

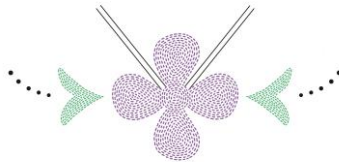
National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**



**PUBLIC**

**November 23, 2017**

**Public transcript Volume 30:**

**Marilyn Wapass,  
In relation to Maxine Grace Wapass**

**Heard by Commissioner: Michèle Audette  
Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox**

**Royal Reporting Services Ltd.**

**APPEARANCES**

**Advocate for Children and Youth Saskatchewan**

Non-appearance

**Assembly of First Nations**

Non-appearance

**Government of Canada**

Sarah Churchill-Joly (Legal Counsel)

**Government of Saskatchewan**

Colleen Matthews (Legal Counsel)

**Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik (Women Walking Together)**

Non-appearance

**Kawacatoose First Nation**

Non-appearance

**Native Women's Association of Canada**

Neegann Aaswaakshin (Legal Counsel)

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Saturviit Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, AnânuKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association Inc., Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre, Manitoba Inuit Association

Non-appearance

Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation

Non-appearance

**Women of Metis Nation/Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak**

Non-appearance

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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	<b><u>Page</u></b>
Marilyn Wapass (In relation to Maxine Grace Wapass) Heard by Commissioner Michele Audette	1
MARILYN WAPASS, promise to tell the truth in a good way on eagle feather:	1

INDEX OF EXHIBITS

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Exhibit No.

(Code P01P06P0303)

- 1 Electronic folder of images displayed on monitors during the public hearing.

**WITNESS: MARILYN WAPASS**  
**(IN RELATION TO MAXINE GRACE WAPASS)**  
**HEARD BY: COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE**  
**COMMISSIONER COUNSEL: JENNIFER COX**  
**GRANDMOTHER: BERNIE POITRAS**  
**COURT REPORTER: SHAWN HURD**  
**REGISTRAR: BRYAN ZANDBERG**

5 (Commenced at 11:42 a.m.)

6 MS. JENNIFER COX: Good morning, Madam  
7 Commissioner. I wish to present to you  
8 Marilyn Wapass, and before we begin, Marilyn  
9 would like to do a promise to tell the truth  
10 with the feather.

11 **MARILYN WAPASS, promise to tell the truth in a good**  
12 **way on eagle feather:**

13 MS. JENNIFER COX: Thank you. So, Madam  
14 Commissioner, Marilyn has brought a drum with  
15 her this morning, and she'd like to do her  
16 own introduction. Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Mmhmm.

18 (DRUM PLAYED)

19 MS. JENNIFER COX: So, Marilyn, if you want  
20 like to start perhaps by telling the  
21 commissioner a little bit about who you are.

22 MS. MARILYN WAPASS: My name is Marilyn  
23 Wapass, and I'm from the Thunderchild First  
24 Nation. I -- I travelled today to be the  
25 voice for my sister, to be the voice for my

1           sister Maxine, and to be the voice for all of  
2           those women who -- who are missing and  
3           murdered and to be the voice for my children.

4       MS. JENNIFER COX:                   And today we have your  
5           children beside you. So on this side of you  
6           we have Tearen, and on the other side of you  
7           we have Brody. So, Marilyn, you're here to  
8           talk about your sister Maxine. Perhaps you  
9           can tell the commissioner a little bit about  
10          Maxine.

11       MS. MARILYN WAPASS:               Maxine was my little --  
12           my little sister. She -- she was -- she was  
13           actually my -- my late auntie's daughter, and  
14           my auntie passed away when we were very  
15           young, and my mom -- my mom took care of her  
16           and my grandpa. My grandpa also took care of  
17           all of us.

18   And so we grew up in  
19           Thunderchild, and like so many other  
20           Indigenous people, we -- we lived in poverty,  
21           and there was definitely a lot of addiction  
22           within our community, and we -- we saw that.  
23           We lived through that, but we also lived in a  
24           time where my grandfather taught us and  
25           showed us the importance of living off the

1 land, and so we had an extended family  
2 system, and I have so many other family  
3 members who couldn't be here today, so --

4 But Maxine -- Maxine was  
5 a beautiful person. She was a light, and I  
6 am the oldest of -- of ten of us, and so I  
7 had a responsibility to take care of her and  
8 my siblings, and so -- and Maxine was very  
9 close to me growing up, and she struggled.  
10 She struggled with her own addiction and life  
11 was not easy, and I didn't understand it, and  
12 it was through this entire experience, my  
13 life experience and my -- my -- my life, this  
14 path that I walk on, I'm trying to be her  
15 voice, and it -- it -- it's opened my eyes to  
16 a lot of issues that we face as Indigenous  
17 people, and so sorry I'm rambling, but --

18 MS. JENNIFER COX: So when you say it opened  
19 your eyes to a lot of things, perhaps you  
20 could talk a little bit about that.

