opportunity for Pamela and Fred to share, share some fond memories about Hilary and talk about her strengths and contributions.

PAMELA FILLIER: I don’t even know where to start.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: You can start wherever you like.

EXHIBIT NUMBER 1: A copy of a video displayed during the testimony of the witnesses (MP4 format
PAMELA FILLIER: She was a very good singer. She could sing really beautifully. She loved to dance. She loved her friends, she had lots. Lots of friends and she loved to shop. That was one of the biggest things that clued me into something being wrong because she would never miss going shopping. She, she loved it. I took her shopping one time and she started singing a song and in the song it was saying spending all your money on me, spending time on me and she looked at me and she laughed. And she said, and it’s true eh mom, I’m spending all your money, because she was having a very good day shopping. Yeah.

But she’d bring home stray animals constantly. I remember going outside and there’s this straggly looking dog and of course you can’t say, I couldn’t
say no. So I would end up with a lot
of dogs and a lot of cats, finding cats
on the railing and it would be her
bringing, bringing these little stray
animals home. She was a wonderful
little girl. She really was.

I remember when I had first started
seeing Fred and his girls could stay up
really late and my little girl would
try to stay up really late too. And
they’d laugh because she’d always fall
asleep before midnight and they’d,
they’d be able to stay up because they
weren’t an only child and Hilary was an
only child until, until I met Fred.
And then she had the joys of being a
sister.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So Pamela, can
you tell me where you’re from and a
little bit about the community you’re
in and the community that Hilary grew
up in?
PAMELA FILLIER: I’m from Burnt Church, Esgenoopetitj. And that’s, that’s where Hilary grew up. She was so smart, she started talking at such a young age. My, my sister was taking a video of her when she wasn’t even walking, she was just at that point where she’d grab you and stand up and stuff and she didn’t even notice until she looked back on the video that my little girl had reached up to her and said “auntie”. And she wasn’t, she wasn’t even a year old.

And she liked to cook with me.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So you were saying when you and Fred first met and were together that all of a sudden she was a sibling. Can you tell me a little bit more about the family, like you and Fred are a blended family, who are your children?

PAMELA FILLIER: What’s that?
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Who are your children?

PAMELA FILLIER: His oldest is Amanda Fillier. Emily Fillier. She’s the same age as Hilary. It hurts me because I think of how hurt they are.

I really thought I was going to find her. I remember looking on the tv and you see a mom crying, crying for their daughter or their son. And I would sit there and I would cry cause I hurt for them. I’d even go in the other room and I’d, I’d hug my little girl, being grateful that she was and that she was okay.

I never thought I would be that mother on tv crying for her little girl. It’s not a easy road, it really isn’t. Everybody tells you, time heals. Time will heal. Time doesn’t. Time don’t heal, it just reminds me of all those landmarks I miss. Graduation, prom,
marriage. For her to even become a mother.

She also has a step brother named Mathew Fillier. We were told Hilary had been found and that she was dead on his birthday. So every year on his birthday he has to be reminded that his sister was found. He’ll always have that bad memory for his birthday. And then when Hilary was 13 I had Frederick, my, my youngest son. Well my youngest child, my only. He remembers her a little bit but not much. But he still, he still cries for her. He still feels that, that absence.

She was just so full of life, like she lit up my house. She really did. We’d sit in my bedroom and we’d play that game karaoke wars where the game would score you and I, I beat her. But we would have so much fun, like I’d pick songs and she would pick them and she
just really loved life. She truly did.
She loved every bit of it.

The last Christmas we had, she said mom
I don’t even know what to ask for, I
have everything. I wish I wasn’t
sitting here. I wish I was just
watching from my couch.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I noticed you,
you have this lovely picture. We’re
seeing pictures up on the screen of
Hilary at various ages but you also
have a lovely picture frame here. Can
you tell me little bit about this
picture frame and, and maybe about the
one picture in particular, the one
where she’s dancing.

PAMELA FILLIER: That’s my
favorite one because that picture, it
shows her. It shows that fun loving
carefree little girl. How anybody
could look at her and want to hurt her
is beyond me. She never even got
spanked in her whole life, she never experienced physical pain. That was probably the first and last time she felt physical pain.

Her friends had actually done that up for me for her birthday. They, they brought that to me along with a birthday cake for Hilary. She had some really really good friends. Some of them were just life long friends. I remember one time I had a, a dozen lobster delivered to me and she got on the phone and she called her friend Alanna, they were friends ever since they were like this big, they grew up together. And they were so young, they weren’t even 10 years old and they sat there and they went through that dozen lobster like it was nothing. I never seen such small kids eat so much lobster. But they sat there and had their lobster day and they loved it.
I loved going tubing with her. We would take her tubing and at the end of tubing there’s this bridge. It is so high. I mean I could never ever jump off it. When you look up she looks so tiny up there and she jumped off the bridge. We videoed her doing it because she was so brave. Just got up there and jumped off the bridge. And then sassing me because I wasn’t brave enough to jump off that bridge. But she was.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, well thank you for sharing those fond memories. And I know, like the next thing we’re turning to is not easy for you so please take your time. Can you start with telling us when Hilary was first missing? Can you please tell the Commissioner how you came to know that she wasn’t where you thought she would be?
PAMELA FILLIER: Okay. Well I’ll start off with she had called me three o’clock in the morning, Saturday to remind me that we were going shopping the next day. So I asked her if she was okay, she said she was. The last thing we said to each other was “I love you”. The next morning I woke up and I had such a strong feeling to go to tabusintac. I just couldn’t shake that feeling. I just really wanted to go for a drive in the woods in tabusintac.

So we went and I saw my, my ex-step mother. She was down at her camp so we went and we sat there with her for awhile. And I told Fred, I said I have such a bad feeling. And then my step mother got a phone call and she got off the phone and she said Joseph’s died. So I figured maybe that’s it. So then we start walking to the truck and I stopped and I looked at him and I said, that’s not it. I had a bad feeling and I couldn’t shake it.
So I tried to call her and I couldn’t get through so I figured, you know, she’s a teenager, maybe she wants to stay with her friends one more night. So I had my sister, on Sunday, go look around for her and she couldn’t find her. So I ended up going down and I went to every single place that she was at. Every house that she went to I went. And it always stopped at that family. That’s where my search always ended because there was nothing further passed that. And when I went looking for her, the last house I went to, I asked the girl, I said did you see Hilary anywhere. She said I didn’t see Hilary in over a week, but her sister just told me that she was with Hilary all night.

