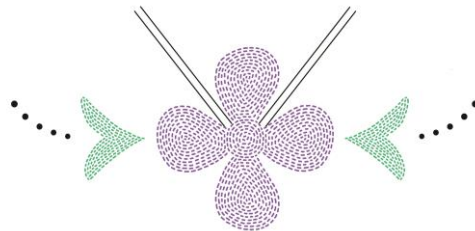


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

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



**PUBLIC**

**Sunday April 8, 2018**

**Public Volume 115**

**Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
In relation to her mother, Katherine Rose Williams,  
Noreen Joyce William & Sharlene MacAdams**

**Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

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## II

### APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations		Non-appearance
Government of British Columbia	Rachel Holmes	(Legal Counsel)
Government of Canada	Anne Turley	(Legal Counsel)
Heiltsuk First Nation		Non-appearance
Northwest Indigenous Council Society		Non-appearance
Our Place - Ray Cam Co-Operative Centre		Non-appearance
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada	Beth Symes	(Legal Counsel)
Vancouver Sex Workers' Rights Collective		Non-appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Metis Nation		Non-appearance

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Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette

Commission Counsel: None.

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Laureen "Blu" Waters Gaudio, Kathy Louis, Florence Catcheway, CeeJai Julian, Audrey Siegl, Merle Williams, Deni Paquette, Donna Dickison, Ruth Alfred, Harriet Prince, Gladys Radek, Louise Haulli, Reta Blind, Elaine Bissonnette, Eunice McMillan, Candace Ruth, Janice Brown, Theresa Russ, Deanna Lewis, Jennifer Thomas, Margerat George, Juanita Desjarlais

Clerk and Registrar: Bryan Zandberg

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Hearing - Public 1  
Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 Metro Vancouver, British Columbia

2 --- Upon commencing on Sunday, April 8, 2018, at 9:05 a.m.

3 (DRUMMING)

4 **MR. PRESLEY WILLIAMS:** I just want to  
5 introduce myself. I'm the son of Skundaal Bernie Williams.  
6 I just wanted to let everybody know that I really  
7 appreciate all the strong and powerful women that's been in  
8 my life. My mom's been there through thick and thin, and  
9 I'm very, very proud of all of you exposing what's really  
10 happened in our lives. It's lateral violence that needs to  
11 be taken care of, and I'm affected by that by having  
12 children of my own.

13 I'm very, very proud for my mother to stand  
14 and speak what is real because that's what people need to  
15 know, and that's what people need to hear. We -- we as  
16 young people still have a practical voice in this world,  
17 and yet our colonial minds tend to forget. We rely on our  
18 Elders and our young people to succeed our culture and our  
19 traditions.

20 My traditional name is Wadgadagaang (ph). I  
21 come from the Stlangng Laanaas clan of Old Masset. We have  
22 another subclan, the Dew Claw (ph) Stlangng Laanaas. We  
23 are in -- we are in positions to be Hereditary Chiefs as of  
24 this summer. My mother and I are the first two Hereditary  
25 Chiefs that will be in -- in that position in -- be the

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
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and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 first time in Haida history, and it'd be very, very pleased  
2 to -- to be a part of this.

3 I've watched on the television. I've heard  
4 a lot of stories in regards to a lot of the things that  
5 occurred in our -- our Aboriginal world, and it just seems  
6 to me that it's -- it's taken 40 to 50 years for our voices  
7 to be heard, and now that we have a chance that we can  
8 express ourselves, it's very -- very -- very awesome.

9 This -- to my right is my wife Jamie. We  
10 would have liked to bring our children, although due to the  
11 content of the conversations we're going to be having, it's  
12 going to be a little bit difficult for them to understand.  
13 I would have loved to have my brothers here, my older  
14 brother and my younger brother here as representatives of  
15 our people and our clan, although due to having young new  
16 members of our awesome family, it's just too difficult to  
17 kind of schedule everybody as well as how many people are  
18 sitting beside us.

19 I'd also like to thank the Tsleil-Waututh  
20 Musqueam and the Squamish Nations for letting us do our  
21 business on their territory, and -- and I'd like to thank  
22 the Tsawwassen aboriginals for also giving us the chance to  
23 practice our -- our traditional -- our protocol for  
24 expressing ourselves, and -- and I'd like to say thank you  
25 for everybody else for attending; the media, thank you for

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and Sharlene MacAdams)**

1           being here. Thank you for the Government officials to be  
2           here. Thank you for my Aunty Terri (ph). Thank you for  
3           all the beautiful family members that are here to support  
4           us. I know a lot of people that are standing beside us and  
5           behind us. I really love and appreciate you for helping  
6           and representing our -- our voice. It's really important  
7           that our -- our young people and our Elders have a voice.  
8           Right now, we're dealing with too many problems internally  
9           and externally. It's very challenging to express to our  
10          children how difficult it really is.

11                        So that's the reason why I'm here, to  
12          support my mother and her voice, because it needs to be  
13          heard, and -- and a lot of the stories that are going to  
14          come out of this are going to really shake our people, but  
15          it's -- there's no more lateral violence. We are stopping  
16          this today. We need to have some closure, and I'm sure  
17          it's going to take longer than just this event to occur,  
18          but this is a step going forward for our people and for my  
19          mother, and -- and I hope -- you know, if I've said  
20          anything to offend anyone, I apologize. I'm still young in  
21          this world. As an Aboriginal man, I'm still a baby when it  
22          comes to tradition. I'm still learning our culture as well  
23          as our language and our songs, so it's very important that  
24          we touch back to our culture because that's the protocol  
25          that we live and succeed in our lives. This colonial mind

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1 is just -- it's -- it's poison, and the only way we can  
2 beat it is by being chameleons under the eyes of the  
3 Government: Learning, speaking their tongue, and  
4 understanding the way they talk and understand the way they  
5 deal with things and how we can manipulate it. This is a  
6 perfect example of manipulating it. Now we have eyes all  
7 over the country that are watching us, and now we have the  
8 opportunity to express that feeling in -- in such a way  
9 where it's -- it's quite a large impact going from the  
10 residential schools to the '60s scoop to, you know,  
11 even -- even being adopted. A lot of these things are not  
12 spoken about, and it's very nice that I can hear other  
13 stories because I've never went through that, and my mom's  
14 hidden those things from us our entire lives, and this is  
15 one opportunity that I have to swallow my pride and listen  
16 to my mother. This is the way our culture is. You listen  
17 to your Elders, you listen to your matriarchs, and you  
18 listen to the women that are key in your life, and my  
19 mother is the one that's given me this strength and power  
20 in my voice, and I'm very nervous, but I'm very proud and  
21 courageous that I'm here standing beside my mom and my  
22 wife, and, you know, my aunts and my family members from  
23 Haida Gwaii and a lot of family that my mother's known and  
24 grown upon in her life before my life, and I -- I just want  
25 to say thank you and *hǎw'aa*.



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and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 In our culture -- or in our Haida, we -- I  
2 just learned this yesterday. Being a land-protector of our  
3 people is (speaking in Haida); means the warrior Haida, and  
4 this is a perfect example of a (speaking in Haida). This  
5 is a real warrior.

6 (APPLAUSE)

7 MR. PRESLEY WILLIAMS: And without further  
8 ado, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to  
9 speak. Thank you.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: *Háw'aa*.

11 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS: I  
12 just want to say good morning, Madam Commissioner Audette,  
13 and to the territory of this -- this beautiful territory  
14 here that I've been so blessed to do my work since '86  
15 here; and to the Elders, to the matriarchs, to the  
16 grandmothers, *háw'aa*; to the survivors, especially to the  
17 families.

18 My name is Gul Kit Jaad, which means Golden  
19 Spruce Woman. I'm from the territory of the Stlangng  
20 Laanaas. I am also a Hereditary Chief in Waiting along  
21 with my son. My Hereditary Chief's name is Tas Gai (ph),  
22 which means Chief of Two Villages.

23 And to the warrior women that I've been so  
24 blessed to work on the front lines with them, and to the  
25 women who are still suffering on those streets, and to the

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
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1 women from the Downtown Eastside that are here, I really  
2 honour you. I want to say *háw'aa* to you for being here  
3 today.

4 I'm also known as Bernie Williams Poitras.  
5 I want to make this very and openly clear that I have -- I  
6 have declined a lawyer for this process. I spoke to my  
7 Elders. I spoke to spiritual people here that I want to do  
8 things the old -- the old protocol way. I was not coerced.  
9 I was not ever given any advice to have or not have. I  
10 just wanted to make that clear that this was of my own  
11 choice that I have chosen to come before you,  
12 Madam -- Madam Commissioner Audette, that this was my own.  
13 I felt at the last minute -- I spoke to my niece Audrey  
14 Siegl. Like I said, I spoke to the Elders that I want to  
15 do things, you know, the proper way of my people, my  
16 protocol is not to have a lawyer present.

17 I want to say *háw'aa* to my support, and  
18 especially Rita Blind, and my cousin Penny and Terri and  
19 Carol Martin, so many of you. I want to say *háw'aa*.

20 I'm not really clear on how to start this.  
21 I'm probably just going to be, you know, trying  
22 to -- because of time-wise and other family members, I  
23 would like to just -- I'm probably going to zoom through it  
24 really quick. I just want to make it known that my son  
25 Presley and his brothers, this is the first time they're

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1 going to be hearing my story.

2 For -- I'm going to be 61 this year. I  
3 have -- I've always tried to shelter and make sure that my  
4 children would -- would never, ever, ever go through the  
5 things that I've gone through, and I've never spoken to  
6 them. Like I said, this is my first time. I've -- and  
7 there's been many times I've been really misunderstood  
8 because of who I am.

9 So I want to say how much I honour my  
10 children. My children have sacrificed a lot through being  
11 on the front lines. Many times I've had to leave at 2, 3  
12 in the morning when I got the calls about our loved ones,  
13 our women. Several days I've had to leave my children to  
14 go on the front lines, and I really honour them that they  
15 never gave up on me.

