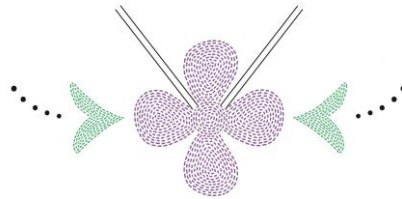


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Edmonton Inn, Wildrose Ballroom
Edmonton, Alberta**



PUBLIC

Thursday November 9, 2017

Public Volume 25:

**Edward Lavalley, Daniel Powder & Roxanne Roan,
In relation to Madeline Margaret Gignac;**

**Lorna Martin, Gail Kreiser Leech, Sharon Patterson, Brenda St.
Savard, Joyce Eagle & Arlene Pearson,
In relation to Mary Jean Kreiser;**

Berna Barore, In relation to Ruth Nora Cocks

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APPEARANCES

| | |
|---|---|
| Assembly of First Nations | Non-Appearence |
| Government of Alberta | Ashley Gelinas (Student-at-Law) Laura MacLean (Student-at-Law) |
| Government of Canada | Christine Ashcroft (Legal counsel) |
| Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women | Non-appearance |
| Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, AnânuKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association Inc., Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, Manitoba Inuit Association | Non-appearance |
| Women of Metis Nation / Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak | Alexandria Winterburn |

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel and representatives are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Edmonton Inn and Convention Centre - Wildrose Ballroom (Public #2).

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| Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox | |
| Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Emily Mesher | |
| Registrar: Tasha-Dawn Doucette / Bryan Zandberg | |
| Commissioner of Oaths for the Province of Alberta: | |
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| Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Irene Morin | |
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| Registrar: Bryan Zandberg | |
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1
Edward Lavallee,
Daniel Powder and Roxanne Roan
In relation to Madeline Margaret Gignac

Edmonton, Alberta

---Upon commencing on Thursday, November 9, 2017 at 9:41
a.m.

Hearing # 1

Witnesses: Edward Lavallee, Daniel Powder and Roxanne Roan

In Relation to Madeline Margaret Gignac

Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson

Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox

Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Emily Mesher

Registrar: Tasha-Dawn Doucette / Bryan Zandberg

Commissioner of Oaths for the Province of Alberta: Jeff

Weigl

MS. JENNIFER COX: So, Mr. Commissioner, I
would like to present to you Ed Lavallee, who's on my
immediate -- on my left. Beside him is Daniel, and beside
her is Roxanne. Ed is looking to provide a promise on a
Feather.

So, Mr. Registrar, if you could assist me.

Here you go.

EDWARD LAVALLEE, Affirmed

MS. JENNIFER COX: (Indiscernible) you can
have the microphone.

MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE: Did you want me to
begin?

MS. JENNIFER COX: Yes, Ed, if would you like

1 to begin by telling the Commissioner a little bit about
2 yourself.

3 **MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE:** Right. My name is Ed
4 Lavallee. I'm -- I'm -- I want -- I wish to tell the story
5 of my sister. One of the individuals that has affected --
6 affected with this terrible -- terrible -- terrible thing
7 that has been going on in Canada for many years. I know
8 that it's just -- just recently that a Commission has been
9 established for -- for missing and murdered Aboriginal
10 women across the country. This -- this process has been
11 going on for far -- far too long.

12 And I am happy that the Canadian government
13 has -- has decided -- actually forced by our women and our
14 Aboriginal leaders who -- who establish this Commission to
15 find out why -- why this terrible thing is happening across
16 the country with our Aboriginal women across Canada. It's
17 a shameful -- shameful thing that is happened in Canadian
18 society, and has -- it has to be told.

19 I -- but I want to tell you our story. My
20 name is Ed Lavallee. I -- I live here in Edmonton, but I'm
21 originally from Saskatchewan, from the Sturgeon Lake First
22 Nation in Saskatchewan, and our family is -- came from --
23 we were originally classified as Métis.

24 In -- in Saskatchewan we grew up in a
25 community called Fish Lake. My father was Antone (ph)

3 Edward Lavallee,
Daniel Powder and Roxanne Roan
In relation to Madeline Margaret Gignac

1 Lavallee, he was a Métis trapper. And my mother was
2 Bernadette Rabbitskin (ph) from the Big River First Nation,
3 and they met in the late 1930s, and created a beautiful
4 family of 12 children. And I -- along with my deceased
5 sister, Madeline, that's one of the -- Madeline is the one
6 that we want to tell you about.

7 She is the second -- the eldest of 12 members
8 of our -- our family that grew up -- actually my
9 grandfather, Louis (ph) Lavallee, was a trapper and also
10 a -- a trader in Northern Saskatchewan, and lived in
11 Lavallee Lake in Northern Saskatchewan, and -- and lived in
12 what is now called the Prince Albert National Park. But
13 when that park was established in 1928, then a further
14 expanded to 1938, all families that lived within the
15 boundaries of that -- that park had to leave -- forced to
16 leave the -- the boundaries of now the Prince Albert
17 National Park, and of course, our -- I -- our family -- my
18 -- my father's family, and his brothers had to -- were
19 scattered throughout the Northern Saskatchewan.

20 My father took his family to a place called
21 Stoney Lake, gradually moving to Big River for a while, Big
22 River reserve. Because he was not -- he was not a First
23 Nations. He was Métis. He could not live on -- you could
24 not live on reserves. We lived briefly at Little Red River
25 reserve in Saskatchewan, and then at that time the -- the

4 Edward Lavallee,
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In relation to Madeline Margaret Gignac

1 Métis were living as off reserve -- off -- road allowance
2 in families and but the -- the -- the CCF government at
3 that time heard the plight of the Métis and gave us a
4 little community called Fish Lake. It's in the around Emma
5 lake area, and there now two section reserve community, 12
6 families moved onto this -- this community called Fish
7 Lake, and that is where we grew up as a family. We -- we
8 lived in a -- in a log cabin house and with our brothers
9 and sisters.

10 And of course, the -- the fur trapping
11 industry of course, could not really support a large
12 family. Actually you know Canada was first established as
13 the fur trapping country in -- in Canada, that's how our
14 nation was born, hey, Canada. It was the fur industry that
15 established Canada as -- as a First Nation. And of course,
16 all -- all our Aboriginal people in -- in Canada worked in
17 that industry and over the years, and of course, a lot of
18 our Aboriginal people worked in that industry -- fur -- fur
19 industry. And of course -- well, we're quite proud of
20 being you know, part of that industry even though that
21 we're, you know, marginalized so we couldn't make a -- a
22 huge profit, a living in that -- that kind of society.

23 But anyway what has happened in -- while
24 living there a lot of us of course, moved away from Fish
25 Lake. My sister -- my eldest sister, married into the

1 Sturgeon Lake reserve. Madeline, my second eldest sister,
2 the one that I'm going to be talking about. Yes,
3 married, or lived common-law with her first -- her first
4 husband in and around Fish Lake then eventually moved into
5 Prince Albert, Saskatchewan is, the City of Prince Albert.

6 But I -- I just want to give you that sort of
7 small scenario of -- before we get right into her story.

8 Madeline lived -- lived, as I said, in -- in
9 Fish Lake, met her first common-law husband, Bill Eclair
10 (ph) and -- and they had three -- three daughters, and I
11 think that they -- they moved to Prince Albert -- and --
12 because -- because -- oh, he wasn't Bill Eclair was Doug
13 (ph) Eclair, Doug Eclair.

14 That -- in -- in our -- the nature of our --
15 our existence in our society at that time, a lot of our --
16 our people, because they're poor, do not have steady jobs,
17 and they -- they naturally had you know, to not support --
18 cannot support their -- their families because of the poor
19 conditions, and of course, when you are living in that kind
20 of society you're poor. Got no jobs, you know, you
21 gravitate to doing a lot of negative things in your -- in
22 your daily living. And that's what happened with Doug
23 Eclair.

24 He -- he became -- because he was unemployed
25 and he start abused my sister and they -- they gradually

6 Edward Lavallee,
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1 separated. My sister, again met another man and married
2 him.

3 But I want to -- I want to read a narrative
4 that my -- one of the daughters -- the eldest daughter of
5 my sister that went missing. I should say that my -- my
6 sister, Madeline Margaret Gignac Lavallee went missing in
7 1981 outside of Prince Albert. And she went missing for
8 four -- four years.

9 Naturally when she went missing the -- the
10 family -- the family -- because we're related to a lot of
11 relatives, and several communities Big River, Sturgeon
12 Lake, Chitek Lake, a lot of and -- and Montreal Lake a lot
13 of people knew our family, and when they -- they became --
14 they knew -- when they became and heard about the fact that
15 my sister was -- went missing, of course, it effected all
16 our relatives, they were horrified that something like this
17 had happened.

18 I want to just read you the excerpt of
19 Marlene Crombie Lavallee, the eldest daughter of Madeline.
20 I'll just begin reading. "At the age of 49 our mother,
21 Madeline Margaret Gignac Lavallee,
22 born the 6th of May of 1932, went
23 missing from outside the old Broadway
24 Hotel in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan,
25 around midnight of October 20, 1981.

1 She was -- she had asked her niece,
2 Geraldine Moose Hunter (ph), who worked
3 in the hotel bar at the time, to call
4 her a taxi and then had gone outside to
5 wait for her cab. Mom had gone
6 shopping earlier that afternoon. It --
7 at the Salvation Army for quilting
8 material and had stopped at the hotel
9 for a -- a few drinks after shopping.
10 But because she was addicted, the
11 afternoon wore on into the late
12 evening. Mom had agreed to babysit
13 Geraldine's children the next day. So
14 she left her shopping bag for Geraldine
15 to bring in the next morning. It had
16 began to snow in Prince Albert that
17 evening. Mom had lived with her
18 husband Arthur (ph), Arthur Gignac and
19 their daughter, LoriAnne (ph) in a
20 basement apartment on East Hill, ten or
21 11 blocks from the hotel. When
22 Geraldine arrived at her mother's the
23 following morning to bring her -- all
24 of her children she was met with her
25 mother's worried husband, Art (ph), who

1 had come home the previous afternoon
2 from his job, cutting posts in the
3 bush. Art had told Geraldine that
4 Madeline had not come home the previous
5 night. Geraldine left her children to
6 make other -- childcare arrangements.
7 Art got LoriAnne off to school then
8 contacted me, Virginia May (ph), and
9 Marlene Crombee (ph) to see if -- where
10 mom was. My husband, Kenneth (ph), and
11 I, and our three children, who also
12 lived in Prince Albert at that time. I
13 had not heard from Mom and to allow Art
14 to -- to look for Mom I gladly agreed
15 to have LoriAnne come to our house on
16 the bus after school so she could stay
17 with her family while Art conducted his
18 search. (Indiscernible) while Art
19 began his search I also began to
20 conduct inquiries to see if the -- any
21 of the Grey Cab taxi drivers had picked
22 Mom -- Mom up at the hotel the night
23 before. The cab dispatch, dispatcher
24 was not able to provide any definitive
25 information, nor did the follow up

1 visits to the taxi stand to speak with
2 drivers who had worked the night of my
3 Mom's disappearance. And it did not
4 yield any forthcoming results. We
5 subsequently learned that mom and her
6 brother, Joe Lavallee (ph), and then a
7 woman friend, and Doug Eclair, uncle
8 to Madeline's former common-law spouse,
9 had apparently had a few drinks
10 together at one of the hotels the
11 previous afternoon, but that was only -
12 - the only contact they had. Again
13 Doug Eclair had heard a report that
14 Mom had gone to drink at a particular
15 house in the city. When Doug Eclair
16 and Art's help we also checked out the
17 house, but the people there could not
18 remember or confirm anything. I also
19 went to Mom's cousin, Grace Bird's
20 (ph), house just a couple of blocks
21 from Mom's, but Mom was not there.
22 Phone calls were made to relatives on
23 nearby Sturgeon, Sturgeon Lake reserve
24 and no one had any knowledge of Mom's
25 whereabouts. My sister, Darlene (ph)

1 who lived in Livock, Alberta,
2 telephoned maybe the day after Mom
3 disappeared to ask if Mom was okay.
4 She had had a bad dream about Mom being
5 beaten. But that she and I and other
6 people surrounding Mom in a protective
7 circle to shield her. When she woke up
8 she was cold. She felt like she was
9 sleeping on a pillow of snow. I had to
10 tell -- Mom had not come -- oh, I had
11 to tell her Mom had not come home the
12 night before, but that we were still
13 hoping she would show up or call. I
14 did not want to confirm that that I too
15 sensed something tragic had happened to
16 Mom. The years have somewhat dimmed my
17 memory, but these are my best
18 recollections of what transpired the
19 day -- the days just after my mother's
20 disappearance. After exhausting all
21 immediate leads Art and I gave up and
22 went to the police. At that time there
23 was at least a 24-hour wait period
24 required before a missing persons
25 report could be filed. Also, we were

11 Edward Lavallee,
Daniel Powder and Roxanne Roan
In relation to Madeline Margaret Gignac

1 reminded of the possibility Mom may
2 have left voluntarily and may not wish
3 to be contacted. I do not know how
4 quickly Mom's case was looked into, but
5 the RCMP did follow up with a
6 methodical and persistent
7 investigation. During the first year-
8 and-a-half I met with the RCMP a number
9 of times for interviews considering our
10 mother's disappearance to try to
11 provide as much information as I could
12 remember. The police of course,
13 interviewed many people. I should say
14 that we had a relative who was in the
15 RCMP, her name was Ansis Thomas (ph),
16 and she was central in helping us try
17 to locate our missing sister."

18 She was -- she was, well in the
19 Indian way she was our sister since she
20 was our first cousin. She continues
21 here, "I went out a couple of times
22 with two women police officers to
23 search areas in the geographical
24 outskirts of the city. On our own, Art
25 and I searched various streets and

12 Edward Lavallee,
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1 walking paths on the riverbank of PA,
2 and I went periodically to search on my
3 own the -- the perimeters of the Little
4 Red River Park and along Highway 55.
5 It became very discouraging walking
6 through the forest and bush and I
7 finally realized it was useless. This
8 is too vast a forest outside of Prince
9 Albert. I did not tell LoriAnne about
10 the search we were doing. I was
11 working full time. We could not give
12 her any definitive information where
13 Mom may have gone because we did not
14 know. All we could do was pray, and if
15 I remember correctly a time or two I
16 prayed together with the children. It
17 must have been confusing for LoriAnne,
18 but did not want to say what we feared.
19 We tried to keep it -- keep a positive
20 and helpful, that mom would call and
21 come back home soon. Time passed, and
22 Art was difficult to keep track of.
23 Eventually we learned he had been
24 drinking heavily, but had finally
25 sought help through the Salvation Army

1 Church. Had entered the rehab there
2 and was living at The Bridge (ph), a
3 hostel for men and was attending
4 church. Art is -- has now passed
5 away."