21 MS. MARILYN WAPASS: Well, I'm going to talk  
22 about what happened, and then I'll go  
23 through -- through all of that. So in 2001 I  
24 was working here in the city of Saskatoon,  
25 and I received a phone call one day from my

1           little sister, and she was asking me to take  
2           her back home to our community in  
3           Thunderchild, and so I said that day that I  
4           would because I knew that -- that she was  
5           struggling -- struggling with things and she  
6           needed to be at home with our family, so  
7           later that day after I spoke with her and I  
8           was -- I was going to drive her back home,  
9           after I spoke with her, I went home, and she  
10          wasn't there, and I never saw her again.

11                           And so for -- for a  
12          little bit, a little while I didn't hear from  
13          her and I was getting very worried, and just  
14          over a week -- and my mom was already very  
15          very frantic, and she was calling me, and --  
16          and so after about a week, I -- I went to the  
17          police station to try and file a missing  
18          person's report, and I was in distress at  
19          this time, just as I am now. I was crying,  
20          and I went there and asked for help, and they  
21          treated me so horrible.

22                           I was under the -- I was  
23          under the understanding that when a person  
24          loses their loved one and they're missing  
25          that they need to report them within 24



1 hours, and it was over a week, and they  
2 didn't even care, and they didn't want to  
3 take her -- they didn't want to take her  
4 missing person's report, but there was one --  
5 one police officer who walked by, who  
6 happened to walk by, and he heard my -- he  
7 heard the distress in my voice and he saw me,  
8 and he went out of his way to come and see  
9 what was going on, and I don't know who that  
10 man was, but I'll never forget him, and he  
11 took my report, and he told them, Take her  
12 report and put it on the evening news and we  
13 need to look for this woman, and so we began  
14 our search.

15 We began our search, and  
16 we started hanging posters, and we started  
17 looking everywhere, and we started trying to  
18 get help, and my family came together, and  
19 there was a police officer -- there was a  
20 police officer who was assigned to the case,  
21 and he was just -- he didn't care, and we  
22 argued, and I was frantic and I was drowning  
23 in despair, and I don't even know if he was  
24 even trying to look, and I -- I was looking  
25 and looking, and then months later after

1 calling and calling and trying to find her  
2 and putting myself at risk in going out there  
3 and looking for her myself and hanging  
4 posters and travelling, and finally he  
5 went -- he went on vacation, and he didn't  
6 even tell me. He didn't tell me where things  
7 were. There was -- we had no communication.

8 And so there were two  
9 other police officers who stepped in while he  
10 was away on vacation, and I'm so thankful for  
11 those two police officers because for that  
12 short time, that short period of time that  
13 they -- they came and took over that case,  
14 they -- they found so much information. They  
15 supported me, they listened to me, and they  
16 cared, and then -- and then eventually the  
17 other police officer came back, and -- and I  
18 was right back to having no communication and  
19 back to being mistreated.

20 And so I decided to move  
21 back to my community of Thunderchild to be  
22 closer with my family and to have the  
23 supports that I needed because it was just --  
24 it was too much. It was so difficult to even  
25 just focus on simple tasks, so I travelled.

1 I went home.

2 And then -- and then the  
3 following year, February 6th of 2002, just  
4 before I was leaving for work, there was a  
5 knock at my door and it was the police, and I  
6 knew that -- they didn't even have to say  
7 anything, and I knew that they -- I knew that  
8 they had found her, and they -- they had  
9 found her that fall buried in a shallow  
10 grave, and she was naked. A farmer found her  
11 while he was out -- out hunting, and her  
12 skull was sticking out of the grave.

13 And so we -- and so we --  
14 we had a funeral, and the investigation  
15 turned into a murder investigation, and only  
16 then did -- did things start really moving,  
17 but by then I had help. I had the Native  
18 Women's Association of Canada that came and  
19 helped me. I had -- I had met with other  
20 family members who were looking for their  
21 loved ones, and they helped me too. They  
22 stood with me, and I got my strength from  
23 them.

