National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
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Sunday April 8, 2018
Public Volume 118
Grace Tait

Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Breen Ouellette

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APPEARANCES

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Government of Canada

Lucy Bell (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

Non-appearance

Vancouver Sex Workers’ Rights Collective

Non-appearance

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Metis Nation

Non-appearance
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Hearing - Public
Grace Tait

Metro Vancouver, British Columbia
--- Upon commencing on Sunday, April 8, 2018, at 12:47 p.m.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Mr. Registrar, okay, and Commissioner. Thank you, Commissioner.

For the record, my name is Breen Ouellette, and I am a lawyer with the National Inquiry. It is my very great honour to introduce Grace Tait who resides in Vancouver. She has brought people in support who I will ask her to introduce.

MS. GRACE TAIT: This is Penny Kerrigan, my very best friend in the whole wide world and my sister from another probably lifetime. That's what my family told me when they first met her, and we've been joined at the hip since as my family.

One of my other best friends, Mark Handley, who I cherish for his kind words and his gentleness and his humanity.

Rodney Brown (ph) is my adopted nephew who's always there for me.

Kim Kerrigan (ph), who has been an amazing young person in my life is my family. I'm her aunty.

Anita McPhee, fearless warrior.

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

GRACE TAIT, Sworn:
MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Grace, would you start by telling the Commissioner about your mother and her life growing up?

MS. GRACE TAIT: I'm doing this for her. She was supposed to be here today. She's also a fearless warrior and my matriarch who is a beautiful human being to so many people in East Vancouver. Her name is Barbara Anne Tait. Her maiden name is Nelson.

We come from a lineage of strong Chiefs. I am Tsimshian. I am Eagle Clan. I have two other sisters and a younger brother. My mother comes from a family where our late grandfather, her dad, Medrick Nelson (ph), had two high-esteemed Chieftain names from Kitkatla. One of them is kept in the records of the University of Washington. His name is Jibisa (ph).

He never told us -- us kids, but I always wondered why people would stop him in the streets of Prince Rupert where I was born and grew up for the first seven years of my life and then I went back every year as a young person. That was one of the reasons, because he was a Chief, a high-ranking Chief, and I am his family, and I've always taken pride in that even though I didn't know that he was a high-ranking Chief. He just raised us with that -- the strength and the ability to be who we were and to be kind, to be generous, to be humble, and that's my
mom, and I wish she could have been here today, but I understand completely why she wasn't able to do this. I've always admired her, and I've always been her warrior. I try to protect her as best I can, all my life, but I understand why she couldn't do it today and that she trusts me to share our story to make sure that it doesn't -- it doesn't happen in our family again and it doesn't happen to other young Aboriginal, Indigenous, beautiful women and girls.

MR. BREEN: And would you tell us about yourself, your occupation and your achievements?

MS. GRACE TAIT: I'm a daughter. I'm a sister. I'm a mother. I'm a grandmother. Barbara Anne (ph) is my mom. Melford Emsley (ph) is my dad. Medrick Nelson is my grandfather, Jibisa. I have two children, beautiful children. I have two grand -- two grandkids, beautiful grandkids, and I adore them immensely, and this is why I'm doing this, for the child in me and to protect them.

I worked really hard in my life. I thought I was going to be an interior designer. I graduated high school, which was a rare thing for kids from the Downtown Eastside where I grew up. We moved here in 1973 so my dad could attend UBC; intelligent, articulate, smart man, and he entered into -- to be a teacher, and my mom was going to
be the stay-at-home mom to raise us because she was an awesome mom and caregiver and life-giver.

I have since entered into the nonprofit world for the last 25 years to work with women and children. Currently, I'm the associate director of the YWCA, Crabtree Corner, which I oversee. It's taken me a long time to get here, but that's out of the pride, my mom, who was a chambermaid in the '80s and worked really hard to provide as a single parent for us four kids just like her father did raising his six kids when they -- they tried to take my mom's family away from him as the meal-provider. The -- the church and his family thought a man couldn't raise kids after my late grandmother Grace, who I'm named after, passed away from tuberculosis, but he proved them wrong. He brought a house. He was a carpenter by trade. He raised six beautiful children. Three are alive today, including my mom, my Uncle John, and my Aunty Lorna. The other three died too young. Alcoholism, bad health. It affected our family, and I didn't know why.

My grandfather Medrick never talked about his experience in the residential school. He only talked about the positive things for us. He was an accomplished musician. He played -- he was a pianist. He was an athlete. He had trophies all over his house. He raised six kids on his own and bought a house when it was unheard
of in Prince Rupert for a First Nations, an Aboriginal, an Indian to buy a house. He instilled love in our family. He instilled pride. He instilled a great sense of self, and that's what I carry forward in my mom.

My dad's side, unfortunately, was much more dark, and I don't really have a connection to the Tait side at all because of that darkness, but I carry this name proudly and my accomplishments, my survival of being here as a young girl in the Downtown Eastside, as a graduate from Britannia Secondary, as a hard-working mother and then single parent, and a community member because I love my community in the Downtown Eastside, and I'm so grateful that I work there. I've met a lot of wonderful people in my life, and that's why I'm here, to help those that I've known in the past. Like Bernie Williams said, those sisters were my sisters, too, and I'm doing this for the children, so that we can help those children at the earliest we can so that they don't go through what someone like me has gone through, but if they do, there's good things. There's good things, and I have to remember that every day.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Would you tell us about your father's life growing up?

**MS. GRACE TAIT:** My father, Melford Emsley Tait, was from the Fort Simpson band, the (indiscernible
band name), just outside of Prince Rupert. He came
from -- he had another brother and two sisters, which I
learned later in life. We only thought there was one
sister until I was told a story by my late Uncle Don Smith
about the truth of my family.

   My late grandfather died young, but
apparently there -- the relationship was over, and she had
a boyfriend. My late grandmother, who I never met, I was
only shown pictures and told stories of, was murdered on
Christmas Eve when the kids were little. She was taken on
her boyfriend's boat, clubbed with a stove pipe from the
boat and thrown overboard. I think her perpetrator was
charged and sentenced. I don't know for sure. The family
doesn't know.

