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Wednesday March 14, 2018

Public Volume 66
Panel: The Healing Journey of Inuit Women
Witnesses: Reepa Evic-Carleton, Karen Baker-Anderson, Annie Arnatuk, Mary Thomassie, Lizzie Aloupa & Rebecca Jones

Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller & Commissioners Qajaq Robinson & Brian Eyolfson

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## APPEARANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of First Nations</td>
<td>Daniel Cunningham (Legal counsel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concertation des Luttes contre L’Exploitation Sexuelle</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conseil des Anicinabek de Kitcisakik</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directeur des poursuites pénales et criminelles</td>
<td>Anny Bernier (Legal counsel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Canada</td>
<td>Jennifer Clarke (Legal counsel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Quebec</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami</td>
<td>Elizabeth Zarpa (Legal counsel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innu Takuaikan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naskapi Nation of Kawawachi-kamach</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women’s Association of Nunavik, Ottawa, Inuit Children’s Centre</td>
<td>Beth Symes (Legal counsel) Anne Curley (Representative) Karen Baker Anderson (Representative) Annie Arnatuk (Representative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec Native Women Association</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regroupement Mamit Innuat Inc.</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Résidences oblates du Québec</td>
<td>No Appearance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Public Volume 66  
March 14, 2018  
**Inuit Panel: Reepa Evic-Carleton, Karen Baker-Anderson, Annie Arnatuk, Mary Thomassie, Lizzie Aloupa and Rebecca Jones**  
Chief Commissioner: Marion Buller and Commissioners: Qajaq Robinson & Brian Eyolfson  
Commission Counsel: Fanny Wylde  
Researcher: Lisa Koperqualuk  
Clerk: Maryiam Khoury  
Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testimony of <strong>Reepa Evic-Carleton, et al.</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporter’s certification</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV
LIST OF EXHIBITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DVD “Breaking the Silence” (Saturviit, 2015, 24 minutes 40 seconds).</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MS. MOREEN KONWATSITSAWI MELOCHE: Okay.

All right. If you can get the people from the cheese table. Did you notice how all the veggies stayed there yesterday, but all that cheese and crackers was just devoured? Everybody loves cheese. It’s so fun to have a great spread like that, so thank you all. Like somebody said earlier to -- even the staff of the hotel was pretty great. Yes.

Okay. So, going to get started, just text your fellow friends. So, we are starting, we are a little bit behind schedule. So, this is supposed to go a couple of hours, so everyone is pretty much getting ready.

So, we have a panel here, the Inuit Panel -- Panel Inuit. I’m just going to introduce the recherché. And, I’m practicing my Inuktitut, so she was trying to translate it for me in English and then she says, no, no, that’s English. I said, well, I can speak English, I can do that. I’m not too bad in English. Je peut parler francais un petit peu, but I’m pretty much better in English. And, she says, okay, Koh-per-qua-luk, you can say it like that, or she says, you can say my name as the researcher, as Lisa Kho-per-qwaa-Logk (phon).

Koperqualuk, say it. She says, “Say it fast, practise!”
So, I practised. So, that’s the best I could do, sorry.

No offence, you know?

So, I didn’t do bad, I’m trying, but I will practise and brush up on my Inuktitut. So, I will pass it on, this is our Inuit -- beautiful, incredible Inuit Panel here. Yes, they’re just ready to rock this world. So, you just get ready, these women just got it going on. Okay, c’est un panel Inuit. So, it’s an Inuit panel we’ll hear this afternoon. Lisa - Kwaa-quaa-lok (phon). Okay,

\textit{Nakurmiik.}

\textbf{MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:} [Speaks in Inuktitut]. Thank you very much, and for all who are here. Here we are on this Wednesday afternoon, and sitting here with six ladies who are from various parts of the North and I’ll introduce them to you. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. Yes, we’ll be -- they will each be speaking as they wish, either in Inuktitut or in English, whichever they are most comfortable with.

And so, we have, starting with Lizzie Aloupa, who is from Quaqtaq; Annie Arnatuk beside her; Karen Baker-Anderson; Mary Thomassie from Kangirsuk, Reepa Evic-Carleton and Rebecca Jones. Each of these beautiful ladies have -- are survivors and will tell you their stories, and their healing journeys, and what has brought them up to today. And, they’ll be introducing themselves
further, but before we go ahead, I’d like to ask Bryan to come and give them their oath.

INTERPRETER FOR MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: You will need to do your truth statements and your confirmation.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Great. I guess we’ll start with Rebecca. Rebecca, there are various options, you can swear on a Bible or just make a solemn affirmation, which would you like to do? Solemn affirmation? Great. Rebecca, do you solemnly affirm that the testimony you’ll share today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. REBECCA JONES: I do.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you. And, Reepa, same option, affirmation or would you like to swear on a Bible? Affirmation. Reepa, do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you’ll give today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. REEPA EVIC-CARLETON: I agree.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: You agree, thank you. Mary, same option, affirmation or you can swear on the Bible. It’s your choice. Okay. So, affirmation or on -- affirmation, great. Mary, do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you’ll give today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
MS. MARY THOMASSIE: Yes.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you. Karen?

Affirmation. Okay. Karen, do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you’ll give today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. KAREN BAKER-ANDERSON: I do.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you. And, Annie, same question, affirmation or on the Bible? Sorry? Affirmation, okay. Right. Annie, do you solemnly affirm that the testimony you’ll share today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. ANNIE ARNATUK: Yes.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you. Lizzie, what would you like to do now? Affirmation as well? Lizzie, do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you’ll give today will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA: I will.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: [Speaks in Inuktitut]. Nakurmiik. Thank you. Before we begin, we have members, including Ayolla Meetaq (phon) who is with us here today. Andy Weeks (phon) and Xavier Duq (phon), they are both here from Nunavik area, and they have been protectors of Inuit lands. Thank you for being with us
today. We will begin now. Lizzie Aloupa will be the first one to proceed with this session.

**MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA:** [Speaks in Inuktitut].

So, my name is Lizzie Aloupa. Like I was saying earlier, I was asked by Lisa to share about being a survivor. Like I was speaking earlier this morning, I’ve survived a lot of tragedies in my family, I’ve survived a violent relationship.

So, as it’s stated in the paper, I’m not a police officer, I’m a prevention counsellor for the Kativik Regional Police Force in Kuujjuaq. My home is in Quaqtaq, but my other home is Kuujjuaq. And, I am a mother of eight children, all of them are adults; and I’m a grandmother to 16 grandchildren.

And, in what’s written about me, it’s talking about how I went to a healing session, but I went to a healing school. And so, I was married at a very young age of 18 years, 18 years of age, and I was brought up as a very precious child. Like I was telling you earlier, I’m the oldest of my living siblings, and so I was very precious to my mother.

My father was sent off to the hospital two weeks after I was born, so I didn’t know him the first two years of my life. But I always knew in our little village, I was a very special, loved child, and I always assumed
that’s how it was going to be -- I mean, I just took it for granted that my life would be like that. But, it ended up that, when I was in that marital relationship, that I first discovered people can be physically violent and that I have to watch what I say or whatever.