So then we called the police and nothing. I thought if I told them I can’t find my daughter that they would look for her. But they didn’t. But my
community did. Big groups of them went all over looking for her. I mean they literally kicked people’s doors in. I will always be grateful to my community for doing that. They searched for her and still the police weren’t searching.

I called, after I called the media then they started looking. One Officer had even told me, Pam – and I got along with this Officer really good. I got along with a couple of them really well but this one told me, she’s like Pam that’s the best thing you could’ve done. She said you forced them to look cause every time I called and I asked if anyone was looking for her, oh well it’s this one you have to talk to, you gotta call back tomorrow, they’re not here. And when I called back they tell me it’s another one.

But they did start looking after, they did and they are the ones that got Curtis to admit what he did to Hilary.
But they should’ve reacted when I called the first time. I shouldn’t had to try to shame them or something to get them to do what I needed them to do, what they’re supposed to do. So that started a long search. She went missing September 5. She wasn't found till November 13 and I remember we were in town that day and we were asking more people to help us.

I think we went to the Army Reserve to ask them to come and help us, and they were going to. And then he stops us and he said the police want you to go to the church. He said this is where we stop or something like that, like they weren’t going to come with us cause they said I had to speak to the police first.

So when I walked in the church there was an Officer standing at the end in front of the altar. And when I got to him he just looked at me and gave me
Hearing – Public

Pamela & Fred Fillier
(Hilary Bonnell)

back my tobacco offering. That’s when
he said they found my little girl. My
first question was, where is she? I
don’t even remember what he said after
that. I just remember shoving them and
trying to fight them, trying to rip the
pews out of the floor boards. I damned
God in his own church cause I was so
angry cause I felt like I was giving
him my faith to find her and bring her
back to me.

At that moment I felt like there was no
God. That was the hardest day of my
life. That changed me. It changed me
for the rest of my life. It’s not the
same anymore. It’s like all the air
just gets sucked right out and you feel
so alone. I never had hate in my
heart, I never hated anybody and it’s
awful to say but I do have hate in my
heart. Cause if I would sit here and
say I don’t I’d be lying.
This guy didn’t have no remorse. I remember sitting in my trailer during the weeks that we were looking for her and one night I was at the trailer alone and this truck kept coming in to the driveway and doing burn outs. Then he would take off back down the road and turn around, not too far, there’s just a road there so it’s obvious that that was meant to, I don’t know, intimidate me or something, I don’t know because I still didn’t know who had took my daughter. But here’s this truck spinning, taunting me. And I, I didn’t know. I didn’t know who took my daughter. But he knew and he had no remorse.

To go as far as to follow the people that are looking for my little girl and to stand beside them and pretend that he’s looking for her too. And after he grabbed Hilary he didn’t even stop there. He grabbed another little girl, which is what led to him revealing
where Hilary was. Because he had
grabbed this young girl who was also an
acquaintance of my daughter and he took
her home and he violated her but she
got away. And while she was on the
road she stayed on her cell phone with
her friend and Curtis kept driving back
and forth.

It makes me think, what if that little
girl wouldn’t have been on her cell
phone, would he have said I’m going to
grab her so she doesn’t tell. Cause
that’s how, that’s how he got caught
and that’s a shame, that another little
girl had to be raped for mine to be
found. He shouldn’t have the
opportunity for parole. A person like
that shouldn’t have that opportunity.
And I think it’s unfair that he’s not
on the dangerous offender’s list. It’s
not fair.

My little girl can’t come home, he
shouldn’t be allowed to ever go home.
If he comes out, I believe in my heart
he’ll do it again because he did it
again after he did what he did to my
little girl. If he had any remorse he
wouldn’t have went out and done it
again. He shouldn’t have that
opportunity to come out.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I know it’s not
easy to, to talk about him but just for
a little context can you please tell me
a little bit about, like Curtis? Cause
you were saying he did it before, he
did it after, just to help people
understand a bit of the background.

PAMELA FILLIER: Okay. One of his
cousins had told me that he had drugged
and raped her also. He’s also been
charged for brutally attacking the
mother of his children. He raped her.
And then he beat this other guy, I
think he put him into a coma or
something, like he’s – Hilary is not
the first offence this guy has ever
committed. Like he’s, he’s fought people in our community where I’ve had a person come up to me and he felt so bad. He said he felt guilty because he said he should’ve went to his parole hearing and he should’ve spoke up.

But I don’t, I don’t blame, I don’t put any blame on him or anybody else that didn’t feel strong enough to go and face him and say it all again. I’ll say it again and again and again. I’ll say it till there’s no breath left.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So Curtis had previously been in jail for some time, if I understand.

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes. Five and a half years my husband is telling me.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So – and, and you – there was an understanding that in the community he had, he had caused
some other harm, like he was violent
and harmful and……

PAMELA FILLIER:  Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  ……you’re talking
about a person who came to you after,
after you lost Hilary and said, gee I
wish I had gone to the parole – was
that so that he would’ve been held
longer or in hopes that he would’ve
been held longer for the offence he was
convicted of?

PAMELA FILLIER:  Exactly. In
hopes that they would’ve kept him in,
in jail.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  And it may seem
like an obvious question but I notice
that both Curtis and Hilary have the
same last name, is there a family
connection somehow?
PAMELA FILLIER: I was, I was married to Curtis’ uncle. So Hilary and Curtis were first cousins.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now you talked quite a bit about how the community came together for you. We know that Hilary was missing September 5th and that you didn’t, that she wasn’t found until your son’s birthday in November, and the community helped. What were the types of like searches, or what were the community members doing to help look for Hilary? One point you said kicking down doors but did they actually, what did those searches look like and how were family members and community members helping?