   My dad and his siblings were sent to our
other grandfather, great grandfather on the Tait side who I
can't even remember his name because it's so horrid what
happened to those kids. They were kept in the attic. My
late Uncle Don told me. Those kids, innocent, beautiful
kids, my family, were kept up there. They were starved.
They were tortured. He apparently would pour a
hot -- super hot bath and stare down the empty stove pipe
hole in the floor and watch them scream and cry out for
help, and no one heard them.

   I was always told by my late dad, Mel, that
I was named after his sister who perished in that room. He said her name was Grace Elizabeth. That's my name, Grace Elizabeth Tait. I found out at his funeral that his late baby sister, who was an infant at the time, was named Rosabell (ph). It wasn't Grace Elizabeth, so I don't know where that story came from, but I got the name. I always assumed it was because my grandmother and why my mom agreed to it because that was her mom's name. It's a family name. My Aunty Lorna is Lorna Grace. I have a little Grace cousin in Lorna's family because Grace is a family name.

Once the kids -- because it was apparent -- apparently that my great grandfather was mentally ill. He was abusive. He was horrid. The kids got taken away and placed in my late great aunty and uncle's house, which I understand and I -- I remember my grandparents, Rose and Robert. Rose died when I was a kid, and I remember attending her funeral and how sad I was because she was so kind. She raised those kids as if they were her own. My Grandpa Robert also did his best in raising those kids as his own with all his other children.

When he died, there was family fights, and they weren't -- they weren't considered siblings. They were told they were foster kids and they were only cousins, but they were raised as brother and sisters, and they stayed there until they were forced to go into residential
school, and they attended the worst one, Port Alberni, where -- they all received settlements from that -- I don't know the details, but because of what they suffered there, they were given quite a bit, as I understand. Us kids, his children, didn't receive a cent. My mother never received a cent.

What I understand and some of the testimony that was given by my family -- my late dad, Mel -- was horrific, and it helped me determine in my mind that the monster in my life -- my dad, my birth father, was the monster -- became a human being when I understood our truth.

He died in 2009. We hadn't had any -- any conversation with him or any pictures or gifts or -- nothing for about 17 years, and my grandfather predicted when he died that he would die alone, and that prediction came true. My dad was left in his apartment for 50 days before someone contacted me on Facebook to say and ask me if I knew where my dad was because no one had seen him since before Christmas, and I said, of course not, I would not -- I hadn't expected to see him or know any details about what his -- where he was or how he was, but I said someone needs to go check his apartment. Where is he living? Go. Send someone now.

And then my cousin Christine (ph) who I was
working with at the time came down to my office and told me that it was him and he was passed away, and it was horrific because he was there for 50 days. He was decomposed, and it -- the smell was overwhelming, and everything in his apartment was contaminated by dead body, and I -- I was cold. I didn't cry. Didn't think about the humanity in him. I was just, like, the monster is dead, but he wasn't a monster. He was a small child that deserved more and was loved. He was strong. He was educated. He was -- he was artistic. That -- that man was -- he was so -- so many wonderful things that in my lifetime I got to experience because I'm the eldest, and I try and remember those good days all the time because I'm trying not to hate him for what he did to us and our mother, his wife.

So I remember -- I always think in my mind the child Mel, and that's why I work with children and families today, so that my little friends, my children -- the children who I consider my extended family are protected, and if these things happen, I can help. I can be there, and that's why I'm in the helping field.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: When did your parents meet and marry?

MS. GRACE TAIT: They met in Prince Rupert when they were in high school. My mom's very beautiful, raised and protected by her dad, always -- always looked
amazing, her hair, her make-up, and they had to wear skirts in those days, so she dressed up every day and wore lipstick, which was not so cool in her -- her father's eyes, but she snuck it on in high school, and she told me about it.

She met my dad. He was an -- he was an athlete. He was slim, tall, dark, handsome, charismatic. She fell in love, and it quickly happened, and she became pregnant, and in 1996 [sic], I was born on March 9th, and they were married on the 24th, so I was at -- attended my parents' wedding. It was actually what they term shotgun wedding because my grandfather said, no -- no woman of that day could be a single mom and couldn't raise a baby on your own. It was just unheard of, and you had to show -- save face, and you had to be married. You had to. There was no other thing. So they were married.

What she shared with me later was that she never, ever wanted to get married, never, but she did it for her dad, to save face. She did love my dad, but at the same time, it was quick, too quick, and she didn't really know him, and her heart melted because she knew he came from a tough background, too, and they live with my grandfather. We all lived in my grandfather's house because they -- they had to find a house, so I -- I cherished that time that I had as a baby because he
protected all of us, and he had love to share.

The moment my parents finally got their first apartment, the violence began, and I know that from a young age. They say kids can't remember. I know. I sense -- I have flashbacks, and then he moved her away to come to UBC to get his education to be a teacher, and that's when everything escalated, the violence in the home. My grandfather, I could tell he didn't want to let her go when we moved because we were traveling down by train, and he kept hugging my mom. He hugged her so long, and she hugged him back so long that the train started moving, and he traveled to Terrace with us and had to pay for the ticket and got off in Terrace finally and let her go.

They talked all the time because she was close to her daddy, and Mel knew that. Mel took us away from that safety. He knew. Any love or the happiness that my grandfather instilled in his family and us was taken away from us because he moved us here to abuse my mother, to abuse us with his hatred and his violence and sexual abuse, the things that were instilled in him from his family, from the secrets no one was supposed to talk about, and from the residential school. The monster was born, and the monster thrived.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What is your first memory of violence perpetrated by him?
MS. GRACE TAIT: I remember it was our apartment. We had a couch and a chair. My mom was always busy. She was cooking, and my dad worked at the pulp mill, and he made really good money, and we had stuff -- we had -- I had -- always -- my mom dressed me up all the time, and I would trip and fall and ruin everything because I'm a klutz, and -- but we had pretty dresses, and she walked me around with the pram, the stroller in Prince Rupert like ladies do because our father made good money. He made really good money.

But with that came the alcohol because he had the money. He could do whatever he wanted and be -- and spend it however he wanted, and one of his choices was alcohol, and so he -- he did that, and what I remember waking up to, my little baby sister, Cheryl Anne (ph), was sleeping, and I remember hearing loud voices, and I remember peeking out of our bedroom and seeing her -- seeing my mom in my dad's hands being shooken. She was bleeding, and what I recall from that is he hit her with a rock on her forehead, and she called her brother, my late uncle Al Nelson who came to make sure she was okay and to warn my father to never touch her again or he would be dealt with by my uncle.