24 And so a few months later  
25 when the snow melted and the police told me

1           again that we had to have a second burial  
2           because they found more parts, but not only  
3           that, that they had to exhume her mother's  
4           grave to get DNA and all of these -- these --  
5           these horrible things that were -- that we  
6           had to do when -- and -- and I had to consult  
7           with elders about exhuming the grave and  
8           about what to do about the body parts because  
9           I wanted to follow the cultural protocols,  
10          and so -- and so the investigation continued.

11                                The investigation  
12          continued, and then the police came to me  
13          months later and told me that -- that they  
14          had somebody. They had somebody, and he  
15          confessed to killing my sister, and then so  
16          we had to go through the entire court  
17          process. All the while I'm -- I'm -- I'm not  
18          sure what -- I wasn't sure what to expect,  
19          and it was so drawn out, and all the while it  
20          seemed like the -- the justice system was  
21          protecting him and his rights.

22                                So eventually after  
23          numerous court proceedings, we went -- we  
24          went to court. We went to trial just down  
25          the block from here, and day after day I had

1 to sit in the courtroom with the man who  
2 killed my sister. Day after day I had to sit  
3 in that courtroom with the media, who all the  
4 while they were writing things dehumanizing  
5 my sister, re-victimizing me and my family,  
6 so I waited. I waited, and my son here, my  
7 son -- I was pregnant with him, and I thank  
8 the Creator for bringing him to me because it  
9 carried me through all of this knowing that I  
10 was going to have a little boy baby.

11 And so I sat and I waited  
12 every day, and I listened to the court  
13 proceedings, and all of this -- all of this  
14 was taking place after all of the -- after  
15 everything that happened to Neil Stonechild  
16 was coming to light within this city, all of  
17 the things that the police did to him which  
18 created such a turmoil within the justice  
19 system, and I sat in that courtroom, and I  
20 saw how the prosecutor was trying to argue my  
21 sister's case, and I saw how that judge kept  
22 defending the person who killed her, and I  
23 knew -- I knew the judge already -- before  
24 the outcome, I knew that the judge already --  
25 already was going to side with the man who

1           killed my sister. I knew it.

2                           And so I listened to the  
3           man who confessed to killing her. I listened  
4           to the recording in the courtroom. I saw him  
5           break down. I saw him cry and say, yes, that  
6           he killed her and he took her life, and then  
7           the judge threw out -- threw out -- threw out  
8           his confession, and then he let him go free.

9                           How does that happen?

10           How does somebody who confessed to taking a  
11           human life, how do they get away with that?  
12           And that day, that day that that judge made  
13           that decision, he sent a very strong and  
14           powerful message. He sent a message to the  
15           rest of society that it was okay to kill  
16           Indigenous women, and who's going to be  
17           accountable for that? Where's my justice?

18                           And then my eyes were  
19           being opened. Slowly through my pain I was  
20           seeing things for what it truly -- truly is.  
21           So in my pain -- in my pain and everything  
22           that I was feeling, my little boy came into  
23           this world, and in my pain, I turned to the  
24           ceremonies, and I crawled into the sweat  
25           lodge a broken person, and I asked the

1 Creator to help me, and the Creator -- the  
2 Creator pitied me and heard my prayers, and  
3 slowly over time I became stronger and I  
4 began to heal, all the while taking part in  
5 vigils and walks. I protested on Parliament  
6 Hill. I went to the Robert Pickton trial.

7 I gave up an  
8 opportunity -- I gave up -- I gave up my  
9 hopes and my dreams that one day that I would  
10 be a lawyer and that I -- that when she went  
11 missing, I was in university and I changed my  
12 career, and I went and I -- I found a job  
13 where I could work on the streets with  
14 people -- with people who were suffering with  
15 addiction, with people who went missing, with  
16 women homeless, with people who I have been  
17 so honoured and so humbled to meet.

18 And so I started -- I  
19 started trying to learn as much as I can, and  
20 I started healing and going to more and more  
21 ceremonies, and I became stronger and moved  
22 back to the city, and -- and I started  
23 picking up the pieces of my life, started  
24 working. I got my degree, and then I decided  
25 to move for work, and I moved back home years

1 later.

2 And then I had another  
3 relative who went missing, and then in my  
4 mind, my uncle -- in my mind I'm thinking --  
5 and my family was getting very worried after  
6 a few days, and in my mind I'm thinking this  
7 doesn't happen to a person twice, and so  
8 we -- we rallied ourselves and we got  
9 together because I knew what to do.

