

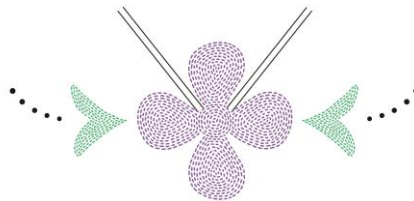
National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

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**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls  
Truth-Gathering Process –Part 1 Public Hearings  
Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, South Ballroom**



**PUBLIC**

**November 21, 2017**

**Public transcript Volume 27:  
Gwenda Yuzicappi & Leslie Maple,  
In Relation to Amber Redman;**

**Leslie Kennedy, Sheila Kennedy & Raylene Kennedy,  
In Relation to Candace Opekokew;**

**Connie Littlewolfe, Gord Schreyer, Linda Young &  
Nahanni Olson, (In Relation to Jarita Naistus**

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**Royal Reporting Services Ltd.**

**APPEARANCES**

**Advocate for Children and Youth Saskatchewan**

Non-appearance

**Assembly of First Nations**

Non-appearance

**Government of Canada**

Tania Tooke (Paralegal)

**Government of Saskatchewan**

Alanna Ruehlen (Counsel)

Betty Ann Pottruff  
(Counsel)

**Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik (Women Walking Together)**

Non-appearance

**Kawacatoose First Nation**

Non-appearance

**Native Women's Association of Canada**

Non-appearance

**Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit  
Women's Association of Nunavik, AnanauKatiget 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**

Non-appearance

**Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation**

Non-appearance

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**Hearing # 1 - None entered.**

**Hearing #2 - (Code P01P06P0104)**

- 1 Video Re: Candace Opekokew shown during public testimony (3 minutes 52 seconds).
- 2 Three-page handwritten chronology beginning with "May 13/13 - Closed her bank acct @ CIBC."
- 3 Documentation of formal complaint brought by Ms. Leslie Kennedy against the RCMP, Lloydminster Municipal Detachment, comprising:
  - a) Letter dated 2013-10-23 addressed to Ms. Leslie Kennedy Re: "Your complaint against Cpl. Hartwell et al of the Lloydminster City RCMP" file 2013-1358805 signed by S/Sgt. Dave Kalist;
  - b) October 18 letter to Ms. Kennedy from Donna Horton, Enquiries and Complaint Analyst with Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP (one page);
  - c) Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP - Formal Complaint CPC file 2013-3098 (seven pages).
- 4 July 7, 2014, letter from Kelvin Watson of Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP Re: Leslie Kennedy - Request for Review (four pages).
- 5 August 22, 2014, letter from Michael Stashick, Commission for Public Complaints against the RCMP to Kelvin Watson, FSIN Re: File 2013-3098, with Appendix A (seven pages) and Appendix B (four pages).

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**Exhibit No.**

- 6      Chairperson's Final Report, Civilian  
and Complaints Commission for the  
RCMP in the matter of File 2013-3098,  
Complainant Ms. Leslie Kennedy,  
comprising a cover and nine numbered  
pages.

**Hearing # 3** - None entered.

**WITNESSES: GWENDA YUZICAPPI AND LESLIE MAPLE**  
**(IN RELATION TO AMBER REDMAN)**  
**HEARD BY: COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON**  
**COMMISSION COUNSEL: JENNIFER COX**  
**ELDER: JULIE PITZEL**  
**COURT REPORTER: SHAWN HURD**  
**REGISTRAR: BRYAN ZANDBERG**

5 (Commenced at 10:00 a.m.)

6 MS. JENNIFER COX: Mr. Commissioner, if we  
7 could begin by promising to tell the truth  
8 with the feather. Is that what you would  
9 like to do?

10 MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI: Yes.

11 MS. JENNIFER COX: So this is Gwenda  
12 Yuzicappi.

13 **GWENDA YUZICAPPI, promise to tell the truth in a**  
14 **good way on eagle feather:**

15 MS. JENNIFER COX: Thank you. Testing.  
16 Sometimes it works.

17 MR. DANIEL VIGNEAU: Yeah, if you're really  
18 quiet. Just try to keep your voices up.

19 MS. JENNIFER COX: Mr. Commissioner, I'd  
20 like to present to you Gwenda Yuzicappi and  
21 her granddaughter Leslie Maple, and Leslie's  
22 here as a support today.

23 COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON: Good morning.

24 MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI: Good morning.

25 MS. JENNIFER COX: So, Gwenda, I'm wondering

1           if we could perhaps start with you talking a  
2           little bit about yourself, where you're from.  
3           Tell the commissioner a little bit about  
4           where you come from.

5       MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI:           My name is (speaks in  
6           native language), and that is my Dakota name.  
7           My English name is Gwenda Yuzicappi, but my  
8           Dakota name is Gray Buffalo Woman. I come  
9           from the Tatankanajin Standing Buffalo Dakota  
10          Nation, which is about three hours away from  
11          here. My ancestors came from the United  
12          States, and they had given us the Standing  
13          Buffalo to reside on.

14                                   I was raised by my  
15          grandmother. She was 98 years old when she  
16          started her journey to the spirit world, and  
17          within her lifetime, she had raised 42 of us  
18          grandchildren. She had taught us a lot in  
19          regards -- her name was -- she had four  
20          Dakota names within her lifetime. She was  
21          98, and she was begin four names, and she  
22          inspired me. She's my mentor. She's my role  
23          model. She is with me all the time, the same  
24          with my daughter, and she gave me a lot of  
25          teachings in regards to respect and love,

1           caring and sharing, and I carry that with me.  
2           Every -- every day when I pray, every day  
3           when I greet people, I greet them as how I  
4           want to be greeted is one of her teachings  
5           that she shared with me.

6                       My father was the late  
7           Leslie Yuzicappi, and he also passed away. I  
8           have -- both of my parents both have started  
9           their journey. My grandmother actually  
10          brought me out of foster care. I was taken  
11          into care in Regina, and when the worker, the  
12          social worker called the chief of Standing  
13          Buffalo, the late Alex Buffalo, and as soon  
14          as he mentioned my dad's name, he knew my  
15          family, and he went and -- and spoke to my  
16          grandmother and told my grandmother that four  
17          of her grandchildren were in care, and she  
18          said immediately that she was coming for us  
19          and came and got us, and that prevented us  
20          from not going into foster care.

21                      As I said, my grandmother  
22          raised 42 children, five of her own  
23          biological children. My father was the  
24          second oldest, and my grandmother went to  
25          residential school, my father went to



1 residential school, and I believe I was five  
2 years old when my grandmother came and  
3 brought me into her care, and I also went to  
4 residential school. I went to the Lebret  
5 Residential School located near Fort  
6 Qu'Appelle.

7 Within my grandmother's  
8 teachings, she had so many people living  
9 in -- in our home, and we had to share  
10 bedrooms. We had to share chores within my  
11 grandmother's home. The one thing that I  
12 remember is my grandmother -- she was called  
13 unci. In Dakota that meant grandmother, and  
14 my unci, every day when we came back from  
15 school, she had a hot meal ready for us, a  
16 pot of soup, tea, fresh bannock 'cause there  
17 were a lot of grandchildren, and that's one  
18 thing I continue, you know, with my children.

19 I have three children of  
20 my own. My oldest son, he is 33 years old,  
21 and then my only daughter, the late Amber  
22 Redman, and her Dakota name is (speaks in  
23 native language), and it's Red Star Woman.  
24 Translated into English, it's Red Star Woman,  
25 and here in Saskatoon they have -- the police

1           have a statue, and I had told a story about  
2           Amber and how she -- when she was 12 years  
3           old, she was the junior princess of  
4           Tatankanajin, and she was dancing, and I  
5           travelled with her all over Canada and the  
6           United States, and she loved to dance. She  
7           was a girls' fancy dancer, and she -- as she  
8           danced, as I sat there -- and I had water  
9           waiting for her. After her first song, I'd  
10          go run out there and give her water, and just  
11          to sit there and watch Amber dance, it was  
12          just so amazing to see her glide as she  
13          lifted up her shawl. It was like she was  
14          flying like an eagle, soaring like an eagle  
15          when she danced, and her footwork, as she  
16          danced, every step was so light. She was on  
17          her toes, and every step was so light, and  
18          I -- that's what she reminded me of when I  
19          watched her, watched her dance as an eagle  
20          soaring as she danced every step.

21                        I remember the -- the  
22          first time she went out and danced, her  
23          outfit that her father -- her late father had  
24          made for her. His name was Art Redman, and  
25          when she went into -- he was the one that

1           came and approached me and asked if Amber  
2           would be interested in running for junior  
3           princess for Standing Buffalo, and I asked  
4           Amber, and she said yes, so as soon as she  
5           said yes, her dad said, Well, I'll start  
6           making her an outfit, and you can start  
7           getting her ready. So he had her outfit  
8           ready, her beadwork, and I got her dress made  
9           and her hair ties, and we dressed her up.  
10          She ended up winning. We had to sell  
11          tickets, and my daughter sold the most  
12          tickets. She went out there and sold  
13          herself, you know, sold, approached people  
14          and asked if they were interested in -- in  
15          purchasing tickets from her, and she ended up  
16          winning, and then they did the Honour -- at  
17          Standing Buffalo powwow they did the  
18          Honour -- Honour Song for her, and I remember  
19          as we were all coming into the arbor and  
20          Amber was dancing, and she was 12 years old  
21          dancing in front of us with her outfit, and,  
22          oh, I was just so emotional. It was such a  
23          beautiful milestone for myself to remember  
24          about my daughter.

1 Standing Buffalo. She went from Grade 1 to  
2 Grade 9. She loved volleyball. She loved  
3 basketball. She was into her sports, and, as  
4 I said, when she was 12, she would have been  
5 in Grade 6. She started dancing, so we went  
6 to a lot of powwows. She did a lot of the --  
7 participated in a lot of the ceremonies.

8 Within Standing Buffalo  
9 we have a Sun Dance. We say (speaks in  
10 native language), our sun dance family, and  
11 Amber was approached by the women elders on  
12 Standing Buffalo to be a pipe girl and the  
13 story of the White Buffalo Calf Woman who  
14 brings the Lakota people the sacred pipe, and  
15 when I told Amber about that story, and I  
16 said, Well, they're asking -- the elders are  
17 asking if you would be the pipe girl in  
18 holding up the sacred pipe for four days, and  
19 she agreed, and I was just so honoured. It  
20 was another milestone in Amber's legacy.

21 And I also dance, so when  
22 Amber first came in, they start the sun dance  
23 ceremony where Amber comes in and she brings  
24 in the pipe and she walks around four times  
25 and lifts it up and lets the people know that

1           she's coming with the sacred chanunpa, and  
2           then she hands it off to the sun dance chief,  
3           and that's -- she holds it up four times, and  
4           on the fourth time she offers it to the sun  
5           dance chief, and as the mother standing there  
6           dancing with her, it was -- it was such an  
7           honour. Every year that I dance now, I think  
8           of her, and as the pipe girl comes in just  
9           before the ceremony starts, she's there.  
10          She's one of the first ones as soon as the  
11          sun dance tree is lifted, is stood up, the  
12          tree of life. She's one of the first ones  
13          there to -- in her spirit, she's one of the  
14          first ones there to acknowledge all of us,  
15          that no matter what that she's there with us.

16                       When Amber graduated --  
17          she went to high school in Fort Qu'Appelle  
18          in -- and she attended Bert Fox Community  
19          High School from Grade 10 to 12, and she --  
20          she was a very quiet -- very quiet student,  
21          didn't have any complaints from the teachers.  
22          It was all good comments. She did very well  
23          in school. She wanted to become a teacher or  
24          a police officer. Those -- those are one of  
25          the two choices she made, and she graduated,

1           and I remember when she graduated, she went  
2           and spoke to her dad and asked her dad if her  
3           dad can -- can attend, and we were all there.  
4           My grandmother, my -- my grandmother was --  
5           oh, I believe she was in her nineties  
6           already, and she attended, and she was just  
7           so honoured to be a part of Amber's life and  
8           be a part of this graduation, the ceremony,  
9           and I and Amber -- she wanted to have her  
10          dress custom-made, so we went to a  
11          neighbouring -- a neighbouring seamstress  
12          that -- and she was Caucasian, and when I  
13          introduced Amber to her and the reason we  
14          were there, she was just honoured to make  
15          this dress for her, so her grad dress was  
16          made by a local seamstress that lived close  
17          to Standing Buffalo.

18                       Amber needed an escort  
19          for her grad, so she asked her oldest  
20          brother, my oldest son to be her escort, and  
21          when they came -- in the grand march when  
22          they entered the ceremony, the graduation  
23          ceremony, not -- for me, as a mother, to see  
24          not only my daughter but my son all dressed  
25          up, and they were both so happy, always

1 smiling. It was such a beautiful day again.

2 After graduation, Amber  
3 asked if she could take a year off. She just  
4 wanted to -- to take a year off from school  
5 before she went on to university, so I  
6 agreed, and she said she wanted to work.

7 She enjoyed -- she  
8 enjoyed children. She loved children, and  
9 when she first met her boyfriend, her first  
10 ever boyfriend, Cody Ironeagle, she met him  
11 in school, and he wanted -- she came and  
12 introduced him to me, and she said, Mom, get  
13 ready because when I start having children,  
14 I'm going to have nine children -- nine  
15 grandchildren for you, and I was like, Bring  
16 it on, Amber, bring it on. I wanted that. I  
17 wanted grandchildren.

18 To the right of me I have  
19 my granddaughter Leslie, and Leslie also was  
20 in foster care, and Amber and my oldest son,  
21 Bevin, did not want Leslie and her brother to  
22 be in care, so they approached me, and they  
23 said, Mom, if you can take them out of care,  
24 I promise you that I'll look after Leslie,  
25 that I'll adopt her as my own, and my oldest

1 son was going to take care of her older  
2 brother, and so I agreed. I said, You know,  
3 I'm working a full-time job, and both of  
4 youse would need to be committed to look  
5 after the two younger children, and they  
6 agreed, so I went and got them out of foster  
7 care, and Leslie's now 17 years old, and she  
8 has a lot of memories in regards to Amber  
9 taking her out to the beach. We live beside  
10 beautiful lakes, and Amber -- this is how she  
11 respected Leslie as she -- her boyfriend had  
12 to sit in the back and Amber -- Leslie would  
13 sit in the front with Amber as Amber drove  
14 her to the beach for her to go and play  
15 for -- for a couple hours.

16 My youngest son -- so  
17 Amber's my only daughter, and my oldest son,  
18 Bevin, was 7 pounds, 12 ounces when he was  
19 born. Amber was 7 pounds, 13 ounces when she  
20 was born, and then I have my youngest son.  
21 His name is Dreyden, and he was 9 pounds, 4  
22 ounces, so what a big difference, and there  
23 was the ten years difference between Amber  
24 and my youngest son, so they were happy.  
25 They both -- both of my -- my older children



1                   were really happy to have a younger brother.

2   We had lived on Standing  
3 Buffalo all of our lives. As I said, I was  
4 raised by my unci, and then I started my own  
5 home with my own family, and all of my  
6 children graduated. My oldest son, Amber and  
7 my youngest son, they all graduated, and that  
8 was one of the things that -- 'cause my  
9 grandmother, my unci, was still with us, and  
10 she encouraged that.

11   We met every Sunday at my  
12 grandmother's home, and she prepared this big  
13 meal while we all helped. We all helped cook  
14 and peeling potatoes and getting the  
15 vegetables ready. My grandmother had this  
16 big garden which we all took care of, and so  
17 we all had a chore in preparing this meal,  
18 and every Sunday at noon the whole family all  
19 came over to my grandmother's house, and we  
20 just sat around and told stories or listened.  
21 When grandma and grandpa told stories, we  
22 were all told, you know, you listen to our --  
23 listen to their stories 'cause there's a  
24 teaching in there, so we did.

25   My grandmother helped

1           care for my grandfather as he was in a  
2           wheelchair. We as all the grandchildren, we  
3           all helped in -- in cleaning and washing, and  
4           every season my grandmother did a whole  
5           housecleaning, so we were all, you know,  
6           taught that we had to have a clean house, and  
7           every day, every day -- it wasn't like a  
8           chore. It was like a family working together  
9           is how I -- how I can explain it.

10                       My grandma spoke Dakota.  
11           She was a fluent speaker, my grandfather  
12           also, and every Sunday my -- my late father  
13           would come to grandma's house because she had  
14           this big meal prepared, and we got to spend  
15           time with him. We got to spend time with  
16           my -- my father, my late father, and they  
17           loved their sports. They loved hockey and  
18           baseball, and whatever was on, they -- the  
19           whole -- everyone just had chairs around the  
20           TV when there was a big game going on, and we  
21           all cheered, so we got to spend time with our  
22           dad. We walked from our house, which was way  
23           in the back of Standing Buffalo.

24                       My -- my grandfather and  
25           my grandmother were farmers, and my

1 grandmother told us the story on how she  
2 walked with the -- to break the ground, and  
3 my grandfather put the horses on this -- what  
4 was it called -- plow, and my grandmother,  
5 four o'clock in the morning they were out  
6 there and they're getting everything ready  
7 for -- to break the ground and start  
8 planting.

As I said, my grandmother went to -- she was taken and she went to residential school. She had passed on before she could talk about her experience, but from what she had told me was that she had a good experience. She had a good experience with the nuns. She learned how to -- to meet

1           other people from different reserves that  
2           were attending, different students that were  
3           attending. She adopted a lot of the other  
4           children that came from Manitoba that  
5           couldn't go home every weekend, so my grandma  
6           brought her home to her house, and her  
7           parents raised them and accepted them,  
8           adopted them into their family, and to this  
9           day, these two old ladies that were in school  
10          together, the families -- their family, which  
11          are Dakotas from Sioux Valley, and my family,  
12          we are strong. You know, we stand together.  
13          We keep in touch every day. It's just  
14          amazing on how these two uncles taught us how  
15          to continue that adoption ceremony and how to  
16          continue to be a family as one.

17                       I'm talking about  
18          residential school, and I think about grandma  
19          saying it took them three days just to get to  
20          Regina, from Standing Buffalo to Regina, and  
21          I would always take my grandma -- I would get  
22          in the car and I'd take her to Regina, and  
23          she'd be like, M'mmm, I didn't think I'd be  
24          in Regina today, and one of the stores that  
25          she remembers was Army & Navy, and that's

1           where she got all her clothing from and  
2           her -- it was just a shopping spree for her  
3           to take her there, and driving, instead of --  
4           it was only an hour, 45 minutes to get there,  
5           and by horse and wagon it was three days, and  
6           she said, We'd camp here, and then we'd get  
7           up in the morning and we'd pack up and then  
8           we'd go again and we'd camp here, so she'd  
9           tell me stories like that.

10                           Another story I wanted to  
11           share about my grandmother is when she was  
12           85, I told all the family, Instead of giving  
13           her a present can you give her money, I want  
14           to take her down to the States 'cause we're  
15           from United States. We're from Aberdeen,  
16           South Dakota, and my grandmother has land  
17           there, so she wanted to go and see about  
18           getting the papers and the documentation to  
19           give to us as her younger generation, so I  
20           took her, and I asked the family, Instead of  
21           giving her money for her birthday, please  
22           give her -- instead of buying her a present,  
23           give her money, and I took her. I took her  
24           down there and we spent a whole week, and she  
25           introduced me to family in Spirit Lake, in

1           Aberdeen, and I still keep in touch with  
2           them. So that is another teaching from my  
3           grandmother on how that connection from  
4           family in the States and how we need to find  
5           our roots and find out who we are as a  
6           Dakota, and that makes me so proud, so proud  
7           to be a Dakota woman and knowing that -- the  
8           history of Sitting Bull, the history of all  
9           that we have endured. All my ancestors have  
10          endured in the past to give us this -- this  
11          life we have today, I'm so grateful for that.

12                        So my grandmother went to  
13          residential school. My father went to  
14          residential school. The one thing that they  
15          told me was that they were not allowed to  
16          speak Dakota. They weren't allowed to speak  
17          their language, and I know little of -- of my  
18          language. I do attend a lot of ceremonies.  
19          I am trying to learn my language. I'm trying  
20          to -- I have an open mind in every ceremony  
21          that I attend to learn because I know  
22          nothing, and I strongly believe that my  
23          language is my foundation of -- of my  
24          ancestors, of my grandmother, of my dad, and  
25          now that they're all -- all on their spirit

1 journey that I have to -- I have to learn. I  
2 have to teach it to my grandchildren, and I  
3 do. I have a six-year-old granddaughter,  
4 and I just want to share another story. Last  
5 week we were at my mother-in-law's place, and  
6 the kids were all playing hide-and-seek, and  
7 my granddaughter's name is Sage, and so the  
8 other girls that she was playing, they were  
9 looking for her. They found her, so it was  
10 her turn. They said, Sage, you got to count  
11 up to ten, and I was sitting there, and she  
12 started counting in Dakota, wanzi, nonpa,  
13 yamni, and I looked, and like I'm teaching.  
14 I'm trying to teach her, and to know that --  
15 to hear her speak or to count up to ten, I'm  
16 like, oh, it's working. You know, it is  
17 working. So I just wanted to share that,  
18 that language is the foundation of who we  
19 are.

20 Coming from Standing  
21 Buffalo, it's a small -- we're -- we're a  
22 band that we have a total of 1,000 band  
23 members and only maybe 5, 600 that live right  
24 on Standing Buffalo, so we're a very small  
25 band. Right in Saskatchewan there are --

1           there is three other bands of the -- three  
2           other Dakota bands in Saskatchewan, so we do  
3           have relatives in each one of those bands,  
4           and when I say who I am, when I go to Carry  
5           the Kettle and I approach an elder, I let  
6           them know who my family, who my grandmother  
7           is, who my grandfather is and my dad, and  
8           they say, Yes, I know them, and it's good.  
9           It's good. To me it brings me that  
10          connection to all the different Dakota bands  
11          here in Saskatchewan.

12                        I wanted to share also  
13          that my daughter was my heart and soul. As a  
14          young woman, seeing her as a baby and a  
15          child, every day she was bringing so much  
16          gifts. She was teaching me so much how to  
17          love and how to forgive. She loved her  
18          puppies. She always had a pet dog that she  
19          took care of. She went out there and fed it  
20          and talked to it and even dressed it up in  
21          her doll clothes.

