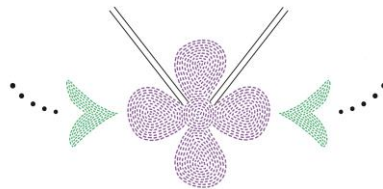


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Radisson Hotel, Ambassador A
Winnipeg, Manitoba**



PUBLIC

Friday October 20, 2017

**Public Volume 15:
Bernice Catchway, Wilfred Catchway, Mary Starr
& Willie Starr, In relation to Jennifer Catchway;**

**Sharing Circle: Marie Annharte Baker, Vernon Mann, Melissa
Cook, Sue Caribou & Forest Funmaker**

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.

II

APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	No Appearance
Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak/Women of the Metis Nation	No Appearance
Government of Canada	Anne Turley (Legal counsel) Amber Elliot (Legal counsel) Christine Ashcroft (Legal counsel)
Government of Manitoba	Samuel Thomson (Legal counsel)
Manitoba MMIWG2S	Angie Hutchinson (Representative) Leslie Spillett (Representative)
Manitoba Moon Voices	Tanis Wheeler (Representative)
Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Manitoba Inuit Association	Beth Symes (Legal counsel)
Winnipeg Police Service	Shannon Hanlin (Legal counsel)

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Radisson Hotel, Ambassador Rooms A & B (i.e. the two main public hearing spaces).

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Witnesses:

Marie Annharte Baker, Vernon Mann, Melissa Cook, Sue Caribou, Forest Funmaker

Exhibits: none entered

1 Winnipeg, Manitoba

2 --- Upon commencing on Friday, October 20, 2017 at 9:06

3 **MS. TERRELLYN FEARN:** Good morning,
4 everyone. My name is Terrellyn Fearn, I'm the Director of
5 Health and Community Relations. I wanted to welcome you
6 here, welcome you back those that are returning and those
7 that are just attending today.

8 We are on our final day of the hearing and
9 we have heard so many stories -- so many stories of sharing
10 of families and survivors. And, I want to share my
11 continued gratitude and sentiment to all the families and
12 survivors that have shared. We have heard well over 75
13 stories, stories of lost loved ones and survivor stories in
14 the past four days, and very grateful for those stories and
15 that sharing. I want to honour the courage of the families
16 and survivors in sharing their story, in sharing the truth
17 to ensure that some change happens for our women, for our
18 people and for those yet to come.

19 I'll start off with a few -- just
20 announcements and reminders. Lunch is going to be served
21 at 12:00 in the back as -- same as the other days, as well
22 as for the families and survivors up in the Family Room on
23 Floor T. A reminder that the fire is burning strong at
24 Oodena and if you need to go and speak to that fire, there
25 is a shuttle that leaves every 15 minutes from the Radisson

1 Hotel to Oodena and from Oodena back to the Radisson Hotel
2 as well.

3 I just wanted to mention, we had really
4 exciting youth workshops that was happening on Wednesday
5 and will continue to happen today. Jaime Black is working
6 with the young people over at the Oodena Circle on an
7 artistic expression project and they're coming back today
8 at 12:30 to finish up that project. They will be meeting
9 at 3:30 over at Oodena to have a dialogue with the
10 Commissioners on not only the importance of artistic
11 expression in this work with the Inquiry, but also its
12 role. So, we welcome you all at 3:30 to make your way over
13 to Oodena, they'll be having this dialogue with the
14 Commissioners prior to the closing ceremony around 4:00-
15 ish.

16 So, I just want to acknowledge --
17 acknowledge those amazing young people. If you haven't had
18 a chance to wander over there, they're pretty strong and --
19 and pretty powerful and have a lot to say, a lot of
20 wonderful things to say that we need to listen, so I just
21 want to share that with you as well.

22 I want to acknowledge -- every morning,
23 we've had our beautiful circle of grandmothers and our
24 Elders and our men grounding us with pipe ceremony and
25 water ceremony before we begin, and today we were honoured

1 with the presence of the little boy water drum, and I just
2 want -- a reminder to everyone that there are many, many
3 strong medicines and people holding us in good space as we
4 all do this work for all of us, for those beautiful
5 families and survivors, but also for all of you. For all
6 of you cameramen, for all of you translators, and -- and
7 the mic -- everyone. Everyone that is part of the circle
8 and doing the work. So, I want to just put a reminder out
9 there that as we hear these stories, you know, to -- to be
10 conscious and mindful of ourselves and to take good care of
11 ourselves as well.

12 So, we do have our Elders Room, we have many
13 beautiful grandmothers and Elders that will sit with us,
14 sit with you. If you want to sit in a more intimate
15 private setting, we have one on one, we have some
16 counsellors, Indigenous counsellors onsite, we have
17 spiritual, faith based individuals that are here to support
18 in many different ways. So, if you would like to know a
19 little more, just reach out to myself or one of the health
20 supports in purple shirts.

21 One of the things I just wanted to mention
22 is we have had so many families and survivors come and
23 gather over the past four days and we've had about 40
24 families and survivors register over the past four days to
25 share their story, and I just want to acknowledge the work

1 that everyone is doing.

2 In speaking with those families and
3 survivors, they shared with me, you know, that they were
4 hesitant about the process and they didn't know about it,
5 so they came, they sat, they witnessed, they observed very
6 closely to everyone that's involved and what's happening in
7 the process, and they shared with me that they felt
8 comfortable, that they wanted to tell their story. And, I
9 want to acknowledge them as well, because they're such an
10 important part of relationship and trust, and we have to be
11 mindful of this work that we're doing and the importance
12 and the time that it takes to engage in relationship and to
13 build trust, and the importance of coming together in
14 person, the importance of the community outreach to enable
15 people to sit together to better understand this process of
16 the Inquiry, the process of how to have their story told,
17 and the supports that are going to be available and the
18 supports needed for them to feel comforted and safe.

19 So, I just want to acknowledge those
20 families that came over the past four days, and survivors,
21 and decided to engage in this process because their stories
22 are so important to hear, and if we hadn't been present
23 here on this beautiful land, this Treaty 1 land, this Métis
24 homeland land, that those are stories that may not have
25 been heard. So, I want to acknowledge that as well.

1 family will be walked in. So, we will wait for them to be
2 brought in.

3 **Hearing # 1**

4 **Witnesses: Bernice Catcheway, Wilfred Catcheway, Mary Starr**
5 **and Willie Starr, In relation to Jennifer Catcheway**

6 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

7 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

8 **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers: Thelma Morrisseau,**
9 **Bernie Skundaal Williams**

10 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

11 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner
12 Audette, I would like to welcome the next family that will
13 be participating and sharing their story. I ask that the
14 Catcheway family now please come in.

15 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** Remain standing if
16 -- if you can. I'd like to say a prayer and acknowledge my
17 Saviour. I know it's been a long journey. It's been a
18 long time. We waited nine years for this day.

19 So, I want to thank the Lord. I want to
20 thank Him and give him time and give him reverence because
21 he's the one who made it possible for us to be here today.

22 So, I'd ask -- I know there's different
23 faiths and different ways of worship, but this is the way I
24 pray. So, I just ask you to -- just to pray for us,
25 because this is not an easy task we're taking on today.

1 Thank you, Lord Father in heaven. We thank
2 you, Lord, for this day that you've made. We thank you,
3 Father, for opening the door that no man can shut. We
4 thank you, Father God in heaven, we acknowledge you this
5 hour, this day. We ask you, Father God, for wisdom,
6 knowledge and understanding, Father.

7 We pray for those that are listening out
8 there, those across -- across Winnipeg, across Canada and
9 across the world today. We ask you, God, to just have your
10 way and that your will be done in this place. And, Father
11 God, we ask for change. We ask for change, Lord. We thank
12 you, Father. We ask for words of wisdom this morning and
13 that all would be done accordingly, Lord, decently and in
14 order.

15 We thank you, Father. Bless this -- this
16 time that we're going to be speaking. And, Lord, we ask
17 the blood covering upon each and every one of us. We give
18 you praise. We give you thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.

19 You may be seated. I'm not sure how we get
20 started. Is this my time to speak?

21 First of all, I want to thank -- like I
22 said, I thank my heavenly Father in heaven for all that
23 He's done and all that He's going to do, that's going to
24 take place here.

25 And, I want to thank the supporters of my

1 family that are here, that are sitting up here and those
2 that are in the back. I want to thank them for taking the
3 time to be with us today.

4 And, those of you that are out here in the
5 public here, I want to thank you for taking the time and
6 also for Commissioner Michèle Audette taking the time to
7 hear our story and our grievances today.

8 It's been a long, long journey. It's been
9 nine years to get here and to share Jennifer's story in a
10 public way. And, I know we've spoken about Jennifer
11 throughout the years, but this is a special day.
12 Everything is documented. Everything is going to be
13 documented, every word that we say and everything that we
14 do, so I'm glad for that.

15 And, like I said, it's been a long, long
16 journey, but it's not over yet, because Jennifer is still
17 not home with us. That's when it's over. It's not over
18 yet.

19 My name is Bernice Catcheway, B-E-R-N-I-C-E,
20 Catcheway, C-A-T-C-H-E-W-A-Y. Jennifer Catcheway is our
21 daughter. This is my husband, Wilfred. I'll pass down the
22 mic. Just your name -- you don't have to spell it, just
23 your name and who you are.

24 **MR. WILFRED CATCHEWAY:** I'm Wilfred
25 Catcheway. I'm Jennifer's father.

1 **MS. TAMARA SANDERSON:** My name is Tamara
2 Sanderson and I'm Jennifer's oldest sister.

3 **MS. MARY STARR:** I'm Mary Starr. I'm
4 Jennifer's older sister.

5 **MS. ALICIA TRAVERS ROBERTS:** Alicia Travers
6 Roberts. I'm friends with Bernice, Wilfred, Tammy, Mary
7 and the whole family. They're just like family to me.

8 **MS. RHIANNA ACOBY-CATCHEWAY:** My name is
9 Rhianna Acoby Catcheway. I was friends with Jennifer.

10 **MS. NATASHA ACOBY:** Hi, my name is Natasha
11 Acoby. I'm friends with Jennifer.

12 **MS. NAHANNI FONTAINE:** Good morning. I'm
13 Nahanni Fontaine and I'm a supporter for the Catcheway
14 family.

15 **MS. LESLIE SPILLETT:** *Wachay* (ph). I'm
16 Leslie Spillettt. I'm also a supporter for the family.

17 **MS. BARB ESAU:** Barb Esau. I'm a friend and
18 supporter of the family.

19 **MS. HANNAH SANDERSON:** I'm Hannah Sanderson
20 and I was her niece.

21 **MS. MERCEDES STARR:** I'm Mercedes Starr and
22 I'm her niece.

23 **MS. CHARITY:** I'm Charity and I was her
24 niece.

25 **MR. ISAIAH:** Hi. I'm Isaiah, I was her

1 nephew.

2 **REGIONAL CHIEF KEVIN HART:** Good morning.

3 I'm Kevin, and I'm here to support the Catcheway family.

4 **MS. SHEILA YELLOWQUILL:** I'm Pastor Sheila
5 Yellowquill, and I'm part of the family and here to support
6 them spiritually.

7 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** Thank you. I just
8 -- I was up 4:00 this morning. You know, I'm not one for
9 writing notes and everything like that, because I'm a --
10 I'm a reverend of our church, Harvest Call Ministries, and
11 -- and every time I try to write down notes and date, it
12 just doesn't work for me.

13 What I do naturally is I speak from my
14 heart, but I -- I have some notes that I -- if I have to
15 refer to them, I'll do so. But, I just want to speak from
16 my heart today, and I always have, and I'm not here to
17 sugar-coat nothing.

18 This is a real tragedy that's happening
19 across Canada for the murdered and missing Indigenous women
20 and girls. This is a real tragedy that -- that's ongoing.
21 So, I'm not here to sugar-coat anything.

22 Our nightmare is not over. Our nightmare --
23 the day Jennifer went missing, our nightmare started, and
24 it still -- we're still living that nightmare, and I just
25 want somebody to wake us up.

1 Jennifer Catcheway was our daughter.
2 Jennifer was a beautiful -- as you're going to see, we have
3 a slide after, that I want you to -- to listen to the words
4 of the song and listen that Jennifer was a real person.

5 We loved Jennifer. Her family loved her.
6 Her friends loved her. And, as you'll see in the slideshow
7 that, you know, we loved her. We loved all our -- we love
8 all our children, and I know you do, too. You love your
9 children. I wouldn't wish this upon anyone, the pain and
10 the grief and what we live with every single day, not
11 knowing where Jennifer is. I wouldn't wish it upon
12 anybody.

13 I don't have no enemies -- I don't think I
14 have enemies, but I wouldn't want to wish upon anybody what
15 we're going through, what we live. We go to bed at night
16 wondering where Jennifer is. We wake up in the morning
17 wondering where Jennifer is.

18 My husband here -- well, we're going to get
19 into that, but I want to just lay the foundation as to what
20 happened, what -- the question is, what happened to
21 Jennifer Catcheway? Where is Jennifer Catcheway?

22 We raised her. We raised her. I raised her
23 in the church. I raised her. Jennifer went to school and,
24 you know, just like any child, enjoyed her -- you know, her
25 childhood and just -- she was a good -- a good child, you

1 know.

2 And, I know us mothers will say, "My -- you
3 know, I have a good daughter, too." I know we all do. You
4 do, too. But, I'm a mom speaking for my Jen, you know.
5 And, I've also said, "Jennifer was silenced by someone,"
6 and now I speak for Jennifer. We speak for Jennifer, my
7 husband and I.

8 And, Jennifer, you know, was looking forward
9 to her birthday. Jennifer was excited about her birthday.
10 She's, you know, like every young lady or young man that's,
11 you know, going to celebrate their 18th birthday. She --
12 thank you so much. Jennifer was anxious. She was -- you
13 know, she's happy because her birthday is coming up June
14 19th.

15 And, you know what, my husband and I, we do
16 that to our children. We give them money, you know. Money
17 is money, whatever, \$20.00 or whatever. We just give them
18 money. They don't even have to ask for it. We're not
19 rich, but the little that we have, we give it to them. We
20 just give to the kids.

21 So, Jennifer says, "Don't give me any more
22 money, Mom." She said, "Don't give me" -- she said, "Put
23 it all and give it to me all at once on my birthday," she
24 said. She thinks she's going to have a lot of money then.
25 So, I said okay.

1 So, I stopped giving her money, because I'm
2 going to put it away, you know, for her birthday. And, I
3 said to her -- I said to Jennifer, "What do you want for
4 your birthday, my girl?" I said, "What do you want? You
5 know, this is your 18th birthday. What do you want?"

6 See, she had a boyfriend. She had a
7 boyfriend who loved her, and she said she loved him. I
8 didn't, you know, think too much of that but, you know, she
9 would get upset at me if I would -- if I would -- I don't
10 know. I'm sorry. Do I look at you? Do I look at you?
11 I'm sorry. I don't want to be rude.

12 And so, anyway, she says, "Mom, you know
13 what I want for my birthday?" She said, "I want you to
14 meet him." I said, "Mm." She wanted me to meet him prior.
15 And, I said, "No, no, no."

16 You know, like every mother, they want their
17 daughter to marry a police officer, or a lawyer or
18 somebody, (indiscernible), you know, like that. So, that's
19 what I wanted for my daughter and my children to, you know,
20 to -- someone that's going to look after her. So, that's
21 what I wanted for her. But, she fell in love with a young
22 man, and she wanted me to meet him. And, I always said,
23 "No, no, no, no, no."

24 So, for her birthday, she said -- I said,
25 "What do you want, Jen?" She said, "I want you to meet

1 him." I said, "Okay." I said, "Okay, I'll meet him." I
2 said, "What else do you want?" She said, "I want a
3 barbecue." She said, "I want a big barbecue." She said,
4 "I want my family, my friends, and I want him there."

5 And, I said, "Okay, we're going to do all of
6 that." I said, "What do you want?" She said, "I want
7 steaks." I said, "Well, we're going to get steaks, you
8 know?" For her 18th birthday, that's her day, we're going
9 to do whatever she wants.

10 So, we got -- I bought steaks and preparing
11 for her birthday that's coming up in June. June 19, 2008.
12 And, we got ready. I got ready for her -- for her
13 birthday. And, you know, it was on a Thursday. June 19th
14 was a Thursday.

15 I seen her Tuesday. Tuesday, you know.
16 She'd come and go. She'd come and go to the house. She
17 stayed with her friend down -- I don't know if I want to
18 make names, but with her friend here. She stayed with her
19 in -- in Winnipeg. She -- at home, Winnipeg, you know,
20 like that.

21 Anyway, Jennifer, she's -- my husband always
22 told us. He trained us that way. We've been married 34
23 years now -- 33 years, my husband and I, and we have three
24 children together. And, he always trained us. "When you
25 go somewhere," he said, "write down where you're going and

1 the time you're going to be back." Always. We always did
2 that. We'd write a note that say, "I'm going to be here
3 and I'll be back here." And, I still do that today, "I'll
4 be back at 6:00 or..." I still do that. He trained us
5 that way.

6 So, Tuesday -- Tuesday, June -- so Jen's
7 birthday was on the 19th. 16th, that was a Tuesday. I
8 seen Jennifer and she asked me, she said, "Mom, buy ice
9 cream." I said, "Okay." "Buy me an ice cream," she said.
10 I said, "Okay. I'm going to the store and I'll come back."

11 So, when I came back, she was walking away
12 and she said -- but that's the last I seen her, I laid eyes
13 on her. I'm just laying a foundation. And then I said --
14 she was going. She said, "Just leave my -- just leave my
15 ice cream in the fridge, Mom, I'll be back." That's what
16 she said. I laid eyes on her. I said, "Okay." I said --
17 and I went -- I went -- I went home.

18 I went inside the house -- if you find that
19 -- right here. This is the -- this is the note that she
20 left. I told you, my husband trained us to write where
21 we're going. And, it says, "My beautiful mother. I wanted
22 to let you know that I went for a walk. I'll probably be
23 -- I'll probably go to Vernon's (ph). Can you please put
24 my ice cream in the fridge in the basement? I love you so,
25 so much. X's and O's, Jennifer Catche -- Jennifer Leanne,"

1 she put, "Catcheway." So, that -- that was Tuesday. And,
2 that's how our husband trained us to write where we're
3 going and when we're coming back, always. So, that's
4 Tuesday. That's when I last seen her.

5 So, I'm preparing for her birthday. I
6 bought the steaks and we're getting ready. I haven't seen
7 her again, to lay eyes on her, but I knew she was around,
8 and I thought, okay, she's celebrating her birthday. You
9 know, she didn't come home.

10 So, Thursday -- I already had the steaks
11 marinating Wednesday night, you know, for -- to cook for
12 Thursday. She still didn't come home, but the phone rang.
13 The phone rang Thursday -- June 19th, Thursday morning,
14 between 9:00 and 10:00. I thought it was 11:00 until the
15 police, the RCMP, traced the call, that the call came in at
16 9:00. So, I thought it was 11:00, but it was at 9:00.

17 And then Jennifer -- the phone rang, and I
18 said, "Hello." And, she said, "Hi, Mom." She said, "It's
19 my birthday." And, I said, "I know it's your birthday,
20 Jen." I said, "I know." I said, "I'm getting ready here."
21 I said, "Where are you?" And, I can hear her head -- I
22 could hear her voice turned -- like I'm moving the
23 microphone (indiscernible) you can't really hear me, but
24 you can hear me now. That's how it went on the phone. She
25 said, "Where are we? Where are we?" She was talking to

1 somebody. "Where are we?" she said.

2 And, I said -- suddenly, I felt a pain in
3 the pit of my stomach with fear, unspeakable fear. I've
4 never, ever in my life experienced that pain and that fear
5 that I felt that day talking to her, and even after. I've
6 never experienced that pain, that fear that had gripped me.

7 And, I said to her, "Jennifer. Where are
8 you, Jennifer?" because I felt that fear. And, she said,
9 "Where are we?" she said to somebody. And, she said -- I
10 said, "Jennifer," but I was screaming. I panicked. That's
11 how I -- I react to fear. I'm not a calm person. I get --
12 I get -- I don't know why I get angry, but I get angry.

13 And, I said, "Jennifer, where are you?
14 Where are you?" I said to her. She said, "I'm in Skownan."
15 I said, "What are you doing in Skownan? What are you doing
16 there?" And, I said, "Jen." I said, "Jen, get home. Get
17 home right now, Jen. Get home." And, I slammed the phone
18 down. And, that's the last time. That's the last time I
19 spoke with her.

20 And, I, for years and years, I regretted
21 that. I regretted hanging up on her, but that was my fear
22 that took over. I said, "Where are you? Come home. Get
23 home, do you hear me? Do you understand?" I said, "Get
24 home," and I hung up and I never heard from her again. No
25 matter how many times I tell this story, it's like I live

1 that moment. It's real. It's real pain.

2 So, she never came home. That was Thursday.

3 And then Sunday -- Sunday, I'm getting ready for church
4 because I minister. I'm a reverend, an ordained reverend.

5 So, I was getting ready for church and I get a phone call
6 from a brother-in-law by marriage, one of the people of
7 interest that took Jennifer. I didn't know that then.

8 I got a call from his wife and said that
9 Jennifer was with him, and she started saying things that I
10 won't get into. And, I said, "No." I said, "No, it's not
11 true." I said, "Because if I would listen to everything,
12 every bad thing somebody would say about my family, I would
13 go insane," I said, "So, no."

