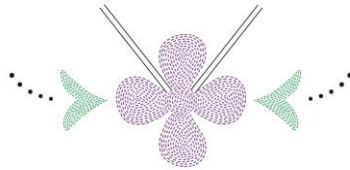


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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

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



PUBLIC

Thursday November 23, 2017

Public Volume 31:

Eva Potts & Percy Potts, In relation to Misty Faith Potts;

**Carol Wolfe, Josephine Longneck, Brenda O'Neill
& Dorthea Swiftwolfe, In relation to Karina Bethania Wolfe;**

**Danielle Ewenin, Lillian Piapot, Mona Woodward & Debbie
Green, In relation to Eleanor “Laney” Theresa Ewenin;**

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II

APPEARANCES

Assembly of First Nations	Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
Advocate for Children and Youth Saskatchewan	No Appearance
Government of Canada	Christine Ashcroft (Legal counsel)
Government of Saskatchewan	Betty Ann Pottruff (Legal counsel) Trish Greyeyes (Legal counsel)
Iskwewuk Ewichiwitochik (Women Walking Together)	Darlene R. Okemaysim-Sicotte (Representative)
Kawacatoose First Nation	No 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	No Appearance
Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation	Viriginia Lomax (Legal counsel)
Women of Métis Nation/Les Femmes MichifOtipemisiwak	No Appearance

Note: For the purpose of establishing this record of attendance, counsel are considered present whether they attended one or all of the public hearings held over the course of the day at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel - Central Ballroom (i.e. the public hearing space # 1).

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Exhibits: None entered.

1 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

2 --- Upon commencing on Thursday, November 23, 2017 at 9:43

3 **MR. MILTON GAMBLE:** Good morning. (Speaks
4 in Indigenous language). We give thanks and praise again
5 to our Creator our grandfather, Mother Earth, for giving us
6 another beautiful day to celebrate life. I want to
7 acknowledge our pipe carriers this morning, Elder Doucette
8 and Elder Little Tent, for lifting their pipes for us this
9 morning, asking us to go and speak to our Creator on our
10 behalf during pipe ceremony.

11 I want to thank the organizations last night
12 for hosting a beautiful round dance at TCU. We heard
13 nothing but good comments.

14 This morning, I'm going to ask a *kookoo* in
15 our ceremonies, and a man who has helped us emcee a lot of
16 round dances and Pow Wows and is also a ceremonial man
17 himself, Mrs. Veronica Doucette and Howard Walker, if you
18 can please make your way up here for opening prayer? I'll
19 ask those of you to bear with us and give us your undivided
20 attention.

21 --- Opening prayer

22 **ELDER HOWARD WALKER:** It's a difficult day,
23 my relatives, the things that we talk about, missing and
24 murdered Indigenous women and girls. It's difficult for
25 the families, and we have heard some pretty heavy stuff,

1 and we're still going to hear them. The Creator has a
2 purpose for each and every one of us to be here, to sing,
3 to dance, to speak, and also share the strength of our
4 *kokum* and our women.

5 We'll render a prayer in Cree language.
6 I'll render the prayer in my Mother language, the Stó:lo
7 language. Help us, the way you feel comfortable in
8 communicating with the Creator, help us at this time.

9 **ELDER VERONICA DOUCETTE:** (Speaking in
10 Indigenous language). You feel it. That's your dad
11 (indiscernible) women that are lost and murdered. My dad
12 was alone. We were six little kids. I was eight years
13 old, and a baby a year old (indiscernible), and I'm 84 now.

14 My mom passed away. My dad, he was alone.
15 He had no (indiscernible). What we had were aunties and
16 (indiscernible). That's your life. When you don't have a
17 mother, you're nothing. That's how I talk about things.
18 (Indiscernible). You're lucky to say that, because I
19 didn't have that. I didn't have my mom. I had a mom, but
20 (indiscernible). Even some guys, they don't have a mom,
21 but they have a wife, always respect your wife or partner.

22 But, that doesn't happen to all men. I know
23 that. That's your mom now that you married when you have
24 no mom (indiscernible). When you have kids, love your
25 (indiscernible). But, we have our first baby was born two

1 months before we got married. So, something happened in
2 that few months there. June 9th. Sixty-six years. A
3 little more than that, huh?