22                        The ceremonies that she  
23          attended, Amber had so much potential, so  
24          much -- so much potential in -- in what she  
25          wanted to become. I miss her. I miss her a



1 lot.

2 She was 19 years old when  
3 she went out to the bar with her boyfriend,  
4 Cody Ironeagle, and another one of her male  
5 cousins. They went to Trapper's Bar in Fort  
6 Qu'Appelle on July 5th -- July 15th, 2005,  
7 and it wasn't like Amber to go out and drink  
8 on a Thursday night, so I -- I -- when I came  
9 back from work -- I do want to say I work  
10 with Social Services. I work with the foster  
11 care system. I talked about myself being  
12 in -- in -- in care for a day. I would  
13 say -- actually I should say two days until  
14 my grandma came, but when I graduated and  
15 when I went to university, that's what I  
16 wanted to do is I wanted to help children  
17 that were in foster care, and I have. I have  
18 worked with Social Services for 18 years. My  
19 employers, my -- my community in Fort  
20 Qu'Appelle that I work with, they have been  
21 so empathetic in allowing me this time off  
22 work and allowing me this time when my  
23 daughter went missing, to take as much time  
24 as I wanted from -- from work, as I needed,  
25 as I required, and they were so

1           understanding. It's like my employers were  
2           my family, another part of my family, and I  
3           wanted to share that because I have not  
4           shared that in the past.

5                       My reason for that is I  
6           didn't want people to judge me. I didn't  
7           want people to know that as a mother, I did  
8           attend school. I went to university. I  
9           graduated. I went to university, and one of  
10          my profs -- one of my professors had told me  
11          in university that once you get your first  
12          job, stay with it for two years, and then  
13          after two years you can move on to whatever  
14          you need to do, and one of my profs is here  
15          at the gathering, and I did. I got my first  
16          job and stayed two years, and I said, Well  
17          I'm going to go back to school.

18                      Well, after two years of  
19          working and realizing that I'm going to be  
20          going back on to student loans of \$1,000, I'm  
21          like how can I -- how can I manage that with  
22          three children, so I ended up not going back  
23          to school, and I regret that, but that's a  
24          choice that I had made, but in speaking with  
25          my -- my other family, my work -- my

1 coworkers, they give me a lot of support when  
2 I go out and speak and I'm invited to speak  
3 in regards to the missing and murdered.

4 So my daughter, when I  
5 was at work, school -- Fort Qu'Appelle High  
6 School was right next door. Like it was on  
7 the same -- the same street, so she came to  
8 me lunchtime and we'd go for lunch or if she  
9 needed anything -- if she was going on a  
10 volleyball trip, she would come and get some  
11 spending money before she went. She marked  
12 down all my paydays on her calendar that she  
13 had at school. She had mom's payday every  
14 two weeks, and so she was there. She was  
15 with me.

16 She was a very -- as I  
17 said, very happy. She loved sports. She --  
18 she went to school right next door to my  
19 work, and everyone knew her, everyone knew,  
20 so on the day that my daughter went to the  
21 bar, she got into an argument with her  
22 boyfriend, and she was playing pool in there.  
23 I was told she was playing pool. She was  
24 also very intoxicated. She was falling. I  
25 asked, Why didn't you stop serving her drinks

1           if she was so intoxicated? And I said, Why  
2           didn't you let the people that she was with  
3           let them know that it was time for her to go  
4           home?

5                               That night Amber and Cody  
6           got into an argument, and there was -- there  
7           was people there. There was men there that  
8           they didn't -- Amber didn't know, and they  
9           seen Cody leaving, so they went and they told  
10          her that he was getting into a fight outside,  
11          so she went running out, and that's where  
12          they took her, the men that were in the bar.

13                            So that night, July 15th,  
14          Amber was taken from Trapper's Bar. She was  
15          19 years old, and Friday morning I got a call  
16          from Cody, and he said, Did you see Amber?  
17          Is she home? And I'm like, No, Cody, she's  
18          not home, and then he started explaining to  
19          me that he got into an argument with her at  
20          the bar and he ended up leaving, and he was  
21          just calling to see if she made it home, and  
22          I said, No, she didn't make it home, but if  
23          you guys got into an argument, you need to  
24          give her that time, that time, that cool-off  
25          time, and he said, Okay. He said, Just call

1           me -- or I'll call back, he said. So he  
2           called back again on Saturday and then on  
3           Sunday, and still -- you know, that weekend  
4           there was the Craven Jamboree happening.  
5           There was a powwow. Yellow Quill powwow was  
6           going on.

7                        So Amber was the type of  
8           person that she would go. She would go  
9           wherever. Like she would just -- she had her  
10          own car and she had a driver's license, so  
11          she would go, but that night she didn't take  
12          her car. She left her car at home.

13                      I'm just -- I'm going to  
14          go back again because just remembering Amber,  
15          in having her car, she won it at bingo. She  
16          went to bingo and she won, so she bought  
17          herself a \$1,500 car. Her car needed an oil  
18          change, so she asked on how to do an oil  
19          change and changed her oil in her car.  
20          Driving on -- on grid roads, the roads are  
21          pretty treacherous in the mud and in the  
22          rain, and her muffler came off or came loose,  
23          so she had her car hoisted up and she was  
24          under there, and she had her wire and she was  
25          trying to fix the muffler on her car, and

1 Bevin came out and his friends pulled up in a  
2 car. There was four of them, four of Bevin's  
3 friends, and they said, What is Amber doing?  
4 And Bevin said, Oh, she just changed her oil.  
5 But what is she doing in the back of her car  
6 underneath? And Bevin looked under and he  
7 said, Oh, she's trying to fix her muffler  
8 'cause it's hanging, and these guys, these  
9 four of Bevin's friends were just amazed that  
10 Amber was doing -- and this is how Amber was.  
11 She was very independent. She was very --  
12 when she set her mind in doing something, she  
13 did it, and that's just who she was. So she  
14 ended up going to bingo. She won her own  
15 car. She was trying to fix up her car on her  
16 own. She asked. She asked for help in  
17 fixing it up, and they gave her, so she --  
18 she took their -- their direction and did it,  
19 went on and did things on her own.

20 Going back to Cody, Amber  
21 went out on Thursday night, and, as I said,  
22 these -- these men took her, and they were  
23 First Nation. They were from Little Black  
24 Bear First Nation, which is only 55  
25 kilometers away from Standing Buffalo, and I

1           remember the police telling me that Amber was  
2           at the wrong place at the wrong time, and it  
3           took me a while to understand that -- that  
4           concept, but Cody, her boyfriend, phoned me  
5           Friday, he phoned me Saturday, he phoned me  
6           Sunday, and I said, No, she's still not home,  
7           she must be really upset with you. By Sunday  
8           I was telling him, She must be really upset  
9           with you, just give her that time.

10                       I went to work on Monday,  
11           and Cody called me, and he said, Gwenda, I  
12           just want to let you know that I made a  
13           missing report on Amber, and that just  
14           shocked me. I listened to what he had to  
15           say, and I was just in awe, and I told him.  
16           I said, Well, I'll call the police, and if  
17           they need any information, any more  
18           information, I will give them that. So as I  
19           hung up the phone, I -- I was in shock.

20                       I called the police, and  
21           this was in the morning. It must have been  
22           about ten in the morning, and I said, I just  
23           received a call from Cody Ironeagle, and he  
24           informed me that he made a missing person's  
25           report on Amber Redman, and they said, Yes,

1           and I said, Is there any more information  
2           that you need from me as her mother? And  
3           there was, so I gave them the information  
4           that they needed. They needed her height,  
5           her weight, her date of birth, where she was  
6           born, so I gave them that, and then when I  
7           hung up the phone from that, it hit me, the  
8           shock, and I had enough time to just go to my  
9           supervisor and let her know I -- I had to go  
10          home, a report was made for my daughter, a  
11          missing person's report was made for my  
12          daughter, and that -- all weekend I didn't  
13          believe, didn't believe that she was missing.  
14          I just thought she was gone away. That was  
15          my hope, that she was gone away. Knowing  
16          that her and her boyfriend had that argument,  
17          I thought she just needed that time away from  
18          him, but my employers told me to do what I  
19          needed to do and if I needed anything from  
20          them, just to give them a call.

21                       I went home, and coming  
22          from a small reserve, the information went  
23          like wildfire. As soon as I got home, there  
24          was calls. People were calling. My sister  
25          was at my home. People were coming to my



1           home, and I remember that -- that Monday  
2           afternoon. That evening they were having a  
3           sweat on Standing Buffalo, so I told my  
4           family, I need to go, I need to go, and I  
5           need to pray, I need to get my strength, and  
6           I did. For the next four days I went to a  
7           sweat, and I asked for that strength, and I  
8           strongly believe that part of my life that  
9           those first four days it was so difficult in  
10          trying to gasp that my daughter was missing.  
11          That was the ceremonial part.

12                       On Monday when I got home  
13          after I came back from sweat, my family were  
14          all at my house, so we were talking, and we  
15          were like, Okay, we need to -- did you hear  
16          from the police? And I said, No, I talked  
17          with them this morning, I really feel that --  
18          that we should be out there looking for her.  
19          I didn't realize that if it wasn't for --  
20          'cause my mind. You know, I was in shock. I  
21          was -- I wasn't thinking right. I knew I  
22          needed to get my strength, and I did through  
23          ceremony, but my family, they were saying  
24          that -- to contact the police, they should  
25          be -- and I had one of my cousins just like

1           pacing in my house, and she was saying, The  
2           police should be out there, they should be  
3           searching for her.

4                       So we waited Monday.  
5           Nothing. I made -- oh, I followed up with  
6           Cody's report, and then Tuesday we didn't  
7           hear, and we all met again, and the same  
8           thing I'm hearing from my family again is  
9           that we should be doing something, we need to  
10          do something, so I finally did get a call.

11                      No, actually I called. I  
12          called the police, and I told them I wanted  
13          to talk with them, that the family was  
14          planning on a search, and then that's when  
15          they actually said, Okay, if you're going to  
16          be having a search, then we want to be a part  
17          of it. So if it wasn't for my family who  
18          initiated the -- the plan on starting a  
19          search, we wouldn't have got any -- anywhere  
20          with the police, and I've always said that,  
21          that in those first few days that we needed  
22          to start something as a family, to start that  
23          search for my daughter. It wasn't there.

24                      So we started on a  
25          Wednesday, and I remember the family went and

1           put up a list at the store. It said if  
2           anyone was interested in having -- in coming  
3           to help search, they can just put their names  
4           down to volunteer to search, and we were  
5           starting on Monday, and I shouldn't say  
6           myself because I stayed home for those next  
7           two weeks. I couldn't get out of bed. I  
8           couldn't -- I went into depression. It was  
9           very difficult for myself.

10                       My family were the ones  
11           that guided and told me to see the elders,  
12           to -- that they were bringing them to my home  
13           to talk with me, and they were the ones that  
14           went and started up the search, and this was  
15           five days after on July 20th when they  
16           actually started the search, and I kind of  
17           blame myself because if I didn't -- if I  
18           didn't think or tell Cody that Amber just  
19           needed that time away from him and actually  
20           went to the police sooner, then maybe she  
21           could have been found sooner.

22                       So I carried around that  
23           blame. As I said, I was depressed. I was  
24           suicidal, but the one thing that kept me  
25           grounded was the ceremonies. Knowing that I

1           had to go to the ceremonies every night, that  
2           helped me. Although -- although much wasn't  
3           being done, I had to -- back then I had to  
4           take care of myself, and I didn't realize  
5           that I was even doing that.

6                       I had different people  
7           coming to my house bringing food, didn't  
8           realize that so many people cared and so many  
9           people wanted to help. So many people wanted  
10          to support by whatever, whatever little --  
11          little effort in bringing tea or making soup  
12          or whatever the family needed, and I wasn't  
13          getting much sleep. I -- I would sit up, sit  
14          up all night thinking, you know, that phone  
15          is going to ring. She's going to tell me  
16          where she's at. I need to go and get her. I  
17          always made sure that I had a full tank, and  
18          I remember this moon. The moon was so full  
19          that night when I sat up, and one of my  
20          friends, he came from Manitoba and he sang --  
21          sang for me all night different prayer songs,  
22          healing songs. He sang for me all night,  
23          and -- and I'd run. As soon as the phone  
24          rang, I'd run, and it was just a family  
25          member checking up on me, but I stayed close

1           to the phone. I slept a lot. I -- as I  
2           said, I was thinking about suicide. I was  
3           depressed, and when the family told me to  
4           bring these -- these four -- that they were  
5           bringing these four elder women to come and  
6           talk to me -- 'cause they seen I wasn't  
7           sleeping. I was -- I wasn't talking with  
8           them. I was in my own little world, and  
9           they -- they knew I needed some help.

10                       So they brought these  
11           ladies to come and talk with me, and they  
12           had -- I remember one of the messages that  
13           they brought was that I had other children,  
14           like Leslie and Chris that were five and six  
15           years old, that I -- I had to think of them  
16           and I had to make their lives because the --  
17           make their lives more -- give it more meaning  
18           because they -- if I'm feeling like this,  
19           they seeing me depressed and suicidal --  
20           well, they didn't know I was suicidal, but  
21           seeing me not being who I am, I had to change  
22           that, so I was very honoured that these  
23           ladies came and gave me that wake-up call and  
24           that I had other children that I had to  
25           focus -- focus on, and -- and I did.

1 I remember one of the  
2 women that was coordinating the search came  
3 and talked with me and told me that, Gwenda,  
4 we would like you to come -- because there  
5 was so many people coming to search for Amber  
6 that the searchers, before they -- they did  
7 start their search that there was a prayer  
8 and a smudging, and they wanted me to go down  
9 there and just be present, and the searchers  
10 needed that.

11 So I seen that as a part  
12 of hope, you know, and I needed that hope. I  
13 needed to hold onto that hope, but yet the  
14 people that were volunteer coming all over to  
15 come and search also needed that hope and to  
16 see that strength in myself, so they let me  
17 know. The family let me know, and I went  
18 down to the gym, and they kind of tricked me,  
19 and I -- I didn't realize it was my birthday  
20 and that they made a cake. The community  
21 members made a cake for me, and they shared  
22 it with the searchers, and I was just totally  
23 taken from -- just totally surprised that  
24 they would even think of that, and the  
25 searchers were -- it gave them hope also in

1           seeing -- seeing me be there to greet them  
2           and knowing that, okay, we need to continue  
3           this. I know I spoke to a couple searchers,  
4           and they're like, We're -- we're coming.  
5           We're doing -- you know, we're on horse -- on  
6           our horses. We have our dogs coming out. We  
7           have -- we're walking out there. We're  
8           walking through bush, through the grass,  
9           through the community 'cause our first search  
10          started in Standing Buffalo, and then it  
11          extended out to Fort Qu'Appelle where she was  
12          last seen. That lasted for, oh, I'd have to  
13          say six weeks, and then -- the police were  
14          involved then.

15                               It was when -- I believe  
16          the second day, second or third day of the  
17          search that they finally came out. I had  
18          asked the officer if I could have a First  
19          Nations woman police -- female officer, and  
20          they did. They brought out a Aboriginal or  
21          First Nations officer, and when she was out  
22          there searching and she -- and she came back  
23          with the -- came back to my home with the  
24          family, it was after that commitment I seen  
25          that she would be out there during the day,

1                   and then after work she came and sat there,  
2                   and it was just her presence, being there.  
3                   She didn't say much, you know, but just her  
4                   presence and listening to us, and listening  
5                   to every family member, every family member  
6                   speak, gave us comfort in knowing that, okay,  
7                   the police are finally here. They're finally  
8                   trying to be a part of the search. They're  
9                   coming to the family. They're giving us that  
10                  updated information. I believe it was in the  
11                  beginning daily, and then, as it extended on,  
12                  it was weekly.

13                               My one -- the day that  
14                   they were going to go and search for my  
15                   daughter on Little Black Bear, I just thought  
16                   it was -- every week when they report to me,  
17                   the police officer had called me and said,  
18                   Gwenda, can you come over to the office? And  
19                   we talked about -- before this we talked  
20                   about having this plan, this -- if this one  
21                   day came that they were going to search for  
22                   my daughter that I needed support, so I had  
23                   my family there for support, and when the day  
24                   actually came, they called me and they  
25                   requested me to come over to the police



1 station, which was just a half a block away  
2 from my work, so I just left my office as is.  
3 My purse was still there. I just thought it  
4 was just another weekly update, and I went.

5 When I walked in and I  
6 seen my sister there and like, What are you  
7 doing here? And she said, I don't know, they  
8 just called me to come in, and then I had to  
9 wait for you to come. So we were waiting  
10 there. Then the officer came, and he was  
11 with major crimes, and he came out, and he  
12 was usually smiling and happy, and when he  
13 came out, he had this serious look on his  
14 face, and I knew. Instantly I knew something  
15 was wrong, and he said -- he asked if we  
16 could follow him to a room, and we went  
17 there, and in the room they had the victim  
18 services there, and then it all hit me right  
19 then and there that the plan was unfolding,  
20 you know, our support, and then he started to  
21 explain to -- to us that they were going out  
22 to Little Black Bear and they were -- they  
23 called it a takedown day and that they were  
24 going to search, and I don't know how I felt.

25 It was like I couldn't

1           breathe. My mind went blank. I needed air,  
2           so I asked, Can I just go stand outside for a  
3           minute? And they allowed me. I went out. I  
4           gathered my thoughts and didn't know what to  
5           expect. I told my sister. I said, I need to  
6           go home. So she took me home. The officer  
7           told my sister that they would be giving  
8           me -- giving her an update.

9                           I got home, and there was  
10          so many people. As I said, a small reserve,  
11          the word gets around fast. There was so many  
12          people waiting at my home, and the first  
13          thing I thought about was going to the sweat.  
14          I needed to go and get that strength. So I  
15          had my cousin -- he went and started it as  
16          soon as I said, I need a sweat.

17                          So we went. We went to  
18          the sweat, and we came -- when we were done,  
19          came back to my house, and the family had  
20          said that the police called, and we had just  
21          finished sweat. I remember we were just  
22          sitting down, and they -- they served us tea,  
23          and they said the police just called and that  
24          they found 26 percent of Amber's remains. My  
25          hope that I had grasped onto for so long for

1           those two years and ten months was gone. My  
2           daughter wasn't coming home.

3                       You know, just thinking  
4           about those two years and ten months, my  
5           family, we did a lot. As I said, we did the  
6           searches. We planned walks, awareness walks.  
7           My daughter went missing in July. September  
8           15th we planned our first walk, and there was  
9           over 500 people that came out and  
10          supported -- supported our walk, and we had  
11          two more walks after that, and we walked -- I  
12          wanted to walk from Trapper's Bar to Standing  
13          Buffalo as a way of trying to bring her  
14          spirit home from the bar to -- back to  
15          Standing Buffalo, and that was an  
16          eight-kilometer walk, which I didn't even  
17          think of. You know, it was just when you're  
18          planning something so sacred and having the  
19          elders there and praying and all the people  
20          smudged.

21                       I remember I needed --  
22          just before the walk was going to start, I  
23          needed to use the washroom, so I raced into  
24          the bar. Oh, my God when I realized I went  
25          in there, I -- I had to get out. You know,

1           this is the last place my daughter was seen,  
2           and I've never went back in. I just -- I  
3           couldn't stand that smell. I couldn't stand  
4           that smoke. That -- that whole smell, it  
5           just got me so sick. So I came out, and I  
6           had to ask to get smudged again.

7                         We had the -- the  
8           awareness walks. We had the -- we had the --  
9           as -- as a family, we had to have that hope  
10          within those two years and ten months, so  
11          these walks, these awareness walks really  
12          helped us in knowing that so many people came  
13          out and supported us. It gave us so much  
14          hope in knowing that Amber was thought of,  
15          Amber was cared for, people that didn't even  
16          know Amber, the searchers, the people that  
17          came out and walked.

18                        I remember it was Treaty  
19          4 that weekend on September 15th, 2015, and  
20          so many people that attended Treaty 4 came  
21          out and walked. People from Fort Qu'Appelle,  
22          from farms around, surrounding Fort  
23          Qu'Appelle also came out and walked, so the  
24          support was humongous. It was there. It was  
25          amazing having the singers sing on the way

1           and different people just handing out water  
2           and making sure.

3                           I remember one of Amber's  
4           grandpas walking, and he walked to -- to Fort  
5           Qu'Appelle -- from Standing Buffalo to Fort  
6           Qu'Appelle. He walked every day, and that's  
7           what my dad did too was that he walked to  
8           town every day, and seeing him, seeing all  
9           the community out there walking, it gave me  
10          so much hope. It gave me so much strength  
11          hearing the songs and praying. When the  
12          elders came out and prayed, it gave -- gave  
13          so many -- so it was that healing process.  
14          That's how I see it, as a healing process in  
15          every walk -- every walk that we had -- or my  
16          family and community had organized. It gave  
17          us that.

18                          But within those two  
19          years and ten months, the community of Little  
20          Black Bear didn't say a word, didn't say  
21          nothing, didn't allow the family, didn't give  
22          us any insight on what was going on and that  
23          the rumours that were out there was that my  
24          daughter was there. There was different  
25          names that were given out on who had taken

1 her, but the community wasn't saying  
2 anything, and that's one of the things that I  
3 really strongly believe that should have  
4 happened. There was so many people in that  
5 community that could have just came and not  
6 even talked to me. Like talk to the police.  
7 Let them know what they heard or what they  
8 seen or -- there was so many rumours out  
9 there, and the people within that community  
10 couldn't come and let me know, come and let  
11 the police know, and that's one of the  
12 barriers that I had seen, you know, with my  
13 daughter's -- my daughter's disappearance.

14 So after those two years  
15 and ten months, the police -- as I said, we  
16 went to sweat, and the police called my --  
17 called my home and told one of the family  
18 members that 26 percent of her remains were  
19 found. Our hope -- my hope was gone. Every  
20 day I just thought, you know, my girl, she's  
21 going to come home. She's going to phone me.  
22 I'm sitting right by the phone. I'm ready to  
23 go out. I always had my car ready.