14 So, that was 7:00 Sunday, because I knew the
15 time I had to be at church, so I knew what date -- what
16 time and day it was. That was Sunday. Thursday --
17 Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, I find out where Jen
18 is -- or who she's with, pardon me.

19 And then Monday, which was the 23rd; right?
20 Was it the 23rd? Monday the 23rd. I work -- I work for
21 the government. I've been working for the government for
22 20 years, and I'm still working today. So, I had to --
23 Monday, there was a knock -- I went to work and I -- still,
24 Jen wasn't home.

25 And, I came home at lunchtime. I was

1 scared, but yet, I -- you know, Jen is -- she'll come home,
2 you know. It never occurred to me that, okay, she's --
3 something -- well, you know what? She'll come home. That
4 was in my mind and in my heart. She's going to come home.
5 It's her birthday. She's going to come home. You know,
6 when she's done doing her thing, she'll come home. That's
7 what I thought.

8 So, Monday, I went to work. I came home at
9 lunchtime. It must have been just after 12:00 when I got a
10 knock at the door. And, I always keep my door locked at
11 home. It's always locked, you know. So, I look out the
12 window and then there's a red vehicle out there, with the
13 two people that were -- I find out later that were with
14 her.

15 And so, I -- he said, "Can I" -- he's
16 looking up at me because I live in a bi-level. And so,
17 he's looking up at me and he's saying, "Can we talk?" This
18 was Monday, just shortly after 12:00 because I was home for
19 lunch. Thank you. I was home for lunch. And, he said,
20 "Can we talk?"

21 And, I'm looking down and I said, "What do
22 you want?" "Can we talk?" he said. I said, "Yes, okay,"
23 but he was standing there by himself. The other individual
24 was in the truck. And so, I said, "Yes, okay." So, I went
25 downstairs, and I was already feeling nervous, my stomach

1 was turning. I don't know why I was feeling like that. I
2 just was feeling that way.

3 And, I opened the door. I said -- the first
4 thing I said to him was, "Where's Jennifer?" I said,
5 "Where's Jennifer?" And, he said, "Well, we dropped her
6 off." "Dropped her off? Where did you -- what do you
7 mean?"

8 Just when we were talking, the other
9 individual, just like moments, was standing right there.
10 Can you move -- move over? There's my son, Willy, I asked,
11 and my daughter-in-law. Just for the record, this is my
12 son, Willy, Willy Starr and his wife, Lindsay (ph). I'm
13 sorry for the interruption.

14 So then I said -- I began to -- to get upset
15 there. And, I said to -- he's standing there. I don't
16 know if it's right to mention names, but I'm trying to
17 avoid that. I don't want to mention no names, because you
18 already know in the papers and stuff like that, but I don't
19 want to mention any names here.

20 But -- so, I said to him, "Where's
21 Jennifer?" I didn't say that I was already panicking. I
22 said, "Where's Jennifer?" And, he said, "I'm sorry. I'm
23 sorry." The one man was saying, "I'm sorry." And, he
24 wouldn't look at me, but he was looking -- "I'm sorry, I'm
25 sorry."

1 I said, "For what? What are you sorry for?"

2 I said, "Where's Jennifer?" I said, "What are you doing
3 with her?" I said, "She's just a kid." I said, "Where is
4 she?" And then I said, "What are you doing with her
5 anyway?" I said, "You have a wife. What are you doing
6 with her?" I said, "She's just a kid."

7 "I'm sorry, I'm sorry," he said. "Where is
8 she?" "I dropped her off." "Where did you drop her off?"
9 "No. 6 Highway." "Where?" "Gypsumville Road." "Why?" I
10 said, "Why? She's a kid." I said, "That's all forest over
11 there. That's all forest. She doesn't know that place.
12 Why did you drop her off?" I said to him. "Because she
13 wanted to get off."

14 I said, "You know what?" I said, "Your wife
15 phoned here yesterday," I said, "and telling me you're with
16 her." I said, "I'm going to the RCMP." I said, "I'm going
17 to report you." I said, "You took her. You didn't bring
18 her back."

19 Just like a light switch, a light off and
20 on, his personality just changed. His -- everything about
21 him changed. When he was just saying, "I'm sorry, I'm
22 sorry," then all of a sudden, he was just changed and said,
23 "Go ahead. We have the same story." He said, "Go ahead."
24 Just changed just like that. And, that was it. They got
25 in their red truck and they left.

1 So, because I'm working and I'm only on my
2 lunch hour, I phoned work, and I said, "I'm not coming
3 back." I said, "Something's going on." I said, "I don't
4 know what's going on." I said, "My daughter is not home.
5 Somebody took her." I said, "I need to know what's going
6 on."

7 And, they said, "Oh, you know, take all the
8 time that you need." And, you know, I have a very good
9 employer, employer that are -- they're very understanding
10 and have been throughout my employment and, you know, the
11 last nine years. And so, I said, "Okay, you know, I'll be
12 back. I'll call," I said. She said, "You do that."

13 So, at the time, I didn't know what to do.
14 I was distraught. I was panicking. I didn't know what to
15 do. Where is Jen? My husband wasn't home at that time.
16 So, I went to the police. I went to the RCMP. That was
17 June 23rd. I went to the police, to the Royal Canadian
18 Mounted Police in Portage la Prairie detachment. That's
19 where I went.

20 I said, "I want to report my daughter
21 missing," I said to this constable. I forget his name. I
22 know I had his name, you know. And, I said, "I want to
23 report my daughter missing." I said, "She didn't come
24 home." I said, "Her birthday was on Thursday." This was
25 Monday, I went.

1 And, he said, "Oh, what's her name?" I
2 said, "Jennifer. Jennifer Catcheway." "Oh, how old is
3 she?" Like that. That's how he spoke to me. "How -- how
4 old is she?" I said, "She just turned 18 Thursday, her
5 birthday." "Oh, give her a week. She's on a drunk." I
6 said, "You don't even know her to talk to her [sic] like
7 that -- about her like that. You don't know her." He
8 said, "Oh, give her a week. Give her a week."

9 I left. I didn't know what to do. I just
10 left, no statement, no nothing. I was in shock. I didn't
11 know what to do. My daughter, right there when I lost it,
12 my brain, I don't know what happened. I don't know. Maybe
13 it was just my way of coping, but I lost my memory for
14 three months.

15 I had people coming up to me and said,
16 "Remember talking to me? Remember?" I said, "I don't
17 remember." I said -- I couldn't eat. I couldn't sleep
18 because Jennifer -- I said, "I don't know if Jennifer is
19 eating. I don't know if she's drinking. I can't." I felt
20 so guilty because I felt it was unfair for me to eat or
21 drink, because I didn't know what -- if she was eating. I
22 said, "I can't eat."

23 So, I didn't know what to do. Nobody was
24 listening, because we went -- we went to the -- back to the
25 detachment Monday, Tuesday, and I think it was Wednesday we

1 went. No RCMP came out to hear me or to take a statement.
2 The woman behind the desk said, "I'll give them your
3 message." Nobody came out, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. I
4 didn't know what to do. I don't know where -- what do I
5 call? What do I do? I don't know. So, I have my -- I
6 went through my -- we started documenting, not right away,
7 but a little bit here and there.

8 June -- when -- when Jen went missing, that
9 was the 23rd I went to report her missing. June 25th, I
10 think it was Wednesday. June 25th, I went. My son-in-law,
11 Darryl Sanderson and I, we -- we made posters and we went
12 all over. We went to Dauphin, Swan River, all those areas.
13 We went to the bars posting posters. "Where's Jennifer?"
14 I didn't know -- I just didn't know what to do.

15 I think it was on June 26th when I came
16 home, there was still nothing done. I went -- Darryl and
17 I, we went to Yellowquill Road, our highway, all the way to
18 the west of Swan River, Easterville -- not Easterville. We
19 didn't go that far. We went through Skownan, Rock Ridge,
20 posting posters and asking -- I've been asking, pounding on
21 doors on people that I knew, "Do you -- have you seen Jen?
22 Did you see her around here?" I said, "I haven't seen --
23 she's missing," I said. "No, we haven't seen her. We
24 haven't seen her."

25 So, we went through No. 6, because he said

1 he dropped her off on No. 6, so we went down No. 6. And,
2 the very last road, the very last -- at the end of the
3 road, there was a house there. So, I went to that house
4 and I said, "Here's a poster." I said, "My daughter is
5 missing." I said, "If you hear anything, the individual
6 said that they dropped her off here on the road, on the
7 highway, right -- right here." I said, "If you hear
8 anything, or notice or see anything," I said, "Call me,
9 please." I said, "My number is on the poster." She said,
10 "I will."

11 So, that was Wednesday. On the -- I don't
12 want to get my dates wrong. I have it here on the --
13 because June 26, 2008, I spoke with -- I phoned -- because
14 I didn't know what to do, I phoned -- nobody was listening.
15 So, I phoned Southeast -- Southeast -- I don't even know
16 what it's called. It was Southern Chiefs, I think it was
17 called. I don't know why them. I don't know. That was
18 just a num -- that's who I thought of.

19 I picked up the phone there and a lady
20 answered the phone. And, I said, "I don't know who I --
21 who I'm talking to. I don't know what to do. My daughter
22 is missing. The police are not doing anything. They're
23 not taking my statements. What do I do?"

24 I learned later on, her name was Nahanni
25 Fontaine. I had no -- didn't know where this was taking

1 us, just that I spoke with her that day. She said she was
2 upset on the phone. I said, "Nobody -- I don't know what
3 to do," I said. "I'll call you back," she said. I don't
4 know what was said on the phone and she was so upset.

5 She said, "Bernice, this thing I want you to
6 do." She said, "Start to journalize everything, the people
7 you talk to, their names, the places, phone numbers. If
8 you talk to the RCMP, get their badge number. Start
9 journalizing everything." And, that's what we did right up
10 until today.

11 As you see, my husband was walking in with a
12 camera, because that's what he does. He sleeps with that.
13 I'm not kidding, because we get -- we got calls over the
14 nine years, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00 in the morning. Right
15 away, the camera, every time we speak to somebody. We've
16 got tons of footage, of video footage. We have statements.
17 We have -- every time we spoke to somebody in authority, we
18 have it documented, because that's what we were told to do.
19 And so -- and so this -- that was Wednesday.

20 Time went on. Just within a week or a week
21 or two, a lady called, the same lady at the little house in
22 the corner. She said, "I want you to know," she said, "My
23 son-in-law lives with this girl in -- in this little town
24 here, and they're -- those two individuals were there
25 burning clothes."

1 And, I said, "Okay," I said, "I'm going to
2 call the RCMP. Do you mind?" "No," she said. I called
3 the RCMP in Gypsumville. I think I have his name here. I
4 don't even know if I should say his name, but I called a
5 detachment there. And, you know what he said? "Oh, I know
6 her, Mrs. so-and-so. I know her. She's a drunk. Don't
7 believe her. You can't believe anything she says because
8 she's a drunk. I wouldn't listen to her." That's what he
9 told me.

10 I was shocked because this is a -- this is a
11 little ray of hope that -- you know, a little ray of
12 sunshine through this woman telling me that these two
13 individuals are burning their clothes not too far away from
14 that -- that junction where they said they dropped her off.
15 And, it just -- I said, "What?" "Oh, don't, don't, don't,
16 don't pay attention to her. She -- half the time, she
17 doesn't know what she's talking about." That was a week or
18 so later.

19 And then she said, "They were there on
20 Sunday, burning clothes." My husband wasn't home. He was
21 out. So, I -- I got in my vehicle when I -- I knew the
22 house. I knew who they were talking about. I got in my
23 vehicle. I drove over there. I said, "Were they here?"
24 "Yes." "Were they burning?" "Yes." "Where?" "In the
25 back." I said, "Can I go and see it?" "Yes." They took

1 me to the back. There's burnt material in the back there.
2 And, I said, "Have the police been here?" "No." I said,
3 "Did they come here at all?" "No."

4 And, I have a video-camera and I'm taking
5 pictures. I'm taking -- "No," she said. And, it was three
6 weeks or was it three -- three weeks to a month or -- if
7 not longer, then the Forensic team came and took the dirt
8 from there, that long. I took pictures weeks before they
9 got there.

10 When we -- when we -- we started our own
11 investigation right away with my husband. We got -- we got
12 it all together. Okay, we've got to -- we've got to, you
13 know, backtrack, "Where was Jennifer? Who was with
14 Jennifer?" We did all that. I said, "There's got to be --
15 there's got to be gas -- gas -- gas receipts where they had
16 to have gassed up. There's got to be gas" -- we did our
17 own investigation because I didn't -- I didn't know what
18 the RCMP were doing. I've never heard from them, so we
19 went on our own.

20 I said, "There's got to be gas receipts.
21 There's got to be signatures somewhere." There's got to be
22 -- there's video-cameras along the businesses on No. 6
23 Highway. There's gas stations. There's -- there's
24 Pinaymootang Gas Bar. There's Powderhorn and there's
25 Ashern. There's Nosehorn. There's -- up the St. Laurent,

1 there's cameras all along the way. I said, "Did they
2 not..."

3 Three months later, Powderhorn Gas Bar, the
4 individuals called us, "We have some footage here if you
5 want to come and see it." I said, "What?" "Yes, with --
6 of those individuals gassing up." Three months later. I
7 said, "Okay, I'll" -- we got in our vehicle right away. We
8 went over there. And, they're showing us on the computer,
9 a video of them gassing up there and the time.

10 Well, we won't get into that. I'm not here
11 to lay down a case or -- you know, I'm not trying to lay
12 down a case. I want you to understand, and I want the
13 public and Canada and the world to know how we were failed,
14 how Jennifer was failed. The RCMP failed her. How? You
15 say, "How?" They didn't take my statement. They didn't
16 take me seriously. (Indiscernible) I know I'm being turned
17 down there.

18 Time is of the essence when somebody goes
19 missing and reported somebody missing. Time is crucial.
20 There's no time to say, "Oh, give her -- give her time.
21 She's on a drunk. She'll be back." Who is he to make an
22 opinion like that?

23 We went to Powderhorn. Here, we see the
24 individuals gassing up. Why am I saying that? Because
25 that's crucial information that was still on the computer,

1 that was still the RCMP that didn't pick it up yet. I took
2 video footage. I said, "Did they come here yet?" "No.
3 It's still here." I could go on and on and on of reports
4 of what they haven't done.

5 We went through -- we excavated three or
6 four dumps? Four dumps. We went to the lakes because of
7 rumours. We excavated four dumps. We went to the
8 mountains, to the valleys, to the rivers. We went to the
9 cemeteries to look for Jennifer. Then, we went to Grand
10 Rapids. Thirty days, we -- there was a story that came out
11 that Jennifer got murdered in Dakota Tipi. That was
12 information that was brought to us from the local leaders
13 -- or I should say leader. So, we stayed there 30 days
14 searching for Jen.

15 We left -- we left Portage. When we
16 couldn't find nothing, we left there. We went -- we walked
17 from No. 6 all the way to Grand Rapids. It took us 30
18 days. We walked every site, on every -- on every road. We
19 did -- we just took our time. We put bottles when we were
20 done. (indiscernible) water bottles on a branch, just to
21 let the people know that are coming, we've -- we've already
22 searched this area.

23 We took 30 days to get over there. When we
24 got over there, we found out where Jennifer was with these
25 individuals, and there was partying there. I went to the

1 individuals -- well, first, we got to Grand Rapids. RCMP
2 come and met us. He was in a truck. I introduced myself,
3 who I was, and my husband, and our searcher search party.

4 I said, "Did you take a statement?" "No."
5 I said, "You never took a statement?" "No." I said,
6 "Thirty days ago, my daughter went missing from here, Grand
7 Rapids. She was last seen here in Grand Rapids and you
8 never took a statement?" "No." I said, "Why not?" "I
9 never got word. I never got permission" -- or I don't know
10 what the word he said -- I don't know what word he used
11 that -- "I never got confirmation to take a statement" or
12 "permission", whatever you want to -- I said, "Thirty days
13 passed and you never took a statement?" "No."

14 We went to where the party was and we talked
15 to the individual, the owner or caretaker or whatever he
16 was there. And, he said, "Yes, they were here. I seen
17 her," he said. "She was sitting right there, a beautiful
18 girl." I said, "Yes, she was beautiful. What was she
19 wearing?" And then he described what she was wearing.

20 And, he said, "She was just sitting there.
21 She didn't look like she was in trouble or nothing," he
22 said. "She was happy." I said, "That's Jennifer," because
23 that's how Jennifer was.

24 So, we -- we searched there. We -- we
25 searched there. We went to the people. We -- we took

1 statements. I've got the statements. I've got footage of
2 every individual that I spoke with, that the police never
3 spoke with.

4 I want to speed it up. I want to speed up a
5 bit to what's important to me, what's important to my
6 children and my husband, is that the RCMP failed her. We
7 started digging into who was who and what were they doing,
8 what time. We got a time frame. We got all of that. I
9 went to -- we spoke with them.

10 We weren't -- we weren't going to say -- you
11 know, we got tired of she said, he said, three other
12 people, but the fourth person said -- no, we went straight
13 to the individual. Now, we got tired of going between two,
14 three, four people. We're going to go and speak to whoever
15 said what. That's what -- that's what we started doing.

16 I was so -- we went -- we were going through
17 -- I'm going to speed it up to seven years. We had --
18 according to the RCMP, because I had somewhat of a
19 conversation with a certain detective that was on our case,
20 and nothing moved, nothing. I talked to the RCMP. We gave
21 them information. We gave them whatever bones that we
22 found.

23 And, you know what? I'm not a pathologist.
24 I don't know what -- what's a human bone and what's not.
25 What we -- I do now. We work with one now. But, I didn't

1 know what bones we were finding and, you know, the searches
2 that we were -- were taking.

3 So, I said to the corporal that was on our
4 case. It went on and on. And, you know, there was no
5 communication at all whatsoever between us unless I called,
6 unless I phoned. This was years later.

7 In the beginning -- I've got it documented
8 that, yes, there was communication, there was when -- when
9 they finally -- on June 28th, that's when the investigation
10 started. There was -- I have the name of the head officer
11 that took Jen -- finally took Jen's case. I have it
12 documented here. These are mine from nine years ago. I
13 finally got -- he finally took our case June 28, 2008.

14 So, anyway, nothing flowed. Nothing, no --
15 according to when we give information, whether we're in
16 Grand Rapids, it has to go to Winnipeg D Division. Whether
17 we're in Swan River and we find something, it has to go to
18 "D" -- to the office. Every -- nothing -- nothing moved,
19 nothing flowed, only had to go through this one individual,
20 this one corporal. I don't want to name his name.

21 And then people will say, "Well, you should
22 have named his name"; right? But, I'm here to share. I'm
23 not mean. I'm not vindictive. I'm not like that. I just
24 want the world to know that they failed my Jen.

25 So, I was -- we never gave up. We never

1 rested. I work. I work. When I'm working here in
2 Portage, right after work, my husband has the shovels. He
3 has the truck loaded. We're going. We go up -- nobody
4 knows that. Even up until today, we'll get to that, we're
5 out searching every day.

6 We spent one whole summer, last summer. One
7 whole summer in the back of Dakota Tipi. One whole summer.
8 Nobody knew that. We found bones. Anyway, seven years
9 later, we had -- the RCMP gave me -- these are the three
10 people that are -- or five people, or I should -- maybe.
11 Maybe ten people at the most, people of interest.

12 And, we spoke to them, every one of them,
13 and they all said, "Oh, we didn't have nothing to do with
14 it. I never met her," and things like that. And, you
15 know, that's -- that's their story and they're sticking to
16 it.

17 So, I was frustrated one day. I was bug
18 eaten. I don't know how many times I got poison ivy. I
19 was bitten by bugs, walking in swamps. Fall, we went -- we
20 would search right till the snow falls.

21 One day in Ashern, we were searching a field
22 because of tips and rumours. We went to this field in
23 Ashern. It was cold. I was cold. I was going in a ditch.
24 And, we had hip waders on, me and my husband. And, I fell
25 in the water, and he was across, going on the other --

1 doing the other ditch, and I was on this ditch. And, I
2 fell in the water, and the water went in my hip waders.
3 And, I said, "Will." I said, "I fell. Come and help me
4 because I" -- that thing got heavy and it was cold. I was
5 frustrated.

6 Summertime comes, the heat -- the heat and
7 the bugs, and the mosquitoes, and going through the swamps
8 and these bugs, and there's water snakes. There's mice.
9 There's all kinds of things in the nature out there that I
10 -- you know, I tried to be strong. I see a snake. I'm
11 going to go anyway. I was hot and I was tired.

12 And then the phone rings. And, I said,
13 "Hello." And, he said, "This is so-and-so." And, I said,
14 "Hello." And, he says, "Can you, Bernice" -- he said, "If
15 you can, can you set up a time for -- I want to take a lie
16 detector test," seven years later. "I want to take a lie
17 detector test." He said, "I'm tired of being pointed at or
18 looked down at, in my community."

19 And, I -- but I've been talking to him
20 prior. That wasn't our first conversation. We'd been
21 talking through the years, this individual. And, he said,
22 "Can you make arrangements? I want to take a lie detector
23 test." I said, "Really?" "Yes," he said. "I'm going to
24 prove it to you. I'm going to -- I had nothing to do with
25 it. I'm going to" -- I said, "Okay, fine."

