National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel
Elmbridge Room
Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

Friday April 6, 2018

Public Volume 99
Elizabeth Myria Wilson, In relation to Tracey Clifton

Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Breen Ouellette

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MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you, Commissioner Audette.

For the record, my name is Breen Ouellette and I'm a lawyer with the National Inquiry.

It is my very great honour to introduce today Elizabeth Myria Wilson who lives in Coquitlam. Elizabeth has brought people in support who I will ask her to introduce.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Janna and her mom, Mavis, Jackson and Windsor.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Mr. Registrar, Elizabeth has requested to affirm using an eagle feather.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Good morning, Elizabeth. Hi. I'm going to pass the eagle feather to you.

Elizabeth, do you solemnly affirm to give your evidence -- let me start that again. I'm still waking up.

Do you solemnly affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: I do.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Elizabeth, would you
start by telling us about yourself, your occupation?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: (Speaking in Hailhzaqvla).

Hello, good morning. My traditional name is (speaking in Hailhzaqvla), which means "Abalone Shell Woman." I come from the Heiltsuk Nation on my father's side and Tsimshian Nation on my mother's side.

And I have worked as a Heiltsuk language teacher for 12 years in the community of Bella Bella. But I am currently a student at UBC in the Indigenous Teacher's Educational Program to further my education as I do have my certificate and language proficiency through SFU but I'm now going in for my full teacher's certificate.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: In conversations we've had prior to this hearing I have come to understand that you would like to speak in part about a family member. What is her name?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Tracey Clifton.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And is Tracey missing or was she murdered?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: I believe she was missing.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And what is your relationship to Tracey?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well,
technically, she would -- she is a cousin to my mother, so therefore, I would refer to her as an aunt.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And when did she go missing?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: I would say early '70s maybe. I wasn't even born yet so.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And so you didn't know her personally?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: No.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So are you telling us what you have learned from your older relatives?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah, and I just found this out maybe two, three years ago, that we have had a family member, my aunt Tracey, go missing. So I asked questions about it and was told that she had gotten into an argument with her mom. So, therefore, she left home, started walking the highway, which is now referred to as the "Highway of Tears", and was never seen again.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And you said she was walking from home. Where was home?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Prince Rupert. So I believe she was walking to Terrace or maybe Port Ed because we have family along the way and I'm pretty sure she had friends as well. So we're kind of unsure what her plan was or was it to go see family or friends.
MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And do you know anything else about Tracey's disappearance?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: No.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Do other family members possibly know more?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yes. My mom referred two of my uncles who are two of her brothers but it's fishing season and they're not in contact right now so.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Would you please pass on my invitation to them to register for the National Inquiry before our registration process closes on April 20th?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yes.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you. I also understand that you are a survivor of violence. What kind of violence have you experienced in your life?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, all. Physical, mental, verbal, yeah.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And when did you first encounter violence?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: As a child, as young as I can remember and in my home from my father.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: What were your
parent's lives like?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Lots of alcohol, drugs, parties.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what were their lives like growing up?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** My mom's was lots of travelling. Her parents were in the fishing industry and, yeah, they did a lot of travelling. My father was ill with TB so he was sent to a TB hospital for majority of his childhood. Once he was removed from that he was placed in boarding homes. He lived in 13 different boarding homes, 12 of them he says was the worst part of his life. Lots of racism, lots of violent behaviour towards him, sexually abused, the -- thankfully the 13th home he went to a family who lived in Lillooet and he always said this family had saved him. Yeah, they took him in and looked after him as if he were their own son. So it was really nice.