10 I was prepared now, and I  
11 phoned the police and I said, My uncle -- my  
12 uncle Anthony Wapass was reported missing,  
13 please tell me what you're doing about this,  
14 and the lady said, Well, we've sent emails  
15 out, and I said, My name is Marilyn Wapass.  
16 I'm from the Thunderchild First Nations, and  
17 I had a family who went missing and murdered.  
18 I'm a part of the Native Women's Association  
19 of Canada, and I lodged a formal complaint  
20 against the police officer who mistreated me  
21 in my sister's case, and I want to know what  
22 you're going to do to find my uncle, and  
23 within minutes they had me talking to the  
24 sergeant and they had people out there  
25 looking for him. Well, what about all those



1 people that don't have that power, who don't  
2 know what to say?

3 And so -- and so we had a  
4 search for him, and we went and we looked and  
5 we found his body. We found his body. He  
6 was beaten to death not even a thousand  
7 meters from my house, and we had to go  
8 through it all over again, but this time --  
9 this time I knew -- I knew what to say and I  
10 knew what to look for and I knew how to deal  
11 with these things, and this time things were  
12 going to be done properly, but, again, my  
13 family had to be re-victimized when they  
14 weren't even done healing and dealing with  
15 the loss of my sister, and so we went to  
16 court again, but this time there were two men  
17 who were found guilty, and they were  
18 sentenced to life.

19 So, again, having to --  
20 to go through all of the pain and that  
21 trauma, again I turned to the Creator and I  
22 crawled into that lodge, and, again, the  
23 Creator took me and healed me, and so I  
24 started praying and I started going to  
25 ceremonies and started working and again

1           trying to pick up the pieces of my life, and  
2           then something else happened.

3                           I decided to take some  
4           time off of work, and I got a phone call one  
5           day. I got a phone call from another woman  
6           within my community, and she said to me,  
7           Marilyn, they're trying to blow up our sun  
8           dance grounds, and I didn't understand what  
9           was going on. I didn't understand what she  
10          was trying to -- to say to me because she was  
11          so frantic, and I saw. I went there. I went  
12          there right away.

13                           Our sun dance being the  
14          highest ceremony that we have as Cree people,  
15          and I went there, and I saw. I saw seismic  
16          testing being done on this -- on our  
17          ceremonial grounds. I saw our ceremonial  
18          cloth ripped and tattered on the ground and  
19          trees, and there were explosives in the  
20          ground, and in my mind and in my heart, I saw  
21          that the very thing that kept me going, that  
22          healed me was being threatened, and so I  
23          started a protest with many other women and  
24          people from my community, people who stood in  
25          front of the trucks, people who tried to

1 stop -- stop the testing, and then I saw -- I  
2 saw people come from all over to come and  
3 support us, but there was a day -- because  
4 there were already explosives laying in the  
5 ground, and we couldn't stop them all, only  
6 the ones closest to the lodges, and I saw  
7 that there were too many of them, that we  
8 couldn't do anything about it, so they came  
9 and did their seismic testing around the area  
10 because we wouldn't allow them on the  
11 grounds, and that day that they came and they  
12 detonated -- detonated them, the ground shook  
13 like an earthquake. Our ceremonial ground  
14 shook, and I was so traumatized, and then I  
15 was filed -- I was served with court papers  
16 because by then they had filed an injunction  
17 to remove me from that ground, and so after  
18 refusing to leave, they arrested me and again  
19 I was in court, and I was in the very same  
20 courtroom where my sister's trial was being  
21 held, and again I had to face all of that,  
22 and eventually I lost, but I saw in my eyes  
23 and I know this. I saw -- I saw that our  
24 women -- I saw that our women were being  
25 murdered because of what's in the ground,

1           because of the resources that the people  
2           are -- that the government and the companies  
3           want.

4                           At the end of the day --  
5           and you cannot tell me any different because  
6           I know and I've seen it. I've lived through  
7           it. You cannot tell me that these women are  
8           not being killed and murdered, and the  
9           government is allowing it to happen while  
10          they try and take our connection away from  
11          the land, our mother. You cannot tell me any  
12          different, and it's all for money. It's all  
13          for oil while they corrupt even our own  
14          government systems, oppressing our women, and  
15          the women in our communities don't even have  
16          the platform to speak about their concerns,  
17          our women who are often blamed and -- for  
18          their own oppression and their own pain, our  
19          women who have to come into this world to  
20          suffer at the hands of men but, not only  
21          that, our men who are stripped of their  
22          power.