From that day forward, I believe everything was done in secret, the abuse to her became secret, because
he didn't want to have to deal with my Uncle Al or anybody in our family on the Nelson side, so he moved us down here.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** When did the family move from Prince Rupert to Vancouver?

**MS. GRACE TAIT:** I think 1970 -- '73, '72. Yeah. So we stayed with -- there was a place that the First United Church had a house on West 16th for First Nations families that arrived out of town to settle before they could seek permanent housing, hopefully. My late great Uncle William Robinson and my late great Aunty Doreen Robinson -- Nelson family -- ran, and it was amazing because I got to meet more of my Nelson side, and it was a big beautiful house, and I would play hide-and-seek with my big cousins, and it was -- we ate meals together, and we had conversations and laughter, and I didn't want to leave that place because that's how it felt, like, in Prince Rupert.

So when we found our first apartment, it was then when the abuse -- verbal abuse started to happen to us kids: You're stupid, you're worthless, you're dumb, you're ugly. And we believed it, and I believe my mom believed it in herself. She -- she stopped dressing up. He didn't want her to wear makeup. He didn't want her to dress pretty. He didn't want her to have her hair done anymore, and he controlled everything in our home with the violence...
and with verbal abuse, and later on, I learned sexual abuse.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: You said earlier that your father worked at a pulp mill. There aren't any pulp mills in Vancouver. What did he do when you moved to Vancouver?

MS. GRACE TAIT: He was a student. He had applied and received some funding to attend UBC, so he received -- our family received a living allowance and paid for our rent, but rarely any -- any extra beyond those -- the basics of the rent and the food and the utilities and the phone or the cable, we never saw anything because he drank it all. Any chance he would, he would buy whatever he wanted to buy for himself, and we went hungry a lot of the time, and we had the very basics, and I always commend my mom because I've never, ever tasted a fried rice like hers. It was wiener fried rice, and it was the best, and baloney ketchup stew was the best, and I crave those things as an adult because it's comfort to me because she made it with love, and she was a really good cook, so she always -- her best intentions were always to make sure our childhood was like her childhood: Happy, fed, loved.

So -- and my late dad was involved -- he got involved in Indian politics, so all they did was drink and drug and spend money and have sex outside their marriage,
have affairs. There was fights all the time. The politics were brilliant because they were fighting for our rights, but at the same time, it was torture for the families left behind. We were -- we were abused, and as I understand, hearing from other people, it's not changed, and I'm saddened by that. I'm trying to be a different leader, and the people I consider my friends and colleagues, the leadership, don't do that, but in that day, it was accepted, and it was supposed to be tolerated by the wives and the families, and the police did nothing to stop that. We were left to deal with the fallout if he ran out of money, and my mom suffered in silence, the abuse, because he hid it.

I happened to come home one day from school for lunch because I forgot to pack a lunch, and I brought my friend along, and I walked in. My dad and my mom were on the stairwell. We had a two-level townhouse in the projects, B.C. Housing, and they were rolling around. She later told me that she -- was the first time she actually hit back and kicked back and hit him. I was so embarrassed. I shut the door right away because I didn't want my friend to see that. I was a child. I never said anything about it. The police weren't called because I was embarrassed.

I think from that, that moment, my mom also
seeing me, it spurred something for the first time: I want out of this marriage. I don't want -- I don't deserve this. I think that's what's happened when I saw her, even though it was horrific for me, but I think that's -- she didn't want this for her children, never.

MR. BREEN OUELETTE: Did the violence escalate as time passed?

MS. GRACE TAIT: It did in secrecy because he knew. He sensed, so she would have even more bruises and never say anything. She would have cuts. The police would be there, and us kids, you know, would know, but not -- we -- we had no one to turn to. We went to our community centre, and thankfully, they helped us. We had sports. We had arts. We had photography. We had snacks. That was Ray Cam Community Centre. It saved our lives. The people there to this day who worked in that -- that centre for decades are my friends, my colleagues still. My little brother, when they built Ray Cam -- before Ray Cam, there was a place called the Sugar Shack where kids hung out, and someone burnt it down, so it spurred on the moms in the neighbourhood who stopped. The militant mom (indiscernible), shout out, amazing women in my neighbourhood who -- who along -- a lot of them since have passed, but their children are so proud, and I'm so proud of what they did. They helped create Ray Cam Cooperative
Centre because the Sugar Shack was gone, and my little brother, who was just tiny, had his picture taken in -- in the newspaper, and they celebrated their 40th anniversary a couple of years ago. He was the one that -- it was an empty lot, and he was the one that was shoveling the first construction on the empty lot that was -- he's the cutest. Everybody loved him. Chuck. Everybody knows Chuck.

(LAUGHTER)

MS. GRACE TAIT: His name -- his real name is Aaron Dale (ph). Still amazing man who's on the board of Ray Cam for several years. He was a youth adviser, did amazing things, helped create amazing things for other youth in the neighbourhood and for children and families. This is our family out of -- out of this abuse, hidden secrets, police, violence. Amazing people emerged out of this. My sister, Cheryl Anne, worked for INAK (ph) for several years. Brilliant mind. Highest security. Dealt with lots of dollars, and my sister Geri Lynne (ph), amazing mom, helped my niece when she had -- was diagnosed with leukemia when my niece was 2 and became a medical expert herself because of the teachings of our mom. Her eldest child, Nicole Tait (ph), amazing young lady who did the Walk4Justice with Gladys Radek and Bernie Williams because she knew a bit about her grandma's history and our sisters who were going missing and murdered in our
neighbourhood; just like myself, compassion and caring and loving, wanted to give something back to her community and to our family.

But this all cost us. Our family, our amazing mother is a two-time cancer survivor and a recent heart attack survivor. Her body is traumatized. She lives in constant pain every day from head to toe. She has to take heavy medications to even make it through the day, and I believe that is because of her body taking all that abuse through the years. She had broken bones; she had broken noses; she had scrapes, cuts, not only from my late dad, her late -- her ex-husband, from a subsequent boyfriend of hers years later who abused her in secret.

But we were fed. She worked hard as a chambermaid for my organization, the YWCA hotel in the '80s, and I'm so proud that I made her proud to become their associate director of that organization and managing and working for our community in a managerial position with high esteem and respect. She helped that, and she was so proud. She -- she created me, and this is the person that I am because of her -- articulate, beautiful, smart, educated, fearless -- is because of her.