6 That's my sister, Madeline's,
7 husband. "It was only now that I
8 realize Art must have gone through a
9 lot of stress at that time and was
10 probably questioned at various time.
11 The RCMP recently confirmed to me that
12 Art was not among those considered as
13 suspects, and that two other suspects
14 had been eliminated. By the time of
15 the year -- by the time -- the -- by
16 the end of the year Darlene and her
17 husband (indiscernible) came from
18 Livock, Alberta to take LoriAnne into
19 their care."

20 LoriAnne is the youngest of
21 Madeline's daughters. "They have
22 raised her as their own daughter.
23 Sometime within the first few months of
24 the investigation, a lead came to -- in
25 that Mom was living out of the city on

1 a farm and did not wish to be
2 contacted. We received a phone call
3 from an officer concerning that report,
4 but then later received another -- an
5 apology from another officer as the
6 result had not been verified.
7 Eventually a Crime Stoppers video was
8 produced and aired on local CTVIB TV
9 featuring a brief synopsis of the --
10 the evening Mom disappeared. Actors on
11 the video portrayed Mom talking to a
12 man in a red half ton truck that had
13 white stripes painted on each side
14 prior to her entering the hotel. A
15 description of her case was given and a
16 request was made for anyone who has
17 information to contact a local RCMP
18 Crime Stoppers. A number was given too
19 -- which anyone could call anonymously.
20 I do not know if there was any calls
21 received by the RCMP as a result of
22 this video. Throughout the years Mom's
23 case was -- has been handled by a
24 variety of investigators as from time
25 to time officers handling her case

15 Edward Lavallee,
Daniel Powder and Roxanne Roan
In relation to Madeline Margaret Gignac

1 would move to other detachments. It is
2 possible mom was mistaken for a hooker
3 as she stood outside the hotel that
4 night waiting for her cab. She was
5 addicted to alcohol and would have been
6 very inebriated. She likely thought
7 her cab had arrived and thus became a
8 victim of a predator. On May 5th,
9 1985, three-and-a-half years after Mom
10 disappeared human remains were found by
11 a farmer on a farmland he had just
12 purchased approximately five miles east
13 of Prince Albert. I -- Virginia (ph)
14 was living in Nipawin when I received a
15 call from my old neighbour in Prince
16 Albert alerting me to the news on the
17 radio. When I listened and I heard the
18 news for myself I had the strong
19 intuition these were the -- these were
20 the remains of my mother, Madeline, as
21 I had just been praying for some
22 resolution to our family's suffering.
23 I immediately contacted the RCMP and
24 they asked if I -- I remembered what
25 Mom had on. I knew what her jacket

1 looked like. The type of pants and
2 other clothing she would have normally
3 worn and her shoe size. My step-
4 father, Art, was also living in Nipawin
5 area provide me with a description of
6 Mom's shoes and reminded me that she
7 had a family ring on with one stone
8 missing. I gave this information to
9 the RCMP. At the time they had not
10 found the ring, but they said they
11 would go back with a metal detector to
12 see if they could locate the ring. The
13 RCMP thought we should go to view the
14 clothing, but we would have to wait for
15 a few days as Mom's clothing was being
16 steam cleaned. And it would be a few
17 days before the items were returned.
18 By the time Art and I arrived in Prince
19 Albert the RCMP had found the ring.
20 Art and I went to the RCMP together and
21 viewed the clothing and footwear and
22 verified all items as Mom's, Mom's --
23 yeah, they belong to Mom. We also
24 confirmed Mom sometimes used dark red
25 polish. The discovery of Mom's remains

1 definitely provided partial disclosure
2 to our suspicions of what had happened
3 to her had been confirmed. We had
4 suspected she had murdered on the very
5 night she disappeared. We were at
6 least able to have a traditional
7 funeral and lay her remain next to her
8 ancestors at the Sturgeon Lake Indian
9 burial grounds. Listening to the drums
10 beating at her funeral moved me
11 intensely and allowed my tears to flow
12 freely at last. At last Mom was with
13 her people, where she should have been
14 all these years. For me, it was just
15 the beginning and my true healing time.
16 But I wonder, does one ever truly heal
17 in this lifetime? I feel I will only
18 be whole when I am reunited with Mom in
19 the time of eternity."

20 Yes, there was -- we did have -- after her
21 remains were found, (indiscernible) settled, or the
22 concerns of our -- our family, and actually we're horrified
23 to -- to be told the condition which she was found, only
24 her skull was -- was found by this farmer. And the way
25 that we're able to determine it was in fact, her was

1 because of her -- her ring and that some of her clothing.

2 But she was brought back to the Sturgeon Lake reserve.

3 By the time we were members of -- of that --
4 became members of the Sturgeon Lake reserve, because after
5 the passing of Bill C-31 by the Canadian Parliament we are
6 able to become Status Treaty Indians because our -- our
7 grandmother was from that reserve.

8 But anyway, we had a very -- it was a very
9 move -- moving funeral for our sister at that time. It was
10 a way that we found somewhat peace, but the hurt was -- was
11 still very -- very evident in the whole community. Because
12 we were related to most of the people on that reserve.

13 Just to continue the narration, "Our
14 mother, Madeline's, missing persons
15 case was initially handled by Prince
16 Albert RCMP, but in August of 2016,
17 Madeline's youngest daughter, LoriAnne
18 Gignac of Grand Prairie, Alberta
19 received a phone call from the
20 Saskatoon RCMP historical case unit,
21 and was informed our mother, Madeline's
22 -- yeah, our mother -- yeah, Madeline
23 Gignac's case had been designated a
24 historical case. And was now
25 reassigned to the Saskatoon RCMP

1 historical case unit. The RCMP wanted
2 to meet with and interview LoriAnne.
3 When LoriAnne received the call from
4 the RCMP historical case unit she
5 contacted me, the eldest of Madeline's
6 remaining three daughters, and asked if
7 I would accompany her and our sister,
8 Darlene to the interview. I, of
9 course, wanted to join them. In
10 September 9th 2016, 35 years after mom
11 went missing, we three sisters went to
12 the interview with renewed hope that
13 Mom's case might eventually get solved.
14 We were given the opportunity to ask
15 whatever questions we wished to and to
16 provide any new information we might
17 remember. In the past -- this past
18 August, 2017, the historical case unit
19 of the RCMP in Saskatoon once again
20 contacted LoriAnne to tell her that the
21 number one suspect concerning Mom's
22 murder had passed away in Victoria
23 Hospital in Prince Albert. This
24 brought back all kinds of conflicting
25 emotions to all of us. At the age of

1 65 I am the eldest of my sisters. I
2 felt a renewed sense of stress, the
3 thought of revisiting the questions
4 surrounding Mom's disappearing --
5 disappearance. The second eldest,
6 Darlene, who will turn 63 this month
7 has always hoped for a deathbed
8 confession on the part of our mother's
9 murderer. Our youngest sister,
10 LoriAnne, now age 49, had buried
11 her pain as best she could. And the
12 latest development brought back the
13 feelings of vulnerability and confusion
14 she experienced as a 12-year-old when
15 Mom disappeared. At that time of this
16 call a special female police officer,
17 Donna (ph), was assigned to us who was
18 very easy to talk to, and who let us
19 know that we could call her at any time
20 with any questions we had. I made up a
21 list of 16 questions and then contacted
22 this officer who patiently and gently
23 answered all questions. One of the
24 questions I asked was, "Why LoriAnne
25 and I could not find any information on

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1 our -- our mother, Madeline Gignac, on
2 any of the Internet sites dealing with
3 the missing and murdered Aboriginal
4 womens of Saskatchewan?" We had both
5 began to feel like our mother had never
6 existed. I am so glad I asked as I
7 learned that once a missing person's
8 remains are found that that person's
9 name is taken off all missing persons
10 lists. This removed this mystery and
11 alleviated the growing sense of
12 injustice and frustrations we were
13 feeling. There is so much more to
14 Mom's story that could be told. Mom
15 should not have had to endure this
16 tragic end to her beautiful person.
17 She had suffered so much already --
18 already, extreme incidents of domestic
19 violence over a span of 12 years in her
20 first common-law marriage. The extreme
21 poverty living in isolated Northern
22 Saskatchewan Métis community. Living
23 mainly off the land and receiving only
24 occasional subsistence vouchers from
25 the DNR. Mom was completely abstinence

1 from drinking alcohol until she turned
2 25 of age, around which time she lost
3 her own mother to a fate similar to her
4 -- her own also outside the same City
5 of Prince Albert. And also in the
6 wintertime. Mom's grief and tears over
7 her mother's freezing death around 1957
8 drove her former common-law husband to
9 extreme bouts of rage and violence
10 against her when she was drinking. I
11 remember one incident where a -- a
12 bottle of alcohol was put to Mother's
13 mouth and she had no choice but to
14 drink. After this she agreed to --
15 yeah, after this she agreed to drink
16 with my -- my first step-father
17 whenever he asked. Mom soon learned
18 alcohol could dull some of her sorrows
19 and misery and she no longer resisted
20 drinking. She eventually became an
21 alcoholic. Due to her alcoholism she
22 lost her first three children;
23 Virginia, Darlene, and Linda (ph) to
24 Social Services. Later -- later years
25 Mom told me that she had a breakdown

1 after she lost her children. And she'd
2 go outside calling for us. We children
3 kept in touch with Mom while we were in
4 foster homes, and visited during
5 holidays. Mom subsequently had a son
6 David (ph), and then LoriAnne, and
7 eventually our family relationships
8 were restored. We lost so much time
9 with our beloved mother in our early
10 years and our adult years were cut
11 short. Mom left us a very great legacy
12 of love. Despite suffering so much
13 violence and poverty Mom had an ability
14 to endure and make the best of her
15 circumstances. She was very kind,
16 merciful, gentle, generous, hospitable,
17 industrious, and resourceful. She was
18 a meticulous bead worker, a
19 housekeeper, provide food and clean
20 clothing and she was an entrepreneur
21 selling lovely bead work over many
22 years. But above all she -- she was
23 the -- the best of mothers."

24 Of course, this is prepared by her eldest
25 daughter, Virginia MaryAnne Matlin Marlene Crombie. Yes,

1 so I wanted to publicly tell our story of -- of how we --
2 we miss our sister. I -- over the years I -- I -- I --
3 I -- I went to school complete my -- completed my public
4 school and struggled to complete high school, went on to go
5 to university. But I had to leave the -- the way that our
6 family worked in those days, back in the 1950s is that the
7 eldest family members, when they were going to school, had
8 to quit school to help support the family. That -- that is
9 the way all -- all the families worked in those days. I
10 guess maybe to a certain extent has been happening
11 throughout the 1960s, 70s, and 80s with a lot of our -- our
12 families living -- in rural -- on reserves and the Métis
13 population as well, so that was the way that we have.

14 And today because I've gone to university I
15 was able to work most of my life. Hardly was not
16 unemployed and I worked for all levels of government in
17 program managerial levels, and I worked with our Aboriginal
18 organization as well. And I was asked in our Indian
19 political movement in Canada.

20 And today of course, I'm -- I'm -- I'm 77
21 years old. I've been retired for some time. But now
22 I'm -- I do a lot of volunteers -- volunteering and work
23 with a lot of our Aboriginal people here in Edmonton. I
24 work with homeless people. I worked with the Bissell
25 Centre for a couple of years as the Elder there. Provided

1 counselling to homeless and people suffering from alcohol
2 and drug abuse, and that's what I do presently. I -- I'm
3 still on a number of Aboriginal boards and other
4 organizations. And also with -- I work a lot with people
5 with disabilities in the city. I have with me, supporting
6 me today my adopted daughter here, Daniel Powder.

7 We work on the -- of the report and the
8 project the Amiskwaciy History Series making sure that the
9 true history of Aboriginal people is told here in Alberta.

10 And I also have my other sister, Roxanne
11 Roan. Roxanne and I work in -- in another area, the Two
12 Spirit movement in Canada, and also here in Alberta. She
13 has -- she's one of the strongest supporters, and has
14 worked herself making documentaries about Two Spirit
15 people. And I'm so happy that they're able to -- to sit
16 with me and support me.

17 But I wanted to give my own interpretation of
18 why this tragic thing is happening with our people in
19 Canada. You know, if Canada is supposed -- we --
20 Aboriginal people in Canada are at the bottom scale of the
21 Canadian society. And that's why we are all very -- very
22 poor. We're not -- very few of us that are now emerging
23 into the middle class, but we're not -- not -- yeah, we're
24 not equal in -- in this Canadian society. And therefore we
25 -- we have the proper history of our people is not being

1 told in our institutions in Canada.

2 And it's just now that Canadian society,
3 because of the horrible stories of the residential school
4 movement that the Canadian people are now finding out that
5 how we are -- have been treated. And because we are not
6 respected in society I don't think that we are respected.
7 There -- there is attempts -- attempts right now, there is
8 this whole reconciliation process that's happening across
9 the country. I'm glad that some -- some of Canadian
10 organizations -- institutions (indiscernible) are doing --
11 trying to do something about it, but they are not working
12 fast enough.

13 We have, you know that our, a lot of the
14 Aboriginal people now have -- have moved to urban centers
15 across Canada, half the Aboriginal population are now
16 living in urban centers. But those that are come here to
17 live in urban center, a lot of our people have not
18 completed formal educations, or -- or have gotten skills to
19 find work and so forth, gone to (indiscernible) a lot --
20 the -- the bulk of our -- our population is unemployed.