So, I started experiencing violence when I was just around 19 years old. And, over the years, we had children. I went -- because we were living in his community; when I decided I would go back home, so I went back home to Quaqtaq, where my mother was and my siblings were, and my husband came along with me.

The point I really want to make is that, when you are going through an abusive, violent relationship, there is no one there to talk to, we always think we’re the only ones going through this. In my case, I always thought he’s angry because of something I did or something I didn’t do; and I had no one, no where to ask for support or for advice.

So, finally, in the year 2002, it was the last time he attacked me, and it -- the abuse, or the physical abuse didn’t happen regularly. It would maybe take four years, a few years, and we were a good family. Everyone thought we were a really great family. There was no alcohol involved in our lives; so when I was almost strangled to death, everyone thought that we had been under
the influence of alcohol, but we were not.

So, when it was time for me to be seen by
the nurse, I went to see her, but it was really hard for me
to press charges because it’s something we were not taught.

Even though I had been interpreting for the
justice criminal court for a few years, when it became my
personal life, it was really hard. I really felt like this
man is the strongest man. If the police come and arrest
him, he’ll just throw them and they can’t do anything with
him.

This is how abuse makes us think. We think
this abusive person is the most powerful person on earth.
By the time we finally come to -- like, a dead -- when I
finally came to the point where I had to report and press
charges, it was very hard. It’s very difficult. And, when
I finally left -- because at that time we were separated
for a while, but we -- for the sake of my children, I tried
to take him back again without any counselling from anyone,
and it just didn’t work. Like, it never did work before
because we did not communicate. Communication is so
important.

So, by the year 2008, after I had been at
the healing school in Orangeville, Ontario, I finally had
enough inner strength to say, “Okay, I’m not going to
continue in this relationship. I want to live. And, this
is not living.” We are told so often by our people, our Elders: you are married till death parts you. This is your marital agreement.

But, the -- so I’ve -- after the healing school experience, I started really thinking, it shouldn’t have to be like that. Because we were taught at the school, you were never meant to feel bad about yourself.

So, I went back home -- I didn’t leave right away, but it became really hard to live at home again. So, I left and things started getting better for me, even though it was very difficult; because up there, if you leave your marriage, you’re like an outcast. You become an outcast. You don’t fit anywhere anymore.

So, I have been telling the younger women, if you live in a violent relationship, you have to realize he didn’t change last year, he’s not changing this year, most likely he’ll still be the same next year, so it’s best to get yourself to a safe place even though you’re married. You’re not safe in your own home.

And, to this day, we still have to face people who say, you have to stay in that marriage. It’s your fault. You’re the on who talks a lot, so it’s your fault. You have to stay in it. And, because we don’t have counsellors, we’re only starting to recently discover that we also can have therapists, and people are getting
therapists now, thank God.

But, we are very behind. What you enjoy here, doesn’t exist in the Arctic, so we are very behind in that. So, if we have to go to court, we are very scared, so we don’t report a lot of criminal stuff to the police because we always think it’s me that’s going to send the perpetrator to prison. So, our thinking is based a lot on misunderstanding of the justice system.

I just want to add that I’ve been working on childhood sexual abuse prevention and healing for the past seven years now. And I have come to realize that childhood sexual abuse in our region is the main cause for all the violence and raging and all the violence that goes on, all the beatings that go on. We have come to realize that sexual abuse as a child -- having been sexually abused as a child is the main cause for all the violence.

And, when we went to visit the men in prison at Laval, we met 25 men, and one of them at the end of the sessions -- I will never forget what he said. He said,” I realize most of us were sexually abused.” So, that’s -- my passion is to help people to break the silence on their sexual abuse and to start on their healing journey from sexual abuse.

I think I’ve used up my time already, right?

MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: Thank you, Lizzie.
Could you explain a little bit the program or the awareness-raising program that you coordinate, that you work?

MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA: Okay.

MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: Yes, thank you.

MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA: Thank you. So, when we first started -- well, the Regional Health Board decided that we would prioritize sexual abuse in Nunavik. At that time, we didn’t know what to do, where to begin. I was the only Inuk in a committee that decided to work on that.

So, in the beginning, we tried out -- we pilot-projected the ‘Good Touch, Bad Touch’ program. The Health Board had taken this program and we went over it, we translated it, we adapted it to what we needed, and we did that in kindergarten and grade 1, and I was -- because I’m a certified teacher -- I went to teach the program in two schools.

In the second school, we realized that one teacher and one worker could not even bear to hear the word sexual abuse, so I realized before we go into the classrooms, we have to work with the frontline workers first. So, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada had this program called The Hidden Face -- or had this resource called The Hidden Face. It’s about a woman who was sexually abused and she’s from Greenland.
So, we built a two-day healing workshop using that resource. So, when we travel, we only go to communities that request the program, because sexual abuse is rampant in all the communities, or was. So, when we’re invited to a community, we take the frontline workers; give them the two day Hidden Face healing workshop; and give them orientation to sexual abuse; and then we go into the school.

We do the same thing with all the staff of the school, and then finally we go into the classrooms and we teach each class three times, as prescribed by the program. And on the fourth day, we meet each child to make sure that what we taught them was understandable.

**MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** And, how long has this program been on now?

**MS. LIZZIE ALOUPA:** It’s going into six years now, because we started in May 2012.

**MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank you, Lizzie, [Speaks in Inuktitut]. And, I think I’ll leave the questions to the end? Yes. And, we’ll continue with our panelists. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. And, we’re now passing the microphone to Reepa Evic-Carleton. Thank you, Reepa.

**MS. REEPA EVIC-CARLETON:** Thank you for having me here and thank you for all the people that shared before us. It’s been really impactful and we feel for the
I just want to share a little bit about my early beginnings. I was born in an outpost camp when mom and dad were still living on the land. So, I have wonderful memories of that life, that Inuit had. Up to the 1950s, ‘60s, we were forcefully moved to the settlement of Pangnirtung Nunavut when I was about six years old.

So, I was really brought up in a really good traditional way. I was surrounded by wonderful Elders and adults in that small camp, because we only had, like, 10 per camp, and I thought we were the only people, before we were introduced to others, other than Inuit. So, that was my early beginning.

We used the qulig to light and to cook and to keep warm; and I was born in a hut, in a qarmaq, so my mom -- my mom’s helper, it was my [Speaks in Inuktitut] till she passed away. And so, she treated me in a very special way all throughout her life and she even told me that there were certain things that she said when I was born that she wanted to see in me as skills or characters. And so, I think of it and I think, wow, that was a really good start for a little infant. So, my memories are wonderful of that time when mom and dad, and other families were still living solely off the land.

So, after the relocation, mom and dad always
went back to that area where I was born when they went out camping. Let’s say May to September, that was our long holiday. It would be nice to have that again. So, after the relocation, we were told to go to school; so the learning that I would have gotten from my mom and the other women stopped because we were now in school for the day. I didn’t go to residential school, but my oldest brother and younger sister had gone to residential school.