23                           These issues are about  
24          racism. They're about discrimination, and  
25          it's entrenched in our systems. You cannot

1 tell me any different. I know and I see it,  
2 and this is my life. I've seen people dying  
3 on the streets. I've seen our people in  
4 the -- in this province, in this province  
5 where there's so much hate, our people are  
6 suffering with so much. The rates of HIV and  
7 AIDS in this province are through the roof,  
8 and it's our people who are becoming  
9 infected. It's the system that continuously  
10 tries to oppress us to try and silence us and  
11 cut our ties to the land.

12 Our women, we get our  
13 strength from the land, from Mother Earth.  
14 She gives us strength, and she's sick and  
15 she's dying, and our people are sick and  
16 they're dying. We're protectors of this  
17 earth, and so many of our people have  
18 forgotten that because they're suffering, and  
19 that's because of the system.

20 I have issues with how I  
21 was treated by the City Police. I have  
22 issues with -- with the judges. I've seen  
23 and I witnessed firsthand and I've been  
24 treated so horribly, but so have others, and  
25 they don't even have that voice themselves.

1 I'm here -- honestly I'm  
2 here because I have no faith in this Inquiry.  
3 I have no faith in this Inquiry because it --  
4 it represents the system that has oppressed  
5 me, that is killing our people, but I'm here.  
6 I'm here because -- because of these boys,  
7 because of the children. I'm here because of  
8 my friends who have lost loved ones and are  
9 still looking because they need that voice,  
10 and we need to keep going. We need to try,  
11 and I'm not blaming -- I'm not blaming the  
12 men. I'm not pointing fingers because it  
13 boils down to racism, it boils down to hate,  
14 and each and every one of us as individual  
15 people, every morning that we wake up, we  
16 have a choice that we could bring light into  
17 this world or we can feed that -- that  
18 darkness that we have to live with every day,  
19 and I'm trying, and it's real hard not to sit  
20 here and be angry. It's really hard not to  
21 have hate in my heart because my culture is  
22 about equality and love. This is about the  
23 genocide of our people. This just isn't  
24 about Indigenous women. This is a spiritual  
25 battle.



1           seeing that because our people have been used  
2           as political scapegoats from the government  
3           for so long. Our -- the rest of society does  
4           not see the beauty of our culture.

5                        I know that I'm talking  
6           about things that may not seem relevant to my  
7           sister's death, but they are very much  
8           connected, these issues, very much connected.

9                        My reality is that I have  
10          to wake up every morning and I have to go out  
11          and step in and walk in society, and I'm  
12          going to get mistreated. I'm going to face  
13          racism. I'm going to face discrimination,  
14          and so do these boys. That's their reality,  
15          and they're here today because they need to  
16          see that so that I can prepare them and  
17          hopefully teach them and show them compassion  
18          because that's what this world needs is  
19          compassion, but how do you integrate that  
20          into a system that is built on the oppression  
21          of our people? I don't know what the answer  
22          is, but we have to try.

23        MS. JENNIFER COX:                So, Marilyn, you  
24    mentioned that the police -- that when your  
25    sister was murdered what police force was it



1                   that you were dealing with?

2       MS. MARILYN WAPASS:               This was the Saskatoon  
3                   City Police.

4       MS. JENNIFER COX:                And you also mentioned  
5                   that you had made a complaint to -- was it  
6                   the Saskatoon City Police that you made the  
7                   complaint?

8       MS. MARILYN WAPASS:               I made -- at that time  
9                   the FSIN had started their own investigation  
10                  unit because of what happened with Neil  
11                  Stonechild and his death, his murder, and so  
12                  our people -- there was a pattern that was  
13                  developing that our people didn't have a  
14                  place in which to come forward with -- with  
15                  all of these things that were taking place,  
16                  and FSIN created a justice investigation  
17                  unit, and so I reached out to them, and  
18                  they -- they helped me to lodge a complaint.

19      MS. JENNIFER COX:                And perhaps for the  
20                  benefit of the commissioner and some of the  
21                  people in the audience, can you tell  
22                  everybody about your experience with the FSIN  
23                  Special Investigation Unit?

24      MS. MARILYN WAPASS:               So I went and I -- I went  
25                  and I met with the investigation person at

1           that time, and from the very beginning, he --  
2           he showed me kindness. He was a former  
3           police officer. He was First Nations, and  
4           he -- he came from B.C. to work, and he  
5           listened to my story. He understood and he  
6           walked with me, and he -- he gave me options  
7           and he cared, and so together we started  
8           lodging this complaint. We wrote letters.  
9           FSIN wrote letters to the police department  
10          in my sister's case, and they demanded that  
11          something be done about it, and so they  
12          started an investigation.