21 When our people are unemployed, have got
22 nothing to do, naturally they -- their social system is
23 turned upside down, we, we know that -- we hear on -- on --
24 or are told constantly that we are -- because of our
25 dysfunction social system our -- and the high unemployment

1 amongst our people, presently I think the unemployment rate
2 for the majority of society is six percent, while ours --
3 our rate of unemployment is about six or seven times higher
4 than -- than the -- the norm in -- in Canada, and therefore
5 that causes a lot of us to -- to not -- or it breaks down
6 our family and living. We don't have jobs. And therefore
7 we -- a lot of us that move into cities become homeless and
8 you know, that the last homeless culture in Edmonton. The
9 bulk of the homeless people here in Edmonton are Aboriginal
10 people. Hey, this is a God damn shame.

11 I -- and I -- I worked all my life to -- to
12 help our -- our people try and better themselves, but I
13 know that some progress is now -- now being made. We hear
14 that the -- the rate of high school and graduation among
15 our young people has -- rate has increase, and the number
16 of our other people going on to -- to higher learning,
17 becoming professionals has increased.

18 We just heard that -- well, an Aboriginal
19 person has been -- has been appointed to the -- the Supreme
20 Court of Canada, which is wow, that -- that's great but I
21 remember the time that -- oh, in the 1960s that we could
22 count the number of people finishing high school and going
23 to university, then the first lawyers on the -- yeah, the
24 first few people that are completing their educations.
25 Naturally when we are at the bottom rung of society there

1 is no respect for our people. And our -- the history of
2 our people is not being told in society.

3 And I just found out from the Alberta --
4 Alberta Teachers' Association of Alberta's that's now
5 urging all their teachers to start teaching the true
6 history of Aboriginal people in Canada, which is a somewhat
7 gratifying to know, and I think that they -- they have
8 started to do something in that area.

9 But I think that that is -- because there is
10 no respect for women in Canadian society that's why we find
11 this horrible -- horrible horrific incidents of our missing
12 and murdered Aboriginal women.

13 Our people -- a lot of non-Indigenous men see
14 our -- our women as easy to pick up. Especially in -- in
15 beer parlors across the country, and it's terrible to say
16 that, but that -- that is evident. Anybody that knows the
17 social system here in -- in Canada, that is what's
18 happening in -- in our society. Men -- non-Indigenous men,
19 and some of our men too, picked up our women, and get them
20 drinking in hotels, and get them drinking, and take them
21 out and I don't know why they have to -- why they have to
22 go out and beat them to death just because to -- to gratify
23 their lust, that's (indiscernible) is just lust as far as
24 I'd say.

25 Because I grew up knowing that -- that these

1 non-Indigenous men have told me themselves that they --
2 they lust after our women, but do they have to -- have to
3 go out and kill them as well? That is -- that is what I --
4 I think that is disgraceful in Canadian society. I think
5 that this whole incident after this Commission is finished
6 I hope that one of their recommendations should be that
7 men, the non-Indigenous society have to talk about their
8 true -- true feelings towards our women. How they treat
9 our women.

10 They have to have healing -- healing talking
11 circles about this throughout our land, and I hope that it
12 -- this Commission recommends that as one of the number one
13 priorities. Okay, thank you.

14 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Ed, if -- there
15 anything else that you'd like to say?

16 **MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE:** What's that?

17 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Is there anything else
18 that you would like to say?

19 **MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE:** No, but I -- yeah, I --
20 I'm happy that the Canadian government has -- has given
21 monies that this Commission has been established. I know
22 that there's been a lot of problems with this Commission.
23 A lot of our -- our people say that it's not being properly
24 handled. And that -- but I think that this is being
25 resolved. And I -- I hope that if more -- more money

1 should be given by the Canadian government, make sure that
2 this Commission is -- does interviews, as many of our women
3 and families affected by -- by these horrible things that
4 is happening in -- in the Canadian society is resolved.

5 I -- I -- I hope that if we need more money
6 we have to have a complete findings of the -- this
7 Commission -- of our -- our missing and murdered Aboriginal
8 women. And I want to thank my supporters, Daniel, and ...

9 **MS. ROXANNE ROAN:** I'd like to say thank you
10 for inviting me, Ed, to this very important gathering.
11 It's really heart wrenching to hear stories. I too, was a
12 runaway at one time. I grew up very spiritually, and when
13 I came back to the reserve I didn't like it.

14 I'll just tell a little bit of myself, and
15 I'm glad that I was invited because I have a few words to
16 say too, because I too, was almost a victim of murdered and
17 missing. Back in 1983 is when I first started hanging out
18 on the street and hanging out with runaways too. And my
19 parents were persistent to find me and they used to come
20 and find me in Edmonton.

21 But the part I wanted to talk about is --
22 it's fresh in my mind and I have to live with it daily. I
23 -- I live with anxiety. But I deal with it through
24 sweetgrass -- sweetgrass, and my upbringing of who I am as
25 First Nations person. That's make -- that who is makes me

1 strong. Back in '83 I had stolen my parents' vehicle to
2 come to Edmonton. I didn't drink back then, and I didn't
3 drink till I was about 28 years old because the belief that
4 I was taught when I was young.

5 On my way home, coming back in '83, on the
6 QE2 just past Millet, going down a little hill, going up,
7 an RCMP had pulled me over, and I was scared because I only
8 had a learner's at the time and I thought I was going to be
9 in trouble, and it was the other way around. And he looked
10 at my ID and said, "Step out." And I asked him -- I asked
11 the officer, "What -- what did I do wrong?" And he said,
12 "No, you don't have to ask any questions. Just step out."
13 At the time I was young and I had a mini skirt on and I had
14 stilettos on and a leather jacket and a little T-shirt, and
15 so I was wondering why -- why am I getting told to step out
16 of the vehicle?

17 I was trying to ask the RCMP but he kept
18 telling me to shut up. So I was getting more scared
19 because I wasn't being allowed to talk. So he -- he pulled
20 me onto the other side -- the passenger side of the vehicle
21 -- of my own vehicle. Well, my parents' vehicle. He put
22 me on the hood. He put my hands on the hood and he said,
23 "Put your hands on the hood." And I didn't want to, and
24 then he put them on there.

25 Just hearing some of these women's stories

1 and I just had to talk about a little bit of mine because
2 as I was standing there he spread my legs with his baton.
3 He said, "You dirty Indian women like doing this kind of
4 stuff, don't you?" And I said, "How can you be doing
5 this?" He pushed my head and said, "Shut -- shut the F up.
6 I know you're going to enjoy this." And I said, "You can't
7 be doing this to me. This is -- this can't be real."

8 I've seen a lot -- I've gone to seek lot of
9 help for my -- my trauma that I've -- that caused -- causes
10 -- that's been -- I've been carrying for a long time.

11 He started groping me. Taking my underwear
12 off. I heard him unzipping and I thought, oh my God, this
13 person is supposed to protect me. This person is supposed
14 to help me. As I was crying louder this vehicle that
15 pulled up beside him and was asking for help. If it wasn't
16 for that vehicle I don't know what would have happened that
17 time.

18 Then he hit me with the billy club on -- on
19 my legs and he said, "Don't say anything." He -- "I know
20 where you live. I know you can't do nothing." He said,
21 "I'm an RCMP and you're just a dirty Fing Indian." He said
22 -- well, he said a lot more than that, and then he went
23 running to that vehicle. He told me to get going.

24 As I was trying to get going I couldn't -- I
25 fell -- I fell in front of my vehicle, scraping my knees.

34 Edward Lavallee,
Daniel Powder and Roxanne Roan
In relation to Madeline Margaret Gignac

1 I was just trying to survive. Just because I was Native,
2 First Nation. Why are we treated so bad? As I always
3 could ask myself. Every day -- every day I see an RCMP or
4 an officer I tremble, I get scared. Are they going to do
5 this to me?

6 I'm now 50 years old, and I still live with
7 this anxiety. I've gone to see so many therapists to talk
8 about it. It helps me get rid of all the stuff that I
9 carry. I never really ever told out in public what
10 happened to me when I was younger.

11 Sometimes I think maybe it is the RCMP
12 killing the Native women because they don't care about how
13 we are as people. I told my grandmother the story because
14 I never phoned over five years. They thought I was dead.
15 They did a ceremony to come and look for me to see if I was
16 alive. My own people were ceremonial people. They found
17 me. When they found me I was -- I had found somebody that
18 took care of me. He was Spanish. I still thank that
19 family that took care of me.

20 After five years of being scared of Canada,
21 to come home, I know there's not only me that have been
22 treated like this.

23 I thought one day I would tell my story in a
24 book or on documentary because people need to see the truth
25 of how we've been treated too long. It's got to stop.

1 I have sisters, and their children, and now
2 they're having children. I'm scared for them to be treated
3 the way I was treated when I was a teenager. Because where
4 I come from (speaking in Native language) the town of
5 Wetaskiwin is so racist there's nothing but pawnshops and
6 liquor stores. It's so pathetic. And they laugh at us
7 every day. It just makes me sick. But what keeps me going
8 is lighting my sweetgrass, believing who I am.

9 We welcome the newcomers be -- we took care
10 of them. You guys should come back and take care of us
11 too. Like how we took care and loved you guys, and showed
12 you how to live on -- in Canada, that you call.

13 That was not -- I've been -- that's one of
14 the first times that I was almost raped, but I was raped
15 twice after that. But I lived a horrible life as a
16 teenager. And I'm still surviving, and I thank the
17 Creator, and I thank Ed for letting me come and let me tell
18 a little bit about myself. And I pray for all the women
19 that have gone missing.

20 And I remember my friend walking across
21 Canada. She was a former prostitute. They were -- and she
22 phoned me, said, "I'm walking across Canada." Because she
23 remembers when I told her my story and said, "You should
24 walk with us." And I said, "I can't do that." I said,
25 "But go for it" and. Ay-ay. Thank you for letting me say

1 a little bit of my story. Thank you, Ed.

2 **MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE:** Thank you sister, thank
3 you very much. Ay-ay.

4 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Mr. Commissioner, I'm
5 wondering if you have any...

6 **(SCREAM)**

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** That's a buffalo yell.
8 And that's for the women. Our grandmother, by the name of
9 Vera Martin gave that gift to us. Passed it on to me and
10 my daughters to pass on to all of the women so we never
11 lose our voices ever again, whether we're happy or we're
12 sad. We use it. It comes from deep within. And Vera
13 Martin got that buffalo yell in a sweat lodge when she was
14 asked to go do the late Vera Martin. She was asked to go
15 do a ceremony for the women at Kingston pen. And she asked
16 those women what their names were and they couldn't even
17 say their own names.

18 They are so conditioned to be silent. They
19 couldn't even express their own name to say who they are.
20 So our great late great grandmother, our late grandmother,
21 Vera Martin said a prayer in that lodge, and were ask for
22 guiding. A (indiscernible) women entered her lodge and
23 gave her this gift and told her forever together
24 (indiscernible) together (indiscernible) we have this gift.
25 So I'm giving this gift and I'm -- and I thank this -- this

1 Inquiry that's going on, the longest time got to show the -
2 - the media and the social media have influenced personal
3 opinions, and to witness this thank you (speaking in Native
4 language) Roxanne Roan.

5 You (indiscernible) in our language means
6 (indiscernible). So that's a buffalo yell and if any woman
7 wants her voice to be heard today stand up and do it today,
8 now and you'll never be silenced again. Tell me to do it
9 again. Want to stand up and do it with me, let's all move
10 together. Power. We will regain our power and we'll never
11 lose it again, that's what this Inquiry is supposed to be
12 about, one, two, three, let's do it.

13 **(SCREAMING)**

14 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Thank you.

15 **MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE:** Thank you very much.
16 Yes, I -- I knew Vera Martin very much. I worked with her
17 here in Edmonton before she passed on to the spirit world.
18 She was a powerful healer and also a powerful advocate for
19 our people. Thank you very much.

20 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So Mr. Commissioner, I'm
21 wondering if perhaps you have any questions?

22 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** I don't have
23 any additional questions.

24 But Ed, I'll like to really thank you for
25 coming here and participating in the inquiry this morning

1 and sharing with us about your sister, Madeline, and also
2 sharing your perspectives and recommendations with us. I
3 really appreciate you coming and sharing with us, thank
4 you, very much.

5 Roxanne, I also want to thank you as well for
6 sharing with us, for having the strength to share your --
7 your experience with us. Thank you very much.

8 **MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE:** Thank you.

9 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So if we could conclude or
10 adjourn this matter, please.

11 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** We can adjourn
12 this matter, thank you.

13 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So we'll have some gifts
14 for you, Ed.

15 **MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE:** What?

16 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** We'll have some gifts for
17 you and Roxanne.

18 **MR. EDWARD LAVALLEE:** Yes.

19 **--- Exhibits (code: P1P05P0304)**

20 **Exhibit 1:** Folder of two digital family photos.

21 **Exhibit 2:** Four-page written statement of Virginia Mary
22 Anne Crombie dated November 6, 2017 at
23 Pontrilas, Saskatchewan.

24 ---Upon recessing at 11:41 a.m.

25 **Hearing # 2**

1 Lorna Martin, Gail Kreiser Leech, Sharon Patterson, Brenda
2 St. Savard, Joyce Eagle and Arlene Pearson
3 In Relation to Mary Jean Kreiser nee St. Savard
4 Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson
5 Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox
6 Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Irene Morin
7 Registrar: Tasha-Dawn Doucette / Bryan Zandberg
8 Commissioner of Oaths for the Province of Alberta: Jeff
9 Weigl

10 ---Upon resuming at 12:02 p.m.

11 MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. So, Mr.
12 Commissioner, I'd like to introduce you to Gail Martin
13 (sic), sorry, Lorna Martin. Gail, (indiscernible) Arlene,
14 who's right below me, Sharon in the red shirt, and beside
15 her is her sister, Brenda. We would like to do a promise
16 to tell the truth on the -- with the Eagle Feather, please.

17 LORNA MARTIN, Affirmed

18 GAIL KREISER LEECH, Affirmed

19 SHARON PATTERSON, Affirmed

20 BRENDA ST. SAVARD, Affirmed

21 JOYCE EAGLE, Affirmed

22 ARLENE PEARSON, Affirmed

23 MS. JENNIFER COX: So, Mr. Commissioner,
24 we're going to start with Lorna, who's sitting here at the
25 head of the chairs.

1 And Lorna, if you would like to begin by
2 telling the Commissioner a little bit about yourself.

3 **MS. LORNA MARTIN:** Good morning, my name is
4 Lorna Martin, my spirit name is (speaking in Native
5 language). I was born and raised in Edmonton. I currently
6 live in Ottawa, Ontario.