I still have yet to meet this family. We've seen each other's photos through social media. We've talked through social media but I haven't physically met them yet. I look forward to the day that happens because they have not only taken my dad in but they've made it a point to keep track of his life and they've always known that he's had children and I believe the mom refers to us
as -- myself and my siblings as her grandchildren, even though we haven't met her yet. So that would be really nice to finally get to meet them.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So what was your life like growing up?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** It was difficult. I did spend as much time as I could with my grandparents and numerous aunts and uncles. My -- because like I said, my parents were more focused on alcohol and drugs and I was beat up a lot. And, of course, for a majority of it was for no reason or for little things like dumping my juice or my milk or being so ill with the flu that I couldn't sit up and do my homework. I got beaten for that. And I don't blame my parents for it. I blame the alcohol and the drugs and the life my dad had growing up. And I always made sure that my sisters were never physically hurt. So I would take the blame for anything that they've done wrong or just anything wrong that my dad had thought was wrong in his eyes. I took the blame for it and took the beatings and whatnot so that my sisters didn't.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did it get to a point where you just couldn't stay in the home anymore?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah, because the alcohol -- like, once we moved to Bella Bella from
Hartley Bay, I believe I was 10, and the drinking became worse because the alcohol was easier to get, the drugs were easier to get. So the violence became worse. House parties.

My sisters and I always shared a room and a bed but when we moved to Bella Bella my gran, my dad's mom, set up a room for myself. And numerous nights I would either find myself going to my sister's room, because they shared a room, or they would come to mine. But it was -- it became normal and it was -- like, we never left our room in Hartley Bay because we were always together because of the house parties. I wouldn't allow my sisters to be left alone. We barricaded the bedroom door so that nobody would come in because we quickly found out that people would come in thinking it was the washroom. Well, in some cases it was true and others I believe that they were using it as an excuse to get to our bedroom.

So, yeah. I removed myself from that situation. It was really difficult leaving my sisters but I couldn't do it anymore. So I left and I moved in with a couple who didn't hesitate to take me in and took part in raising me as their own. They became really, really close to me and I essentially didn't take long to refer to them as mom and dad. And they had two boys who are my brothers.

So I lived with them for a little bit and
then I moved away with a family friend to Victoria to Saanich and was there for about a year and a half. And that family was really nice at the beginning and was nice to take me. And I'm sure they had good intentions at the beginning. Things changed quickly. I was becoming mistreated a lot, so near the end of the year and a half I packed out middle of the night because, again, I didn't want to be a part of that mistreatment anymore and because it was -- it wasn't physical but it was mentally abusive and emotionally abusive, which was becoming pretty close to being sexually abusive as well. So I had removed myself from that situation and moved in with a friend that I knew through school.

Middle of the night -- well, throughout the day because I was home alone because I was grounded for being a minute late the night before, so that -- the next day I slowly started packing my stuff and putting it in the basement, by the basement door ready to go once everybody was asleep. So that's what I did. And my friend's mom and she came and they were waiting outside with their vehicle and took me in and I was with them until the end of that school year and then I had to move back to Bella Bella.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell us why you had to move back to Bella Bella? Who made you move back to Bella Bella?
MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, the school board and because my parents had -- still had legal say in what I had to do. Agreed and, yeah, they had me move back because I was hoping to stay with this -- with my friend and her mom but wasn't allowed.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And did the school board make any attempt to ensure it was safe for you to move back?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yes. Well, they didn't really know the family situation. It was -- I don't -- well, I shouldn't say they didn't know. Maybe they knew, maybe they didn't. But they -- I guess in a way, no, they didn't ensure that my safety would be priority moving back.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: What happened when you returned to Bella Bella?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: I quickly got into alcohol and drugs myself and met my ex-husband. We were together for -- I quickly moved in with him at his parent's home and about a year after we got together I became pregnant with our first child. And things were going really great and then I guess she was around 7 months old when I found out I was pregnant with our second child, which then I was 15 at the time and my ex-husband was 20 and he felt the right thing to do now was to get married.
So we had gotten married on our oldest daughter's first birthday and I was seven months pregnant with our second child.