4 (Indiscernible) both of them. He went
5 (indiscernible), always talk about when parents separated.
6 Sometimes a young couple (indiscernible) and from there,
7 but my prayers were (indiscernible). But, I stayed. We
8 used to drink (indiscernible). We used to fight. I used
9 to beat him up (indiscernible). I'm getting old now
10 (indiscernible).

11 I want to say this. We have 14 kids; eight
12 girls and six boys (indiscernible).

13 --- Indigenous prayers are said

14 **MR. MILTON GAMBLE:** We have a couple of
15 gifts for our Elders. I want to thank our Elders for their
16 beautiful prayers, for blessing us. I want to take this
17 opportunity to invite Chief Bobby Cameron to come up and
18 share greetings on behalf of the Federation of Sovereign
19 Indigenous Nations, the Chief of the organization, Chief
20 Bobby Cameron.

21 **CHIEF BOBBY CAMERON:** Thank you, Milton.
22 (Speaks in Indigenous language). For everybody, we thank
23 Creator for our beautiful day today, and for all the *kokum*
24 and *mushum*, and all the women, and all the men that are
25 here sharing their stories. You know, an Elder once said

1 when you're having a hard time, when you're depressed --
2 and we get depressed. We get stressed out for various
3 reasons, in our families, in our home, in our
4 relationships, out there in society, and the Elder said,
5 when you're thinking like this and you're having
6 difficulties, he says, "Look at your hand." I said, "Okay,
7 I'm looking at my hand. What does that mean?" And, he
8 says, "Because the colour of your skin says your ancestors
9 died signing inherent treaty rights."

10 Your ancestors, our ancestors, survived all
11 those hard, enduring times all those many, many years of
12 residential schools, of the racism we face throughout the
13 justice system in Canada, from the RCMP to the lawyers to
14 the judges to the prosecutors. The racism still exists.
15 It exists in the federal and provincial governments, but
16 there are still some good people there.

17 Now, this Inquiry that's been happening, and
18 all the stories of survival, and hardship, and horrific
19 experiences, the healing journey, we acknowledge all the
20 survivors and the families. The family from Piapot, Mr.
21 Rinelle, we were hearing him the other day tell the ladies
22 that have went through some hard times in your years of
23 living, we acknowledge and we pray for you.

24 To all those that are still on that healing
25 journey -- and this is going to continue. It's going to

1 continue -- we look forward to hearing the stories from
2 Crystal from Piapot, and Tracy Desirlee (phon), and on the
3 horrific experiences they faced with the police services in
4 southern Saskatchewan. To the Inquiry, to the
5 Commissioners, Michèle and Marion and others, thank you for
6 coming here. This is why we supported it, because families
7 need to tell their stories. Families need to heal.
8 Families need to continue.

9 But, when this is done, when this is done
10 and the Inquiry sums everything together, that the healing
11 continues and the stories be told, because these stories
12 need to be recorded, and our people, our ancestors, in the
13 next hundred years are going to understand all the families
14 and all the hardships that we went through, but we still
15 survived. We still survived, and we'll continue to
16 survive, because all our people that are coming, all those
17 unborn, will hear these stories. They'll say *kokum* and
18 *mushum* were survivors. My mom was a survivor, and it's
19 that warrior spirit in each and every one of us, and all
20 the women and men, that warrior spirit.

21 Our ancestors didn't sign inherent treaty
22 rights for no reason. They signed it to continue this way
23 of life, that survival instinct, and it's in every one of
24 us. It's in every one of us to speak loudly and proudly of
25 who we are, what we are, and where we come from. These are

1 the messages we continue to gather.

2 For all those people, thank you for sharing
3 your stories. It takes a lot of courage. In the summary
4 of the report, we ask the Commissioners -- we ask the
5 Commissioners and all those involved that the justice
6 system of Canada needs a serious overhaul. It needs a
7 serious overhaul when it comes to First Nations' protocol
8 and traditions. They need to understand and recognize that
9 we, as First Nations people, deserve to be treated with
10 equal dignity and respect; the same opportunities be fully
11 inclusive of our First Nations people.

12 You know, we as an FSIN executive are here
13 to support the families in anything we can do. We're here
14 to help. We're here to support and be the voice, if the
15 families decide us to be the voice. A lot of good
16 recommendations and directions come from all the families
17 here today; the after care, the ongoing sessions that have
18 to happen after this Inquiry leaves Saskatoon. But, also,
19 that we don't forget.