16 It wasn't until about ten years ago that my  
17 oldest son realized that the dynamics of the work that I  
18 was doing, and I know Carol went through the same thing,  
19 the sacrifices that our -- our children, so many family  
20 members across Turtle Island have had to sacrifice just for  
21 this work, just to keep the fight, and I really honour my  
22 three sons, and I am truly sorry that they felt abandoned.  
23 It was not my -- never my intentions.

24 My journey -- I come from a family of 17  
25 brothers and sisters. I have a stepfather that is -- who

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and Sharlene MacAdams)**

1 is African-American, a stepfather that is non-Native, and  
2 my First Nations dad. I was given up -- I like to -- I  
3 always think that I was given up, but I was taken from my  
4 mother when I was about three months old, and my  
5 grandmother raised me.

6 As far back as I can remember -- and I also  
7 want to -- I'm going to be giving the names of my  
8 perpetrators. I've been told that I could risk everything,  
9 but I cannot live in this hideous -- and to feel sick every  
10 time I go home to Haida Gwaii or I see my perpetrators on  
11 the streets in Vancouver.

12 My brother Douglas Williams; Hereditary  
13 Chief Cecil Brown, Jr.; Nicholas Brown (ph); Alan Hill, Jr.  
14 (ph); Godfrey Wilson (ph), also known as -- I can't think  
15 of his nickname right now -- these are my abusers. If I am  
16 to be stripped of my beliefs, of my Hereditary Chief's  
17 name, you do what you need to do, but this is my truth. I  
18 was always taught that you are only as sick as your secret.  
19 My sion (ph), my spirit, I have to -- I have to tell the  
20 story.

21 My abuse started when I was 3 years old. I  
22 remember living in my grandmother's house with her. I had  
23 two brothers, Paul Williams, who I thought was my father,  
24 but he was my older brother; my brother, Douglas. My abuse  
25 started when I was three 3 old, like I said, when he was

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1 bathing me in the tub. My grandma used to put a  
2 metal -- metal tub outside where the rain can just -- just  
3 drip into that tub, and I remember him touching me. I  
4 remember to this day, and as I got older, when I was  
5 walking, and it always happened when he was drunk, and that  
6 continued up until my grandmother passed away. I found a  
7 way to burrow myself -- I -- I didn't know that -- our  
8 relative Marina Dixon Nix (ph) had passed away a few months  
9 ago, but she was the one that -- she reminded me of so many  
10 things that where I used to burrow myself under my  
11 grandmother's house with my dog Lucky. I dug a hole in  
12 there. That was my only safety net because I could hear  
13 him coming home.

14 I always had to sleep on the floor because  
15 we were poor, and my grandmother had a -- had an old army  
16 cot bed. My grandmother was, to me, one of the greatest  
17 women in my life and I -- I always tried to believe that  
18 she didn't know about this, but I had to really accept that  
19 she knew about my abuse. It became so violent that I  
20 remember my brother -- older brother Paul, he had a  
21 Winchester shotgun, and I used to watch him and -- he used  
22 to clean it, never used it, but I remember the one day  
23 because the abuse was so bad, I was bleeding so bad, that I  
24 had nowhere to go to, and nobody would help me. I was  
25 going to Indian day school.

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1                   Then my dog -- you know, that was my little  
2                   best friend. As many as my friends know that I don't like  
3                   animals. This is one of the hardest thing I -- to talk  
4                   about is where my brother tried to use the dog for me to  
5                   perform oral sex on my dog, and then my cousin slaughtered  
6                   my dog, skinned him and hung him on my grandmother's  
7                   clothes line, so I had nobody.

8                   When I -- when my grandmother died -- I'm  
9                   going to skip a lot. When my grandmother died, though,  
10                  ended up moving to my cousin's place, to my aunt, Ruby  
11                  Brown, and my Uncle Cecil, who became the Hereditary Chief,  
12                  end up moving there because nobody wanted me because  
13                  my -- my aunt was willing to take me. Then my abuse  
14                  started there with Hereditary Chief Cecil Brown, Jr., then  
15                  his son. I was so terrified to come home after school and  
16                  that because I knew one of them would be waiting for me.

17                  My cousins Maureen and Deb tried to always  
18                  protect me. We always tried to protect one another, but I  
19                  was so little. We used to put dressers by the door to try  
20                  to keep one of them out of there, especially her dad, but  
21                  mine was always after school, and -- I used to take off  
22                  down to my grandmother's old house after she died, and I  
23                  used to just go underneath her house and hide there and not  
24                  want to go -- ever go home.

25                  Then when I spoke out about the touching,

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1 about the rapes and sodomy and that that I was subjected  
2 to, the Ministry was called. Then my journey began, and I  
3 ended up in Prince Rupert in foster care. I spoke fluent  
4 Haida. In my grandmother's house, you were not allowed to  
5 speak English. She was a very, very strict, strict, tough  
6 woman and that, that no, it was not -- not acceptable to  
7 speak English there, so that was the only language that I  
8 knew, and when I was flown over, I didn't even know where I  
9 was going. I remember I was slapped in my face, and I was  
10 called a liar.

11 When I started my monthly before I left, I  
12 was at -- in a fishing boat with my uncle and his wife, and  
13 that's when he raped me on the fishing boat there, too, and  
14 I started my menstrual time cycle then.

15 When I ended up back in Prince Rupert, I  
16 didn't know where I was going. I was met by -- my social  
17 worker, Tover Brant (ph). I've -- I've never forgotten  
18 her. I ended up in -- in care there in a home of -- with  
19 five other kids, and during this time, I didn't know that I  
20 had sisters. Didn't even know I had brothers other than my  
21 two brothers. Didn't even know I even had a mother, but I  
22 ended up in Rupert and that. Then we started running away,  
23 and I met a man who's my dear friend, and I don't know if  
24 he's here. His name is Darryl Hevner (ph). He was a man  
25 that helped to protect us kids.

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1                   At the age of 11 to 12 years old, six of us  
2 girls were sold into the sex trade work -- we didn't  
3 know -- at the Empress Hotel in Prince Rupert. As many of  
4 you know that I wear shorts very -- don't wear shorts very  
5 often because of my legs. I've got cigarette burns all  
6 through my legs right up to my back. Around -- like, my  
7 buttock area is very -- scarred really bad. This is what  
8 we will endured. We were just kids.

9                   We had nobody to -- to protect us but this  
10 man that I met because he was also a runaway kid. He  
11 became one of my dearest friends that I thought I'd  
12 lost -- I thought I actually lost him. So when we met him,  
13 like, he helped us to get out of that hotel that us kids  
14 were in. The only place that we could live was in these  
15 box cars. Like, they were grain cars. That -- that was  
16 our home. We would only come out at night to just go  
17 through the Dumpsters and to eat whatever we could eat out  
18 of the garbage can.

19                   Then we -- we lost one of the women that was  
20 found in between Prince Rupert and Terrace on the railroad  
21 tracks with a -- a beautiful Chinese girl that we grew up  
22 on the streets with. She was found on the railroad tracks  
23 with a bottleneck, a Coke bottleneck inserted inside her.  
24 She was beaten, and we always felt that, you know, because  
25 of these men, these were fishermens, these were



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1 longshoremens, and I didn't realize at the time in that  
2 hotel, my mother would -- you know, was drinking downstairs  
3 in the bar while we were being abused upstairs.

4 Then from there, we started running away.  
5 We started heading to Terrace, not even realizing that back  
6 then that women, like, were being killed along the Highway  
7 of Tears there. My story's no different than anybody's.  
8 We all have a common thing, is that it's violence against  
9 us women.

10 We managed to get out of the -- of the hands  
11 of these men through this really courageous man that I  
12 honour and respect so much. It's Darryl Hevner. If it  
13 wasn't for him, I really sincerely believe that I would not  
14 be alive today, or I would have been one of the statistics  
15 on those streets, either becoming an addict or eventually  
16 dying.

17 I learned how to read. I have a T-shirt  
18 that used to say, "this is my favorite redhead," and a lot  
19 of people that I know that really don't like redheads, but  
20 it was Archie Andrews off of the Archie comics that I  
21 learned how to read, so --

22 (LAUGHTER)

23 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS: I  
24 learned years later that, yeah, he -- he was, like, the  
25 first man in my life because I learned how to read through

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
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1           them.

2                           Ended up in residential school at the Native  
3           Institute of Canada outside of Nasgo. That was not  
4           recognized by the Federal Government. Ended up in there  
5           for about seven years, off and on. They would let us out  
6           during the summer. I had a foster family in Smithers. In  
7           Rupert, first, though -- in one year, because I  
8           was -- because I spoke Haida, that they didn't know what to  
9           do with me. I will never forget this one foster family  
10          that -- our meals were -- we were asked to be on all fours,  
11          and they would put dog food, be treated -- treated just  
12          like an animal, and we'd have to, on our fours, just to go  
13          and eat out of that bowl. That was our supper.

14                        I'm really -- I'm really indifferent with  
15          food. I don't know if many of the workers here know that.  
16          I always pack Mr. Noodles with me. I don't eat fancy food.  
17          I don't eat many foods. I can't drink milk.  
18          I -- I -- there's things I just get really nauseous around.  
19          I learned to eat really fast -- my kids always say, slow  
20          down, Mom -- because I remember the plates always being  
21          pulled from us.

22                        I don't ask for pity. I don't ask for  
23          sympathy. I -- I am -- I feel a little bit embarrassed  
24          that I'm sharing these things because it's -- I live a very  
25          private life, that's why, and I'm always worried that

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1           whatever I say will be held against me or to be called a ho  
2           or -- that's why I never shared my story because I didn't  
3           want -- I'm always tired of being put down and called down,  
4           and I tell people the only thing I haven't been accused of  
5           is sleeping with a man because I'm a two-spirited woman.  
6           I've been accused of everything, and it's -- anyways.

7                         So my journey began from Smithers. I had a  
8           foster family there that was ministers at the Pentecostal  
9           church and that, and they tried to beat the Indians out of  
10          us, and I -- I just could not conform to -- to their ways  
11          because every Friday nights, they would make us go up to  
12          the front, get on our knees and -- you know, everything,  
13          and -- I don't put people down for their religious beliefs,  
14          but I -- I know what happened to us.