13                         They started an internal  
14          investigation in the city here, and the  
15          police officer went into early retirement  
16          before anything could become of it, but after  
17          all of these years looking back and looking  
18          back at all of those other police officers  
19          who tried, and what I remember most is their  
20          kindness and their compassion, even though I  
21          was angry and I -- I couldn't understand. I  
22          had to maneuver around -- it was -- it seemed  
23          like there was constant obstacles that I had  
24          to face, but it -- it's those that actually  
25          cared that really helped me through all of

1           that, so FSIN and that investigation unit  
2           helped me during that time.

3       MS. JENNIFER COX:            Do you think it would  
4           have been possible to get help like that if  
5           they didn't exist?

6       MS. MARILYN WAPASS:        No, no.

7       MS. JENNIFER COX:            And just -- just so that  
8           other people also understand, FSIN stands  
9           for?

10      MS. MARILYN WAPASS:         The Federation of  
11           Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

12      MS. JENNIFER COX:            And I think you said it,  
13           but just so it's clear, you did -- that  
14           came -- the Special Investigation Unit, can  
15           you tell the commissioner how that came to  
16           be?

17      MS. MARILYN WAPASS:         When -- to my  
18           understanding, to my understanding when  
19           Neil -- Neil Stonechild's body was found  
20           frozen outside of -- in the outskirts of the  
21           city, and there were other First Nations men  
22           who these things were happening, and they had  
23           stories and -- and so -- and these stories  
24           were making it to the media, and so FSIN,  
25           that's -- if I'm not mistaken, that's when

1 FSIN actually opened that department to take  
2 in these stories so that they could have --  
3 so that they could have a place to go because  
4 it was the police that were dumping these men  
5 outside of the city, and it was the police  
6 who -- who took Neil Stonechild out there.  
7 It is the police who took his life, and I  
8 believe it. I know it. They murdered him.  
9 They're allowing our people to be murdered.

10 There are people within  
11 these systems that are perpetrators, and  
12 they're so protected, and that's the truth,  
13 and there are people, our Indigenous people  
14 who are -- have to live with the trauma of  
15 residential schools who don't have the voice  
16 to speak about all of this injustice that's  
17 taking place because at the end of the day,  
18 these missing and murdered women, everybody  
19 knows someone. Everyone's related to them,  
20 to someone. This issue is so deep.

21 And we as Indigenous  
22 people, we are a collective. We are all one.  
23 We are all affected by this. We are being  
24 targeted. We are being targeted, and it all  
25 boils down to money. It all boils down to

1           the land. The government is still trying to  
2           kill the Indian in the child. It's never  
3           stopped. They are still at war with our  
4           people, and I know this. I've seen it, and  
5           this is my life. This is not something I  
6           just read out of a book or I had to learn in  
7           university. I seen it, I lived it, and  
8           they've used our people as scapegoats, and  
9           they've created such a hate towards  
10          Aboriginal people and created such a division  
11          amongst Indigenous people and non-Indigenous  
12          people. There is no education out there on  
13          the importance of our people and our culture.  
14          Sorry. I went off a little bit.

15        MS. JENNIFER COX:                That's okay. So based on  
16    your experience, do you think there's a few  
17    things that you would recommend that should  
18    be changed?

19        MS. MARILYN WAPASS:            Well, definitely. There  
20    are changes that need to be made within the  
21    police system, within the judicial system,  
22    within the education system, within the  
23    health-care system, within -- like I said,  
24    within every sector of society.

25    There needs to be serious

1 policy changes that integrate our culture.  
2 There needs to be policies and laws made  
3 that -- that -- where people are held  
4 accountable for their mistreatment of -- of  
5 our people, of anybody, anybody. Nobody  
6 should be discriminated because of their sex  
7 or their colour.

8 People need to start  
9 going -- people need to start being charged  
10 for hating, for hating, for bringing hate  
11 into this world. There needs to be serious  
12 laws made against racism. I think that the  
13 government, there needs to be an  
14 investigation that's done in the government  
15 system itself including Indian Affairs, but  
16 who's going to do that?

17 And, as I said earlier,  
18 there also needs to be laws in place that  
19 protect the land because we -- we need the  
20 land. We -- it's a part of our ceremonies.  
21 It's -- it's a part of -- we have everything  
22 that we have. We have this water to drink.  
23 We have the clothes that we're wearing.  
24 Everything that we have throughout the day,  
25 throughout our life is because of the land.