1 I phoned the corporal -- oh, no. Not right
2 away. And, I said -- he said, "If I'm such a suspect, how
3 come no RCMP talked to me in seven years?" I said, "What?"
4 He said, "No RCMP come and knock on my door to come and
5 question me." I said, "Seven years?" "Seven years." I
6 said, "I'll call you back," I said.

7 I called the corporal. I called him right
8 away. I said, "What are you doing? What are you doing?"
9 I said, "I just got a call." I said, "And, this -- you --
10 your suspect called me and asked for a lie detector test
11 that you haven't so much as spoken to him in seven years."
12 And, he said, "Well -- well, not -- not officially."
13 That's his words to me. And, yet, for seven years, he had
14 him as a -- he said, "Oh, I wouldn't give up on him yet."
15 He said, "Don't let it go yet. Just keep, you know, doing
16 what you're doing," and all that. He said, "I've spoken to
17 them and I talked with them and they're a little fishy.
18 They're a little" -- when, in fact, they never even spoke
19 to them. They never approached him in seven years, none of
20 them.

21 That's I -- right from -- my husband, right
22 from Day One, when I went to go and report Jennifer
23 missing, he lost all faith in the RCMP and up until today.
24 That was such a blow to me.

25 When, you know, you work, you're trying to

1 trust these people that are in authority. They're there to
2 protect and to serve and, you know, to be on your side,
3 because these are criminals or whoever they are. And, he
4 says, "They never talked to me in seven years. Can you do
5 that for me?"

6 Last April, April 4th -- April 4th. This
7 past April 4th here. He said, "Oh, they called" -- he
8 called me again. He said, "Oh, we're set up for a lie
9 detector test," he said. I said, "Well, good for you."
10 "I'm going to do this for you," he said. I said, "No, you
11 don't do nothing for me. Do it for yourself."

12 So, he -- he went. And, "I'll call you
13 back." He was so arrogant. "I'll call you back." He
14 said, "I want to show you I had nothing to do with this.
15 I'll call you back. I'll call you back," he kept saying.
16 No call. April, May, June, July, August, September,
17 October, seven months. He's never called me since when we
18 had contact. So, I phoned the corporal. I said, "Tell me
19 the results." I said, "I heard that he told me -- he
20 phoned me and said that he took the lie detector test." I
21 said, "Tell me the result." "Oh, I can't. I'm bound."

22 I said, "But you told me the results of
23 those two females. You told me that they -- they passed
24 those." I said, "What's the difference? Tell me," I said.
25 And, he said, "Find out from them." And, I will find out

1 from them. That was a few years ago.

2 This last dump that we did in Dakota Tipi
3 First Nation -- we did a dump again. Twice, we went back
4 there and twice we did -- excavated the dumps. I'm telling
5 you, that's the worst. We did one, and the first one was
6 in Grand Rapids. The second one was in Portage la Prairie,
7 the city dump. A huge city dump. You'll never find
8 anything in there, unless it's, you know, laid out by a map
9 as to time -- the dates were dumped there. And then we did
10 Dakota twice.

11 And, this last time, I was so sure we found
12 her. On the slide show, you'll see a helmet with my
13 children and my family, and our -- there were -- it's the
14 worst thing a parent or anybody can go through to find your
15 -- to try to find your child in a garbage dump where it
16 stinks, because there's rawhides and everything. It's a
17 garbage dump.

18 At one point that the bucket went in and I
19 thought it was her head. I went to stop them, and I
20 screamed, and I said, "Stop." I went -- I went running and
21 told them to stop because I thought that was her head.
22 And, I went running, and it was a helmet that was covered
23 in black, whatever it was under, but I thought it was her
24 head. And, I would have took that. I would take anything.
25 I'd take anything from Jennifer.

1 Throughout the years, we found bones.
2 That's hard. At one time, we found, kind of, a piece of a
3 pelvic bone out in Swan River on the highways there,
4 because that was one of the routes they said they took. It
5 was, kind of, a piece of a hip bone or the pelvic bone.
6 And, I took it.

7 And, we searched. My husband and I, we
8 searched. We just -- it's just non-stop. If I'm not
9 working, then we're out searching. And, I had that pelvic
10 bone. And, we got a room, I said, "I'm exhausted. I'm
11 tired," I said. So, he said, "Let's go to Swan River." He
12 said, "We'll rest for tonight. We'll start again in the
13 morning."

14 So, we did, and I took that hip bone and I
15 put it on the dresser. I said, "I don't know if that's
16 you, Jen. At least, we get to sleep with you one more
17 time," I said. So, maybe -- they may think that's crazy,
18 but that is my little girl. I kept it until they said it
19 wasn't.

20 We have so much -- like, so much of what --
21 where we've been, and what we've done and how we've been
22 just let down by the authorities so many times. And, I can
23 prove the times that we spoke to them, but time does -- it
24 prevents us today. But, I've got the proof when we spoke
25 to them, the time and the conversations.

1 And, October 5th was the last call that I
2 got from Jennifer's detective that was on our case. My
3 husband said he wanted him removed at one point because we
4 thought he wasn't doing enough. We had no idea if they
5 were doing anything at all. Like I said, we lost hope in
6 the RCMP already.

7 October 5th, just a few weeks ago, he
8 called. We were in Winnipeg. He called me to tell me that
9 he was being moved to Project Devote (ph) and that somebody
10 else was taking our case. But, I said, "The only reason
11 why you're calling me is because the Inquiry is coming, and
12 I know that I'm going to" -- I said, "When I get over
13 there, I'm going to mention all of this." I said, "I'm
14 going to talk about the times you said you were doing
15 something and you didn't, because these guys came to me
16 seven years later and you didn't do a thing."

17 Any information -- the same corporal would
18 ask me and my husband, "Can you find out the names of so-
19 and-so? Can you find out where they're living?" Asking us
20 to go and investigate and find so-and-so. "Can you -- we
21 got -- we have the proof." He said, "Can you go and ask or
22 can you find so-and-so? We need to talk to him." That's
23 his job.

24 We did. We found them. We could find
25 anybody. This world is a small world and you can find

1 anybody because we -- and we never heard of these people or
2 these names. Whoever we needed to speak with, we found
3 them. We found them and we spoke to them. Whether they
4 knew something about Jen's case or not, we still spoke to
5 them.

6 I'm just about done. This is -- to you,
7 this is a book. To me, this is worth gold. This is gold.
8 It's because it has times, dates, names when Jennifer first
9 went missing and how she was let down by the RCMP. It
10 documents the time that they finally got -- officially took
11 her case. They didn't take it right away.

12 And, you know what? Through the years of
13 all of this, it cost us my children. It cost my husband
14 and I. There was a -- where they need us, we can't be
15 there, because we're in the bush. Family times, birthdays,
16 family events, Christmastime, stuff like that. Birthdays
17 there's some -- we don't -- we're not there because we're
18 in the bush.

19 And, they said to me, "Mom, you died. You
20 died nine years ago. When Jen died, you died. You never
21 have time for us." I said, "Because we're looking. We're
22 searching." And, I don't blame them.

23 This last search, this last summer, this
24 last -- every June 19th, we have a fundraiser to keep our
25 search going. June 19th. My children pulled out. They

1 said, "Mom, it's too hard. It's too hard for us. We're
2 not doing this anymore." I said, "Don't ever ask me to
3 quit. Don't ever ask me to quit looking." I said, "Don't
4 ever ask me to quit. I'll never quit looking for your
5 sister." And, that's just the way it is.

6 Nine years later, we're getting older. My
7 husband had two heart attacks, anxiety attacks, stress,
8 looking for our daughter. He's not the same man before Jen
9 went away, before she was stolen. Night and day, he's on
10 Jen's case.

11 Three months -- at one point, three months,
12 he got I don't know how many hours of sleep, steady. We
13 totally changed my home around, everything -- it was like
14 an office. He put the couches there, blocked us off.
15 We're not allowed there. He had cameras like this,
16 cameras, papers. He had everything with Jen's case. And,
17 he wouldn't let us in the living room for three months.

18 I'd wake up for work. He's sleeping. He'll
19 get up and start again. Three months steady, steady, doing
20 the RCMP's job. I say that because I don't know what
21 they're doing, if they did anything at all. After three
22 months, he was exhausted, tired. And, I said, "Will,
23 that's enough. That's enough now," I said.

24 "Just for a while" -- I said, "Just put it
25 away, just, you know, I want my home back," I said. "This

1 is too much now." With a fight -- we had actually, you
2 know, not the physical fight, but disagreement was that,
3 "Okay now, out. You know, that's it now. You've got to
4 make yourself an office. I want my living room back."

5 But, these are the things that we went
6 through. And, I'm probably going to say when I go home or
7 -- I wish I should have said -- I should have said this,
8 now I remember this, because it's not easy. I'm doing my
9 best to speak for Jennifer. It's not over.

10 I believe, and that's my belief, somebody
11 out there knows where Jennifer is lying. Somebody last
12 laid their eyes on her. And, I believe -- until you show
13 me, until the RCMP show me otherwise, I believe they didn't
14 do nothing and that they failed Jennifer Catcheway, our
15 daughter.

16 How? Firstly, because they didn't take the
17 statement when time was of the essence. Time was crucial,
18 because those individuals just left there, that RCMP said
19 -- I said, "I'm here to report my daughter missing." "Oh,
20 he just left here." He said, "He just left here a couple
21 of minutes ago," he said. I said, "What?" "Yes, he just
22 left here. He just said that he dropped her off on No. 6."

23 My question is, did RCMP -- if this
24 individual went to report Jennifer that he dropped her off,
25 did he take a statement from him? Did he say why he

1 dropped her off, when he dropped her off? Was there any
2 statement taken or did he just let him walk out the door?
3 What was done that day that he went? Why did he go to the
4 RCMP? Why did he feel he had to go and report her? He got
5 there before me. What was done? Was there a statement
6 taken? Was there records? I -- I doubt it. And, if there
7 was, I'd like to see.

8 They tell me it's an ongoing investigation.
9 Well, as parents, I think we have a right to know what's
10 going on. It's been nine years. It's not a -- it's not a
11 highly sophisticated case where -- where you can't --
12 nobody can solve it. I believe we solved it. We just have
13 to find Jennifer. She's our proof. She's our baby.

14 And, I said it once and I'll say it again,
15 this inquiry is not going to bring Jennifer home. We'll
16 bring her. But, you can move forward with recommendations
17 that are left here from families. The recommendations,
18 they -- they need to be put forward, not just put on paper
19 and on a shelf. They need to be implemented.

20 If I sound angry, I am angry. I am. I'm
21 angry and I'm hurt. I'm disappointed. I want my baby
22 home, that's all. That's all I want. I just want my girl.
23 I just want to bring her home. That's all. And, we will
24 bring her home. I know we will bring her home. We started
25 and we'll finish by bringing her home. I said, "As long as

1 there's breath in me, as long as there's breath in us,
2 we'll go on searching and we're going to bring our baby
3 home because she's out there. She's out there somewhere."

4 I told my husband when they were sitting in
5 the living room. I said, "Do you feel that Jen -- do you
6 feel Jen?" I said, "I feel Jennifer." I said, "I could
7 just touch her. I smell her. I could just feel her." I
8 said, "She's here. She's close by."

9 I know -- I know people die every day.
10 People die. Our loved ones die, but they have an
11 opportunity to go and lay their loved ones down. They put
12 them down in a grave and they have their closure and in
13 time will heal, but not for us. Not for us. Our Jennifer
14 is still out there. And, every time we come to things like
15 this, it's reopened again. The wound is reopened again.
16 It will always be open. People say, "Move on." You can't
17 move on. You can't move on because she -- she's there.
18 Jennifer is there somewhere.

19 I want to thank Chief Hart for supporting us
20 today. He's been supporting us and inviting us to
21 different -- we went to Regina to -- for Jennifer. And, I
22 really feel a connection with him, because I have -- I feel
23 he has the heart and the compassion for the issue, for the
24 murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls. He has
25 the heart and that's what it's going to take to get things

1 moving, it's somebody -- it makes a difference when
2 somebody cares with what you're going through. It makes a
3 difference when somebody is listening.

4 You know those that you can talk to and it's
5 just a pay cheque. It's just a pay cheque, "Yes, okay.
6 Well, you know." But, you know those who have a heart for
7 this issue and Chief Hart to me is one of them. He
8 probably doesn't even know I'm going to say that statement.
9 I just asked him to be here. I invited him to be here
10 because I felt that from him. I felt that from Nahanni,
11 and Barb, and my friends and family that are here.

12 I could -- I wish I could have had them all
13 here, but I thank them for supporting us, and for my
14 children, and for you that help us to get out there with
15 prayer, and financially, we can keep on going, because
16 where do I go for help? What organization do I go to? Who
17 do I -- what door do I knock on?

18 We had to leave an area to be here. If we
19 weren't here, we'd be searching. There's a -- one of the
20 stories was they threw Jennifer in a -- in a well. We
21 heard hundreds of horrific stories about what they did to
22 Jennifer and how they dismembered her and how they
23 decapitated -- they did so much to her. And, we have to
24 listen to that. Whether it's a tip or whether it's rumour,
25 we still have to listen to it.

1 We got a call 1:30 in the morning. This
2 person said, "We found a grave. You've got to get over
3 here." We left right away, went to Grand Rapids, got over
4 there. And, this is what we have to listen to. He said,
5 "Well, there it is." I said, "Where? What?" "Right
6 here." "Right where?" "Well, this is" -- I said, "You
7 called us 1:30 in the morning to come out how many hours
8 away, ten miles north of Grand Rapids yet -- to come and
9 see this?" But, we have to. We have to. We can't just
10 let anything go, any tip or rumour that comes. We got to
11 -- we have to check up on it.

12 We left a site to be here. We found a well
13 in the middle of nowhere, a well close to where we're
14 searching. And, I said, "Oh my gosh." I said -- my
15 husband -- he's not strong anymore, not the way he used to.
16 Not in a disrespectful way because he's strong. He's --
17 he's my strong tower.

18 And, why I'm saying that is, that well is 10
19 feet down. We opened the lid and there's muskrats there,
20 there's beaver carcasses and it stinks. It's a well. It's
21 contaminated. My husband jumped in it. We put a 10-foot
22 ladder, went in there. And, he takes the shovel and he's
23 digging these carcasses out of there that smells. And, I
24 know it's hard. He's got to lift it over his head. So,
25 he's cleaning it all, all that garbage in there, because

1 we're thinking our daughter is in that -- in that well. He
2 dug two feet, and then he pushed a pole in there, and it's
3 another two feet to go. And, he's tired.

4 I said, "We -- we need to get a well,"
5 because he's got my -- I put my shirt around his mouth and
6 his nose because of the smell. I tried to tie it the best
7 I could for him. I said, "We need a backhoe." I said,
8 "That's a tiny backhoe." And then we had to stop to come
9 here. We still need a backhoe, just a small one, just to
10 get in there. That's too much work for him.

11 But, like that -- that's just an example, we
12 have to -- we'll go on searching. We'll go on because
13 that's our daughter. And, I'm sure every parent feels --
14 would feel that way, but I wouldn't wish any parent to go
15 through what we're going through.

16 But, sadly, unfortunately, it's continuing
17 to happen. They're continuing to go missing, our girls,
18 our women, our men, our boys. Why? Why? I said I wasn't
19 going to spend all day about Jen, because we've got to get
20 to the root cause, why.

21 I could sit here and I could cry all day for
22 my daughter, but I want change. I know -- I know and I
23 believe in my heart, and you can't change me, and I believe
24 that the RCMP failed Jennifer that day.

25 Had he taken a statement, had he questioned

1 him -- I don't know if he did, because he no longer -- he's
2 been murdered, so you can't ask him questions. That day --
3 this is the question the -- the person that was murdered,
4 that took my daughter -- when I asked him that day, that
5 Monday. I said, "Why?" I was screaming at him, "Why?"

6 And, he looked at me and he pointed at me,
7 and he said, "Do you believe in God?" I don't want to
8 point at anybody because that's rude. And, he said, "Do
9 you believe in God?" I said, "Yes. Yes, I do." And, he
10 said, "Then, you'll find her." Now, what kind of comment
11 is that? That's how he left me. He walked away. "Do you
12 believe in God?" I said, "Yes." "Then, you'll find her.

13 From that, we took -- we tried to analyze.
14 We're not experts. We're not psychologists. We -- we try
15 to analyze. Why did he say that? Yes, I believe in God.
16 Yes, he knows that. I'm a minister of our church. He
17 knows that. So, I thought, "Why is he saying that?"

18 Let's go to the cemeteries. Let's go check.
19 You know, let's go to the graveyards. Maybe he put her in
20 there. Let's go look at the fresh, fresh -- all over. We
21 went all over, not just Portage area. We went to Grand
22 Rapids, Swan River, all over, every -- there's little
23 churches, abandoned churches with graveyards. We went
24 there. We went all over. Wherever there was a church, we
25 looked -- because of his statement, because "Do you believe

1 in God?" Then, we moved over to, okay, maybe he thinks I'm
2 traditional maybe or -- or let's -- let's go -- so we went
3 to areas like that.

4 I never wanted him to be hurt or to die.
5 Whatever happened there, I don't think has any relevance
6 [sic] -- what's the word for that? To this case. So, I
7 don't know what happened there. I know that he was
8 murdered and I know that he'll never answer questions.
9 He'll never answer me.

10 He was a loudmouth person. That was his way
11 of intimidating people. But, he's no longer in the land of
12 the living, so I can't go to him. And we just rely on
13 people calling us, telling us to check here, go there, and
14 we do. And, it costs money. It costs time. As a
15 government worker, you're only -- you're only allowed so
16 much for vacation, vacation time. And, I use it up, my
17 whole summer. So, I go without vacation time for the fall
18 and the winter without, you know, no break. I've got to
19 work because I already used up my time searching.

20 I just -- I'm going to end here because I
21 feel in my spirit that it's time for me to stop, but I'm
22 going to give an opportunity to my loved ones, my children,
23 because they love Jennifer. They love Jennifer. And, I
24 want it recorded and documented this day because we
25 suffered a great loss, and it's our baby.

1 Somebody stole her, had no right to her, had
2 no right to take her. She could have had a baby. She
3 could have got married, but that was taken from her.
4 Somebody decided she didn't have a right to live, but she
5 had every right to live.

6 **MS. TAMARA SANDERSON:** I'm really thankful
7 for today. My mom was able to share and to let everyone
8 know who Jennifer was, who she is. Jennifer is a person.
9 She's our loved one, she's my sister, and it breaks my
10 heart to have to be here today.

11 Years ago, I used to see pictures in the
12 stores of children that were missing and I would just see
13 them as a picture until one day when I got that phone call
14 that my sister was missing and the shock. It's just a
15 terrible shock and you think it's not real. And then when
16 she didn't come home, you know reality is setting in and
17 it's just really hard.

18 It's really heartbreaking to see that this
19 is happening over and over. It's not just our family.
20 After Jen, you hear of so many other stories of other --
21 other women. It's just so -- it's just too -- it's
22 becoming more and more of an evident problem that's out
23 there. This is not just a random act. This is an actual
24 epidemic. This is an actual genocide. Another form of
25 genocide against women.

1 And, I'm so thankful today that there is
2 this opportunity to create change because something has to
3 be done now, because this is just unbelievable. And, just
4 hearing on -- just reading people's posts on -- about this
5 Inquiry, I was blown away, reading how unbelievably
6 ignorant people are to the fact that these girls are
7 missing.

8 There's no -- there's no actual -- for life,
9 to care for human life. A lot of these people may have
10 come from different backgrounds, they might have had, you
11 know, addictions. A lot of them had addictions. It
12 doesn't matter. They still had life. And, everyone has a
13 right to live and that just -- it's just very upsetting to
14 see that there's no one speaking up for them.

15 And, I'm thankful to see my mom -- as strong
16 as she is, I know it has taken a toll. As she said, I know
17 it has. It affected me personally. It affected my -- my
18 children, my siblings, my brother, my baby brother. He's
19 not here today. I would have loved to see him sit with us
20 here, but he has been affected. My brother has problems to
21 deal with this whole thing. He can't take it. He's been
22 in trouble. And, we need to help the families. My brother
23 is in trouble and it breaks my heart.

24 But, I'm here today for my sister, to show
25 that Jennifer was loved. I'm happy her friends are here.

1 Jennifer loved her friends so much, and her family, her
2 nieces and nephews. She loved all of them.

3 And, you know, I'm just -- I'm just happy
4 that with Jennifer's case, that something good will come
5 out of it. It's not for nothing. It's not just another
6 name, not just another story, but something will come out
7 of it in the end, and that's what I'm believing for. Thank
8 you.

9 **MR. WILLY STARR:** Good morning, everyone.
10 My -- my name is Willy Starr. I'm the brother of Jennifer.
11 It's never easy to speak and explain how my loved one went
12 missing and -- or when I see my family hurting, how much
13 that hurts me inside. Like my parents said, we're all
14 affected and impacted.

15 Our lives have changed. It's -- I don't
16 know how to describe it. It's just unreal what we have to
17 live with every day. I never asked my parents to stop
18 searching. I know me and my mom were like this. I know
19 her heart, and I know how she is, and how strong she is,
20 and -- and she'll never give up. My dad will never give
21 up.

22 So, all I can do is just be there to support
23 them and love them. And, my siblings, the ones that are
24 here, we try our best for Jennifer. We love her.
25 (indiscernible). I usually don't cry like this. Usually

1 when I talk, I could talk, but today, I don't know,
2 emotions.