24 In the beginning I'd be  
25 driving by myself, and I'm searching. I'm

1           thinking she's going to be running through  
2           the fields. She's riding in the back of a  
3           van. She'll wave at me, and, you know, I'll  
4           have to follow her. There was different  
5           things I was going through. My mind was  
6           racing.

7                               Semis. And now I see the  
8           semis that have the missing person's picture  
9           on the back of their semis, and I think  
10          that's a really good idea because I remember  
11          following a semi, and I thought what if --  
12          what if they would help. I wonder if I  
13          stopped them if they would help if I gave  
14          them a poster, but there was so many things  
15          that I was doing, and my family, like they  
16          were like, Where did you go? And when I told  
17          them, they were, No, no, no, no, you don't  
18          have a cellphone. You're going out searching  
19          by yourself. You can't do that. There's  
20          safety here. You have to take care of  
21          yourself. So finally that set in and I said,  
22          Okay, I won't -- I won't go out, and -- but I  
23          had to do something. You know, it was just  
24          so hard just staying at home sitting by the  
25          phone waiting, waiting for someone to come

1                   and give me information.

2                                   When -- when my  
3                   daughter -- when the police first told me  
4                   that my daughter's remains were found that  
5                   night, the next day I had phoned the helpers,  
6                   and I told them of the new information that  
7                   we got was that her remains -- 26 percent of  
8                   her remains were found on Little Black Bear,  
9                   and they said, Gwenda, if you can get the  
10                  police to allow us to go there because it's  
11                  been two years and ten months, and your  
12                  daughter's remains are out there alone. We  
13                  need to go there. We need to sing those  
14                  songs. We need to say those prayers. So see  
15                  if you can get the police to allow us to go  
16                  there. So I said, Okay.

17                                So I called the officer.  
18                  I told my family first, and they said to call  
19                  the police. So I called the police, and I  
20                  said, You always told me if there was one  
21                  thing that they could help me with, just to  
22                  ask them. I said, I want to ask you -- I  
23                  have a request, and he said, Sure, Gwenda,  
24                  what is it? And I said, I want to go where  
25                  my daughter's remains were -- were found. I



1           want to go there. I want to take the  
2           helpers. They need to sing those songs.  
3           They need to say those prayers because my  
4           daughter was out there alone. You know,  
5           she's been there in that community in the  
6           bush by herself for that long, and we need to  
7           follow protocol, and he -- the officer said,  
8           I don't know, Gwenda, I'm not going to  
9           promise you -- I'm not going to promise you  
10          anything, but I will talk to my supervisor  
11          and I'll see if we can go out there, if we  
12          can allow you to go out there.

13                       Two hours later we get  
14          the call from the officer, and he said, I  
15          spoke to my supervisor, and my supervisor  
16          said yes, you can go but only seven, only  
17          seven people can go. I have so many people  
18          in my home parked outside. How could I say  
19          no? How could I say, no, you can't come? So  
20          I spoke to my family, and I said, You know,  
21          the police have given us the approval to go  
22          there, but only seven family members can go  
23          including the two helpers, and we all looked  
24          at each other, and I'm like, Who's the seven?  
25          I said, You know, I want my -- my oldest son

1           to be there, and we're -- the two helpers  
2           need to be there, and so we were trying to  
3           figure out which seven. The chief wanted to  
4           go there 'cause that was his niece. We were  
5           trying to -- and we couldn't. You know, we  
6           couldn't say no to the cousins. We couldn't  
7           say no to the friends. We couldn't say no.

8                         So we just went out  
9           there, and there was at least 15 cars. I  
10          don't know how many in each, but I remember  
11          being smudged all the way up there. I'm  
12          sitting in the driver's -- in the passenger's  
13          side, and they're smudging me, and I'm  
14          crying, trying to face -- face reality that  
15          my girl -- this is where my girl was for all  
16          that time that we were searching and looking  
17          for her and having that hope that she was  
18          going to come home.

19                        When we got there, all  
20          the police that were still searching, they  
21          all stood in a big line on the road, and  
22          as -- as we came in, we had more than the  
23          seven people that they said we could bring,  
24          and they didn't say -- they didn't say  
25          anything to us. They just -- all the officer

1           said is we can't -- if we're taking tissue,  
2           if we're taking tobacco that we can't leave  
3           anything there. We have to put it in our  
4           pockets, keep it with us, and the little --  
5           that morning when the officer said -- it was  
6           raining, it was drizzling, and he said, You  
7           need to dress appropriately, boots or rain  
8           jacket, so we did, and when we got there and  
9           all the police officers lined up on the road,  
10          and we were coming in, and the -- one of the  
11          officers told us where to go, and I remember  
12          seeing this tent right beside the -- in the  
13          ditch, and they said that's where the  
14          anthropologist was, and they showed us the  
15          little path in the bush, and we had to walk a  
16          ways in, but we had our -- our jackets.

17                   It was drizzling out, and  
18          we were walking in, and the helpers, the two  
19          helpers stood on the south side, and the  
20          family members, we all just went around, and  
21          they seen -- when we walked in there, there  
22          was this steel or this tin casket that was in  
23          the middle of this bush, and they had a  
24          yellow -- one of those yellow plastic table  
25          cloths over -- over the casket, and when I

1           seen it, I'm like, That's my baby. I had  
2           to -- I had to try to be strong -- my son was  
3           there; he was right beside me -- knowing that  
4           just a small part of her was there.

5                           For the helpers to start  
6           singing and praying, it was very very  
7           emotional. I was standing on the east side  
8           of -- of the casket. As I said, the helpers  
9           were on the south side. There was this big  
10          tree, and I remember opening my eyes and  
11          seeing these four big rocks around my  
12          daughter's casket, around where she was  
13          found, and this is a pretty big casket, and  
14          there was four big rocks around and the  
15          trees. There was four major trees around  
16          her, and I remember closing my eyes and  
17          praying and reaching out to her and praying  
18          and letting her know I'm here. And the next  
19          thing you could hear is the wind, the wind  
20          and the crackling. There was crackling  
21          coming through behind us, and I thought is  
22          that the searchers? Is that the police? Are  
23          they still -- are they still searching?  
24          Didn't they tell them all to -- to stop until  
25          we have the ceremony done? And the wind and

1           the crackling, it was -- something was coming  
2           behind us. I just closed my eyes, and I  
3           started praying harder, and the helpers were  
4           singing and they were praying, and when they  
5           were done, it stopped. The wind stopped.  
6           The crackling, whatever was coming through  
7           behind us stopped, and then the helper said,  
8           Okay, we can leave now.

9                         So we all followed out in  
10          that single file again out on that little  
11          path, and the one thing he told us is, Don't  
12          look back, just keep on walking, don't look  
13          back, and when we came out, we shook -- all  
14          of the officers that were standing, we shook  
15          all their hands because we understood that  
16          them too, you know, they were going inch by  
17          inch in that bush, and they were looking for  
18          as much of my daughter's remains as they can,  
19          and I remember asking the police, Please find  
20          her hair. You know, I need -- I need -- it  
21          was a ceremony that we do in keeping their  
22          spirit for one year, and I needed her hair,  
23          and they couldn't. They couldn't find that  
24          for me.

25                         We went back to my home,

1           and they finished the ceremony off with a  
2           feast, and we all gathered in my home, and  
3           the helpers started -- finished the ceremony  
4           and prayers, and I asked, What was that --  
5           that wind and crackling? I said, Did you  
6           hear that or is it just me? And he looked at  
7           me and he said, No. He said, I wanted to let  
8           you know that those were all our ancestors.  
9           Those were all our relatives, that Amber was  
10          in the place where she was alone physically,  
11          but spiritually she wasn't alone, and that --  
12          knowing that gave me so much comfort, that  
13          when her spirit left her body when they had  
14          murdered her that she wasn't alone. All the  
15          ancestors were there, my grandma, my dad, my  
16          mom, you know, all our family, all our  
17          ancestors that knew of her, and because she  
18          was a part of that sacred ceremony in  
19          bringing that pipe into ceremony, she was  
20          held as one of the highest honours of a young  
21          girl, and they all came, and when he told me  
22          that, it just made me feel so happy. I was  
23          comforted, you know, 'cause I blamed -- I  
24          blamed myself. I blamed -- oh, how could my  
25          girl be there by herself with these men?

And the next -- the next day after the -- after the beautiful ceremony, the next day we're sitting outside on my patio, and my cousin said, Gwenda, turn around slow, she said, and look what's there. And I turned around, and right behind my home is buffalos. I turned around, and there was this great big buffalo coming, and it came right up to the fence, and I'm sitting right here, and the buffalo comes right behind me, and I'm like, Oh, my, so I went and I grabbed tobacco, and I walked as close as I could get -- I didn't want to scare -- as close as I could get to the buffalo, and I started praying. I already knew that my daughter, a small part of her remains were located, and I started praying, and when I was done, I called the helpers and I told them what just happened, and the one thing he said was, That buffalo is bringing you strength and to have hope in what -- what is to come.

1           found her -- a part -- a larger part of her  
2           skull, and that's what they needed, and that  
3           buffalo, that buffalo came to me and gave me  
4           that strength, and I remember I had five  
5           cousins sitting there, one of my sisters and  
6           cousins sitting there, and I was just so  
7           overwhelmed with -- with happiness, and I  
8           knew -- I knew within myself that, okay, you  
9           know what? I'm going to -- whatever's to  
10          come, I'm going to be strong because that  
11          buffalo just showed -- showed my strength,  
12          gave me strength.

13                        So the next thing, when  
14          I -- when I talked with the officer, I said,  
15          I need to make plans in putting my daughter  
16          to rest, and he said, It's going to take us  
17          at least another three more weeks before we  
18          actually can release her remains. So what  
19          I -- what I told my family is that, Okay,  
20          it's going to take time, but we have this  
21          time to prepare, we have this time to prepare  
22          for my daughter's wake, and one of the other  
23          things after the -- after we came back from  
24          Little Black Bear, at the feast, after he  
25          told us that all our ancestors came and gave



1           us that strength and let us know that she was  
2           not alone, they said that the first year --  
3           she's missing two years and ten months. The  
4           first year is when her spirit goes around and  
5           visits all the family, so she was going  
6           around visiting all the family, and I felt  
7           her presence in my home. The second year is  
8           when she goes up to the next level and she is  
9           learning the star teachings, and the next  
10          year is when she puts on that buckskin dress  
11          and she starts her journey home, so those ten  
12          months.

13                               And after the helper told  
14          me that, I'm like, Okay, we have three weeks.  
15          I need you to go in Amber's room. She wanted  
16          to dance traditional. From dancing junior  
17          girls, she wanted to dance traditional, so we  
18          got the material. We got all -- I and her  
19          went shopping. We got all the things she  
20          needed. I said, Go in her -- 'cause I didn't  
21          allow anyone to go in her room except myself,  
22          and I allowed Cody, and I asked my sisters to  
23          go in there and get her things and bring them  
24          out, and we had the -- the hides. I think we  
25          had four hides, and the two that we put

1           together was in the shape of a buffalo skull,  
2           the hide itself, so when we -- when we  
3           started sewing them, started sewing the hides  
4           together, we didn't cut. You know, we just  
5           sewed on the inside and on top, and  
6           everyone -- so within those three weeks, we  
7           all sewed, and anyone who came, I asked them  
8           to say a prayer and to -- even if they put a  
9           couple stitches in that hide in making her  
10          dress, they did. They came out, family,  
11          children, friends. They all came and helped  
12          in making her dress, her buckskin dress, and  
13          we had elk teeth.

14                               My cousin is a painter,  
15          and he came. Cousin, he said -- he came and  
16          sat with me and he was crying, and it's  
17          really hard to see a man cry, and I sat with  
18          him, and he said, I want to paint -- I want  
19          to paint on her dress. She was our pipe  
20          girl, so I want to paint the sun dance  
21          colours. I want to paint horses, he said,  
22          horses on her dress, and I was just amazed.  
23          It's like I seen this painting, but I didn't.  
24          You know, it was -- he was telling me what he  
25          was -- his creation that he was going to

1           make, and I said, Okay, you know, if that's  
2           what you want, then do it. I said, I  
3           would -- I would just love that, for you to  
4           do that.

5                               So he came and he  
6           painted. We had -- he had made her a little  
7           stand or a -- he made a dress stand to put  
8           the buckskin on, and then he painted the --  
9           the four horses, four horses in the different  
10          colours in the front bottom of her dress, and  
11          the elk teeth are up here, and the fringe  
12          under her buckskin dress was all here. So we  
13          were done that, done the dress.

14                            The police said, Okay,  
15          we're going to be -- it's been three weeks,  
16          we're going to release. You can -- we're  
17          going to have her remains at the funeral  
18          home, and if you want, you can come there and  
19          do what you need to do. So I called the  
20          helpers again, and they said, Yes, Gwenda, we  
21          need to come there because they had Amber's  
22          remains in a little silver box, and they  
23          said, We've got to take her remains out of  
24          there, we've got to put them in cloth, we've  
25          got to sing those songs, we've got to say

1           those prayers and smudge.

2                               So we went to the funeral  
3           home, and there was like a lot of family that  
4           came again, and I remember I couldn't go in  
5           because I was on my moon time, so I had to  
6           sit out on the bench outside the funeral  
7           home, so everyone went in, and I could feel  
8           the building moving, vibrating, and what had  
9           happened is there's only three people allowed  
10          to go into the room where her remains were,  
11          and two police officers were standing outside  
12          of the door into the room, and they went --  
13          the two helpers and another person went in,  
14          one family member went in, so three of them  
15          went in, and when the helpers were singing  
16          and they started praying, it was like boom,  
17          boom, boom. They could feel something coming  
18          into the funeral home, and it was just like  
19          maybe half the size of this room here, and  
20          they had the casket on this side, and they  
21          said she came in from the north, and my  
22          daughter rode a buffalo into this room, and  
23          she got off the buffalo. It was like the  
24          White Buffalo Calf Woman, when she turns into  
25          a buffalo, she changes four colours, and the

1           last colour she's into the buffalo, and  
2           she -- she goes, and she came riding in on  
3           this buffalo, and she got off the buffalo,  
4           and she started dancing. They said she was  
5           dancing fancy, and it vibrated. It moved  
6           that whole building. Like everyone in there  
7           was just like -- the police that were  
8           standing outside the door, they were shocked.  
9           They were like what's going on? Why is there  
10          so much activity in this room? So when they  
11          came out, the helpers explained, you know,  
12          that was part of the ceremony that we needed  
13          to do, and it was done.

14                        So what they had asked  
15          the two officers was that empty steel can or  
16          that empty steel container that they had my  
17          daughter's remains in, if they could take  
18          that, the two officers, if they could take it  
19          away and bury it, and they agreed, and so  
20          they left with it. What -- the ceremony that  
21          we needed to do was done, and then we were  
22          able to take her home.

23                        The -- the gym was ready  
24          to bring her home, and we were all there  
25          waiting, waiting to -- to follow her home,

1           and I know I remember telling -- asking the  
2           hearse driver -- because they like to drive  
3           fast, and I'm like, Take it slow. You know,  
4           you're going to leave a lot of us, take it  
5           slow. So one of the officers came and asked  
6           if all the family could go and meet outside  
7           of Regina. So then the hearse would come  
8           out, and then we can meet and follow the  
9           hearse out.

10                               So we agreed, and we went  
11           out to -- we went out to -- outside of  
12           Regina, and we followed the hearse home, and  
13           right by White City there's a horse farm on  
14           the right-hand side, and as we were coming  
15           there, all those horses -- there was about 12  
16           of them. They came running right to the  
17           fence, and then they started dancing. Their  
18           heads were moving and their legs. They  
19           were -- they all came. All these 12 horses  
20           came to the fence, and they started dancing,  
21           and my sister goes, Gwenda, look, look. She  
22           said, Look at those horses, and I looked, and  
23           I was just very emotional again that we were  
24           bringing my baby home, and the animals, the  
25           animals knew. They knew what was going on.

1                               And we got -- we got to a  
2                     turnoff. Just before Standing Buffalo  
3                     there's a turnoff, and there's -- it's about  
4                     another five miles, and just as we were going  
5                     to turn, the police had their lights on, and  
6                     there was the hearse and then all of our cars  
7                     behind, and I'm like, Now what? You know,  
8                     'cause you -- you -- when you see lights,  
9                     police officers -- or the lights of a car  
10                    flashing, you think of something happened,  
11                    something bad. I'm like, What else are we  
12                    going to be expecting?

24 We had the traditional --

25 the traditional wake, and we had asked the

1 media not to -- to respect us and respect the  
2 family and not be a part of, and they agreed,  
3 and the police, they -- they stayed 'til  
4 midnight. And in my culture, we have  
5 settings that we -- we plan. We have four  
6 settings, one at supper, one at midnight, one  
7 when the morning star first rises and one  
8 before we take her to the burial grounds, so  
9 we were doing the midnight setting, and we  
10 were all standing right up in front. The  
11 coffin was there, and in Amber's journey we  
12 put the dress, the buckskin dress that we  
13 made. Family made moccasins, so we put those  
14 in. Amber's outfit when she was 12 years  
15 old, we put that in there, and I remember  
16 telling my uncles and my brothers, Everything  
17 that's in my living room on those three  
18 tables, bring them, bring them all down.

19 Well, when I got home  
20 after the wake, after the funeral when I got  
21 home, Amber's crown, her princess crown was  
22 still on the table, and I remember starting  
23 crying, and I said, How am I going to do  
24 this? You know, this was supposed to go with  
25 her, and I ended up giving it to my niece to



1           see if she would keep it. She was very  
2           gifted, and Amber always came and visited her  
3           and to tell her things to tell me, and my  
4           grandma, my unci that I talked about, she  
5           came, and she would say, I'm worried about my  
6           grand -- my takoza -- which means  
7           grandchild -- I'm worried about her, and my  
8           niece -- 'cause she was here. When she  
9           was -- right up there she was sitting, both  
10          her and Amber, and they were worried about  
11          you, they wanted to be here with you.

12                        So I ended up asking my  
13          niece if she can take care of that crown  
14          for -- for me, and the day of -- of the  
15          burial, the -- the -- oh, so the midnight  
16          when we were doing the settings, all the  
17          family was standing up front, and there was  
18          this sweetgrass, the smoke of the sweetgrass  
19          right above us, and then my aunties were  
20          behind me, and they were like, We seen that  
21          sweetgrass just come and just cover like just  
22          right on top of all the family, and I said, I  
23          looked up and I seen that. I said, I opened  
24          my eyes, and there's this red star. That was  
25          my daughter's name, Red Star Woman. There's

1           this red star that came from the ceiling that  
2           just went right into the casket, and I  
3           thought I was going crazy. I'm looking  
4           around, and I asked my sister. I said, Did  
5           you see that or am I going crazy? And she  
6           goes, No, I seen it. My aunt was behind me.  
7           I turned around, and I asked her. I said,  
8           Did you see that? Did you see that red light  
9           or that red light just go from the ceiling  
10          right into the casket? And she goes, Yeah, I  
11          seen that. So I was like feeling a little  
12          bit better. I thought, okay, I'm not going  
13          crazy, and I was told that was her -- that  
14          what we were doing in preparing my daughter  
15          for her journey, that she was happy. That  
16          was her, and that was one way of her showing  
17          us that she was happy in what all we did in  
18          making the moccasins and her outfit and that  
19          buckskin dress that she could finally put on  
20          and wear.

21                       We went -- the next day  
22          we did the last setting before we took her to  
23          the burial, and I wanted a horse and wagon  
24          like the old days. You know, they used the  
25          horse and wagon, and they put her in the

1 back, and then we all had to walk behind. I  
2 stayed up all night, and I remember so many  
3 people that were there and I was talking with  
4 and praying and smudging 'cause I'd asked the  
5 guys that were there if they could go and  
6 smudge her coffin again and smudge the whole  
7 building, and they did, and they ended up  
8 staying up with us, and I didn't want to  
9 leave. I didn't want to leave her.

10 As we were walking up  
11 that hill to take her to the burial grounds,  
12 these horses came again on the top of the  
13 hill, and they came and they started dancing,  
14 and they knew that -- they knew that she was  
15 going home. It was such a beautiful sight to  
16 see again. I was one -- when we first  
17 started the walk, I was one of the first  
18 people to walk right behind my girl. When we  
19 got on top of the hill, I was the last one.  
20 It was just so exhausting, but we did -- we  
21 ended up taking her home.

22 And I asked the women. I  
23 said that in four days I want to have another  
24 sweat and I want to let her go, so we planned  
25 that, and all the women came. All day was

1           cooking, and my sisters came over and they  
2           were hauling everything out, and we went back  
3           to the sun dance grounds at the back of the  
4           reserve, and my cousin who -- who drew the  
5           horses, he was the one that did the fire and  
6           got everything ready for us, and he was there  
7           with his sister and her son, so we went in.  
8           We went in -- into sweat, and as we were in  
9           there, my cousin was with his nephew, and he  
10          was -- oh, I think he was nine years old, and  
11          he said, Uncle, I'm going to go -- there's a  
12          deer standing over there. I'm going to get  
13          close and go and look at that deer, so he  
14          said, Yes. He told him he can go. He said,  
15          But don't go too far.

16                        So he went -- he went to  
17          where that deer was, and that deer was on the  
18          west side, and he said when he got there,  
19          three more deer came, one from the south, one  
20          from the west and one from the north that  
21          came -- came out, and all these four deer  
22          from different directions started dancing in  
23          the centre. In -- in each direction they  
24          came dancing in the centre. These were deer,  
25          and they're dancing in the centre, and

1           in-between from the south to the west, the  
2           grass turned blue. There was four different  
3           colours, yellow, white, and that's what this  
4           nine-year-old boy came back and told his  
5           uncle, and his uncle said, Tell auntie --  
6           when she gets out of sweat, tell her what you  
7           just seen, and that was -- as I said, the  
8           animals, they give us so much strength, the  
9           buffalo I talked about and now the deer, and  
10          then when we were done, came out and they  
11          told us about -- this beautiful story about  
12          the deer.