7 I'm here to share my mother's story, or part
8 of it anyway, her -- my mother's name is Mary Jean. She
9 was -- here's her baptismal certificate. It -- the name on
10 it Marie Jean St. Savard. My mother's married name is --
11 some people also called her Mary Jane (ph). Her married
12 name is Kreiser. She was born September 12th, 1938 in
13 Wabasca-Desmarais, Alberta. Also on the Bigstone Cree
14 First Nation.

15 Her father's name was Pierre St. Savard (ph).
16 The last name is well on the birth certificate is St.
17 Savard. I guess the English pronunciation is St. Savard,
18 S-A-V-A-R-D, Grandpa, Pierre St. Savard, married Adelaide
19 Crow (ph), Adelaide is my -- my mother's mother.

20 Also holding a letter I just requested from
21 the Slave Lake RCMP detachment dated September 20th, 2017.
22 This is part of when I was getting some information on my
23 side of the family because my middle son was -- he's an
24 iron worker, and he was getting -- in the process of
25 getting a social security number with the United States to

1 gain employment there.

2 So this has my mother's name, Mary Jean
3 Kreiser, and it has the police file number on it, which is
4 1988-0454, and it has -- has note: "She's been missing
5 since 1987. This file is still under
6 police investigation. Should you have
7 any further questions in regards to
8 this matter, please contact the
9 department."

10 And it's signed. 1987, in July I moved to
11 Ontario with my late husband and our three-year-old son. I
12 also became pregnant out there, in the summer months, with
13 our second child. I'll share that information because it's
14 a little bit of background of -- of where I was and -- and
15 the -- the -- some of the things I was dealing with at the
16 time of my mother's disappearance.

17 I had spoke to my sisters a few times in the
18 fall of '87 and they were mentioning that they hadn't heard
19 from our mother around Thanksgiving. And that was unusual
20 because our mother was always in touch with us at any --
21 during any holidays or on birthdays, whether we saw her in
22 person or whether it was a brief phone call just like --
23 just, you know, I mentioned brief, because it could have
24 been a brief phone call or it would have been a long
25 conversation, but she was always in touch with us.

1 My middle son was born in March of 1988, and
2 he -- he was born with a detached vein in his heart and he
3 had heart surgery when he was ten days old. So another --
4 another reason why I was kind of far removed from the
5 search for our mother in -- in the early years. I had a
6 lot on my plate.

7 And my son actually was -- he had two cardiac
8 arrests -- well, we -- we didn't know what was wrong with
9 him. He just -- he was just breathing funny and weird one
10 day and we ended up in emergency and luckily because he --
11 his heart had stopped. So that was my immediate emergency
12 was -- was my baby for -- for a few years, but he's -- he's
13 very healthy now. He's a young man.

14 I just wanted to lead into that and -- well,
15 maybe I'll hand it over to my sister, Arlene, who can --
16 who can take it from there. Well, she was the one who
17 reported our mother -- mother missing in -- in Edmonton.

18 **MS. ARLENE PEARSON:** Yes, hello, my name is
19 Arlene Pearson Kreiser, and I was the one that reported my
20 mother missing in September 1987.

21 She had come from Slave Lake for a visit, to
22 stay with me, and at that time she was -- how do I say
23 that? Partially separated from her common-law husband, Al
24 Moller (ph). And she had come to stay with me for a visit,
25 and he eventually came about a week later to pick her up,

1 which I could see signs of her not willing to go with him
2 because they really weren't getting along. But she went
3 anyhow and agreed to come back to my home on Thanksgiving
4 of that year.

5 And -- well as the weeks followed she never
6 appeared or anything so -- which is really out of character
7 for her at that time because -- especially for family
8 events, and stuff like, that she -- she made a point of
9 phoning or -- or appearing herself, right. So I let that
10 go for about a week after Thanksgiving and then I -- it --
11 it just bothered me and bothered me and I thought, well,
12 you know, this is not right and I tried contacting her, and
13 when I did her phone was out of service and -- well nobody
14 heard, or anything from her since -- since the last time I
15 saw her.

16 So I thought I better -- you know, I felt I
17 had to do something at that point so I phoned the city
18 police, which they sent out detectives, whatever, to come
19 to meet with me at my -- with my fiancé at my home at that
20 time. And -- well, they came in the house and asked me how
21 long she was missing for already, and I told them it had
22 been already a couple of weeks. And I thought I'd wait
23 because there would be times where she'd disappear and you
24 know, we wouldn't talk to her for a couple of weeks and
25 then she'd phone us, and stuff like that, but this was -- I

1 felt was a little too long.

2 So they came and met with me and my -- with
3 my fiancé at the time, and sat down and discussed her
4 behaviour, and her -- what kind of a person she was. And I
5 don't know -- I -- I -- it just took me -- I think -- how
6 do I say that? Off guard, because the first thing they
7 asked me was if she was Native, and if she drank.

8 So I took that you know, personally, and my
9 husband at the time, well, he wasn't -- he wasn't of any
10 Native descent and he took offence to that also and he
11 asked them, like, "It's none of your business asking me
12 that kind of question when you know," his mother-in-law is
13 missing in the first place.

14 You know, what does that really have to do
15 with it. You know, she was white or Native you know. And
16 I kind of -- I got offended by that too, myself, and I
17 thought, "Well, this is you know, not -- not acceptable to
18 me."

19 So they explained why and you know, the
20 situations and, I could understand that, but -- well, that
21 meeting was over and they left and as the weeks gone by --
22 were going by nobody was contacting me, and I kept you
23 know, trying to call them and see if they followed up
24 and -- on any of the places where she might have gone back
25 to, or even found Al Moller at that time.

1 And like she may have been still in Slave
2 Lake with him, and they went out there, is what they told
3 me, well, they were going to go out there, but they -- I
4 don't think they really did. But they couldn't contact him
5 either, so I got a hold of my other brothers and sisters
6 and more or less told them, "I think we have a crisis
7 here," right.

8 So as time went on, like for me I just -- I
9 dealt with them on a weekly basis where the answers -- the
10 only answers I was getting, was, "We'll get back to you,"
11 and that kind of thing, but well, I -- I just had a feeling
12 she -- you know, I didn't think she was ever coming back,
13 so just that feeling of emptiness.

14 So as 30 years now later, well, I guess I was
15 right, you know, so in my mind I know she's not on this
16 earth, it's just -- and in my heart too, it's just -- it's
17 -- well, it's hard to deal with, and especially with my --
18 my own children, they were young at that time, even having
19 to explain to them like, "Where's Grandma?" And like you
20 don't know. That's not a good answer to give your
21 children. You know, like, it's -- it's really difficult,
22 but -- I don't know, I feel -- I -- I feel I just couldn't
23 do any more and I kind of gave up, but then I didn't.

24 And then over the years I actually contacted
25 Al -- Al Moller myself, I called him and -- well, I

1 shouldn't have said certain things to him, but I asked him
2 what, you know, "How could he live with himself," with my
3 mom's disappearance, knowing like, I -- I was a hundred
4 percent sure he had something to do with her.

5 And the RCMP even told me previous to me
6 calling him that he agreed to take a polygraph, and I guess
7 after I contacted him and he told me he was going to phone
8 the police because I was harassing him. And then after
9 that he refused to take a polygraph, which I thought was --
10 like to me in my own mind, well, that's the hundred percent
11 guilt is what I thought, right, especially for him agreeing
12 and then changing his mind right after that. And so the
13 RCMP said they'd continue their investigation, and that was
14 that. And then 19 -- was it 1997? I can't remember now.

15 They had phoned me Christmas Eve to tell me
16 that he was involved in a head-on collision with a semi and
17 that he was deceased now, and to let me know if it gives
18 our family any kind of peace.

19 They felt that he was responsible for my
20 mother's disappearance as well, so you know, they --
21 they -- well, how do I say that? I don't even know how to
22 say that. They were trying to console me more or less, and
23 stuff. So you know, that -- that really did kind of make
24 me feel good, but you know, it's just in between there well
25 we still don't know where she is, right, and that's --

1 well, that's the hardest thing to deal with, I feel.

2 So after that I kind of -- well, I dealt with
3 this on my own -- in my own way, and then my sister, Gail,
4 took over this after that -- the investigation. Because I
5 just -- I don't know, I just felt that I couldn't do it
6 anyway. And that's all I have to say.

7 **MS. GAIL KREISER LEECH:** My name is Gail
8 Kreiser Leech. I'm of the Bigstone Cree. Name is Red
9 Humming Bird, my spirit name. I reside in the Aplatla (ph)
10 clan of the Stellat'en (ph) Nation.

11 And I remember my sister Arlene working --
12 talking about the police, and going back and forth with Al
13 Moller. And back then we -- we always -- always thought
14 that when I grew up I also thought that whenever you
15 reported something to the police that everything would be
16 taken care of. They would check out all the different
17 angles of the investigation and that they would help the
18 families and work together with the families.

19 So within the second year I -- I know my
20 sister, Arlene, was having frustrations with Al Moller and
21 the police and he was threatening restraining order against
22 the family. So I phoned the -- the first police -- the
23 RCMP on the -- on the file and he said, "What -- what
24 nationality was your mom?" I told him. And he said, "Did
25 she drink?" And he -- I said, "Yes." And he said, "Well,

1 there -- there you go. They wander off for two-weeks and
2 they come back again." And I said, "Yeah, but it's been
3 two years."

4 So I got so frustrated that I felt, "How
5 could we trust and -- the -- the justice system?" This
6 person with my mom's file with a comment like that? And
7 racist remark and -- and a judgmental, he summed it all up
8 in -- in just by the those few questions.

9 So -- and then different family members, I
10 know would -- doing their -- were to ask questions and do
11 their thing.

12 So ten years later I had my mom come in my
13 dreams three days in a row, and I realized -- I thought at
14 that time there must be a heaven if my mom's coming to see
15 me, and I wasn't spiritual, so I grew spiritual because of
16 her coming and -- and I was checking out different things
17 about healing, and learning about healing myself and taking
18 courses to teach it.

19 So -- and another lady I knew who was a
20 psychic, well, she was coming to her, so then we put our
21 information together, and I would ask questions about the
22 file, and I was told I wasn't allowed to see the file then
23 realized that what I'm being told is my mom wants me to
24 look at the file.

25 So I asked passed over the period of time to

1 look at the file and was told, no, at least two or three
2 times. And then I talked to my sister, Lorna, and there
3 was a letter that come through -- and my sister sent it,
4 Lorna, it's about the *Freedom of Information Act*, so -- so
5 I asked to -- to look at the file, and so we -- we were
6 able to look at the file and there was hardly anything in
7 it. And so there was a lot of frustration and just
8 total -- just like a total disheartment in the justice
9 system and -- because we -- we trusted them.

10 And so -- so I decided to make my own file
11 and it took two years to make that file and it was a risky
12 thing to do, and I thought if they're not going to do their
13 job, I think I'm going to do this. And one of the things
14 that had happened was I was told that Al Moller passed away
15 two weeks before I had the dreams of my mom. And then --
16 so then I realized that if I made the file before when he
17 was alive I might not be around myself, so maybe that --
18 that was a blessing.

19 So I -- I questioned the family members. I
20 wrote their name and the dates and what they said about my
21 mom. And then I -- the ones that weren't questioned in the
22 file, I -- I contacted them and I would ask questions. And
23 some of them were older and they could only provide certain
24 details.

25 And so there were details like where her last

1 cheque, Al Moller cashed her last cheque and forged her
2 signature. He burnt her belongings. There was a lot of
3 red flags like a -- like a -- a child that is young --
4 could see these red flags if you told them the story.

5 So there's many things in there, and so
6 finally we had a -- a police officer that worked better
7 with the family and I was -- I was really happy that
8 someone come onto her file, started working with the family
9 as best as he could with the higher up not -- well I know
10 he had to work with his higher up -- and could do what
11 he -- what he was allowed to do. So there is many things
12 that he -- when I had last talked with her we were at
13 Kingsway Mall, not far from here, and Al was taking her
14 home to -- to Slave Lake, and that was the last time I saw
15 her, the end of September, because the Thanksgiving when we
16 -- the family last talked to her.

17 And so he was buying her many things, and I -
18 - I knew that was a sign of abuse because when someone
19 abuses a -- a woman, the women used to talk about -- when I
20 was younger, that they would buy them things to make up to
21 the person.

22 And I knew she was a bit uncomfortable and
23 she wanted to go see about -- the doctor about her thyroid,
24 and there was a lump on her thyroid, and he said, "What do
25 you going to doctors for? They don't know -- do anything

1 for you anyhow," and so I thought that was odd behaviour.

2 So -- so she had gone back, and I remember
3 the last phone call was on Thanksgiving, the family was
4 talking to her and she was crying and distraught and she --
5 so then they passed the phone around because she was
6 supposed to be in Edmonton, but she was in Slave Lake, and
7 then the phone went dead when the kids were -- had -- had
8 talked to her and they put down the phone for a minute.

9 So there was -- there's quite a few things
10 that had come out and we did have a -- and the police
11 headquarters are not far from here, there was a couple
12 officers assigned to her -- her case, and there was
13 constant -- like, looking over our shoulder, was the
14 feeling, and I think this could be done in a good way, but
15 it can also be done in a way that making sure that
16 something's not going to be exposed.

17 So we had some -- why -- we said, "Why didn't
18 our family -- my mother ever -- why wasn't she ever put on
19 the news? "Why wasn't she given that opportunity?" So we
20 had to push for -- just everything we got we had to push
21 for. So we got that opportunity 13 years later. We put
22 the -- her in the papers, and so we -- the reporters from
23 the media were there, and some -- one of them asked a
24 question, they said, "Well, how come you waited this long?"
25 And I said, "Because it wasn't done before."

1 And then -- so when everybody left the police
2 officer took me out the door around the corner and he
3 started yelling at me. And he's a quite tall man, and --
4 for -- I'm looking up at him and, "What are you doing
5 slamming the police?" And I said, "Well, it's my spiritual
6 teaching to tell the truth."

7 So and what I felt is there was a -- a large
8 hand over our -- our investigation like this, and I don't
9 think all the people were doing that, but there was some
10 that were doing this behaviour, and it's still happening to
11 this day.