PAMELA FILLIER: Okay. The first searches they had done was where they’d get a bunch of people and they’d all stand in a line and they’d start walking into the woods and stuff and they’d be asking other community
members if they’d seen Hilary. Then when they heard, like there was rumours about another guy saying that maybe, maybe she was there because this guy was known for hurting girls or whatever, but my daughter was never there.

But the community went there and searched, like any, any lead that they would hear they would go and they would look. Like they got in their vehicles and people would load other people into their cars and they would go all over the place looking for her, looking in camps, looking in dirt roads and they, they really went above and beyond.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And this whole time that you’re searching for your daughter, obviously you’re holding out hope you’re going to find her. And I know it was difficult for you but what were, what were some of the – I mean besides the obvious, like you yourself
searching, what were some of the barriers and obstacles you were finding to getting information out more or what helped to get more information out about Hilary missing?

PAMELA FILLIER: Going to the media helped getting it out more because it made it so that it wasn’t just our community that was looking for her. If anything I felt like Hilary brought, brought Canada together because where there was racism and fighting there was none. Like were the Native people and the French people would fight, they weren’t fighting.

Everybody was together looking for her, not just, not just for church but everywhere. Everywhere was looking for her.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I know that at one point before Hilary was found family members were also using things
like social media in trying to get
posters across the country and
fundraise for billboards. Can you tell
us a little bit about that?

PAMELA FILLIER: Ah, my sister had
fundraised for billboards and the
leadership had helped with flyers. So
we sent, we sent flyers out. That’s
basically all they could’ve done.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Like posters,
like a missing persons poster?

PAMELA FILLIER: Yeah. Yeah, they
had some, we had some really big sized
ones.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah.

PAMELA FILLIER: We had our, our
truck was actually like a driving
billboard. We had posters that were
about that high all over the truck and
we would drive all over.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now I know everyone can imagine it’s a nightmare looking for her and it might seem basic but can you tell us, like what your days were because while you were looking for her I’m guessing you couldn’t work, you couldn’t do other things.

PAMELA FILLIER: No.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So what, what were your days like during that time?

PAMELA FILLIER: Well we would search until the sun came up. So we’d only get a few hours sleep and we’d get up and we’d go search again. That’s what my days were, every day I looked. Every night I looked. If I was able to be awake in the day time I would look but we would search all night.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Commissioner

Audette, I have a unique request. The – and we’re going to talk about it but there’s a video that was made during the time that Hilary was missing, in fact there were a few videos made on social media. And this is while the family and the community were still looking for Hilary and they were still holding out hope they were going to find Hilary.

And I’m going to actually ask Pamela why it was so, why it’s so important. She wants the video to be shown but what we’re actually going to do is we’re going to request to leave the room. The family is going to request to leave the room while the video plays and we’re going to ask for a five minute break after that. But first, I would like Pamela to explain why she thinks it’s so important that we, the National Inquiry, show this video and
that people understand why doing things like this is important.

PAMELA FILLIER: Okay. The reason I’d like for everyone to see the video is there’s going to be a lot of pictures of her up and you could see, you could see her spirit. You could see how much love she had. I need people to see what a wonderful little girl she was and how loved she was and how much I miss her so much.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And it’s one of the things too, if I understand correctly, for Pamela is Fred is it’s not just a memorialization or commemorative but that it’s just important for everyone to watch to celebrate that life, to recognize how important life is. But because it is very emotional for the family, they’re requesting a step out and following the video a five minute break, but if we could reconvene.
So I’m going to suggest once we leave the room we come back at 10 to 4:00, the family and I, but to please have the AVA play the video for those in attendance and those that would be watching live or on an archive video so they could see Hilary in life.

PAMELA AND FRED FILLIER EXIT HEARING
ROOM WITH CHRISTA BIG CANOE

A VIDEO OF HILARY BONNELL IS PLAYED

EXHIBIT NUMBER 2: A folder containing 42 digital images displayed during testimony of the witnesses

RECESS
UPON RESUMING:

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, so Commissioner Audette, thank you for
letting the family have that request. They knew that seeing the video might be too difficult for them. They know that some more of the story they want to share is also difficult and tough and they wanted to save some of their strength for that.

And we’re just going to circle back to one point, the point is, Pamela when you were in the church was the reason that the RCMP told you in the church that they thought that was a safe space for you? That’s the first question. The second part is, at the beginning we heard you had to go to media to get the RCMP engaged, by the time that you guys found Hilary what was that relationship like?

PAMELA FILLIER: The relationship was totally different. In the beginning I was, I was really disappointed with the police in their lack of reacting as quickly as I needed
them to. But in the end I ended up
loving a few of them just like they’re
my own family. Joannie Peradis was one
of the officers that I’ve grown to care
about. And Gabbie Devote, Gabrielle
Devote was another one. There was
Laroque Fortaine, he was another one.
Rock Fortaine. There was so many in
the end that I felt totally different
about them. Like some of them they
just felt like, it felt like they were
going through the journey with me and
it just, I felt a bond with them in the
end. In the beginning no, but in the
end I could see that a few of them,
their hearts, their hearts were in it.
It was a……

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I believe you
were telling Commissioner Audette that
on September 5th or the morning after
you went out to a camp. You went to a
specific space and you had visited
with, and you hadn’t been to that area
for a long time. And - but you felt
drawn to it. Can you tell us a little bit more about that, and can you also tell us how close that actually was to the location where they found Hilary?

PAMELA FILLIER: Well the area that I had felt that I needed to go to that morning, Hilary was like 10 minutes away. If I would’ve just, instead of going straight, if I would’ve just turned off this way, she was buried in there about, I think a mile. Not even a mile, yeah, not even a mile in the woods.

Just, it’s a rough road so if you drive with your car from where we were, it would take you maybe 10 minutes to get to where, where Hilary was.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And how, how close or how far away is that from the community, from Burnt Church?
PAMELA FILLIER: From Burnt Church it’s about a 20 minute drive.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So the — where Hilary was buried wasn’t actually right in the community, it was outside of the community?