20 And, I put the request in to Marion Buller
21 that, you know, should this extension happen that we go to
22 the northern and remote communities, because there are so
23 many people that can't come here and share their stories,
24 because they don't have transportation, they don't have a
25 means to get here. So, that's the request going into this

1 Inquiry, because they have to get an extension from the
2 federal government.

3 So, perhaps, to each and every one of you,
4 how we can ensure that this extension happens, maybe a
5 template letter or a template BCRT Chief and Council saying
6 this extension has to continue, because stories need to be
7 told, survivors need to heal, families need to heal. It's
8 not going to just end. It's just not going to end in one
9 or two years; it's got to continue. So, we are advocating
10 for the northern and rural communities, those voices to be
11 heard.

12 Thank you all for listening to me, and once
13 again, to our Elders with the pipe ceremony. To our drum
14 group and to the dancers, thank you for healing us because
15 that's a method of healing as well. Commissioners, to our
16 Elders, Florence, *kokum* from Yorkton, thank you. And, to
17 all the staff, the voices here are important. They're much
18 more important than the FSIN event; the survivors are more
19 important. I can say that whole-heartedly.

20 I can say this on behalf of the FSIN
21 executive, in a respectful way, of course, that we love
22 each and every one of you. Tell your stories, share your
23 stories, and continue that warrior spirit, because we're
24 here together to teach our children and grandchildren that
25 way of life; that way of life to build a good quality of

1 life, to understand that our children have inherent treaty
2 rights. That's what distinguishes us from many, many
3 nations, inherent treaty rights. (Speaking in Indigenous
4 language). *Hay-hay.*

5 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci. Merci*
6 *beaucoup.* I know you witnessed I put the necklace on Chief
7 Cameron. I didn't do it for the Elders. He was cute. Not
8 true. (Speaking in Indigenous language). *Merci beaucoup.*
9 Every day, every one of us starts the day the way we start
10 the day. Do we control it? I don't know. Do we want to
11 control? Maybe. But, everywhere we go, we respect the
12 protocol. We respect the culture. We respect your beauty.
13 But, also, we respect the pain, this collective pain, and
14 to do what we do.

15 We're also human beings, parents, husbands
16 to be, very virtual lately since I started this journey.
17 We're mothers, brothers, but what helps me to be with you,
18 it's the simple things, the spirituality. And, this
19 morning, like we do every morning, I went to the sacred
20 fire, put some tobacco for us survivors, family members,
21 men and women, grandmothers, grandfathers, our children and
22 grandchildren, because we know when you come here, it's
23 tough. It's opening wounds, or reopening, or still there
24 very fresh.

25 But, we know also that you have courage.

1 Courage is the best teaching you're giving me everyday, the
2 courage, the strength, the resilience, the love. We feel
3 it. I do. And, what is beautiful also is your respect.
4 My culture, my way, who we are, and you welcome us in your
5 circle.

6 Many people said the Inquiry will solve
7 everything. It is sad when we say that to a survivor or to
8 a family member. We have to say that it's all of our
9 responsibilities. We only have two years to do this, and
10 one more year left.

11 You talk about the extension, Chief Cameron,
12 handsome chief. He's listening. I was wondering if he
13 was. It's a joke. We have to bring in that circle also
14 the Inuit. They deserve to have their truth to be told, to
15 be shared. Same for the Métis people. And, of course, for
16 the nation who speaks French as a second language. So, the
17 country called Canada is so big. So, two years wasn't
18 enough. It wasn't enough to do it in a right way.

19 So, yes, I welcome your support, Chief
20 Cameron, for all the First Nations, Métis, Inuit across
21 Canada. The healing process is an everyday process. This
22 Inquiry is one of the solutions. And, for the first time
23 in our history in this country, it's led by Indigenous
24 people, mostly by women. We need your support. We need
25 the support in order to do it right for the families; for

1 my family, for your families, for all of us. We need to
2 tell our leadership, every province, every territory, the
3 federal government, this is not only one person's
4 responsibility; it's a collective responsibility.

5 We will fight until the end. We will put
6 love until the end, and that end is when we stop breathing,
7 and then we become spirits, and then we will continue. So,
8 today, I wish all of you the time you need to take when you
9 share your truth. I wish that you have that feeling that
10 you're in a safe space. As a mother, this is what I wish
11 for you today. We will receive your truth. We will listen
12 to it. But, most of all, we will do the best we can to
13 honour it. I know we will.