15                        From there, I ended up in the Native  
16          Institute of Canada. Like I said, that was not recognized  
17          as a residential school, and it was the most demeaning  
18          place I would ever -- I would rather live in a boxcar than  
19          to ever have to subject anybody to how we were treated in  
20          there too. Like I said, my story is no different than  
21          anybody's.

22                        And at that residential school, the same  
23          thing, they -- they were trying to cast demons out of us  
24          and -- because we were -- as -- as First Nations people,  
25          they said that we were savages and we need to change, and

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1           then the one tried to use bleach on us because -- I -- I  
2           would really get dark during the summer and that,  
3           and -- and if we were good, you know, I was allowed to go  
4           back to Smithers to be with my foster family there,  
5           and -- but if I -- you know, like, if we didn't comply  
6           and -- or follow their rules, it was through the  
7           Arctic -- the Arctic Bible Institute of Canada, and -- we  
8           started running away. I had the honour to -- when I was up  
9           in Rankin Inlet, I remember this young man. His name was  
10          James Carratuk (ph). I remember him because I thought it  
11          was his brother, but it was his relative, that these were  
12          two Inuktitut young men that were also taken from their  
13          home, from Nunavut, that I'd -- I didn't realize until when  
14          I was up there in Rankin Inlet, a couple months of ago,  
15          that I went to residential school with him and how they  
16          were treated because we spoke our language, and I finally  
17          got to meet his -- his aunty who was, like, an  
18          (indiscernible) MLA up there that I had the honours of  
19          meeting them, and I was so happy to hear that he was -- he  
20          was okay.

21                        I have never knew -- you know, understood  
22          anything about trauma because I always believed that this  
23          is what -- sexual abuse or rape, you know, that seems so  
24          normal, that it was okay to hurt us, and -- I started  
25          drinking very young, when I was about 6, 7 years old,

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1 because my brother -- my oldest brother drank, and I always  
2 ended up drinking what he had -- had left, so that became  
3 part of my life back then.

4 So when we used to run away from the  
5 residential school, we ended up in places, Cache Creek,  
6 then the cops would come and gets and bring us back, and  
7 then I finally met these two women from the Okanagan  
8 where -- that's where I met my son's father. So to get out  
9 of that system, because his dad, you know, fell in love  
10 with me, and -- but I -- always knew in my life that -- is  
11 that I was very different, and -- but to -- I had to get  
12 out of that system. I married my son's father because  
13 I -- I just got tired of being target, tired of running.

14 This man that I married was the most  
15 beautiful human man I've ever seen. If you ever watched  
16 "Urban Cowboy," well, that was my cowboy.

17 (LAUGHTER)

18 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

19 He was very dark, handsome, and man, he could dance on that  
20 floor, and I was a friend to his girlfriend back then, but  
21 I caught his eye. I was very slim. I'm still short yet.  
22 I haven't grown any, but...

23 (LAUGHTER)

24 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

25 But I had no interest, but I knew that was my way out. I

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1 had my oldest son Bobby. Then we got married in 1978,  
2 June 3rd. Never knew that this man that -- who said he  
3 loved me would become the most violent man in my life.  
4 Then my journey began with him.

5 I wasn't even married a week, and the abuse  
6 started. He threw me out of the car. We were heading down  
7 to Montana and Wyoming and -- because my ex-husband used to  
8 be a rodeo cowboy, and -- he was a bull-rider and a  
9 team-roper, and -- and a musician, and we were on our way  
10 down on our honeymoon, and -- and the beating started.

11 I understood that -- you know, now I  
12 understand many years down the road that, you know,  
13 violence, there are so many faces to it. I've had my  
14 ribs -- they had to wire my -- my jaw. I've had my legs,  
15 my feet broken deliberately. I had a plate in my back  
16 here. He snapped my arm right back because I wanted to  
17 play ball. I used to pitch Triple A women's fastball, and  
18 I couldn't even throw anymore.

19 And years down the road, when I finally left  
20 him because I ended up in transition houses with my kids,  
21 it was one thing to beat me, but when he started to abuse  
22 my sons, it's either fight or flight. I stood between my  
23 middle son Presley here where his dad had a big rodeo  
24 buckle, and he was going to start beating him because my  
25 ex-husband was hung over. He was a heavy drinker, very

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1 heavy drinker, but he always maintained his job. He worked  
2 for Tolko Industry, a big sawmill, but when, like, that  
3 belt came out, and I stood between them, and I would --he  
4 would physically go into the bedroom and drag -- drag me  
5 out of -- on -- on the floor, off the bed, and start  
6 grabbing the boys and throw them on the floor. When that  
7 started, that was it.

8 I got charged for -- back then, we had a  
9 joint bank account, my ex-husband and I, and because he  
10 took all the money, he was having affairs with a couple of  
11 women that I didn't care because I was not really -- trust  
12 me, I was not interested in. All I ever wanted was  
13 children in my life, to have (indiscernible). I would have  
14 had five children. Two died of crib death. All I ever  
15 wanted was babies, and that -- nobody could take that.

16 But when the abuse started with my children  
17 here, that's -- I had to bring my son to the hospital  
18 because he was -- he started bleeding internally through  
19 his penis, my son Presley here. That's when I had to  
20 decide because the only way that he would keep me at home  
21 was to beat me and to make sure that I was so badly  
22 beaten -- I don't know how many times I ended up in the  
23 hospital. Broken ribs. They had to wire my jaw shut. I  
24 couldn't walk. I had casts up to here, trying to hold the  
25 babies and to look after the home.

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1 I'd phone the police and that. The police,  
2 because my ex-husband used to party with the police, the  
3 RCMP, they would tell -- like, they would tell my  
4 ex-husband exactly where my sons and I were, at the  
5 transition house, so we weren't safe anywhere.

6 And then, finally, when I got charged for  
7 theft because I pawned -- I pawned, like, a VCR because he  
8 drained our account, and we had no food, and the family  
9 would not help us, so I pawned that, and then he charged  
10 me. I got three months for doing that, and in that period,  
11 time period, I didn't know that he had already sexually  
12 assaulted my oldest boy Robert while I was in jail.

13 So through my lawyer that I met -- his name  
14 is Bob Williamson (ph), he's now retired -- he was the one  
15 that also became my saving grace, him and his wife. We set  
16 out a plan to remove my sons and myself totally out of the  
17 home. The family all knew what was going on. The family,  
18 their grandmother, their aunties, their uncles who are very  
19 elite, very -- they had a relative who is one of the first  
20 MPs in Canada. They protected him. They protected  
21 everything right down to the time when the grandmother died  
22 many years ago -- actually, a few years ago. I was told  
23 not to speak about it because it would do a lot of damage  
24 when she got sick. The grandmother got sick, so out of  
25 respect for my sons, like, I never said anything.



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1                   So it -- it was my lawyer, Bob Williamson,  
2                   and his wife that -- we set a plan in motion. We left  
3                   everything behind. This is how we ended up in Vancouver in  
4                   1983. My youngest boy was only three months old.

5                   He stalked me for over two years, everywhere  
6                   I went. Even when we moved down here, he was living in  
7                   Surrey, yet we didn't even know that; and today, I don't  
8                   think my children, other than maybe twice, have spoken with  
9                   him.

10                   It took me six years to leave that man  
11                   that -- I told my son, you know, even though I am, like, a  
12                   two-spirited woman, this was my -- all I wanted was  
13                   children because I know what it was like to not have that  
14                   love, to -- never to be shown that, and I just wanted to  
15                   have my own, to love them, and that was in my little bubble  
16                   world that I -- I've missed out a lot of stuff in between.

17                   So when I ended up down here -- before I got  
18                   married, I needed to find out who I was to apply for my  
19                   marriage license, and I applied for it, and they denied me  
20                   under Williams because I'm registered under my  
21                   grandmother's name as Williams. I didn't know that I was  
22                   registered under -- at birth, under a different name,  
23                   LaRochelle. That -- that is not my name. My mother, I  
24                   believe, was having an affair with a fisherman, and this is  
25                   where that name came from, and -- so it was one of my

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1       aunties that told me, you'll find your mother down on  
2       Skid Row, and I didn't know I had a mom. I always believed  
3       my grandmother was my mom because my grandmother never  
4       spoke about my mother. Nobody spoke about my mom. My mom  
5       was a very violent, violent drunk and person. I didn't  
6       know that. So when I found out that my last name was  
7       different, and -- then I got married and then ended up down  
8       here.

9                       When I started to apprentice under  
10       Bill Reid, that's all I ever wanted to do was to be an  
11       artist. I just wanted to create because that was my  
12       healing. I didn't know anything else. Art became who I  
13       am. Still to this day, I can just sit for hours and just  
14       dream my life away and just, you know, create because  
15       that's my self-expression. I forgot to mention, too, that  
16       I stuttered really bad. I couldn't even hold a  
17       conversation with anybody. It's hard to believe I used to  
18       stutter because I'm so yappy now, but...

19                                       **(LAUGHTER)**

20                                       **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

21       And music was the thing that saved me too. But when I  
22       started apprenticing with Bill Reid -- I met a woman years  
23       and -- you know, in that era of time, I met Viola Thomas.  
24       I used to play ball and we used to travel a lot, and when I  
25       lived in the Okanagan, and -- so I had the opportunity of

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1 meeting Viola and that, and -- and I was in my early 20s,  
2 and she also used to ride -- I used to barrel-race too.  
3 I -- I think I'm probably the only Haida woman that's  
4 ever -- as short as I am, man, we were fast, though, on  
5 those horses for barrel-racing. I used to barrel-race with  
6 the Native Rodeo Circuit and that.

7 And so I met Viola, and we became friends,  
8 and -- so when I ended up down here, I reconnected with  
9 her, and -- and this is where my journey began with the  
10 murdered women and girls here. I met Harriet Nahanee,  
11 Kitty Sparrow, Marion Makasko (ph), Loni Bernice Brown  
12 (ph), and Rita, Carol, all these incredible women in my  
13 life.