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes. Well that’s actually, there’s an area of tabusintac that’s actually native land and that’s, that’s where he buried her.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I know that the next part is difficult too so I want to start with you had told Commissioner Audette that the media was super helpful. They were helpful in trying to fundraise for billboard, they were helpful so that you could get the police’s attention but is it fair to say sometimes they’re helpful and sometimes they’re hurtful? So leading......
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: ......up to the trial you - we’ll talk about the trial specifically but leading up to the trial sometimes some of the information the media, was it fair say, was sensationalized or sort of written as fact when it was Curtis’ position?

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah.

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And that made it difficult to read things in the newspaper that weren’t necessarily true?

PAMELA FILLIER: It made me angry.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. So if we could maybe turn our attention to the
trial, because even before you get to
the trial, what happens in the process
as a family member going through the
justice system? What, what else
happened? Like how long did it take to
get to trial? What were some of the
things while you were waiting to find
out whether or not Curtis would be
convicted of murdering your daughter?

PAMELA FILLIER: It was a – I
think he’s, he’s got a better memory at
saying that. I’ve……

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: That’s fine.

PAMELA FILLIER: My nerves are so
bad that I have a hard time to……

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So Fred can you
actually help us out here just with the
timeframe?

FRED FILLIER: Gladly, yeah.
Well when he was arrested it was around
November 13th and we waited almost two years for the trial. But there was a pre-trial before that, a voir dire and it, it was an 11 week process, of voir dire. It - I was sitting in the courtroom every day from 9:30 to 4:30 then an hour and a half lunch break.

So we went to the voir dire for the 11 weeks and then we waited another year for the actual trial which was, I believe, around 10 weeks of the same thing, from 9:30 in the morning till 4:30 in the afternoon. Sitting on a hard wooden bench, listening to the, the worst things you could ever imagine, you know, about your, your daughter.

And it’s one of the hardest times of our life. The actual hardest time of my life was that day at the church when the police told Pam and she’s a little bit off on that day because when we went to the, the church to meet with
the two Officers she had to go pee. So
she ran across the parking lot to the
Band office to pee and the two chief
Officers and me, we stood in the lobby
of the church waiting for her to come
back.

And I talked to them a little bit, you
know, just casual conversation but when
I saw Pam coming back is when I clued
in because I saw the lamb coming to the
slaughter. I saw Pam coming towards us
and I looked at the two top cops and I
looked at them and I said no. And they
ignored me and I knew. They walked
her, they walked us to the alter and
they held his hands out and held Pam’s
hands, and he didn’t say a word to her.
I didn’t even see him hand her back the
tobacco, all I saw was Pam saying, you
found her didn’t you, and the cop shook
his head like this, nodded it once yes.
And then she said, she’s dead isn’t
she. He went like this, and then she
went berserk.
And that moment is the worst moment of my life, seeing her go through that much pain. There’s no words for it. I couldn’t do nothing, I couldn’t help her, I just let her – I fell to the floor more or less myself and she just went crazy in the church. And I remember her yelling out cursing God and I remember yelling out that it wasn’t God who did that it was the devil. And to me that saved her a little inch of belief in God, you know, cause that wasn’t God who done all that act that was the devil.

And that’s about all I got to say on that right now. There’s……

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Actually can I ask you a bit more about the timeframe? So – because you do have a better memory of it because you recounting, you knew off the top of your head the weeks certain processes took. During
those weeks you’re sitting there from 9:00 til 5:00 on that hard bench, again, are you able to work? Are you able to provide support for your family? Can you tell us a little bit about what you do?

FRED FILLIER: I’m a self employed locksmith. I’ve been self employed now for 30 years. It’s just a proprietorship, it’s just me so I’m the sole provider, I guess, for the family is the way I look at myself. I know I’m really not, Pam is too but I take that, that duty on myself very seriously and during the search, I probably put a month into it, I ran out of money. I was broke. People was giving me gas money to fill up my truck and we were going to a certain house to feed us and we, we’d wake up around ten o’clock in the morning to 11:00 and we’d start searching until six o’clock the next morning. We wouldn’t stop.
Like 18/20 hours a day we’d search. And then we’d go to our camper, which we moved down in that area so we could sleep in that area cause we lived, we didn’t live in the same area cause Hilary just went to her home town because it was labour day weekend and her and her friends wanted to have a little harrah before they went back to school. And the next day we were to go down and take her shopping for school clothes.

And the, the pre-trial, well after we heard what happened I was unable to work. I was mentally and physically totally - there was nothing left to me. I couldn’t even help my kids mourn. There was four other kids in the family and I failed them during that process, I couldn’t do much. I’d help take care of the little one who was only four at the time, but a lot of things I don’t remember.
Where did I get the gas money to drive to town every day, 30 miles to go to court. And I have a little shop in town where my house was in town, in the back of my house there’s a small shop, it’s just like a room for my trade and we’d drive to town, we’d go into the courtroom, do our thing. Then we’d have the hour and a half lunch and I was so broke I was buying cans of tuna and leaving it at the shop so at lunch time I’d take her to get her whatever she wanted and then I’d go and eat my can of tuna to have my lunch to go back to the, to Court.

And I don’t think I’ve eaten a can of tuna since because I probably ate 30 or 40 cans of it during the pre-trial and trial. But it wiped me out. I ended up having to sell my home in town because I was so behind on my taxes with the Government and bills. So those, those weeks of being in a courtroom where we had, we had a lot of
emotional support but what I need to
see changed in Canada is we’re family
members of the victim.

When they’re spending endless hours and
days in a courtroom they need to be
nurtured. They need to be fed and they
need a place to rest during this trial,
during the trial or during the voir
dire. Because I don’t even remember
who took care of my kids back then, it
was so – I think my parents did, I’m
pretty sure they did.

But it was such a traumatic moment
where we were just going day to day and
sometimes minute by minute of what
we’re going to do next. And I remember
when the trial was over – no, actually
it wasn’t when the trial was over, it
was after the funeral was over, we went
back to our house in town and someone
came from another Reserve with a
truckload of groceries and they brought
it into our house, put it in our
kitchen and to this day I still don’t remember who they are. I’m very thankful for that and it’s kind of embarrassing but it was help that family members needed when they’re going through something this traumatic.