So, life was pretty good up until I was sexually abused by this man who became my husband after several years. Because I -- like a lot of people, it was very hard to share what had happened to me. I remember my mom was awake when I came home. I normally didn’t stay out that late. But, I believe she, kind of, felt something was up with me because she was awake. And I really wanted to say something to her, but the shame came, and the guilt, so I had buried that deep inside of me at a young -- 15 years old.

Then, I became pregnant with him and -- so he really, kind of, said, “Since you’re pregnant, we have to get married.” And, there was not a lot of help back then. And so, I married him, and he was very, very abusive to me throughout the nine years we were together. We had three children. My oldest is in her 40s now.

So, life was really hard. There were lots
of times when you felt like totally alone, nobody was
really there to help you. When I had to flee because of
safety reasons for myself and my three children, it would
be to mom and dad, because there were no shelters.
Absolutely no shelters.

And I always wondered why -- why do women
and children have to leave and make a big life change, when
he’s only one? But, that’s still the same today. It would
be so nice if women could stay with their children because
they’re very -- it’s a very, very difficult time when a
woman is living in an abusive relationship.

So, that’s still a question in my mind,
because women have to flee, women have to go outside the
community to go to a shelter because most communities don’t
have a shelter. So, that would be one of my
recommendations, is to look at safe homes for women and
children, in their community.

So, mom and dad always took me whenever I
needed to flee -- and it was a lot around my safety. Not
so much the children, but it was my safety because he would
become very violent. There was one time I remember -- I’ve
always worked, I’ve always been a caregiver that always --
I always worked and I always looked after my children; but
there was one time he met me outside. And I was going
home, and he was very, very angry, and he dragged me from
outside to my -- to our home. And people did nothing. There was few people that saw this, they did nothing.

So, after I had left him, I came across a woman who was very -- who was being beaten severely outside and all these people were passing by. I could not. So I stepped in and took her home. That’s what violence does to you: You really do care for what’s happening to others, because you remember how it was when help was not available. So, you put yourself in situations that could be dangerous. He could have turned on to me, but I did not care.

Sometimes the community turns against you because they’re small communities, “Why did you -- why did you help her? Why did the police come and he was in trouble?” So, smaller communities are difficult in that way. And, like the first speaker was saying earlier, for a mom, particularly my mom, it was like, “You married him, he’s going to change, he will change, you stay in this relationship.” So, I lived with that for quite a long time, then I realized I had to leave. I had to make a decision for me and my kids.

Another incident was where I was carrying our youngest baby in my amautiq because that’s how we care for our babies, carrying them in our amautiq. We were house sitting at his brother’s little matchbox house when
they were still around, and he got very angry again for --
for really no reason. And he was very jealous; and so,
every time he would go into that mindset, it was like he
would try at me till -- who I saw, or was I with anybody
ever. Like, I really had no words to tell him because I
had never been with somebody else other than him.

So, he wouldn’t believe me and he wouldn’t
let it go, so he got a knife and he put it against my neck
here and my baby is in my back. That was really, really
scary. I looked out this big window of this little
matchbox house and there was my mom, looking inside. But
she didn’t come in. And, he seemed to stop. I don’t’ know
if he saw her or it was just me. So, when I saw my mom the
next day, I said, “Why did you not come in and stop what
was happening?” She told me she never came.

So, I really believe in -- somebody was out
-- looking out for me. So many occasions, I can tell lots
of stories about these kinds of things, but we don’t have a
lot of time. And, what eventually really started happening
to me was: feeling hopeless and helpless, nobody to really
talk to. And, the police would be called, the social
services would be called, but nothing was ever done. It
was kept under the carpet back in that time.

So, despair started to happen within me
internally and -- I still functioned, I still worked, I
still cared for the children, but there were times I just wanted to disappear. I didn’t know how to get out of this mess.

One day, I seemed to woke up mentally and I realized the mess I was in. I wasn’t using drugs or alcohol. And, I realized it was like a wake-up call: I either get out of this or I’m going to die. He’s going to kill me or I’m going to go in such a state of mental illness or something like that, that I -- it woke me up. It seemed to wake me up and I cried. I cried a lot that day. And, I didn’t know -- I didn’t know. I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t know how to get out of it, but I knew I had to get out.

So, that’s when I left him and I started talking to an Elder. What really helped me was I really had to share what was going on with me, so I started sharing with an Elder and she listened and listened, never judged. And, I cried a lot. I didn’t even know what was happening to me because I’ve never lived this kind of a life before.

So, by the time I left my community back in 1989, I had post-traumatic stress disorder like Barb was sharing. We were -- because I moved south with my second husband, we were in training for trauma and addiction because we were opening up a treatment centre back in the
early 2000s. Listening to our instructor and reading through the material, I diagnosed myself, I had full-blown PTSD. I suffer panic attacks, I -- lots of paranoia, and again an Elder helped me through that.

I’ve never taken medication for it, but an Elder was always there when I needed her, even through telephone, long distance. She’s a very wise lady. She’s still with us. Barb mentioned her name, Meeka Arnakaq. She’s also my first cousin. So, she was there for me throughout these years and I highly recommend anybody who is going through stuff like I went through to start -- even with one person. That’s enough. And, it’s better like that sometimes, just to be able to talk to someone, otherwise it will drive you crazy.

I wasn’t suicidal, but the thought of wanting to disappear was getting very close to suicidal thoughts. So, I really realize I was in big trouble within myself and that’s really when I started to reach out.

So, I became very passionate about wanting to help my people. Being brought up in a way that my mom and dad brought me up, having that stability in my first years, I think really helped me when I was really struggling as a person.

And, I also really believe in letting people talk in their language when they’re really going through
their stuff. We’ve seen that over and over and over at the Mamisarvik Healing Centre when it was still operating. And, I really stress that, we need healing centres, we need centres open across our North. It’s one thing to have a centre in the South, but it would be great to have these services available in our northern communities.

And also help for the men, because when somebody’s not feeling great about themselves, that’s when these things do happen. So, centres for men or -- would be great to see, because we need our men. And, on-the-land programs are also very effective. We did a one month on-the-land program just before Mamisarvik closed down in -- outside Inuvik, and it was wonderful. Hard work, but wonderful. So, I would highly recommend on-the-land programs when people are going through their healing process.

I think for a lot of us, we’ve had family members that have committed suicide. And I’m -- and a lot of it -- because when you are traumatized and you have these things going on within you, without help - it doesn’t stay just the same. It does progress. So, we need services, more services for our people; young people; families.

So, I’ve made a life outside my Territory. I’ve been in the South for over 20 years now. When the
healing centre closed down several years ago, I took a good long break and I thought I was going to retire. But I went back to the work force and I’m now working with the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre and I’m really loving it. We hear the voice -- because we work -- the building is where the children are, the day care, the preschool, the Head Start. So, we’re surrounded by wonderful laughter, wonderful children, and it’s so healing. It’s wonderful to work there. And, I always hear the children laughing outside our facility because the playground is right within the yard there.