13                               And just as we were going  
14          to eat the food, we had no utensils, so I  
15          told -- I asked everyone if they could come  
16          back to my house, and there was a reason why  
17          there was no utensils, and just as we were  
18          pulling up to my house -- as I said, the  
19          buffalo are right behind me -- this big  
20          buffalo was coming from the east side, and he  
21          was big, and the dust behind that buffalo, it  
22          was -- it was a lot. We knew the buffalo was  
23          coming. Well, we didn't know until we pulled  
24          up there, and I asked all the women. I said,  
25          Just do your tobacco, tobacco offering and

1           say our prayer 'cause that buffalo came right  
2           up right behind my house as the other buffalo  
3           came, and I said, There was a reason why the  
4           utensils weren't there and we had to come  
5           back here because we weren't done.

6                        So after we had make --  
7           made our offerings, and I asked the women. I  
8           said, Who do you think that was? And they  
9           all said Amber. She came and -- to let us  
10          know again that what we were doing was in a  
11          good way and she was happy.

12                       So a lot of -- a lot of  
13          beautiful things that happened, all the  
14          messages and all the signs that were given to  
15          us, and there was so much negative, so much  
16          negative, but the -- the beauty, the essence  
17          of all the messages that Amber had shared  
18          with us and with the family, it completed us  
19          as family. We have that emptiness in our  
20          hearts. That emptiness, that pain that we  
21          carried was taken away after we had witnessed  
22          all this beautiful -- the beautiful  
23          ceremonies that were done, and, as I said, my  
24          daughter was a pipe girl, and she showed us.  
25          She showed us in -- in a way that we as First

1 Nations people, First Nations women that what  
2 we share, our languages, our culture, our  
3 teachings, how we were raised, those are so  
4 important, and I know that my daughter, I  
5 know that Red Star Woman, I know that there  
6 is a reason, there is a purpose. Within her  
7 19 years of life, there was a purpose in her  
8 gifts that she taught me as her mother that  
9 in knowing there is more and more of our  
10 First Nations women that are going missing.

11 Every day is a tragedy,  
12 and we have to bring this issue to the  
13 forefront, and I strongly believe this public  
14 inquiry is going to do that. I believe that  
15 so strongly that all the family members that  
16 are here that still have loved ones missing,  
17 don't give up your hope. Keep a grasp. Hold  
18 onto that hope. Don't give up.

19 I know that my daughter  
20 has been with me. It's been 12 years, and  
21 we've been through the court. We've been  
22 through the difficult -- the most difficult  
23 time was the court, and I know I just wanted  
24 to share that a bit about the court, the  
25 court process and how when we were there and

1           knowing that these two men that had murdered  
2           my daughter, that had raped her when she was  
3           pleading for her life, in court when they  
4           brought up that she was pleading for her  
5           life, and they didn't hear her. Instead they  
6           punched her and broke her jaw, and she was  
7           trying to tell them that, no, if you let me  
8           go, I promise I won't say anything, I  
9           promise, and they didn't hear her.

10                       After they beat her up  
11           and after they raped her, one of the men took  
12           a knife and stabbed her in her skull, and  
13           when the police, the searchers were looking  
14           for her remains and they found that part of  
15           her skull that they needed to support the  
16           story from one of the guys of murdering her.

17                       I know there was two guys  
18           that were charged, and one of them is still  
19           free, and that's where I question. I  
20           question the justice system. I question why  
21           did one get convicted of second-degree murder  
22           'cause it was first -- when they first  
23           convicted them, it was first-degree murder,  
24           and then they negotiated where it came down  
25           to second-degree murder, and he agreed to



1           second-degree, and I strongly believe that  
2           not one but two of them. Why this person  
3           that they convicted for the murder of my  
4           daughter second-degree, why couldn't they put  
5           him as a dangerous offender? And that's my  
6           question that I have to you, Commissioner,  
7           that I need to know. I need to know that. I  
8           need to know that these questions that I'm  
9           bringing forward, that they may be followed  
10          up.

11                               I know with this public  
12          inquiry I'm asking for a treatment centre. I  
13          believe that when my daughter first went  
14          missing those three weeks, months, those  
15          months that came, that if there was a place  
16          that I can go, that my sons who desperately  
17          needed that help, that if we were able to go  
18          and get a part of the healing, the process  
19          of, okay, you know, this is happening to my  
20          family. My sons are not sharing what they're  
21          feeling. Is this a place that can offer  
22          resources for my family? That would be  
23          amazing. You know, that would be -- for  
24          myself if I could go back and change, that's  
25          one of the things I believe that would

1           strongly help myself as a family member, as a  
2           mother and to see my sons get that help that  
3           they need, and I brought in people to  
4           do talking circles, to -- I offered my sons  
5           to go to sweats. I offered -- they don't  
6           like the talking circles. They would rather,  
7           oh, talk to youth that are within their age  
8           group, and, you know, to this day, my sons  
9           don't talk about her as much as I do. I talk  
10          about her with pride. I talk about her with  
11          honour. I talk about her in love, and I know  
12          when my sons are -- are hurting -- they're  
13          still hurting -- that the only thing they can  
14          do is nod their heads when I talk about their  
15          sister, but I'm always telling them, She's  
16          with you, she's with us, just talk with her.  
17          You know, when you're alone, talk with her,  
18          and she will show. She will show you signs  
19          that she's there with you and never to give  
20          up, but that's one of the things that I'd  
21          like to see change.

22                           If the police were able  
23          to help us right in the beginning, that would  
24          have helped so much. Then making that call,  
25          that missing person's call, I waited four

1 days, and if it wasn't for Cody, her  
2 boyfriend, to make that missing person's  
3 call -- I say make it right away. I see the  
4 difference, and I do know through the courts  
5 that we need that support as families.  
6 Within the court we need that support -- for  
7 just to be there, just to smudge them, just  
8 to offer whatever the families need because  
9 when you're in there in court and you're  
10 taking on all this information and you're  
11 finding what your family has gone through and  
12 what your loved one has gone through and the  
13 trauma, we need that support. We need that  
14 counselling. We need that counselling. We  
15 need that culture. We need our teachings to  
16 come in, and I was not offered that.

17 Victim services was  
18 there. I know that when we were in court, we  
19 had one side, my family, and the other side,  
20 the people that murdered my daughter, their  
21 family there, and to have both of them in one  
22 little small room was very very difficult,  
23 and I know we can't change anything there,  
24 but it sure put us through a lot, myself as  
25 the mother. To hear and see these families

1            talking about my girl was very hard to listen  
2            to and not say anything, to be the stronger  
3            person. I just wanted to share the -- the  
4            court process. It is very difficult, and we  
5            as family members, we need that support.

6                            Being here and talking  
7            about my girl, I also need that aftercare. I  
8            need support. This has been a lot in coming  
9            here and talking about my girl and talking  
10           about what she went through, and what we went  
11           through as a family, what we went through as  
12           a community is very -- very hard and painful,  
13           and I need that help. I need that support.

14    MS. JENNIFER COX:                    Gwenda, I'm wondering if  
15           you could maybe give a little bit more detail  
16           to the commissioner about some of the things  
17           that happened in the court process that you  
18           found maybe could have been done differently,  
19           some of the things that you wished you'd had.  
20           So you were able to say that victim services  
21           was there, but you didn't feel that worked  
22           very well for you, did you?

23    MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI:            No, I didn't. Victim  
24           services was there when my daughter -- when  
25           the police went the first day to go and

1 search, but they didn't offer that support on  
2 that first day when they went out and  
3 searched for my daughter. In court victim  
4 services is there, but it was like they  
5 weren't there.

6 My family needed --  
7 needed -- there was a lot of us, and for us  
8 to do those victim impact statements and to  
9 read them out, that was very very hard. In  
10 knowing if the -- if victim services, if they  
11 knew this was going through, this is going to  
12 happen, if we were better prepared, that  
13 would have helped us as a family member, so I  
14 really strongly feel that victim services  
15 needs more. They need to offer the families  
16 more in regards to court and preparing.

17 There was information  
18 that was not shared with me, and when I found  
19 out that my daughter was stabbed in the back  
20 of her head, I really felt that if I knew  
21 that beforehand, it would have helped me more  
22 instead of hearing it in court. So giving  
23 the families the information beforehand and  
24 preparing them would have helped me.

25 MS. JENNIFER COX: And the other thing that

1           you found out was that there was more than  
2           two people involved, right? I'm wondering if  
3           you could tell the commissioner a little bit  
4           more about that.

5       MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI:           The rumours -- first I  
6           heard from rumours, and when I asked the  
7           major crimes person about -- about the number  
8           of people that were a part of my daughter's  
9           murder, that had taken her right from the  
10          bar, the people in the bar that night said  
11          there was four to five people in the bar.  
12          There was only two that were charged. One is  
13          now -- his charges are stayed, and the year's  
14          up and he's free.

15                                   The other three, those  
16          are my concern. I was in Fort Qu'Appelle  
17          and -- doing my laundry, and this guy came up  
18          to me, and I knew he was there when my  
19          daughter was -- was murdered. He was in the  
20          home, and he came up to me and he asked if he  
21          could sit down and talk with me, if he could  
22          have a mediator and come and tell his side of  
23          the story, and, yes, I was angry, and, yes, I  
24          told him, You had two years and ten months to  
25          say something. You're from Little Black

1 Bear, and you did not say nothing, and now  
2 that my daughter is gone, you're trying to  
3 come and tell me your story? You're trying  
4 to share that with me? No. And I just -- I  
5 couldn't understand why only two were  
6 convicted. Well, one was convicted, one  
7 charge was stayed, and what happened to the  
8 other three?

9 I know when he approached  
10 me, he said that his son who was also there,  
11 was 16 years old, was -- also committed  
12 suicide because he was there and he -- he  
13 heard the screaming and he heard the pleas,  
14 and so he carried all this with him, and I'm  
15 wondering why, why the police did not share  
16 that with me, that there was more people in  
17 that home when my daughter was murdered that  
18 night.

19 I also found out from  
20 court that my daughter was murdered that  
21 night, so July 15th when they had taken her,  
22 she was murdered within that -- that -- that  
23 night. So to me -- and I didn't hear this  
24 until court, and I really wish that the  
25 autopsy report, if -- I wish I seen that. I

1           wish I was able to read that more carefully  
2           or read it, period. I know that that would  
3           have helped me back then.

4                       As a family, when your  
5           loved one is missing and then murdered and  
6           then all this information that is compiled by  
7           the officers and court is over, I really feel  
8           that it should be shared with the families,  
9           that the family need that closure.

10                      I know that left me with  
11           a lot of questions, and if this man didn't  
12           come and approach me -- I only heard rumours  
13           until he came and approached me and said he  
14           wanted to talk with me. Well, I don't know.  
15           I don't know if I'm strong enough to be able  
16           to have that conversation with him, but if I  
17           knew, it would have helped instead of relying  
18           on the rumours that were out there 'cause  
19           there's so many rumours, and if the police  
20           were able to help in that way, that would  
21           help me a lot as a family.

22   MS. JENNIFER COX:           Those are all the  
23           questions that I have, Gwenda, but I'm  
24           wondering if maybe, Mr. Commissioner, do you  
25           have any questions that you --



1 COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON: I think I just have one  
2 follow-up question. You talked about some of  
3 the things that you felt supported you and  
4 some of the things that you went through, and  
5 you also made some recommendations for some  
6 things that would be helpful. Based on your  
7 experience are there -- are there still  
8 things even now that would assist you if they  
9 were in place?

10 MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI: Having that support  
11 from -- from other families and knowing that  
12 what I was going through was normal and  
13 natural and having that denial, the shock,  
14 the process, I know I offer that to other  
15 families now, that if I hear of a family that  
16 is -- has a missing loved one, I -- I call  
17 the family and I offer, Can I just come and  
18 sit with you? And just having that, having  
19 someone that has been through it there with  
20 me, that would have helped me. That would  
21 have helped me a lot, and I know of other  
22 families. I've gone to support them, and  
23 just -- all you have to do is just sit there  
24 and let them talk about their loved one, you  
25 know, that they share the stories with you,

1                   and that's a part of healing in itself.

2       MS. JENNIFER COX:                   Is there anything else  
3                   you'd like to share, Gwenda?

4       MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI:           No.

5       MS. JENNIFER COX:                   So, Mr. Commissioner, if  
6                   we could conclude these proceedings with the  
7                   exchange of gifts unless you have further  
8                   questions.

9       COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON:           No, I don't have any  
10                  further questions. I just really want to  
11                  thank you for coming here this morning and  
12                  sharing your truths with us and sharing your  
13                  insights and your recommendations and  
14                  assisting the Inquiry in that way, and we  
15                  just have some small gifts of appreciation to  
16                  share with you before you leave.

17       ELDER JULIE PITZEL:                Could I ask that -- to  
18                  come and sit in this chair? I'd like you to  
19                  come and sit in this chair and bring your  
20                  feather. Sit here. I want you to sit in  
21                  this chair on purpose, just to warm you up a  
22                  little bit because it's quite a thing to go  
23                  through talking, and if the people that are  
24                  here to support this lady, I'd like to -- I'd  
25                  like to say also a prayer, if you don't mind.

1                   Okay.    You had something to give her?

2       COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON:           Mmhmm.    So I have this --  
3                   an eagle feather to give you as appreciation  
4                   for sharing your truths with us today, and  
5                   these were given to us by grandmothers from  
6                   British Columbia to share with the  
7                   participants here.    I also have a little  
8                   token of appreciation of reciprocity and some  
9                   sage seeds.

10      MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI:           Yes.

11      COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON:           Also give you some  
12                   tobacco as well.    Thank you very much.

13      ELDER JULIE PITZEL:            Anyways, and then we'll  
14                   end it off with saying a prayer because all  
15                   of us have listened to a story, and before I  
16                   start, I want to tell you a little story of  
17                   how I came to be here.

18                                        When you -- when your  
19                   daughter was missing, I saw you on TV, and I  
20                   had a prayer in my heart to give her strength  
21                   to find her daughter, and I witnessed the  
22                   courage that she had in keeping the memory of  
23                   her daughter alive so she would be found, and  
24                   I'd say to her on the TV, Keep it up, keep  
25                   being strong, and today I was just sitting

1 out listening to another place I was, and I  
2 was asked to come here, and I looked at that  
3 picture, and it just struck me that I had  
4 been saying prayers for her and her family,  
5 so that's a story that how things can be, and  
6 I think -- and I think that her daughter set  
7 that up so we could meet, so -- and I  
8 purposefully didn't touch you because I  
9 wanted you to tell your story, and part of  
10 your healing is the tears (inaudible), okay?

11 So I'd like you people to  
12 stand, and I'd like to say a prayer, and you  
13 have these little bags where you put your  
14 tears in there. If you have kleenex, put  
15 them in there and put them on your seat  
16 there.

17 And I -- I'm privileged  
18 to have spoken different languages, and I  
19 speak Dene and Cree and Michif, so I'm very  
20 rich. I'm very grateful to my grandparents,  
21 and today I'm grateful to all the teachers  
22 I've had in my life, all the people that have  
23 gone to the spirit world and all the people  
24 that continue to teach me today, and I'll say  
25 a prayer in Cree.

1 (PRAYER)

2 ELDER JULIE PITZEL: If you wanted to say a  
3 few words and you could come and say to this  
4 lady. Do you want to sit here?

5 MS. GWENDA YUZICAPPI: Yeah.

6 ELDER JULIE PITZEL: And if you don't, that's  
7 fine too.

8 COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON: Are we adjourned?

9 MS. JENNIFER COX: Just for the purposes of  
10 the record, Mr. Commissioner, if we could  
11 adjourn this matter.

12 COMMISSIONER EYOLFSON: We'll adjourn this  
13 session, thank you.

14 (Adjourned at 12:12 p.m.)

15 (Reconvened at 1:23 p.m.)

**WITNESSES: LESLIE KENNEDY, SHEILA KENNEDY, RAYLENE  
KENNEDY (IN RELATION TO CANDACE OPEKOKEW)**

**HEARD BY: COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE**

**COMMISSION COUNSEL: CHRISTA BIG CANOE**

**ELDER: JULIE PITZEL**

**COURT REPORTER: SHAWN HURD**

**REGISTRAR: BRYAN ZANDBERG**

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Good afternoon,  
21 Commissioner Audette. I would like to  
22 present to you and introduce the next family  
23 that will be sharing their story. Sitting  
24 right beside me is Leslie Kennedy, and  
25 immediately beside her is Sheila Kennedy, and

1           then at the far end from me is Raylene, but I  
2           notice they all call her Ray Kennedy. They  
3           would each like to swear on the Bible and  
4           hold the eagle feather to swear in, please.

5   COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:           Perfect. The mic? Oui.

6           So merci beaucoup. Again, I really apologize  
7           for being late. I was with a beautiful  
8           family member, so we finish. Because, as you  
9           can see, my strong accent, I ask the  
10          registrar to read it on my behalf, so it's  
11          going to be faster if it was -- her instead  
12          me.

13   **LESLIE KENNEDY, sworn:**

14   **SHEILA KENNEDY, sworn:**

15   **RAYLENE KENNEDY, sworn:**

16   COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:           Merci beaucoup.

17   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:          Commissioner Audette, the  
18          family today will be telling you the story  
19          today of Candace Opekokew. She was killed --  
20          I'll wait for your translation.

21   COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:           There's no translator.

22   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:          Okay. Sorry. The family  
23          will be talking about Canada Opekokew, who  
24          was killed when she was 28 years old walking  
25          outside of the Tropical Inn in Lloydminster,

1 Alberta, in May 2013.

2 I'm actually just going  
3 to start by asking the family some questions,  
4 and I would actually like to ask you -- and  
5 each of you can answer if you like -- if you  
6 can please share some of the strengths or  
7 fond memories you have of Candace.

8 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: Well, Candace was 28  
9 years old when this happened, but her growing  
10 up was -- I can't say it was really --  
11 because we -- I was married to their dad at  
12 one time, but I went through a lot of  
13 emotional and physical abuse, but when I  
14 separated from their dad, I -- I made sure my  
15 kids were okay because in order for them to  
16 be happy, I needed to be happy. So I tried  
17 to bringing them up the best way I can, and I  
18 worked hard. Even little menial jobs I  
19 worked hard. Sometimes I'd work two, three  
20 jobs a day just cleaning for teacherage or  
21 subbing or working at a restaurant because I  
22 wanted them to have the things -- I didn't  
23 want them to be without. I just wanted them  
24 to be into extracurricular and everything  
25 they wanted.

1                               So I used to tell my kids  
2                               don't -- finish school first, Don't have kids  
3                               'cause I was a young mother, and I said, You  
4                               see the struggles I go through. I just  
5                               wanted them to be smart, I guess, and I'm  
6                               glad to say as a single parent, all my kids  
7                               graduated. They didn't have kids 'til after,  
8                               and Candace didn't have any kids. She -- as  
9                               soon as she finished school, she graduated  
10                              and she got into a education assistant  
11                              program right away, which she had -- she had  
12                              quit because she told me it wasn't for her.  
13                              She couldn't see herself sitting in a school  
14                              and, you know, being in a building inside  
15                              doing office stuff.

16                             She was more challenging  
17                             than that, which took her to her next phase,  
18                             and she loved welding. She was a welder.  
19                             She did everything that I guess most men do.  
20                             She got her gun license. She would go  
21                             hunting. She would dig her own holes, which  
22                             I can't even do, in the lake to go fishing.  
23                             There was nothing, I guess, in my girl's way  
24                             that she wouldn't -- if somebody told her you  
25                             couldn't do it, she would do it. She was



1 stubborn like that, I guess, like me.

2 So I remember at 16 my  
3 mom had come to visit me in Canoe Lake, and  
4 we were all sitting around the table, and my  
5 mom goes on to say about my grandma was 30 --  
6 36 when she became a grandparent. My mom was  
7 18. Then when -- my mom said when she became  
8 a grandparent she was 36 and when she became  
9 a mother she was 18, and same thing with me.  
10 I was a young mother, and Candace, I remember  
11 her clearly that day, and she said, Well,  
12 kokum, I'm going to break the cycle, and she  
13 did. She did.

14 So my girl would go on  
15 from job to job 'cause sometimes her job --  
16 she would be let go because of not enough  
17 work, but she welded all over. She was --  
18 the last place she was working was in  
19 Lloydminster where she passed away, but she  
20 worked in Neilburg. She worked in North  
21 Battleford. She worked in Bonnyville. So  
22 there that's -- she made a lot of friends, a  
23 lot of friends that I didn't even know who  
24 came to support her the time we had to bury  
25 her. I didn't even know half the people

1           there that came all the way to little Canoe  
2           Lake. That was then I felt my daughter was  
3           loved by so many people, and at that time the  
4           ex-chief had said, Be proud, she did what  
5           most women never would have done.

6                       And she left, and she  
7           used to come home Christmas holidays or come  
8           check up on her nephew, and she would tell  
9           her friends or teenagers like, Finish school,  
10          get out of here, there's nothing there for  
11          you, there's so much out there, and that's  
12          what I told them too, you know. If I had the  
13          chance to do what you guys did or could do, I  
14          would do it. You guys have nothing holding  
15          you back. And she did. She went to Niagara  
16          Falls. She went to Queen Charlotte Islands.  
17          She -- I had a nickname for her, and she was  
18          my little spinster, my little gypsy, but that  
19          was how she was. Nothing held her back.

20       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       Sheila?

21       MS. SHEILA KENNEDY:         First when I say I had  
22               the opportunity of -- of being with her as a  
23               baby, starting kindergarten, Grade 8 and  
24               celebrating to Grade 12 graduation. She  
25               loved to -- she was a fun-loving person,

1           loved to laugh. She was also our first --  
2           our first granddaughter. She was the  
3           firstborn. She was also the firstborn  
4           great-granddaughter to her maternal and  
5           paternal grandparents. She was loved, and  
6           everybody was proud of her when she was born.  
7           She was still loved by everyone. She  
8           challenged life, like my daughter said.

9                               I was just thinking about  
10          the loss of pride, the loss of how proud we  
11          would have been if she was here with us, the  
12          celebrations that we missed with her  
13          birthdays, and maybe she would have gave us a  
14          granddaughter and a great-granddaughter or  
15          some grandchildren. She also would have  
16          probably gave us some wedding preparations  
17          that we missed. There's so much that was  
18          taken out of our life. There's so much that  
19          has changed.