3 Like, when we were -- when we were searching
4 -- when we were searching for Jennifer in Dakota Tipi, when
5 Jennifer went missing, it was just our loved ones, our
6 close family and our friends that went out searching for
7 her. And, well, we didn't have much money to provide for
8 food or provide water, but we did what we could.

9 A month later, I don't know if they
10 explained it already, but there's a young girl that went
11 missing here. Her name is Amber McFarland in the picture.
12 Do you want to show her? It's -- okay, bring it. This
13 young girl here too has a family, now went missing from
14 Portage la Prairie. She went missing a month after my
15 sister went missing.

16 You know, and what we seen in the
17 inequalities that were visibly shown and demonstrated,
18 there's something wrong in society. Because we had no
19 help. Nobody came and helped us. Nobody from the
20 community come and help us, you know. We -- look it, we
21 have a -- there was a massive search. It was called their
22 search because -- I mean, I don't know if it's because
23 she's Caucasian or what, but the whole community got
24 involved. They had over 1,500 people show up there,
25 horses, cops. Everybody was there with food and buses and

1 transportation to and from, you know?

2 What's wrong? What's -- what's the matter
3 here? What's the difference between my sister and their
4 loved one? Where's the equality in society? That needs to
5 change. We're all the same. There ain't nobody better
6 than anybody here. We're all human beings. That was hard
7 to witness. It was hard, because our people, we're not
8 like that, you know? It's pretty harsh, man.

9 When we were out searching too, we were out
10 searching No. 6 Highway. I found skeletal remains in the
11 bushes, laying -- laying upright, and it freaked me out;
12 right? It's, kind of, traumatic, you know, because my
13 sister, I was thinking and all these things happening.

14 So, we found these remains of these bones
15 and we took them -- well, we went to the RCMP detachment.
16 I said, "Come over here. We found something. We found
17 these bones, what seems to be a body." That cop didn't
18 even believe us then. He didn't even want to come.

19 So, I went back, went back to that area, and
20 I took a piece of the knee because it had a bit of
21 cartilage inside of it; right? So, maybe there's DNA in
22 there or whatever. So, I took it, I put it in a bag and I
23 brought it to them. And then only after I physically shown
24 them that, then they -- then they moved, you know, it was
25 -- it's kind of messed up.

1 Another time when we were -- like my mom
2 said, when we were searching from Dakota Tipi to Grand
3 Rapids, it took 30-some days. And, when we arrived there,
4 we asked the cops. I said, "What -- in the 30 days, what
5 did you do for my sister?" He said he didn't even know.
6 He didn't even know she went missing. So, there was --
7 there was no communication between those jurisdictions, you
8 know? So, there has to be a change there too, with how
9 they communicate, the RCMP, and how information is shared.

10 So, it's been nine years now and we're still
11 going. We're not going to give up. All we want is to
12 bring Jennifer home. We can't rest. Every day, every day
13 we think about her. There's not one day that goes by.

14 Yes, still have -- I know my sister is just
15 one girl of many, many, many, far too many women out there
16 missing. Everybody has their story and wants to share
17 their loved one. And, I feel them when they -- it's hard
18 to listen to others too, if you know. Like, you feel --
19 you feel their pain, too.

20 I don't know. My hope when I -- when we
21 went to Regina recently, there was a gathering. My family
22 -- well, we were shocked to find out that the RCMP weren't
23 going to be looked at or wasn't -- their conduct wasn't
24 going to be implemented into that -- their mandate. That
25 was an insult, a slap on the face, because that impacts my

1 family from Day One, you know? We need to follow up on
2 that. Somebody has to be held accountable, you know?

3 Like my mom said too, we never wished for
4 the man that took my sister -- he has passed away now. We
5 never wished harm on him. We don't wish that on anybody.
6 It's just that he could have said something, you know, and
7 now he's not here to talk.

8 I just hope somebody knows and somebody will
9 talk. Somebody has to. There's, like, a culture of
10 silence that needs to be broken of fear, of saying what's
11 right and protecting those, because it's unpopular to
12 speak. That's a lie, man. That's not being true to
13 yourself, you know? Let's look out for each other now, you
14 know? Let's -- men have to -- we have to -- it's our duty
15 to protect our women.

16 I just -- I don't know. Anyways, I just
17 want to wish everybody, you know, the best. You know, keep
18 us in prayer. Keep my family in prayer. We're not going
19 to give up. We're going to keep going, you know? It's not
20 over. It's not over just yet.

21 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** I just want to say
22 one thing and have it documented. There's a newspaper
23 clipping here, the Daily Graphic. I know you'll say, "Oh,
24 that's just news. They'll report anything they want." It
25 says, "RCMP deem case a homicide," Jennifer's case.

1 But, you know how I found out? I was at
2 home watching TV and they deemed it a homicide over -- and
3 they didn't talk to us. They didn't tell us it was a
4 homicide. I was watching the news and Corporal -- I won't
5 mention her name. The spokesperson for the RCMP said, "Her
6 body could be anywhere from Grand Rapids to Winnipeg. It's
7 a vast area. It could be anywhere." That they deemed it a
8 homicide that day.

9 And, I'm looking, and I'm watching TV, what?
10 Could they not have spoken to us first? Could they not
11 have come and knock on my door and say, "You know what,
12 this is what we're suspecting. You know, we're looking
13 into this, but we deem -- we have reason to believe, that
14 we're deeming it a homicide case"? But, no, I found out
15 through the news.

16 That's lack of communication, lack of
17 respect, lack of compassion for a family. That's one of
18 the changes that need to be made.

19 **MR. WILFRED CATCHEWAY:** I just want to thank
20 everybody for -- for being here. You know, we worked hard
21 to have this happening. And, I spoke to Carol Bennett last
22 time about where I'm originally from and what had happened.
23 And, I told her that I want Canada to know what happened to
24 my daughter.

25 And so, I asked Nahanni, she was there that

1 time, "How much time do I have at the roundtable here in
2 Winnipeg?" And, she just went like this. She opened her
3 arms. And so, I spoke out about where I'm from. And,
4 originally, I'm from Waterhen. It's about four hours north
5 from here. And, what had happened in Waterhen -- and I
6 know -- I asked my wife to be silent when I'm speaking,
7 because I have to let Canada know, First Nations and --
8 changes have to be made here in Canada about our First
9 Nations.

10 But, when I was living in Waterhen, I had a
11 nice home. I had a football field for a yard. I had it
12 fenced until, you know, there -- of course there was
13 alcohol and drugs involved. And, I went into treatment. I
14 had a problem with alcohol. But, when I came out, a lady
15 that worked at (indiscernible) office said, "Do you want to
16 work as a NADAP worker?" And, I said, "What's that?"
17 "Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program Co-ordinator." I
18 said, "Okay, I'll try that.

19 And, sure enough, I took -- I went to
20 training and I became a counsellor, and I helped the people
21 at Waterhen dealing with their alcohol and drug problems.
22 I used to take them to treatment centres, you know,
23 teaching them about alcohol, what I had learned.

24 But, as time flew, when I worked at the
25 office, I've seen poverty, I've seen lack of housing, lack

1 of, you know, pretty much everything, and money wasn't
2 flowing as it should. Our elders were sleeping in their
3 jackets just to keep warm. I mean, these are old people.
4 And, stuff like that I did not -- I didn't like seeing
5 stuff like that, and I thought, well, what's going on?

6 You know -- there was no bad meetings
7 happening, there was no reports as to where the monies were
8 going. But, just to make things -- I want to clarify what
9 really took place back in 1996. And, I need glasses here.
10 I need Canada to listen. You know, there's two sides of
11 the story.

12 At the last election of November 15, 1993,
13 four new councillors were elected. Shortly after that, the
14 four new councillors discovered major discrepancies in a
15 band financial records and evidence of mismanagement.
16 There was a lot of misappropriation of funds.

17 A decision was made on March 18, 1994, by
18 majority of council of the quorum to have the chief signing
19 authority revoked. This decision was enforced by the
20 legitimate band council resolution of the Indian Affairs on
21 March 23rd, 1994. In accordance with this decision, band
22 financial records were to be seized by a quorum for an
23 independent audit.

24 On March 25th, 1994, the chief incited his
25 supporters to break into the band office and destroy band

1 financial records before they were -- could be seized.
2 Since March 25th, 1994, the following incidents have
3 occurred: break and enter at the band office; burning of
4 documents; barricade of the band office; assault on quorum
5 members; unlawful confinement of quorum members;
6 threatening and terrorizing quorum residents. All of the
7 above was committed by the chief supporters.

8 The chief lied to the public, Indian Affairs
9 and band members. He has misled the people into believing
10 that he has support of the majority of band members when in
11 actuality, the majority were undecided because the lack of
12 information.

13 Due to all these overwhelming factors, the
14 supporters of the quorum members want to separate and form
15 their new band. They know from experience that there will
16 never be any hope for equality for them as long as they
17 remain part of the existing band. Up to date, there is
18 considerable number who have signed for separation. And,
19 this happened back in 1996.

20 We protested. We put it in front of
21 Waterhen band as you come in, and we allowed traffic to go
22 in and out. It was the police that did the barricade. 10
23 miles from there, there's a community of Waterhen. They're
24 the ones that barricaded from -- people from entering in
25 and out.

1 And, this is the *Indian Act*, and we're
2 supposed to live by it. Because -- just be patient. This
3 is a band council resolution. This was signed by the
4 quorum of council, removing the former chief because he
5 forfeited his office. He missed three consecutive
6 meetings.

7 And, according to the *Indian Act*, if you had
8 missed those meetings, you'll forfeit your position as
9 chief. This is a legal -- as legal as it gets. The
10 Commissioner signed it. And, this was in 1995, before the
11 police barricaded the road in 1996. So, Harvey was no
12 longer chief and that's by law according to the *Indian Act*.
13 And, from that point on, he became an imposter.

14 Why I'm talking about -- about this is
15 because my little girl, Jennifer, was taken by Child and
16 Family Services because we stood up against corruption and
17 abuse, what was happening in the reserve. We stood up
18 against that.

19 And, I went to jail for that. My family
20 went to jail. And, they took my little girl. CFS took my
21 little girl. My wife went to jail. And, we were taken and
22 we were painted as gang members. How is that? Like, I'm a
23 NADAP worker. My sister is CFS. And, councillors, like
24 they're farmers and they're fisherman and -- you know? How
25 is that we are gang members? But, my little girl was

1 taken, like I said, with CFS.

2 There is an article here I want to read
3 here, back in 1999. It's an article from Obituary Arrest.
4 There's a history of Manitoba judges being biased against
5 Indians as reported in the findings of the Manitoba
6 Aboriginal Justice Report.

7 And, I believe that because the judge that
8 sentenced me, I stood up in front of the court, I said,
9 "You have no right to sentence me or anybody here because
10 you're in conflict. You were a Legal Aid lawyer and you
11 had prior dealings with band members on both sides."

12 And so, he can -- you know, this is racism.
13 Racism is evidence in our case. We were guilty before we
14 walked in there. And, I want to read another word here,
15 because our elected officials, our councillors, went to
16 jail, they were assaulted. The chief that was appointed,
17 Gordon Catcheway, was -- there was a hammer. They removed
18 him physically from the office with a hammer.

19 You know, this is an elected official. This
20 is Canada. And, the police didn't lay charges. They
21 didn't -- they just stood by and allowed anarchy in our
22 reserve, and they called us displaced.

23 As of today, we never went back to Waterhen.
24 We never moved -- nobody moved back since 1996. And,
25 they're still protesting. They're not paying rent because

1 legally it was wrong.

2 I want to read an article here, and these
3 are the words. It's not only in Canada this is happening,
4 but this is words from a South African, Nelson Mandela.
5 This is what he said. "Provides a powerful echo to
6 Indigenous viewers of the Canadian legal system. As
7 Mandela stood awaiting the sentence that would see him in
8 jail for 27 years, he said to South African court, 'The
9 white man makes all the laws. He drags us before the
10 courts and accuses us and he sits in judgment over us. In
11 this courtroom, I face a white magistrate. I am confronted
12 by a white prosecutor. I am escorted into the dock by a
13 white orderly. The atmosphere of white dominion lurks all
14 around in this courtroom. It reminds me that I am
15 voteless, because there is a parliament in this country
16 that is white-controlled. I am without land because of
17 white minority has taken the lion's share of my country and
18 forced my people to occupy poverty-stricken reserves, over-
19 populated and over-stocked, in which we are ravaged by
20 starvation and disease.'"

21 But, this is -- reminds me, you know, how --
22 what happened when we went to jail. Our elected officials,
23 our chief, our real chief isn't in Portage right now. He's
24 -- you know, he's labelled as displaced. How can that
25 happen here in Canada? What good is the *Indian Act*? What

1 good is this?

2 You know, changes have to be made. Which
3 courtroom -- you know, if we hire a lawyer, they're going
4 to lose their licence for two years. Lawyers even have
5 fear in siding with us. Canada has to listen.

6 As for myself, I'd like to see, if we have
7 to, to make changes. We might have to go to Ottawa,
8 Supreme Court of Canada, whatever it takes. But, Waterhen
9 has to be looked at. And, there's facts. There's footage
10 to back up what I'm saying.

11 But, my daughter, CFS -- you know, when CFS
12 took them -- when -- we went to Court and we appealed it --
13 we were going to the Supreme Court of Canada and they
14 dropped the charges because why? Because they knew they
15 were in the wrong what they did with us. They knew they
16 were in the wrong.

17 But, I just don't want to get off track
18 here, I know we're here for the missing, and our laws have
19 to change. That's why the reserves, First Nations, you
20 know, you look at them, poverty. And, when we try to stand
21 up, where do I end up? I'm displaced. Somebody is getting
22 rich off our people.

23 But, I want to stay focused on the missing.
24 You know, I love my little girl and I'll never stop
25 searching for her, you know, there's not a day that goes

1 by, and it won't be over until I bring her home. And, it
2 won't be the RCMP. I guarantee you that. Thank you.

3 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** Maybe you don't
4 understand why he got onto all of that. He had a point.
5 He did have a point. Had it not happened, what -- in '96
6 and -- when we were removed, we went to Portage. Had we
7 been at home, maybe this didn't take place. That's why he
8 brought that out. And, it's still happening.

9 We were banned from our reserve and still
10 today, it's like that. And, my husband is hurt. He's
11 frustrated. Had it not happened in '96, maybe our Jennifer
12 would be alive today. So, again, there's -- we feel that,
13 you know, there's mistreatment and bias, and all of that.

14 But, at this time, I want to change the -- I
15 would -- we have a slide show and I want to have a moment.
16 And, if we can ask the technicians to get it ready, please.
17 I want to introduce you -- some of you may not know
18 Jennifer. I want you to introduce you to our daughter,
19 Jennifer Catcheway through this video.

20 I don't know if you can see it with the
21 lights. I'm not sure if we can turn the lights down or --
22 this is important. That's our baby.

23 **(MUSICAL PRESENTATION)**

24 That's our Jennifer. Thank you for
25 watching. She was -- she's not just a picture on a wall

1 somewhere or a newspaper clipping. She's not just a
2 statistic with the 1,000 or more missing. She was our
3 daughter.

4 When is it going to stop? When is it going
5 to stop for our women that go missing and murdered? When?
6 What is it going to take? How many more of our young women
7 have to go missing? How many before there's a change? The
8 change has to happen now, because when this Inquiry leaves
9 Winnipeg, it's going to another area and another area after
10 that to hear the same story of their loved ones. How many
11 more inquiries have to take place before something is done?

12 Phoenix Sinclair, how much millions of
13 dollars? \$5 million or \$7 million to that Inquiry? And, I
14 don't know if those recommendations were all put in place.
15 This is \$53 million. This Inquiry that's costing \$53
16 million. And, at the end of the day, will there be change,
17 more recommendations that are going to sit on the shelf?

18 By the time this is all said and done, they
19 have a report in November, I think it is. How many more
20 missing will go before -- before this Inquiry is done? We
21 have to say enough is enough. Enough. There's one too
22 many sisters murdered, one too many.

23 My cousin, Chris, is one that's missing in
24 Winnipeg. He's still missing. How many more? It has to
25 stop. The laws have to change. Something has to change.

1 The laws are protecting the criminals, and they're getting
2 away with it because they know the system. What -- at the
3 cost of what? My daughter? Your daughter? Who next?

4 We're not safe. Our women are not safe
5 anymore. Nobody is safe. Thank you so much. Thank you.

6 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** From the
7 Cashton Community, where I'm from. And, I'll speak
8 English. And, if Canada had implemented all the
9 recommendation, there's over 1,200 recommendations for the
10 past four years -- for the past 20 years, we wouldn't be
11 sitting here. We would be celebrating instead.

12 So, it's something that we've been failed
13 for a long, long time, for too long, that I'm not ashamed
14 to say it where I'm today. And, I have to say that no
15 family should go through what you went, with all of you
16 sitting here. After listening and receiving your truth,
17 this is your truth for me, and I honour this sincerely.

18 And, still today going through that pain
19 with no answer, no help and no support, I don't think --
20 it's not only the RCMP who failed you; it's the country,
21 it's Canada where I think all your family deserve health
22 support, the way you believe in your God, the spirituality,
23 the physical and mental support seem to be missing, because
24 we've heard stories that they had one day of health, some
25 none, and you don't deserve that. And, for me, I have to

1 be frank and honest, I have that same concern.

2 Like I said yesterday, that I don't want to
3 see those recommendations, I want them to be alive. And,
4 when I'll be free moccasin after this mandate, I will be
5 pushing, pushing, pushing as a mother and as a new
6 grandmother.

7 And, people were saying for many, many
8 months that the Inquiry won't be able to look what the cops
9 or the police did or didn't do. I have -- I have to say,
10 if you agree with your family, of course, that we do not
11 reopen cases and become the police. First of all, I don't
12 have that expertise at all. But, we have the capacity to
13 examine, to look what they didn't do. But, in order to do
14 that, we need to have the files. We need to have
15 information. We need to have the facts. It was so
16 powerful, the image that you shared to Canada, how a
17 Caucasian, a non-Native, get the support, the help, the
18 exposure and all of it, including the police, when our own
19 sisters, daughters, mother are missing don't get that at
20 all or little bit.

21 So, if you can, we could meet again. The
22 people from the Inquiry could come back here and meet with
23 your family and exchange what we could gather with you and
24 to ask the hard question when we come back here to the
25 institution.

1 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** I'm not a -- I
2 appreciate -- appreciate that, and yes, but I'm not a
3 lawyer.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Me, too.

5 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** I'm not a lawyer and
6 I'd like to get legal counsel as to -- because I know -- I
7 know you can change records. You can -- you can do
8 anything. My book is 2008, but it's easily -- I could have
9 changed and said -- but those are the originals. So, I'm
10 not a lawyer, but I appreciate your offer, and I'll speak
11 with my family and -- but I also need legal representation.

12 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** That's so
13 true and so normal. I open my heart and the door to help
14 me, to help the other Commissioner to ask the right
15 question when we're sitting with the RCMP and the other
16 institution.

17 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** And, I just want to
18 say one more thing before we move on. Mrs. McFarland, I
19 know she's not Native, but we grew to be close friends. We
20 stopped our search in order to help -- in our search at the
21 time. So, she's a beautiful, beautiful family who lost a
22 beautiful daughter, who wants answers as well.

23 And, I always encourage her to come to these
24 things. She just said, "No." She got hurt and
25 disappointed by RCMP, and she said, "I will not, no more."

1 This is -- this is her daughter, Amber. And, she's --
2 they're a beautiful family. They're a beautiful family who
3 suffers just like the rest of us.

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** You're right,
5 and it happened in Highway of Tears where a Canadian family
6 lost a beautiful daughter. And, since that day, they've
7 been walking with the women who lost their loved one on the
8 Highway of Tears. And, when we're working together, the
9 stronger we are. So, yes, you're right, totally right.
10 Thank you so much. (Indiscernible).

11 **MR. WILFRED CATCHEWAY:** I just want to add
12 something here before -- the *Indian Act* has to be resolved
13 with our Aboriginals. It's time that we did. This is a
14 journalist that -- that wrote this, and she's been a
15 journalist for 40, 50 years. But, this is what she wrote,
16 "Especially Aboriginal issues, we have to make changes in
17 the future. There is no question about that. But, we have
18 to know what we had in the past and how it worked. The
19 dark side of Canada, the lack of kind of understanding
20 between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians and the
21 damage that it has caused over the years, and it's still
22 evident in parts of the country. Frustration still lingers
23 on both sides of the divide. The government is a failure
24 politically. I think it's not complicated. Look at the
25 *Indian Act*, and the most shocking thing I ever saw is a

1 document Natives had to sign when they had a child. It
2 basically makes their child a ward of the state, a ward of
3 Canada, rather than their child, you know, that kind of
4 still Colonial attitude where it's the government that's
5 going to say, we will look at the *Indian Act*. We will see
6 what that means. We will have a real discussion about
7 that. We will see if we need that anymore."

8 But, that's what she said. You know,
9 some changes have to be made, because look what happened to
10 Waterhen, you know? I have family there. I have cousins
11 there -- still living there. And, I have nothing against
12 them, you know. You know, I still say "Hi" to them and
13 stuff. But, there has to be a change.

14 And, I'm asking the people of Canada, the
15 Aboriginals, you know, to get together, to work together
16 and to make changes happen, especially for our missing. My
17 daughter, it hurts -- every day it hurts, you know? And,
18 it hurts to see my wife cry when I'm out searching.