The violence -- because he knew she was trying to walk away, didn't want him in her life, of course -- it escalated in secrecy. It became more -- more
bruises on her body, more police at our house.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Were the police helpful?

**MS. GRACE TAIT:** Most of all, no. We were kids. Who's protecting us? Who was there to ever, ever support us kids? Who was there to ever support my mom? And the police, because my dad could talk his way out of it, would let him go. You know, how many times did they need to be at our house? Our -- our family joke is, hello, Mrs. Tait, how are you today, from a police officer of several, and of course, she would say, fine. No one asked, and no one checked to make sure she was actually fine. No one asked, no one checked to make sure us children, us four, were fine. Never happened.

Through the -- through the years, the only person that ever made a difference from the police force when we were younger was Dave Dixon (ph). He became a human of the -- the human face of the police. Even though people have different opinions of him, he was our champion. He would actually listen to my mother Barbara and make sure that the perpetrator was arrested and taken to jail, and even though he would get out the same day, he did that -- he did his job, and he became a familiar face for my children when they were at day care at Ray Cam Centre because he became the human face of police and not having
us afraid and my children not being afraid because he visited them and he gave them stickers, and in the day care, those kids wanted to become policemen or firemen. The girls too.

(LAUGHTER)

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: When we'd spoken earlier, you mentioned something an officer told you and I think a bunch of kids that were in your neighbourhood. Do you remember what you told me?

MS. GRACE TAIT: I still can't recall his name. He was the beat cop in our projects, and he just drove his -- his police car around the project and yell things. You know, like, he wouldn't get out of his car for the longest time to actually get to know anybody, but we -- he -- he assumed all of us kids who were there were up to nothing but trouble. We were a problem. Even though we were just having fun, we were playing hide-and-seek or red rover or tag, and he would yell out of his car, you're all worthless. You -- you mean nothing. You're not going to be -- you're not going to be anything.

And that always stuck with me, and what I always remember from my grandpa's teaching is karma, and when I heard he retired years later, and in his retirement he went to go cut down a tree in his yard, and the tree fell on him and killed him, and I thought, karma. My mom
and I thought the same thing when I called her and talked to her about it, and she said, yeah, that guy wasn't a good guy. And we didn't have that relationship with the police who -- who never asked us except when Dave Dixon was there, he made sure us kids -- because that's how I got to know him in my teens. He'd ask me, how are you, Grace? And to this day, he's my friend and my colleague in the neighbourhood. He has pictures of the missing and murdered women and family members in his wallet -- he carries with him because he wants to find them and he wants to -- his heart is with the families, just like my heart's with the families. He knew what we went through, and he tried.

It's not perfect, but he tried.

 Mister Breen Ouellette: Would you agree with the statement that Dave Dixon is a good man?

 Miss Grace Tait: He's the best man.

 Mister Breen Ouellette: Did the law empower this best man to protect you as much as you needed it?

 Miss Grace Tait: No. I knew he got flack. I knew that the -- the mentality of the police back then, always has been, to this day, because I witness it in my job, as I was preparing for my testimony the day of, sent a woman who was abused, who was injured, didn't think -- didn't ask if she wanted to press charges, didn't ask if she needed medical attention, let -- let her abuser
go with the car, the phone, the money, and told her, go see Sheway. Sheway is our partner. They have specific criteria. They're in our building at YWCA Crabtree Corner.

Their -- particular criteria -- because their work is intensive with moms, babies, infants, and pregnant moms. She didn't fit the criteria and was left in our reception area in hysterics, and I helped her, and it infuriated me that to this day, as that child back then who needed help to now, 2018, and still no help and just sending and dismissing her; I helped her, I asked her, what can I do? What would you like to do? Are you okay? Can I see your injury? And stayed with her, and she was so appreciative and happy, and that's -- the people I work with made that happen, and the people who groomed me to be here made that happen. My mom made that happen.

The police aren't our friends. Had an incident with the RCMP. They're not our friends. That needs to be looked into, and it needs to be rectified for the kids, for the youth. It needs to happen yesterday.

We're failing them like you failed me as a child. It's still happening, and I expected better, and I thought that things would be better, and it's not.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** How did your father abuse you and your siblings?

**MS. GRACE TAIT:** When we moved here to
Vancouver, not only was our mom abused in secrecy, but he would call us names every single day: You're stupid, you're a dumbhead, idiot. He'd whack me on the top of the head: Stupid, do the dishes. We were like little slaves for him, probably what he learned from his abusers in residential school. He would be fake in front of people, so when our family came, he'd be the doting dad because he could talk his way around anything. The person who got the brunt of it all -- we thought when -- because he always talked about having a son, so my mom, of course, you know, was going to birth babies until she had his son. We thought that that would end. He would be proud. He had his son, our little brother. He ended up treating our little brother the worst. We just found out about it in our adult years, and my mom just found out about it a couple years ago and was heartbroken because she was working so hard, she didn't see this.

My brother is the most amazing man who takes care of Elders in the Downtown Eastside. He feeds them. He sits with them. He makes sure that someone is connected to them, I think, because of the abuse he suffered because he suffered the worst and never told us.

My sister says she suffered sexual abuse from him, but it hasn't been proven because she's never laid charges.
I know that I just felt less than, always in his presence, every day, but I was so in awe of his artistic talent and his incredible knowledge and the kind person he could be when he let kindness in, which was not very often, but I saw that in him, and that was my mom's family, again, the teachings, the grandfather who instilled in me that you have to be kind to everyone, even if they're mean to you. I saw that in my father once in a -- once in a while.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: You told me about another incident where your mother fought back on the stairs. Would you share that with the Commissioner, please?

MS. GRACE TAIT: It was the first time I witnessed the violence that was in secret for numerous years, but I saw her, and for the first time, I realized, she's actually fighting back, she's kicking him, and that's when I realized, and she told me that she was. She was tired of it, and she actually hit him, and he didn't know what to do. He stopped. He realized that this -- this was a different set of rules for him, and she was actually going to fight him back. That was a proud moment for her. That's what she had worked up all her life to -- to respect herself, to know that the strength in her and her courage was there all along, and she finally utilized it. It came
MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And so you said that she tired of the violence. What did she do?