20                           As First Nations people,  
21          we celebrate the wealth of grandchildren and  
22          great-grandchildren. I take pride in saying  
23          that I feel wealthy with all my grandchildren  
24          and my great-grandchildren. Money can never  
25          replace anything like that.

1 I still struggle with why  
2 it might be, what we could have seen. Why  
3 did this happen? We struggle with thinking  
4 of how she was alone and how this might have  
5 turned the worst. We might have not have  
6 seen her body like all the other missing and  
7 murdered Aboriginal women, but as -- as I  
8 consoled my family at the time, we believe in  
9 our ancestors coming to get us, so I believed  
10 and I told my daughter that her grandparents  
11 were probably there telling her to come, so  
12 they probably lifted her up and were happy to  
13 see her. That's the only consolation that I  
14 have, that she had no fear because she saw  
15 them. She was there for quite a few hours.

16 I was waiting for her to  
17 call me. She always says, Kokum, it's your  
18 birthday, I'm going to come over there, so I  
19 waited for her the whole day to call, and  
20 then I messaged her and I said, Hey, you  
21 forgot my birthday, how come you haven't  
22 called yet? And then the next day we got the  
23 news. The phone was ringing and ringing, but  
24 we were outside with my family.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Raylene?

1 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: So my sister's strengths  
2 were a jack-of-all-trades. She was -- she  
3 was driven with education, her goals. She  
4 made me who I am today, strong, independent.  
5 She was a person that I ran to for  
6 everything, relationship advice, problems  
7 with my mom, best friend advice. Like she  
8 was someone who was behind my back.

9 She -- we competed  
10 against each other, and I'm a very  
11 competitive person and so was she, so it  
12 was -- she always won, but the day I finally  
13 beat her in track was 'cause she was getting  
14 slow and I was getting faster. I beat her  
15 home, run home for lunch, and if she wasn't  
16 cleaning the floors or washing everything,  
17 dishes properly, then I was doing them the  
18 best. I always had to prove that I was  
19 better.

20 I had my son, and I was a  
21 single parent, and she helped me. She was  
22 almost as if just stepped in as -- as my  
23 son's father and was just the best to my son,  
24 to my son and I, helped me raising him.  
25 Anything I needed, she was there helping me,

1           also encouraging me to finish my education.  
2           You have to do that, encouraging me  
3           everything I wanted to do, and she was just  
4           someone I called and, Well, mom will never  
5           let me leave, never let me leave 'cause she  
6           wants -- she wants my baby, and I just always  
7           felt like I was being pulled by -- to stay  
8           and help my mom and be with her, and still  
9           with her. I just -- I miss her every day,  
10          just someone to -- that had the answers for  
11          me. She didn't ever let me settle for what I  
12          never deserved.

13                               I believe when I got  
14          my B.Ed., my education, bachelor of  
15          education -- we were two years into the  
16          program and we lost her, and I was drinking  
17          almost every weekend or every chance I got  
18          and leaving my son with my mom, trying to --  
19          thinking I wasn't hurting, but I was hurting  
20          myself. I was charged with a DUI, and I  
21          was -- I -- it hurt 'cause I was -- the  
22          questions came back to why did I get charged?  
23          Why didn't this guy get charged for all of --  
24          all of those -- the racial -- I'm not a -- I  
25          don't stereotype colour or anything, but

1           all -- it just started to hit me because I'm  
2           brown or -- and I just started -- about a  
3           month after, I knew I had to pick myself up.  
4           I wasn't going to get anywhere, and -- and  
5           from then on, it was about a year after my  
6           sister passed, two weeks after her feast, I  
7           decided to become sober and started balancing  
8           out all my aspects in life, my spiritual,  
9           mental and physical self and started to  
10          obtain my goals and things I know she would  
11          want me to obtain in life, so I started  
12          living my strengths through my sister and  
13          stopped using her -- her death as an excuse  
14          to escape my own.

15                        She helped me to -- to  
16          raise my son. He's always so observant and  
17          he's always watching what I'm doing, and I  
18          want him to be that strong successful and  
19          independent man and helping women and seeing  
20          what we go through. I need to be that  
21          positive role model for him, and I know  
22          that's what she would want. She's helped  
23          me -- even just not being here she's helped  
24          me move forward with a positive -- positive  
25          impact on my life, and now I just preach

1                   about positive a lot. It helps me.

2       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:           Thank you all for sharing  
3                   Candace's strengths and talking about some of  
4                   the impacts of her loss.

5                   I know actually talking  
6                   about the details of her death is difficult,  
7                   so I'm going to ask you to share what you're  
8                   comfortable sharing and how you can share  
9                   about what happened the night that she was  
10                  run over and what followed in terms of  
11                  investigation or the steps the family took.

12       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:           Well, leading up -- up to  
13                  what happened -- see I didn't find out that  
14                  night. I didn't even know she was in an  
15                  accident. I had text her that night before I  
16                  went to bed, but there was no reply. When I  
17                  realized -- when I text her that morning,  
18                  that's the guilt I carry with me because when  
19                  I text her, she was already in the hospital  
20                  lying there by herself.

21                  I know I have my mom, but  
22                  I have an adopted mom in Canoe Lake. That  
23                  weekend I took her out for her birthday, and  
24                  it's coincidental that my mom -- my  
25                  biological mom and my adopted mom have the



1 same birth dates. I went to North Battleford  
2 for the night, and I remember my adopted  
3 sister telling me, Just make sure she's back  
4 by six o'clock 'cause we're having a barbecue  
5 for her.

6 So when this happened  
7 that morning, I still didn't -- received no  
8 news, and my -- my adopted mom, Bernice,  
9 wanted to go for a haircut at Co-op mall, so  
10 I took her there, and while she was getting  
11 her hair cut, my son phoned. It wasn't about  
12 my -- my daughter yet. It wasn't about his  
13 sister yet. My son was going through  
14 relationship problems, and I was dealing with  
15 that for about two months of him being  
16 suicidal, and he phoned me. He was upset.  
17 He was still upset about his ex and his kids  
18 and wanted his kids, and I told him I'll be  
19 home that day, so after she was done, I went  
20 to -- I said, We have a couple hours to  
21 spare. So she said, We'll go to the casino,  
22 and I said, Okay. So we stopped there, and  
23 all I remember was Bernice, she had said,  
24 Mindy's asking about Candace, I wonder why,  
25 and I said -- right away there was an ugly

1 feeling that came over me because the last  
2 time Mindy asked about Candace was when she  
3 was in a relationship where she was being  
4 abused and she wanted Mindy to go get her,  
5 and as a mother, I just had that ugly gut  
6 feeling that something was wrong.

7 So she went to her  
8 machine and I went to mine, and then I was --  
9 just got up and I went to go get a coffee,  
10 and I told her, Bernice, I'm going to go grab  
11 a coffee, and she said, Okay, so I went -- as  
12 I was in line, I went to check my phone, and  
13 I had all these missed calls and texts and --  
14 from all over, my dad in Onion Lake and Canoe  
15 Lake and North Battleford, and I froze. I  
16 just froze. I couldn't even check. I was  
17 scared to check. So I went and grabbed  
18 Bernice right away, and I said, Bernice, I  
19 think we got to go. She just said, Okay.  
20 Right away she said, Okay.

21 So as I was walking out  
22 the door, I met up with my cousin. Just the  
23 look on his face. It was my cousin Gino, and  
24 he -- he said, Bells -- that's my nickname;  
25 everybody knows me by my nickname -- we've

1           been looking for you, and I -- and I knew  
2           something -- I just couldn't -- I just didn't  
3           want to hear it, but I knew something was  
4           wrong, and I knew it was her. I don't know  
5           why, maybe because I didn't get a text back  
6           that night. I don't know, and he said, It's  
7           Candace, and all I remember is saying, No.

8                       My next recollection I  
9           think I had was I just remember talking to  
10          Lorraine, my support here. My car was still  
11          at home, and I told my -- I told Lorraine,  
12          Bring my kids, my son and my daughter. Bring  
13          my kids. Please drive for them. Use my car.

14                     Then when I could breathe  
15          enough to phone the RCMP to find out what was  
16          going on, what happened, what -- they said  
17          they couldn't tell me anything, only that she  
18          was hit and that she was at the hospital a  
19          little after one. She was alive for a few  
20          hours, but she had succumbed to her injuries  
21          and that her body was already at the funeral  
22          home and I won't even be able to see her  
23          because they were sending her for an autopsy  
24          on Monday.

25                     So I was in North

1 Battleford. I ended up staying in North  
2 Battleford. My kids showed up there, so  
3 right from Saturday, we stayed there right  
4 'til Monday when they finally brought her  
5 body to North Battleford funeral home. That  
6 was the only time I got to see her.

7 All the RCMP told me was  
8 they couldn't -- they couldn't give me any  
9 details because they were still  
10 investigating. They couldn't even tell me  
11 who they charged or who they -- they had or  
12 if they were questioning anybody, but as a  
13 mother, deep down in my gut I had a feeling.  
14 It wasn't the ex-boyfriend that used to abuse  
15 her. It was his friend.

16 You see, and I was never  
17 brought up racist. I grew up in North  
18 Battleford. I played ball and sports with a  
19 lot of white people. As a matter of fact,  
20 one of my best friends from Grade 3, I still  
21 have contact with her, and she was never  
22 brought up like that. So the ex-boyfriend is  
23 a white guy, and his friend's a white guy  
24 apparently from Nova Scotia area.

25 I remember she called

1 from his place a couple times. The first  
2 time she called, as a parent I asked her  
3 right away, Who is this? And she said, He's  
4 just a friend. She said, He's just a friend  
5 of B.J.'s, and I said, Well, is he anything  
6 like B.J. because usually assholes like to  
7 hang out together, and she said, No, no, he's  
8 all right. That's all I remember about this  
9 guy because I know she phoned. Sometimes  
10 she'd phone me for lunch, meet for work -- or  
11 gas money to get to work.

12 So, anyway, it wasn't  
13 'til -- I can't even remember if it was after  
14 the burial or -- I know I had written down  
15 notes, wrote down some notes because by then  
16 I was feeling -- I don't know -- something  
17 wasn't right. My dad had went to the bail  
18 hearing in Lloydminster, so it was before the  
19 bail hearing he was already given bail of  
20 \$1,000 and was free to go. They mentioned  
21 about six or seven names, my dad said, that  
22 he wasn't supposed to have any contact with,  
23 so I just assumed it was witnesses. I  
24 believe this was before -- before the -- I  
25 think we were still waiting for her body

1           when -- when I heard he got bail in North  
2           Battleford because I did have my daughter's  
3           body at home for one night in Sweetgrass, and  
4           I brought her home to Canoe Lake to be buried  
5           there.

6                       So the day we buried her,  
7           May 10th, at that time we had no service in  
8           Canoe Lake, and it was after, and I called  
9           the Lloydminster RCMP detachment. These are  
10          notes I -- that I kept because I -- I knew I  
11          wasn't in my right mind, but I knew something  
12          wasn't right also, and I thought I needed to  
13          write this down.

14                      So May 14th, 2013, I  
15          called Lloydminster RCMP detachment,  
16          Constable -- I had it blank here, but it was  
17          Constable Hartwell who was in charge of the  
18          investigation. I had some questions, and he  
19          said the bail hearing was up to the judge and  
20          that they probably figured he was not a  
21          flight risk. I asked what he was being  
22          charged for, and Constable's response was  
23          impaired driving, impaired driving causing  
24          death, dangerous driving causing death,  
25          public mischief and obstruction. They were

1 still investigating and that there was still  
2 not much they could say.

3 He did tell me -- can I  
4 say the name? He did tell me Jason  
5 Campbell's car was being analyzed just to  
6 cover all avenues in the case. He tried to  
7 say his brakes were no good -- in case he  
8 tried to say his brakes were no good or  
9 anything like that and that Candace's  
10 cellphone was in Edmonton being analyzed. He  
11 also had a team out there checking traffic  
12 lights, etc. to see their whereabouts during  
13 the day.

14 I asked him, I heard  
15 there was a second person in the car and what  
16 was happening with that other occupant of the  
17 vehicle, and he said they needed his  
18 statement so the charges on Jason would stick  
19 and that he had a strong statement against  
20 him, which is why they haven't charged him  
21 because I asked if it was true that both  
22 males fled the scene after they had run over  
23 my girl or was it just a rumour.

24 I also asked about this  
25 video surveillance that was outside the

1 off-sale store on the side of the building  
2 and wouldn't -- wouldn't that be enough  
3 evidence. They had that too. I asked if  
4 he -- if they had her purse, and they said  
5 they did and that once the investigation was  
6 complete, they would give the items back. I  
7 asked about the names mentioned in court --  
8 which my dad appeared in court -- that Jason  
9 Campbell was to have no contact with and who  
10 they were, and Constable told me they were  
11 witnesses. I asked who called 911 and if  
12 Jason even tried to call or help her.  
13 Constable's reply was they received two calls  
14 right away and police arrived at the scene  
15 minutes and some -- one minute and some  
16 seconds. Candace was still alive, tried to  
17 speak to the officer, and she was then taken  
18 to the hospital where she succumbed.

19 In a conversation prior,  
20 they told me it was approximately 1:30 a.m.  
21 when paramedics arrived, and at 4:30 a.m. she  
22 succumbed to her injuries in the hospital.  
23 They told me to be prepared for a lengthy  
24 investigation, that it could take a year, two  
25 years, and I tried to keep contact after the



1                   burial.

2                                   After the funeral, my mom  
3                   and my daughter stayed home. They cleaned  
4                   up. I'd taken my son to work because that  
5                   was his coping mechanism was to go to work  
6                   right away, so he wanted me to drive him back  
7                   to the camp where he goes in Alberta, and  
8                   it's just right by Bonnyville, and some of  
9                   the workers from her old job site came to the  
10                  funeral, and Joe asked if I wanted to stop  
11                  in, one of her bosses. So while my mom and  
12                  them, my mom and my daughter were cleaning  
13                  the house and putting her -- her pictures  
14                  away, which are -- we do. When we lose a  
15                  loved one, we put their pictures away for a  
16                  year. I had the opportunity, because we  
17                  stayed the night in Bonnyville, and Joe, my  
18                  late daughter's boss, took me on a tour where  
19                  she worked prior to Lloydminster, took me on  
20                  a tour of what she did in her workplace and  
21                  everything she did. I remember just feeling  
22                  so amazed at the stuff she was doing in  
23                  there, and I was so proud -- proud of her.  
24                  It was something that made me feel so -- like  
25                  I did something right as a parent. She was a

1           hard worker.

2       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       Leslie, you had already  
3           told the commissioner about -- a couple  
4           things about what you knew, and the notes you  
5           shared were the notes that you wrote at the  
6           time that you made the calls. There were a  
7           couple of things in the news at the time, and  
8           I was just wondering if I can just show you  
9           these articles. These are in your binder.  
10          So the one is in relation to when he's let  
11          out on bail, so Jason's let out on bail, and  
12          the article references the same charges you  
13          believed, so the article *Saskatchewan Mother*  
14          *Cries Foul Over Guilty Plea*, they talk about  
15          the fact in the article that he had been  
16          charged with five counts including impaired  
17          driving causing death and dangerous driving  
18          causing death, the same things you had  
19          already told the commissioner, but this  
20          article talks about how devastated you were  
21          because he pled guilty to the charge of  
22          mischief.

23       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:       Well, that was when --  
24           the first time they called me. I don't know  
25           exactly which date. It was after the burial

1           and just that the Crown was trying to make  
2           the impaired charges stick, but they weren't  
3           sure if they could because they didn't take a  
4           blood sample from him.

5                       Apparently he was around  
6           the scene. It was the friend that took off,  
7           but to me, him being a white guy, they  
8           probably thought nothing of it to ask him. I  
9           know if it was an Aboriginal man, they would  
10          have right away taken him in, took a blood  
11          sample or arrested him just for standing  
12          there. I've heard stories about them doing  
13          that, but they didn't take nothing from him.  
14          It wasn't 'til, I believe he said, the next  
15          day when they realized it was him that ran  
16          her over.

17                      They had even called  
18          her -- him a cab. They called him a cab, and  
19          he went to a house because they told me they  
20          even went to the cab company -- phoned the  
21          cab company and got ahold of the cab driver  
22          who drove him and asked him where they took  
23          him, so they took him to a house. I don't  
24          know if it was a house party or what, but  
25          they took him to a house, and he admitted to

1           those people in that house that he'd just ran  
2           over somebody. It was probably the witnesses  
3           that they had said on his bail hearing that  
4           he was supposed to not be in contact with.  
5           They also said they had his car, they had her  
6           phone, they had the video surveillance, and  
7           they had his -- his friend's statement  
8           against him.

9                               So they couldn't charge  
10          him with impaired because they had no blood  
11          sample, and then the next time they're  
12          phoning me a few months or maybe a month --  
13          it wasn't that long because everything was  
14          over and done with in November. The  
15          sentencing was in January. It was in August  
16          before I went back to work 'cause I work at a  
17          school and I was off for the summer, and in  
18          August, the Crown prosecutor, the only time I  
19          ever heard from her besides her assistant --  
20          this is the only time I ever heard from the  
21          Crown prosecutor, and I thought she was  
22          supposed to be on my daughter's side. She  
23          phoned to tell me that they had to drop the  
24          dangerous driving causing death and the  
25          impaired driving causing death. She told

1 me -- the Crown prosecutor told me that they  
2 had no choice but to drop the impaired  
3 causing death and the dangerous driving  
4 causing death. My daughter and I were home  
5 alone. She was wondering why I was crying.  
6 I felt like they just killed her all over  
7 again. I honest to God felt I had no breath  
8 in me. All morning I stayed at home, and I  
9 cried and I just shut everybody out, and I  
10 think Raylene was in her room crying.

11 After I could finally  
12 breathe, and I phoned the elder that I use  
13 who was also Candace's moshum, and it's her  
14 godfather. I phoned Eval, and I told him  
15 about the call, and he said, Well, what did  
16 she say? And I told -- I said, Well, she  
17 just said that if we wanted to talk to her,  
18 she could meet us in Lloydminster, and he  
19 said, Well, let's just go, let's go talk to  
20 them. We went to Lloydminster for nothing  
21 again because basically they just told us the  
22 same thing they told us over the phone.

23 So he was only being  
24 charged for obstruction and mischief. She  
25 didn't say anything about dropping the

1           obstruction off, dropping that. It wasn't  
2           'til when we went to court that November. I  
3           believe it was early November, which is why  
4           he changed his plea to guilty because  
5           everything was dropped. The obstruction was  
6           dropped. They basically charged him with  
7           mischief. That's like playing a prank for  
8           killing my daughter.

9                           At that time, the judge,  
10          he asked me if -- if I wanted the sentencing  
11          over before Christmas or after because they  
12          would be making a -- setting a date for  
13          sentencing, and I said -- he said he had a  
14          lot of stuff to read over, and I told him,  
15          you know, to take his time. I said, You  
16          know, I -- I don't care if it was after  
17          Christmas. Take your time. I don't have my  
18          daughter here this Christmas. Jason Campbell  
19          has his daughter, and he's got many  
20          Christmases he can spend with his daughter.  
21          So a court that they said would -- could take  
22          a year, two years was done in a matter of  
23          months.

24                           In-between there I had --  
25          between all of this, I had already contacted

1 FSIN Special Investigations Unit, Kelvin  
2 Watson, because by that summer it just -- to  
3 me nothing felt right, and I needed some  
4 guidance, so I contacted him. He met me in  
5 North Battleford and we had an interview, me  
6 explaining everything that happened up to  
7 that time. We had an interview in his car,  
8 and he recorded everything I said. That was  
9 the start of our first appeal, and I believe  
10 that was August when I met with him.

11 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can I clarify something?

12 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: Yeah.

13 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, yeah, there's some  
14 more documents, and we can actually address  
15 those momentarily, but just to clarify, so  
16 Jason Campbell, he pleads guilty and is  
17 eventually sentenced. Do you recall what the  
18 sentence was? It's in one of those articles  
19 as well.

20 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: I remember. Jason  
21 Campbell then changed his plea to guilty, and  
22 the judge sentenced him to nine months pro --  
23 nine months. Three months was a house  
24 arrest, six months was curfew, two years  
25 probation, and he was ordered to pay \$2,000

1           into a scholarship fund that I was trying to  
2           set up for my daughter at the high school she  
3           graduated where I work.

4    MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:        So -- and you've already  
5           explained to the commissioner how frustrating  
6           you found all that, and nothing was sitting  
7           right with you, you just said, so then you  
8           decided to talk to -- you said FSIN. Can you  
9           tell us what that is?

10   MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:           Well, I believe the name  
11           changed, but it was Federation of  
12           Saskatchewan Indigenous Nations. I think  
13           it's Sovereign Indigenous Nations now, and  
14           this is the Special Investigations Unit, and  
15           Kelvin Watson was working there.

16   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:        And so before I hand  
17           these documents over -- and you have a copy  
18           of these as well?

19   MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:           Yeah, not on me.

20   MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:        Sorry. So maybe we can  
21           just sort of explain these documents before  
22           we give them to the commissioner, and then  
23           that can help explain how Kelvin was able to  
24           help you out and what you mean when you say  
25           part of an appeal process because the appeal



1           wasn't in criminal court. The appeal was  
2           because of a complaint you made, right?

3       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:           Mmhmm.

4       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       And so maybe you can just  
5           tell the commissioner what the complaint you  
6           made was first.

7       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:           The complaint I had was  
8           that they did not do a proper investigation  
9           on my daughter's death, so, like I said, I  
10          contacted Kelvin Watson, and so the first  
11          appeal -- I had to sign some stuff for him,  
12          and then the first appeal he had sent, and  
13          they had replied to me, which I found -- I  
14          don't know. Right away I knew -- like  
15          because it said Lloydminster K Division was  
16          going to be investigating the RCMP, and I  
17          found that -- why are RCMP investigating each  
18          other? And I knew it wasn't right, but I  
19          waited. I waited impatiently. I tried to be  
20          patient.

21      MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       Can I ask you another  
22          quick question --

23      MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:           Yeah.

24      MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       -- just again for  
25          clarification? So you make a complaint

1                   because you weren't satisfied with the  
2                   investigation.

3       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:                   And where it was leading.