14 Then I started finding out about my -- my  
15 own family -- I met my family back in 1992 for the first  
16 time, and one of the things that I want to say is that my  
17 sons never understood why they didn't have any uncles or  
18 aunts around them. Because of what I went through, I  
19 didn't want my children to ever go through the sexual abuse  
20 that I had been subjected to all these years and no  
21 accountability and -- for anything.

22 So it was finally a few years ago that I  
23 finally told them, this is the reason why. My brother  
24 Ron Victor LaRochelle is one of the biggest perpetrators  
25 around. He's a pedophile, and I have no problem saying

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1       that publicly. My brother, Douglas George Williams (ph),  
2       another one of the biggest pedophiles around. These two  
3       have never, ever been charged for anything, even though we  
4       had enough evidence against them, and yet the Ministry  
5       still allowed these men to still perpetrate out there to  
6       this day.

7                        So when I met my family, I felt, like, a  
8       sense of belonging, but there's a price to it because I was  
9       apprenticing yet with Bill Reid, and they knew that I had a  
10      pay cheque every two weeks, so I became -- just to be part  
11      of that family, they would really guilt me to death: Well,  
12      my hydro's getting shut off, this is getting done, I'm  
13      short on my rent, I'm this, so I just gave and gave and  
14      gave, but I still protected my children away from them. I  
15      didn't want my children to be near them, and finally, like  
16      I said, a few years ago, my children finally understood  
17      why.

18                      But for many years, I would never, ever tell  
19      a lot of people that I was a Haida woman or even First  
20      Nations. I -- I told people I was, like, a Filipino woman  
21      because of the systemic racism that was so prevalent around  
22      us all the time. My children never really grew up with  
23      First Nations kids. I used to come home, 2:30 at night  
24      from work and that, and I'd have the United Nations at my  
25      home. I turned my garage into a little social area for my

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1 children to have their friends, and my two older boys  
2 started learning how to speak Mandarin, Hindu, all these  
3 other languages, and I felt bad because, like, they  
4 couldn't even learn their own language because I was so  
5 ashamed.

6 So when my journey began, all I ever wanted  
7 to do was carve. I don't know, in my culture, Haida women,  
8 this is not part of our -- is our culture. Haida women,  
9 it's -- I mean, it's not against our culture. It's -- it's  
10 against protocol, but Sharon Hitchcock Baker Williams (ph),  
11 God rest her soul, that -- and Frieda Dazing (ph), you  
12 know, to pave the way for us women and how to do this work.

13 So we started working on the many projects  
14 with Bill Reid and that, knowing that he was so sick with  
15 Parkinson's and that, and I used to administer his  
16 medication, and weekends, I don't think I even had a day  
17 off sometimes because he would -- Skundaal, you need to  
18 pick up my Billmobile and come and pick me up, and -- we  
19 always had other projects to do, and then finally one day,  
20 through meeting Viola Thomas and Harriet Nahanee and them,  
21 and Harriet (indiscernible) and Kitty Sparrow came down to  
22 the studio one day and said, come on, and I honestly  
23 thought they were taking me for lunch. I was so happy to  
24 see them and that, and they said, no, you grab your stuff,  
25 you're coming with us, and that's where my journey began,

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1 starting -- doing the front lines back in 1986. My  
2 children were just little boys.

3 Then I started to find out about who I was,  
4 realizing that I had such a large family and finding out  
5 my -- about my mother. My mother died November 5th, 1977.  
6 Who would have believed, you know, 40 years later I would  
7 raise the survivor's totem pole on her very date that I  
8 didn't even know.

9 I started finding about my mother, started  
10 finding out about my sisters that I had and how they also  
11 went unnoticed in the Downtown Eastside. They were  
12 invisible. I blame the coroners. Those coroners should be  
13 investigated. There is no due diligence on any of their  
14 hearts, that they just wrote my family off as if they never  
15 existed.

16 I'm very proud have to my niece Nicole here.  
17 That's my second oldest sister's daughter that I just  
18 finally got to meet a few years ago. I didn't even know  
19 she existed.

20 But like I said, I met my family in 1992 and  
21 that, and very -- a lot of family hidden secrets, and when  
22 I found out about my mother, how she was -- ended up in a  
23 hospital because of a beating so severely that she bled  
24 internally and -- and that. My mother was 56 years old.

25 And I started finding out about my oldest

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1       sister, Katherine, how she was strangled to death but yet  
2       written off, and I took pictures at her funeral in her  
3       casket because what I was told was that my sister did not  
4       like things around her neck. I -- and I just want to back  
5       up for a minute, about my mother, how her body, because the  
6       Haida Nation, through Frank Collison and them, would not  
7       decide whether to bring my mother's body home. She was  
8       left in that morgue for three months pending their  
9       decision, and yet Frank Collison and Reynold Russ are one  
10      of the two biggest perpetrators in my village, and one is  
11      alive yet, but never, ever been -- they have never, ever  
12      been charged. My Aunty Terri and her sister was so  
13      courageous to come up against them in court, and they  
14      walked. This was my mother that I was denied.

15                I've got a lot to say about the band council  
16      and that, but I just wanted to bring this back to this is  
17      how my mother was failed through the system but also  
18      through the Nation that I loved so dearly.

19                Then I find out about my oldest sister, like  
20      I said, and one of my aunties told me that she knew her  
21      very well. My sister Catherine Katherine was a beautiful  
22      woman, very quiet. She just went and checked around, like,  
23      treatment centre, apparently, and then when she came back,  
24      she was found dead at the Cobalt Hotel, but it was written  
25      off is that she died of asphyxiation from eating a pork

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1 chop bone, but yet at the funeral home when I was asked to  
2 go there, when I was told by my aunt that she never liked  
3 things around her neck, and I'm curious why she had this  
4 scarf around her neck. When everybody walked outside  
5 waiting for the casket to come out, I stayed behind. I  
6 asked the funeral director to, please, don't take her out  
7 yet.

8 I took down the scarves, and there's  
9 strangulation hand marks around her neck. Her shoulders  
10 had -- were badly bruised. I took pictures of that. After  
11 the funeral happened the following week, I went to the  
12 coroner's. I said, explain this to me. You tell me that  
13 she died of asphyxiation, and yet she's got  
14 strangulation -- hand marks around her neck. Nothing had  
15 ever happened.

16 My second-oldest sister, Noreen Joyce, the  
17 man that was giving the alcohol to was a man that she had  
18 been befriended to, and he was only charged on because it  
19 was, like, a non-Native woman. He only got charged for  
20 hers, and yet they wrote down that there was nine -- nine  
21 First Nations women, but they never even cared about that  
22 one of those women were -- was my sister.

23 My baby sister in Merritt, Sharlene  
24 MacAdams, the RCMP was also alerted on her common law, and  
25 yet -- I'm trying to figure out how the system, when we



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1 phoned the RCMP, how they cremated my sister, baby sister,  
2 in one day without notifying the next of kin. My sister  
3 Noreen was cremated right away, too, without notification.

4 This is what gave me the push to do this  
5 work. I don't get paid. I want to make this very clear  
6 too. I am not a staff on the National Inquiry. I'm a  
7 grandmother. We are not paid staff here. So I want to  
8 make that very clear. We are volunteers in -- we were  
9 asked to do this work, so just for the record, like, I want  
10 to make that clear.

11 So this was at the beginning. You know,  
12 Grandmother Rita Blind, we used to go to her place  
13 when -- because, like, the Elders knew back then about  
14 Robert Willy Pickton. Nobody would listen to them. I  
15 believed even to this day that if they would have listened,  
16 that there would be many of our loved ones would be alive  
17 to this day. You know, Carol Martin, so many of us women  
18 who are on the front lines -- and I want -- I want to say  
19 this. You know, Carol and I, you know, talked about this  
20 years ago and that. I want to acknowledge her sister  
21 Delilah. Delilah was the one that started coming forth  
22 with informations about Robert Willy Pickton. This young  
23 girl by the name of -- her name is Angel, not the one from  
24 Haida Gwaii, I want to make that clear -- started coming  
25 forward, and I remember in those days how -- we're talking

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1 about organizations and that, you know, what -- what roles  
2 you play in this, about how those roles were shut on our  
3 Elders. I never forget going to wish with them one night  
4 when it was at the First United Church. Harriet and Rita  
5 were looking for one of our women that was missing, and I'd  
6 never forget how those workers there stood like a police  
7 officer and try to block them from coming in and say, no,  
8 you are not going to come in here. This is our Elders that  
9 these organizations were doing this to, and how many of  
10 these doors were shut to these women? Right to this day.  
11 We talk about lateral violence. It's very, very  
12 much -- and it -- it's right here today.

13 I blame a lot of these organizations. I've  
14 witnessed -- I remember back in our time era, the Downtown  
15 Eastside Women's Centre was one of the safest places to go.  
16 There was not even 30 organizations down there. Now we're  
17 over 300. But there's a lot of good organizations out  
18 there that do work hard for the women: WAVA (ph), there's  
19 BWSS, the Aboriginal Mothers Centre. There's -- I can only  
20 count maybe five on my hand.

21 When I look at these statistics right  
22 now -- I'm going to jump ahead now -- through all these  
23 organizations that are down there, including the policing,  
24 including the court systems, including the City -- the City  
25 council, everywhere, (indiscernible) -- all these places

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1 and that, you figure out that there's a million dollars a  
2 day that's being spent in the Downtown Eastside -- spent in  
3 the Downtown Eastside. So you're looking at 27 million to  
4 31 million a month times 12. Why isn't our people still  
5 safe? Why are they still living below the poverty line?  
6 Why is our Elders standing in food bank lines? Why is  
7 my -- why is my grandchildren not feeling safe and being  
8 bullied in these schools with all this money that's being  
9 spent every day, a million dollars a day? Why is there  
10 still homeless people, you know, on those streets? We have  
11 become the biggest commodity -- like Carol Martin has said  
12 over and over, we have become the biggest commodity  
13 anywhere in the Downtown Eastside.