MS. GRACE TAIT: She kicked him out. She told him, no more. She was paying the bills already. We weren't rich, and he never contributed to the household. He often came at times when she (indiscernible) after he moved out to eat our food and watch TV and lay on our couch when he wasn't supposed to be there because she didn't want him there, but he didn't listen, and no one was there to enforce anything. He even charged up his food tab at the cooperative store at Ray Cam without her approval. They let him because they didn't realize they were separated, but he racked up hundreds of dollars. My mom paid back and told them, don't do this again, so he couldn't, but he came down to our house anyway and ate our food. He'd walk in any time he wanted to, and she would tell him that and then go to a friend's because she knew she was safe there, but us kids were there, and we got the brunt of it. She didn't mean that to happen. She was seeking safety for herself, so us kids would always play out or go to the community centre to get away from him. That was our house, our food.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: After he was kicked out, did he attack your mother again?

MS. GRACE TAIT: Yes, he did. We don't
remember the details. I remember as a child, I woke up, and I could hear yelling, and I thought, oh, there's a party, they're dancing or something. I got up, and I heard crying, and I went to my door, and it was dark in our upstairs hallway, in our bedrooms, but I remember listening and thinking, something's wrong here. I hear -- like, it's -- it's too quiet from just the yelling that happened seconds ago.

So I creeped down to the stairs to peek and to see what the adults are doing. My father was standing over my sobbing, bleeding mother, holding a knife. I ran back to my bedroom, and I told -- because the younger siblings got up. I told them, go in your room, hide yourselves, don't let anyone in. Go now. And they -- they were half-asleep, but they knew, so they hid in their rooms, and I hid in my closet, and I remember that. I have to protect my mother. What am I doing in this closet?

I got out of there, probably within seconds after I sat in there and got up, and I went down those stairs, and in my best adult voice and my strength that I could muster, I behaved like an adult. I became a negotiator for our lives because when he screamed up at the kids upstairs -- us upstairs, he said, you watch out, I'm going to kill you too. I came down the stairs and acted like there was nothing wrong and pleaded to my dad, what
was he doing? I needed to call the ambulance because my mom was bleeding. I looked over and I didn't realize my late Uncle Butch, because he was trying to defend her, was cut on his hand and he was in shock. They were drinking together. They were just having quiet drinks. Her boyfriend at the time took out the back door and took off. Left her. That relationship didn't last. Coward, he is.

So I pleaded to not hurt us, to let me call the ambulance, which he did. I was shocked. So I calmly went to the phone and dialed 911, and the kindest most amazing staff member of 911 at that time answered and treated me so amazingly well on the phone because I was calling for the ambulance and she could hear my sobs. She knew something was wrong and immediately said, stay on the phone, I'm calling -- the police will be there, because his rule was, you're not calling the police, you're just calling the ambulance.

I then, while I was on the phone, pleaded with my dad to please put down the knife because I feared for my life. I thought I was going to die that night, but I needed to protect my mom, my amazing mom, and all the courage in me for my siblings, for my mom, came out that night, and I've been that person since. I never dealt with it even at my father's funeral. It wasn't until this Inquiry that I asked my mom if I had her permission to
share our story, to help those other women that are suffering through this and those children, to never happen again, to make the best world possible, for that child I left behind in that room at that moment. I was the most serious child after that: Shy, introverted, but smart and kind, but I didn't enjoy a lot of it. I was scared every single day for the longest time, and no one offered me or my siblings or my mom counseling or anything to help us through that. It was our family's strength, the love that our family shared with us knowing we went through hell with that monster.

The ambulance drivers who came: Amazing. The police officers came and actually arrested him. I was shocked. When I pleaded with him to put down the knife, he put it down and I kicked it under the sofa so he couldn't reach it, and then he went to look for his glasses and the police came and arrested him -- he -- my mom had to remind me because I blocked it out. The police came to the door, and she answered it or I answered it, I can't remember, and they asked us if everything was okay, and he was standing right there, and he said, everything's okay. I thought for that moment, he's going get away with that again and he's going to kill us, and thank goodness the police did their job that night and realized nothing was okay because the ambulance was there for wounds, and they arrested him,
finally.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What was the outcome on the assault charge?

**MS. GRACE TAIT:** We went to court, but before that, we had to meet with Crown counsel. Nobody explained to us. I was a child. Nobody explained to us what the process was. Nobody asked us what we wanted. We were told, you have to meet with Crown counsel. We thought we'd do it because we had to. To put that monster away, we had to. I was a child. It scared the living hell out of me to be at that table answering questions from a complete stranger who's the lawyer who didn't have an ounce of humanity at that moment, was dealing with a child who I could tell he utterly hated, without my mom being permitted there. I don't want any other child to experience that again. I answered his questions because my strength came out again. I was shaking in my chair because I didn't know if they were going to put me in jail. My mom felt the same way. It causes her anxiety. That's why she couldn't testify today.

We went to court. We weren't permitted in there for most of it because we were the witnesses, and I remember sitting up there when they brought me in after my mom testified, and she felt -- he was looking at her. He waved at her, and he asked her, how are the kids doing?
She was terrified, the process, and how dare he ask her how
the kids are doing, trying to make it look like he's caring
dad?

So when they brought me in and that mean
Crown counsel started asking me the questions and I sat up
there, and I could see the humanity in the judge. I could
see -- I could sense, I could tell, he knew a kid was
on -- on that witness stand, and the moment that my power
came out again was on that witness stand because I was
going to tell my truth to save my mom and us from the
monster, and I was powerful. I knew that at that moment.
I was strong, I was articulate, but I was a kid, and he
stared at me, and I stared at him back, and then I looked
down, and it took everything in my being to be able to be
strong and to stand up to that monster, to put him away,
and he knew that. He knew he was defeated.

So after a couple of questions, his lawyer
asked for an adjournment, which I didn't know at the time.
Nobody explained anything to me. We were having a time
out. That's what I thought. He came back, and my -- my
father pleaded guilty to the assault charges; not attempted
murder, not threats to us kids because us kids didn't
matter. Nobody asked us. I was a negotiator. We
were -- we were being held and threatened, and nobody
intervened.
My mom thought she would get justice. There was no justice in that. He got sentenced ten months. Our recollection is he only served three months.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Did you have any further encounter with your father after he was released from jail?