But during the time of the birth of my second child, my oldest son, my mother-in-law passed away. I'm sorry. And that was really difficult and that was another life-changing moment for, not just myself, but my ex-husband and his family. And his father turned to alcohol to cope with the loss. And so, therefore, we took it upon ourselves to remove ourselves and our children from that situation again. And we then got our own place and were finally living on our own as a young married couple with a family. And we took his youngest brother with us because he was only 16, same age as me, at the time.

Things were okay. And then we found ourselves drinking more and more and then we realized what we were doing was wrong so we'd stop for a bit. And then I got pregnant with our third, my youngest daughter, and quickly realized I needed to do something. That's when I got into the school and became a substitute teacher for a number of years. And then the opportunity came to get into the language department, so I started working there for a while.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And what were you teaching in the language department?
MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, the Heiltsuk language, anything and everything that I could teach the students and our language, our culture, our history.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And so then how did your marriage go from there?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: It became worse. The last three years of our marriage was a huge struggle. Lots of arguing. We did try to make it a point to not argue or allow our children to hear our arguments or argue in front of them. But the last three years it became worse. They were -- our children were witnessing more and listening to it more.

I started drinking a lot to deal with the situation, which, at the time, I didn't know was the wrong way to deal with it. But because I've seen it done throughout my life it was the only way I knew.

Near the end of our marriage we -- it was -- it became physically abusive. Yeah, it just deteriorated and got worse.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Would you share with the Commissioner one of the incidents of violence that you have previously told me about?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, we had just gotten back from a trip. And my youngest daughter
went to lay down. She went to sleep, took a nap. She was 10 at the time. And my youngest, who my ex-husband and I adopted from birth, he was just not even -- well, just over one, one years old at the time. And I was packing him and I can't even really recall if anything was done or said. I don't believe there was anything to trigger what had happened. But my ex-husband came at me and -- with his hands to my throat while packing our baby. And his brother -- one of his brothers came in and grabbed our baby and took him and didn't say anything.

So I got up. I managed to get him off of me by kicking him. And then -- and grabbed our baby's bottles, formula, water. And because we had just gotten back from a trip, mine and my baby's clothes and stuff were packed together in a bag and it was still by the door. So I grabbed that and had left and went to my parent's place and I have never been back since.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And when you left, how did you resolve the issue of the children?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: It was a struggle to come to an agreement to be better parents for them and to work together for them because he was angry that I had left. And when I had left I quickly got into another relationship with a woman and that was new for him. So he was angry and had tried to keep the children from me.
And he had gone to court and tried to fight for full
custody but we had talked and came to an agreement to have
joint custody of our children.

And it took a few months to -- for him to
come around. And I wasn't expecting him to but he did.
And it was really nice. And we get along a lot better now
than the last three years of our marriage. And our two
younger children live here in the city with me. So he has
come to visit on a number of occasions now and he stays in
my home with my partner and I and to visit with our
children. And things have turned around in that aspect
and, yeah. I think we're best friends now and we can go to
each other about anything. We help each other out
financially and, yeah. So it's good.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: I would like to go
back just a little. You had also told me about another
time where there was violence and you were going to a
relative's home. Could you tell us about that?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah. That's
when our two older children were just under two and Kevin
had been out for a few days drinking. And so I -- it was
during the summer and I wanted to get the kids out of the
house. So I was on my way to visit one of his aunts and
his grandma. And I was really close to their home when my
ex-husband had come around, turned the corner in a vehicle
that was driven by a friend.

They had stopped and I thought, oh, great, he's done drinking. He's going to come join us kind of thing. But, no, he got out and he was angry. He was so angry. And he had tried to come at me and I was holding the stroller. The kids were -- it was one of those double strollers that sat this way rather than, like, front top kind of thing, not side to side. And I was holding onto the stroller because we were up on a hill and I didn't want -- I couldn't let it go. If I let it go the kids would have started rolling down the hill.

And I was just trying to push past him as hard as I could. And the friend that was driving him was trying to help as well and get him back in the vehicle. And thankfully he did and I got to his aunt's house where his grandma was also there. And I guess about an hour or so passed and Kevin had showed up and was still really angry and was trying to push his way through. But his aunt and his grandma wouldn't allow him to get past the door.