12 So according to the correspondence and an
13 email that I have -- we'd asked for Crime Stoppers
14 investigation two times over the years, and we -- we were
15 told that it just couldn't happen, and so finally I'd asked
16 a few years back, and I spoke to a woman at Crime Stoppers
17 and she was willing to air it. And one of the things that
18 they were saying if there's no re-enactment how can we --
19 there was always different things that were -- were being
20 said, and I didn't know what to compare it to because we
21 never have done this before. So -- so she was willing to
22 air it, so I was waiting for the information to come, and a
23 month goes by, and then more time goes by.

24 And then there is an officer that was on the
25 file and I didn't know where he went. I thought he got

1 moved and he was in the chief position -- chief officer so
2 -- and I said, Well, that's where you went. And I thought
3 you had already been moved out and. So he said -- the
4 police officer moved and that he'll be sending the -- the
5 information to go to Crime Stoppers.

6 And this is quite a bit after the fact, and
7 it's in an email. So I kept that email as evidence, and I
8 didn't know to this day it would be used as evidence if I
9 ever needed it. But I -- I do have it.

10 And because I know when you're working on
11 investigation, the file doesn't go out of building. It
12 stays in the -- that office and those people will be
13 assigned to that file. If I'm wrong somebody can correct
14 me, but, yeah, so -- and so there was that part. So we
15 lost that opportunity again.

16 So coming to Missing Murdered Indigenous
17 Women Inquiries, telling our story different places is a
18 way of getting her story out there so someone can recognize
19 her and maybe we can find her remains.

20 And we did ask for -- her partner had
21 conflicting statements to his job site, because he was in
22 paving that maybe he -- we can get his job site checked out
23 with special equipment to look for bones, because I was
24 speaking with one police officer, and -- and we -- we
25 talked about that and -- and so that was a possibility.

1 But then there was -- it was mentioned that if you don't
2 have this specific spot then they can't check all over the
3 place.

4 So I just have -- I'm not sure about that
5 because I've seen on TV that they're checking 20 years
6 later, they're going over a whole -- like -- large property
7 looking for remains, so there's that, so it...

8 And she lived in the -- on a campground,
9 Roland on the River campground with -- with Al. And we did
10 have a -- like a drawing from a -- the psychic, we went
11 there and they were doing construction.

12 So like today, now the question is because
13 you see a lot of remains being uncovered to this day --
14 well, they're, they'll set up all the equipment and their
15 trailers and they'll go on -- in there with equipment
16 looking for -- you can look for bones, and so that's a
17 question we'd like to ask for them to do this where she
18 lived, because there's a lot of trees and areas where you
19 can -- you could hide a body if you want there because
20 there's -- there is -- there is a little bit of an old dump
21 there too, and it's right next to the river, so.

22 And then when he was -- he didn't stay too
23 long, and he left and you know, he went into -- I asked for
24 the history to be checked out because there was a history
25 of violence going through B.C., and all the way to

1 Abbotsford. So, and then he was into some other things
2 that we don't know about, but that the other things he was
3 into the police know what it is, and so it has to do with
4 women.

5 And so the family had come out, asked for
6 them to be questioned and the wife and there was a comment
7 coming out as, "Well, he was going to church and he was
8 trying to change his life." And I thought, "Well, what --
9 what's that got to do with a suspect?" Like I don't -- I
10 don't need to hear that. All -- like what we are wanting
11 was his family questioned and his wife. He was re-married.

12 And so finally she offered to be questioned,
13 and she was reluctant, and so they said she had a -- they
14 had a picture -- she had a picture, and it was my mom. So
15 -- yeah, so that's what he kept. And the children were
16 reluctant to -- even of their own abuse, and the mother --
17 their mother was violently abused, and then sometime she
18 had passed away, but I don't know the details and the son
19 was abused in the family.

20 So there's a very violent history and that
21 person was really violently abused in B.C., from him after
22 he left my mom, so it -- there was those details. The
23 police have more of that. So, yeah, so there's a lot of
24 frustration.

25 So it -- now the -- the point of having more

1 questions, is that how do you ask somebody that you don't
2 trust and don't want to talk to anymore? And can somebody
3 mediate this -- this conversation, or be put on her file?
4 There's that -- because when it's the Chief of police who
5 else do you talk to?

6 So like the -- there's the -- there's a new
7 person in -- like that he's higher up and in Alberta I know
8 -- yeah, so who does he -- like who -- who would he have to
9 talk or we talk to instead? So -- and then over the years
10 is like do we go to seek justice about this?

11 And you look in Hollywood nowadays and people
12 are suing people for 20 years ago, they're sexually
13 assaulted and there's no evidence, these kind of things are
14 happening, and we've been working over the years and
15 there's so many red flags over this, and those things are
16 happening. So we know somewhere we'll find the right
17 people to talk with, and that will work with our family in
18 a good way.

19 And for some reason we just keep going and
20 you don't see too much coming out at the time, but I know
21 it's going to help future generations or it might help
22 another case, so I don't know how many other people in that
23 area are having problems with the justice system.

24 There's some justice system work better in
25 some other communities than others and they're using really

1 good equipment, and they're doing a good job, so -- yeah,
2 so it's a -- it's more of a call out for justice, and just
3 have good service for -- for people.

4 And I think women are important in our
5 communities and our culture, they're caregivers and they're
6 -- I don't think that -- I feel like not -- they're not
7 respected in some communities like there's colonialism
8 still going on and different things. So I just hope for --
9 for justice, yeah, for her, and for all people. Thank you.
10 All my relations.

11 **MS. SHARON PATTERSON:** My name's Sharon
12 Patterson, and I'm the eldest of my five sisters here. I
13 was born in Athabasca, and then raised in Slave Lake with
14 my *Kookum* until I was three, and then mom got married to
15 a -- to my step-father and then I moved to Edmonton with
16 them.

17 And I'd really like to say some nice things,
18 some good things of my life with my mom that's kind of hard
19 after these ladies -- after my sisters spoke, but I will do
20 it. You know, like it's been 30 years, and it's really
21 rough. It made me go crazy -- well, I was crazy in the
22 first place, but I am -- life is hard. You never have
23 answers. You never have the right answers that you want.
24 That you expect to hear.

25 And I always pray for -- "Show me where your

1 bones are." You know, I want to see where her bones are.
2 And you get what you ask for when you pray. I prayed to
3 *Kookum* one day -- one night, and I know my *Kookum's* always
4 been with me. I've been through a rough life as I grew up
5 and she's always been there beside me. I felt her.

6 So anyways I wanted to see where mom was now.
7 Because another dream I prayed for she showed me something
8 I didn't want to see, but she showed me a gun actually, but
9 this other dream -- okay, "Can you show me where mom is
10 now? And she did. It was heaven." What I perceived to be
11 heaven, and there she -- there was my *Kookum* standing there
12 and I go to her, "Where is she?" And she goes -- points.
13 And there's my mom sitting there on a beautiful garden
14 bench smiling at me.

15 And there's times like -- like, now I know
16 she's safe. I know her soul is safe. It's not wandering
17 around. I had wonderful times when I was growing up with
18 my mom. Like, going -- shooting rabbits and ducks. She
19 shot -- showed me how to shoot a gun when I was like, five
20 years old and she was a good shot. Then we'd go home and
21 she would cook that rabbit, or that duck, or that
22 partridge, and it was so good.

23 I could never make the bannock that she made
24 to this day. She made the best bannock in the world.

25 I'm really having a rough time trying to say

1 the good things that -- my mom, I can't do it no more.

2 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Mr. Commissioner, I'm
3 wondering if we could perhaps take a brief break?

4 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Yes, let's take
5 a ten-minute break.

6 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Thank you.

7 **(BRIEF PAUSE)**

8 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Are you ready?

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes.

10 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So Mr. Commissioner, if we
11 could resume. Yes, so we're going to resume with Brenda,
12 who's one of the sisters as well.

13 **MS. BRENDA ST. SAVARD:** Hi, my name is Brenda
14 St. Savard. I don't have any stories to speak of, of my
15 mom. I never got to meet her. I never got to know her.
16 The only stories I know are from my sisters, and I'm here
17 more in support for us all. And hope that we some day will
18 be able to find some peace and find some answers. Thank
19 you.

20 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Gail, I'm wondering if
21 perhaps, Lorna...

22 **MS. LORNA MARTIN:** My name again is Lorna
23 Martin. I just -- the past two weeks I've been waking up
24 like around like 4:00 in the morning and thinking about
25 coming here today and sharing our mother's story. And --

1 and I -- sometimes I get really nervous because I didn't --
2 didn't want to miss anything.

3 And then I -- I -- I -- I had heard that this
4 is like a -- a court like the inquiry -- the commission had
5 the authority to subpoena people. And -- and I had
6 actually been -- I live in Ottawa, and I had been with the
7 -- had worked with the Native Women's Association of Canada
8 at the time when we presented the signatures to the House
9 of Commons. And our mother was one of the first women
10 registered in -- in the database at Native Women's
11 Association of Canada, I think in 2005, her story one of
12 the first women registered, and since been I don't -- I --
13 I know this is not like the final because I don't want to
14 jump to maybe our wish list of things we'd like to see.

15 Also for me I'm just having a hard time today
16 because my mother -- my -- my -- my husband was murdered in
17 1998, and so I -- I had gone through that -- that murder
18 trial with him, and was kind of like the same thing that
19 happened on the witness stand where my -- the stress goes
20 to my stomach and I kind of -- it just gets into like a
21 ball and I hold it tight and -- and I collapsed on -- you
22 know, on the stand so I was determined to -- it's not good
23 to hold yourself in that -- that tight, and it -- it's very
24 painful

25 But listening to my sisters, getting ready

1 this week you know, I always, sometimes I try to be the --
2 the strong one, and -- and attend to maybe things I -- that
3 they may need in getting ready, although you know, I know --
4 - I'm not the only one that can help them do that. They --
5 they take care of themselves well.

6 But we were all really young when our mother
7 went missing, you know, it's a long time ago, and the
8 things that we -- we went through that we learned, and that
9 we faced for the first time were all the things that you
10 heard.

11 And when -- yeah, we were hard on ourselves
12 like the guilt that -- that we had while our mother's out
13 there missing we don't know where she is over the years,
14 and family members, and friends, and everybody would ask
15 sometimes, "Where's your mom?" "What happened to her?"
16 You know, "What do you think happened to her?" And someone
17 even mentioned a few years ago, "Maybe -- maybe she ended
18 up on that Pickton farm," and -- and you know, what a scary
19 thought for, you think, that's -- I -- I perceive that as
20 scary.

21 And then you know -- but everybody else was
22 afraid for her too because they all -- everybody who knew
23 my mom knew her as -- as a big -- a big heart, she was
24 always happy, joyous person and she had that impact on
25 people.

1 So I was in my older years, my older age I
2 wonder how in the hell can a person of interest you know,
3 when somebody goes -- if there's a murder, or if there's
4 somebody goes missing usually it's always the -- the
5 husband or the -- you know, it's always the spouse, because
6 that's what happened to me in my husband's murder trial.

7 I was questioned many -- many times and I
8 learned in that process that it's because I was the prime
9 suspect, and I'm okay with that now because that's just the
10 usual -- that's the -- the number one thing that they
11 should look for is that, that person's spouse, and that's
12 just how they -- we learned that -- I learned that the work
13 -- the police work is done. So you know, years up to this
14 date you know I -- we wonder -- how in the hell did they
15 not pursue that man more? Why were they not on -- hot on
16 his trail. Why in the hell does my sister tell me that --
17 that man burnt his (sic) clothes?

18 People involved in investigations and police
19 work know that that's a red flag. If you take the time to
20 go out and make a fire and -- and burn somebody's clothes?
21 Like, that is -- that's -- I don't understand it because
22 I'm not a murderer and I'm not a criminal. But that is a
23 criminal work. That's what they do. That's what we
24 learned many years after.

25 We didn't know that when we were young and

1 innocent. But you get hardened with these horrible -- with
2 these injustices, these weird stories that you learn years
3 after, that maybe if the police were doing their job,
4 taking take of my mom a little bit, that something --
5 something could have -- some more evidence could have been
6 gathered and -- and hung onto, so that's why you know, I
7 was sitting here and I was thinking -- hearing these
8 stories again and it really made me mad, really makes me
9 mad.

10 And as a family member it -- yeah, it makes
11 you mad. It makes you cry. It makes you sick to your
12 stomach. And I just wanted to share that with you. I have
13 a lot more to say too.

14 **MS. ARLENE PEARSON:** I didn't mention
15 something that the family has talked about. When -- when
16 information is sent out and you're asking from -- like from
17 the -- from the file to be sent to -- let's say for a
18 documentary or to -- to the media in some form, Al had
19 mentioned my mother went missing from Westlock.

20 And another statement he also mentioned that
21 my mother was walking down the highway, side of the road,
22 with a plastic bag with her clothes in it, and a semitruck
23 picked her up and he took her to -- took her to Vancouver
24 to Hastings.

25 So family last talked to her, and she was in

1 Slave Lake with Al and -- and really upset and crying. So
2 -- and I don't know if he had a third story. I thought
3 there was -- there might -- there still might be another
4 story out there because his statements were conflicting.

5 To this day there -- there is info on the --
6 the -- like on the Internet, and if we have a documentary
7 done, and the people go there and question about the file,
8 about my mom, this information comes out and we don't want
9 it coming out that Al's side of the story because he's --
10 he was the main suspect.

11 So we -- we always have to look at documents
12 and block it out, and then, and then send them -- like most
13 likely have to send an email and say, "Please, do not send
14 Al's conflicting statement information to the media." So I
15 -- maybe it's we're the family and you know, just certain
16 things like that is so important to us for her because it's
17 saying she's over here, she's over here instead of she was
18 here, and let's focus on this, focus on that too, but focus
19 on where she was. And -- and what about her remains and --
20 and like the stories that, that could have been gathered.
21 Someone might have seen her and who did he know that he
22 told about her and because they all know it would go all
23 the way back to Slave Lake.

24 And so we -- we -- this was sent out and
25 we -- we had to wipe that -- black that out -- Westlock, we

1 put Slave Lake. And then she wasn't wearing a dark blue
2 coat, she was wearing a white blue -- white bomber style
3 jacket because -- bought it in Kingsway Mall over here and
4 I had the exact same one. It was cotton, and it was kind
5 of like a little western style. So too much of the -- the
6 suspects info on my mom is still being put out there, and
7 was put out there and I -- yeah, we just felt like, why do
8 you put the suspect's info -- information out there? It's
9 very frustrating. So, yeah, it's like you're speaking with
10 frustration just even saying it.