MS. GRACE TAIT: Because my mom was a hard-working chambermaid, she worked weekends, and we spent time with an amazing Robertson family who did respite to help her out, and so they would take us to things like camping and fishing in Chilliwack and around Hope where we got to be kids; amazing family that helped my mom out. They were her best friends in the neighbourhood. They just lived four doors away from us.

And for some reason, my mom can't recall, there was a visit arranged because for some reason our father was residing in Chilliwack. I don't know if it was a halfway house or that was the terms of his condition or anything, we don't recall, but somehow a visit -- because he requested a visit with his children, apparently it happened, and so the family brought us over to see him.

My younger two siblings don't recall very much of our father. My sister and I, that was her -- her perpetrator of sexual abuse among -- upon her, physical abuse upon us. I didn't want to be there. I think my mom
agreed just to stop him from harassing her, too, but she
thought maybe these kids want to see their dad, and she
didn't want to keep us away from our dad. I can understand
the thinking and -- as a parent myself, but none of us kids
were asked, and we went through it. It was the most
awkward -- there was not very much said. We just wanted to
get out of there quick and fast as we could, and we -- and
the family saw that, and we went back to our camp. It
wasn't long after that he moved back up to Prince Rupert
area.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And what did he start
doing when he moved up to Prince Rupert?

MS. GRACE TAIT: He had received his
teaching degree from UBC and was apparently looking for
work. I didn't know it at the time. It must have been
when he was in Chilliwack. He gave one last phone call to
my mother, and she never told me this until I was an adult,
that he threatened her over the phone yet again, and he
said, I need to move away from here, out of Vancouver area,
because if I stay here, I'm going to kill you.

And again, it triggered her and set her off,
hurt her immensely, scared her. She didn't share that with
us. She suffered that alone. She wouldn't tell her family
to protect them because her family would have been there if
she -- she told them. That's a strength in her, but that's
why her body is suffering today. We have all sorts of chronic health conditions in our family. It's because of the trauma. I understand that now.

So in order to take care of the trauma, I've done my own healing. This Inquiry is healing for me. This is allowing me to let go of that monster and find humanity in him again.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So in the aftermath of everything that you experienced, what impact has it had on you?

MS. GRACE TAIT: I'm thankful because you can't go back and change time. It's made me the kind and compassionate person that I am. It's made me the intelligent hard-working person that I am because I embraced, like my grandfather did, the best of residential school for him. Music, hard work, kindness, protecting others. People would come and up shake his hand, and I never knew why. I thought it was, again, as I learned as an adult, that it was his two Chief's names, but he protected kids, girls, in residential school from the abuse they were suffering. He stood guard. Medrick Nelson stood guard for those girls with other young men who were taught to protect our matriarchs, our life-givers, our mothers, our sisters, our aunties, our daughters, our nieces, and that's instilled in me. That was instilled in my mom. The
courage to go beyond that and to find laughter and the beauty in life is what I've discovered.

After a long time of being angry, suffering abuse of my ex-partner with his mental illness because I thought that was the best thing to do for our children, not seeing my worth and finally discovering it and finally becoming who I am today, was a long journey. My healing happened because of our culture. My healing happened because of the amazing people in our culture and our -- our neighbourhood, in -- in our circles that we work in, and a lot of us who have been abused and suffered are in the helping field. Kids from my neighbourhood who -- who suffered the same things in secrecy are the most amazing workers and have come back and are doing amazing things with other families, and I loved them. I love my neighbourhood. That's why I'm still working there. That's why I'm committed until the day I die to give back because that neighbourhood gave me the strength to be who I was today -- who I am today. A lot of mentorship from other women in the community because I was -- I delivered Meals on Wheels to the seniors' building starting at 11 years ago old, twice a week, until I graduated, until I was 18, and those were the most amazing stories I ever heard in my life; the militant moms, the Ray Cam Cooperative, lots of programs in the community that I still want to continue and
want the grass roots to be the leaders of that. That's why I'm back in my community to make that happen because it meant so much to those women. It means so much to me, the Aboriginal mother's centre and the founder, Penny Kerrigan, gave me that because the strength in women. Doing the research on the Indian Homemakers Association of B.C. gave me the courage to strive to be more than myself but to reach and reach and reach.

People like Viola Thomas, Jamie Lee Hamilton (ph), Violet Smith (ph), Babs Cane (ph), people at the community centre, Ray Cam; and my family, my children, and now my grandchildren have even inspired me more, being a nana. Proudest thing that's ever happened to me is being a nana. They're amazing, and my daughter's doing so amazing.

What I have to do more is for my son. Because of our history and traumas, my son is incarcerated, and I fear for him on a daily basis, and it hurt me and it -- said my hatred hearing that a non-Indigenous man was being given Elder support when my son can't even access that -- can't even access that on a regular basis. He has to work and make sure -- and please the highers-up in his prison to get the services that should be there for him anyway to help him to exit, to support him, to make sure he never ends up there again because of his trauma. He's a warrior. He helped protect his mother: Me. He loves his
granny. He didn't mean for this to happen. It's our trauma. He has a healing path that has to happen, but he's not going to get that in prison. We need to do more. We have to do more for our brothers and sisters incarcerated, [] and we have to now because they're dying. They're killing each other. It needs to happen now.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: For the benefit of the Commissioner, I think I might know who you're speaking about, but you said there's a non-Indigenous offender who had access to Elder support. Would you tell the Commissioner who you're talking about?

MS. GRACE TAIT: The killer of Cheryl Ann Joe, who was my sister's friend, who every day I pass by the spot where she was left mutilated and pray every day for her on my way to work. We weren't allowed to talk about her, her story, out of respect to the family, so yesterday was the most empowering moment from that amazing family I've ever heard, and that strength and courage and intelligence and diligence inspired me to hear what they have gone through and what Cheryl Ann suffered, and to know the Women's Memorial March stemmed because we had -- we weren't -- it was enough. I was -- there were so many memorials in the '90s. We were devastated. If it wasn't an overdose of bad heroin and the introduction of crack to our neighbourhood, people were going missing, people were
being murdered, women, and Rhonda McDonald (ph) was found at Crab Park, and they said to us -- she was our neighbour -- and to our family, that it was an overdose, and I still to this day don't believe that that was the case. She was a loving mother, a good neighbour. She was trying her hardest, and to this day, I don't believe that for a second, and that's what inspired me to come back and be strong for my neighbourhood, to help our women get to the place where they want to be, on their terms, with their strength and their gifts, because everyone has gifts. We need to remember that and help them find those gifts back and help them thrive in our communities.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you.