14 We have survivors and family members who
15 work inside of this Inquiry. They remind us every day. We
16 have Elders who work with us, guide us. They remind us
17 every day, "Don't forget why you're doing this and for
18 whom." So, today, again, we will create that chapter where
19 Canada needs to go, and you are doing it. So, I say thank
20 you. *Merci.*

21 **MR. MILTON GAMBLE:** Thank you, Commissioner.
22 At this time, I'm going to call upon Dancing Horse to come
23 up and share another blessing through dance and song. I'll
24 ask him to share a few words with us.

25 **DANCING HORSE:** (Speaking in Indigenous

1 language). Thank you, Creator. It's a new day today. We
2 always respect each other, and we always talk about the
3 woman's life, a woman's spirit, all the things we were
4 left, we always -- a man and a woman always shared. We
5 always tried to look after each other.

6 I was approached last night and told to talk
7 about our drum, about the woman. Long time ago, a woman,
8 she had the drum, but ladies, at the time of wartime, they
9 were too powerful. The men looked after the drum now to
10 this day, and I told him that's true, because I'm a singer,
11 I'm a dancer. I see the women, they do look at us and make
12 sure we watch over that drum in a good way out of respect.

13 We're going to have the women dance on the
14 one side, and the men on this side, out of respect. This
15 is a healing dance. We have a friend from Toronto. She's
16 going to come dance with us. A good people from up south,
17 Treaty 4, the Touchwood Hills area, that's where I come
18 from, Kawacatoose, and my dancers are from Gordon,
19 Muskowekwan and Day Star. We really always try to stick
20 together over there, and try to learn from each other.

21 Our language, Cree and Nackowin (phon), we
22 try to keep that language, too, in our four bands, but
23 sometimes it's hard to keep that. But, I thought I'd pass
24 those good messages on to you people and the families.
25 Really, it was hard for us to -- you know, our hearts are

1 for you. It won't stop here. Keep on going, we told the
2 Elders. You tell your stories and make them listen to you,
3 because they've got to listen.

4 You know, we love our children. I'll do
5 anything for my children. Don't stop here. I thought I'd
6 pass that message to you. I'm kind of getting a little
7 chocked up, because kids are number one to us.

8 **(DRUMMING AND DANCING PRESENTATION)**

9 **MR. MILTON GAMBLE:** We do have some gifts
10 for the singers and dancers, if you could please stick
11 around? Dancers, we have some gifts the Commissioner is
12 going to be presenting to you.

13 We want to thank the drum group and the
14 singers for providing us with those blessings of songs. In
15 our way of life, the way as a dancer and a singer, that
16 drum is life, that everything that we do in this way of
17 life has meaning; the feathers that we carry, the handles
18 that we use, the bustles on our backs, the drum that we
19 use, it all has life. The drum is a spirit. The hide that
20 comes off the drum came off a living animal. So, the
21 spirit of that animal is in that drum.

22 The wood that's surrounding that drum came
23 from a living tree. So, the tree and the connection to
24 Mother Earth is in that drum. I just wanted to share a
25 little bit of that history and knowledge that we have as

1 singers and dancers to our ceremonies.

2 Just a few announcements, we have a masseuse
3 in the house. She was with us during pipe ceremony. We
4 found out that she is a masseuse by trade. Her name is Kim
5 Ocheewehow (phon). There's a sign-up sheet in the main
6 entrance right through these doors here. She's setting up
7 her table next year, and it's \$20 for a 15-minute session.
8 Her services are available for anybody who wants to take
9 advantage of that. You're more than welcome. Lunch will
10 be, again, out in the main area right through these doors.
11 Lunch will be served.

12 We want to thank all those who helped and
13 participated with the opening ceremonies throughout the
14 days of the hearing; the singers, the Elders, the pipe
15 carriers, all those who helped bring that positive spirit
16 to our territories. Here in Treaty 6 territory, we're
17 always welcoming people. We always give thanks and praise
18 to our Creator in the most humble way and the most
19 respectful way we can, and it's always through that pipe
20 that we carry.

21 Apparently, I was cuter than Chief Cameron.
22 I hope he doesn't hear that. I just got told that.

23 We're going to take a few minutes to set up
24 the room here for the next family. So, I'd ask that you
25 bear with us. Give us a few minutes. It will give you

1 time to grab a coffee, grab some water, and we'll be
2 starting in approximately 10 minutes.