So, I work as a mental health counsellor and we work with the family. We run the parenting courses, the Inunnguinig parenting courses, we’ve -- this is our second session that we’re running. It’s 20 weeks long and it’s for Inuit parents. So, it’s been really wonderful to have that running. And, we usually have about 20, 15 to 20 parents every once-a-week that we gather. And these are based on Inuit-traditional way of parenting. And we also have our women sharing circles and men sharing circles once a week. So, there’s lots of good programming happening out of the centre that I work for now.

So, just to go back to the first relocation, many people don’t talk about that. It’s coming up more and more, but I’ve always, kind of wondered about the effects
of those decisions that were made for my people without
their presence in these meetings. So, I was too young to
remember, but I’ve had opportunities where I’ve asked
questions to my Elders, how it was when they were
forcefully moved.

One lady, I’ll never forget, when I asked
her the question, she started to cry, and she cried, and
she cried, then finally started to share her story of how
it was for her. So, from then on -- that was like 30 years
ago. From then on, I realized there’s a lot of grief and
loss within my people, and it needs to be dealt with. If
not, then it just goes from generation to generation.

So, there’s lots of stories. I think I’m
taking a bit too much time, so I’m going to pass it on.
Thank you for listening.

MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: [ Speaks in
Inuktitut]. Thank you for your incredible story and your
Please go ahead.

MS. KAREN BAKER-ANDERSON: I’d like to just
start off by just saying how incredibly grateful I feel to
be in this room. In the last two days I have witnessed
incredible strength; the wisdom of women; the courage of
people. I have seen, heard and witnessed incredible pain,
but a strength and a spirit that has touched my heart.
I was asked -- our legal counsel, Beth, who is here and has been incredible support for all of us, had asked -- we’re part of the standing committee with Pauktuutit -- had asked that we come and speak about our programming at the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre.

But, before I do that, I’d like to talk a little bit about the urban situation. Currently, 26 percent of Inuit have chosen or, in some cases have had no choice but to live outside of their home regions. Ottawa is home to a large urban Inuit population that is hard to get an exact count on, but as we heard today from Cathy, from TI, it’s estimated to be around 5,000.

When we look at who makes up that population, we have found that there is a group of Inuit who moved to Ottawa to live permanently; for employment, health services, to be with family. There is another group that live in Ottawa on a temporary basis.

They come for medical services again, and some, and it’s an unfortunate story -- on any given day in Ottawa, there will be 60 youth who have left their home Territory in the Baffin region to live in Ottawa. Because they’re involved -- because they’re in need of support of mental health services for the youth; or they’re involved in child welfare and have not been able to be placed in their own region, so they are therefore living in Ottawa.
Fifty percent, which is really interesting,
of the population that we work, with are now born in
Ottawa. We deal with many children who have never, in
fact, lived or seen or experienced the North in any way,
shape or form, other than the cultural stories and the
pictures that are passed down to them as they visit the
Centre and speak with their families.

The issues that we see when Inuit come to an
urban setting is that there are systems everywhere that
they need to navigate. I remember two years ago being in
CHEO, and a woman came in; and a really obviously tough
part of her life, her child was there for medical services
-- CHEO is our pediatric hospital. And, I heard her ask
somebody, “How do I get to the third floor?” And, somebody
quickly in English responded to, “Go down the hall, turn
right and to take the elevator.”

And, I stopped for a moment and thought,
“Has this woman ever been in an elevator? Did she
understand what was just said to her?” I took her hand and
together we went and found her sick child.

There are so many systems to navigate in an
urban setting. Over and over again, we ask people to prove
who they are. We ask them, “Do you have birth
certificates? Do you have medical records? Do you have
your child’s report cards? Do you have assessments on your
children?” And when people don’t have these things, people in the system query why you wouldn’t. There’s lack of understanding of the systems in the North.

The other thing that Inuit face when they’re in Ottawa is there is an assumption that pan-Aboriginal services will meet their needs. The Inuit, and from what I have seen, quietly go to programs and are grateful for services, while yet acknowledging that they wished those services were in their language and that were of their culture.

I experienced this firsthand with my daughter, Anika (phon), who we adopted at birth, and her birth mother is Reepa. Anika came home from school one day and she had gone to -- the night before actually, she had gone to Wabano, our amazing Indigenous health care centre and gone to a cultural event. She said, “Mom, they were smudging. Do we smudge?” And, I said, “No, Anika, in your culture, you don’t smudge.” But, it was a cultural activity.

So, when kids are in Ottawa, they struggle with what is their own identity, and as staff, we need -- are constantly educating people that there is a difference between Métis, Inuit and First Nations. Because there is an assumption that when they know about one of those groups, that they can apply what they know to all three
Inuit in Ottawa experience racism. There is no question in my mind and in my heart. I have non-
Indigenous men stand in my office and tell me, blatantly, that they go to a particular bar on a certain -- during a certain time of the month because they’re certain to find Inuit women who are intoxicated; that they then know or feel that they have the right to abuse. I can tell you I have said, “Don’t let the door hit you on the back of the head as you exit my office.”

I’m not here to tell my story. I am, in fact, not Indigenous. I am a white woman who, 23 years ago, found herself somehow employed at Tungasuvvingat Inuit. I don’t know what brought me there, but like Reepa, I’m very spiritual. My husband and I had gone through infertility treatment for a number of years and couldn’t understand why this middle-class family -- couple, was not able to conceive a child. It’s all I had ever wanted my entire life.

I think there’s a connection to why I ended up working at TI, in children’s programs. I didn’t have the education. My background was in business and adult education. But, somebody said to me, my dear friend, Liz Lightford, who I still work with to this day and who developed all of the family programs at TI, “You light up
when you’re around children. It’s where you need to be, it
is your calling.”

The Inuit community allowed me to fulfil my
passion and work with children. Every day I wake up and
think, how the heck did this crazy white chick from
Manotick get to be the executive director of an Inuit
organization. I wasn’t sure that I should be here today,
in fact, to speak.

Yesterday, a memory came back to me. The
memory of being 30 years old, it was a while ago -- quite a
while ago; and just having started in the community. And,
this beautiful Inuk woman came to me and said, “I’m going
to the Royal Ottawa tomorrow, I am -- I had become -- my
family is involved in child welfare, I need to deal with my
alcoholism. I’m going for an intake, can you come with
me?”

I had no idea what that meant. I had no
idea what was needed of me. I had never done work of that
nature. But she had asked me. I said, “Absolutely. Tell
me what you need.” She said, “I need you to drive.” And,
for people in this room who have ever seen me drive, that
was very, very brave of her. And, she said, “I need you to
hold my hand and I just need you to be there.”

During the hour of that intake, I learned
that the human spirit can endure so much. I had not heard
or ever experienced such a story of horrific pain in my life. She told the story like she was telling somebody about a trip to Walmart to pick up groceries. She didn’t cry. She stared at the person doing the intake, and just went on.

She talked about being abused not by one person, two people, even three people. She talked about having family members missing, murdered. I had never in my life experienced hearing such a story. As we left, I will never forget her putting her hand on my shoulder and saying, “Are you okay?” That is the gift of Inuit. Always checking on each other.