I never imagined how deep it could be, of pain and weakness and stress and there’s no words for it. And so when someone else goes through something like what we went through and they have to spend a lot of time in a courtroom they, they should be uplifted and supported so they can spend their time in a courtroom and have a place to rest after in case they have to drive to the city where the court - you know, there’s a lot of places where family members would have to drive to a courtroom which is, you know, in another city. That caused a lot of stress for us.
That really does need to change. Thank you.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Fred, one more question. One more question.

FRED FILLIER: One more, that’s it?

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: One more, that’s it. And I know you talked about the financial burden and you talked about how tough it is but what were some of the other struggles during that timeframe? Like you did talk about how difficult it was for you emotionally, because you were sometimes hearing some of the worst things or what you guys believed were untrue things. What was, what were the toughest things and can you tell me about how did you access services? Or were they even available to you?
FRED FILLIER: I did. I went to Victim Services. Well Victim Services was with us quite a bit during the pre-trial and the trial. They would sit beside us in the courtroom and say, well this is going to happen next and so prepare yourself, it’s going to hurt, you know. That was nice. But my, my two daughters and my son were troubled quite a bit from a previous, my previous relationship and I asked Victim Services if you could do anything for my kids, to help them. And they told me they couldn’t do nothing because they weren’t family and that hurt my heart so much that I gave, I gave up on Victim Services.

She was a nice lady, she’s still there today. She’s a great person but her protocol is that, is that mandate, well they can only help the immediate family. But we were a married blended family, like my, my children were – Hilary was nine years old when I met
her and my kids met her at that age and
I had a daughter that was nine as well.
And Hilary was 16 so there was seven
years of love to grow and we were –
Hilary was the glue that put us all
together.

She was the happiness in the home and
she was the kooky little girl that made
us all laugh and love each other. I
kind of lost track of what I was just
saying is, there’s so much – Victim
Services, they, they couldn’t help my
kids because they weren’t family
members. And when I heard that from
her I didn’t show any emotion, I just
said okay, thank you. I was already
hurt beyond anything so anything anyone
ever said to me wouldn’t matter anyway
because I was already floored.

So I just let it go and I tried to
figure out how I could do it myself
but. You know the first two years
since Hilary was so suddenly taken from
us, our four year old Frederick, he was
four at the time, and every single
night for two years – this was one of
the hardest things that I had to go
through, one of them was watching Pam
in the church and the second one was
mourning myself heavily, very very very
heavily. There’s no words to describe
watching her suffer and my kids suffer
and then trying to deal with my own
suffering.

But my four year old son, every single
night before bed he’d start crying for
Hilary and his arms would go up to the
sky like that, and he’s say Tia come
home, I need you now. And telling me
he wants to be an angel with Tia and me
telling him she’s – I’m holding him and
rocking him in my arms and telling him
it’s okay, Tia’s in heaven now and, and
she’s an angel. But for two years that
was, that was really really hard to
console my son.
And to this day, he still needs consoling. He still sleeps with me. Hilary used to put him to bed at night and, and he got attached to that so it transported to me being the one to put him to bed at night. I’d put him under my wing and, and you know, I’d rub his back, I rub his head. And he’s 12 years old now and I’m still doing it. I kind of miss my wife for that but, you know, that, that’s okay, my son is more important and we went through hell so I can, I can deal with it. But trying to help my children where I cannot help them is, is a big problem cause it still exists today.

My daughter Emily is 23. She’s 24, she’s the same age as Hilary and she has some issues and I can’t really talk about them but they’re related to severe trauma. And my older daughter, Amanda, she’s 27, she’s three years older than the other two, she was two years in university to be a
psychologist and she got three, three years into it and she failed the third year because it was a year after the murder and she had to take a year off. But she finally got her degree after five years of sociology. She didn’t get to go back and finish the rest because now she’s $60,000.00 in the hole for student loans and stuff.

And before all this I was self employed, I owned some properties and the house that I was in, and there was a house beside it, I was going to sell them, put my kids through school. But, with that trauma and everything happened I ended up getting a huge tax bill and a, a lien put on my home and I had to sell the home before it was taken from me to pay off the lien.

And there was a little bit of money left so I bought my wife a nice car to get her out of the house, a nice black convertible and got her a little bit
but I lost my home. It was paid for, it was 23 years we lived in that home and it’s gone. But, that’s, that’s kind of irrelevant, you know, it’s, I just feel when families go through something like this they need to be supported through the Courts because we didn’t ask for this. She didn’t ask for that and they, they need to be more supportive in other ways than – which our Victim Services are doing now.

Even having a room at the Courthouse, a family room where there’s lunch available and a couple of couches where they can stretch out for about an hour and a half or they need a break from hearing harsh testimony, they can go to that room and rest. I, I believe every Courthouse in Canada should have that for things like this.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Thank you, and I only did have to ask one question and you covered it all. That
was good. No, it’s important because you’re building in some of your recommendations and it’s important the Commissioner hears how you lived through this experience and what it, like we all know the ultimate cost but what about all of the other costs. Did you want to add anything to that Pamela?

PAMELA FILLIER:  No, he pretty, he pretty much covered, he covered it.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  So there’s – I don’t want to, I only want to spend as much time as you want on this. We’ve already heard Fred talk about the fact that parts of the trial were brutal because you were listening to really tough testimony. I understand there was a number of preliminary motions, there was the pre-trial, the trial, this takes two years. At the end of it Curtis is found guilty.
PAMELA FILLIER: Yeah.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah. And then I understand he tries to appeal it.

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes, he tried to appeal it and nobody told us that he was trying to appeal the decision. How we found out is a reporter had asked my husband, are you guys going. And Fred said we didn’t know anything about it and it was on my daughter’s birthday, April 28. And we wouldn’t have even known, we wouldn’t have even been in that courtroom if it wasn’t for that one reporter that took it upon herself to message Fred and ask him if he was going.

And I thank God that she did because I feel they should have told me because I have a right to be there. I have a right to know because this guy took my daughter’s life. I have a right to sit in there and say no, he doesn’t deserve
another chance. He’s already gotten chance after chance after chance. And even to me, even with what he’s been given, he still has a chance because he has a chance to get out. My daughter didn’t have that chance and neither should he.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do you recall how long he was sentenced for?