3 --- Upon recessing at 9:33

4 --- Upon resuming at 9:43

5 **Hearing # 1**

6 **Witnesses: Eva Potts and Percy Potts**

7 **In Relation to Misty Faith Potts**

8 **Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette**

9 **Orders: none.**

10 **Commission Counsel: Christa Big Canoe**

11 **Grandmothers, Elders, Knowledge-keepers: Sylvia Popovich,**
12 **Florence Catcheway**

13 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

14 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Good morning. Good
15 morning, Commissioner Audette. I would like to introduce
16 the next family that will be sharing a story with you.
17 And, we have both Percy and Eva Potts will be speaking, and
18 they have supports. But, the family would like to begin
19 with a song.

20 **(MUSICAL PRESENTATION)**

21 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Good morning. Do you
22 promise to tell your truth in a good way today? Thank you.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Commissioner
24 Audette, both Percy and Eva will be talking today and
25 sharing the story of Misty Potts. They're going to start

1 by sharing a number of things. And, as you can see by a
2 lot of what they've brought today, that there's a lot of
3 strengths Misty had. And so, to begin, I'm going to ask
4 the family to share some of Misty's strengths, or tell us a
5 little bit about who Misty was.

6 **MR. PERCY POTTS:** (Speaks in Indigenous
7 language). Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's a
8 pleasure to be here. The Creator has given us many
9 languages on this land, and it's up to us to maintain those
10 languages and speak them as much as possible.

11 So, today, we arrive here, and it's really
12 some place that we did want to be. And, the reason why I
13 say that is the way we raised Misty, she was raised around
14 the drum, songs, ceremony, traditional living off the land.
15 We did not allow her to attend Native school, because of
16 what my father had told us. My father said, "These people
17 that are here aren't going to go home. So, you have to
18 integrate with them as quickly as possible. Keep what you
19 have, but learn what they've brought."

20 And so, Misty walked that road. She was a
21 pipe holder, Sundance pipe holder. She danced Pow-Wow.
22 She was a good daughter, sister. She was a decent human
23 being. And, over the years, we watched her struggle
24 through life, and she always maintained herself, and she
25 went back to her beliefs when she had a problem. Wherever

1 she was at, she found people.

2 She tells me some stories about some guy by
3 the name of Orville Looking Glass, or I don't even know who
4 that is, but she hooked up with him in Manitoba. So, she
5 knew how to reach out. It wasn't like she was a dead-end
6 person. She had a lot of promise. She brought us to the
7 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, and we won the top hand
8 drum for the year, and it was quite an honour for us. And,
9 she was the one that was orchestrating all of that.
10 Nothing like that has happened since she's been gone. Our
11 organizer is gone; taken away.

12 To this day, we don't know where she's at.
13 All of the information the RCMP have, they resort to
14 protocol. We have to respect the rights of the suspects.
15 They have more rights than my dead daughter, missing
16 daughter.

17 Back in Alberta, there's a family by the
18 name of McCann. The old man and his wife went missing.
19 Today, there's a gentleman, criminal in jail by the name of
20 Travis Vader, and he's in prison without those bodies ever
21 having been found. So, they did everything that they
22 possibly could to bring that case to a conclusion.

23 Every time we ask them about my daughter
24 Misty, they have an excuse. Not enough boots on the
25 ground. Not enough backup. I don't know if they know

1 anything about forensics. There's been many things that
2 have come forward that they haven't followed up on, and
3 it's at a standstill today, her case. We haven't had any
4 family meetings, community meetings with the team to let us
5 know what has happened to Misty.

6 So, in looking back, the race-based
7 decisions, the discriminatory decisions that are being made
8 because of who we are has to stop. And, I think one of the
9 ways that that has to stop is we ourselves have to stop
10 being victims. We are not victims.

11 Last night, just before I went to bed here,
12 some -- maybe somebody sent that spirit. I don't know.
13 Come into my room making noises in there and trying to
14 sleep. All of a sudden, they just pushed me, like, really
15 hard and in my own language, he said, "(Speaks in
16 Indigenous language). Try to help yourselves. They're not
17 going to help you."

18 And so, when we look at the kind of monies
19 that are being put into this area, a question always comes
20 up in mind. Why wasn't that money allocated towards
21 developing an elite force within the RCMP that would
22 strictly look into this area? This is all they would do.