We drove in silence. I dropped her off. I went home and I threw up for two hours straight. I could not believe as a Canadian, in this country -- with so much wealth, so much knowledge, that we could ever have a Canadian be treated the way that that woman had been treated. To have been let down by so many systems. My heart changed that day. It was a call to action for me that I could no longer, as a Canadian, stand by and not be affected by what I had heard.

The other thing that acme to my mind this morning was when we adopted our beautiful Anika from Reepa and her husband, Boyd. It was a traditional adoption. It kind of, confused the people in the hospital when she was
born, because we were all in there and Reepa gives birth to a 10-and-a-half-pound baby; I said thank goodness it wasn’t me. And, breastfeed -- she says, “Well, I think she’s hungry.” I said, “Well, feed her.” So, she breastfeeds her, and then hands her to me and I breastfeed her, because I had been pumping so that I could breastfeed her. And, the total look of confusion on the doctor’s face was quite precious.

When I adopted Anika, I met with Meeka Arnakaq, the same Elder we have spoken about many times, and I said, “I need to hear from you what I need to do because this is an incredible gift I had been given.” And, she said, “You need to raise her as part of her community, she needs to know who she is as an Indigenous woman, but also as a white woman because Reepa’s husband, Boyd, is from Scotland heritage.” Just three minutes before we got up to speak, my daughter, our daughter -- we obviously have a very open adoption -- sent this to me. She’s at McGill University here in Montreal studying political science. She said, “Mom, sending strength to you all and what is surrounding you today. I just participated in a walk-out with the Indigenous Student Alliance to raise awareness for the injustice that continues to be committed against our community. I don’t want to go to my next class.” I said, “Follow your heart, sweetie, and don’t go then.” She will
be joining Reepa and I this evening to have dinner. That is my inspiration to serve.

Twelve years ago, the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre started, and I was hired as the executive director. It started with one program, five staff, and a budget of $300,000. Today, as we sit here, our budget is now $4.5 million; we employ 60 people; and we offer a multitude of services. The services are nothing but a toolkit to help people.

People ask, “How have we grown this agency?” And, it’s simple. We have done what the Inquiry needs to do. We have asked Inuit: “What do you need?” We have listened, and we have responded. The community built this agency. It is theirs. You can see it in the eyes of the children when they walk through the doors. You can hear it with the staff and how proud they are of their work.

Yesterday I was sent a picture from our staff. Currently we have 30 Inuit kids -- actually, 40 Inuit kids out on an on-the-land camp with five Elders. And so, they were sending me pictures yesterday. We offer a multitude of services. And, yesterday, when I refreshed my memory on ITK’s policy or strategy to end suicide -- everything is in that report.

There needs to be healing, we need to get back to what Inuit always know and have known: that
children are the center of the universe. Without children, there is no community.

I do three things -- or have three things in my office. One is a picture that somebody gifted me of a blanket toss, and I love that image of people holding around a circle or a blanket with a child in the middle, and they’re throwing the child up. The second thing I have, is a huge picture that was taken by Prime Minister Trudeau’s photography team, and it was a group of our children who went to perform. I have a little crush on Trudeau I have to tell you, I find his hair lovely.

I did not go that day. But, the children returned all happy, and I said, “Where were you guys?” And, they said, like it was an every day occurrence to them, “Oh, we were performing in a nice building for some nice guy,” with big smiles on their face. And, what I loved about that moment is our mission at our agency is really simple: to ensure that each and every Inuk child that walks through our door has a sense of pride in who they are. The hope in that is that years down the road, they will then to contribute back to a healthy community.

When I looked into the eyes of that children that day, I saw hope; I saw pride; I saw a sparkle. It wasn’t about Trudeau. It was about them. It was so clear to me how they felt. I have that picture on my wall.
The third thing is I will never forget hearing a First Nations Elder speak about living on reserve and children being taken from a community, sent to residential school and how the sound changed in the community, that they would open their windows and not hear the sound of children playing.

I work with my window open so that I can every day be reminded it’s not about politics, it’s not about funding: it’s about those kids. They bring meaning to our work. The programs that we do have, we have a half-day Head Start program, a full day childcare centre. And, I have to tell you, every single community needs a childcare centre. They don’t just need a childcare centre, it needs to be funded appropriately. We pay our staff on average $25.00 an hour to work in the childcare centre.

When I was at the National Strategy for Childcare, I heard about the rates of pay in the North, where the cost of living is so much higher in Ottawa and left quite pissed off, to be honest with you, that people doing such important work were paid so low.

We have youth services, parenting services, mental health services. We have four staff that work in the Ottawa Carleton school board doing cultural presentations, and we are working on system change. But, all of that is because that’s what the community told us
they wanted. We have just followed their voice.

And, again, if you read through ITK’s suicide-prevention strategy, it’s all in there. We just need to stop doing all -- this Hearing is obviously important. Reports of such nature are important. But, this has to be a call to action. Thank you. I know I’ve gone on way too long, but that happens with me. Okay. So, I’m going to pass it on. Thank you.

MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: Thank you very much, Karen. Thank you for sharing. We have three more panelists, and I don’t know if you would like to take a break or we shall continue. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. Yes. They can continue if you are all right as well. Good. All right. We will continue. So, we have, next up, Rebecca Jones. Yes, please.

MS. REBECCA JONES: How do I start? So, my name is Rebecca Jones. My family is originally from Coral Harbour, Nunavut. I semi-grew up there; we moved there when I was about 12 years old, and went in and out of the community up until 2008. I’ve lived everywhere pretty much in the North and in southern Canada.

I, too, am a survivor of domestic violence. I left my ex-husband back in 2009 for the last time. A lot of what the women were sharing earlier resonates with me very much. I think for a lot of us Inuit women living in
the smaller communities in Nunavut, experience very much the same things. With lack of services, nowhere to go, and we’re all being told what Reepa had shared earlier to just stay in the marriage.

We’re often told by the Elders ...

**INTERPRETER FOR MS. REBECCA JONES:** ... “It will be okay again, just stick with it, he will change eventually if you’re just patient.”

**MS. REBECCA JONES:** I can tell you patience does not work. There’s nothing anybody can do to change anybody else. There’s nothing anybody can do to force their partner to heal, because as mentioned, people that do that are injured persons themselves.

Initially, I had thought I would speak about some of the traumas that I had gone through, but it just kept bringing me back to my ex and the things he’s gone through. And, there are not enough services and programs for our men and boys. Men in general have a harder time speaking about things that have happened to them, disclosing abuse. And, I just really want to express the importance of having more programming for Inuit men and boys.

And, the importance of keeping our children safe, teaching them to be proud of who they are.

Encouraging those people that are in those kinds of
situations, those kinds of abusive relationships, to leave
and not to stay and -- not to be patient, but to leave.
And, if in the future, yes, if he does change on his own,
then that’s your choice, if you want to go back to him.
But for now, you need to get out.

But, unfortunately, there are, I think only
two, two or three shelters in the whole Territory. And,
for those of us who have, kind of been known to have a
stronger voice, were asked to take on this added stress.
Even while I was going through these things, I was
constantly asked to help others and to open up my home.
And I did, to some. I allowed people to come in with their
six kids and, like -- even though I was quite stressed out
myself, but I had no choice because these people had
nowhere else to go, which also caused a lot of strife
between myself and the husband.