PAMELA FILLIER: I believe 25 years but they say, I think after 16, 15 or 16 years that they could apply for parole or something. I totally don’t agree with that.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So my, my math’s not great on a quick spot but I’m thinking that’s about six or seven years from now, potentially. Seven years from now that he’ll be eligible for parole. Earlier you were telling the Commissioner that somebody who had experienced assault from him had wished
that they had gone to the parole process. A lot of families don’t know much about parole processes.

What are your guys’ plans in seven years from now when he’s eligible for parole?

PAMELA FILLIER: I plan on being there. I plan on saying my peace. If I have to get down on my knees and beg them not to let him out I will. I will. If they let him out, shame on them. Shame on the Canadian Government for letting that monster out to begin with. Shame on them. That shame belongs on the Government for letting him out. His file said high risk to re-offend. What part of that do you not understand?

I mean it’s, it’s English and that’s their first language, they should understand high risk means oh chances are he’s going to go and do this again
but we’re going to let him out anyway.
I paid for that. For the Government’s mistake. Me and my little girl and my family, we paid for that and we pay everyday and it’s not fair. It’s not.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Because, because you’re already talking about this, you’re a fairly strong advocate and you’ve spoken out lots about, you’ve spoken out lots about how you believe laws should be changed. So I just want to give you the opportunity to, to tell, to tell the Commissioner, what do you think needs to be changed in the law?

PAMELA FILLIER: I think we need tougher laws against rapists and pedophiles and if you kill someone you shouldn’t have that chance to come out. You really shouldn’t. We need tougher laws against these major crimes because these are not little things. They, they really aren’t. People are losing
their lives and people are getting away with murder.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: There was one picture up earlier that went by, there was a picture of you, you guys, I think it looks like you’re in front of Parliament Hill or, or in front of Ottawa somewhere and you’re holding a sign. I don’t know……

PAMELA FILLIER: That’s on Parliament Hill.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah, I don’t know if we could pull that picture up. But you’ve done a lot of advocacy, you’ve been a strong woman, you’ve been a strong husband supporting talking out, speaking about these issues and you feel driven to do so because you’re so passionate about the laws, that’s fair to say.
Here we go. So this day, can you tell us just a little bit about this day?

PAMELA FILLIER: We’re standing on the Hill saying the same things we say at every meeting. Sometimes it’s – you feel like nobody hears you. Because I’ve been saying what I’m saying for so many years now that it’s started to feel like nobody’s listening.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And the quotation......

PAMELA FILLIER: That’s what those things are all about, is trying to get our Government to open their eyes, look out your window, we’re right here.

FRED FILLIER: Could I say something about changing the laws just briefly?

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah.
FRED FILLIER: I want to add to this because I feel this is extremely important to changing the laws of rapists and pedophiles. And I’m not too good at giving examples so I’m going to give an example, say of me. Say if I raped somebody and I violated their civil rights, that’s basically what I do and I, I scar them for life. So when I’m convicted of that crime, if I am and I should be, my civil rights should never be the same again since I violated someone else’s civil rights in such a horrible way.

That’s where the laws need change. So these rapists and pedophiles think, oh I’m, I have rights to this and that. No, you want to rape and violate a woman, you want to dominate a woman and do horrible things to her, your, your civil rights should never be the same. The Charter of Rights do not apply to a rapist and a pedophile. There should be amendments to it where the police
and other people, they need to be labeled and marked if they’re ever let out again.

Like I don’t know what the law should change to be but they need to be changed. If I done something like that to a woman I should never have the same civil rights again as the woman that I hurt. And I’m so strong on that, that really does need to change.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: The quotation that you had up in that poster, that really struck me. To the world she was one person, to us she was the world. In terms of doing that advocacy and you said, you know, all the meetings we go to, the context of this was pre-inquiry I’m assuming? Like before the Inquiry called?

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: But we always seemed to be so caught up in statistics. We always seem to be caught in, in how many women but this point you’re trying to make is, like one, one life is too much. Is that fair?

PAMELA FILLIER: Exactly.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah. There’s a memorial that you’ve been working on, can you just tell me a little about the memorial that you want to put up in your community?

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes. There’s a when I lost my daughter I wanted to do something special for her, and to me it just, didn’t want it to be just a tombstone. I wanted it to be something that when you see it you would say she was loved and she’s missed. We did fundraising for that and I had made sure whoever, when you send donations
send it directly to the monument company.

But there was one place in the community that you could go right into the store and put the money in the jar, which is For These Groceries. Deena, she was kind enough to keep that jar there and she kept it there for a couple of years. And we got all the money for the monument. The monument is completely paid for and I was waiting for the land to be cleared.

So this year the land was completely cleared and we have a paved driveway going in and I wanted it to be on April 28th, which is her birthday. Kind of like, like my last birthday present to her. But I guess the monument company doesn’t do that during the winter so they said the soonest would be June 1st. The monument is nine feet long and 12 feet tall. It’s, it’s beautiful.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I want to make sure I’m giving you the opportunity, in case we missed anything, in case there’s anything else you want to share with the Commissioner. If you have any more recommendations.

PAMELA FILLIER: I do. You know when, when you go to Court, like I can’t, I can’t sit and say well he did this and this and this before but yet I can’t sit on the stand and say the truth about this monster. But, yet he can get on the stand and say horrible lies about my daughter. I, I don’t think that’s right.

He sits there and lies about her and then these things get posted in the paper and that’s not my child. You’re taking the word of a monster who’s trying to make some sick form of justification to why he raped my daughter and killed her. She was only 16 years old. She just hit puberty a
few months before that. She was - she
took so long to hit puberty that I was
going to take her to the doctor, I
thought something was wrong with her
because she was 16 years old. Well not
16, she was 15 and about a month or two
before her birthday she became a woman.
And then this monster gets on the stand
and tried to paint my daughter as a
prostitute. She was 16 years old.