23 We need boots on the ground, because we
24 don't have any. We don't have anybody out there. Unless
25 we ourselves as families are searching, no one is going to

1 go out there and start searching. The police say they do,
2 but we have no proof.

3 So, I've gone through all kinds of emotions.
4 I even -- I'm a hunter. I can hit a moose at 200 yards
5 through the heart. I could just as easily do that to a
6 drug dealer, and my thinking has gone there. These people
7 that have caused these problems, why don't we kill them
8 all? And, we have talked about it. Native people, white
9 people, it's not just us that they're targeting.

10 Right now, it's just at the talking stage.
11 What happens when somebody actually starts to organize
12 that? A vigilante, and then we'll be going to jail. For
13 what? For work that the justice system is supposed to be
14 doing on our behalf? So, I'm glad it's just been a
15 thought. I haven't gone there.

16 So, losing someone that you love makes you
17 think all kinds of crazy thoughts. All of a sudden, you
18 get up in the middle of the night, in the morning, and you
19 go look some place where you think she might be. And,
20 sooner or later, it starts to dawn on us that we can't find
21 this person because we have no evidence, we have no
22 starting point to look for this individual, because all of
23 the stories are mixed up by the people that she was
24 associated with.

25 So, it's been a tough time for us. Myself

1 personally, I've sat in the bush with a rifle in my mouth
2 twice. And, the only thing that took that barrel out of my
3 mouth is my grandchildren. I thought about my
4 grandchildren. I thought about my children. I thought
5 about, you know, if I do this, this is the easy way out.
6 It's harder to come back and face the reality of what's
7 going on. It's really straining on the mind, on the heart,
8 on the emotions. It weakens your body.

9 Sometimes you don't even want to do
10 anything. The things that you enjoy doing, you find no
11 enjoyment out of because the whole family was there. Now,
12 they're not there through alcohol and drugs, and the things
13 that our young people go to for comfort, because they put
14 themselves in a dead-end space. We can't help them.

15 So, it's difficult for us. I feel for all
16 of you parents, all of you brothers and sisters, husbands
17 and wives, for the missing or murdered Indigenous men and
18 women, because there are men missing, too. It's been going
19 on for a long time. Somehow, this country of Canada has to
20 wake up to that fact that we are not victims, we're not
21 animals; we're human beings, just like them. Well, I don't
22 know if I want to be like them. I want to help.

23 But, there's a lot that needs to be said.
24 But, as a father, I know that feeling of what it's like to
25 lose your loved one. It's something that I don't wish on

1 anybody. It's horrible. At least if you had closure, to
2 see the person, to find the person, whether the person has
3 been dead or murdered, bring that body home and put it
4 away. At least if we had that, that would take a lot of it
5 away. But, we don't even have that. So, there's many of
6 us like that in this country. It's not just only us two.

7 One of the things that I would encourage
8 this Inquiry is to incorporate into it that there are
9 missing women from all races, not just Indigenous people.
10 We cannot be marginalized as, you know, victims. We're not
11 victims. We are a people, a strong people, strong race of
12 people that were given a tract of land that we shared with
13 others, and they have taken advantage of that through
14 genocide.

15 Now, today, we're into suicide and homicide.
16 That's not what was supposed to happen. It was supposed to
17 be a peace treaty where people are supposed to get along,
18 learn each other's culture, respect each other, and work
19 together. That has not happened at all. That's why these
20 things keep happening and our politicians refuse to wake
21 up. The judicial system refuses to wake up.

22 Our children are still being taken off the
23 reserves. Something is wrong and it's not us. The system
24 has to correct itself, because this is not the end. I
25 think this is the tip of the iceberg of what's out there.

1 So, thank you very much.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Eva, can you
3 also share with us about Misty and some of her strengths
4 and what your relationship was like, please?

5 **MS. EVA POTTS:** (Speaks in Indigenous
6 language). Hello. My name is Eva Potts. I'm Misty Potts'
7 little sister. We're 10 years apart, and I guess I'm just
8 going to speak about the items here that I brought today.
9 Back home -- we're from Alberta. We're from Alexis Nakota
10 Sioux Nation. Misty -- sorry, I lost my train of thought.