1 We need to protect the land.

2 We need -- there also  
3 needs to be -- there also needs to be more  
4 funding available to -- to the agencies that  
5 are helping people on the grassroots level,  
6 public service agencies.

7 There needs to be an  
8 education that takes place that all of these  
9 issues that we face as Indigenous people, the  
10 issue of missing and murdered women, the high  
11 rates of HIV and AIDS, the -- the high rates  
12 of Aboriginal people who -- who are being  
13 taken, these children taken from their homes,  
14 the overrepresentation of -- of Indigenous  
15 people in the prison systems. All of these  
16 issues, they're all connected, and our men,  
17 our men need a space to heal and to grow so  
18 that they can protect us. Our men need their  
19 power back too. There needs to be a system  
20 in place where our grass -- our grassroots  
21 people are -- have access to -- to healing.

22 The universities -- for  
23 most programs at the university level, most  
24 programs to take a native studies course,  
25 it's usually optional, but when you have

1 people who are studying to become -- to work  
2 in -- in -- work with Indigenous people,  
3 maybe -- maybe they'll be lucky if they -- if  
4 they take one class. Well, one class isn't  
5 enough, and even there in the universities,  
6 the professors, those that -- that are  
7 teaching and educating people, what about  
8 their privilege? What about their bias?  
9 What are they teaching about Indigenous  
10 people?

11 I don't know how to say  
12 this and I don't know how to -- how it needs  
13 to be done, and -- and I don't want to say it  
14 where I'm offending anybody, but the white  
15 people need to look at their own privilege,  
16 and not everything is about money. People  
17 need to understand that First Nations people  
18 have -- we have our own world view that does  
19 not focus around money.

20 So there is a lot of  
21 education that needs to -- that needs to take  
22 place. There are policies that need to be  
23 made in every system that directly look at  
24 racism and discrimination, and the people  
25 that work within these systems, they need to



1           be accountable for that racism and that  
2           discrimination because it's killing our  
3           people. It's killing Indigenous women.  
4           Okay.

5       MS. JENNIFER COX:           So the one thing -- the  
6           last thing that I would ask maybe, Marilyn,  
7           is there's been pictures that have been  
8           coming up on the screen, and maybe you could  
9           talk a little bit about what's in those  
10          pictures.

11       MS. MARILYN WAPASS:       So that's my sister  
12          Maxine, and she was always smiling and  
13          laughing, and -- and she was really good at  
14          laughing at herself too. That's me putting  
15          up a poster when she was missing, and that's  
16          her just not long before she passed away, and  
17          she was very close to our grandmother, so  
18          close to her.

19                                    My grandparents passed  
20          away before Maxine went missing, and I am so  
21          glad that they didn't have to go through what  
22          we were all going through when we looked for  
23          her.

24                                    I know at the end of the  
25          day that she's still with me. She's here

1 right now with me. I know that. I know that  
2 we come from a place of light, and I know  
3 that I'll see her again. I'll see that smile  
4 and hear those jokes. I know that this isn't  
5 our home. I know that. I believe that, and  
6 I know that I'm going to go back home to a  
7 place where all of us -- it doesn't matter  
8 what skin colour we are, that we're all going  
9 to be in this place where we all love each  
10 other. I know that, and I know I need to  
11 forgive and I need to let go, but -- and that  
12 I have important -- all of us have important  
13 lessons to learn here while we're here. I  
14 know that, and I know every single one of us,  
15 regardless if we're Indigenous or not, we  
16 have this opportunity to make this world a  
17 better place, to speak out for a greater  
18 humanity. I know that, but it's -- it's so  
19 hard when you're mistreated and you have to  
20 face and be the subject of hate.

21 It's hard. It's hard and  
22 it hurts, and we need to open our eyes. We  
23 need to remember. We need to remember that  
24 we all have to be accountable for the things  
25 that we do while we're here, and we're all

1 going to be standing before the Creator,  
2 every single one of us, and we have to answer  
3 for how we treat each other here. I know  
4 that.

5 And I want to say to all  
6 of those people who are trying to take a  
7 stand, who are trying to speak out for the  
8 issues that we face as Indigenous people, I  
9 want to tell them to try and remember that,  
10 to rise above the hate, to rise above the  
11 discrimination and the oppression, to speak  
12 for our Creator and our Mother Earth in a  
13 good way with peace and love and light and  
14 forgiveness. That's what my sister has  
15 taught me.