19 You know, one time, she was in a bush and I
20 heard her cry, I thought she found Jen, and I went running
21 and running, but she just broke down. All I could do is
22 hug her and tell her we will find her, you know?

23 And, I could relate to other murdered and
24 missing people. You know, one of the men, his daughter is
25 missing and he said, "I have no clue what happened." Like,

1 she came to the city, she was outside on the street, and
2 that's the last time she was seen.

3 But, at least, I told my wife, we have like,
4 you know, something to go by. We have tips. But, he
5 doesn't have -- he didn't even have a clue. He has no tip,
6 you know? And, I just felt bad for him. So, it's
7 heartbreaking, very heartbreaking.

8 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Thank you.
9 *Merci beaucoup. Alors -- sorry, in English. Thank you ---*

10 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** You're welcome.

11 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** --- from the
12 bottom of my heart. And, my English is getting better.
13 Thank you so much. And, we have gift for you. And, our
14 Elders and myself will -- to all your family here, we'll
15 share something for you. Thank you very much.

16 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** Thank you. Thank
17 you.

18 Sorry. We're -- I'm not done. Sorry,
19 sorry. Sorry, can I get your attention, please? I want to
20 introduce to you somebody that's very important in our
21 lives and our family's, who grew to be like a sister to us
22 -- for me. We're probably the same age. Maybe I'm -- to
23 me, she's just like my sister and a family friend who
24 supported us and took care of us and helped us along the
25 way, that gave us direction in who to talk to and -- you

1 know, really took care of us and begin to love us and our
2 Jen, where she's part of our home and our family.

3 And, I want to introduce you to her, and I
4 asked her if she could say a few words on our behalf,
5 because I'm not a politician, I'm just a mom who wants to
6 find her daughter. So, I'm not a psychiatrist,
7 psychologist, I'm not a politician, I'm a mother who wants
8 her daughter home.

9 But, at this time, I'm going to ask if we
10 can give a few minutes to Nahanni Fontaine. If you could
11 just come, please? I'm sorry, I -- I forgot. I -- I asked
12 her to -- to come.

13 **MS. NAHANNI FONTAINE:** So, I mean, everyone,
14 I am -- my name is Nahanni Fontaine and I am presently the
15 MLA -- the NDP MLA for St. John's. Prior to that, I was
16 the special adviser on Indigenous Women's issues. And,
17 prior to that, I was the Director of Justice for the
18 Southern Chiefs' Organization which is where I first met
19 Bernice and Wilfred.

20 They've just asked me to say a couple of
21 words, and not from a -- not as a family member obviously.
22 I mean, we are family, but not -- I'm not in any way, shape
23 or form speaking on behalf of MMIWG, but there has been a
24 request to say a couple of words, and actually from some
25 other families as well.

1 I say this with the utmost respect and love
2 for everybody in this room, for everybody that's doing this
3 work. This is very difficult work. It is very critical
4 work. It's very important work. And so, I lift each and
5 every one of those folks that are doing that work.

6 I also just want to first and foremost
7 acknowledge every single family member that's in this room
8 that is across Manitoba, and certainly our family members
9 that are across Canada right now from coast to coast to
10 coast.

11 I also just want to acknowledge all of the
12 Elders that have been doing really, really important work
13 this week. And, I know that our Elders all around have
14 been doing really critical spiritual work and supportive
15 work, and I -- I lift you up and acknowledge each and every
16 one of you for your work that you've been doing in love and
17 in kindness and in respect.

18 You know, just prior to coming here this
19 morning, I was actually at a breakfast fundraiser, Women in
20 Support of Equality, and actually we had two speakers. One
21 was Loretta Ross, she had just been appointed the Treaty
22 Commissioner, and Kim Pate.

23 And, Loretta Ross spoke about reconciliation.
24 She spoke about the treaties. And, she said, "For
25 treaties, we always have to understand the intent behind

1 it, the truth behind it. In reconciliation, we have to
2 speak about the truth."

3 And so, it is in that spirit that I come and I
4 say that, you know, there have been some families certainly
5 this week that have felt that they haven't been supported
6 in maybe a thorough way, in the best way that we can do.

7 And, you know, I was reminded by my sister,
8 Sandra Delaurent (ph) who said -- you know, often I'll say,
9 well, we've been working on this for 30 years, if you look
10 at the Highway of Tears. But, she gently reminded me that
11 actually we have collectively been working on this for 50
12 years.

13 If you look at Helen Betty Osborne, if you
14 look at some of the first cases of missing women on the
15 Highway of Tears, those go back actually the late '50s;
16 right? So, over 50 years, MMIWG families have been
17 quietly, loudly, courageously, resiliently, have been from
18 coast to coast to coast demanding action on MMIWG.

19 It is only because of MMIWG families that we
20 are here today, along with Indigenous women who have stood
21 with families, and have been those lobbying, and that voice
22 in support of families. And, in that, as Michèle knows,
23 when we began the discussion on the National Inquiry, it
24 was to be able to give families that opportunity to share
25 the stories of their loved ones; right? Because across the

1 country, everywhere you go, there has been pockets of
2 opportunities for families to share, certainly here in
3 Manitoba, certainly in other places and in other places,
4 not at all.

5 So, one of the things about the National
6 Inquiry was to give that opportunity, to give MMIWG
7 families the opportunity to get their loved one as a part
8 of the Canadian historical record.

9 The other piece of it, as you know for a
10 National Inquiry, is to unpack, deconstruct why we are
11 where we are today. And, you know, a necessary point or
12 part of that is allowing families the time, all the time
13 that they need, to be able to do that unpacking.

14 You know, I -- I was speaking with a family
15 member that came public here to do her hearing. And, she
16 was saying to me afterwards, "You know, I wasn't asked the
17 right questions. I didn't get to share what I wanted to
18 share because, of course, families are in the midst of that
19 trauma; right?" And so, to help them, kind of, navigate
20 through all of those interconnected and intersecting issues
21 in respect of why we are where we are today, she felt it
22 wasn't done, and we heard that a couple of times from
23 family members.

24 Now, I know, and I think everybody in this
25 room knows, and I think everybody across Canada knows, to

1 be brutally honest, the time frame that was instituted in
2 respect of the call for the National Inquiry for two years
3 is completely unreasonable.

4 It is unreasonable that in this country, we
5 would look at an Inquiry in respect of missing and murdered
6 Indigenous women and girls from coast to coast to coast,
7 which spans generations and generations and generations, to
8 think that we could establish the infrastructure, right,
9 all of the terms of reference, the offices, the staffs, the
10 Commissioners, all of these things, execute the hearings in
11 a good way that families have as much time as they need,
12 each and every one of the families that want to
13 participate, write the reports, do the trauma-informed
14 work, so that each and every family member, after they've
15 given their presentation or their hearing are taken care
16 of. To imagine that we could do that in two years is so
17 beyond unreasonable and so beyond disrespectful.

18 And so, I think from the families that I've
19 spoken to, there is a call on this government and this
20 prime minister who I believe wants to work in a good way
21 with Indigenous peoples. There is a call to do this in a
22 good way. This is the only chance families will have.
23 This is it. This is it. People across Canada need to know
24 that this is it. It's taken us 50 years to get here and
25 this is it.

1 And, people will say, "Oh, \$53 million. Those
2 are my taxpayer dollars." If we need to pay more, then we
3 pay more. If that means that we give families who attend
4 travel, support money, bus tickets, if they want to come in
5 wherever they want to come in, let them come in. If they
6 want to stay at the hotel, let them stay in. If they need
7 money, if they need cigarettes, if they need diapers, if
8 they need child care, that's my taxpayer money. Give them
9 the money, because this is it. This is all we have.

10 And so, respectfully to everybody, we call on
11 this government to do this in a good way. And, I say
12 *Migwetch* for the opportunity.

13 **MS. BERNICE CATCHEWAY:** Thank you, Nahanni.
14 Thank you.

15 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci beaucoup,*
16 Nahanni. Very, very, very powerful words, and I agree. I
17 agree with you. You're right. *Merci.*

18 **--- Exhibits (code P1P03P0501)**

19 **Exhibit 1:** Catcheway family video commemorating Jennifer,
20 presented to the Commission October 20, 2017
21 in MP4 video format at 918 MB, duration 9
22 minutes 35 seconds.

23 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Hello. Sorry. We just
24 wanted to advise everyone that the lunch is actually out
25 now. As you can tell, we're a little behind schedule, but

1 that's because we're trying to afford the families the
2 opportunity to actually speak. And so, lunch will be out
3 here now and available. So, we're going to break for at
4 least the 30 minutes so that people can eat, before we come
5 back here and reconvene. And, although we're behind
6 schedule, that's where we'll continue to -- and also for the
7 families, in the Family Room, lunch is also available.

8 --- Upon recessing at 11:53

9 --- Upon resuming at 13:09

10 **Public Sharing Circle: Marie Annharte Baker, Vernon Mann,**
11 **Melissa Cook, Sue Caribou, Forest Funmaker**

12 **Heard by: Commissioner Michèle Audette**

13 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

14 **Grandmothers, Knowledge-keepers, Elders: Florence Catcheway,**
15 **Thelma Morrisseau, Belinda Vandenbroeck, Leslie Spillet**

16 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

17 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** We're going to get
18 started, so we'd like to just ask people to get settled and
19 -- so we can give our attention to the families that are up
20 here now to share their story.

21 I understand, sir, you're going to offer a
22 prayer. I'd like to ask you to come up. *Migwetch.*

23 **MR. FOREST FUNMAKER:** (Speaks in Native
24 language). I greet all of you on this grateful day that we
25 get to share these stories of the murdered and the missing.

1 And, I want to say on behalf of the people of this territory,
2 Anishinaabe, Dakota, the Cree, we understand there are many,
3 many stories that have had success, that have had despair.
4 There have been tears. There's been blood in this territory.

5 And, I want to acknowledge that long history
6 of our people here and the spirits that are on this land the
7 way that we all used to talk about those stories. The
8 mythologies that are here, I want those to be acknowledged by
9 you to understand that this land is vibrant with life and
10 love, and that with all of us together connected through our
11 minds, through our hearts, that we can grow with strength and
12 heal ourselves, our communities, our young people, looking to
13 the past, to the present, to the future. Please, Creator,
14 bless us.

15 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** *Migwetch.* Thank you
16 for that beautiful prayer. Pat.

17 **MS. PATRICIA CARIBOU:** I'm also going to say
18 a prayer for us today. (Speaks in Native language). I ask
19 that you hold us and care for us as we share today for Marie
20 and for Forest, and for their -- and the grandchildren. I
21 ask for help today. I ask that you surround this place with
22 loving hearts, that we listen in a good way the witnesses,
23 and also to hear this powerful woman as she shares and gives
24 us wisdom to help, so that we don't have to have any more of
25 these kinds of meetings. *Tumontu,* I thank you for all that

1 is life and for all of us here. *Chi-migwetch*.

2 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** *Migwetch* for those
3 beautiful words. It's always a good way to start our
4 afternoon, so I thank you very much.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner Audette,
6 this afternoon, we have a number of families and survivors
7 before you. And, I would just like to give them the
8 opportunity to introduce themselves to you.

9 I'm just going to start here with Vernon.
10 If you could pass the microphone along when you're done?

11 **MR. VERNON MANN:** Hi. My name is Vernon
12 Mann. I'm here on behalf of Tanya Nepinak who was my partner
13 and the mother of my kids.

14 **MS. MELISSA COOK:** Good afternoon. My name
15 is Melissa Cook. I also go by Mel Cook Crate. It's my
16 writing name. And, I am here as a living witness as a woman
17 who survived Winnipeg. And, also, on behalf of my cousin,
18 Ashton Cook, who was missing last year and did pass away.

19 **MS. SUE CARIBOU:** Good afternoon. Sue
20 Caribou. I'm here to speak about my niece, Tanya Nepinak,
21 and both my parents that were murdered. And, I have men that
22 were murdered. And, my nephew was missing, but he's found.
23 And, I'm going to go home to Pugnawana (phon) for his
24 funeral.

25 I've had a lot of family members in my life.

1 I've been going through this since 1970-ish and it's now
2 2017. And, again, I'm going home to a funeral. This one at
3 least has -- the family has a closure, but we still don't
4 have a lot of closures in our family. Thank you.

5 **MS. MYRNA WHITEHAWK:** Good afternoon. My
6 name is Myrna Whitehawk, and I'm here to provide support to
7 Marie Baker.

8 **MS. PATRICIA CARIBOU:** Patricia Caribou, and
9 I'm here as a spiritual support for Marie.

10 **MR. FOREST FUNMAKER:** My name is Forest
11 Funmaker, and I'm the son of Marie Baker and grandson of
12 Sophie Shorty.

13 **MS. MARIE BAKER:** My name is Marie Baker, and
14 I'm speaking on behalf of my mother, my missing mother. Her
15 name is Sophia Harriet Shorty from the Little Saskatchewan
16 First Nation.

17 **MS. BELINDA VANDERBROOK:** My name is Belinda
18 Vandebroek. I'm a health support, and I'm here to support
19 Sue Caribou.

20 **MS. KAREN HARPER:** My name is Karen Harper.
21 I'm a support to Sue Caribou.

22 **MS. PAULA GAGNON:** My name is Paula Gagnon
23 and I'm here to support my mom, Sue Caribou.

24 **MS. SASHA OLSEN:** My name is Sasha Olsen, and
25 I'm here to support my mom, Sue Caribou.

1 **MS. LESLIE SPILLETT:** *Tân'si*. I'm Leslie
2 Spillett. I'm here to support Vernon and Sue and Marie.

3 **MS. ANGIE HUTCHINSON:** Hi, I'm Angie, and I'm
4 here as a support for families.

5 **MS. BELINDA VANDERBROOK:** And, I also want to
6 mention Sue's sister, the mother of Tanya Nepinak, Joyce
7 Nepinak. Sorry.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, this afternoon,
9 we are just going to offer the opportunities for the families
10 to share with you, Commissioner, what they would like to and
11 so, please.

12 **MS. MARIE BAKER:** The last time I saw my
13 mother, I was nine years old. So, it's been about 60 years
14 over that time, so it's about 1951-52. She's an
15 Anishinaabekwe. My mother (indiscernible) Ojibwe, and she
16 was married to my dad who was of Irish-Scot ancestry. He is
17 now deceased.

18 I always thought my mother was coming back
19 after I last saw her. Like, there was never a formal search
20 made. I'm thinking I was about 18 maybe, when I kind of
21 thought maybe she wasn't going to come back, but I'm not
22 sure.

23 And, I didn't know at that time. They didn't
24 use that word, "abandonment," so I never thought of that as a
25 way to describe maybe what happened to me. And, I never even

1 used that concept until recently of being motherless for a
2 long time.

3 I think back to when I actually met one of my
4 other relatives who had lost her mother. Her mother was
5 killed and her body was thrown in the river. And, that was
6 the first time I was able to speak with another person in a
7 way that I knew would understand, because she had lost her
8 mother, too.

9 As I learned over the years now that many of
10 my urban relatives have become either murdered or missing.
11 That cousin I told you about, her sister was part of that
12 horrible murder called the "broomstick murder."

13 I want to say a little bit too, why they're
14 not here to say anything. Like, my cousin is now, of course,
15 deceased, but the other ones, my other cousins. Most of them
16 say that all of this is just talk, that no action, nothing
17 will, you know, occur, so they just don't want to be part of
18 it.

19 The reason I'm here, it's not because I
20 believe in this inquiry in any way. I'm here more or less to
21 speak on behalf of my mother's spirit. So, my mother was --
22 you know, had gone to the Elkhorn Residential School. So, if
23 I'm going to attribute anything about, you know, who
24 destroyed my mother, definitely they did, and while supported
25 by the Anglican Church.

1 The Zulu people in South Africa, they call
2 that time or what happened to them as "soul murder". They
3 don't say that here very much, but that's what I felt. My
4 mother, you know, really experienced violence at that time
5 from this governmental -- you know, where the government, you
6 know, wanted -- what did they say? They wanted to kill the
7 Indian in the child. And, they, you know, tried to do it by
8 that soul murder.

9 The loss of my mother severely affected my
10 life and also that of my son and grandchildren, and I'm
11 really grateful that I was able to raise my son here, Forest
12 Funmaker, and a lot of it was through the kindness of others.
13 He has three children. And, while our family in a way is
14 very small, I have a larger extended Indigenous inter-tribal
15 family, you know, through my life.

16 I have kind of spouted off the last few days.
17 It's not that people weren't trying to help me, because I
18 ended up falling down and hurting my ribs, and so on. I have
19 to use my walker, and it just hurts when I try to lift myself
20 up, and then ended up another terrible thing to happen.

21 I lost my tooth and then so that part where
22 the tooth was started getting infected, so it's -- I've got
23 an infection going on in my mouth here. And, I was just
24 hoping that it wouldn't affect my way of speaking. So, I'm
25 not doing too bad. I was able to go to the doctor yesterday.

1 So, maybe I'm only partially, let's say,
2 sorry for how I spoke to some people today or in the past
3 year. The reason for that is because just my own tension,
4 you know, increasing. I've tried very hard to, you know,
5 prepare for this time.

6 I took, you know, some type of -- I went to
7 some helping sessions to learn more about mindfulness, which
8 helps you have a balance. But then, I don't know. About two
9 weeks later, I took another workshop on how to be fearless.
10 So, I think I'm practising a bit when I'm not quite sure when
11 I may need to do that. But, all I can say is be careful.

12 But, that's another aspect of this
13 spirituality, and I'm so glad my son and Pat could open this
14 up for me, because I'm such a disbeliever in spirituality. I
15 think that's one of the ways in which I suffered, because
16 when you grow up and people around you are either keeping too
17 silent or they're not telling you what you need to know,
18 you do learn to disrespect, you know, this, you know, so-
19 called honesty that people will say they're doing, especially
20 in their spiritual practices. So, when I went to Sunday
21 school and did all that kind of usual thing because, again,
22 my mother did ask me, I felt that I have had experiences, but
23 -- like, helpful spiritual experiences. But, I -- actually
24 one time, I went out and made myself a button. It said,
25 "Medicine Woman - Not." I know, why? But, it seemed that

1 the kind of work I was doing when I was speaking, some people
2 like "Oh, you've got to be a helper. You've got to be a
3 healer." So, I felt that I had to notify them that no, I
4 wasn't doing that. I was just a writer, and I wanted to find
5 a way to express the loss of my mother and the way Indigenous
6 women, Indigenous mothers are treated in society.

7 In some way, I think, gee, they've got a
8 nerve calling themselves a society, a government and that,
9 because to me, the settler organizations like that, they're
10 based on so much lies in their history about not just who we
11 are, but themselves. I don't know how many of you went out
12 there to celebrate 150 of that, 150 years of that covering up
13 the history, but I certainly didn't.

14 So, I think that I am in a way grateful, that
15 maybe that was a good thing that I became a sceptic because
16 of what happened to my mother, and I saw nobody doing very
17 much about that or others, other native women that had been
18 killed or lost.

19 And then I became an advocate too in the
20 child welfare system, you know, to deal with it. I worked in
21 that system only to find now that those when -- while we were
22 trying to have a native approach to it, to save the children,
23 you know, from the institutions they were being put in or
24 foster care, adoption, that our very own people collaborated
25 with government and social workers and that. So, it was very

1 difficult facing that lateral violence that's -- that happens
2 in our community. If you don't go along with, you know, some
3 of the people, then they make sure that you don't get work,
4 you don't have a voice.

5 I'm very lucky to have become a writer and
6 have an access to, you know, being able to express myself.
7 There is a whole thing about, like, why I don't believe in
8 these things, like, I guess it's called forgiveness, you
9 know, reconciliation, because I don't want to sound greedy or
10 windigo, but I want to see money. I want to see our cash
11 here, you know, compensation, redress.

12 And, there are several Indigenous -- other
13 Indigenous writers that do not want to go along with this,
14 you know, idea of reconciliation or accommodation. I guess
15 they believe, as I do, it's just another setup to take more
16 land and to, well, kill more of our people.

17 I especially like it when people say, "Oh,
18 they have hope that things are going to get better." And,
19 the kind of information, knowledge I've gained is there's
20 still more land they want. There's still more resources they
21 need. This is all around the world, and they're not going to
22 stop with an inquiry. So, I guess I'm urging people to
23 resist and fight back as much as they can.

24 When they had the Truth and Reconciliation
25 announcement here in Winnipeg, it was in this hotel. I think

1 it was this one actually. It had a different name. They
2 were passing out these Kleenexes and all the stuff. And, I
3 said, "No, I'm going to fight. I'm going to fight for my
4 mother."

5 So, now, when you come to this thing, they've
6 even got bags that are labelled "Tears." So, I guess we're
7 moving right along with that idea of, you know, that maybe we
8 shouldn't be fighting so much over there if there's not
9 changes that we need.

10 I'm still somewhat involved, because I'm
11 disabled, and so, I have other -- you know, somewhat working
12 on that. And, I just started working with some youth,
13 because we didn't have organizations at the time where the
14 youth and the seniors would speak and share an inter-
15 generational, you know, idea.

16 Actually, I feel sad that none of them are
17 here. But, again, who wants them here? Nobody asked them.
18 I see them here the other day at one of the sessions. They
19 came briefly to check in. But, nobody makes a space for
20 them. They're our youth. And, these particular ones, I
21 found, are very -- I would say they're just right into
22 finding out what's going on in society.