And the RCMP were then called. I'm not sure by who but they were called. And when Kevin had heard that they were coming he took off and was running through the village to try and avoid the cops and whatnot. And then they finally got a hold of him and took him in and then, yeah.
MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So were they called in part because the violence was more escalated than usual?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah. I believe someone called that had witnessed what had happened in the street and probably saw him coming to the house.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And do you remember if anybody was harmed when he tried to get into the house?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, he was because he had tried to grab a knife that was on the counter by the door but he had knocked the -- a glass coffee pot over and it broke and I guess he had slipped and cut his hand really bad. But he -- at the time he was the only one that was physically hurt. But that was I think about it that was physically harmed.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And just to clarify, which RCMP detachment would that have been; do you know?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: I believe they're situated out of Prince George but I'm not sure.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Okay. Thank you. And when the RCMP took your ex-husband into custody, did they -- what did they do? What was the response?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, they said it was their duty to charge him with domestic violence even if I didn't want to. But they did inform me later that I could have those dropped if I wrote a letter to the judge
stating that we were going to work on our marriage and seek
counselling and so that's what I did. And there wasn't any
follow up or anything like that because, I don't know, I
kind of feel that if there was maybe things would have
gotten a lot better.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And when you speak
about follow up, are you talking about something that --
like, rather than an arrest and a charge and a conviction --

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** M'hm.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** --- what kind of
follow up do you think would be appropriate?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Like, how do I
say it? Like, more support because we were so young. I
saw my parents as a married couple but through alcohol and
drugs. So, yeah, I think more support, because once we --
I think we only saw the counsellor a couple of times and
they said, "Okay, yeah, you guys are good. I'll let the
judge know" kind of thing and that was that. Like, okay.
Good. We carried on and, yeah.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Elizabeth, what do you
hope will happen as a result of your testimony today?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** More support,
more programs built for our youth and young couples, not
just in small communities where it's really needed but here
in the city, especially the city because I really thought long and hard about this because I've had a niece take off because she disagreed with her mom. My youngest daughter took off because she had a disagreement with me but she -- so support and more safe places for them to go. Because when I went to help look for my niece, I had called a couple of shelters who -- and told them -- or, like, gave them her information and her age and they're, like, "Oh, yeah, no, we don't take in that age." And I'm, like, "Well, why not?"

Like we, as adults, can take off and we can take off for hours and days and it'll be okay, but when our children do that it's not. Not just because of their age but for their safety. They don't know what it's like to go off and on their own. So to have a place for them to go at any age I think would be safe and would keep a lot of our youth in our lives, male, female. So to have them go to a place where there's safety for them, there's education for them, to let them know that, yeah, it's okay to have a break and to have numerous support in this building for them. Counselling, education on what could happen in their lives if they don't stay on the right track.

I would like to, like, see cultural support because a lot of children think, well, I don't know where I'm from. I don't know who I am as a First Nation's
person. I would like to see them connect and find who they are as a First Nation's person and how powerful they could be as a First Nation's person.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And just as a follow up question, you had spoke to me at some length about the availability in terms of times of availability. Can you tell us about that?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: For these programs?

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Yeah.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah. Oh, yeah, for these programs. I would like to see them 24 hours a day because I feel our children are more vulnerable at night when they're left alone. If they're in a home, everybody goes to bed. And I know, I've heard my daughter up numerous nights trying to deal with what is going on in her life. We're really close and we can sit and tell each other anything, which I'm really grateful for but I know there are times where she feels she can't. And I respect that. So to have something for her to go to, to have people, even to just call, because I know they have hotlines and stuff but to have people that you can also go to and physically see, not -- like, when you call someone through the hotline, you don't know who they are. You don't know what they look like. So to have children be
able to go to see these people as well, not just to call
them, but to see them, because I know I feel a lot better
when I go and when I sit and talk with somebody rather than
talk to them over the phone. But, yeah, I would like to
have these programs 24/7 because, like I said, our children
are more vulnerable at night, whether they live in a home
or on the street.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And what would you ask
Canadians to do after listening to all the families and
survivors who've come to share their experiences with the
National Inquiry?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: I would like
them to listen to as much stories as they can and to hear
them, not just to listen, because I believe there's a
difference between listening and hearing. And to really
take it to heart and think if they would be able to survive
if they were in that person's situation. How would they
cope with living a life like I've lived? Would they have
survived? Would they have come out a good person or a
broken person?