16 MS. JENNIFER COX: Madam Commissioner, I  
17 don't have any more questions.

18 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup, Maitre  
19 Cox. Merci beaucoup, Marilyn, and two  
20 beautiful young men to be here and to remind  
21 that our men have a role for us, the  
22 grandmother, the mothers and the daughters  
23 and granddaughters. We need our son to  
24 protect us when they'll be grown up. It's  
25 all the wish of mothers.

1                   So thank you. If I can  
2                   say something, there's many women that we've  
3                   heard across Canada who said what you said  
4                   about the relevant -- how do we say in  
5                   English -- between Mother Earth and what's  
6                   happening to us, so it was relevant. We --

7           MS. JENNIFER COX:                   Connection?

8           COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:           Connection? That she was  
9                   saying that -- okay, but she -- I'm using her  
10                  word, connection. Thank you. And it is, and  
11                  it was very strong in memory too that women  
12                  that fought for the water, for the protection  
13                  of the water and the land, and they talked  
14                  about you and your fight against the oil  
15                  industry, so your work resonates across  
16                  Canada, so thank you for what you're doing  
17                  for our Mother Earth. Thank you so much.

18   And Saskatchewan -- when  
19                  we do provinces or territory, I'll name it  
20                  with how we call it here in Saskatchewan.  
21                  All the families share about what was their  
22                  definition or reality about the racism and  
23                  discrimination and how the system responded  
24                  or didn't responded to them. So I say thank  
25                  you for you for sharing to us, to Canada for

1           those who are listening, for people in this  
2           room, also how it felt, how it didn't support  
3           you in your journey, and we will try to  
4           honour that when we will present the report,  
5           and I'll have some question -- question I  
6           need to know and I need to understand. I'm  
7           not a lawyer. I used to be involved with  
8           NWAC. That's my school, that's my world, and  
9           we all want to understand why a judge will  
10          make that decision, so I turn around with  
11          Indigenous women who are lawyers and we're --  
12          how do we say? We are blessed that we have  
13          Indigenous women working in this Inquiry and  
14          will explain to me why. I need to know why  
15          and understand and to see if it's -- how do  
16          we say -- a trend, something that we --

17       MS. JENNIFER COX:                Right, trend.

18       COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:            Merci beaucoup. Yeah.

19                So all your recommendation, we took good  
20                note. I know we have our registrar who  
21                making sure that everything you said, it's  
22                well registered and it -- it follows what  
23                we've been hearing. It's adding of what  
24                we've been hearing, so merci beaucoup, and  
25                that was -- it's going to be something you'll

1           have to explain to me.

2           MS. JENNIFER COX:            Oui.

3           COMMISSIONER AUDETTE:        Merci. Thank you, and  
4           thank you for your story.

5           MS. MARILYN WAPASS:          I also want to say thank  
6           you to -- I want to say thank you to the  
7           Creator. I want to say thank you to the  
8           grandfathers and the grandmothers 'cause  
9           they're hearing me, and they hear me and  
10          they've helped me and helped me carry --  
11          carried me, but I have people here that came  
12          and supported me. There are families who  
13          I've known for many years that are here  
14          that -- that are speaking here. I want to  
15          say thank you to them, and when they share  
16          their stories, they're speaking for my  
17          sister, and I want to say thank you for that.

18                                    I want to say thank you  
19          to the agencies that are working so hard to  
20          bring these issues to light. I want to say  
21          thank you to those that have given me the  
22          opportunity to -- to help me to learn and to  
23          grow and to see things as they are for the  
24          women's group here in Saskatchewan. (Speaks  
25          in native language). Thank you, thank you

1 for all the work that you do.

2 I want to say thank you  
3 to the Saskatoon Tribal Council because when  
4 I walked into this place, they came right to  
5 me, and these men, my friends, they came to  
6 protect me, my husband. Thank you so much.  
7 (Speaks in native language).

8 MS. JENNIFER COX: So before you go,  
9 Marilyn, we have some gifts that the  
10 commissioner is going to provide to you, so  
11 one of the gifts we have is feathers, eagle  
12 feathers that are from the grandmothers in  
13 Hadai Gwaii, and we are providing you with a  
14 feather for each of you, and, in addition,  
15 we're also providing you with some seeds to  
16 plant when the weather gets a little bit  
17 better, and we would ask a favour of you, and  
18 that is if you grow something with the seeds  
19 that you take a picture and send it to us.  
20 That will give us -- it's a hope, the growth  
21 that we're hoping that will come of this  
22 Inquiry. Thank you. If we could conclude or  
23 adjourn this matter. Thank you.

24 (Adjourned at 12:58 p.m.)

25

**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.



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Shawn Hurd, CSR

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