4       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:               And where it was leading,  
5                   and that was because there was no blood test,  
6                   there was no breathalyzer, they put him into  
7                   a cab, so a lot of these things concerned  
8                   you, and you decide to make a complaint about  
9                   it not being -- I'm just going to actually  
10                  refer to the document -- it not being a  
11                  thorough investigation?

12      MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:                   Mmhmm.

13      MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:               And so the first document  
14                  that we're going to hand up is actually the  
15                  complaint form, and it details the complaint  
16                  you were making?

17      MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:                   Yeah.

18      MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:               Yeah, and that appears to  
19                  be in October 23rd, 2013?

20      MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:                   Yeah.

21      MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:               And you told us you were  
22                  patiently waiting.

23      MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:                   Yes. I would contact him  
24                  as to if he heard anything. I was emailing  
25                  him or phoning him, and by then the charges

1           were being -- I believe they had already been  
2           dropped 'cause that was October. All the  
3           other charges were being dropped, and it was  
4           just the mischief and the obstruction. I  
5           didn't even know the obstruction was dropped.  
6           It wasn't until they had read it in court  
7           that November that he was only being charged  
8           for mischief, and then -- so, anyway, that  
9           was my question as to like why, my complaint,  
10          and then as we were going into this more and  
11          more, the reason why they dropped all these  
12          charges, 'cause there was no evidence. Well,  
13          what about the witnesses? What about Jason  
14          Burke's statement? This was the friend that  
15          was with him. What about the video  
16          surveillance? There was other stuff in  
17          there, and I just -- right now is just --

18       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       But the next up is  
19               when -- when Kelvin starts to help you,  
20               right?

21       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:       Right. So we sent it  
22               out, and then they sent it back. At one  
23               point when they were finally ready to release  
24               information to us, this was in Lloydminster  
25               when they were done the investigation. There

1           was me and my mom, my daughter, my aunties  
2           and a couple of friends that I had supporting  
3           me. There was quite a few of us in that  
4           small room where he explained to us the  
5           details of the video surveillance and how he  
6           had explained that to me. I didn't want to  
7           watch it, but his -- his words were is that  
8           they had pulled up. They had pulled up to  
9           the Tropical Inn off-sale. The guy that was  
10          with Jason Campbell and my daughter stayed in  
11          the vehicle. Jason and Candace went into the  
12          Tropical Inn. The first -- the first appeal  
13          it said that -- or they told me that she came  
14          out first, handed her purse and handed the  
15          beer to Jason Burke, and then she went out  
16          and around and squatted to pee, and then  
17          Jason Campbell came out. Well, how did he  
18          not know that she wasn't in the vehicle? How  
19          do you not know your passengers are not  
20          sitting with you? I said, Even the picture  
21          of the little car that was on the news, I  
22          could feel in my own car if I was to run over  
23          a can. How could he not feel? Because he  
24          told me from the video, it looked like he  
25          backed up about 20 feet. On the appeal,

1                   they're saying 14.

2                                   They also said on there  
3                   that one of them noticed -- one of the RCMP  
4                   noticed that Jason Campbell was intoxicated.  
5                   My question to Kelvin was, Why didn't that  
6                   guy take the initiative to at least bring him  
7                   in for -- for a breathalyzer or whatever they  
8                   do if he had noticed he was intoxicated? He  
9                   said they're -- they're explaining in there.  
10                  There's like four RCMP there, and they're  
11                  all -- their main concern was my  
12                  daughter's -- I thought it takes four of  
13                  them? Well, who's covering the scene and  
14                  who's trying to find witnesses? I don't  
15                  think it took all four of them.

16       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:           So you're waiting  
17                                   patiently, and, you know, you get news back  
18                                   from the RCMP investigating the RCMP that  
19                                   they're not seeing anything wrong with the  
20                                   investigation. So Kelvin and you work  
21                                   together to request a review. Do I  
22                                   understand that correctly?

23       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:               Yeah.

24       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:           And so this is the  
25                                   document I'm now handing to the commissioner.

1 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: So when Kelvin and --  
2 Kelvin and I talked, and when Kelvin and I  
3 talked about -- before doing the second  
4 appeal, I had lots of questions, and I asked  
5 Kelvin lots of questions 'cause I needed  
6 questions answered on the first appeal. I'm  
7 not a lawyer or anything, and I don't know  
8 all these legal terms, and I wanted to make  
9 sure I was reading things right, and so when  
10 Kelvin asked if we do the second appeal, I  
11 said, Yeah, because one of my questions there  
12 was like how come they didn't take him? He  
13 said -- Kelvin said, With me being an ex-RCMP  
14 officer, even if I didn't have the grounds to  
15 arrest him, I could have detained him and put  
16 him in my vehicle and within ten minutes I  
17 would have found a connection between him and  
18 your daughter, and they didn't do that.

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Just for clarification,  
20 thank you for explaining how Kelvin was  
21 helping you with the second appeal. So in  
22 order to make another appeal of the review,  
23 you guys -- Kelvin helps you write a letter,  
24 but you had received information from the  
25 Commission For Public Complaints Against the

1           Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It's a fairly  
2           large package, and at Appendix B -- in  
3           Appendix B, it's a letter again explaining  
4           the police's position on why they think that  
5           the investigation was okay, and then the very  
6           last page of this document, can I just get  
7           you to actually read in the conclusions?

8       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:                   (As read)

9           Conclusion. Please be advised that  
10          pursuant to section 45.4 of the *RCMP Act*,  
11          I am notifying you that the investigation  
12          into your complaint has now been  
13          concluded. If you are not satisfied with  
14          the disposition of your complaint by the  
15          Royal Canadian Mounted Police, you have  
16          the right to refer your complaint in  
17          writing to the Commissioner For Public  
18          Complaints Against the Royal Canadian  
19          Mounted Police for review of the -- at  
20          the following address.

21   And that was for Ottawa.

22       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:           And this is the -- and I  
23          should have asked you to read just the  
24          paragraph before where they explain their  
25          decision.

1 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: (As read)

2 Based on the information before me, I  
3 cannot support your allegation against  
4 the corporal -- against Corporal Hartwell  
5 and other members of the Lloydminster  
6 detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted  
7 Police. However, we are not immune to  
8 the tragic circumstances of your  
9 daughter's death, and it is with great  
10 sincerity that I offer you our  
11 condolences.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So on your review, it's  
13 determined that they don't agree with what  
14 you're complaining about or your allegation,  
15 as they call. You've now had a review.  
16 You've asked for another review, and it goes  
17 to the Civilian Review and Complaints  
18 Commission for the Royal Canadian Mounted  
19 Police, so this is what they call the second  
20 review, right, that you're talking about,  
21 and --

22 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: That was my last hope.

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: That was the last  
24 opportunity based on this process where you  
25 can make a complaint, so, you know, the



1 conclusion of that review says if you want to  
2 do this, the next step is to contact the  
3 Commission for Public Complaints, and you  
4 actually do that, right?

5 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: Mmhmm.

6 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yeah, and so I'm just  
7 going to hand the commissioner the review  
8 results, and I'm going to ask you a couple  
9 quick questions about the last part of the  
10 process.

11 So the last part of the  
12 process, you decide, well, I'm going to do  
13 this, I'm going to -- I'm going to follow and  
14 I'm going to make this complaint through.  
15 Does anyone ever call you or were you given  
16 any type of evidence or --

17 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: No.

18 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- just -- somebody give  
19 you an interview?

20 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: No.

21 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did you make written  
22 submissions in order for the Civilian Review  
23 and Complaints Commission to make a  
24 determination on your complaint?

25 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: No, just what -- what me

1           and Kelvin wrote down together as the  
2           complaint.

3       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       So just for my  
4           understanding, as you understand the  
5           process -- 'cause no one's called you and you  
6           have no opportunity to make any submissions  
7           other than the fact that you've made the  
8           complaint, you've asked for a review, gotten  
9           a re-review and then a chairperson makes the  
10          final decision, and so what's the outcome of  
11          the final decision?

12       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:        Basically the same as the  
13          first one.

14       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       Okay, and so --

15       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:        But see like I didn't --  
16          I didn't -- I had got this in April. Does it  
17          say April?

18       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       You got it in April, but  
19          the decision was made in --

20       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:        March 31st, yeah. So it  
21          was the following week in April when I had  
22          received it. See at the time when my  
23          daughter passed away, I was in my second year  
24          of bachelor of education with my other  
25          daughter and I, and I took two classes off.

1 I couldn't finish those two classes. I  
2 did -- I did eventually. After we were done  
3 most of our classes, I had to come back to  
4 Saskatoon to finish my B.Ed., and I went back  
5 to Canoe Lake to do my internship. I believe  
6 I had at least four weeks left.

7 Early May I was done my  
8 internship my final year, and this came in  
9 April, and I -- deep down in my heart, I knew  
10 it was going to be the same outcome, so I  
11 didn't read it, and I told Kelvin Watson I  
12 wasn't going to read it until I finished my  
13 internship. I didn't want that in my way of  
14 finishing because Raylene and I, we pushed  
15 each other through those last two years  
16 saying how Candace would have wanted us to  
17 finish. She wouldn't want us to give up, so  
18 when that came in, I couldn't read it 'cause  
19 I knew it was just again RCMP investigating  
20 RCMP. I did eventually read it, but, like I  
21 said, it wasn't the outcome I wanted.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So I know that you guys  
23 have thought about one of the recommendations  
24 that -- based on your guys' lived experience  
25 speaks specifically to that point about when

1 people are unsatisfied with investigations,  
2 you have a recommendation what it shouldn't  
3 be at least. Can you share that with us?

4 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: One recommendation was  
5 RCMP investigating each other is that they're  
6 obviously going to stick up for each other.  
7 I mean I think it was a few weeks ago I read  
8 an article in the Star Phoenix. It was  
9 through Facebook, and Don Worme had -- was,  
10 in this article, explaining how when is  
11 Saskatchewan going to stop the RCMP from  
12 investigating each other, and the article  
13 went on to say that Ontario's changed and  
14 Alberta and other provinces, and I'm  
15 thinking, well, when did Alberta change  
16 because I know in 2013 they were still  
17 investigating each other.

18 The other -- I mentioned  
19 a few recommendations, that we needed more  
20 support for our males, which is the reason  
21 why my son is not here. He likes to think  
22 that his sister's still working somewhere.

23 The other one was  
24 jurisdiction of victim services. I had  
25 Lorraine Durocher with me, and she was -- was

1           there to help my kids, so when I had to go to  
2           court in Lloydminster, they had this victim  
3           service lady call me from Lloydminster, and I  
4           didn't see the point because our victim  
5           services in Canoe Lake, she knew my story,  
6           she knew everything that happened, and yet  
7           they wouldn't let her come with me. It's  
8           jurisdiction.

9                               So every time I went to  
10          court, this lady would phone me and tell me  
11          she'd meet me in court, but I've never met  
12          her once. It was finally at the sentencing  
13          where I told Lorraine I really needed her,  
14          and I even wrote a letter to her supervisor  
15          to let her come with me because when I went  
16          to court, I even asked an RCMP officer -- and  
17          I know Lorraine knows all the RCMP officers  
18          where she works, but when I went to Lloyd,  
19          there was -- victim services, who she said  
20          she'd be there, I never saw her once, and  
21          she -- I asked the RCMP officer and -- he was  
22          sitting in court, and I asked, Do you know  
23          this Jennifer, I believe her name was, and he  
24          said he didn't even know her. So I -- I  
25          wrote a letter to Lorraine's supervisor and

1            begged for her to come with me to the  
2            sentencing. That was the only time they let  
3            her come with me other than today.

4        MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:        Actually usually I have  
5            your support people introduce themselves, and  
6            I overlooked that today, and with both  
7            your -- with you guys' permission and the  
8            commissioner's permission, if I could hand  
9            them the microphone and they could give us  
10          their names, just to say who they are and why  
11          they're here because I know that support is  
12          important for the three of you.

13       MS. LORRAINE DUROCHER:        Hi, my name is  
14            Lorraine Durocher. I work with victim  
15            services. I'm here to support Leslie  
16            Opekokew and family.

17       MS. BRENDA KENNEDY:            Hi, I'm Brenda Kennedy,  
18            Leslie's auntie.

19       MS. SHEILA ANDRES:            I'm Sheila Andres. I'm  
20            Bells's auntie too.

21       MS. MARLENE ALBERT:            I'm Marlene Albert. I'm  
22            Bells's auntie.

23       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:        Thank you, and just --  
24            just to clarify this recommendation where  
25            you're talking about a victim service

1 provider that was through the courts or  
2 through the Crown's office, you didn't find  
3 it helpful, but what you did find helpful was  
4 the victim service person you'd already been  
5 working for, so is there a specific  
6 recommendation you can make to the  
7 commissioner about where we should be  
8 resourcing victim services?

9 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: I think they should be  
10 able -- there shouldn't be any boundaries  
11 within victim services. Like I didn't see my  
12 point in having -- like it's hard enough to  
13 tell my story, but to have to repeat it to  
14 another one, you know.

15 Like other than today and  
16 the last few days or week, I've been really  
17 trying to keep myself busy. Like some days I  
18 wonder, you know, I'm glad I wasn't an  
19 alcoholic or a drinker when she passed away.  
20 I don't know where my life would have been,  
21 and it's a scary thought. I get by with my  
22 prayers, I smudge, and I keep myself busy  
23 with my job, so I like to think that I'm  
24 healing in a good way.

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: One of the things you had

1           said to the commissioner earlier was the  
2           first time the Crown called you was to tell  
3           you -- was to tell you they were dropping the  
4           charges. I know when we were talking  
5           earlier, you said that you had some  
6           recommendations around the communications the  
7           Crowns --

8       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:           Yeah.

9       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       -- should have with  
10           families. Can you share that with us?

11      MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:           Like for me, I'm -- it's  
12           not like I go to court every day. I think  
13           they need support systems for people that are  
14           going through stuff like this to help them,  
15           to guide them to what's the next step.  
16           What -- you know, what should I be doing?  
17           Like the Crown prosecutor did not make any  
18           communication with me other than her  
19           assistant.

20                                   I had a long way to  
21           travel, and she would phone me like the day  
22           before that they're going to be adjourning  
23           it. You know, don't tell me things last  
24           minute, and that was my complaint to her.  
25           Maybe she used that against me the whole



1           time. I don't know, you know, but I remember  
2           being in court when he was changing his plea,  
3           and she walked up before -- when they call  
4           their names, she walked up to give some  
5           papers to the judge, and I remember him  
6           saying, You're giving this to me now? And  
7           she said, Sorry, they just came upon my desk.  
8           Whatever they were, I don't know. Like I  
9           said, there was no communication.

10       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       I wanted to -- to give  
11           Ray or Sheila a chance if they had any  
12           recommendations to you, but before I do that,  
13           did you have any other recommendations you  
14           want to share with the commissioner?

15       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:       No.

16       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       So, Sheila and Ray, you  
17           can feel free to answer, you know, who wants  
18           to go first, but based on going through all  
19           this -- so like I can't help but note we're  
20           sitting here with three generations of fairly  
21           strong women, and so -- and you've obviously  
22           been each other's support systems, so from  
23           where you guys have been sitting supporting  
24           each other and going through this and healing  
25           in your different ways, is there any

1            recommendations that you would like to make,  
2            Sheila, that the commissioner should think  
3            about?

4        MS. SHEILA KENNEDY:            Well, I'd like to know  
5            how they define losing -- like death when you  
6            go to court because the court that we went to  
7            was all kinds of different offences that was  
8            happening. There was traffic and drug  
9            offences, and all of a sudden there's this  
10          person that's supposed to be charged with  
11          murder of my granddaughter, and all of a  
12          sudden there's nothing but just mischief.  
13          Like it just sounds like who is accountable  
14          for the death, you know, and is there --  
15          there must be an explanation or something.  
16          All this time I was thinking, well, we're  
17          going to high court or -- there was only us  
18          there plus the -- plus the person that's the  
19          accused, and why did we end up in this little  
20          courtroom where there was hardly nobody -- no  
21          witnesses, just him and us, and all they did  
22          was watch over us like we were going to do --  
23          commit something else while we were there,  
24          and he was more protected than we were, and  
25          so I'd like to know how do they define the

1           system and what kind of a courtroom or court  
2           case it's going to be.

3       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       So I know that the  
4           commissioner and I aren't going to be able to  
5           answer that question.

6       MS. SHEILA KENNEDY:        Yeah.

7       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       But maybe if I can  
8           suggest do you think it would be -- is it  
9           fair that you want to see some changes so  
10          that there are definitions around --

11      MS. SHEILA KENNEDY:        Yeah.

12      MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       -- around that? Is it  
13          fair to say you might even want to see some  
14          definitions or changes in law when someone  
15          does actually commit murder by a vehicle that  
16          it's taken seriously enough?

17      MS. SHEILA KENNEDY:        Yeah. Yeah, it needs to  
18          be taken seriously. I -- I also -- myself,  
19          my son was -- my son was beaten -- almost  
20          beaten to death about 18 years ago, and to  
21          this day they haven't charged anyone, and  
22          same with the injustice that happened there,  
23          the investigation. There was no -- never  
24          anybody charged, and I don't know how they  
25          defined -- how do they do all these

1            investigations? It's just so bizarre that  
2            they would leave us out. Like as a woman and  
3            as a native person, it's so tragic, and it's  
4            so unfair the way things happen.

5        MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:        Can I ask about -- the  
6            point you made about feeling like you were  
7            being watched?

8        MS. SHEILA KENNEDY:        Yeah.

9        MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:        Do you have any  
10           recommendations? And I know Ray might  
11           actually also speak to this because she made  
12           a comment earlier in her testimony about  
13           feeling for the first time brown or a level  
14           of racism. Are there any recommendations you  
15           could make in relation to the court processes  
16           or any of the processes and how they should  
17           be treating Indigenous people or if there  
18           were issues of discrimination?

19       MS. SHEILA KENNEDY:        I think because there's  
20           so much unfairness towards even the history  
21           of -- of Aboriginal people. Like it's gone  
22           so far back, and we're still dealing with  
23           issues with treaty, residential school,  
24           Fifties Scoop, you know. How long do we have  
25           to do this before we can see the light?

1           Yeah, and I think everyone that is -- that is  
2           up there working to make things right with  
3           the community, with ourselves, with everybody  
4           that they also need to learn our ways. They  
5           need to acknowledge us, they need to respect  
6           us, and they need to know about our protocols  
7           and how we do things, and we are different  
8           and we are -- I think we're more resilient  
9           than they are. We can handle a lot of  
10          things, as you can tell by us here, and --  
11          but they need to learn more about any  
12          culture. Like we're already a multicultural  
13          society. How much more -- like we need  
14          training, you know. We need training to go  
15          to university to become a teacher. How much  
16          training does the RCMP get in six months? Do  
17          they know everything about psychology? And  
18          then they have to deal with a whole bunch of  
19          people all over the world. I think maybe  
20          they need more training, and it should be  
21          mandatory for them to do -- to learn about  
22          the protocols of First Nations people and  
23          other cultures.

24       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:       And I notice you said  
25          mandatory, so mandatory training, so that's

1                   actually required.

2       MS. SHEILA KENNEDY:               Required.   Even at the  
3                   level of training for -- to be a police  
4                   officer, do they have that?   You know, they  
5                   need to learn more about -- about racism.  
6                   You know, institutional racism is all we ever  
7                   see.

8       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:           Those are great.   Thank  
9                   you.   Ray, I know -- and I'm going to put you  
10                  on the same spot I just did with your  
11                  grandma.   Earlier you had said to  
12                  Commissioner Audette that feeling, and you  
13                  said you didn't grow up racist, but you felt  
14                  particularly vulnerable or like brown for the  
15                  first time as part of this incident with your  
16                  sister.   Can you talk to any recommendations  
17                  on discrimination or antidiscrimination or  
18                  antiracism?

19      MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY:            Can I see your notes?

20      MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:           That thing you told me  
21                  yesterday.   No, no, in your own words if you  
22                  could just -- you know, you expressed that  
23                  you really kind of felt racism for the first  
24                  time, and you -- in that context with your  
25                  sister, what did you learn from that?

1 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: Just through news,  
2 through media, seeing it all over that she  
3 was a prostitute, just another Indian kind of  
4 thing. It wasn't -- she wasn't even that.  
5 She was beyond that. She was a welder. She  
6 was, you know, educated, and it's just sad to  
7 see those things on there, and my mom --

8 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: The media said -- the  
9 media said those stereotypes?

10 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: Yeah, stereo --  
11 stereotypes. Not the media. It was in the  
12 media's comments, sorry.

13 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Okay.

14 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: And just other people  
15 thinking the way they think. I don't know.  
16 It was their opinions, I guess.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So just to clarify,  
18 you're not talking about the media raising  
19 it. You're talking about the section that --  
20 where there's comments --

21 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: Comments, yeah.

22 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- that people make  
23 comments, and so immediately some of the  
24 assumptions or stereotypes --

25 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: Yes.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- because your sister  
2 was First Nations --

3 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: Yes.

4 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- went down that really  
5 ugly racist road.

6 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: Yes.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So do you have any ideas  
8 or comments, suggestions on some of those  
9 issues?

10 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: I wasn't brought up to --  
11 that way. I wasn't brought up to look at  
12 people with colour or anything. We're just  
13 all equal, and I'm -- I'm a kind-hearted  
14 person and I'm a teacher, so I'm able to --  
15 to be kind, and my -- my mom, for her to see  
16 all that, and it was hurting her, and I  
17 always had to tell her just to ignore -- to  
18 ignore her (sic). We know her for her  
19 strengths, and we know her for who she is and  
20 who she stood to be, and that's what she  
21 taught me my whole life. You can't just  
22 label somebody.

23 What is reconcile -- I  
24 would like to --

25 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: In terms of



1 reconciliation and --

2 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: Yes.

3 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- you know, as a teacher  
4 what are some of those things you think are  
5 important about antiracism or  
6 antidiscrimination?