14 I've got nothing to lose with what  
15 I'm -- you know, with what I'm talking about. I don't work  
16 for your organizations. I'm on those front lines. I  
17 always believe in my heart, if you were doing your job,  
18 there shouldn't be one homeless person out there. I've  
19 never had a cordon bleu in my life, but I sure see a lot of  
20 these people going out and having those big fatties and  
21 whatever out there because those are crumbs that you're  
22 giving. I want that whole loaf of bread. I don't want  
23 your crumbs. I want to be able to walk in my community,  
24 the community that I love so much. I feel the safest in  
25 that community is in the Downtown Eastside. I don't feel

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1 safe walking up on Davies Street. I don't feel safe  
2 walking over well on Robson Street. I don't feel safe in  
3 Surrey. I feel safer on those streets and in those alleys,  
4 you know, because we go looking for those women in those  
5 alleys. We're the ones that are mopping up the blood.  
6 What is your organization doing?

7 This is one of the reasons why that the  
8 Elders -- I remember Harriet and Rita were, 20 years ago,  
9 talking about a health, healing, and wellness centre, and  
10 still today, we are still fighting. I see Lorelai Hawkins  
11 fighting for the same thing, you know, back in that time;  
12 Grace Tait. These were the women, and yet we are sitting  
13 here, and nothing's been done yet. Why has it taken over  
14 4,000 women and girls' names to sit here and to still keep  
15 asking the same question? We have this right.

16 When we did those walks across Canada, we  
17 sat one day with the walkers and that. We went through the  
18 human rights, the Indigenous human rights thing. It took  
19 us a week to go through it, you know, for our study, little  
20 things, you know, at nighttime and that. We counted 17  
21 violations against our women and children out of, like,  
22 that. Seventeen violations, and yet nothing's done.

23 I was one of the very fortunate and lucky  
24 women that I thank my Creator every day I don't have to  
25 carry a medicine bag or anything, yet -- you know, and I

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1       could tell you, you know, how my gratitude is, you know,  
2       for my Creator because that's not my journey. That's not  
3       my life. I respect you with the medicine, but I want to  
4       say I have seen and I have witnessed so much violence, and  
5       it's not because of the Walk4Justice or the Tears 4  
6       Justice, all these coalitions that -- this is the reason  
7       we're here today. It's because of women like Rita,  
8       Harriet, Lorelai, all these women. This is women  
9       nationally that have sacrificed -- Jamie Lee Hamilton, all  
10      these women, courageous, Angela MacDougall, all these women  
11      nationally who have fought to the bitter -- almost to the  
12      bitter end, and yet nothing has changed. Nothing has  
13      changed. But instead, the system has set it up where the  
14      lateral violence, you know, to fight for those fundings,  
15      to -- you know -- you know, and to fight amongst one  
16      another.

17                   The Government knows exactly what they're  
18      doing: Divide and conquer. We all know that, but why are  
19      we fighting one another? I'm trying to make sense of all  
20      of this. Why is it -- has to get so hurtful, yet we're  
21      fighting for the same thing? I -- I don't understand this.  
22      This is my only opportunity that I get to say what I need  
23      to say from my heart. This hurts me so much. I've been  
24      accused of raping a woman. I've been accused of extortion.  
25      I've been accused of holding my Elders' hostage. I've been

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1 accused of -- you name it. How do you think I feel? My  
2 sons didn't even know that I tried to commit suicide three  
3 times at the hands of a spiritual person that clawed my  
4 face down who was a pipe-carrier, who's a sun-dancer, and  
5 lives in my community but clawed my face. Nobody stood  
6 with me. I've been stabbed three times and shot at twice,  
7 and I've never, ever had one of you stand beside me or walk  
8 with me until after the fact. This is what I'm talking  
9 about. You think about these women, how many doors have  
10 been shut on them, and yet we're out there: Hey, we've got  
11 to do this for the women. How dare you. How dare you  
12 stand there in judgment of me and then open that door.

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Oh --

14 **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

15 Uh-uh. I only have one shot at this to say what I need to  
16 do. Shame on you. You're not my friend. Get that knife  
17 out of my back. How dare you call me your friend when  
18 you're -- you're there, you know, moving that knife into my  
19 gut? Because it's easier for you to tear me down than to  
20 lift me up.

21 I made a comment to this woman. I said, I  
22 want you to be one of my pallbearers. I want six of these  
23 women, and I named those women out. I want you to be my  
24 pallbearer, and this person said to me, oh, I feel so  
25 honored. Why did you ask me that? And I said, so you

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1 could let me down one more time. I mean what I said.

2 My reality is -- is I've walked with these  
3 women. I've listened to their cries. Why doesn't anybody  
4 want to help us? Don't we matter? I'm not in a leadership  
5 role here. I'm a humble servant in my community. Why  
6 would you want to be jealous of this? Like, come on. I'm  
7 short and I've got an attitude this big.

8 (LAUGHTER)

9 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

10 You know? I tell people, I am hated by many and loved by a  
11 few. I could -- you know what? I don't care if you like  
12 me. I feel very secure with who I am. I got three amazing  
13 sons. I got incredible grandchildren. I got -- on two  
14 hands, I probably got ten good friends that I'm crazy with  
15 and I'm crazy about them. If you don't want to be in my  
16 life, don't slander me. You know what these women have  
17 gone through? The same thing. I was strong enough to have  
18 one Elder come into the hospital when I tried to commit  
19 suicide because I couldn't take that abuse coming from a  
20 spiritual person that clawed my face for accusations that I  
21 stole money from the murdered missing women, and I want  
22 this on the record too.

23 The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, and I'm  
24 going to say this one last time to you, and  
25 this -- publicly. When we did all these walks, the Union

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(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
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1 of B.C. Indian Chiefs were looking after those  
2 monetaries -- not Gladys, not Bernie Williams,  
3 nobody -- because I am sick and tired of taking the brunt  
4 of people's bullshit and to be torn down. At whose  
5 expense? I make my own money. I'm a working poor woman.  
6 And for clarity, too, if I choose to go downtown and have a  
7 beer, who the hell are you to judge me when I see you  
8 sneaking around the corner with your pipe in hand? How  
9 dare you? You don't know my story.

10 I've only shared a little bit of who I am,  
11 but I'm going to tell you, it stops today, like my son  
12 said. You don't want to be, you know, in my life, bye-bye.  
13 I have a T-shirt that says, "want to care but don't." You  
14 know? Want to care but don't. I've got work to do. I  
15 have a family that I love, I adore, and I respect. These  
16 are my warrior men. I don't have time for your bullshit.

17 I hear all the gossip, you know, putting  
18 down, losing focus of why we're here, is about the women  
19 and those beautiful children that are gone. I don't care  
20 about these coalitions. You don't know my story. You  
21 don't know anything about my family, and if you think  
22 you've got, like, you know, answers on how to solve or  
23 resolve, you better step back because you don't. I have  
24 another T-shirt that says "stop" -- "stop trying to fix  
25 me." You don't know my story. Instead of trying to push



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1       us down, wouldn't it be great -- I said this, like,  
2       to -- like these non-Native people, you know, who work in  
3       the big organizations downtown. What would happen  
4       hypothetically, I said, if we as Aboriginal people started  
5       getting healthy? What would happen? Your organization  
6       will just -- (unreportable sound) -- like that.

7                       As Maya Angelou has one of the greatest  
8       sayings around that I love reading her stuff: We rise.  
9       Very simple. We rise. But the context of it, look within  
10      it. We are red women rising, and we rise. Because you  
11      know what? We've had enough.

12                                       **(APPLAUSE)**

13                                       **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

14      I've had enough. I've had enough. I can't speak for  
15      Gladys or Penny or for Carol and that, but I'm sick and  
16      tired of having to be the one sent to mop up the blood  
17      downtown. All these people that are pushing against, like,  
18      this National Inquiry, step back because we're coming  
19      through with or without you.

20                                       **(APPLAUSE)**

21                                       **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

22      Step back because if you don't understand -- there's many  
23      of you who have walked with us. I remember when we were  
24      doing these walks, and again, these organizations -- like I  
25      said, I don't care, I don't care if you close a door to me,

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and Sharlene MacAdams)**

1 but I'm going to say this. When we started doing these  
2 walks across Canada, seven times and two times on the  
3 Highway of Tears, not one of these organizations came out  
4 to support us. Not one.

5 So don't stand in front of me and tell me  
6 that you -- you want to do all this good work now. Um,  
7 like, you're 30, 40 years too late, honey, because we're  
8 not going away. I watched you build your empires off the  
9 backs of our people. I should have owned a home by now.  
10 These women that have gone before us, they should have had,  
11 like, a better quality of life under your leaderships, but  
12 that didn't happen.

13 Now, speaking of leaderships, I also hold  
14 our leaderships well accountable. Instead of blaming the  
15 residential schools and that, we need to take a look within  
16 our own leaderships on our reserves, our villages. I've  
17 seen these men, our leaderships, on those front lines, you  
18 know, perpetrating our women, sitting in those bars, like,  
19 oh, swagging around, at the casinos, thousands of dollars  
20 going in, but yet you can't even provide safe housing for  
21 our Elders and our women and children? Shame on you.

22 The leadership -- the leadership that I've  
23 been given, I take it very seriously, and so does my son.  
24 We want to be the change. We are going to be the change,  
25 and we need to step back and hold those men in power, right

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1 up to Perry Bellegarde. I've been at those fine dining AFN  
2 Congress of Aboriginal People's meetings. So has Carol, so  
3 has Penny. We've all been there. So has Viola. We see  
4 what's going on there. You ever ask them how much money it  
5 costs, like, to put one of those on and at the end of the  
6 week, woo-hoo, party on, panties off. That's what it is.  
7 I seen our leadership so drunk in their monkey suits.  
8 These are our leaders. I'm not ashamed to talk about this.  
9 Because I hope that you hold me accountable in my  
10 leadership if I ever done shit like that. I apologize for  
11 swearing.

12 But I've watched them. Why is all the  
13 blame -- I understand, yes, the Government plays a really  
14 big key role, but why is it targeted towards the Government  
15 when it's right in front of us? Clean up your own backyard  
16 with your own people, but nothing -- they -- every time I  
17 see these meetings, I just cringe. It took us 20 years  
18 with the grass roots movement that we were -- you know,  
19 have been in, 20 years to get through those doors in these  
20 leadership meetings. It shouldn't have been that way.