11 So -- so those are the things and it's --
12 it's a lot of work because -- and we all have to read a lot
13 of this information and documents and look at what's put on
14 the TV, if something comes out, and question now -- like I
15 feel like I have to question if someone wants to ask me
16 about my story and I said, "Well, can I view it?" and then
17 all of sudden it drops right off. And I was like, "What
18 happened to asking me about the story about -- about my
19 mom? Was it just too much work for you?"

20 So I do realize -- and someone had told me
21 once that -- that the women get exploited as well, when
22 people want a story, they want a good story. And there's
23 those reporters out there, and people media, they -- they
24 do a good story and a good service to humanity, and they
25 tell the truth, and they look for the truth in all things.

1 And so and clarification -- so -- so I -- you know, you
2 just have to believe that and have faith those people are
3 out there so that -- thought I would mention that as well.

4 She -- I know she was trying to get a -- a
5 divorce -- like, from my father. Who -- who was concerned
6 for her wellbeing? And my father -- she'd separated from
7 for many years, and I was told that the -- her divorce
8 didn't go through so sometimes we put Kreiser, so someone
9 can recognize by Kreiser, yeah, so there -- there's those
10 things. So thank you.

11 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** I'm wondering if there's
12 anybody that wants to talk about recommendations, or things
13 that they want the inquiry to consider based on your
14 family's experience. Are there specific things that you
15 think that we should be looking at, or consider?

16 **MS. LORNA MARTIN:** I don't know if somebody -
17 - I just wanted to get in a little more info just to
18 mention that our mother went to St. Maarten Residential
19 School in Wabasca-Desmarais. Did somebody mention that?

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No.

21 **MS. LORNA MARTIN:** Yeah, she -- she did. And
22 so I just wanted to mention that.

23 One of the things -- actually I wanted to --
24 we'd like to get her information -- her missing person
25 information corrected to -- we're -- we're not sure why it

1 -- the information reflects statements from the prime
2 suspect, Al Moller, as my sister was mentioning in this --
3 this missing person report, and -- and of a lot of comments
4 that people still mention to this day.

5 They -- they believe that our mom got in a
6 car or a truck with some men and went to B.C., and -- and
7 it was in Westlock, and those were the words of that Al
8 Moller person, so we could get that corrected. So we can't
9 -- don't have to hear that over and over again. I don't
10 know if you can correct that on the Internet as -- as well.

11 I don't know if this is -- would be part of a
12 recommendation but just recently with my -- one of my sons
13 looking into applying for a social security number in the
14 United States, I -- our mother wasn't registered with
15 Indigenous and Northern Affairs. She was eligible to be
16 re-instated for her status as part of Bill C-31, so when
17 she went missing she wasn't registered.

18 So I'd -- I was actually looking into that a
19 couple of weeks ago and -- and I will do that because that
20 will help her grandchildren, great grandchildren in some
21 way. Maybe I'll hand it over, I can't -- maybe I'll think
22 of something later on.

23 Actually, there's one more thing I
24 remembered. I -- I have a -- I trust and I know that there
25 have been a lot of work a lot of recommendations already

1 coming forward from organizations like Native Women's
2 Association of Canada, Assembly of First Nations, The Métis
3 Nation of Canada, The Inuit AnanauKatiget, all the -- all
4 those organizations, and FFADA, lot's of -- there's been a
5 lot of recommendations.

6 I -- I trust -- I'm not a lawyer. And I was
7 mentioning that to my sisters, that we don't have to do
8 that, bring forward like lawyer, or legal type of
9 recommendations because that's already being done --
10 that -- that type of -- those like brain busting kind of
11 thinking recommendations. Trust that our people, and that
12 work for those organizations are lawyers. We can fall back
13 on that safety net of those legal type of recommendations
14 already coming forward and being done.

15 We've had some conversations of a wish list
16 of -- of things to honour our mother.

17 And a couple of them are like a ceremony
18 where you know, I offer tobacco and our cloths to an Elder
19 for her spirit name, that would -- as part of honouring her
20 and having some -- having her as part of some maybe Alberta
21 memorial for missing and murdered women. I think that's,
22 that's it for me.

23 **MS. ARLENE PEARSON:** Are you finished?

24 **MS. LORNA MARTIN:** Yeah.

25 **MS. ARLENE PEARSON:** Okay, okay. And -- all

1 I wasn't going to say anything. I just want to say thank
2 you for this opportunity for us to explain our stories
3 about our mother and actually my sister, Lorna's talked me
4 into -- the second time coming to these events which I am
5 totally against but she talked me into it again. She put
6 me through that *Taken* two years ago and I fought with her.
7 No, there's no way and she made me do it, and this time
8 again and I thought, no, but here I am.

9 It's not -- well, it's funny, but it's --
10 she's -- she's just determined, but I'm glad I came. And I
11 guess I had a lot of things to say, which I really didn't
12 think I did. And I'm just hoping through all this
13 something good comes out of this, and hopefully Mr. Trudeau
14 out there in Ottawa listens to our pleas and our
15 recommendations and our -- hears our tears and our prayers,
16 and whatever we have to say, and I hope that does make a
17 difference in our lives and every -- every other family out
18 there is -- that is going through the same situation we are
19 in.

20 And since like even watching on TV and
21 everything that he's -- whatever he says he's going to help
22 Native people of Canada. Well, I sure -- I sure hope he
23 does because I hope we're not sitting here, you know,
24 talking about nothing, which is not going to anywhere in
25 the future. Anyhow, that's all I have to say.

1 **MS. GAIL KREISER LEECH:** I'd just like to
2 share that my -- my mother was a very traditional person.
3 When she lost her Status, we lived in Edmonton. She still
4 brang (sic) that with her because we would go outside of
5 Edmonton and go and snaring rabbits and I remember going
6 with one of her brothers because they had to take it in the
7 bush and so they would do hunting, and so I -- I would be
8 with them at times, but sometimes not directly right
9 standing there, but I know with the rabbits, so living in
10 Edmonton in the city.

11 We still had rabbit Shake'N Bake put on our
12 rabbits, and then she was -- they're trying to feed all the
13 kids and then -- so they -- we would go to the lake she
14 would put a -- wrap a chicken up with salt, pepper, with --
15 put it in foil, put it on the motor and it would be cooked
16 when we got to the lake, and they would bring out the buns
17 and was -- they were so tasty and we didn't taste any
18 toxins in it or anything, so I don't know how they wrapped
19 things.

20 And during the time of her disappearance just
21 before, she had things with her health showing up. And I
22 know as a woman, that is elder, and even men you feel more
23 vulnerable because your body's not the same, and you're
24 wanting to have -- you might be wanting to have a place of
25 our own and get away from your partner who might not be

1 well, or who might be abusive. And I think it's important
2 to have more things for men and women when they get older
3 and because as soon as you have medical issues there's a
4 vulnerability there and we can't help it because we don't
5 have this suit of armor with us without our life.

6 And so have more -- she didn't have access to
7 as -- as much as we have today. And there needs to be a
8 lot more out there because all these people are coming out
9 and some people have stories of missing people that aren't
10 even recorded yet. And so going to events -- sometimes I
11 don't know why I'm going.

12 A lady had come to me, she'd been in her home
13 for 30 years and finally started coming out which she lost
14 her sister, and it was such a blessing to meet this -- this
15 woman. And so then I, you know, some people you try to
16 refer them to someone who -- who can help them in different
17 ways and stay in contact and make a lot of friends and it
18 just happens to be they have missing people in their life.

19 Coming to this -- this inquiry here I didn't
20 know what I was coming into, so I didn't prepare myself
21 because I was thinking of bringing of file I made. I was
22 looking at it one day and I -- I thought if you read it
23 like a book it's going to tell you a lot about the story
24 about the handwritten notes, the notes, the pictures, maps,
25 and different things in there.

1 And I didn't realize -- I got emotional some
2 of the stories shared by grandchildren in -- in that, and
3 so -- so it's -- you feel like you -- you put yourself on
4 the line there because you're saying things about -- really
5 you have to come out to speak out to have done -- to have
6 justice. And a lot of times your -- your people are
7 disciplined, especially like the things my mom had to put
8 up with. So I know it was hard for her to tell about some
9 things with the family because I remember her saying that
10 she felt a -- a feeling in her stomach, and she -- it was a
11 loneliness. And it was about within the month or so before
12 she passed, and it was in the deep lonely feeling in her --
13 her stomach. And she -- she mentioned that to me and I --
14 and I felt helpless that I -- and so it was her soul, and
15 so being who knows what she had to go through, and so I
16 don't know how many of these we have to go through to be
17 heard.

18 And I know there's people out that they're
19 listening, and they'll hear it, they'll get it, some are
20 still trying to figure out, some might not got it yet, but
21 they'll get it later.

22 So -- yeah, it's a blessing to be here.
23 Thankful to be with you all. All the people that helped.
24 There's things that went one way into another and that's
25 all learning in itself. So I'd like to say thank you to

1 all the people that have come here to work and support and
2 be here to make a difference, all my relations, thank you.

3 **MS. LORNA MARTIN:** I think can't of any more
4 things -- recommendations but I would like to request --
5 like in that regard, an opening for our family to bring
6 forward things at a later date if we think of them.

7 And actually, wondering if this is our -- our
8 sisters here, but we do have a brother, Brian (ph) he
9 didn't want to -- he didn't want to be here today. And
10 maybe that you'd keep an opening for those family members
11 who are not ready today to -- to share, or to bring --
12 bring forward recommendations to leave -- leave the door
13 open for them. And I don't know if we're closing, but
14 right now we're not.

15 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Sorry.

16 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Are we closing right
17 now?

18 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Sure. Just...

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Okay. Well our mother
20 -- I just wanted to make sure that it was on the record
21 that our mother went to St. Maarten residential school and
22 which was located Wabasca-Desmarais on Bigstone First
23 Nation, Bigstone Cree First Nation. It has -- when I was
24 there a few years ago on Bigstone, the school, I heard was
25 burnt -- burnt down.

1 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** M'hm.

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And actually our --
3 our -- we have one uncle, my mom has one sibling left who's
4 still alive, his name is Jonas St. Savard (ph), so that's
5 another person who may, at some point, have some
6 information to bring forward. Thank you, and I really -- I
7 wanted to say thank you to -- to you for making -- for
8 taking care of us. This is -- it was really hard -- really
9 hard to do. I didn't -- I didn't know -- I just had a hard
10 time today and thank you for -- for your kindness and --
11 and helping me through it.

12 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So, Mr. Commissioner, did
13 you have some questions or some comments?

14 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** I'd just like
15 to thank each of you for coming here today to share with
16 us. I just want to recognize the strength as well that --
17 that you've shown in coming here and sharing with us and
18 also thank you for telling us about your mom and for
19 sharing some recommendations with us -- with the inquiry
20 today, thank you very much.

21 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** So the Commissioner will
22 share some gifts with the family and if we can adjourn this
23 matter or conclude it.

24 --- **Exhibits (code: P1P05P0305)**

25 **Exhibit 1:** Folder of one digital image.

1 ---Upon recessing at 1:18 p.m.

2 **Hearing # 3**

3 **Witness: Berna Barore**

4 **In Relation to her sister Ruth Nora Cocks**

5 **Heard by Commissioner Brian Eyolfson**

6 **Commissioner Counsel: Breen Ouellette**

7 **Berna's Support: Helen Boucher**

8 **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Rick Lightning**

9 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

10 **Commissioner of Oaths for the Province of Alberta: Jeff**

11 **Weigl**

12 ---Upon resuming at 2:04 p.m.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you,
14 Commissioner Eyolfson. For the record, my name is Breen
15 Ouellette, and I'm a lawyer with the Nation Inquiry. Is it
16 my honour to introduce Berna Barore, who has travelled here
17 from Athabasca. Berna has brought someone in support, who
18 I will ask her to introduce.

19 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** (Indiscernible). This is
20 my cousin Helen Boucher. She's also from Athabasca.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you.

22 Mr. Registrar, Berna has requested to affirm
23 using an Eagle Feather.

24 **MR. REGISTRAR:** If you could please, have the
25 witness -- thank you.

1 **BERNA BARORE, Affirmed**

2 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Berna, I want to offer
3 you this tobacco tie in support of testimony today.

4 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Thank you.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Would you, please, tell
6 us the full name of the person you have come to speak about
7 today?

8 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** My sister, Ruth Nora
9 Cocks.

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And are you here today
11 because she is missing or because she was murdered?

12 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** She was murdered.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** When was Ruth murdered?

14 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** She went missing on March
15 28th of 2008, 11 days later her body was found, on April
16 7th, 2008.

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And in which city was
18 she murdered?

19 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** In Athabasca, Alberta.

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** How old was she at the
21 time?

22 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Fifty-one.

23 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And can you share with
24 the Commissioner what Ruth's life was like growing up?

25 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Ruth was very quiet. Very

1 shy. She didn't -- she kind of stayed in the background.
2 She didn't like to be noticed. She never -- she --
3 although she was the oldest in our family she never did
4 tell us what to do. Like, she -- really mild tempered and
5 she didn't stick up for herself, really, a lot of the
6 times, so even though I was younger I kind of stuck up for
7 her. I keep -- she was my only sister. She was the oldest
8 and I also had eight brothers -- eight brothers. Ruth was
9 very shy. That she couldn't go to school, so when she was
10 12 years old my dad had taken her out of school. That --
11 that's more about -- that's about it.

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you. And can you
13 tell us about Ruth's life in the weeks and months before
14 she was murdered?

15 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Ruth was staying with --
16 with her younger daughter, Amy (ph), and she has three
17 grandchildren. I raised Amy. But she was really close to
18 the -- I was very close to my -- the oldest grandson, but
19 she was very close to the youngest one. For the first
20 three years of Devon (ph) -- Devon's life my sister was
21 there. Like she slept with him. She -- everything. And
22 she had settled down. She was good. She was -- she rarely
23 went out to drink and like, her grandchildren were -- and
24 that's what had turned her around, was her grandchildren.