7 MS. RAYLENE KENNEDY: Just joining all the  
8 Missing Murdered Indigenous Women awareness,  
9 Aboriginal awareness, teaching my social  
10 studies and native studies the effects on  
11 residential school, Sixties Scoop. I'm just  
12 learning it too, so it's mind-blowing to me  
13 and shocking, so I just always relate it to  
14 our grandparents and make them see -- see  
15 the -- that we were -- we are history, right,  
16 and to always have -- find kindness in their  
17 heart to forgive 'cause that's the only way  
18 we can move forward, right? I'm a forgiving  
19 person. I forgive Jason Campbell. I  
20 moved -- I moved forward spiritually. I'm  
21 finding myself spiritually, and I'm -- it  
22 helped me. It helped my healing path, and  
23 that's it.

24 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. You've got  
25 one more?

1 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: Can I say something?

2 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes.

3 MS. LESLIE KENNEDY: When we're talking about  
4 forgiveness, I also told that to the judge  
5 too. I said, Normally I'm a forgiving person  
6 and I am a forgiving person, and I pray for  
7 that, eh. I pray for -- because I don't want  
8 to be sick with this, carrying this, and I  
9 know it'll make me sick, and I try to lead my  
10 prayers to try and forgive him 'cause it  
11 wasn't only his fault. It was the RCMP's  
12 fault for letting him get away 'cause he  
13 can't -- he's not facing up to his  
14 responsibilities. They allowed him to lie.  
15 They let him get away with all that stuff,  
16 and I know he has to live with what he did to  
17 my daughter, and I'm trying -- I'm trying to  
18 forgive him, but it's coming. I'll say it's  
19 coming, but it's -- it's not there yet.

20 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Now, the  
21 family has -- it's a video that they're going  
22 to play, but before they play it, I want to  
23 check to see if the commissioner had any  
24 questions for the family or comments -- or  
25 questions or comments.

1 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci. Merci, Maitre  
2 Big Canoe. Thank you. Three beautiful  
3 generation, and the gift you're giving us,  
4 it's -- people who are watching and  
5 listening, your truth. You're sharing your  
6 truth, and you're honouring your daughter,  
7 your granddaughter, your sister is that  
8 there's so much to be done about stereotype,  
9 about the systems in plural, failing us as  
10 women or Indigenous women, and the list is  
11 long, so I -- I want to say on behalf of my  
12 colleagues and as mothers and people who  
13 works in this great journey with -- along  
14 with Maitre Big Canoe, we will do the best we  
15 can to honour the spirit of your sister,  
16 granddaughter and daughter, and I hope -- I  
17 hope people were listening. I hope the  
18 system, the people who works in that system  
19 were listening and see that there's a human  
20 being here. There's a woman with a family,  
21 with friends and so on.

22 And I listen carefully.  
23 I'll read carefully also all the evidence,  
24 the document you gave us, and in order to  
25 honour this, my other colleagues also will

1 read it, and with the help of Maitre Big  
2 Canoe, making sure that when it's time to  
3 bring that recommendations -- those  
4 recommendation -- I'm sorry -- it reflect the  
5 love that you have for Candace, and to  
6 conclude quickly, thank you for the  
7 recommendations.

8 There's many families  
9 across Canada that we've heard in private, in  
10 camera, in statement or in public that share  
11 the same sadness, concerns or frustration but  
12 also the same hope, so there's more and more  
13 in that circle, and I was very honoured to be  
14 the one sitting here with you, and merci  
15 beaucoup.

16 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so I'm going to ask  
17 that -- there's a video, so we have the two  
18 monitors here. I might actually -- can  
19 everyone -- can everyone see at least one of  
20 the two monitors? And do we have volume?  
21 Perfect.

22 (VIDEO PLAYED)

23 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I notice that you have a  
24 candle down here that has the last -- that  
25 saying. There's a picture and the saying,

1                   and today you lit this candle in honour of  
2                   Candace, so --

3       MS. LESLIE KENNEDY:                   It's the last verse.

4       MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:            The last verse, and --  
5                   yeah, so I just wanted to point that out  
6                   'cause I knew that was important to the  
7                   family to have it there, and so thank you for  
8                   showing the presentation. The commissioner  
9                   actually will have -- has some gifts that  
10                  she'd like to share. Would you like me to  
11                  explain, Commissioner?

12      COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:            Go ahead.

13      MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:            Yes. The -- the gifts  
14                  that you're about to receive from the  
15                  commissioner include for the three of you  
16                  that shared your story, which we -- the  
17                  commission considers a gift. The first thing  
18                  that you're being handed is three eagle  
19                  feathers and so one each, and the feathers  
20                  are being gifted because the matriarchs of  
21                  Haida Gwaii, the grandmothers had instructed  
22                  that feathers be gathered to help provide  
23                  strength and to thank you for sharing your  
24                  sacred gift, and so they began collecting and  
25                  harvesting feathers, and then they put calls

1 out for other people to give them feathers,  
2 and they're prepared for and cared for so  
3 that you guys can walk with them in strength  
4 too, and then what Commissioner Audette is  
5 handing you are seeds.

6 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: No.

7 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Oh, sorry.

8 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Tea.

9 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Tea, Labrador tea, and  
10 they're -- yeah, and the commissioner was  
11 born in Labrador, so these are -- this is  
12 something from her culture that she prepares  
13 to drink, and so she wanted to share that  
14 with you, and there's also tobacco.

15 Elder Julie would like to  
16 say a few words, and I'm just actually going  
17 to gently put the pictures of Candace on the  
18 spot so that she can use the blanket.

19 ELDER JULIE PITZEL: I wanted to say I'm  
20 honoured to be here as well and to listen to  
21 the stories, and you know your story the  
22 best, and you know how you feel about it.

23 One of the stories I  
24 wanted to tell you about, I have an aunt who  
25 passed away when she was 104 years old. She

1 comes from the north. (Speaks in native  
2 language), so one of my cousins said, Auntie,  
3 we talk about our emotional selves, our  
4 mental self, our physical self, but sometimes  
5 we don't mention our spiritual self. How  
6 come? What happens to our spiritual self  
7 when we pass on to the spirit world? And she  
8 said, All those other things go, she said,  
9 but the spirit lives on, and the courage that  
10 you showed to tell us how you felt lives on  
11 with your -- with your daughter, and I just  
12 wanted to use this blanket here to -- if you  
13 would come up here and the daughter as well,  
14 and we'll cover them up a little bit to warm  
15 up together just to signify that -- yeah.  
16 Just wrap them up. Okay. So usually I -- if  
17 you would just hug each other and keep each  
18 other warm like you've been doing, and I  
19 thank everybody for coming to listen, and, of  
20 course, there's a lot of people here who  
21 support you, and you have an opportunity to  
22 come and say a few words to them if you wish  
23 because you came to listen. You can come  
24 here and say a few words to them if you like,  
25 anybody.

1 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: You mean people from  
3 the --

4 ELDER JULIE PITZEL: Yeah, and then we'll  
5 say -- we'll end off with a prayer 'cause you  
6 have personal feelings that you went through  
7 and we'll (inaudible). Okay. Then we will  
8 stand up and say a prayer, please, and I'm  
9 fortunate to speak a few languages. One is  
10 Dene, Cree and Michif, and I will say a  
11 prayer in Cree.

12 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Should we stop the camera  
13 for the prayer?

14 MS. JULIE PITZEL: Oh, it doesn't matter.

15 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.

16 MS. JULIE PITZEL: 'Cause I'm not smudging.

17 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.

18 (PRAYER)

19 MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE: At this -- sorry. At  
20 this time I'm just going to call for an  
21 adjournment. I believe it's a 15-minute  
22 adjournment before the next session will  
23 begin.

24 (Adjourned at 3:11 p.m.)

25 (Reconvened at 4:13 p.m.)



**WITNESSES: CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE, GORD SCHREYER, LINDA  
YOUNG, NAHANNI OLSON (IN RELATION TO JARITA NAISTUS)  
HEARD BY: CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER  
COMMISSION COUNSEL: JENNIFER COX  
COURT REPORTER: SHAWN HURD  
REGISTRAR: BRYAN ZANDBERG**

5 MS. JENNIFER COX: Chief Commissioner, if  
6 you're ready to proceed.

7 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Yes.

8 MS. JENNIFER COX: I have on my very left  
9 Connie Littlewolfe, who's here to talk about  
10 her daughter, Jarita Naistus, and beside her  
11 is her husband, Gord Schreyer, and beside  
12 Gord is Linda Young, which is Connie's  
13 sister, and beside Linda is Nahanni Olson,  
14 and before we begin, the parties would like  
15 to have a promise to tell their truth on the  
16 feather.

17 **CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE, promise to tell the truth in a**  
18 **good way on eagle feather:**

19 MS. JENNIFER COX: And, Rick, would you like  
20 to speak as well? Sorry, Gord. I want to  
21 call you Rick. Perhaps you can also take the  
22 feather for a minute.

23 **GORD SCHREYER, promise to tell the truth in a good**  
24 **way on eagle feather:**

25 MS. JENNIFER COX: And Linda?

1       **LINDA YOUNG, promise to tell the truth in a good way**  
2       **on eagle feather:**

3       MS. JENNIFER COX:                   Nahanni, did you want to  
4   speak as well?

5       MS. NAHANNI OLSON:                Yes.

6       **NAHANNI OLSON, promise to tell the truth in a good**  
7       **way on eagle feather:**

8       MS. JENNIFER COX:                   So, Connie, if you want  
9   to begin, and perhaps you could tell the  
10    chief commissioner a little bit about  
11    yourself, what community you're from and  
12    where you grew up.

13      MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:        From Onion Lake,  
14    Saskatchewan, and I grew up there. I've  
15    lived there most of my life.

16      MS. JENNIFER COX:                   And how many children do  
17    you have, Connie?

18      MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:        I have -- I had eight. I  
19    lost one. I have seven. I have seven now.

20      MS. JENNIFER COX:                   And we're here to talk a  
21    little bit about Jarita today, right?

22      MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:        Yeah.

23      MS. JENNIFER COX:                   Okay, and growing up,  
24    Connie, in Onion Lake, did you attend  
25    residential school?

1 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: I'm -- I'm a residential  
2 school survivor and I stayed at the  
3 residential school, and then I was also --  
4 what do you call that again where you --

5 MS. LINDA YOUNG: Day school.

6 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: Day school?

7 MS. LINDA YOUNG: Mmhmm.

8 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: Yeah, I was also in day  
9 school.

10 MS. JENNIFER COX: How many brothers and  
11 sisters did you have, Connie?

12 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: I have ten, ten brothers  
13 and sisters, yeah.

14 MS. JENNIFER COX: And at the time Jarita --  
15 or growing up, where did Jarita grow up?

16 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: She grew up in Onion Lake  
17 as well.

18 MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay, but then she moved  
19 to Lloydminster? Was she living in  
20 Lloydminster at any point in time?

21 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: After -- after she had  
22 her children, she moved to North Battleford  
23 first. She went to school over there, and  
24 then when she was done school in North  
25 Battleford, she -- excuse me -- she moved

1 back home to Onion Lake, and then she  
2 attended Lakeland College. At the time of  
3 her murder, she was a student at college.

4 MS. JENNIFER COX: And for the benefit of  
5 the audience, Connie, how far is Onion Lake  
6 from Lloydminster?

7 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: It's approximately 50  
8 kilometers north of Lloydminster.

9 MS. JENNIFER COX: Okay. So how many  
10 children did Jarita have?

11 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: She had two children.  
12 She had a boy and a girl.

13 MS. JENNIFER COX: And at the time of her  
14 death how old were they?

15 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: They were two and three.

16 MS. JENNIFER COX: So do you want to talk a  
17 little bit about Jarita? Tell the chief  
18 commissioner a little bit about Jarita  
19 herself.

20 MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE: Well, Jarita, she was --  
21 she was a quiet -- quiet, shy girl, yet she  
22 had a lot of friends. She had a lot of  
23 friends from school where she went to school  
24 and lived in North Battleford. She picked up  
25 on friends there too, and growing up on the

1           reserve, she also had a lot of friends from  
2           school and the surrounding area where we  
3           lived, so there was many people that knew  
4           her. At the time of her funeral, the hall  
5           was -- it was packed with her friends and a  
6           lot of people from the college that she  
7           became to know as her friends.

8                         She was -- she was a good  
9           mother to her two children. She was teaching  
10          them lots about her traditional values. She  
11          wanted them to carry on the tradition that we  
12          were taught, so she would take her children  
13          wherever she went to -- to -- like to round  
14          dances, to powwows. She would always take  
15          her two children along so they would learn,  
16          and she also -- she made regalia, dance  
17          regalia for the two children, so they'd be  
18          dancing in the arbor together, but at the  
19          time just before she passed away, she was  
20          making a jingle dress for herself, and she  
21          never did finish that dress so she never had  
22          a chance to wear it, but we use it when we  
23          have dances for her to honour her at the  
24          powwow, so we give the other nieces a chance  
25          to wear it every year, and they wear it while

1           we have the specials for her. The nieces,  
2           they -- you honour wearing the ones that  
3           knew -- that knew her.

4                       That dress now is -- we  
5           still have it at our house, and -- and when  
6           we bring it out during the powwow, other  
7           people, they recognize that, and they talk  
8           about the dress that she made that she never  
9           had a chance to wear, so she made it very  
10          beautiful, yeah.

11                      There was a statue that  
12          my brother made. He made a different statue  
13          each year for the college where she went to  
14          school, and they gave that statue to the  
15          highest honour student at the college. We  
16          did that for four years. I forget. What's  
17          it called?

18   MS. JENNIFER COX:           Scholarship?

19   MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:    Yes, scholarship. So  
20          Lakeland College, because she was an honoured  
21          student at the college, they had a  
22          scholarship for -- in her memory.

23                      When she was going to  
24          school at the college, that's one of the last  
25          memories I have of her 'cause I watched my

1           grandchildren. They'd stand at the window  
2           and watch her walk away to go to school, and  
3           they got used to her going to school. She --  
4           her education meant a lot to her, and the  
5           two, they'd stand at the window and they'd  
6           watch her leave, and they'd be waving at her,  
7           and she would stand and wave back. She had  
8           to go down to the confectionery to catch the  
9           shuttle to go to school in Lloyd, and that  
10          was the time of her death, so it was really  
11          hard to watch my grandchildren stand there  
12          and wait for their mom to come back, and she  
13          never came back, and they'd ask me questions.  
14          Where's my mom? I didn't know how to  
15          explain. That was really hard to explain,  
16          that she wasn't going to come back.

17                   And then we had the -- we  
18          had the funeral. We had the funeral, and  
19          everything -- everything we did in our  
20          traditional way 'cause we were brought up in  
21          a traditional way. My mother brought us up  
22          in a traditional way not to let go. So when  
23          we had her funeral, we used horses, and --  
24          and after the funeral was over -- well,  
25          during the funeral we didn't know if we

1           should -- if we should allow the kids to see  
2           their mom in the coffin, so we didn't want to  
3           traumatize them because she was so battered,  
4           bruised, so we didn't -- we didn't bring them  
5           there, and after we had the funeral, we had a  
6           feast and we brought the kids in. We brought  
7           the two grandchildren in to come for the  
8           feast, and then after the funeral was over,  
9           they went home with their dad, but my  
10          granddaughter, she couldn't get used to it  
11          over there, so she came back. She came back,  
12          and then the older brother stayed, so they  
13          didn't only lose their mom, but they got  
14          separated also, and they lived like that for  
15          a long time until just recently. Just before  
16          school started this year, then Nevada moved  
17          home to go be with her brother, and that's a  
18          long 12 years to be separated.

19                               I found it hard to  
20          understand that because she cared for her  
21          children so much -- she cared for her  
22          children so much that she didn't only teach  
23          them their traditional values, but she was  
24          teaching them how to -- how to live a clean  
25          life, how to look after themselves. I'd be



1           getting ready to go to work, and she'd be  
2           getting ready to go to school. I'd walk by  
3           the washroom, and she'd have two stools  
4           beside her, one on each side, and she's --  
5           she's teaching her little ones how to brush  
6           their teeth, and I always see that vision of  
7           her looking after her children so well.  
8           She'd come home after school and she'd cook  
9           for them, and they'd all work together in the  
10          kitchen, and then she'd give them a bath  
11          every night and get them ready for the next  
12          day. There was -- I never heard her get mad  
13          at her children or anything. She was always  
14          playing with them, and they were so happy.

15                       Jarita, my daughter, she  
16          never had an enemy. I've ever known her to  
17          have an enemy. Living on the reserve, my  
18          nieces and nephews, they'd come over, and  
19          I've never heard anybody to argue. I have a  
20          lot of memories of her playing and laughing  
21          with them, and we'd go pick berries together  
22          and stuff and sit down at the table and sew,  
23          preparing our regalia.

24                       There was no -- there was  
25          no alcohol around her -- her children. I've

1           never known her to leave her children to go  
2           drink until the last days of her life. She  
3           went out because of a birthday party, and I  
4           lost her in Lloydminster because she got left  
5           behind in Lloyd. She bought a room. She  
6           rented a room. She was asking people for a  
7           ride home. They told her they didn't have  
8           room for her, so she just stayed in Lloyd.  
9           She rented a room. She was in there by  
10          herself.

11                           The next morning they  
12          found her in her room. All her bones --  
13          had a lot of broken bones when they found  
14          her. She was laying face down. She had a  
15          wired hangar around her neck and a towel and  
16          her belt and a broken sternum from getting  
17          choked from behind. She didn't deserve that.  
18          The kids didn't deserve that.

19    MS. JENNIFER COX:           Did you want maybe,  
20           Linda, to speak for a little while or Gord?

21    MR. GORD SCHREYER:           The trial was a confusing  
22          trial from what I read. I wasn't involved in  
23          Jarita's life when she was alive. There was  
24          a technicality the judge made by not telling  
25          the jury that the information received that

1           this Gordon Dwight Hurley confessed to the  
2           murder in jail. The jury made him sound like  
3           the informant was untrustworthy, which we  
4           found out this year is totally untrue via the  
5           investigating officers, which took us about a  
6           year to track down. I talked to them this  
7           spring. So with that technicality, his  
8           lawyer found a loophole at the appeal trial  
9           to throw it out. He walked a free man.

10                       The investigating  
11           officers, who worked two months very hard to  
12           get a solid case on this guy who was known  
13           for violence, abuse from his own mother, from  
14           his ex-wife, they had a solid case, and just  
15           because of that little technicality, he  
16           walked away a free man. So any -- any  
17           evidence used against him up to that point  
18           could not be used again, so the only way he  
19           could be brought back to trial is with new  
20           evidence. Well, the only new evidence you're  
21           going to have is that someone was actually  
22           standing there and saw him, and that's why  
23           he's free today.

24                       He's not only a free man  
25           today, in 2017 he sued the Saskatchewan RCMP

1           for wrongful conviction, so that's how bold  
2           this character is. So he's retired today on  
3           blood money because a judge made a technical  
4           mistake. So I don't get that. Why would he  
5           walk free for murder? I don't understand,  
6           and I think that's the confusing part with  
7           Connie, that he'll never go to jail for this  
8           crime, and I can't remember his exact words,  
9           but Connie does. When he was set free, he  
10          was not remorseful. He did make a remark  
11          about, My nightmare is over now and the  
12          family's has just begun.

13                        I -- I'm not a lawyer. I  
14          don't know the technicality, the term to  
15          where he can be tried again, but, like I  
16          said, it's -- talking to the investigating  
17          officers, that's a one-in-a-million chance of  
18          that ever happening.

19                        So this is crazy. It  
20          should be -- I don't understand it, and if  
21          he's so bold to do this, who's to say Jarita  
22          was the only victim? He's from northwestern  
23          Alberta, which is pretty close to the trail  
24          of tears. You know, it just makes you  
25          wonder.

1 And I'll speak on behalf  
2 of Connie at the -- at what took place at the  
3 trial with lack of somebody being with the  
4 family to say what's going on 'cause we all  
5 know what courts are like with a whole bunch  
6 of high terms and technology. If you didn't  
7 go to college, you have no idea what they're  
8 talking about. Well, you can only imagine  
9 what this family went through when this guy  
10 was given not guilty and he walked out of the  
11 court. The family's just sitting there.  
12 What just happened? How come nobody was  
13 appointed to this family to walk them every  
14 day through this trial process and to let  
15 them know? What rights did Jarita have? All  
16 they're talking about is what rights he had.  
17 Nobody once said what right Jarita had, her  
18 family, so, of course, with that becomes  
19 confusion, misunderstanding.

1 trial process from beginning to end.

2 Hopefully one day that'll never have to  
3 happen because it will stop, but there's many  
4 things MMIW can do.

5 We've been to quite a few  
6 MMIW conferences, and awareness is key, but  
7 education is greater, prevention, and it's  
8 got to start in the schools 'cause I'd rather  
9 be on the -- working on the prevention end  
10 than on the result or -- and so Connie and I  
11 have talked about it for years now, about  
12 going to the schools and talking to young  
13 girls and boys that the boogieman does exist  
14 'cause he does obviously. It's not a perfect  
15 world we live in unfortunately, but I think  
16 that if them things were in place, this  
17 confusion wouldn't be as drastic as it is  
18 'cause every case it's that way. The  
19 families don't have nobody to stand on their  
20 side. They're alone. The culprit -- the  
21 culprit's the one that gets all the legal  
22 backing and support, and no victim services.  
23 I've seen that firsthand. I'm sure everybody  
24 in this room has seen that firsthand. I'm  
25 not bashing anybody, but you're on your own.

1                               So to me these meetings  
2                               should be about what we can do to prevent  
3                               this, not about talking about what has  
4                               happened. I'm pretty sure I speak for  
5                               everybody in this room. Everybody in this  
6                               convention, we want this to change. It has  
7                               to change 'cause I've seen what it does, and  
8                               the world needs to know this is no joke.  
9                               People self-destruct. Sister Linda, do you  
10                              want to say anything?

11       MS. LINDA YOUNG:                   (Speaks in native  
12                              language). Just an acknowledgement for the  
13                              opportunity to come here and share and for  
14                              this support that we're able to give my  
15                              sister.

16                              So my name is Linda  
17                              Young, and I am Connie's oldest sibling. I  
18                              am the -- the eldest daughter, the oldest  
19                              sister, and I've been away from Onion Lake  
20                              for 50 years and which in a way separates me  
21                              from my family, and whenever I can, I want to  
22                              support my sister 'cause of all the siblings  
23                              in our family, she has suffered the most.