21 Everybody blames the Government, like, for  
22 water, housing. You remember something. I live  
23 off-reserve. My reserve is getting money for me still, and  
24 I live off-reserve. Why aren't we going after them? The  
25 Government is the one that is giving the money out, and our

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1        leaders are taking those monetaries. Are we seeing it? I  
2        still haven't got a house yet. I got property. Because I  
3        don't fit in. I'm not a relative to that Chief that day,  
4        or I haven't slept with him or her, whatever way it is. I  
5        don't get those perks. Education, the same thing. Why do  
6        I have to fight? I took four student loans out to go to  
7        school for four years because my band. You think that  
8        these women had that opportunity too? You wonder why these  
9        women ended up on these streets? Wasn't because of the  
10       Government. It was because of what's going on on those  
11       reserves or individuals. I hold our leadership accountable  
12       for that.

13                    I have talked to many of our First Nations  
14       women on the streets. Sexual abuse. You can't get a job  
15       because it's nepotism. Our Elders. I cannot believe some  
16       of the housing that we are looking at in my village. The  
17       Elders are living below third-world country. Why is it  
18       that? But my name is on that band list, and you're getting  
19       money for me and my children and my grandchildren. Why is  
20       there nothing to sustain us over there?

21                    Haida Gwaii is one of the most beautiful  
22       country -- or areas in the world, very pristine. Why can't  
23       I go home and have a house there to make sure that my  
24       grandchildren will learn the language, the culture, and  
25       everything? Why does it have to be separate or segregated

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1           because I don't fit in with that group over here, I don't  
2           fit in with this drum group here, or because I don't speak  
3           my language anymore, I'm not Haida? I have been told  
4           that: You are not Haida because you don't speak your  
5           language. Excuse me? You guys are the ones that signed  
6           the paper me to go to Provo, Utah, where I ended up in  
7           care. You signed those documents to show my quantum blood  
8           as a Haida woman, that I ended up in care.

9                         Viola Thomas and I spoke about this years  
10           ago, that I wanted to sue the Haida Nation because of that.  
11           How can you sign me away? You signed me away to another  
12           country. How many other children, you know at -- they had  
13           this welcoming home ceremony. I never got the call.

14                        My sisters were on that band list, too, so  
15           was my mother, but they collected that money all those  
16           years but never helped them. You think about these women,  
17           like, the First Nations women. How many of those bands,  
18           you know, called, like, to see? I've only seen one Chief  
19           come down here from -- from Lake Babine. She came down  
20           here, and she still comes down here to see her people,  
21           asking them, would you come home? Do you see these Chiefs  
22           on the front line other than going into the bars and having  
23           a drink and trying to schmooze around?

24                        I'm not saying that all Chiefs are bad  
25           because there is some great Chiefs that are great leaders,

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1 but the ones that I know, mm-mm, should be ashamed of  
2 yourself. But you think about these women, is were they  
3 given that chance? No.

4 I wanted to talk about that. I wanted to  
5 say what I needed to say about, like, that leadership  
6 because I am so appalled, and I'm appalled at how the  
7 National Inquiry is -- always been, like, a target of  
8 silliness and that and -- because -- I'm only going to  
9 speak for myself -- because I'm with Michèle Audette as,  
10 like -- you know, like, a grandmother, and I want to make  
11 this clear. I'm speaking as a family member now, not as a  
12 grandmother. I'm not an Elder, and I don't think the  
13 Elders would even want me because I get really silly mouth  
14 here, so...

15 (LAUGHTER)

16 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

17 And that's not part of my role. I -- I knew my role when I  
18 was -- you know, I was given my role at a very early age  
19 that I'm a land-defender and I'm a peace-keeper. That's my  
20 role. I will never be an Elder. That's not my -- but my  
21 role is not only with one Commissioner. It's for all the  
22 staff. I'm not a hired -- I don't get -- no. But is what  
23 we have in common with the work that we do is that I hear  
24 it over and over, especially from Michèle Audette. This  
25 woman wears her heart on her sleeves. All the

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1 Commissioners do, and what I hear more than anything is  
2 that family's first. It's about the family. I'm not  
3 trying to toot, you know, Michèle's horn, but, you know,  
4 that's what it's about.

5 And I apologize if I've said  
6 anything -- it's like my son says, because I -- you know,  
7 I've always taught him, if I've said anything to offend  
8 anybody -- I -- I've really condensed everything down. My  
9 sole purpose here as a survivor was to finally put an end  
10 and to name my abusers, and is it going to make me feel all  
11 warm and fuzzy after? No. The work still goes on. But  
12 what I do, and I will never stop. I will never stop this  
13 fight for -- the justice for these women, my mother and my  
14 three sisters, and for all the families across Canada and  
15 to the north.

16 And this Commissioner Madam Michèle Audette  
17 is -- I'm acting as my own lawyer. Do you got anything to  
18 ask me?

19 (LAUGHTER)

20 (APPLAUSE)

21 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: (Speaking in  
22 French)?

23 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

24 *Oui.*

25 (LAUGHTER)

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1                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** I just sworn  
2                   you.

3                   **(LAUGHTER)**

4                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** You know, in  
5                   our tradition, in the east, I don't know in your beautiful  
6                   territory, but when a person come with a traditional  
7                   approach, it's automatically sworn for us, that every words  
8                   that would come from that person, it's the truth, their  
9                   truth.

10                   So I know usually we ask, are you going to  
11                   do this in a good way, and -- because it's a talking and  
12                   sharing circle, and because you choose to do it that way, I  
13                   want to reassure you that everything you said and will say,  
14                   we know it's the truth. And -- how do we say that? I feel  
15                   petite. I feel small beside you.

16                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

17                   Well, now you know how I feel.

18                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Yeah.

19                   **(LAUGHTER)**

20                   **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Big time.  
21                   Usually I'm a tough cookie, not afraid of anything, but now  
22                   I'm very nervous -- in a good way, of course -- and before  
23                   I ask some question, I just want to say the teaching you're  
24                   giving us, the four of us, the Commissioners, but also the  
25                   staff that I call my new family, the love that you're



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1 giving us every day, you're lifting up us because it's not  
2 an easy journey, but we have to do it, and we do it because  
3 women like you, Gladys, we had Cynthia and Bonnie who were  
4 here, we had Myrna, women from different region, and like  
5 you and, of course, your niece, to remind us why we have to  
6 do this and how we have to do it, and the how, it's very  
7 different, very different depending where we're from the  
8 north, the south, the east, the west, or the prairies. And  
9 you never said no to us, ever. It was a Sunday night or a  
10 Monday night. It didn't matter. It was five days in a row  
11 or a month in a row. You never said that. You never said  
12 no, and I'm including all the families and survivors.

13 And you brought some people for a few hours  
14 in your beautiful community, but also for me, a very tough  
15 place, and you changed them. (Indiscernible) changed. He  
16 didn't wear his tie this morning because of you.

17 (LAUGHTER)

18 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And I know  
19 you have many, many, many years of dedication. You met so  
20 many people, you're very humble, you're not running after  
21 camera, hey, I did this, I did that, but because I know, I  
22 know, I was young when I was watching you, and one of my  
23 mentor was one of your friends, Viola Thomas. When we were  
24 young, she was involved with the Quebec Native Women and  
25 talked about you, and that's how I started to know who is

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and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 that Bernie? The Bernie.

2 (LAUGHTER)

3 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So can you  
4 help us, because we have one shot. You mentioned it couple  
5 times, and your beautiful testimony, we have one shot, and  
6 I will use your expression, we have one shot to do this  
7 right, this Inquiry, something that you fought with your  
8 sisters, with your grandmothers, and we can start with the  
9 coroners, we can start with the police, we can start with  
10 the leadership, we can start where you want us to start in  
11 this part of this conversation we're having, the  
12 recommendation, the action that we have to bring in that  
13 report, and this is not my report, but it's our report for  
14 those who believes in the Inquiry. For those who doesn't  
15 believe, I respect that. Why I respect that? Because  
16 we're all different. We have something in common, though:  
17 Racism, discrimination, but how we live it, probably it's  
18 different. Remember, we have to remember, many of us  
19 didn't want this Inquiry. They wanted the money directly  
20 to the organizations or services or a program, and we have  
21 to honour that and respect that, but there's some of us,  
22 also, who said we need this, and Lori Ojic (ph), Lanny  
23 Morrison (ph), Sue Martin (ph), you, Gladys, were the first  
24 one to answer my calls two years ago: How do we do this?  
25 How do we do this to make sure that it's working? And you

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1 have that expertise. You are my expert. You -- I mean,  
2 all the women that you mentioned and the women who are  
3 listening -- what do we have to bring in that report? And  
4 when I'll be finishing this mandate, I will be so proud and  
5 so loud to make sure that those recommendation, those totem  
6 poles that we have to put in your beautiful territory,  
7 Gladys, and other commemorating --

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible).

9 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** -- yeah,  
10 monument that we have to put across Canada, I will stand  
11 beside the people who will wish and wants that. I want to  
12 hear from you, *les recommandations*.

13 **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

14 No.

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** No? Okay.  
16 You're the boss. She's my boss.

17 **(LAUGHTER)**

18 **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:** I

19 think -- I remember, you know, conversations going back  
20 over 20 years ago, like I said earlier, and the  
21 conversations was with Rita. I -- I -- I really want  
22 everybody to acknowledge there's only Rita. As -- as I  
23 mentioned the other day at the opening, Carol and I were  
24 just, like -- we were like the point guards, and we still  
25 are. I really want to acknowledge these two incredible

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1 women that are the only two left out of that -- we have our  
2 group of seven, you know, the artists that they talk about,  
3 the Group of Seven and that? Well, we got our group of  
4 seven, and these two women, I really want to acknowledge  
5 them and that because these were the ones that really  
6 helped to guide Carol and I, you know, through our long  
7 years and -- of being on the front line, is our Elder Rita  
8 Blind, if she could be so kind to stand, and Viola Thomas.  
9 Are you standing, Viola?