23 And, while we formed a youth council when I
24 was younger, in my early 20's, many native people didn't want
25 us to speak out or to learn anything. They thought they were

1 doing everything. So, I'm kind of glad we bypassed their
2 advice.

3 And so, I said -- and, I feel now I am part
4 of this circle in my life now. I can participate with other
5 youth who want to know what is going on, and how do we work
6 together to get the social justice and compensation, what we
7 need to reunite our families and rebuild our communities.
8 That's what I'm about and not here to put it under this
9 carpet that they're showing in front of us, that that's what
10 we're supposed to put our, you know, concerns or our tears.
11 Maybe they're going to take those packages of tears.

12 I know I did not say much about the
13 circumstances of my mother's disappearance or being missing.
14 That had to with -- as I attended this, I lost trust, lost
15 belief in the credibility. So, I am -- what I want to do for
16 my mother is speak to her, because I feel her spirit is here.
17 And, you know, and that I'm grateful for being part of what I
18 call the "mother line" of my ancestry. I claim my
19 Anishinaabe -- being Anishinaabekwe to my mother, and I'm
20 very grateful that I have that, and to my other women
21 relatives. I guess I would start with this piece I wrote,
22 because I included my mother in my work. I'm a writer, poet.

23 "My child memory convinces me that I spoke my
24 mother language, Ojibwe, with my mother. I remember always
25 hearing the sing-song speak of my aunties and cousins as they

1 worked in a house. My father spoke English, and so, I no
2 doubt experienced a bilingual upbringing until my mother
3 disappeared. Then, I learned silence. That loss must be
4 close to what Lindquist referred to as the end of mother
5 tongue fluency in a person, especially a child. Did I feel
6 numbness? Did my breath stop as it does in near drowning?"

7 Actually, I think the legacy for my mother
8 would have been that I could have been a bush lady. My
9 mother knew how to trap, you know, how to, you know, take
10 care of, you know, like plants and, you know, make some
11 medicines. I could have learned that from her. So, that is,
12 you know, explaining part of my motherlessness.

13 And then I have this other thing that I just
14 could briefly mention here in this one piece of writing where
15 some guy was following me around to the Winnipeg Square, and
16 I went through that trauma of re-experiencing that stalking.

17 Anyways, I kind of saw myself as a person
18 that had been like -- you know how they have with magicians
19 where they saw a person in half? That's what I felt; someone
20 had sawed me in half and I could not reconnect at times.
21 And, I had to acknowledge at time I was a sole survivor when
22 no one was around to defend me. I guess that idea of being
23 split became a larger inspiration for my writing, because I
24 saw the person that was getting hurt wasn't always me, and I
25 wrote it like this.

1 "I keep forgetting, so I compact it all. She
2 is not that proud, so she bears my wounds. She reaches for
3 the trauma, but manages to mould how the scab didn't quite do
4 her in. She's so lucky for that gift. She's a buddy to my
5 body. She was the one that wore the black eye. She coughed
6 for me at work when I almost passed out from a broken rib
7 injury. She will convince me that I am angry for nothing.
8 She accepted abuse for me. I've got nothing to talk about.
9 She does it all to keep it straight. She does not always
10 write it down like a police investigation," which of course
11 they don't do, we know. "I must have to be ready for her to
12 break the awful news to me that many people attribute her
13 anger to me and confuse me to hell," because they say, you
14 know, how it is not really allowed to be angry about, you
15 know, what is what you've lost or that.

16 Like in the case of my mother, nobody -- I
17 don't think I've heard anybody here mention that, you know,
18 how my mother lost her identity through that, you know, that
19 *Indian Act*, and that I only became entitled to become part of
20 my community in 1985 through the Bill C-31. And now, my son
21 is applying for Bill C-3 and, of course, we're waiting and
22 waiting.

23 I also wrote about, you know, how when my
24 mother's memory would come into my work. Like, I would like
25 to read you this.

1 "I would also remember the next-to-last time
2 I saw my mother. She was supposed to visit me that time she
3 got out of jail. The Mother's Day card I bought with satiny-
4 feel floral teapot, I pressed the sponge-padded sponge up and
5 down, milking the belly teapot for a mother-daughter feel.
6 I, just for the fun of it, dust off her memory, brush her
7 bones, ever tickly, make her fancy laugh again and again. I
8 set up archaeology expeditions, but digging up mom takes
9 work, news of where did she go. My birth mother, I find
10 stuck in a heart-shaped pin cushion she made. I talk
11 straight to the very needles. She left memories in me, deep
12 hurts, stabbed my heart, velvet soft and worn." So, I have
13 that precious, you know, pin cushion she made. It's part of
14 my alter, my shrine for my mother.

15 I feel that I have been able to express, as
16 much as I could, the pain of other women, young women. And,
17 in this one, I ended it off with, you know, this kind of
18 sensitivity I developed when I heard these social workers
19 talking about this young girl they had found on the edge of
20 the city, and they wouldn't acknowledge that she was a
21 native woman, probably Saulteaux. As I found out later, she
22 was from a reserve next to us.

23 So, I had to sit with them in that activity
24 we had. But, as I wrote here, "I found the dead girl in me.
25 She wasn't killed by my words."

1 So, I'm not sure when to work in the
2 recommendations, but I would like to ask my son and friends,
3 support people here, just to say something if they would
4 like or else -- I don't know how we're going to do that, if
5 we would have a time for recommendations separate from what
6 I would like to say?

7 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** If you're okay with
8 it, then we can let each of the family members do what you
9 just did, and then we can come back and ask for
10 recommendations.

11 **MS. MARIE BAKER:** Okay.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Is that good?

13 **MS. MARIE BAKER:** Yes.

14 **MR. FOREST FUNMAKER:** Thank you. I was
15 thinking about this moment, supporting my mom. And, she
16 emailed me the notes. And, as I looked at the computer
17 screen and I was reading, it was like, I guess, looking at a
18 whole history that I never really got to know.

19 The image that I have of my grandma is from a
20 few photos that are etched in my mind. And, I've been to
21 the reserve of Little Saskatchewan, and I've forged
22 connections with my cousins and all of that, and it's been
23 good. I mean, I have that as a part of who I am.

24 There's a part where when I was 12, they all
25 speak Anishinaabe, and it's such a beautiful language, and

1 they speak it just like nobody's business, you know. And,
2 I've been brought up in the city, probably mostly in
3 Minneapolis, and there's place names there. And, one of the
4 lakes is called Nokomis, Lake Nokomis.

5 And so, I remember one time I was going to
6 college. And, we were driving around in this old Chevy
7 Nova. And, we had gotten some beer, and we were just
8 sitting out there, and it was just like so peaceful to be
9 there. And, my mom, being who she is as a writer, inspired
10 me to write poetry myself.

11 So, I went back in time when I got a little
12 bit older. I remember that time of writing that poem while
13 being on that beach of Lake Nokomis. And, this is probably
14 the only connection that I would have with this woman, was
15 right then and there.

16 And, after the experience that I wrote of
17 this poem, basically saying that her living in an urban
18 experience was similar to mine, and that I didn't really
19 realize I was retracing some of the steps that she probably
20 had done throughout her life.

21 Living in the urban experience is tough.
22 And, I know for families, you know, you want to be close
23 together. You want to have that kinship. I didn't have
24 that kinship, so I had to, like, make it up. And, I think
25 that's the worst part about it, is not having, you know,

1 that person to give you those gifts, that language, to show
2 you, you know, to share with you the laughter, the stories,
3 you know.

4 You know, I think for all these women that
5 are missing and all of the kids that have to suffer as a
6 result of that loss, or these families that have to not have
7 that piece, the part of what we do to continue on, I want
8 there to be something for my kids to understand.

9 But, then, it seems like there's already a
10 piece missing for them as well, that I can't fill that void
11 for them because they won't be able to experience that
12 person for their influence on their lives. And, I think
13 that through that void, I'm not having that in my heart.

14 It's tough, because you're always wanting to
15 have that kind of experience with that person, good or bad,
16 you know. It's like I take dysfunctional at this point, you
17 know, to have that kind of experience with somebody. And
18 so, even to have a little bit of a relationship would be
19 good, you know. But, just not to have it makes it hard,
20 harder to really go through.

21 And, you know, through all these things that
22 I've gone through, I had to stick to my own kids who are
23 distant. A couple are in British Columbia. One is in
24 Saskatchewan. And, I don't know. I don't know if they are
25 victims of this. I don't know if I filled them with enough

1 love. I don't know. That comes from the void. I can only
2 trust.

3 And, as you heard my mom talk about, like to
4 fight, that's probably the biggest part that I take with all
5 of this, is to carry on and to move forward. And now, I
6 work with kids. And, every day, you know, it's like I want
7 to hype them up to be looking forward to their futures, to
8 treat people nice, to appreciate what they have around them
9 in this life, to know that, you know, they have a religion,
10 a spiritual practice connection with the land, the spirits.
11 Our gods are all around, you know. And, I feel that, you
12 know, I really like what you guys got, you know, here for
13 this kind of procedure, to help people to understand that
14 there can be something done.

15 So, I just wanted to let you know that, and
16 my kids know that, you know, I think our Indian people, you
17 know, need to go forward. And, that's what I wrote to them
18 in this, whatever it is, Chat Room or Snapchat or something
19 like that. I'm not real sure about it. Getting older now,
20 so it's all starting to get foggy, what the names are for
21 all these things.

22 But, I did try to relate, you know, like, you
23 know, as if every moment is my last or I don't see them
24 tomorrow. Try to be as truthful as possible with them today
25 to say "I love you. I love you."

1 And for them, you know, I think the biggest
2 part, and the biggest part is to experience the joy, the
3 pain of our lives. And, you know, we will survive these
4 moments and grow stronger from them. So, I guess, that's
5 what I was trying to write to them. And so, I basically
6 said that to them.

7 It's, like, "I want you to understand that
8 your grandma is going through a thing with this inquiry, to
9 talk about your grandmother." And, they're going to need to
10 know that, you know, you never had that experience. I never
11 had that experience with her. And, all I knew was that she
12 had possibly committed suicide and jumped off a bridge.

13 The only thing I kind of thought was, you
14 know, that maybe she had partied too hard, and just then
15 somebody had done something to her and threw her off of that
16 bridge into the water. I don't know if it was by the
17 railroad tracks.

18 And then when you travel around, you feel,
19 like, is this where she was at? Those kinds of things. You
20 wonder about these stories. And, I guess just trying to
21 find a connection, you know, has been part of the hardest
22 part for me as a young man. And, even growing and knowing
23 what my mom has searched for all this life, you know, to get
24 to that connection with her mom. But, you know, she even
25 saw her, you know.

1 And, I didn't even have that chance to be
2 with her, to sip tea or to, you know, have her make, I don't
3 know, moose meat soup or, you know, to have those things. I
4 never had that kind of warmth with her. I can only imagine
5 it now. And, that's what I wanted to make sure that my kids
6 understood that, you know, we can't go back, but hopefully,
7 they'll go forward with strength.

8 So, I think I'll end it there, but yes, I
9 love my grandma.

10 **MS. MYRNA WHITEHAWK:** My name is Myrna.
11 Marie is my dear friend. I think we've been friends for
12 probably nearly 35 years. And, I tell you Marie is one
13 exceptional person. Despite her talk here today, we've
14 journeyed a lot through our discussions on the loss of her
15 mother and the searching for her mother. I've helped her in
16 ceremony, in looking for her mother. We've travelled, like,
17 to Ontario where her mother used to go pick berries. We've
18 journeyed with some of her relatives to Little Sask.

19 And, she really developed a good relationship
20 with my mother, because my mother was probably the same age
21 as her mother. And, my mother was very close and very fond
22 of Marie. And, Marie also really, really taught us a lot,
23 because I was raised on the reservation and Marie was raised
24 in the urban area. And I went to residential school; she
25 didn't.

1 So, we were a good pair in terms of my
2 telling her probably what her mother experienced in
3 residential school, and also through the stories from my
4 mother. So, she was kind of able to gather some of that
5 knowledge of likely what her mother experienced, and also
6 told her, you know, "I think your mother was probably very,
7 very smart because of what -- where you're at today."

8 Marie is a very, very smart woman, very
9 intellectual. She taught me a lot about reading, being a
10 rebel, being sceptical. And, that's really helped me in my
11 work politically, in my writing. You need people like
12 Marie, you know. She's helped a lot of my family. She's
13 helped a lot of women in Winnipeg.

14 She's dragged me to Oklahoma, to a writer's
15 conference, to North Dakota where we were cooks for the Sun
16 Dance lodge-keeper, so all those journeys. She tends to
17 think less of herself, but really, she's an incredible woman
18 and I'm really, really proud of her.

19 And, some of the recommendations I'd like to
20 make are -- I came from Saskatchewan last night, and I was -
21 - because Marie and I were talking about her presentation.
22 And, I said to her, you know, "As we speak," I said, "our
23 women are being murdered right now, and our women are being
24 exploited sexually by drug dealers, by johns and by our own
25 people."

1 And, also, when you look historically at the
2 murder of our women, our women have been murdered since the
3 White Man came here, because there's records of the murders
4 of our women, and it goes back to the 18 -- 1700's that I
5 found records where no action was taken against the people
6 that murdered the women.

7 And, I would really like this Commission to
8 look at some kind of a telephone line where people can phone
9 in to talk about and report about their missing and murdered
10 women and men, because right now, people are dying in our
11 communities in high numbers. It's genocide going on with
12 drugs, and nobody is saying anything. Health Canada has no
13 concern. A lot of mental health issues, no concern.
14 There's no action today as we speak here, and our people are
15 dying.

16 I'm sure that if you set up a confidential
17 line, you would get a lot of reports. It's just that I
18 think we need to take action, rather than having -- rather
19 than just sitting here and talking about some of the
20 missing, murdered women. Right now, it's happening in our
21 own communities and probably in the urban areas. Thank you
22 very much.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** We're going to afford
24 each family to say their first part and then come back; is
25 that okay? Yes, if we could give it back to -- oh, sorry.

1 **MS. PATRICIA CARIBOU:** So, then, I'll speak
2 now just to finish off my part then. And then it'll go on
3 to Sue?

4 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yes.

5 **MS. PATRICIA CARIBOU:** Okay. So, yes. So,
6 it's been my privilege and honour to know Marie. And, she
7 gave me one of the greatest gifts yesterday because her and
8 I met on a professional basis where I am a clinical social
9 worker, and an Indigenous healer, I call myself. And, we
10 met many, many times, and it's always been a privilege to
11 learn from you, Marie.

12 She worked for hard to grieve and to honour
13 her mother. And, I've seen the way she can use her words is
14 just -- it's amazing. I would recommend -- the gift that
15 she gave me was that she said there's people that came into
16 her life that have nurtured her, and she counts me as one of
17 those people.

18 And so, that is what I would recommend. I
19 would recommend that there would be helpers out there that
20 would really love our people, love each other, love our
21 people, not for a dollar, but to really care for them and
22 believe in them. And, that's what she said to me yesterday.
23 She said, "You always accepted me," and I did, and I do.
24 And, a lot of times, we don't have that kind of care, that
25 kind of -- for our own people.

1 And so, that's my recommendation is that we
2 have whatever it takes, the clinical counselling, the
3 ceremonies. And, for myself, I do Reiki and I do Hawaiian
4 Healing Arts that our people deserve to have everything to
5 heal and to love and to be whole once again. *Chi-migwetch.*

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, if we could come
7 to the other families, so they can share too, please?

8 **MS. SUE CARIBOU:** Hi. For me, the justice
9 have failed me right from the start. My mom gave me up
10 because of residential school, and I'm grateful. I was
11 angry for a long time, but I'm grateful because I had two
12 families, two moms. They denied my real mother education,
13 because she had some kind of disease. But, they took me
14 anyways to residential school.

15 So, I experienced a sober, wonderful life
16 with my auntie and that my real mother gave me up, too. I
17 had a beautiful home in High Rock where my mom had eight
18 gardens and one with all vegetables. We built our own log
19 cabin as a family, my brothers and sisters.

20 And then they took my brother, my real
21 brothers and sisters, to residential school. So, my real
22 mother turned to be an alcoholic. She was very abused,
23 abused relationship. And, both my real mom, my dad, were
24 murdered in 1979.

25 My mom took me back when my late brother,

1 Ovik (phon), was born. I ended up being a young mom at age
2 eight, because my parents were alcoholics. Sometimes, my
3 mom was used as a target with a gun, and I wouldn't let my
4 baby late brother see that. I would always take my baby
5 brother for a picnic or camp out, blueberry picking. He was
6 my first child, my late bro, and I still haven't begun to
7 heal for him, because the justice system failed him also.

8 His baby, my eight-year-old niece, was
9 murdered because they failed my baby brother. They kept
10 taking my nephew to the nursing station. My brother knew
11 there was something wrong with him, but they just kept
12 sending him home. My baby brother died five months after my
13 eight-year-old niece was murdered.

14 Then my niece, Tanya Istil (phon), the
15 justice system failed her. We had a lot of broken promises
16 on her disappearance. While I was searching for my niece,
17 Tanya, I lost my home. I gave all my residential money to
18 my kids. I didn't spend a penny in any negative way. I
19 thought that residential money was a slap on the face,
20 because I'm still affected.

21 I have arthritis. I have broken bones. I
22 have got scars all over my head. And, I've asked for so
23 much help from governments, from organizations. I got
24 receipts, original receipts, where I bought my home for my
25 children and my grandchildren, because they never

1 experienced what a beautiful life you can have when you just
2 live off the Mother Earth. I wanted that for my kids.

3 I complained to the RCMP to help me. I
4 complained to the Legislative Building. I turned to a lot
5 of people. Nobody bothered to ask me for my receipts,
6 bothered to want to help me, because I'm going against a
7 white man that took my home, my children's home, my
8 grandchildren's home.

9 I still have my original receipts here. And,
10 my kids, they got robbed of everything that I suffered for
11 in residential school. I wanted my kids to have something
12 that I suffered. White man has it still to this day. I'm
13 not allowed to go to Lekabon (phon).

14 That white man molested his granddaughter.
15 Now, if it was a native man doing that, they would be locked
16 up. No, he's still out. He tried to kill me three times
17 for items; my cottage, my vehicles. I was left with the
18 clothes I had on, and that was it. He tried to kill me
19 three times, and he's still living comfortable in my kids'
20 cottage. His daughters have all my kids' furniture, all my
21 kids' vehicles.

22 They say that no Indian can ever afford
23 things like that. Well, I did something positive with my
24 residential school. I didn't want it. I wanted my children
25 to have a better life than what I did. My children never

1 got to meet their grandparents. My baby brother died of a
2 heartache. My brother-in-law, Bert, died of stress, cancer,
3 health problems, because my niece, of all the broken
4 promises.

5 I never grew up with a grandfather, because
6 he was murdered. A lot of my family, men, my nephews, my
7 late sister, they're all sweeping my family under the rug,
8 giving the white man my home, my kids' home, their vehicles.

9 And, again, different organizations are
10 fighting for this money. They're ripping our families apart
11 that are going through heartache after heartache. This is
12 missing and murdered. This is not about blood money. These
13 different organizations are ripping our family.

14 We're family. The families that have a loved
15 one missing or husband murdered, we are family now. We're
16 going through the same thing, but different organizations
17 pick and choose which family they want to help, which they
18 don't want, and I'm sick of that. I'm so sick of my loved
19 ones being used for blood money. I call that blood money.

20 And, the white man still has my children's
21 home. I can show you all the receipts, every proof I have
22 that what I did with my residential money. He's still
23 living comfortable. He'll still be able to spend time with
24 his grandchildren that he sexually molested. Now, if it was
25 a native doing that, he'd be put in jail for years.

1 I want my children to have a better life than
2 what I had. I've been going through this since 1970-ish.
3 It's 2017, and I'm only still talking about my parents,
4 Tanya. I don't have -- I'm not given enough time to talk
5 about my other loved ones that were murdered. This concerns
6 the men and the boys. They're human beings.

7 I just had a nephew missing last week. Thank
8 God that my family, the Hart family, are going to have a
9 closure. But, I'm going to go home to a funeral again.
10 It's tragedy after tragedy. And, we're still going through
11 tragedies, us families, missing and murdered families here,
12 because these organizations are tearing us apart. They're
13 using us. They're using our loved ones like blood money.

14 Some families that used to come up to me and
15 talk to me, now they're just brushing me off, because this
16 organization is helping them better than this organization
17 that I'm dealing with. You know, that's called blood money
18 you guys are taking. It's sad that my loved ones still have
19 to go through this tragedy.

20 All the families in here, all the ones that
21 are missing their families, no closure, and their families
22 that have been murdered, they're still going through tragedy
23 after tragedy, because they're being ripped apart.

24 We're all humans. We should all come
25 together and work as one, one as whole, work together. How

1 else are we going to ever get anything done to find our
2 loved ones, to solve these unsolved murders, if we keep
3 being ripped apart by different organizations, by different
4 leaders, broken promises that we get? We get these promises
5 to make us happy, to shut up for a while, just like the
6 residential money. It was thrown, like, to us, to shut up,
7 a slap in the face.

8 But, I'm still suffering every day with my
9 health, and my loved ones that were murdered, and still no
10 closure today. I have health issues. I have to have a
11 heart spray. I have high blood pressure. I have restless
12 nights, not knowing where my loved one is.