So he can go on stand and smear my
daughter like that and I can’t say the
truth about him. Maybe that Jury needs
to know everything about him. Because
if they sit there thinking this is his
first time when it’s not they’re not
getting a clear picture of the person
that’s in front of them. And I really
feel that way, they shouldn’t be
allowed to sit up there and talk badly
about their victims, make up things to
make themselves feel better. All
you’re doing is victimizing the family
all over again.
Because it hurts. You don’t want to hear someone say untrue things about your child and you know they’re untrue. But you can’t, you can’t really go and get mad and scream in Court, why is he allowed to say that. Why can’t I say what he did. You can’t do that cause then you’re going to get thrown out of Court. I really feel like sometimes the Courts victimize the victims over again.

The criminals, it seems like when you go to Court, it’s like they have more rights than you do and they do. They have more rights than you and considering his past, his criminal record and what he, he did that should have been no question about it, he should’ve been put on dangerous offender’s list and I should’ve been told.
No worries Mrs. Fillier, your daughter has received her justice, this monster will never be on the street again. That’s when I’ll feel that Hilary has gotten her justice. She’ll never have complete justice because her life was taken from her and was taken from me. Cause there’s things that I’ll never get. It hurts me when I see kids, when I watch Hilary’s friends graduate, that hurt. I wanted to get her ready for her prom. I would’ve liked to pick out a wedding dress with her. And I can’t do that, and I’ll never get to do that.

It would just be a total injustice if this man was ever let out again. That’s all I want. I just want tougher laws. I can’t protect my daughter anymore. And that’s a hard thing to say because I feel like I failed her. And I know people say don’t blame yourself but as a mother how could you not blame yourself. I don’t need
anyone to blame me cause I blame myself
too.

FRED FILLIER: That’s not true, you know that’s not true. It wasn’t your fault, don’t think like that. Please.

PAMELA FILLIER: We’re supposed to be able to protect our children. The Government isn’t making it easier for us. We need tougher laws, it’s not going to just protect Native kids, it’s not just going to protect us, it’s going to protect everybody. It’ll protect everybody. Cause no race is better than the other. But when one race is traded so unfairly there comes a point where you’ve got to get mad.

My daughter paid for Canada’s mistake. They made the mistake and they let him out and my little girl paid that price. I just don’t want to see another little girl pray, play, pay that price. I
really don’t. You shouldn’t be allowed to violate someone and then walk down the street and have a chance to give yourself a good life. Because if he comes out he’ll just be in his 50s. That’s not old. It really isn’t. He’ll come out nice and strong and healthy cause he’s getting at least three meals a day. Getting to go workout at the gym.

He shouldn’t be allowed to do none of it. That’s all I want. I just want someone to come to me and tell me he’ll never come out. That’s all I want. We need tougher laws, that way we don’t have to keep watching people on tv. I don’t want to hear someone else get up and say this guy got out of jail and then took my child.

FRED FILLIER: Seeing that on tv is so offensive to us. Seeing that on tv is so offensive to me, when they put a clipping out of a man who’s going to
be moving into a certain area who’s a registered sex offender and he’s high risk to re-offend. They publicize all that. When I see that it’s unbelievably, I feel really sick in my stomach. It just, I don’t even know how to put that into words, how disgusted I am to see that when we’re victims of that.

When a man is let out and they’re saying oh he’s high risk to re-offend. It sickens me. It’s so disgusting. There’s got to be new, new roots to those people who are high risk to re-offend. That’s where their civil rights come in, that should never be the same as anyone else’s. Castrate them. Put a bracelet on their ankle forever. Tattoo their forehead. They don’t deserve the civil rights that we have. They do not. That has to change.
It’s so offensive to see that in the paper or on the news, when someone gets out and they’re a high risk, it just sickening. I’m sorry.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Commissioner Audette, do you have any questions or comments for the, for Pam or Fred?

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci. Merci beaucoup metre Big Canoe. Yes I have some questions but before I start I have to say, meegwetch for, I want to use the right words. Thank you for your courage and I know Pam and Fred, you’ve been everywhere to talk about the need of re-looking at the criminal justice system and its failures and what you explained to us.

And you’re still there and I hope you won’t do that forever because what you’re doing, we’ve heard so many victims or let’s say amazing women - I would say instead of victims - amazing
women who said, yes I was sexually
abused or I was raped and today I want
to change my present and my future.
And what you’re giving us for the
recommendations, I’ll add an “S”, are
very very important.

I’ll make sure that Qajaq, Brian and
Marion, the other Commissioners that
you met in Toronto last July, that
maybe I won’t be able to bring the
passion and the energy that you shared
to us but I’ll make sure that they
understand that we all need to read the
testimony of your truth to see how we
can write those recommendations. And
also, you’re a member of ENFAC, so
there’s a validation also with the
members of that important circle, and
remind us if we’re too soft in the
wording. That’s one thing.

Another important part, where my
colleagues right now are working hard
for the extension – cross my eyes,
fingers, ears, toes - that it’s well received in Ottawa, and of course with the Province of New Brunswick and across Canada, where we need also to build those questions for the Provincial Government and Territorial Government and other places.

One - the Victim Services, it’s Provincial. They were there to support you but financially they didn’t want to support because biologically they weren’t sisters to your daughter?

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes, exactly.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: So you would recommend that we expand - in that recommendation we make sure that Victim Services across Canada, in a situation like you, a tragic unacceptable situation arises, that it’s also support, that’s what I understand.

PAMELA FILLIER: Exactly.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Okay, perfect. I wrote it in Franglaish - half English half French, yes. Okay, as for the - when you did the search and the community was there to support you, did the police was there also for the search?

PAMELA FILLIER: Yeah, they were but not, not right in the beginning. In the beginning it was just the community.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Okay. But they came and brought the dogs and everything we need when......

PAMELA FILLIER: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Okay.

PAMELA FILLIER: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Okay, that’s good to know. And you talked about, it would help other people, not only First Nation or Metis or Inuit, I think there is – lately we saw on the news for the past year at the same time of this work with the Inquiry, that many women who were sexually abused or raped, unfounded I think we say in English, that it didn’t go to the Court. And it’s thousands and thousands and thousands of women, close to 700 women or people say that they were sexually abused.