10 (LAUGHTER)

11 (APPLAUSE)

12 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

13 Again, too, Viola Thomas and Rita Blind, we also have our  
14 oldest walker from -- from Fort St. James that every time  
15 there was a walk and she was raring to go, and as  
16 grandmother Mabel Todd (ph) from Fort St. James, wants  
17 to -- we want to acknowledge her.

18 (APPLAUSE)

19 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS: I

20 just want to say that she's done all the seven walks across  
21 Canada. She's done, like, the two walks for the -- for the  
22 Highway of Tears, and she hasn't been feeling well lately,  
23 but she still wants to do one more walk, and we're saying,  
24 no, granny, that's enough.

25 (LAUGHTER)

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1                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

2           Granny's gone wild again. But I also want to recognize,  
3           also -- just like me, she's very misunderstood a lot of  
4           times and that, and the reason why I want everybody to  
5           recognize these women because these women were -- are part  
6           of the heart of the community. They work -- we're -- we're  
7           always misunderstood in that, eh? I want to acknowledge  
8           Kelly White here.

9                                   **(APPLAUSE)**

10                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

11           And before I -- before I give my closing, I -- I really  
12           want to acknowledge, also, Carol Martin and Penny Kerrigan  
13           and Grace Tait here too.

14                                   **(APPLAUSE)**

15                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

16           This is all the hard work that these women have done on  
17           these front lines and to help bring to it where it is  
18           today. I just want to really acknowledge all these women,  
19           but to also acknowledge all of you, though, too, and there  
20           was times that, okay, you know, we wanted to throw the  
21           towel in because not being heard, just not being heard, and  
22           all these doors, you know, being closed in our faces,  
23           and -- the other person is Gladys Radek. She's -- I've got  
24           to share a little story with you.

25                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

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1                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**   I

2           have to stand up for this one.

3                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:**   Are you standing?

4                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

5           Ha, ha, ha, ha.

6                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

7                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

8           When we were on the walk and that -- I have to put some  
9           little lightness to this, okay?  When we were on the walk,  
10          when -- can't remember which one it was, but anyway, she  
11          really pissed me off and that, and she was sitting on --

12                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

13                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

14          She was sitting -- everybody knows that her and I would be  
15          scrappitty-doo a lot along the route here, and, you  
16          know -- of, like, the places we were going to, but she was  
17          sitting down, and she took her prosthetic leg off, and man,  
18          she just pissed me right off, so like a football, I went  
19          and grabbed her prosthetic leg, and I said, come and get  
20          it, you bitch, you.

21                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

22                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**   I

23          just ran with it, realizing that she couldn't get up  
24          anyways to come after me because I had her leg.

25                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

1                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

2           And the other time -- I just want to lighten the load for a  
3           minute, and -- the other time was -- I had my red Jeep, and  
4           so we had -- her van was side by side of my Jeep and that,  
5           and I was so tired that -- I usually slept in my Jeep  
6           because that's how small I am. Like, I could fit right in  
7           the back, and -- so anyways, they had a mattress inside the  
8           van, so they pulled everything in, so I finally ended up  
9           laying down, and they never even told me that the van got  
10          hit by lightning. It got struck by lightning, and --

11                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

12                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS**

13          **WILLIAMS:** -- nobody came to wake me, like, Bernie, are you  
14          okay, or --

15                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

16                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS**

17          **WILLIAMS:** -- you know, shake-and-baked or anything like  
18          this? No.

19                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

20                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

21          So I get up and, just, like, stretching away, and then they  
22          just looked at me. Like, not one of you came to -- even  
23          her, never came to check and see if I was --

24                                   **(LAUGHTER)**

25                   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 But they just told me, um, I think your Jeep, all the wires  
2 and everything were blown because, like, the Jeep was so  
3 close to the van that I just -- it blew my whole panel out,  
4 but they didn't even care that I was --

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** We did care. We did  
6 care.

7 **(LAUGHTER)**

8 **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:** I  
9 never seen them until eight hours later, but -- anyways, my  
10 colleague -- just my sister, Gladys Radek, we've been  
11 scrappers together, fighting -- you know, I was scrapping  
12 together, words said, but at the end of the day, we always  
13 would work it out. This is Gladys Radek here.

14 **(APPLAUSE)**

15 **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**  
16 I'm just going to wrap it up now. I just want to  
17 acknowledge all the families, NFAC (ph) families, also,  
18 that have been on those front lines, that have been  
19 fighting so hard, and I also like to acknowledge Bev Jacobs  
20 and Bridget Tully (ph), so many of these women who have  
21 fought so hard, and to please keep in mind that we need to  
22 put our differences aside for this great cause and that. I  
23 always believe that the Government, you know, has set this  
24 up for it to fail. We are not going to let this fail.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No.



Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

1                               **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

2           We've got too many families that have been waiting for so  
3           many years. Mine is just a small part of it, and my  
4           recommendation to you is, like I said, about 20 -- over  
5           20 years ago that these Elders had already spoken  
6           about -- to Carol and I, about the health, healing, and  
7           wellness center. This health, healing, and well center, I  
8           remember it with the TRC how much money was spent in every  
9           province that I -- I believe, and it's only my belief, it's  
10          not nothing to do with anybody -- that those monies could  
11          have been put towards like, a health, healing, and  
12          wellness, that all those millions of dollars that could  
13          have been built, and I would like to see as part of that  
14          health, healing, and wellness center is, like, for -- a  
15          place for the children, for their trauma. Their trauma.  
16          They need to be --

17   **(APPLAUSE)**

18   **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS**

19          **WILLIAMS:** -- trauma-informed. One of the things that I  
20          have asked about. Everybody knows part of my story, but  
21          what about my children? Have you heard their story? Have  
22          you heard the children's story on, you know, what it was  
23          like have to my mother either in jail or on the streets or,  
24          you know, having to go out and make a few dollars just to  
25          bring a loaf of bread or a thing of milk? Like, you know,

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
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and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 what about these children? I would like to see a  
2 trauma-informed place that is safe for the children lead by  
3 our spiritual Elders.

4 (APPLAUSE)

5 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

6 That's what I would like to see, that we bring it back to,  
7 you know, our culture, and I honour Patrick Smith from  
8 Kwagiulth Nation, for Culture Saves Lives and that.

9 (APPLAUSE)

10 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS

11 WILLIAMS: -- because I -- I have noticed, too, that this  
12 is really made an incredible difference. When I see these  
13 beautiful women, like Tara in the back here, and Nancy,  
14 that these are beautiful women from the Downtown Eastside,  
15 and I just honour them.

16 (APPLAUSE)

17 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

18 And I'm so glad they're here. Come on, give us  
19 some -- some love.

20 (APPLAUSE)

21 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

22 These are the women that society would like to throw away.  
23 These are the women that I work for, that are suffering on  
24 these front lines. These are the women that have endured  
25 so much, that people turned their backs and their faces

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(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)**

1 away from them. These are the true survivors. These are  
2 the ones that ask for nothing, and they get nothing because  
3 when they ask, they have to go through process sometimes.

4 I would like to see as part of the -- Viola,  
5 Shelly Lewis (ph), Carol -- there's many of us that have  
6 asked for -- we want to do our own exiting program, to have  
7 a place set up that when our women and our boys that are  
8 being subjected to sexual exploitation or human  
9 trafficking, that there is a place immediately put in place  
10 so that these -- our families, that would have a place to  
11 go, and that is not from 9 to 5 that these doors shut down.  
12 We would like as part of that health, healing, and wellness  
13 centre that we have a place to bring our children who have  
14 been exploited in. We will do the work to get you there.  
15 Pam Lewis (ph) was a great advocate, like, for this. She  
16 passed away a few years ago and that. This was one of her  
17 dreams.

18 We've been working with Viola as part of,  
19 like, a pilot project that we want to implement in -- as,  
20 like, for down the road and that to work within the  
21 Thompson/Okanagan and that where we could bring the women  
22 out of these areas from the Downtown Eastside to -- into  
23 safe, healthy, places, as to be part of nature and their  
24 culture out there.

25 We also spoke with Annita McPhee (ph) here

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and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 who's our warrior sister from the Tahltan Nation and that,  
2 that we are serious about this. This is --

3 (APPLAUSE)

4 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS

5 WILLIAMS: -- Annita McPhee here, one of the -- one of our  
6 great women here, warriors.

7 (APPLAUSE)

8 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

9 These are the women that we've been networking with to try  
10 to implement, like, those changes and because we know that  
11 we're getting a lot of resistance and that, and I  
12 understand, like, the organizations. I -- I really do.  
13 But I -- I would really like to see that this would  
14 be -- is culturally lead by our spiritual Elders and our  
15 grandmothers that are out here and our grandfathers to keep  
16 that balance and that, but this health, healing, and  
17 wellness centre has to be run by our own people. Our own  
18 people.

19 (APPLAUSE)

20 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

21 That's a really, you know, important, you know, component  
22 to this. It's -- it's got to be culturally, you know, done  
23 properly and that, and the youth; we got our children, we  
24 got our Elders here, but our youth. What we have noticed  
25 on the front lines, Downtown Eastside, is we have more

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1 youth downtown. We don't have anywhere for them to go. We  
2 have -- yes, you know, we have, you know, Britannia, we got  
3 places, but if we want to take our youth out of these  
4 places, there's nowhere to bring them. We have nowhere to  
5 bring them.

6 Right now, we're looking at about 43 percent  
7 of our women that are dying at a high random rate right now  
8 is, like, through the Fentanyl crisis now, but now it's  
9 becoming our youth that are dying. So we're losing, like,  
10 a whole generation right there because, again, it goes back  
11 to the leadership, and I -- I would really like to  
12 challenge the -- the Commissioners to -- I would like to  
13 have, you know, ideally is to have the Chiefs, you know,  
14 sit at those tables with the grass roots and the  
15 grandmothers and Elders.