I have been through a lot, but coming to
Ottawa has really helped me realize the importance of
Inuit-specific programming; healing groups, whatever you
want to call them. Because I feel that many Inuit are lost
in who they are, they need that sense of self-identity to
begin their healing journey.

Even for myself, I grew up in both worlds,
I’m half-white, and so I grew up both in the Inuit world
and hanoonat (phon) world. But I would always walk around
and I would always -- “Why is everybody so messed up?” You know, and I’d be saying these types of things without even realizing the affects that colonization and inter-generational trauma and all these things have had on so many Indigenous peoples.

I’m not saying it’s an excuse to do bad things, whether to others or to yourself, but it definitely plays a role in why Inuit society is the way it is. With violence being so prevalent in our societies, sexual violence, physical violence; you name it, it’s everywhere. That’s how I would see it. And, that was my main reason for leaving the North, because I didn’t want my children to grow up thinking that that’s normal, to see somebody walking down the street, you know, yelling at their wife and she already has a black eye, you know? And, everybody just, kind of, “Ah, that’s just them.”

I didn’t want my children to grow up thinking that that’s normal. And even though I know in my heart that that wasn’t normal, it became a norm to me too. It was just a part of every day life. And, I don't want our society to be like that and I don't want any child to ever think that that’s normal.

I think education is key, in every sense of the word. Not just education through school, but educate people on the effects of alcohol. You know, it may be all
fun and games for now, but then later on, you’re going to develop an addiction and not a lot of people are aware of that, because it is a fairly new thing that was introduced in Inuit society.

My mom, just one generation before me, they were born on the land. And a lot of people don’t realize that either, that we’re a very new society, new Territory, that it’s going to take a lot of work; but I recommend that we work on our youth because it’s that next generation that’s going to be the change.

When I was growing up, there wasn’t anything for youth. And from what I understand, there still isn’t very much. And, everyone knows what happens when young people are bored, they’ll think of anything to do. They’ll just take whatever is available if they’re not taught properly.

I had written a couple of things down. So, I started working for OICC, Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre, a little over a year ago, or it’s been maybe two years now, something like that. But Karen had mentioned earlier a few things that don’t sit well with me as well.

Being an Inuk woman, in this day and age you would think I would be able to walk safely down the street in one of the safest city’s in Canada, but I can’t. There’s a particular area of town where sex trade workers
are known to frequent, and if I’m walking down there
because I’m coming from a meeting or things like that, cars
will pull up to me, assuming that I’m a prostitute. And,
I’ve had very racist things said to me while living in
Ottawa. I’ve only been there for about two and a half
years now; but it’s that lack of education, it’s -- on the
general public, that lack of education, the assumption that
we’re all drunks.

I find myself, every single time I meet a
new person that I’m having to explain myself, having to
explain the difference between First Nations, Métis, Inuit;
having to explain that statistically, Indigenous people
drink less than any other culture in Canada; having to
explain, “No, I’ve never been a prostitute.”

Like, I think that’s pretty sad in 2018, to
have to be constantly explaining myself when I should be
comfortable in my own home. I should be comfortable enough
to walk down the street. I shouldn’t be looked at any
differently than anybody else. And, I think unfortunately
a lot of Inuit women especially feel that way, and it’s
quite scary, it’s a scary thing to experience and feel.

But my number one recommendation is
education for the general public on who we really are.
It’s all fine and dandy to have it in the curriculum now in
schools, but again, it’s just a general overview of things
that can be very easily misunderstood at that -- actually, one of our ladies that acts as our services, was approached by a man on the bus who had thought Inuit are extinct. He thought we were an extinct people because this is what he learned in his university class, in his Indigenous studies. Despite his -- he was so ecstatic to have met what he thought was an extinct people -- yes. But, yes, she had to educate him on the bus. So, she said, “I should be a professor.”

But these are just the types of things that we have to go through. And, I’m still on my healing journey, but because of places like OICC, because I feel so supported there, I finally have the courage to speak up or speak out.

And, I just wanted to share something, I’m very proud of it. So, I developed with others -- with the help of others this little resource kit, and I want to share it with others so that maybe you can do a similar thing in your regions. It’s a mini-resource kit which contains -- so there’s a few cards in there.

One is for listing resources; one is a calendar which -- I got the idea off of -- I had gone to a conference and they had mentioned an app that’s available in the States, where one big part of it is a calendar, so that the woman can track her feelings or incidents that may
have happened in order for her to reflect back onto her situation. Because when you’re in that situation, you
don’t have time to think about it, process it, process the feelings and thoughts surrounding that whole thing. And then the next thing happens, and then the next things happens, and you just don’t have the time or energy to process all of it. But when you start reflecting back using a calendar, then it helps the woman to maybe make that next step of leaving.

And, that’s about it. And then there’s a resource list. And, if need be -- it’s small enough to fit in a purse. We tried to design it so it’s small enough to fit anywhere. But if need be, there’s an emergency card with numbers -- like emergency numbers. If need be, she can just grab that card and flee. And we’re hoping that -- we have a very good relationship with the Ottawa Police and we’re printing out extra cards like this for them to carry around in their pocket.

So, I encourage every community or every urban centre to develop something like this, just to help your women get out of that situation. I think that’s it.

**MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank you, Rebecca.

Can you tell us if this new toolkit is being used yet, and if not, when will this be available?

**MS. REBECCA JONES:** So, what I’m showing you
here is just a prototype. It should be done within the next month or so, and we’re going to be sharing it with centres across Ottawa, all the shelters and places that provide services for Inuit women and girls.

And, we’re also sending them to the North because of the lack of resources up there, some women are sent to Ottawa from the Baffin region to access services or to go to a shelter. So, we’ll be sending them up there to police officers and whoever, to hand out once -- if they come across a woman that needs to flee to Ottawa.

**MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Very good. Thank you. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. I would next like to introduce Annie Arnatuk, who is also president of the Saturviit Inuit Women’s Association of Nunavik. [Speaks in Inuktitut]. You can speak English or Inuktitut.

**MS. ANNIE ARNATUK:** Thank you, Reepa.

**INTERPRETER FOR MS. ANNIE ARNATUK:** I am an Inuk and I am blessed to be an Inuk. I’d like to share my experiences as an Inuk who was sexually abused. I was underage and this was recurrent as I was growing up, and I had no concept of how a young woman was to connect with men. And I cried for years -- for over 30 years for the experiences I had gone through.

I have gone through my healing journey and I have attended healing circles. And, for nine months I saw
a psychiatrist in regards to that experience, as I lived a
frightful journey with thoughts of committing suicide with
so many children, with eight children, because I was -- had
thoughts of suicide. I felt like I was not a reliable
person. A French instructor also sexually molested us with
these experiences. And then my grandfather also abused me,
so I would self-inflict myself with pain.