25 So she has been -- she was quiet for the past

1 -- for the past four years before she went missing. She
2 wasn't known to be out and partying, or anything like that.
3 After the -- after -- like, within four -- four years
4 before she went missing or murdered.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And can you tell us
6 about her old injury?

7 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** My -- my sister had a --
8 had surgery in her left ankle. She -- it was shattered and
9 so she had to have a plate and pins put in it. But the
10 pins were coming out and it was very painful for her. You
11 could actually see the pins sticking in her -- in her
12 ankle. She never wanted to -- she was supposed to go to
13 surgery again to fix that, but she was not -- she wasn't
14 really too fond of doing it.

15 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so was it quite
16 painful for her?

17 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Very much so.

18 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And did she have
19 medication for the pain?

20 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes, she had Tylenol 3 for
21 the pain.

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And did she require
23 other medication as well because of the pain?

24 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** She did have sleep -- she
25 had sleeping pills. And she also had Valium to help with

1 her depression and help her get through the day.

2 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And do you remember the
3 last time you spoke with Ruth?

4 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I spoke with Ruth the day
5 -- the day she went missing, or that night. On March 27th,
6 which was a Thursday, she was supposed to come to my place.
7 She was at the Grand Union Hotel, and I live two blocks
8 from there. So I was waiting -- I waited up -- I waited up
9 for her for a while, and she had the keys to my -- to get
10 into my apartment building, and also to my -- to my
11 apartment. So I had to work the next day so I went to
12 sleep about two o'clock. In the morning -- when I woke up
13 I found that she wasn't there yet so I went to work.

14 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so was it common
15 for Ruth to stay with you like that?

16 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Oh, yes. She stayed with
17 me a lot of times. By the time I get off work at 3:30 if
18 she's not at my place, I'd be walking down the hallway and
19 I could hear my phone ringing already. I haven't even
20 reached my apartment, and it would be her calling me. So
21 we were in contact every day. If she's not at my place
22 then she's calling me.

23 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And how did the
24 distance from your place to Amy's place compare with
25 respect to the Grand Union Hotel?

1 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** My place is about two
2 blocks from the Union, and her daughter, Amy's, was about
3 two kilometres. And she always took a cab up there. She
4 also had a tab with the cab company, so that whenever she
5 wanted to go home she would take the cab and then pay them
6 whenever she got paid.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so with her ankle
8 it would have been difficult to walk to Amy's?

9 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Oh, definitely, yes.

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Or any distance, for
11 that matter; any long distance?

12 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** For any long distance.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So at the time she
14 didn't show up in the morning, were you concerned at that
15 point?

16 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No, I wasn't.

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So what did you do that
18 day? You went to work and then...

19 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I went to work and then I
20 went right home after work and she wasn't there. And about
21 five o'clock that evening I got a call from her daughter,
22 Amy. She said that her purse was found on the west side of
23 town. That they had -- someone had called her common-law
24 husband with -- from her cell phone. And so I contacted
25 that person and I went and picked up her purse. And they

1 told -- they showed me where it was found.

2 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And just for
3 clarification, the person that called spoke to her common-
4 law husband, you said, that would be Amy's, or Ruth's
5 common-law?

6 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Amy's.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you. And so you
8 picked up the purse and what -- what did you do then?

9 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I picked up the purse and
10 I went -- I took it up to Amy's. I found that unusual
11 because my sister doesn't go on the west side of town.

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did you go to look
13 where the purse was found?

14 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes, I did. There was --
15 there was a log there in the bush there, and her purse was
16 thrown in there, as -- that's what they told me, the person
17 that found it.

18 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And where was this log?

19 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** On west side of town, just
20 on the outskirts.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So how far was that
22 from the hotel?

23 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I would say about a
24 kilometre.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And when you were

1 there, did you attempt to find Ruth?

2 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. Amy -- Trevor (ph),
3 which is Amy's common-law husband, and myself, we were
4 hollering -- calling her name. We were walking around that
5 area where her purse was found, and this was in the evening
6 and it was really -- really snowing hard. At first it was
7 just the three of us looking. In fact, that evening --
8 that -- there was just the three of us looking for her.

9 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So after you looked
10 there, where did you go next?

11 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I went up to -- oh, I went
12 to the Union, I went to the Union Hotel. And I saw two
13 police officers in there. And I went up to them and I told
14 that I wanted to report my sister missing, so they took
15 down the details. This was right in the hotel. We never
16 did go to the police station. And then we went -- then we
17 went up and I decided to stay at my apartment, but I had a
18 friend stay at my place just in case Ruth came by my place
19 and they would know.

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so did you --
21 how -- how would you describe the way the police helped
22 you?

23 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Those two officers that I
24 spoke with in the bar, they seemed like they were really
25 wanting to help. And they started looking, like helping --

1 they looked for her at that -- at that point.

2 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so where did you go
3 from the Grand Union Hotel?

4 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I went up to Amy's. And
5 that's where I decided to stay for the night.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And did you hear back
7 from the officers?

8 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. I got a call at four
9 o'clock in the morning. Sergeant -- or from Officer Falk
10 (ph) -- he -- he asked me if Ruth had any scars or tattoos,
11 and I told him she -- she did have some tattoos and some
12 scars. She had a heart tattoo on her arm from --
13 somewhere's between her wrist and her elbow. She had a
14 scar on her stomach from a gall bladder operation. And she
15 had scars on her ankle where she had her -- her operation.

16 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And did you have any
17 other contact with the police before Ruth was found?

18 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I had a lot of contact
19 with the police after Ruth was found. Just...

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And if I could clarify,
21 did they contact --

22 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Oh.

23 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** -- you at all in the
24 time that you spoke to Officer Falk -- Falk until the time
25 that Ruth was found? Did -- did the police contact you

1 further?

2 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No. But I kept on phoning
3 them. This was the weekend and on Monday Sergeant Scott
4 (ph) had come over to Amy's and he told me not to worry
5 about it -- not to worry now. He says, "Because he's on
6 the case." And that's when everything came to a halt.
7 Nothing was done after that.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So I understand that
9 while this was going on tragedy struck your family again.
10 Can you tell me about that?

11 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** While my sister was
12 missing, on the 28th -- my baby brother had passed away on
13 the 31st of March. That was a Monday. We were still
14 looking for Ruth. We didn't know where she was. We wanted
15 to hold off on my baby brother's funeral until we found
16 her, but then we had to go ahead and do it without her. So
17 we had his services on April 6th, her body was found April
18 7th.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And where did you
20 attend his funeral?

21 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** We had his funeral in Fort
22 McMurray. One of my brothers stayed behind to be with Amy.
23 Well, she stayed in Athabasca. She didn't come with us.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Now, while you were
25 away you said you -- you had been in contact with the RCMP

1 many times in this time period, was that including while
2 you were in Fort McMurray?

3 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. I was phoning there
4 all the time and asking them what was happening with --
5 what they were doing to look for my sister. Prior to that
6 and quite a few days after -- every time I would phone the
7 RCMP they would ask me what missing person. And this went
8 on for days and I would phone them like, ten times a day.
9 I would go knocking on their door. I would go to the
10 police station to see what they're doing. I -- I finally
11 blew up at one of them. I said, "This is a small
12 detachment." I said, "Everybody that works here should
13 know there is a missing person out there.

14 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** How did it make you
15 feel?

16 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Angry at first. Well, I
17 don't -- I -- there was -- there was so much happening, at
18 the time, but it felt like they were not doing nothing
19 (sic) and they weren't. So I phoned my family and -- and I
20 told them that Ruth was missing. I said, "And I'm not
21 getting any help from the RCMP. I asked if they could come
22 down and help me look for her, and they did. They all took
23 times off -- time off their work to come help me look for
24 her.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So you had mentioned

1 she was found on April 7th. How did you learn about that?

2 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I was still in Fort
3 McMurray waiting for my baby brother's ashes. My brother
4 John (ph) phoned me and she -- and he told me that they
5 found Ruth. I said, "Oh." I said, "Great." I said,
6 "Where was she?" And he said, "No." He said, "We found --
7 they just found her body."

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Where was her body
9 found?

10 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Her body was found three
11 kilometres west of Athabasca, down by the river. She was
12 on the ice.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What was strange about
14 that location?

15 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** My sister never went --
16 went that part of town, in the west end. Athabasca's very
17 small. I live two blocks west of the Union. And I knew
18 she never went that part of town, so I found it very
19 strange. That she could not have gone there.

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Was the area well lit?

21 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** To be able to get there,
22 they're going to have to walk up a hill. It's very dark.
23 There is no lights. If she walking -- if she was walking
24 on the ditch there's -- there's a lot of holes on there
25 because I tried walking on it, when I went look for her.

1 If she was walking on a highway, it would have been very
2 hard to get down to the river because it was very steep.
3 And like I said, there was a lot of holes on the ground.

4 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So with her injury
5 would it be reasonable to expect she would be able to walk
6 over that rough terrain?

7 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No, she wouldn't have.
8 She couldn't.

9 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell us how she
10 was found? And if it helps...

11 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** How...

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I understand that there
13 was a person that found her. Can you tell us the
14 circumstances of that?

15 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** On April 6th -- is that
16 that part?

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** April 6th. Yes, I'm
18 asking about April 6th.

19 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** On April 6th the police
20 had supposedly had done a search with cadaver dogs. They
21 walked right by her. A lady that lived not far from there
22 saw what was going on and she got curious, so the next day
23 she got on her quad and with her dog she went to look
24 around there. My sister was found on the ice. She was
25 wearing all black, so she was very visible.

1 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So you were in Fort
2 McMurray when you got the news. What did you do?

3 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I went back to Athabasca
4 the next day, on the eighth. When I got home I walked to
5 the funeral home and I told them that I wanted to see my
6 sister. And they said they had already sent to Edmonton
7 for an autopsy. From there I walked across the street,
8 went to the RCMP, and I asked them -- I wanted them to give
9 me -- to let me look at my sister's file. I wanted to know
10 what they had did all the time that she was missing. But
11 they told me it was a private -- *Privacy Act* and I couldn't
12 see it.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** When you got home I
14 also understand you talked to Amy about how she found out.
15 How the news was brought to her. Could you tell us about
16 that?

17 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** My sister was found in the
18 morning. And the -- they didn't give my family the news
19 until 11 o'clock that night. And it wasn't the Athabasca
20 RCMP that went and notified her. It was the Boyle RCMP.
21 They gave her my keys and five loonies that was supposedly
22 had been in her jacket pocket.

23 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you remember the
24 name of the officer from the Boyle RCMP that Amy told you?

25 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** His name was Sunny Kim

1 (ph) .

2 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And I -- I want to ask
3 one question, just a little back, when you found out that
4 Ruth's body had been sent to Edmonton for an autopsy, and
5 they hadn't told the family, how did you feel?

6 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** The Athabasca RCMP?

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Yeah, when the -- when
8 -- when she was sent for an autopsy without you knowing
9 about it.

10 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Well, I wanted to see her,
11 and I was really upset because I really wanted to see her
12 and so they told me that I would be able to see her when
13 they bring her back for the wake and the funeral.

14 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And when you went to
15 the RCMP to ask for her file did they connect you with
16 victim services?

17 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No.

18 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so who did you meet
19 with after you went to the police station? Where did you
20 go after?

21 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I went to Amy's because
22 that's where all my family members were. So we were
23 talking and our -- I asked that -- like who identified her.
24 I was very surprised to find out that no family member had
25 identified her. I was actually upset.

1 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** When did the medical
2 examiner return Ruth's body to the family?

3 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Ruth's what?

4 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Return her to the
5 family from Edmonton.

6 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I can't remember the exact
7 date.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** You've discussed it
9 with me in the past. Does April 13th sound right?

10 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes.

11 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And...

12 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes, because we had her
13 funeral on April 17th -- or 14th.

14 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And how was she
15 returned to your family?

16 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** She was returned with a
17 sealed coffin. We did not get any of her personal items
18 back. So I -- none of my family got to see her, or even
19 know if she was in that coffin.

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you believe that a
21 family member should have identified Ruth?

22 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Oh, definitely. A family
23 member should have identified her, or a, a doctor.
24 Somebody that knew her, but nobody did.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** By -- by a doctor do

1 you mean a treating doctor, like her family doctor? Some -
2 - a doctor that knew her?

3 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes.

4 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And do you believe that
5 the police and the coroner should take the ability to view
6 your -- a loved one's remains away from the family? Do you
7 think that should be a right of the family?

8 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No, the family has to --
9 has to see their loved ones, otherwise there is no closure.
10 There's always questions, and even hope, because like,
11 maybe she wasn't in there, you know. Because we have no
12 proof that she was.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did you order a copy of
14 the medical examiner's report?

15 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes, I did.

16 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And when did you
17 receive it?

18 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Was about four months
19 after she passed.

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what did you notice
21 that was strange about that report?

22 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I found it was strange
23 that they had out down suicide as the cause of death. My
24 sister had pills. She had Tylenol 3. She had sleeping
25 pills. She had Valium. If she wanted to commit suicide --

1 they said it was suicide by Benadryl. For one, she
2 wouldn't have walked that far. She wouldn't even have been
3 able to make it there. And why take something that you can
4 buy off the shelf when you had all these pills that
5 could -- if you wanted to commit suicide, that's what she
6 would have taken.

7 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What did you notice
8 about the report in relation to her old ankle injury?

9 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** There was no mention of
10 her ankle injury in the report. Two exterior examinations.
11 So it wasn't noted.

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I'm just looking for
13 the exact wording in the -- in the report because from my
14 recollection it's just a little different, and I want the
15 Commissioner to have the exact phrase.

16 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Okay. I think it was --
17 the one from Dr. Damino (ph)?

18 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Yes. The letter.
19 There might have been a technical issue with the copying on
20 -- on the exhibits, and I apologize that -- for that,
21 Commissioner. Essentially, if I understand you right
22 the -- the letter you received back from the medical
23 examiner's office was that they don't evaluate the
24 structures of the arms and the legs, or something to that
25 effect?

1 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes, and the feet.

2 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Okay. So who was in
3 control of the RCMP investigation into your sister's death?

4 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Sergeant Brian Scott.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what was Sergeant
6 Scott's response when he received a copy of the medical
7 examiner's report? What was his first reaction?

8 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** He went over to her
9 daughter -- he went over to her daughter, Amy's, and told
10 her that her mom had died -- had committed suicide. I was
11 at work at the time.