16 **(APPLAUSE)**

17 **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

18 That's what I would like to see. I would really like to,  
19 you know, push that, and just to have that time because I  
20 want to be able to ask the -- you know -- you know, because  
21 people talk about what they think it's working. I want to  
22 ask a question, what's not working? Reverse it around  
23 because we know what's not working, and -- I think that's  
24 about it, you know? Like I said, health, healing, and  
25 wellness centre that the Elders have fought so hard for and

**Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)**

1 it's still not, and -- and -- you know, what is that going  
2 to look like? I don't know. That's up to the Elders,  
3 and -- you know, and to the spiritual people, but I -- I am  
4 really -- really sick and tired, and it's no offense to any  
5 race or anything. I'm not a racist person, but I'm really  
6 tired of the nonNative people telling me what's good for  
7 me, what they think.

8 **(APPLAUSE)**

9 **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:** I  
10 really am. I'm -- and one of the things that I know that  
11 Carol is really passionate about, and she's always fought  
12 for this, is how the overmedication of our people, they're  
13 undermedicated, they're overmedicated, Downtown Eastside,  
14 and I think that we really need to step it up to get a hold  
15 of the -- like, the board of physicians and that, that it  
16 should be a -- working with our spiritual people again  
17 instead of handing out these medications.

18 I remember when I had a breakdown, they  
19 Prozaced me. They put me on Paxil and Prozac, that I was  
20 walking around like a zombie, and how it -- it almost  
21 killed me because I went in -- out of suicide mode. I was  
22 found on the streets walking, and then I picked up a small  
23 handgun, that I was going to kill myself. I paid 50 bucks  
24 for this handgun on the streets. My sons were in the  
25 Okanagan with their grandparents, like, for the summer and

**Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
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and Sharlene MacAdams)**

1       that. This is -- it is distorting so many, you know, of  
2       our people, and if you don't take those medications, then  
3       you're reported because you're not complying with them, and  
4       I'm sure that -- that the child apprehension unit has been  
5       already spoken about, and I really don't want to go there  
6       because my children were -- you know, were also in care  
7       that nobody knew about. My ex-husband decided, like, that  
8       he wanted to get help to fix us, our marriage, so the best  
9       thing to do was to, you know, put my children in care,  
10      which I fought hard to get them back out, and -- you know,  
11      like, we all know what's wrong with that system. I'm not  
12      going to beat that one up and that, but all I know is that  
13      these -- that these doctors are -- some of them should be  
14      charged. Some of them should be, because you can go down  
15      to the Downtown Eastside to a certain doctor's offices and  
16      pay 30 to 40 bucks to buy any kind of medication you want,  
17      and it's shameful.

18                    But my whole thing is about that health,  
19      healing, and wellness centre, and stopping the, you know,  
20      exploitation of our women and children and that and to have  
21      a safe place, you know, for these wonderful people and  
22      that, and that's all I have to say.

23                    And again, it -- it is not my intent to  
24      insult or hurt anybody, and I hope my words -- you know,  
25      this is my truth, this is my story, and I have a lot more

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and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 to say, but, you know, out of respect for the other family,  
2 I would just like to -- do you have anything more to say or  
3 ask or whatever?

4 (LAUGHTER)

5 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

6 Feel free to do it.

7 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: I have your  
8 number.

9 (LAUGHTER)

10 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

11 That's an old number in the bathroom.

12 (LAUGHTER)

13 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yeah, when  
14 you sit, you know? Anyway. Let's be *sérieux*.

15 I would like to ask Audrey, Grandmother Blu,  
16 Grandmother Louise, and Rita to come here. You started  
17 something with the eagle feathers, and now it's our time.  
18 It's a beautiful circle, and I would like the people that  
19 are here to guide us are the one giving you this eagle  
20 feather, and my gift for you will be a blanket.

21 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

22 Are we spooning?

23 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Tonight.

24 (LAUGHTER)

25 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: We'll spoon



Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

1           tonight. We're so --

2                           **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:** I

3           would just -- I would just like to say *háw'aa* to all my  
4           support and to my beautiful niece. I want you guys to see  
5           my beautiful niece Nicole. This is my second-oldest  
6           sister, Noreen Joyce, this is her daughter, Nicole.

7   **(APPLAUSE)**

8                           **MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:**

9           I'm so glad she's here.

10   **(SILENCE DURING GIFTING)**

11                           **MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS:** Oh, gee, that's a  
12           first. Somebody calling (indiscernible). Of course it  
13           wasn't working.

14                           Bernie, the love you've shown to all the  
15           women and the children and those that have experienced  
16           violence, we wrap you today. We wrap you and comfort you  
17           and hug you and protect you because you have done that for  
18           all these other people, selfishless, with humility, with  
19           honour and respect you treated every person who came in  
20           your path, and we acknowledge that because a lot of the  
21           time, it goes unseen, and you need to know that we love  
22           you, we want you well, we want you protected, and we want  
23           to let you know how much we love you because you've shown  
24           your love to everyone you've come into contact with. We're  
25           not getting a bill from you.

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 (LAUGHTER)

2 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: So, Bernie,  
3 I -- it's a pleasure that I've -- I've gotten to know you  
4 so well, that we stand almost shoulder to shoulder. You're  
5 an inch higher.

6 (LAUGHTER)

7 MS. LAUREEN "BLU" WATERS: But I've learned  
8 so much from you, Bernie, and I've seen the compassion and  
9 the humility that you carry, and I hope to continue walking  
10 in the way that you have and showing that compassion to the  
11 people in the way you have, so I honour you today.

12 MS. GUL KIT JAAD/BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS:

13 *Háw'aa.*

14 MS. AUDREY SIEGL: I'm trying not to get  
15 emotional. Where the love that I missed from so much of my  
16 life, from my own mother, I found in you. The support and  
17 the unconditional strength, I found in you. I'm proud of  
18 you and your beautiful family, and I thank you for sharing  
19 your mother. I see who you are. I see who you've always  
20 been. I see all the women you come from. I see not just  
21 the strength that's carried you through but that big  
22 beautiful heart that always finds a way to keep moving  
23 forward. You inspire me. You kick my ass when I need it,  
24 and you show me what love really looks like. You have  
25 shared so much with so many, and I know you're working very

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
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and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 hard on learning to let people love you, and I thank you  
2 for letting me be one of those people.

3 This blanket represents so much than just  
4 the fabric that it's made of. This blanket is some of the  
5 good that you have done coming back to you. I will always  
6 walk with you. I will always be wherever you need me to  
7 be, especially in there and in here, not just because I  
8 love you, but because it's what you have always deserved.  
9 *Háw'aa.*

10 (APPLAUSE)

11 MS. LOUISE HAULLI: Bernie, I'm speechless  
12 because you've taught me so much. You taught me how to  
13 stand up for yourself, which I have never learned to do.  
14 You taught me so much. I'll walk with you to the end.  
15 Thank you.

16 (APPLAUSE)

17 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: I have one  
18 more thing, Bernie. I've been carrying this all week. My  
19 mom made it, and I want you to come with me and give it to  
20 your son with the eagle feathers.

21 (APPLAUSE)

22 (SILENCE DURING GIFTING)

23 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Thank you.

24 (LAUGHTER)

25 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

1 (Indiscernible). It speaks Innu and French.

2 (LAUGHTER)

3 MR. PRESLEY WILLIAMS: Thank you so very  
4 much. *Háw'aa*. I don't know if people know this, but in  
5 our Haida culture, the moment you are blanketed, it's the  
6 highest respect, it's the highest gift that you can get  
7 given to each other aside from given -- given copper. I  
8 had the opportunity, you know, to be bared from my mother  
9 and did not realize how much her life went through so much  
10 turmoils, and just showing the respect from the  
11 Commissioners to myself, I'm -- I'm -- I'm a loss for  
12 words, but that tells me the Commissioners have it in  
13 themselves to make this change happen.

14 Like my mother said, it starts from the  
15 leadership. It also starts from the Federal Government.  
16 They are also at fault. They also need to be put in their  
17 place. Culture reigns supreme. We've been here for  
18 25,000 years.

19 (APPLAUSE)

20 MR. PRESLEY WILLIAMS: And we are still  
21 going to be here, and our culture is still succeeding, and  
22 that is why it works. The Government has -- has to take  
23 their step back and reanalyze how culture has perceived  
24 better for our people.

25 (APPLAUSE)

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

1                   **MR. PRESLEY WILLIAMS:** When we put these  
2           leaders and cultural leaders in these positions that my  
3           mother's requesting, you will see a difference. These  
4           aren't certified government people. This is the way our  
5           oral teaching has been brought to us. It is not a  
6           certified document saying that you're learned this way and  
7           now you can teach it. My grandmother taught me this. My  
8           great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandmother  
9           taught my great, great, great -- and so on and so forth.  
10          That is the practical pride of our people, of being  
11          Aboriginal. That is what's real, and that is what needs to  
12          be rectified through the Canadian Government.

13                   Thank you very much for the Commissioners to  
14          give this me. I really thank my mom to express herself,  
15          but it is a very challenge, and I did give the opportunity  
16          to share my mom with you, and it's been a very hard road,  
17          but I'm working on myself in therapy and teaching my  
18          children how beautiful my family is, and I thank you.

19          *Háw'aa. Háw'aa.*

20   **(APPLAUSE)**

21                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Indiscernible). I'm  
22          a citizen of the (indiscernible). I want to say a prayer  
23          for -- for all the families and (indiscernible) *háw'aa* to  
24          (indiscernible) here. We were both in the same village.  
25          We grew up together.

Gul Kitt Jaad Bernie Poitras Williams,  
(Katherine Rose Williams, Noreen Joyce William  
and Sharlene MacAdams)

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(HAIDA PRAYER SONG)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's a wrap.

(LAUGHTER)

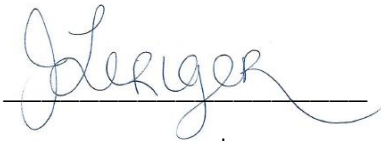
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That is a wrap.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So this one is adjourned, and we're  
going to return here in 20 minutes at 11:40. Next hearing,  
20 minutes at 11:40.

-- Upon adjourning at 11:18 a.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Jenessa Leriger, 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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jenessa Leriger", written in blue ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Jenessa Leriger

April 12, 2018