In the 1980s, the population was around 200,
and I started mentioning my experience. I thought joy
would finally be in my path, but once I shared this, it was
a frightful moment. I am saying this to seek for help;
instead it was fright, as if I was at a war with people
killing each other. It was the heaviest burden I had
experienced.

My grandfather who was highly regarded in
the community, he was a true man in the sense, in the
community, and I was only a grandchild, and people were
saying I was telling lies and that was a heavy burden when
they didn’t trust me or believe me. Because he is an Elder
and everybody trusted him, I went silent.

This possibly occurred for four years, as if
I was his wife. “If you ever disclose, I will kill you and
I will also kill your relations, and then I’ll kill
myself.” That was the heaviest burden I had carried as a
young person.
But through healing, I have regained strength. I have almost killed myself, but through a psychiatrist -- I didn’t trust the psychiatrist at first because he was male. But through my efforts and willingness. That experience I had within my community almost killed my spirit. I could have become mental or taken my own life. Those were traumatic experiences I’ve had. Just as I was about to take my own life at a young age of 40, I had a grandchild of -- my daughter’s child -- and that is what prevented me from taking my life. I loved my grandchild so much.

Therefore, I was so fatigued living that lifestyle; with depression, sadness, wanting to take my life; being the mother, being the provider; and keeping silent. Therefore, I decided to stand on my two feet and a woman in my community realized my life had changed, even though I was a social worker and being a woman of Christianity; that was a heavy burden to carry.

My husband was tired of my lifestyle. Whenever -- the start of the months were the hardest moments for me. I have no hatred or don’t target anyone with my story. The one I loved intensely was the one who prevented me from taking my life, so I initiated my healing journey, seeing a psychologist.

My eldest grandchild ended up dying in good
Panel - Public
Evic-Carleton et al
Healing Journey of Inuit Women

health as -- and through my healing journey, that has brought me to safety. And, I shared about the French instructor. There were nine of us who took the education board in the year she identified. We sought for that French instructor, we even went to the Supreme Court. And, the prosecutor insisted that you have to take charge; that the French instructor we sought for was sought globally. Previously in the U.S. and not in Canada, guilty for -- who wrote a book and the challenge he experienced with the French instructor. And, this teacher happened to be at the same locale with that French instructor. I was frightful. Spoke to him in French.

My French learnings had been lost, but he knew I spoke French and that I understood it had a comprehension of French and I was frightful, but I approached him. “Where is that French instructor, Roger Garso (phon)? Where is he? Do you know where he resides?”

And, he responded, “Annie, he has changed his name. He is no longer just Roger. Dr. Joseph Garso is his name now.”

“Where is he now? We are seeking for him. Where is he?”

He is here. He passed away a year ago here in -- outside of Montreal.

There are seven to nine of us who were abused. Because of those experiences we’ve gone through, we haven’t been able to provide well for our children. One
of them have taken his or her own life, a good friend of mine. He was in Quaqtaq for six months and this is the ruins he has brought us into today.

I enjoyed learning French. As I enjoyed learning French, I had a good comprehension, and I’ve enjoyed it into today. But for years, I’ve neglected to speak French as it charred us with the French instructor, and I realize this after the fact. I’ve been abused sexually for -- by women and by men for so many years, so she recounted how many times she’s been abused by women and men: 22 men and women have abused her.

I am grateful to be alive. You are living a life that one should not experience. You’ve persevered despite your experience. Some people take their own lives. So, I gave some thought about becoming a board member and how I can channel my voice so this abuse can be prevented. This has to stop because it chars peoples’ minds and thoughts, and brings people to suicide. It has been my biggest challenge as a board member with Saturviit. Inuit have to be respected -- Inuit women with prevention of violence -- the rights of Inuit women have been taken away. We need to revive those.

Thank you for the opportunity. I am proud to be an Inuk, to assist and honour others, children, men, or young people. I do not have any hatred towards them. I
was a social worker for 10 years and I’ve been supported through the education, therefore I stand firmer on my feet. I do not direct or put empathy on others.

The last thing I’ll say, traumatic experiences, an elderly person who passed away from food that was contaminated, she went to the health centre several times and was sent home. And if she had gone to a hospital, she would have been alive today. Up in Inuit Nunangat, the employees are not hasty enough to service Inuit with the best care and quality. How could this be improved? How could the services improve and expand in Inuit Nunangat?

My older sister who passed away in July last year, I saw her for the last time here. She lived in Inukjuak and I lived in Quaqtaq. She has lived in Inukjuak for 30 years with children. It was as if her life journey was cut short. Thank you for the opportunity, thank you for listening to me. I have eight children and have grandchildren. I am well. Thank you.

INTERPRETER FOR MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:

Annie, You are now in charge of the Saturviit Inuit Women’s Association, so we’re very proud of you and we’re so happy to hear from you. Did you wish to speak about an investigation that was done in your community about women there, before I hand it over to Mary? Okay. Go ahead.
Yes. Or are you done for now? Yes, thank you.

Mary Thomassie, it’s your turn next, you have the microphone. Thank you.

**INTERPRETER FOR MS. MARY THOMASSIE:** Thank you for accommodating my presence here in Montreal. My father even said one time when he wished to be heard in the house to his children -- by his children -- he did not want me to marry, but to be a rebel.

Men were interested in me, but the philosophy is that a woman needs a husband and I have not listened to my father when he suggested I not marry, for I had. And I stayed with my man whom I had children with. We have two daughters and we have sons.

I got a job at an office and it was a job I enjoyed. Jobs were very rare in those days. And, I used to carry my child in my amauti when I went to work. In comes a man who was sober, and this made him even more dangerous, and he grabbed me. Out of the blue, it was nothing I had expected. I was not raised in any violence at home. I had never been around confusion.

I was raised without a mother, yes, but by the age of five, my mother got sick and it turned out she had passed away then. Her grave is in Quebec City. It was only in the year 2001 that I learned where her grave was, and it’s in Quebec City. This is how it was for us. Who
will now be the leader in the home? Usually the mother is the matriarch and her body has not been returned. We waited and waited for the answers.

I live in Montréal and I found out where to go and what to do, and so I found my own way to her grave. I expected to see a decent grave with perhaps some floral remembrance items, but it was straight rocks. There was no name on it even. In this day of computation and digital resources -- I asked my brother, “Where is my mother’s grave?” Because we were very curious to find out.

We were given that information, but I always expected that she died here. And so, I became an old-timer for waiting for a hint of information to say, your mother was -- your mother died, or even a declaration of death. Nothing. There was no form.

When I was kidnapped in my office, I was grabbed in the front here, and he took me to a man’s room. I got dragged -- and I had my child in my back -- in my baby carrying coat, and he dragged me. I had no strength. I’m a woman. I knew no violence or self defence. I had been so angry about this for so long. I’m not trying to shock you or put you through trauma here.

My father tried to protect me and my sister. What about my three older sisters who married? Nothing bad happened to them. But, he said that, “Mary will not marry
a man.” I’m not afraid now. It’s just I need to release this, and this is my opportunity and I thank you for this.

I’ve also worked at helping people come out of jail because they too need so much help. Our men need help. There was a man who was in jail for 14 years; there is a place of accommodation where we provide counselling.