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did you feel that was
13 a professional and respectful way to handle that situation?

14 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No, he could have waited
15 until she had family with her. When I got home I had the
16 medical exam -- report as well in the mail.

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So you had just
18 received the report, and do you know if -- do you know if
19 it -- you had just received the report because it had just
20 been released?

21 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes.

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So he wasted no time to
23 get over to Amy to tell her that?

24 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No, he didn't.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** In your dealings with

1 Sergeant Scott did he tell you anything about encounters
2 with a person while they were conducting their search?

3 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. When they were
4 doing that one search he told us that he came across a guy
5 in the bush -- he had cut down some leaves -- branches and
6 he was making a bed in the snow there. He didn't tell us
7 who he was, or any other information about that.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And he didn't explain
9 the reason for telling you that information?

10 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Not at all.

11 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did Sergeant Scott ever
12 let you look at the file or any of the police evidence?

13 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Sergeant Scott let me look
14 at -- watch a DVD that was taken at the -- at the Union
15 Hotel that night, that she was there.

16 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what details did
17 you notice about the footage?

18 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I went there and he was --
19 he was surprised that I was by myself. And so we watched
20 the -- the DVD, and I noticed that when she walked -- well
21 got up, and she was walking and she was limping. And I
22 pointed that out to Sergeant Scott. I said, "Her ankle is
23 hurting her."

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did he ask why?

25 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I told him that she had

1 surgery in her ankle and it was -- the pins were starting
2 to come out.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did the video show her
4 leaving?

5 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. When she left -- she
6 walked out the door and she turned left. That would be
7 going in the direction of my home.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And you said earlier it
9 was only a few blocks away.

10 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Two blocks.

11 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did Sergeant Scott say
12 anything to you after you viewed the security camera
13 footage?

14 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. Because I went
15 there by myself he told me that I was the Chief of my
16 family, just like he was the Chief of the police. I told
17 him that I don't have that honour of being a Chief, and
18 that he was racist.

19 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what did you feel
20 in that moment?

21 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Very angry. Because it
22 was like we were nothing. That this was -- like, sort of
23 like he wasn't even talking about a person. You know.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you remember on
25 another occasion asking Sergeant Scott how your sister was

1 identified?

2 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. He told -- at first
3 he told me that she was identified by the scar in her
4 ankle, because I wanted to know how they identified her.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did you find it strange
6 that he said that she was identified in that way?

7 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Well, yes. At least, he
8 could have contacted a family member. That there was --
9 all our family member were -- members were there. We
10 had -- we just had a funeral for my baby brother. Or a
11 doctor, her doctor, or even a friend, but it was very -- it
12 was just not right for him not to ask family to go and
13 identify her.

14 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Was there anything else
15 that you thought was strange? That he said he identified
16 her by her injury in her ankle?

17 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Well, yes, because I had
18 told Falk that she had tattoos, and she also had different
19 scars. But because I had pointed out that her ankle was
20 hurting when we watched the video that probably just -- he
21 thought I would be satisfied with that, I guess.

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did you think it was
23 likely that the police would identify her by that injury
24 when the medical examiner -- examiner had never noted it on
25 their report?

1 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. Because the medical
2 examiner would have saw that. And for them to identify --
3 for him to identify her in that -- using her ankle was not
4 -- it wasn't even identification as far as I'm concerned.

5 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Were you satisfied with
6 the way the investigation was handled?

7 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No, I wasn't. Because it
8 was not handled at all.

9 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And did you make a
10 complaint against the Athabasca RCMP?

11 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes, I did.

12 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I'd just like to --
13 like to take one moment, if that's okay, Commissioner, it
14 appears there's some commotion in behind. Okay. Thank
15 you. So I'm sorry, I missed that because of the noise.
16 Did you lodge a complaint against the Athabasca RCMP?

17 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes, I did.

18 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you remember the
19 date the you lodged the complaint?

20 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** It was in June.

21 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** We've -- we've
22 discussed it before, does June 27, 2008 sound correct?

23 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes, it did -- it does.

24 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And to summarize what
25 was the substance of your complaint?

1 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** My complaint was the
2 Athabasca RCMP did -- did nothing to look for my sister.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Can you tell me the
4 problems that you had with the police investigation?

5 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** After Scott, Sergeant
6 Scott took over on Monday I would phone the RCMP office and
7 I would ask, "How are they doing?" "How is her case going?"
8 And they always told -- every time I phoned there they said
9 they would ask, "What missing person?" I -- I got lost,
10 I'm sorry.

11 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** The -- the -- the
12 different things that you took issue with in -- in how they
13 conducted the investigation.

14 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** There was no
15 investigation.

16 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So, for instance, did
17 they put up posters?

18 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No. I asked -- at one
19 point I did ask Sergeant Scott if we could get -- if he
20 could give us some guidance as to how we could do a missing
21 person search. I never did get a reply from him. He never
22 supplied any missing person posters. We did those
23 ourselves. Even the Town of Athabasca did not know that
24 there was a missing person.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you recall asking

1 the RCMP for any assistance when she was missing?

2 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Other than asking them how
3 -- I asked for them to help -- if they could help us do a
4 search and guide us how we go about searching for a missing
5 person. And we didn't get anything on that.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** They just ignored you?

7 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Pretty much so.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Who performed the
9 investigation of your complaint against the Athabasca RCMP
10 detachment?

11 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** It was an officer from the
12 Boyle detachment, which -- which is about -- they're about
13 30 kilometres from Athabasca. They're in the same county.
14 I was expecting someone from outside to do that
15 investigation.

16 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So to clarify, you
17 would expect them to send in somebody independent who
18 didn't have a connection with -- any chance of a connection
19 with the Athabasca RCMP?

20 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Yes. I was very surprised
21 when they sent the Boyle officer.

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you remember how
23 long it took to investigate your complaint?

24 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** It took awhile, because I
25 kept on calling the head office for the Northern East

1 Division because that's where Boyle and Athabasca are. It
2 took about nine months.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And what was the
4 conclusion of the investigation?

5 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** The conclusion was that
6 the RCMP -- the Athabasca RCMP did no -- was -- did no
7 wrong doing.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Were you told that you
9 could appeal the decision?

10 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I was told I could appeal
11 the decision. I could contact -- my next step was to
12 appeal to Ottawa.

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And how did that make
14 you feel?

15 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I phoned Ottawa. I found
16 out what all these things that I was supposed to do, and it
17 was -- I -- it was like I hit a brick wall, and I went into
18 a deep depression. I couldn't handle it anymore. I was
19 doing this by myself.

20 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And so you chose not to
21 -- to undertake the appeal?

22 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I wanted to, but I found
23 it was just too hard to do it, and to do it on my own.
24 That was okay, but when -- it sounded like there was so
25 much more work to do, and after running into brick wall,

1 after brick wall, after brick wall, no matter where I went,
2 whatever I did I just couldn't go -- or go to Ottawa and
3 appeal.

4 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Did you feel it was
5 fair for someone in your position with your -- dealing with
6 your loss to -- to be put in those circumstances? To have
7 to make that much effort to try to find some semblance of
8 justice?

9 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I was going through two
10 deaths in my family. And my sister was a really bad one,
11 because there was no closure, and nobody did anything to --
12 to -- to help. And after months and months and months
13 of -- like I said, running into big brick walls and while
14 the Boyle Athabasca RCMP -- or Boyle was investigating I
15 would -- I kept on phoning and phoning and phoning. "Like
16 what is going on? Like, what's happening with the
17 investigation?"

18 And it was a long process to go through by
19 yourself with no -- you don't have any information where I
20 could go for guidance, for assistance, to help me push --
21 to help me go through this. I felt that there should have
22 been somebody -- somewhere I should have been able to turn
23 to to help me take that last step to go and appeal that
24 complaint with Ottawa. I don't feel like I did everything
25 -- everything because I didn't go to Ottawa. But I -- I

1 have crashed and burned and I had gone into a deep
2 depression and I -- I just couldn't do it anymore.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** In retrospect given
4 everything that you went through, do you think there was
5 any chance that something would come of it anyway. Now,
6 today, do you think anything would have happened if had you
7 gone through with it?

8 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Maybe the Athabasca RCMP
9 might have been made accountable for their lack of action.

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Following the complaint
11 did you have any other contact with the Athabasca RCMP?

12 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Not directly, no.
13 About -- thank you

14 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I think there's a
15 technical difficulty. Okay.

16 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** (Indiscernible) like this?

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** So after the
18 investigation of the Athabasca RCMP was complete did you
19 have any other contact with the Athabasca RCMP, or were
20 they involved in your family situation at all?

21 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** After the -- after that --
22 one day Amy phoned me, and she told me, "Did you put Uncle
23 Joe (ph) in jail?" I, I said, "What are you talking
24 about?" See my brother was being rowdy at my place one day
25 and I phoned the cops on him -- on him to take him out, and

1 I was at home, at my place, so they told Amy that they were
2 looking at their files and they wanted to know, like how
3 things were. And they had Amy's -- the only contact number
4 they had was for Amy. And I was -- I told Amy, but I --
5 when I -- like when I phoned the police, I said, "I phoned
6 from my home. My phone number. If they were looking
7 through those files they wouldn't even have -- your number
8 shouldn't even have come up on there because it was my
9 place that I called from."

10 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do -- do you remember
11 the name of the constable that called Amy?

12 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** His name was Barnell (ph).

13 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And did he ask her
14 anything else during that call?

15 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** He wanted to know how I
16 was related to Amy and to my sister.

17 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Do you think he had a
18 justified reason to be calling and talking to Amy about
19 this?

20 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No. For one thing he was
21 breaching my privacy. He was talking to Amy about
22 something that should have been private. And I believe
23 that they were just looking at me to see if they could find
24 something. I don't know what they were looking for -- at
25 me anyway to see. I don't know -- my reputation, I -- I

1 have no idea -- I have a feeling they were looking into me
2 at the time.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** And nothing else came
4 of it?

5 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** No.

6 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Berna, can you tell me
7 what were Ruth's gifts and strengths?

8 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Ruth's gifts -- she was my
9 best friend. My only friend at the time. That's all --
10 that's the only person I thought I needed. She loved her
11 grandchildren, but my sister was very shy, very -- she
12 loved her grandchildren especially the middle one. She
13 just made my world a lot more brighter.

14 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What do you hope will
15 happen as a result of your testimony today?

16 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I'm hoping that people
17 become aware of her. People don't know what happened.
18 Like I said, even the Town of Athabasca don't know what
19 happened, that there was a missing person. Just because
20 she was a Native leaving -- last seen leaving the bar
21 nothing was done of it.

22 I want people to realize that it's hard to --
23 especially if you're an Aboriginal woman, to even lodge a
24 complaint and nothing is done about it.

25 To me I feel -- to the Athabasca RCMP that

1 she was a dirty little secret that they swept under the
2 rug, hoping it would go away.

3 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** After listening to all
4 the families and survivors who have and will come to share
5 their experiences with the National Inquiry, what would you
6 ask Canadians to do?

7 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** I would ask that they are
8 more aware -- that they have awareness of what Aboriginal
9 people go through when they -- a loved one goes missing or
10 murdered.

11 My sister's case was not in the missing -- as
12 a missing person. And I believe there are a lot of other
13 families that hasn't made it this far as well. Like,
14 there's probably a bunch of other girls that have been
15 missing, have been murdered, and it never ever been made
16 aware of.

17 There is nowhere to turn. You need -- the
18 police need to have a protocol right across Canada when a
19 person goes missing there are certain steps that they're
20 going to have to follow.

21 There has to be more information out there
22 where families could turn to to look for information when
23 they want to report a loved one missing or murdered. Where
24 you could get help. About it.

25 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Thank you. I will now

1 ask the Commissioner if he has any questions for Berna.

2 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Berna, based on
3 your experience, you've shared a couple of recommendations.
4 I just want to make sure -- do you have any other
5 recommendations you'd like to share with the National
6 Inquiry today based on your experience?

7 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Like I said, there has to
8 be more information out there for people to be able to find
9 where they could get help, outside from the RCMP. Like,
10 there needs -- like I said, the police need to have a
11 protocol as to what -- when a person goes missing that they
12 have to follow for each and every person that is reported
13 missing. And it's something that they have to do all
14 across Canada and it has to be on record.

15 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Berna, I want
16 to thank you very much for coming and sharing about your
17 sister and -- and sharing your recommendations with us this
18 afternoon. Thank you for your strength.

19 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** Thank you.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Can I ask a question?
21 Is that possible?

22 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** I'm sorry, no. If I
23 may, I have one more question for Berna.

24 Berna, do you think that the handling of
25 remains of Indigenous people needs to be reformed so that

1 the institutions in place show proper respect to the
2 families, to the remains, and that you aren't denied your
3 opportunity to say good-bye?

4 **MS. BERNA BARORE:** That is the biggest thing
5 that hurt the most is I haven't had a chance to say good-
6 bye to my sister. And, yes, families should not be denied
7 that.

8 **MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Commissioner, those are
9 all the questions I have for Berna. At your pleasure I
10 request that you adjourn this examination.

11 **COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON:** Okay, we can
12 close this session. Thank you.

13 **--- Exhibits (code: P1P05P0303)**

14 **Exhibit 1:** Folder of images displayed on monitors
15 during public hearing.

16 **Exhibit 2:** Medical Examiner's report ****SEALED**** by
17 Order of Commissioner Eyolfson on May 2nd,
18 2018.

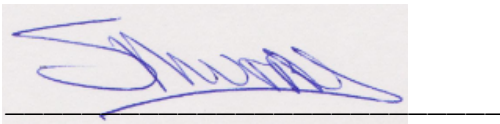
19 **Exhibit 3:** Commission for Public Complaints Against
20 the RCMP Formal Complaint documentation
21 file # 2008-1688, comprising 17 pages
22 (three-page formal complaint form and
23 letters addressed to Ms. Barore from the
24 Commission dated: 1) June 30, 2008; 2) July
25 9, 2008; 3) August 14, 2008; 4) September

1 14, 2008; 5) October 14, 2008; 6) November
2 14, 2008; 7) April 6, 2009; 8) April 14,
3 2009 (submitted missing second page); 9)
4 May 14, 2009.

5 ---Upon adjourning at 3:18 p.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shannon Munro, 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.



Shannon Munro

February 16, 2018