I thank God every day that I didn't turn
into an alcoholic or a drug user. Put themselves in the
shoes of the person they're listening to and hearing and to
think, you know, we've -- I'm sure you've heard of -- in
the news of a dog being accidentally sent to Japan. That
got more time on the news than any missing Indigenous person has.

And I just want Canadians to think, is that pleasurable [sic]? Is that right? Like, I'm not saying anything bad against the family of that dog or the dog itself. I'm an animal lover. But what does that tell Canadians? An animal is better than me?

So, yeah, just hear the stories and take it to heart and educate yourselves on what we've been through for many years.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you, Elizabeth.

I will now ask the Commissioner if she has any questions for Elizabeth.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: We say nichapette (ph) (Innu language of name) in Innu, Elizabeth, your name. Well, before I say something I would like to say that your truth, what you share to us matter, matter to me, matter to everyone of us here. And there's more and more Canadian I'm sure that have open mind and open heart. And thank you so much for your courage to come here and tell us first, of course, what's matter to you and what needs to happen or change. And, of course, to be here and in a humble way, in a beautiful way also to remind Canada what needs to change. And merci beaucoup, nichapette (ph).

When you talked about those centre of safe
place for our youth, is it here in Vancouver or it's across the province?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** I would like to see it across the province. It would be nice. Because it would -- I believe it would keep our children closer to us and it would make us feel like we're doing our job as well as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, to let them venture off but venture off safely. And to learn that it's okay to take breaks because we do it. We do it at work. We do it at home. We do it at school so.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** And I'm not from B.C. You can tell. Where are you from?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Bella Bella. It's the central coast.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** Okay.

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** Bella Bella.

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yeah.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** Okay. And you intend to move back there?

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** Okay.

**MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON:** Once I'm done schooling.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** Wow.
MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah, my plan is to go back and be able to teach immersingly [sic] in --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M'hm.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: --- in school there.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And how is it? Do you have a lot of student there or youth that are going to your classes or it's mandatory?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, it is a part of the school system there. I believe the Grade 7 down are able to have 30-minute classes. Grade 8 up have maybe about 45 minutes, which isn't a whole lot when you add it all up, but it's something. But, yeah, I look forward to being able to go back as a certified teacher. Not just a teacher, but continue as a language teacher as well and be able to teach all subjects in our language.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And why it's important for you to teach in your language?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, it's a part of who we are. It's helped me realize how important I am as a First Nation's woman. I didn't grow up with the language but it quickly became a passion of mine.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay. You learn it later?
MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: I did.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah, I did.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Wow.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm. Yeah.

And now, living in the city, I have recently started a language class for our urban Heiltsuk members that live in the lower mainland. I successfully had my first class last Saturday and I have my second class starting tomorrow.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And is there any Canadian who wish to approach you and say, "I would love to learn your language" or ---

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yeah, a few from UBC.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: And they have attended. Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And you welcome that?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm. Yeah. I believe anyone that's willing to learn our language, more the merrier to help us revitalize what we once lost or nearly lost. Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And to finish I would like you to explain more to us and Canadian also
why it's so important to know who we are or to find who we are. We're more powerful you said ---

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: --- during your testimony. What do you mean by that?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Well, through residential school we've all learned that their intent was to take away from us what we had. And at that time what we had was full and complete. We were -- our language was our first language, which is now our second language. Our songs and dances were heard almost on a daily basis. Traditional practices were done on a daily basis. But it was taken from us. It was hidden for so long. So to be able to -- and I feel we've overcome that and we've dug out almost everything that was hidden from us.