Commissioner, I'm going to make a unique request. I would ask for a minute or two break so that I may consult with Grace about a question that I choose -- I want to ask, but I want to ensure that I maintain a trauma-informed process.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Sure. So we have a little break.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Just one, two minutes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Thank you.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you.

--- Upon recessing 2:08 p.m.

--- Upon resuming at 2:18 p.m.
MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: -- Commissioner, may we continue?

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Oui.

MS. GRACE TAIT: Sorry.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Oh. There we go.

MS. GRACE TAIT: Hello. I just realized I didn't share the injuries my mom suffered.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Yeah. Yes, please. You alluded to them, but please. Please.

MS. GRACE TAIT: Yeah. My mother has a scar on her chin from being cut with the knife. It was a big butcher knife, kitchen butcher knife, and she wears it every single day of her life. I'm proud of it because it actually didn't reach her neck where he meant it to be, and he claimed that his alcoholic drink was drugged, which was never proven. There's no testing. That's his word. That was the monster in him. Didn't succeed in killing her or us. She wears that every day, and I see that as her survivor. The strong beautiful person she is survived. Every day, I'm thankful for that. She's my matriarch and my strength. Thank you.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And I have one point of clarification that's been requested. Which institution is your son currently incarcerated in?

MS. GRACE TAIT: He's in a federal
institution, a sentence of seven years, eight months, due
for early parole this year.

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

MS. GRACE TAIT: I share my truth for the
kids, for the children, I always have, to not have this
happen to any other child that I welcome into my extended
family in my neighbourhood and my home community, in my
home city, Prince Rupert, my village (indiscernible) where
Mel wasn't born a monster. It was created in him through
several things.

We need better supports now for kids. We
need to stop removing them from their homes and their
mothers and support them better because there's too many of
us. 63 percent of children in care in this province are
Indigenous, and that's inacceptable and shameful.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. GRACE TAIT: I work at Crabtree Corner
with our partner Sheway to ensure that mothers stay with
their children.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. GRACE TAIT: Our youth who are
considered aged out, we don't have aged out in our culture.
They're your family for life, and that needs to change, not
just to 24, not just to 29; commitment for your family for
Grace Tait

life.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. GRACE TAIT: In my neighbourhood, when a sister goes missing, I am out there looking. We need a better system. The Moccasin Mafia is getting tired of doing this on our own, going in to search in alleyways, in bars, being threatened lateral violence at us. That needs to stop. That's not our way. We need a better system to ensure those families are supported if they're looking for a loved one, in all our communities but specifically Vancouver, and I've just recently joined a board of directors of a policing office to ensure that happens.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. GRACE TAIT: We need options for families who are going through trauma because of all the trauma-informed work we're trying to do and being educated on to not cause any further distress on any child or family. That needs to be supported. There needs to be safe homes in communities all over Canada for our Indigenous families that are geared towards what they're working on.

I sat in testimony in support this week of numerous communities who are going through so much trauma. There's nothing there for them. Housing's an issue in every community. We need more housing, not concentrated in
one neighbourhood but spread out, that has us mixing with
every other neighbourhood and supported there to include
our Coast Salish hosts and their -- their history and
unseated territory here.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. GRACE TAIT: We need to be inclusive of
the newcomers to make sure they understand their history so
that they're not judging us; there's no assumptions. We're
not panIndian. We all have different stories, and that
needs to be shared throughout the country in every
community, through everyday care, through every preschool,
through every school, through every secondary school,
through every institution, mandatory, to learn our history
until we move beyond that, until we're healed, until the
healing work happens in our communities; and as the Elders
have said for decades, healing and wellness in our
community, that needs to happen today.

Every day in my centre, I see the amazing
strength, but I see broken, traumatized, retraumatized, and
their humanity comes alive with respect and dignity, and
that's not going to happen. As I shared with my journey,
healing and culture have to be in every community, and
there needs to be different options for those communities.
Places like the original Aboriginal Mothers' Centre
Society, Penny Kerrigan, the founder, of the first
Canadian, North American, Indigenous, needs to be in every community. The women, like the Indian Homemakers who birthed the Mother Centre, were all over this country and North America. Their history is rich in success in advocating and helping our communities heal, and that needs to be supported and not taken over by non-Indigenous. We need to create our own and leave it at that and respect our traditions and culture and our support of one another.

Therapies of all sorts need to happen for the kids who are suffering out there, who are in foster homes and are being traumatized all over again, being taken away from their families. These kids need options. They need to be paid for. They need to be asked. Those kids need to be asked. Anything traumatic like apprehension or police involvement in your home, or court, those kids need to be asked, no matter how young they are. Some way we need to figure out to make sure those kids are okay and they're getting the support they need, not like we suffered through when I was a child.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. GRACE TAIT: Our jails, overabundance of our population represented incarcerated without services or supports. How is anyone going to succeed after they're released, or do they end up dying in there, killing each other, on parole or serve their sentence? Who -- who is
responsible to do that, to make sure that they're tracked
and followed and supported to be successful citizens of
this world, without us and the culture and traditions that
they so desperately need and may not be ever offered
incarcerated? And supporting families. My family was the
first one in nine years of doing a community parole
hearing, requested it, never knew until I asked questions.
That should be every opportunity for any of our Indigenous
families, Métis, Inuit, to ensure they understand their
options, all options. Explain to them, walk through them,
support them, fund them. Us as a family, the first one in
nine years, the -- the staff were amazed. It was like
this. Families don't know that's an option. People
don't -- are incarcerated don't know that's an option, and
this is going to help them. Needs to be more of those.

And accountability, as we've heard other
survivors talk about their story, I'm in -- I'm so angry at
the fact that our B.C. Government has given this Inquiry a
condition into which coming into this community to not be
held accountable, and that's shameful. That's shameful.
All of you out there: Write. Phone. Ask. They need to
be held accountable. I, the child in me, needs to know --

(APPLAUSE)

MS. GRACE TAIT: -- in our family's case,
what happened. Why did you fail these children? Why did
you fail our mother? Shameful. If it wasn't for our communities bringing us forward and supporting us with all of this love, culture, tradition, kindness -- that's the only way we're going to get better. That's the only way -- I did this because I want to be better. I want to leave the monster behind. I don't want anyone else have to monsters, especially our children and youth. They are too important to us. That's why I'm being the best nana I can be. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: One more question.