13 I'm scared of that white guy to come and
14 finish me off one day, because I'm fighting him for the
15 cottage. I've got no money to fight. How can I fight him
16 when he has everything? But, meanwhile, I've got receipts
17 here, written document that no white person will even bother
18 to look at, take that time to look at my -- what I did with
19 my residential money. I wanted a better life, something for
20 my children and my grandchildren. That got stolen from
21 them, too, like our stolen sisters and our stolen brothers
22 still happening.

23 I want justice. I want the next generation
24 to have a better future than what I had in my whole life.
25 I'm 52, and I was a young mom at eight years old. And, I've

1 lost a lot of loved ones because of what we're going
2 through, murdered loved ones, nobody charged for my loved
3 ones. Nobody cares. They can just keep doing this to us
4 all the time.

5 They think it's okay that they get so much
6 money to -- for what? Where is that money going to go? It
7 sure ain't going to go to any of my loved ones. I've got to
8 beg to go home to another loved one that was missing. I've
9 got to always beg to go home to a funeral when a loved one
10 is murdered or missing. Meanwhile, you guys are given a lot
11 of money.

12 And, my kids have no grandparents. Their
13 dad, my late husband, the family, how come they weren't
14 charged for body snatching? They stole my late husband's
15 body and took off with my husband's body while my kids were
16 running after their dad.

17 Nobody charged those people. Nobody ever
18 charged my ex for trying to kill me three times. Nobody is
19 looking for my niece. My God, I'm just so tired, tired of
20 fighting for justice. My kids and my grandchildren and the
21 next generation, they deserve a better life, a better
22 generation than what we went through.

23 I was in '60s, foster home to foster home,
24 residential school to residential school, now missing and
25 murdered and a victim, and I'm still a victim, and all the

1 broken promises the government has given my family.

2 My sister Joyce is so angry. She don't even
3 want to be here because of the broken promises that the
4 government gives my family. Thirty-one days, they were
5 supposed to dig out the Brady landfill. They quit on the
6 day of my beautiful niece's birthday. Ten days. That's not
7 thirty-one days.

8 The white guy charged me for assault.
9 Meanwhile, he assaulted me. And then the police told me if
10 I sign these papers, he's not going to charge me. They'll
11 let me go. I can't even ask the police for help. I'm
12 terrified of the police, the way they treat -- they've been
13 treating me and my family. I don't trust. I don't trust
14 our law enforcement.

15 I always tell my kids, if anything happens to
16 mom, "You damn look into it, in the law enforcement. Don't
17 give up." They're always hiding. But, when it comes to a
18 white man doing harm to a native, oh, shit, they celebrate.
19 They're letting him enjoy my children's home, my children's
20 struggle.

21 I made damn sure my kids graduated. I
22 volunteered at their schools. They taught me how to read
23 and write. Residential school never taught me anything but
24 abuse. I wasn't in a classroom long enough to learn
25 anything. I told my kids to bring homework, teach mom how

1 to read and write. They became A+ students. And, I
2 volunteered to make soup and bannock in their schools. The
3 students were always looking forward to that.

4 I tried to turn my life the best way I can
5 for my kids, have a sober life, do something with that
6 residential slap in the money for my children. It got
7 stolen again, got taken away again.

8 My friend, my supporter, Belinda, she's the
9 only one that had helped me with a lawyer, to get a cab to
10 go to my appointments. She's been there for me 100 per
11 cent. And, any organization, she's not even in any
12 organization. She does it from her own heart. She has a
13 big heart. She's not after blood money.

14 I want my kids' home back. I want that man
15 charged for trying to kill me three times. I want my niece,
16 Tanya, to be searched. I want all those promises that they
17 promised us. I want a better future for the next
18 generation. I want the men and boys to start counting in
19 this missing and murdered, because they are humans.

20 Thank you, and one day, one day I tell my
21 kids, when I die, I'll find my loved ones. I'll show
22 whoever is still alive; I'll come to their dream. I want
23 some justice for our people. Now, let's start working
24 together as one, and quit tearing the families apart, and
25 put that money into good use, please.

1 **MS. MELISSA COOK:** I hope you guys can bear
2 with me. I'm just going to read what I wrote. I put some
3 time and effort into this, and I understand that we're
4 running late and there's more people to speak. In my
5 writing also, it's a very safe place for me.

6 My name is Melissa Cook. I'm from Fisher
7 River Cree Nation and Grand Rapids. My father is a
8 residential school survivor, and my mom attended the
9 Missionary School in Grand Rapids.

10 In April of 2007, I lived in the north end of
11 Winnipeg. By my own resolve, I was a patient at the Aikins
12 Street Clinic. I had gone there to ask for help with
13 compulsive coping behaviours that I had: drug abuse, self-
14 harming, night terrors, all resulting from sexual abuse from
15 my stepfather from the ages of eight to eleven, and physical
16 abuse from my biological father starting at the age of one.

17 At the age of 24, I had tried to press
18 charges against my stepfather, but the Crown prosecutor
19 refused to bring him back to Manitoba, because they didn't
20 want to pay. I was devastated.

21 Today, he walks free and he works for the
22 federal government as a systems engineer. He has the
23 highest security clearance that there is in the government
24 of Canada. And, I was not allowed to warn the two children
25 that he lived with or the women that he had taken on as a

1 wife.

2 In May and June of 2007, I was diagnosed by
3 three doctors, including the medical director of the Health
4 Science Centre, Dr. J. Simm, with Post Traumatic Stress
5 Disorder and an anxiety disorder as a result of the physical
6 and sexual abuse that I went through as a child.

7 On August 5, 2011, I had already left my
8 abuser at that time, because there were more than one
9 boyfriends and partners that I had. He was also a product
10 of the residential school system.

11 I was visiting a cousin in the northwest area
12 of the city. There was just the two of us, and we were
13 watching a hockey game. A woman showed up and she provided
14 me with marijuana that had been laced with something, and I
15 didn't know. I overdosed. I stopped breathing. I had a
16 grand mal seizure, and I was transported to the Seven Oaks
17 Hospital.

18 Despite the fact that I had no jacket, no
19 shoes, no money, I was asked to leave at 6:30 a.m. on that
20 cold fall night -- morning. It was dark and it was cold and
21 I was alone. Nobody knew where I was. And, I lingered in
22 the entrance because when I went outside, I was so cold, and
23 I had no shoes, and I didn't know what I was supposed to do
24 or where I was supposed to go.

25 So, I went back and I begged them to help me.

1 And, the worker at that time only got annoyed with me, but I
2 was persistent, because I didn't want to go walking by
3 myself. I still had the heart monitor stickers attached to
4 me. After a lot of begging and asking, I was granted a taxi
5 slip.

6 Two months ago, I received my reports from
7 that time that I asked for, and I determined that they had
8 my mother's name and number. They had my medical history,
9 including my doctor's reports saying that I had PTSD and
10 anxiety, and that I had been asking for help for many years.
11 And, they only thing they wrote, they chose to write on my
12 medical history was that I had a history of crack abuse, did
13 not ask if I was okay, and then they sent me walking. And,
14 those are their words; they sent me walking.

15 Fonassa Bruyere, Roxanne Fernando, Aurora
16 Finch, Terena Silva (phon), Carolyn Sinclair, Lorna
17 Blacksmith, Tanya Nepinak, Hillary Wilson, Penny Osborne,
18 were names of women that had been found within hundreds of
19 metres or had gone missing within miles of that place at
20 that time. The next month, they found a body right where I
21 was, where I was supposed to walk by. Sean Lamb was active
22 at that time. And, they told me that I had to walk with no
23 shoes and no money.

24 In the spring of 2012, I was involved in an
25 altercation with my same abuser, my ex-boyfriend, who had

1 stolen my purse, and it was at his residence and they called
2 the police on me. The police took me away, and I was sent
3 to the Martha Street, on Main Street.

4 The police beat me up. I had no jacket. I
5 had no purse because my ex had it, and they would not help
6 me. This is one numerous times that I suffered abuse at the
7 hands of the Winnipeg city police, berating me, abusing me,
8 sprained my wrist that night.

9 They took me away and after spraining my
10 wrist and roughing me up, which was so normal for us women
11 at that time and it still is, they told me that I had to
12 leave Martha Street with no charges at 4:00 a.m. It was
13 March. It was freezing. I had no jacket. I had no phone.
14 I had no money, and nobody knew where I was.

15 They made me walk from Main Street to North
16 Main, and I walked within 200 metres of Sean Lamb's front
17 door that night, and nobody cared, and nobody knew. And, I
18 later found out that's where they arrested him and that's
19 where he lived, and he was active. And, they were finding
20 bodies before and after that. But, I was nothing that night
21 to them. I knew not to go to the hospital. I knew not to
22 go to the police. I was alone.

23 "Were Known or Believe to Have Been Known
24 Prostitutes." "No Serial Killer." "Body Found in Winnipeg
25 Identified as a Prostitute." "No Link. No Connection."

1 These are all headlines from the newspapers and statements
2 from the Winnipeg city police at that time.

3 Tina Fontaine had also had run-ins with the
4 police days before she died, and they too disregarded her,
5 and she did end up dead. They failed her.

6 Cameron Greyeyes, this last summer, is the
7 girl that I work with. She was in the news because she was
8 missing. High risk for sexual exploitation is in the social
9 media and on the news, posters everywhere. The police
10 attended her residence while she was missing with seven
11 police cars and 14 officers, and not one of them recognized
12 her, said anything, and they left her there. Were they
13 really looking for her? I don't think so.

14 I survived, but barely. And since then, I've
15 had a son. And, I think of the women, my fallen sisters who
16 did not make it. And, I am them and they are me, and I'm
17 that girl, and I'm that woman. And, I'm here to fight the
18 silence, and I'm here to fight the status quo and the stigma
19 attached to what we do to cope with the unwanted and
20 uncalled-for abuse.

21 We cannot depend on the system, the health
22 system, the CFS system, the justice system, to help us. I'm
23 living proof and I'm here to tell you that today. They are
24 not designed to help us. While awaiting the inquiry, I had
25 a recent brush with the justice system. It has reminded me

1 that I am still at risk, and that I may always be. And, I
2 will always have to treat myself with kindness and
3 understanding when they won't. And, I need to treat myself
4 with empathy. And, this is what is missing in my journey
5 with these systems and my abusers. To me, it is one and the
6 same.

7 We need to teach the youth what has happened
8 and about dependency on these sick systems, these sick
9 systems, these power-and-control systems. We, as First
10 Nation people, need to take our power back. And, that's the
11 message that I'm here today -- here for today, and that's
12 the message that I repeat to our women and girls that still
13 feel alone and still struggle. And, one-by-one, we can
14 begin to change the status quo, and all of the loss and
15 death will never be in vain.

16 And, I'd also like to say thank you for
17 finally treating me with dignity and respect by allowing me
18 to come here and giving me a safe place for me and my
19 children, because that's honestly something that I'm not
20 used to from the government.

21 And, when I was 24, I wrote my father a
22 letter, putting his abuse of me back onto him, handing it to
23 him. And, that's what I'm doing right now, and I'm handing
24 this abuse back, because I refuse to carry it any longer.

25 And, the women and the girls that I deal

1 with, I repeat this to them over and over. And, I really
2 acknowledge the message from this lovely lady sitting over
3 here and the one sitting next to me that lateral violent is
4 rampant in our organizations, in the government and the
5 prison system, and that until we address it openly and
6 honestly, that it's not going to go away. Thank you very
7 much.

8 **MR. VERNON MANN:** Hello. I'm Vernon Mann.
9 Tanya and I had a relationship on and off for 15 years. We
10 have two children together. My son is now 20 and my
11 daughter is 16. And, on September 13, 2011, she went
12 missing from the west end in Winnipeg. About eight months
13 later, Sean Lamb was arrested, and he admitted guilt to
14 murdering Tanya, along with two other girls.

15 And then afterwards, when going to court,
16 they stayed the charges against him because, apparently,
17 they stayed -- they paid him for a statement, so a statement
18 couldn't be used in court. And, they started, I guess,
19 denying the charges. So, they just stayed the charges, and
20 there's nothing ever since that's come from it.

21 They were supposed to search the Brady
22 landfill, and that was just -- it seemed like it was just to
23 shut us up, and they did just a quick search that didn't
24 really turn up anything. And even when we were going there
25 before the search happened, one of the detectives even told

1 me, and he said right to me, he said, you know, "Once we do
2 a search, that's it. We're not searching no more. We're
3 not going to search any other places. This is it." So, we
4 were totally failed by our justice system, not only with the
5 search, but with Sean Lamb as well. Now my kids have to
6 grow up without a mother.

7 It's just, I don't know. I feel like we've
8 just been failed by all of it. And, we still have nowhere
9 we can go to pay our respects to her, because it's a
10 landfill. It's a garbage dump. Nobody wants to have to go
11 and visit their loved one at a garbage dump. I just feel
12 like something needs to be done. Nobody should have to go
13 through this.

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, I just want to
15 thank everyone for sharing your story, but I would also like
16 to pass the microphone back now to the family members for
17 their recommendations. And, can I start with you, Marie?
18 If they have any additional ones they'd like to make, please
19 feel free to do so.

20 **MS. MARIE BAKER:** *Migwetch* for asking for the
21 recommendations. And, although I said I didn't like this
22 inquiry, I do feel like I -- like, I feel honoured that I
23 can say something on behalf of our missing relatives.

24 I want to recommend that there be an actual,
25 whatever they call it, research, investigation into the

1 term, "trauma." In a way, it's just been thrown around, and
2 it's not clear to people what that might mean. And, I also
3 feel that, you know, that whole issue has to be addressed in
4 terms of what people might need for their health care.

5 And, as far as the Commission, even though I
6 said I don't believe in it, I would -- like I said, I
7 wouldn't mind seeing some cash, you know. My friend told me
8 at a residential school, the residential school survivors
9 received, I think it was -- the way she mentioned, it was
10 \$10,000.00 right out, for them to pay for healing.

11 And, I said, "I didn't know that. I thought
12 they were just getting, you know, another type of
13 compensation but that, you know, they would get extra for
14 healing." And, I actually got something for that, too, like
15 as a survivor. I was a child of a survivor. That's why I
16 got a year of help from Pat. And, I would say, you know, in
17 a specific recommendation that at least a year or how many
18 sessions that would be, would be available. And, I know
19 others have said other kinds of help need to happen.

20 Right now, I'm a member of a group called
21 Medicine Bear Beadwork Group. And, how it has helped me is
22 it's been part of a family experience for me. We don't talk
23 that much about things that happened to our families. But,
24 as it turns out, many times we just -- we'd have a dinner
25 together, and we work on different kinds of beadwork and

1 other kinds of crafts, like making skirts, and we could help
2 going to certain ceremonies.

3 I can say I'm very appreciative, because I
4 don't always have the money to pay for transportation to go
5 to sometimes the ceremonies. But, it's just the idea that
6 we're together, that we're building family among ourselves.

7 So, I would like to see more activities like
8 that, funded and encouraged. I know there is one that I
9 thought is part of a larger, you know, concern for me. I
10 would like Winnipeg to have a senior centre, an Indigenous
11 senior centre. I might not even be around long enough to
12 enjoy it, so you better hurry on that one.

13 I feel that through this centre, we could do
14 some work that I said was intergenerational, especially for
15 me, like, because I have done this myself, the story
16 telling. I know some people would say, "Ah, it's just
17 entertainment," you know, whatever. But, no, to me it's
18 like helping our people have a vision, because these are --
19 you know, there were stories that helped me survive, and I
20 was so glad that I heard these different stories.

21 They didn't all come from -- you know how
22 some people think, oh, it has to be a super Indigenous, you
23 know, traditional," and they go on and on. But, I found
24 especially other Indigenous writers had stories that they
25 could share. And, I had several that helped me. I have a

1 vision of my mother and, I guess, how I could, you know,
2 have this vision of her coming home or being brought home.

3 One of them is from the women in the
4 southwest. There are stories there they call -- it's about
5 a yellow woman society, and that if someone does leave the
6 community, and there are stories of them leaving and coming
7 back. That is how they -- there are stories that honour
8 women like that.

9 And, I actually found out accidentally that
10 they do even have a clan that honours black sheep, because I
11 remember when I was there, and they said my mother was a
12 black sheep. After I said that, a bunch of them ran up to
13 me and said, "That's our clan."

14 So, I just -- I'm telling this, because there
15 are ways in which our people can bring teachings like this
16 to more people. But, that idea of grieving, like I said,
17 with the beadwork, we need a lot more activities like that,
18 like to commemorate our loss.

19 There was one. I still think it's, you know,
20 kind of far-fetched, but I want it anyway, is I want some
21 kind of acknowledgment at each band council of some of the
22 people that have gone missing or that have been murdered.

23 I also want, you know, some other ways in
24 which to commemorate our losses. One of my favourite ideas
25 is that there be a garden somewhere in Winnipeg where

1 families could go. And then mother prevention tactic.
2 Again, people say, "Well, what's that got to do with
3 anything?" But, to me, I think it's so important.

4 What I want in a lot of reserves is to have a
5 Grandma Safe House, that's what I would call it, where there
6 would be a place there. If somebody was experiencing, you
7 know, either violence or the threat of it, they might be
8 able to get to it. I'm not saying, you know, that it would
9 be maybe that easy to get there, but at least there could be
10 a place like that.

11 And, again, of course, the whole concept of
12 mediation in our community, not just because of the lateral
13 violence that's so common, but that some of these programs,
14 before they get funding, they should have a plan on how
15 they're going to mediate among the people that are using
16 their services.

17 We had a situation before that where it
18 seemed everybody was more equal, like, in terms of their
19 income. It's not that way anymore. If you don't have a
20 certain income, in many Indigenous communities, you're just
21 considered a bum, even maybe a welfare bum. And then, of
22 course, when you get older, you get a pension, so that's, I
23 guess, another kind of bum to them, you know, that you have
24 this limited income. There's very few supports for that.

25 So, they have to -- we have to look at our

1 attitudes towards each other and how to be more inclusive.
2 So, I would call that community or family building. We need
3 to support all these kinds of efforts, although it may seem,
4 well, what's a story got to do with helping anybody? But, I
5 am, you know, aware because I know the education system
6 well. There is nothing in there like that.

7 Even you go to these Indigenous Studies
8 programs, they don't even help our people get those skills
9 anymore. They say, "Oh, people died off that do that."
10 They don't realize that we can bring back, you know, those
11 skills and use them again, especially now we need, you know,
12 to see a vision for ourselves.

13 I guess there's all kinds of things can be
14 said about the police. I don't know why, even though I
15 don't like police, I would like to see more Indigenous women
16 working. Even if they weren't the cops on the beat, what if
17 they were just working in the offices?

18 I know I had to work at City Hall once, a
19 summer job, and I had a ride in the elevator with the
20 police. It was very difficult, because they use so much
21 cologne. I guess they're pigs, right, for some reason or
22 other. But, anyways, I used to suffocate or going up the
23 floor. Maybe there is something of -- take it easy on the
24 cologne, boys, you know? But, anyways, I -- well, I guess
25 that would be a recommendation. We have to find ways so

1 they have more humour, you know, some kind of humour.

2 I'm so glad I was with my son and my friend
3 here, because we were able to share some ideas and that,
4 that really help our, you know, ways of being in a group
5 like this when the tension is so high, and there's a lot of
6 intensity and it's anxiety-provoking. Well, me, I'd like to
7 see more T3's around. See my street influence here?

8 But, yes, I would like to say this way to
9 have these meetings, like people look at it and make
10 recommendations on how to, you know, handle these kinds of
11 meetings because, of course, there would be, as I said,
12 hopefully more meetings to look at grieving and just
13 information that we need about -- that follows from this
14 kind of community sharing.

15 I would like, again, just like as I go to
16 Medicine Bear, I would like to see, you know, where we can
17 meet together and make some of these commemorative things
18 like -- well, for me, I would like shrines that we might
19 have in our own home, pictures, you know, of our people.
20 We'd be encouraged and helped maybe to do that. So, I'd
21 like to see that improvement, because we've had so much
22 silence about all this. There has to be a way for us to
23 grieve more in public and to get that support that we need.

24 So, as I said, as I am a writer, of course I
25 want other people to write. I want all kinds of stories

1 that are there, so our young people can read what happened.
2 Okay, I know Canadians want to fiddle around with their
3 history, but our people need more stories about our history
4 and culture. And, this is not just for recreation. This is
5 because we don't have a school or educational system that is
6 giving them that.

7 Even when they had their residential school
8 thing, I thought, oh, we'll have stories from the people
9 that went to residential school. Not very much came out of
10 that. And then they're hiding it in places. They're
11 archiving it, they call it.

12 No, we need to recommend that our people are
13 getting, you know, help or, you know, building this
14 knowledge base on what we've experienced here, how our
15 people are healing, how they're, you know, being able to
16 rebuild their communities after this. And, I've learned
17 something from being here from the families. Some of them
18 have been able to share that.

19 So, again, that's what I'd like to see, is
20 recommending that there be some support systems after this,
21 you know, inquiry. I know they had that thing after Helen
22 Betty Osborne. Nothing happened hardly there. And then
23 when J.J. Harper got killed, the guy that killed him was a
24 police officer. All we hear, "Oh, he's drinking somewhere
25 in a bar in the southwest, you know, and seeing ghosts," you

1 know? So, whatever happened there? Like, did the police
2 ever do anything to change their attitudes, you know,
3 towards our people, be more respectful? No.