I don't like to say "taken" because if it was taken we probably wouldn't have gotten anything back. I like to look at it as it was hidden and now we've found it and revitalizing and uplifting it and teaching our youth what was hidden from them for so long and for them to learn their culture, their language. Learn how to collect medicine and embrace it, to touch cedar and build something with it, like, a piece of clothing that their ancestors once used rather than what we use now. I think we'll -- I find that uplifting and extremely powerful.
And like I said, once I learned quickly that I was able to take to my language and speak it quickly and learn it quickly, I feel complete now as a First Nation's woman because I have that in my life and I can continue to make it stronger because I'm not fluent in my language. And I always tell my students, you know, kind of prepare them I guess to think, you know, we will never be completely fluent in our language anymore because we didn't grow up in it. So I have a three-month old grandson and he could be fluent because I could speak to him as much as I can in my language. So those kind of things I find powerful because he will learn at a very early age who he is as a First Nation's one day young man who will be as respectful as I can teach him or as respectful as his parents can teach him.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And how do we say grandmother in your language?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Kokum.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Kokum?

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Kokum.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Kokum. Well, he has a beautiful kokum.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: (Speaking in Hailhzaqvla). Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: We say nokum
MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Oh nice.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yes.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Similar.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So far but same thing.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Similar, yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yeah, yeah.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: That's nice.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yeah. Wow.

We say (speaking in Innu), merci, thank you.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: (Speaking in Hailhzaqvla).

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: We'll practice just you and me behind a blanket.

I'm so blessed to be sitting here. We are four today all week sharing this important work and I'm always, always blessed to be the one sitting with you today so I have to say thank you.

And we have something for you and I would like to know if you would accept a gift from us, from the National Inquiry.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yes, okay.

And the person usually who explain the beauty and the
history of those gift is not here. She is bringing my partner, Serge (ph), and some of our staff from Quebec who works for the National Inquiry in the downtown east side, because I wanted the people from Quebec to see ——

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: --- the reality ---

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: --- what's happening there ---

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: --- but also, the warriors who are saving life. So ---

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: --- Bernie brought our people there so she's not here.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Nice.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So I'm not going to be good like her but I'll try.

We -- when we started this journey almost a year now, we were up north -- for me it's north from where I'm from in Quebec in Whitehorse, but for Qayaq it's not the north. She's from far, far, far where there's no more tree. And we received 400 eagle feathers to give to family and survivors or to amazing people who come and share their
truth to us and to Canadian, of course.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: And 400, of course, went very fast. And there were a day that we didn't have any more eagle feathers. And this young man took some of his feathers from his regalia ---

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Oh wow.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: --- beautiful -- it was powerful. A few weeks ago in Montreal this Elder sees that oops there's no more eagle feathers. So we went back to Kahnawake, took some of his traditional hat and gave us.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Wow.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: And two weeks ago we were in Thompson, Manitoba and, again, a man heard that, oh, no, no more eagle feathers. So he went and harvest along the river ---

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: M'hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: --- beautiful eagle feathers, so they're from Thompson.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Wow.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: And we would like to give you one.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: From, of
course, I'm blessed -- I have beautiful Elders from this land that will do this for you on our behalf. Merci.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Don't tell Bernie. I was wrong. You were good at that.

MS. ELIZABETH MYRIA WILSON: Thank you.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Commissioner Audette has asked me to invite people to come up and share a kind word or a hug if you are moved to do so. Thank you.

Pardon, Commissioner, may we adjourn this hearing?

COMMISSIONER MICHELLE AUDETTE: Can we say yes? I say yes.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Okay. The Commissioner adjourns the hearing. Thank you.

--- Upon adjourning at 12:32
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Janice Gingras, 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.

Janice Gingras
April 17, 2018