I was a counsellor for 14 years. They are the ones that need the most help out of our population. They turn to alcohol. They bootleg alcohol. Is it a form of healing to be a bootlegger? What can we do? We must help our men too. They will not ask for help first, either. We women are more open to receiving help. We have men come home back to their community, and they have nothing to say or to share while their hearts hurt.

My nephew was killed in 2005. My little nephew was killed and we know who did it. I heard people testifying, they still don’t know who murdered their loved ones. So, I want to show my support to those who go through trauma as I was a counsellor and I helped others at CRC as a counsellor.

So, I even had to retire because I thought I was getting too old -- just recently, last February. But I still want to help and I have compassion for those who are in pain. Thank you.

INTERPRETER FOR MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: Thank
you so much, Mary, for speaking your mind and your
experience. Can I have a question for you? You brought
some materials from Saturviit with Annie and you showed
some of these at the Inukjuak meeting regarding the
publication of these materials. Could you tell us a bit
more about it? Yes. Thank you.

**INTERPRETER FOR MS. MARY THOMASSIE:** It’s
very important that investigations are carried out properly
for the murder of both adults and children, and so there is
a lot of information that is being hidden. There is
evidence that is not shown. And, we heard a lot about this
in Inukjuak in 2015.

There were 18 families who came to speak at
that board meeting. There was a lot of crying, there was a
lot of pain. They were looking for counsellors and
helpers, due to the lack of respect from the police; people
being arrested have been beaten up by the police because
they’re second-class citizens, they’re not good enough to
deserve any respect. This is what I see. They’re -- we
watch a lot of television in my community, we see a mockery
of murdered people and that is where I do not want our
people to go.

It was an excellent meeting we had in
Inukjuak with Saturviit as we collected information. We
held our meeting in a beautiful building like this -- I’m
sorry, it was the opposite of beautiful buildings like this. We were out on the land where there was traditional food, there was fish to be caught; the speakers who wish to speak were given the time in Inukjuak. And it was not too far from the community itself, so it was a perfect setting for us and I thank Alice for that.

I’m sure I’m forgetting another item I wanted to remember. So, I just say thank you again, Lisa.

**INTERPRETER FOR MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** Thank you, Mary. I think there may be some questions for you, so let’s be open to the questions. Do you have questions for us?

**MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK:** I will also be giving you this report, also prepared by Saturviit which is entitled, “Bring Hope and Restore Peace”, a study report on the life and concerns of Inuit women of Nunavik. So, I’ll bring it to you while you go ahead and ask your questions.

[Speaking in Inuktitut]. Can we give that too, Rebecca? You have one only? Then, we’ll ask to have copies of the prototype of the toolkit for Inuit women in Ottawa at a later date. And Annie and Saturviit would like to present the DVD that they had prepared called “Breaking the Silence”, which is the story of Inuit women in Nunavik, including Lizzie, Annie and Ghenalina Nellie Annieho (phon), who was not able to make it today, and Pasa Angup
(phon) of Nunavik.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I thank you and we pass on these and we are grateful for the gifts you have given us. They will be reviewed and we have them digitally. During our Inquiry, this is a time of listening. Yes, people are watching us and people are hearing us, however even when our work is concluded, the information we are collecting will lead to creating more useful policies after the analyses are done.

Everything that we’ve heard across Canada, for instance this blanket before us has different patterns; but put together, it becomes a whole blanket. It’s the same idea, it’s how our work continues. We collect information from different regions, and then we put it all together. So, what you gave to us is something we will read, Lisa, and your fellow board members will be reading them too, I’m sure.

We listened today and they will help make others understand it more. Sarah’s comments, Liz’s comments, we will learn about your experiences and we will be able to digest and analyze your experiences that are stemmed from your truth as people who experienced these things in their lives.

I want to say thank you. When we were preparing for the Hearings in Montreal, we weren’t able to
go to Ottawa, we won’t be able to go to Nunavik, and we are closing -- getting closer to the end of our mandate. And we had asked if the Inuit of Nunavik and the Inuit who live in urban areas in the South, we wanted to learn and we need to learn from them what their issues are, what their concerns are; how can we show what your issues are. And so, I’m very grateful that you are here to tell us so, what your issues are.

You are the experts and you know your work and what is involved and what is required. We have said from day one that there are difficulties and gaps that we will learn about, but we will also learn about recommendations and possible changes people wish to see by the Inuit, the Métis, the First Nations.

And so, it will be our job to produce your thoughts and you have given us more information that we have to put out there, being Indigenous people from Nunavut, from urban Inuit in Ottawa, from urban Inuit in Montreal; from the young, from the girls, from the mothers, from the fathers. I recognize the importance of all these relations and I thank you so much.

I accept, and we say it over and over, we knew that we were going to hear about very hard experiences and truths, but the solutions are with the people and part of the work of the Inquiry is to highlight, yes, the
difficulties, but the resilience and the ability, the rising of Indigenous women and the reclaiming of your place and your power. And you have demonstrated how you have taken your experiences and are putting that and putting yourselves in your place of power. [Speaks in Inuktitut].

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Thank you. I think Qajaq has said it so well, I don’t know what I could add except to thank you, each and every one of you. I mean, each of you, thank you for sharing some very difficult things. But thank you also for your insight and each of you provided such important insight and recommendations, and together, what an incredible panel this afternoon. So, all I can say is thank you so much for your contribution.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: I want to thank all of you first of all, for coming here today. I know there was some travel that took you away from your families and your friends, so I wish you a safe trip home, all of you.

Thank you. I’ve learned so much from you this afternoon, it’s going to take a little while for it all to sink in. You are wonderful teachers, so thank you. I see six beautiful strong women and all of you inspire me. Thank you very much for coming.

MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: Thank you all of you.
Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Before you all leave, we have some small gifts we’d like to share with each of you as a thank you for coming and sharing with us. And, Grandmother Blu is going to help us here and -- so just don’t leave yet and we’ll come around with these gifts. Thanks.

MS. LISA KOPERQUALUK: And, as we come around, I know you have friends and supporters and colleagues, come give hugs, people.

MS. MOREEN KONWATSITSAWI MELOCHE: Thank you all. And, you spoke for 16 minutes. Sixteen minutes. She was afraid to talk for three. So, [Speaks in Inuktitut]. Thank you everyone. Gifts will be passed. And, we want to thank you, you did such a good job. Pleasure. Yes. So, come on down. Dinner will be served for staff and the panel, the families today. So, for the rest, we will see you tomorrow, but thank you all, drink lots of water, it’s hard, difficult information, but this is how sometimes trauma can turn to thriving. So, we’ve survived and now we’re thriving. So, Migwetch, nakurmiik. Thank you all. Have a good night.

--- Exhibits (code: P01P13P0101)

Nunavimmiut” Pascale Laneuville, published 2017 (Saturviit) (48 pages). Link:


**Exhibit 3:** DVD “Breaking the Silence” (Saturviit, 2015, 24 minutes 40 seconds).

--- Upon adjourning at 18:16
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.

[Signature]

Shirley Chang
March 28, 2018