What would you ask all Canadians, non-Indigenous Canadians to do after listening to all the families and survivors who have come to share their experiences with the National Inquiry?

MS. GRACE TAIT: We're your neighbours. We are not less than. We are important. We are worth. We are valuable. We are here. You need to help us to get to here. Every child and every youth in our community need to be where they need to be, and it's up to Canada to help that happen, all of us together. This isn't only about our -- our women. We care for everyone. We want everyone to be safe.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. GRACE TAIT: And that's why systems need
to be accountable. We need to challenge that in every avenue, and we can't do it without our Canadian neighbours, all of you.

(APPLAUSE)

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Thank you.

Those are all the questions I have, Commissioner. I will now ask if you have any questions for Grace.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Wow. I don't know if you see me, but my face is glowing. To see what people don't know, we -- I always do the same thing. I give tobacco, or I give a little gift for -- for families that come and wants to share their truth, so I was able to find the last, last little pouch of tobacco, who didn't really want to leave me, but it went, and I didn't have to say much. She told me how beautiful she was, how proud she was of herself and how -- so ready, I guess, and this is exactly what we want to hear. Women that stand. Women that are capable to say yes, this is my past, it made me who I am today, and -- role models.

I didn't know you. I've heard about you, True Bernie (ph), and I'm glad that we share, the four of us, the four commissioners, and I don't ask who will sit with me or who -- who will be with me, and it's a gift that I was the one. I see this as a gift. I am so blessed.
We started this journey a year and a half ago, and I won't lie to you. I am exhausted, very much, physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. But when I hear women, women like you, women like many other who spoke their truth, I feel so relieved, so relieved that the Government have no choice to change the way they do things with or without an Inquiry. I know we have warriors. I saw them, and I still see them, but because of the Inquiry, Canada see it. They see it, and even the world see it, and that -- for me as a mom, I used to say militant and activist, but I heard something beautiful this morning: Advocate. Makes me feel good that our mentors who said, we're tired, now it's your time to take the lead, and B.C., there's something special.

Yes, people know I have a son here, (indiscernible) son, with a beautiful daughter, but when I started with Quebec Native women, the first I -- the first women who extended their hand to my Franglais -- I didn't speak English those days. They were women from your territory. We connected right away, (snaps fingers) like this, that became my mentors, that said, hey, stand up, young Frenchie girl.

(LAUGHTER)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Your bonjour.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yeah, your
bonjour. So I can hear somebody's -- I know that laugh.
She's one of them.

(LAUGHTER)

COMMISSIONER MICHELLÉ AUDETTE: And she even taught me: Three things, Michèle, there's always three things. And we meet women, then we go back home.
We -- the heart is bigger but also bigger of concern and sadness because we don't want to leave people behind because of the expectation, but when I hear women and the women I saw who came here, I know that the fight is taking -- the people is taking care of that and advocating for that change, and all the words that you said about what needs to change, for me, it's recommendation, capital letter, very big; call for actions, very, very, very big.
And yes, I'm still being rocked by my dad and my mom, although I'm 46. I'm -- I'm their baby, so it's forever. You're right.

So we need to support family that -- until the end, toujours, toujours, that's for sure. I love your recommendation. I love all of them, and not only for Vancouver. This should be across Canada.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHELLÉ AUDETTE: So we have to
fight for this. We have to advocate. We have a momentum with this Inquiry.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** We don't know if we have an extension, but we'll be loud to make sure it happens.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes. We will.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** There's thousands of women that deserve to be heard.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Some people says, enough, we hear -- we heard enough. You look like Truth and Reconciliation. Thank God 7,000 people spoke at the Truth and Reconciliation. Maybe people -- more people should have done it also. It's not the number for me. It's to make sure that everybody's able to speak like you did. I feel so "yes" because of your message --

*(LAUGHTER)*

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** -- refreshed and, like, woo-hoo, yes, we can do it. So thank you so much.

Because of that, I would like to ask you, would you accept a gift for you and your mom?

**MS. GRACE TAIT:** Yes.
COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yes. A gift for you and your mom, and if you feel that the Inquiry -- it's human being that make this Inquiry alive -- that we're going to do wrong way or too slow or too quiet or too harsh, don't be afraid to teach us, to bring us back where we're supposed to. Bring your voice, your love and passion.

MS. GRACE TAIT: And I will do so respectfully.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Of course. That's what I love, even for some who are hardered, I love that, too, but ouch, but no, I know, I -- I felt it right away. I felt it right away, and next time I come, they know, the women, when I come here, I go -- have supper with them.

MS. GRACE TAIT: M-hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And I wish to see you again. I wish that our path and that I'm able to meet your mom. Yeah, I wish -- I wish that --

MS. GRACE TAIT: We'll make that happen.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Parfait.

Yoo-hoo. Another reason to come back to Vancouver.

(LAUGHTER)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And thank you so much, and I will ask the two beautiful women who started
the journey with me here in Vancouver -- everywhere I go, I ask women from the land, would you come with me and sit with me and support the women to reassure them that they are in their own culture, and they said yes. Since the beginning, they said yes. They didn't have lunch or didn't have break. I said, let's go, we have to go, and they were a little bit behind, but they were there.

(LAUGHTER)

COMMISSIONER MICHELLE AUDETTE: They were there, never complaining, ever. So it's normal for me that I ask them to give you the feather. Merci. And to your mama, (indiscernible). Oh, that's a cute one.

MS. GRACE TAIT: That's a cute one. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MICHELLE AUDETTE: And of course, of course, of course, of course, of course, the community is welcome to hug her.

(LAUGHTER)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible) all the words you spoke today. It's very special and very powerful, and for all that you've lived through and all that you've transcended. I think you've got some (indiscernible) your grandkids, hey?

MS. GRACE TAIT: Thank you.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you so much for all --

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Commissioner Audette, may we adjourn this hearing?

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yes.

--- Upon adjourning at 2:42 p.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.

Jenessa Leriger

April 12, 2018