So your work will help Canadian women, you’re right.

PAMELA FILLIER: I hope so.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: I can guarantee you. We have to prepare that report and you have to help us to make sure that the language and the wording, and of course, with the, the help our team
that it’s strong and it says what it has to say but also for the benefit of the Canadian women……

PAMELA FILLIER: Exactly.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: …..for all of us Indigenous women also. So for that I say you have my support because I think it’s very important, but there’s three other Commissions who are also very sensitive about that. Very sensitive about how the criminal justice works and where it could be improved. Provincial and Federal, of course.

So to finish, if you had – you were clear about the justice system but to the media and to people who are listening across Canada, there’s Canadians listening, I hope, what would you say to them? What would you say to them? Because they have the power to help us in this great mandate, great
journey as parents also, but as people
affected by a lost one or people who
work in this Inquiry, who are also
family members, some of us are, what
would you say to them so they can
paddle with us or feel responsible?

That it’s not only an Indigenous women
issue but it’s all of us, including the
one who’s listening.

PAMELA FILLIER: Well first we
have to start by talking about it. It
needs to be spoken about more often and
we can’t just be okay when something
like that happens. If you hear that
someone is being abused or you think
they’re in danger, say something. Say
something and don’t, for the love of
God, don’t think this will never happen
to me. Because that’s what I thought,
this would never happen to me. Be
aware. Be aware and hold your children
close.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup.
I forgot to say something. I just –
when you spoke I saw the nine foot,
nine feet – how do you call that in
English, the memorial?

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Okay. The big
memorial, I want to say, if I can,
thank you to the people who supported
you because it’s expensive.

PAMELA FILLIER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: It is, I’m pretty
sure, thanks for the picture. And
also, if I can say something beyond my
role as Commissioner, how hard it is
for a parent to lose everything
financially. To support your wife,
it’s amazing, what you did is
incredible, it’s – I commend you but I
don’t think we should be, or, we should
be in that situation.
So the system should help us and it’s something that I want to share with my colleagues. How can we recommend something that the people don’t impoverish……

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Impoverish.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Thank you. Usually Qujaq is there to translate my Franglish. So it’s – I made a star beside it to make sure that……

FRED FILLIER: That is so important.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: I don’t say I’m going to bring a magic solution but it’s something we can debate and make sure that……

FRED FILLIER: We work toward it.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Yeah, and it’s not the first time that we heard that. So something needs to be presented at the end, we’ll see how we can make sure it’s there.

PAMELA FILLIER: Awesome.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup, it’s always a pleasure to see you again and it’s good to, to have you to guide me and the rest of us in this journey. And I hope you’ll stay until the end to make sure we do it right because we do it for you you.

PAMELA FILLIER: I’m not going anywhere. Like I said, I’ll say it till there’s no breath in my body, I don’t quit.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Yeah.
PAMELA FILLIER: I don’t. That’s not one - one thing I’m not, I don’t quit.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: It’s a tough road.

PAMELA FILLIER: It is.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: I’ll be frank......

PAMELA FILLIER: It is.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: ......there’s pressure coming from all over the place but it’s historical so I’m proud to be beside you. And I know my colleagues are and you have so much to teach us and to bring us back on a good track, on the right track, whatever, the good path.

PAMELA FILLIER: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: We have something for you, would you accept a gift?

PAMELA FILLIER: Is it a car?

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: I took it. No, it’s not a car, sorry, but you can fly.

PAMELA FILLIER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: I’ll ask my cutie grandmother to explain where it comes from. There’s a beautiful story.

BERNIE POITRAS-WILLIAMS: Pamela and Fred, haw’aa to you again. I, I feel I’m going to walk this journey with you for many years and haw’aa for sharing your story. I just want to – you’re probably going to hear me say this over and over about the feathers and that, that it started its journey from Haida Gwaii with over 400 feathers that the matriarchs had picked along the shorelines in Haida Gwaii.
So that took a life of its own and then every Province, every, almost every Territory family members started to donate feathers to this whole process of the work nationally. So this last lot here, that it came from Seashell by the Sunshine Coast in between Vancouver Island and Vancouver. So these are the eagle feathers that have come from — with the raw, the rawness, you know, of their wing, and that was donated to the Inquiry to my niece, Audrey Siegl, who’s not with us today.

But this is the gifts from the family members all across, that have been……

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Who made this, this is new?

BERNIE POITRAS-WILLIAMS: That’s from Andrea.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Andrea.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Wow Andrea.

BERNIE POITRAS-WILLIAMS: The case is made by Andrea and it has a Mi’kmaq name and and it has the flower, the Innu flower.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: May I add just one thing?

BERNIE POITRAS-WILLIAMS: Absolutely.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: She says that the feathers come from all over the country, there’s so many heartwarming stories too. People who are listening, people who are spiritual people, people who dance, you know when we were in Thunder Bay there was a young gentleman - I keep telling this story. There’s a young gentleman who took apart his entire regalia to remove all the eagle feathers so that family members could be gifted with an eagle feather.
So there are Canadians, there are people, there are people listening in this country that want to support and send you love.

PAMELA FILLIER: That’s beautiful.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: We have support and it’s for you. Merci.

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE AND BERNIE POITRAS-WILLIAMS PRESENT GIFTS

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Commissioner, can we please close the hearings for today, to recommence tomorrow in this room at 9:00 a.m.?

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Wonderful. So the hearings will recommence tomorrow, so they are closed for today. And they will open again tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.
in here, the Rendezvous Room of the Four Points Sheraton in Moncton. Thank you.

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HEARINGS CLOSED AT 5:30 p.m.
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NOTE: The day closes with a prayer, song and drumming from Elder Peter Jadis; a prayer and song from Elder Sarah Analá
FORM 2

Certificate of Transcript (Subsection 5(2))
Evidence Act

I, we Trudy L. McKinnon, certify that this document
is a true and accurate transcript of the National
Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and,
Girls held at the Rendezvous Room, Four Points Sheraton,
Moncton, New Brunswick on the 13th day of February,
2018 taken from recording NIMNB20180213.

DATE: Wed., Feb. 28th, 2018

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Trudy L. Mckinnon