24                              I think probably -- I  
25                              don't think people need to be told that when

1           you lose a child, the pain is intense and  
2           it's forever, but it is, and what I think  
3           about the most is her care, how she feels,  
4           the suffering that she has gone through. The  
5           many times that she has told and shared her  
6           experience is opening that wound over and  
7           over again.

8                               When we -- when I  
9           attended my niece's funeral, my sister asked  
10          me if I would read the -- what they had  
11          written in her honour, and I felt so, in a  
12          sense, disconnected to my family and --  
13          because all the stories that were shared  
14          about -- about her were so -- were ones that  
15          I hadn't heard before, and I was -- I felt  
16          like I wasn't the right person to be reading  
17          that story, but I'm always -- I feel honoured  
18          that my sister continues to reach out and to  
19          share this experience with her.

20                            I was sitting here  
21          thinking about what is the role that I can  
22          play in this Inquiry, and I think for me  
23          it's -- in some ways seeing that reliving of  
24          that pain, reliving the horror, I would like  
25          that to stop for her. I have so much respect



1           for her courage and her resilience, but even  
2           people who are resilient sometimes have a  
3           very hard time bouncing back in a way, and so  
4           if there was anything to come of this  
5           Inquiry, it would be some kind of solution,  
6           some way of opening the door to healing for  
7           the mothers and the sisters and the aunties,  
8           the grandmothers who have lost their loved  
9           ones.

10                       I'd like to see my sister  
11           be healthy. I'd like to see my sister stop  
12           crying. I'd like her to -- I want her to be  
13           happy in a way that provides her with a life  
14           that gives her a place that is peaceful, and  
15           as long as this is unresolved, she will  
16           continue to hurt the way that she has. Her  
17           daughters will continue to hurt. Her  
18           brothers -- or her sons will continue to  
19           hurt. This is what I've seen from a  
20           distance.

21                       My sister has witnessed a  
22           lot of painful losses in her life, and I  
23           think in some way it's not -- this is not  
24           just another going over the story, and I  
25           think that that would be -- if something

1           could come out of this in a way that resolves  
2           her loss, although I know it's a personal  
3           journey, but every time you have to go back  
4           to the courts, every time you read something  
5           in the paper, every time you watch  
6           television, every time you hear that  
7           something has gone wrong, you know, the  
8           Inquiry trail, it's hard on the families.  
9           It's hard on her.

10                           I think she's done an  
11           awesome job, very dedicated. She -- she --  
12           they were organizing walks every year in  
13           Jarita's memory, beautiful young woman whose  
14           life was taken so senselessly. (Speaks in  
15           native language), Connie.

16       MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:       I'm -- I live in  
17           Marwayne, Alberta, and I look after five of  
18           our grandchildren, and in their school in  
19           their curriculum, they have residential  
20           school in their -- in their program, and a  
21           part of my healing journey is to go to their  
22           school and start -- start talking about  
23           residential school, not -- not the hurting  
24           part of my experiences, but to live back  
25           and -- and to tell them what I went through,

1           what -- how it was living in there, but there  
2           are some things that happened in residential  
3           school that they don't need to know about.

4                       So that's where I'm going  
5           to start my healing, and I would like to go  
6           to the schools and talk to the young ladies  
7           and the young men and tell them about the  
8           importance of when you go somewhere to look  
9           after each other. When they're growing up,  
10          don't leave anybody behind.

11                      In my experience with my  
12          late daughter, when I think about her and I  
13          think about her children growing up, what  
14          would she tell her children, and one of them  
15          would be if you go anywhere, don't go  
16          anywhere alone, and if you go as a group, you  
17          stay as a group. I would like to take that  
18          to the schools. There should be an MMIW in  
19          the school curriculum as a prevention to  
20          teach the young people. Everything that  
21          happened, it's in the past, but maybe we can  
22          do something about the future. In my  
23          daughter's case, it's now a cold case.  
24          There's nothing we can do, but we can start a  
25          prevention.

1 I wouldn't want to see  
2 any -- anybody to go through what I went  
3 through and to lose a daughter like that.  
4 It's too hard. I wish there was more  
5 support. Even in our band, I always have a  
6 hard time getting support to come to places  
7 like this, come, so when I start talking in  
8 the school, I'll -- I'm not going to depend  
9 on anybody to help. I just want to go do it  
10 on my own. I don't know what else to say.

11 MS. JENNIFER COX: Is there anybody else  
12 that wishes to say anything?

13 MS. LINDA YOUNG: I wonder if I could  
14 just -- I feel like this is an opportunity  
15 for us to -- to make known how difficult it  
16 is really to live with this on a 24 hours a  
17 day, 7 days a week all year long, and I know  
18 my sister has been very strong. She's being  
19 really strong, and -- but I've also spent  
20 even just the last 24 hours with her, and the  
21 stress that she goes through is incredible,  
22 and sometimes when you see that stress, you  
23 don't actually know how to help out. You  
24 don't know what to do. You don't know what  
25 medicines are going to work, what kind of

1 counselling. None -- it's just -- it's such  
2 a huge hole, and I think probably, you know,  
3 like as a family member not being able to --  
4 to really tap into what it is that can  
5 support her I think is really -- and I'm  
6 saying -- I'm saying this as really just from  
7 watching her and spending a little bit of  
8 time with her and -- but I think probably all  
9 the families who have lost loved ones  
10 probably have the same kind of -- I don't  
11 know if it's frustration but maybe a little  
12 bit of helplessness, and I mean I'm proud  
13 that my sister is -- is being strong, but at  
14 the same time, there is a lot of  
15 vulnerability in there that's not coming out,  
16 that's not -- that she's really holding, and  
17 I just want this to be an opportunity for her  
18 to really speak from her heart, and I hope  
19 that this time that she has here will give  
20 her that space that she needs. (Speaks in  
21 native language), Connie.

22 I just -- I'm just  
23 checking her 'cause I'm kind of pushing her a  
24 little bit 'cause that's what older sisters  
25 do, so I'm pushing her a little bit, but I

1 think -- you know, I also just want to make  
2 sure that -- I think the desperation for me  
3 probably is what is going to come out of  
4 this. Does she have to go through --  
5 continue to go through this in order for her  
6 to be able to get to a place of resolve? And  
7 I'm really, of course, happy to hear that she  
8 wants to be able to share this in a way that  
9 works towards prevention.

10 And like when we were --  
11 I was involved with the Walking With Our  
12 Sisters exhibition that came through here,  
13 and I think probably the amount of people  
14 that were involved in that throughout the  
15 country and throughout the world is really  
16 significant in terms of the need for somehow,  
17 some way that this should be recognized as a  
18 genocide, and I think that, you know, because  
19 of residential school and sort of  
20 intergenerational trauma that our families  
21 have gone through 'cause we're -- we are  
22 fourth generation residential school wards,  
23 her and I, and I think that in some way I, as  
24 an observer and as a supporter, would like  
25 some kind of -- I know you can't give a

1           guarantee, but I think there is some way  
2           somehow that there is -- that something is  
3           offered that can give my sister hope and --  
4           in her -- in this journey that she's on.

5                       If it was me, I think I  
6           would be -- I don't even know if I could do  
7           what she does. I have my daughter sitting  
8           with me here, and I'm so thankful that she's  
9           with me and here to support her auntie, but  
10          anyway, it's just really what I wanted to say  
11          and just encourage her to be -- I'm very  
12          proud of her, of course.

13       MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:       I think I just feel  
14          drained, that my mind feels tired. I lost my  
15          words, but I thank my sister for coming.  
16          She's my rock. I love her too.

17                       There was other families  
18          back home that are going through the same  
19          thing. There's still two unsolved at the  
20          moment. January 19th we have a trial that's  
21          going on right now. There's four ladies that  
22          got murdered around the same time as my late  
23          daughter, and I often wonder do they have  
24          support? Is there anybody there for them?  
25          'Cause when I was doing our court, it was

1           really hard. Like I said, there was no  
2           support from our band, and if there was  
3           somebody -- some kind of a program for  
4           families like that that are going to court.  
5           These -- these families have to travel to  
6           Edmonton from Onion Lake.

7                               When it was my daughter's  
8           trial, we had to travel from Onion Lake to  
9           North Battleford every day for two weeks, and  
10          that was pretty hard to do when you don't  
11          have the funds to do, and when we asked our  
12          band for help, they offered us a van. They  
13          said, We can offer you this van to use, but  
14          that's very hard when you just want to be by  
15          yourself and just drive and you don't want  
16          anybody around you because you're so tense  
17          and everything around you is so stressful.  
18          So if these families had support like that,  
19          it would make things so much easier to go  
20          through situations.

21                            I've been to so many of  
22          these meetings, and I listen to families go  
23          through things, what they've been through,  
24          and a lot of it is the same pain, what I went  
25          through too, and if there was a program like



1           that, it would make things so much easier to  
2           go through in courts, not painful, but if  
3           there was funding for them, it wouldn't add  
4           on the heaviness what they're going through.

5                       With my daughter's court  
6           being a cold case, it's not easy for me to  
7           let her go. I can't rest easy knowing her  
8           case is cold still. I can't close that gap.  
9           I've done so many walks, awareness walks.  
10          I've done so much fundraising, make these  
11          walks. I brought the dress special into our  
12          powwow trying to raise -- raise awareness,  
13          but everything I do doesn't take the pain  
14          away. There's no closure in our family for  
15          as long as that case is cold, there will be  
16          no closure.

17                      I feel it in my -- my  
18          children. They talk about their sister, and  
19          when they talk about the case, I can feel the  
20          anger they have in their hears. If there was  
21          a way to reopen that case because that's the  
22          only thing, the mistake the judge made.  
23          There was a lot of evidence, and he was  
24          already convicted to life in prison with no  
25          chance of parole for 15 years. He only did

1           two, two years, and they let him go, and he's  
2           walking free somewhere in Alberta. Sometimes  
3           I wonder -- when I go do my shopping in  
4           Lloyd, sometimes I wonder if he's there.

5                           I don't know what else to  
6           say.

7       CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: I just have a couple of  
8           questions. To start with, we're seeing  
9           pictures that are kind of scrolling through.  
10          Could you tell me who -- who is in each  
11          picture, please?

12       MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:       The young man standing in  
13           the corner, that's my late daughter's son.  
14           That's Carlin. This was one of the walks we  
15           had from Lloydminster to Onion Lake.

16       CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Do you remember what year  
17           this was?

18       MS. LINDA YOUNG:               2015.

19       MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:       2015.

20       CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: It may take --

21       MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:       This was one of the walks  
22           we had. That picture in the back, that's the  
23           one Lakeland College made for her. It says  
24           Lakeland College Remembers Jarita Naistus.  
25           This was in front of city hall in

1           Lloydminster. That's Jarita in one of her  
2           pictures before she passed away, and this  
3           would be one of the last ones. The one  
4           carrying the baby is Jarita. She's carrying  
5           her little sister. I only have three girls,  
6           one older than her and one younger than her.

7       CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: I don't have any other  
8           questions. The final word is always with the  
9           families.

10       MR. GORD SCHREYER:           One thing me and Connie  
11           talked about was -- well, we talk about this  
12           a lot. I don't want to guess how many nights  
13           a week we talk about this, about what should  
14           have been done, what could have been done, so  
15           we come to our own conclusion instead of  
16           something that was beyond any of our control,  
17           what can we do. So that's where we've been  
18           talking about the schools, and if we could  
19           save one girl's life, one girl's life, Jarita  
20           did not die in vain, but if this keeps going  
21           on -- like going to many schools, it's going  
22           to be more than one girl. You know what? It  
23           would be awesome if thousands and thousands  
24           can be aware of this, and they'll teach their  
25           kids this 'cause none of us know what's --

1           what we could do to change what the laws did.  
2           Can't say something might not ever happen,  
3           but can't sit by and wait.

4                       So in the meantime -- and  
5           we talked about this. We read the MMIW.  
6           There's missing girls daily, and the longer  
7           we sit and talk about it, it's not working.  
8           Something's got to change, and I think that's  
9           a start is -- awareness is one thing, but  
10          teaching's another, and talking to these  
11          young girls and boys in school 'cause  
12          everybody knows Grade 6, Grade 7, Grade 8,  
13          they're the toughest years, and that's where  
14          it starts.

15                      So until somebody else  
16          tells us something different, I think that's  
17          what we have to do. I think that's what  
18          we're going to do 'cause we can't sit by and  
19          wait for something to happen, but like --  
20          like you were saying, the support needs to  
21          come from this organization. It has to come  
22          from this organization to all these families  
23          out there during their trials. We all learn  
24          from mistakes. We learn from other people's  
25          mistakes. If we don't take this and make it

1           better, then what good are we doing? We have  
2           to change this. The system's got to change,  
3           and it's not going to change overnight, but  
4           this is a start, and we just talked about  
5           this -- well, I think it was last night about  
6           when that group walked across Canada. They  
7           come from pretty well every province, quite a  
8           few from Winnipeg, and we met in Lloyd, and  
9           they had an elder with them from B.C., and  
10          she walked right across Canada. I can't  
11          remember how old she was, but, you know,  
12          that's pretty remarkable and to think the  
13          publicity they got done was pretty minimal,  
14          so you look at -- and that was only a --  
15          what, four or five years ago. So you look at  
16          today. It is coming. It's slow. It can do  
17          better.

18                        Another thing MMIW should  
19          be doing is advertisement, and I know that  
20          sounds kind of weird. I don't know what  
21          other word to use, but we need to be in the  
22          public's eye, and that has to come from MMIW  
23          'cause advertising ain't cheap, but it has to  
24          happen, and it starts with that camera right  
25          over there. This isn't a political thing.

1           This isn't a moneymaking thing. This is  
2           human lives that were lost, and I think I'd  
3           rather use the word this is human lives that  
4           were sacrificed to make this a better place,  
5           and if we don't think that way and change,  
6           then why did this happen? These girls did  
7           not die in vain.

8                               And when we look back in  
9           history, we change our future because  
10          somebody in our past sacrificed their life  
11          for a better future. These girls sacrificed  
12          their life for a better future of girls  
13          today, and that has to happen. It's not a  
14          question of maybe or should. It has to  
15          happen, and it starts with MMIW because now  
16          it is federal. That's a step in the right  
17          direction in a way, in a way.

18                            You know, we did -- when  
19          it was first announced, what was that, a year  
20          ago or so? I don't think I'll say the first  
21          thing out of my mouth, but it was something  
22          like, oh, my God, people are going to make a  
23          living off of these girls dying. I'm not  
24          going to say it's happened or not, but if it  
25          is, that's not right. That's not the reason

1           for this, and I don't know who your command  
2           is or whatever, but hopefully whoever's the  
3           highest at your top is a good person, and set  
4           your channels of command. You know, iron it  
5           out. I know there's some rocky roads that  
6           happened in MMIW in the last couple weeks,  
7           and it's the same thing.

8                         Don't let them people be  
9           sacrificed. You know, make it better, and  
10          maybe someday our great-great-great-grandkids  
11          will be reading this in a history book that  
12          this is what used to happen. Then it's  
13          successful, but if our  
14          great-great-great-grandkids are going through  
15          this, then we failed. We can't fail. No  
16          excuse to fail, and it starts with the  
17          advertisement. I don't know what other word  
18          to use. That's a stupid word to use, but  
19          getting in the public's eye, and education is  
20          key, and that's get into these schools, every  
21          school, every single school border to border,  
22          and if the victims' families want to go --  
23          which is what Connie's been talking -- to  
24          every school and tell their experience so  
25          these kids know that this isn't a joke. This

1           isn't some fiction. It's real. This is  
2           what's out there, and I think we can do it.

3       MS. LINDA YOUNG:               So what I'd like to --  
4           hello? Oh. I just wanted to -- as Gord was  
5           speaking, I was thinking about Jarita's  
6           funeral, and at the funeral my -- my mom  
7           spoke for quite a long time, and my sister  
8           had asked her to speak on behalf of the  
9           family, and she spoke for a very long time in  
10          Cree and -- but she really only said one  
11          sentence in English, and I know I'm not  
12          saying her exact words, but what she said  
13          was, If you are crying those tears, it's  
14          because we regret that we haven't done what  
15          we need to do. She said, My granddaughter  
16          has lost her life as a sacrifice for us to  
17          recognize this as a spiritual awakening, and  
18          so I was thinking about that when Gord was  
19          sharing that and never forgot those words,  
20          and so I -- I also feel that we don't need  
21          any more sacrifices of these young women  
22          who -- you know, like our -- our families,  
23          and I just wanted to share that because our  
24          mom's not here with us. She's in Onion Lake,  
25          but I know if she would have been able to,



1           she would have been here.   (Speaks in native  
2           language).

3       CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Excuse me. Linda, can  
4           you just repeat that again, what -- I want to  
5           really understand what your mother said.

6       MS. LINDA YOUNG:                Okay. I'll try. She  
7           said that, When we cry, the tears are regret  
8           that we are not doing something -- that we  
9           didn't -- haven't done something or that we  
10          aren't doing something about a particular --  
11          in this case it was losing Jarita and maybe  
12          the regret of leaving her in Lloyd, not  
13          giving her a ride, all those things that we  
14          could have done but didn't do, and I think  
15          she was making reference to that in that --  
16          in that particular one, but she also said, My  
17          granddaughter has sacrificed her life for us  
18          to have a spiritual awakening, this is our  
19          spiritual awakening, and I -- I believe that  
20          every time -- how many lives -- these are  
21          just my words. How many lives have to be  
22          lost before we recognize that we need to  
23          awaken to the reality of -- that this is  
24          happening, but anyway, for my mom it was --  
25          she said, My granddaughter has sacrificed her

1           life for us to have this -- it's a spiritual  
2           awakening for us.

3       CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: And I hope I'm not being  
4           inappropriate by us -- did he -- did your  
5           mother mean your family or us as a country or  
6           us as a people?

7       MS. LINDA YOUNG:               I think -- the hall that  
8           the funeral was held at was filled to  
9           capacity, and I -- and there were people  
10          there from Lloyd who were English speakers.  
11          There was a lot of people there who were not  
12          Cree speakers, and I think when my mom took a  
13          breath from speaking Cree, that message was  
14          for everyone who was in there so that they  
15          would understand.

16       CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Thank you very much.

17       MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:       The one thing that I  
18           found out after -- after I lost my daughter  
19           that we were questioning about how come  
20           there's no cameras. We were saying, Go check  
21           the cameras, let's see if we can spot people,  
22           and there was no cameras in that area where  
23           she was in, and because of -- because it was  
24           Jarita being murdered in a motel room, I --  
25           we got told that now there's cameras in every

1 motel in Canada because of that, so there was  
2 positive made from a negative. Even the  
3 smallest little things like that make a big  
4 difference. I just wanted to bring that up.  
5 I'm tired.

6 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Well, I want to thank all  
7 of you for coming this afternoon. I've  
8 learned a lot from you. What you've told me  
9 has been very helpful, and I know it's been a  
10 great cost to you emotionally and spiritually  
11 to do that, so I'm grateful from my heart for  
12 what you've told me this afternoon.

13 When we first started  
14 these hearings, the matriarchs, the clan  
15 mothers on Haida Gwaii on the west coast of  
16 British Columbia knew that this would be very  
17 difficult for families to come forward and  
18 survivors to come forward to talk about their  
19 experiences, and they wanted to reach out to  
20 families all across Canada who come to these  
21 hearings to somehow hold them up and lift  
22 them up and give them strength.

23 So you don't argue with a  
24 clan mother. They directed that eagle  
25 feathers be collected and brought to these

1           hearings and presented to families on their  
2           behalf to give you strength, to lift you up  
3           and to let you know that there are people who  
4           support you.

5                               So today we have gifts  
6           for you in exchange for what you've told me  
7           this afternoon that I take as a sacred gift,  
8           your memories and your experiences. We have  
9           gifts for you; of course, the eagle feathers  
10          that have come from Haida Gwaii to hold you  
11          up and lift you up and to give you strength.  
12          I think eagle feathers are one of the few  
13          things that all of us across Canada have in  
14          common.

15                           Also we have seeds, and  
16          when the weather gets a little warmer here,  
17          I'm asking a favour of you to please plant  
18          these seeds. They're very symbolic, of  
19          course, for all of us across Canada. If  
20          something grows, would you please take a  
21          picture of it and send it to us because that  
22          means new growth and new life, and that's one  
23          of the many things that we want to create to  
24          this National Inquiry is new growth, new  
25          life, new hope for everyone.

1                                   So on behalf of the --  
2                   all of the commissioners and staff, I have  
3                   the -- and the clan mothers, I have these  
4                   gifts for you, and personally I want to thank  
5                   you very much. This has meant a great deal  
6                   to me. Pardon my creaky joints.

7       MS. CONNIE LITTLEWOLFE:       I too would like to  
8                   thank -- thank the commissioners for  
9                   listening, and I thank everybody for coming  
10                  so I can share my story as well. (Speaks in  
11                  native language).

12      MS. LINDA YOUNG:               (Speaks in native  
13                  language). Well, you know when you're --  
14                  when you're raised by the same mother, so I  
15                  was thinking, yes, we need to say thank you.  
16                  (Speaks in native language). We need to say  
17                  thank you for the opportunity to sit here and  
18                  to share and to listen, and I also wanted --  
19                  I know -- I noticed this chair beside my  
20                  sister, and when I've been to sun dance,  
21                  there's always a chair that's empty to -- to  
22                  show us that the spirit that has been gone is  
23                  with us, and so that's how I see this chair  
24                  is that Jarita's here. She's with us. I'm  
25                  very thankful for that, and I also wanted to

1           thank how the -- the hearing or the sharing  
2           has been conducted. It's been done so  
3           respectfully, and I'm -- I'm very thankful  
4           for that, and (speaks in native language).

5       MS. JENNIFER COX:           If we could adjourn or  
6           conclude this matter. Thank you.

7       (PRAYER)

8       (Adjourned at 5:41 p.m.)

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**CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE**

I, Shawn Hurd, CSR, Certified Court Reporter, hereby  
certify that the foregoing pages contain a true and  
correct transcription of my stenograph notes taken  
herein to the best of my knowledge, skill and  
ability.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shawn Hurd." The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Shawn Hurd, CSR

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