4 So, there's still like that unfinished work
5 there after all these inquiries and commissions that has to
6 happen, you know, follow -- make some of those -- put some
7 money into that. Maybe that is a good idea for Amazon to
8 come here as a book distributor. Maybe we can get them to
9 set up a special department for just Indigenous knowledge.
10 Maybe I could support then that idea of all those millions
11 of dollars going into something like that.

12 Winnipeg has so many native people. I feel
13 so embarrassed at times to say to the people, you know,
14 "Welcome to the worst city for native people," you know?
15 You know, it's so evident to me that there are, you know,
16 this apartheid going on. But, again, nobody really talks
17 about it.

18 So, I think we need to open up Winnipeg as a
19 better city, instead of just trying to act like, "Oh,
20 there's not that much racism here. You know, the magazine
21 was wrong, you know," and, you know, Maclean's Magazine.
22 Better the time spent to do even small little projects to
23 help, you know, to help build unity between people,
24 especially in these public institutions.

25 So, I think I've been, I think -- I hope I

1 haven't missed anything that was important in how we talked.
2 Of course, we need the programs upped, you know, like
3 treatment programs and, you know, all that and, of course,
4 decrease other ones, like child welfare, because they're
5 putting the girls on the street after they have been
6 apprehended and that.

7 So, there's a cycle there and some of it has
8 been identified. There's a way to change those
9 institutions. So, as I said, I don't know, ask -- I hope
10 that I didn't miss anything too important or that others can
11 add to whatever I am now recommending. So, Forest, would
12 you like to add a recommendation?

13 **MR. FOREST FUNMAKER:** I only get one?

14 **MS. MARIE BAKER:** Or two.

15 **MR. FOREST FUNMAKER:** Yes. When I come to
16 Winnipeg, I guess I'd like to see something more iconic or
17 symbolic throughout the city, celebrating Indian woman,
18 maybe outside of the city coming in from the south, maybe a
19 huge statue like they have in North Dakota or I think it's
20 South Dakota, where it's just monumental.

21 I think walking downtown on the sidewalks and
22 remember being in Vancouver, they have all of these bronze
23 structures of cows. Why can't we have bronze statues of
24 Indian women all around the City of Winnipeg?

25 I know we talked about earlier having

1 something in the Holocaust Museum in terms of -- I don't
2 know if it's an exhibit or a wing of a place to talk about
3 some of these stories on how does it work with Canadian
4 history and how that has been influenced?

5 I know that there needs to be some sort of
6 education project to elevate the plight of the Indian woman
7 in Canada, in the curriculum throughout Canada, schools,
8 whether they're run by the Department of Indian Affairs or
9 through any of these public schools. I mean, I think you
10 need to appreciate what we have here, instead of this
11 downgraded system of what Hitler used in the actual
12 Holocaust.

13 So, I think those things are a start. I
14 think there needs to be a taxing system economically to pay
15 for all of these programs. And, I would see major
16 corporations of possibly \$10 million above paying 4 cents on
17 the dollar.

18 I imagine that going back into a program to
19 help fund projects that would be important for women
20 organizations to proliferate in the inner cities, and then
21 to also help with reserves or bands to do an education
22 project there, if possible. But, I know that the funding
23 needs to come from those corporations that are making a lot
24 of money off of our water, land and resources, mineral or
25 otherwise.

1 I know there was one more. Designs all
2 across the city celebrating the symbology of our people,
3 what we've given in terms of blood for this territory alone.
4 And, I'm not sure about other cities across Canada, but I
5 know a lot of these companies need to pay for what they've
6 done to our people, to consider them even below third-class
7 citizens.

8 We're not dogs. We need to be elevated to a
9 new standard even to -- you know, I don't know what that
10 status is where, you know, you're an extinct animal almost,
11 but an extinct animal kind of status. I don't know. Like,
12 you're so up there that you can't touch them, you know?
13 And, I mean, that's the protection it needs. You can't
14 touch an Indian woman, and that should be standard
15 throughout all of Canadian law. Thank you. No claps for
16 that?

17 **MS. MARIE BAKER:** I already said my
18 recommendations, so I'm good.

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you.

20 **MS. MELISSA COOK:** I have a couple of
21 recommendations and trust me, I've spent a lot of time
22 sitting at home thinking about this, and this was before I
23 knew that I was going to be speaking here at the inquiry.

24 I spent some time at a group home that's
25 located outside of the city, and it's a Level 5 group home

1 for First Nation girls at risk, and I didn't last very long
2 there, I'll tell you that. The girls that I knew there, we
3 are all still in contact, and they love me and I love them.
4 But, it was problems with policy, procedure and management
5 why I didn't last.

6 I think that if you're going to have a First
7 Nation-gearred group home, you know, for girls at risk, that
8 the policies and the status quo there needs to be in line
9 with their hearing needs. There were sweats that sat idle,
10 and they had been idle for six years or so. There was a
11 sauna that could have been used to help them detox that we
12 weren't allowed to touch.

13 When I met with the licensing, head of
14 licensing, and I voiced my concerns about the in-house drug
15 use and how I was told more than once that I shouldn't --
16 that the management and house manager didn't like the
17 smudging in the house that the girls wanted, and that it
18 "smelled like piss," for example, was one comment that I
19 heard, that when I chose to speak up, basically I got
20 bullied out of there, and the girls got left behind. And,
21 when I tried to remain in contact with them, I had a letter
22 sent to me from the local RCMP that if I did choose to try
23 and save them, that legal action will be taken against me.

24 Being the rebel that I am, I didn't listen,
25 and nothing happened after that. But, I didn't agree with

1 that at all. I felt really horrible leaving them there.
2 And, I think that there are group homes that exist that are
3 like that, maybe there needs to be a review.

4 I think that all the people, the directors,
5 you know, of licensing, should be put in one room and be
6 reminded that that status quo is not acceptable. And, I
7 think that the girls who have gone missing and are murdered,
8 you need to cross-check them with those said places. And,
9 we need to see where the connections are that are missing,
10 because I know that, in fact -- I know that there are
11 connections there.

12 And, when I did speak my mind and say, "How
13 can we drive them and give them money, knowing that they're
14 going to purchase crystal meth and other things, and how can
15 we just sit here and let them do that?" And he -- and when
16 I tried to put a sign up, I was reprimanded. When I tried
17 to talk to them and ask them to try and take better care of
18 themselves and say, "No, this is not allowed on my shift," I
19 was reprimanded.

20 And, they didn't want to do the work, not all
21 of them but a majority of them. And, I -- when he sat
22 across for me and said, "You're not going to like this very
23 much because your hands are tied, and there's nothing that
24 you can do," I said, "Try me." And, that's why I'm here
25 today talking to you, because I will not just be silent.

1 All of their lives matter, and they don't
2 have anybody that is willing to stick their neck out and do
3 that for them. And so, that would be me. I really do think
4 that you need to look into that. I thoroughly believe with
5 my heart that you will find those connections there. And,
6 we can't afford to lose any more. If they want to get that
7 pay cheque every two weeks, then they need to do the work.
8 That's my main recommendation.

9 My second recommendation is that the Winnipeg
10 city police and the RCMP, they're not all bad cops. I have
11 met some good, but many of them are not where they should be
12 ethically. And, I think that they do need to be reminded
13 that they are not in charge of the world, that they have a
14 responsibility to the people.

15 And, if you're looking for extra funding,
16 don't pay them when they get charges and get sent home,
17 because I don't -- I never -- you know, I don't hear about
18 that as much as I do with the cop that, for example, killed
19 somebody while he's driving drunk on Main Street two weeks
20 ago or something, and gets sent home to sit and wait for a
21 pay cheque, who fled the scene, for example. And, that's
22 not the first time that happened, not even on that one
23 street.

24 But, I really care about my girls. I have a
25 17-year-old daughter. I fight for her life every day. I'm

1 like a mother bear. And, I feel that way about all the
2 girls that I have taken care of as a foster mother, place of
3 safety, worked within a group home or even just outreach on
4 my own time for suicide prevention. I was that girl, and I
5 understand what it's like.

6 So, I think we need to set a new tone that,
7 you know, they deserve a chance. They deserve a chance just
8 like, you know, we really need to rally around them. And, I
9 hope that something happens as a result of all of this money
10 and all of these meetings and all of this time that, you
11 know, with the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Truth and
12 Reconciliation and now this. Why are the numbers not
13 changing? That's the PTO's, too. That's what our
14 communities, too. Why are the numbers not changing?

15 And, I get frowned upon sometimes because of
16 my mouth and, you know, but I can get up in the morning, and
17 I could say that at least I'm trying and I'm fighting. So,
18 just thank you for having me again.

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** As far as
20 recommendations, I would say in the justice system, there
21 needs to be stiffer penalties. People shouldn't be getting
22 away with light sentences for murdering these girls, and
23 more sensitivity training for police officers dealing with
24 family, because I know when we dealt with them, there wasn't
25 -- it wasn't a very good experience at all. And then more

1 support for the children, of boys, girls. Thank you.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Commissioner Audette,
3 would you like to make any comments or have any questions?

4 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci*
5 *beaucoup*. Thank you very much. And, we have heard, we
6 recorded, and I asked one of our Elders here to close this
7 in a good way. And, lots of recommendations are for the
8 City of Winnipeg. We're allowed. And, some are for
9 Manitoba. Some are for Canada, what I've been hearing in
10 this circle.

11 And, there's also recommendations that will
12 resonate with what we've heard in Whitehorse and Smithers,
13 and next week, we are in Membertou, so we're showing more
14 and more and more that trend. So, thank you very much.
15 And, I hope we stay in touch through our health support,
16 legal or with me. I'm accessible. So, a lot of families
17 get in touch through Messenger. So, I am accessible, if you
18 have any questions, concerns or comments. And, me too, I
19 would like to stay in touch because there's things I've
20 heard today that how can we make sure that they're not
21 forgotten? *Merci beaucoup*. Thank you.

22 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Did you want to say a
23 few words to close it off? Did you want to close it off?

24 **MR. FOREST FUNMAKER:** All right. (Speaking
25 in Native language) for this experience to be a part of this

1 and to have all of you witness this important process for
2 all of these families that were present here today. I know
3 this is meaningful.

4 And, I know that you're going to go back to
5 your communities, whether here in the city or wherever
6 you're from, and you're going talk about these particular
7 issues, and you're going to educate your people, your young
8 people, and give them ideas about how to celebrate our
9 people, our relationships and especially our women.

10 And, I just wanted to make sure that we pray
11 in a good way for those things to happen in our communities,
12 and that only happens through a communication, and it
13 happens through our connection to our environment and to the
14 ceremonies that we use in a good way, using the tools that
15 we have, the stories we've been given, the language that is
16 still with us today.

17 And so, I want to say a few words in regards
18 to that, praising all of our spirits that we do have. And,
19 I just want to say to all of you out here, bless you, bless
20 you, bless you.

21 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** Could someone come
22 up?

23 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** To the families who are
24 here, who have shared your gift, there have been gifts that
25 have been prepared for you.

1 Commissioner Audette is now handing out eagle
2 feathers and cedar. The eagle feathers, the grandmothers,
3 the matriarchs of the Haida Gwaii, had harvested eagle
4 feathers for the Smithers gathering. And, they decided that
5 they were going to send out a call to harvest eagle feathers
6 for all the families who came in front of the inquiry. So,
7 that is what Michèle is handing out.

8 As well, from us, from the staff, from the
9 Commission, we are giving you little packets of seeds, and
10 we hope that you will plant those seeds and that you will
11 take pictures of growth as a new beginning, and share those
12 pictures with us when they do start to grow. So, I'm going
13 to let Commissioner Audette finish that.

14 We're going to do the closing prayers, and
15 I'm going to invite a family, a group from Sagkeeng, to come
16 up and show a blanket that they have been doing. And, while
17 they're doing that, no disrespect, but we're going to be
18 setting up the drum group for the final drum song.

19 So, we'll let the family move when they're
20 done, and then I'll ask Dolly to do a prayer. And, we'll
21 move some of the room around, so we can bring the drum group
22 in while you're talking about what you've done. And, of
23 course, by Annie.

24 **MS. ANNIE BOWKETT:** I just want to add on I
25 enjoyed the prayer of the Elder brother that's shared

1 already, so I acknowledge his prayer. But, I just want to
2 close it a little thought that this is, Lord, as we finish
3 off, these days, Lord, of sitting in this room, Lord, and
4 we just pray God that we seen, Lord, and we know that this
5 is just the beginning of new beginnings, that this is the
6 season of new beginnings, Lord. And, as we venture out
7 from here today, Lord, we pray God that your hand, Lord,
8 the good hand of God would be upon everyone and every
9 person that got to speak and testify in his place, that
10 your hand would be upon them, Lord, upon their families in
11 a good way.

12 And, Father, we thank you for this day and
13 everything that has been said and done over these last few
14 days. And, we ask all your blessings in the name of Jesus.
15 Amen.

16 **MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU:** Okay. Thank you all
17 very much. So, we're going to have the drum group move
18 over and set up over here where they were on -- oh, my God,
19 was it Monday? And then we're going to have now the family
20 come up. Oh, Annie, oh, my wonderful Annie, I've been so
21 good to you all week and yet I'm -- ah, okay, Annie.
22 Sorry, come on over here Annie. My poor little Annie, my
23 new BFF. So, Annie is going to do the prayer in Inuktitut.

24 **MS. ANNIE BOWKETT:** Before I say my prayers,
25 I want to say that the *Qu'liq* is -- the flame is off while

1 I was in my own hearing. I don't know when it turned off
2 by itself or -- but, anyway, thank you to all of you for
3 welcoming the *Qu'liq*. Thank you to all of you and thank
4 you to the people who have -- who were my supporters in my
5 hearing.

6 So, I'll say a prayer and I'll pass this to
7 Barbara, if she wants to say something. (Speaking in
8 Native language.)

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you, Annie. I
10 thought it was very symbolic. I just wanted to share with
11 Annie that the *Qu'liq* went out by itself after she shared.
12 So, it was like a closure for Annie that the *Qu'liq* said,
13 "You're done; I'm done," because it is her personal *Qu'liq*,
14 so it kind of follows her, so I thought it was very
15 symbolic.

16 And, I wanted to thank all the family
17 members. As hard as it is, you came forward. We need your
18 voice. So, thank you very much for each and every survivor
19 and family that came forward. So, I will be saying that.
20 (Speaks in Native language).

21 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Thank you all. Thank you
22 all. So, I'm sorry, Commissioner Audette had to just step
23 out for a minute. She's been in the room for a long time,
24 if you know what I'm saying. So, she should be back very
25 quickly.

1 I just wanted to announce that after the
2 closing, the closing song, honour song, at the Oodena
3 Circle, at the Forks where the sacred fire was lit on
4 Monday at sunrise, the fire will be put out before sunset.
5 There will be shuttles going all the time.

6 We had had a group of students come in,
7 youth come in on Wednesday. And, what they did is they did
8 an artistic expression. So, everywhere we go, a youth
9 group is brought together to give an artistic expression to
10 the Commission. The blankets were the beginning of that
11 artistic expression in the NWT -- no, I'm sorry,
12 Whitehorse, Yukon.

13 So, the youth are no waiting for the
14 Commissioners to come at the Oodena Circle, so that the
15 youth can present their artistic expression to the
16 Commissioners, prior to the closing and the retiring of the
17 sacred fire. So, if you would like to join the
18 Commissioners and the youth at the Oodena Circle, please
19 feel free. There is shuttles downstairs that will take you
20 directly to the Forks and bring you either -- and bring you
21 back here, if here's where you're going to go home.

22 So, okay. So, if you wouldn't mind excusing
23 me for one minute? She's been -- people just love her.
24 So, now, I have to go and she can't say "I have to do
25 something else." So, I'm going to go say it for her. I

1 will be right back.

2 Who is going to speak? Who wants to speak?

3 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** This is -- the ladies
4 here, this is their star blanket from Sagkeeng First
5 Nation, which has a population of close to 8,000 people.
6 So, the project was done within months, which has many of
7 our family, our girls on the blanket, the star blanket that
8 was hand-stitched by one of our community members, so she's
9 a *kookoo* herself.

10 The star blanket was hanging at Turtle
11 Lodge, in our community, so we'll be making another
12 duplicate as this will be hanging at the Catholic Church
13 and will be hanging at one of the Anglican Church. I think
14 the families also, with Jeannette here as one of the
15 mothers that lost her daughter, Fonassa, which is on the
16 blanket itself.

17 The lady -- one lady did an artistic -- had
18 a dream about the skirt, so she made 13 skirts which
19 represent, of course, the things on top of the turtle, the
20 shell. So, 13 skirts were made along with two men's ribbon
21 shirts and I think another -- I think three ribbon shirts
22 in total, but we -- I guess because we're -- you know,
23 there's a lot more, there'll be more pictures added again
24 to this star blanket.

25 So, I think our recommendation in Sagkeeng

1 is that, yes, we need tons of health supports, and we do
2 have that. We are very fortunate to have a lot of
3 resources. But, the thing is -- the next thing is the
4 monument for Sagkeeng that they've selected already, that
5 they have selected. And, we will send a letter forward to
6 Canada, to the Commissioners, that we're looking forward to
7 having that monument paid for, you know, and the band, of
8 course, will cost share the price of it, but most of it
9 should be paid, we're hoping, by the Commission.

10 So, that letter will come into the hands of
11 us as Chief and council and all the families to sign that
12 letter and give to the Commissioner as soon as possible,
13 that we could start the work as the monument itself is
14 already built.

15 And, in our community, they've built like a
16 beautification area in the bush where this monument will
17 sit, whatever direction the family say, if they want a
18 monument in the middle there, so that they have a place to
19 go to and do their grieving, do their mourning.

20 You know, these women come a long way in
21 the last three years, and I've seen them grow and then heal
22 and stuff like that, but there's a lot more work to be
23 done. And, I'm just hoping that, you know, we take -- our
24 women that are going through these things are going back to
25 the land, and that the land is helping them heal.

1 But, at this time, I'm so happy that you
2 gave us the time here. I didn't want to be rude. But, you
3 know, just this afternoon, Jeannette Bruyere here, our
4 sister, grandmother, just lost her granddaughter just this
5 afternoon. So, we didn't know how to handle this, but
6 we're trying to take her to the family ASAP.

7 But, I'll give the microphone over to Agnes
8 who is one of the -- her sister is on here -- not -- no,
9 Fonassa. And, I had a message as well for Tina Fontaine
10 from my note from Thelma. Thelma Fable (phon) wanted to be
11 here so badly, but her case is coming up in January, and
12 she was -- it was recommended that she not attend the
13 hearings, because they're dealing with Tina Fontaine's
14 issue in January and February.

15 So, Crown attorney asked that she not attend
16 these sessions. But, she said, "I so wish I could be
17 there, Marilyn. I so wish we could be there." But,
18 anyway, her blessings are with all of the families here as
19 well. And, she says, "I hope we find a place, a safe haven
20 in Winnipeg for our women to run to at night." That was
21 her message for all of you today.

22 So, I'll give this thing over to Agnes, to
23 say a few words on behalf of all the families. *Migwetch.*

24 **MS. AGNES ABRAHAM:** Hi. My name is Agnes
25 Abraham. I'm from the Sagkeeng First Nations. We've been

1 trying to get noticed, I guess, for the women that are
2 missing. We're trying to get some kind of resolution where
3 the police will actually listen to us when we're reporting
4 them missing.

5 I reported my sister, Sharon, missing in
6 2001, and they found her DNA in 2004. And, we're just
7 getting them to acknowledge that we are human beings. When
8 we have people missing, we want them to listen and want
9 them to do the search.

10 I had a cousin one time that had -- went
11 missing with a little white boy in Saskatchewan. That's
12 where they found them, because they were abducted from
13 Winnipeg. But, all the publicity went onto that little
14 white boy. And, the little cousin didn't even get hardly
15 any recognition for him being there, and he's the one who
16 got the little boy to escape with him from the abductor.

17 But, yes, I just want to say that we have to
18 keep on fighting for these missing women. They died very
19 tragic deaths. Sharon was on the Pickton farm and my cries
20 weren't heard. I kept begging them to search for her. We
21 had some traditional men, I know a lot of traditional men
22 in B.C., and they're the ones who helped to try to find
23 her.

24 And, they had three inspections to go check
25 on that farm. A woman was stabbed, another one was raped,

1 and they wouldn't go check it, not until the third one.
2 And, when they were walking down by the trailer, and the
3 police officer looked down and he seen part of -- half of
4 that lady's skull in that pail, and that's when they did
5 the investigations. They started searching on the farm.

6 And, right now, we have another girl in the
7 same. It's hard. It's really hard, knowing that these
8 women are suffering so hard. And, a lot of them went very,
9 very violent deaths. And, we can't stop fighting for them.

10 And, this is the coat that was made. It was
11 hand-stitched. It was hand-stitched by one of our people
12 on reserve, and this is our gift to the missing and
13 murdered women. Thank you very much.

14 **MS. DEBBIE REID:** Thank you very much. It's
15 beautiful. Okay. Thank you very much. So, I'd ask if
16 you'd like it to be held up while the drum song goes on or
17 whether -- yes? Okay, perfect. Take Us Home.

18 **(MUSICAL PRESENTATION)**

19 --- Upon adjourning at 15:38 p.m.
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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shirley Chang, Court Transcriber, hereby certify that I have transcribed the foregoing and it is a true and accurate transcript of the digital audio provided in this matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shirley Chang', is written over a horizontal line.

Shirley Chang

January 19, 2018

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