11 The media was -- like, they were helpful
12 with us in Misty's case. We tried to participate with them
13 and tried to get our story out, but one thing that I really
14 didn't like was they really emphasized on substance abuse,
15 and I don't think that that's right, because that was just
16 a -- that was just a short-lived lifestyle that Misty went
17 through, and we all go through ups and downs, and I don't
18 think that that's right that they always point that out.
19 And, it seems like they point it out to make it seem like
20 it was her fault, or it was -- or to justify why she went
21 missing, and that's not even -- that's not the issue. That
22 shouldn't be the issue. The issue is that it's lack of
23 priority, lack of care on the RCMP part. The issue isn't
24 substance. The issue is them.

25 Misty got -- she went -- when she was 19

1 years old, she left the reserve. She went to school in
2 Edmonton, and in Edmonton, there's a college there called
3 the Yellowhead Tribal College. She went there, and then
4 from there, she found out about a problem, and it was in
5 Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was called CIER, Centre for
6 Indigenous Environmental Resources. And, it was a diploma
7 program, and she applied and -- her and her friend applied,
8 and they were going together. They both got in. Her
9 friend decided that she wasn't going to go last minute, so
10 Misty went by herself at 19.

11 She didn't have nothing when she showed up
12 in Winnipeg. She just had her sleeping bag and her
13 suitcase. And, she built a life over there. She met a
14 professor named Stefan McLellan. I think that's how you
15 say it. But, he encouraged her to further her studies in
16 environment, because she was very -- like my dad said, she
17 was raised on the land. She knew a lot about culture, and
18 the hunting lifestyle, and she had a lot of things to say.

19 So, she had that voice, so he recognized
20 that in her and he encouraged her to go on further, and she
21 went to University of Manitoba and got a degree in Bachelor
22 of Arts. Then she came home and she just talked to the
23 Elders, and they told her she's not done. They sent her
24 back. She went back and she got her Master's of
25 Environment. So, she spent 10 years in Winnipeg.

1 Then she came home and she started a
2 department back home, Environmental Resource, and she did a
3 study on wildlife contamination. I think Saskatchewan has
4 that -- they follow her template now. She's recognized --
5 her work is recognized at the United Nations level.

6 So, I guess you can kind of see, I'm not
7 trying to brag about my sister, but this is my story and
8 this is my time to talk about her, and I've been going
9 through ups and downs of grief, and I want to tell it
10 right. And, I don't like how they always talk about that
11 substance abuse. She was much more than that. Misty was
12 an amazing person. She was the organizer of our family,
13 but she was also a leader back home in Alberta. She did a
14 lot of great things. Like, the plaques there are from our
15 community, and our community was really proud of her. They
16 would always give her these -- she was the first one in
17 Treaty 6 to obtain the highest level of education.

18 She beaded that jingle dress. It's a
19 medicine pouch. She beaded that. That picture of her is
20 when she graduated at CIER, and she was 21. This picture
21 of her up here is when she got her Master's. So, I just
22 wanted to share that about Misty. Misty did a lot more
23 things. And, Misty is also a mother. She has an 8-year-
24 old son. He lives in Winnipeg. She was married, and yeah,
25 just life happens.

1 Misty did a lot. She was a teacher at the
2 college, Yellowhead Tribal College. She was going part-
3 time for her PhD, and we just -- it was just supposed to
4 be, like, a rough time in her life, and we were all -- she
5 came back, and she was heading to rehab, and she just left
6 the house. The last time we saw her, she said she was
7 going to the store, and we never saw her again. She was
8 supposed to be going to rehab, and I was really excited,
9 because I was going to get my sister back.

10 I'm so angry. It took the RCMP a couple of
11 days to even consider her missing, and they wouldn't take
12 us serious. It wasn't until a year later they started
13 doing things. A year later. Like -- and then today, they
14 used to check up on us, and they don't even do that
15 anymore. It's not even -- they don't talk to us. They
16 don't follow up with us. And, there's only so much we
17 could do. We tried to do the best with what we have and
18 the resources that we have, but we really rely on the
19 justice system for this. We can't do it ourselves.

20 If I was going to make a recommendation, I
21 was thinking about, you know, we have -- like, our
22 communities, we have reserves across Canada. There's a big
23 drug problem on the reserves. Let's address that. What
24 does that look like? Let's, you know, I don't know, create
25 our own policing on our reserves or something. I don't

1 know.

2 I don't know what happened to my sister. I
3 can go all kinds of different ways. I have ideas and --
4 it's just we don't know. But, one of the biggest issues
5 was the meth came onto the reserve, and there's a lot of
6 different people on our reserve. They're not from our
7 reserve, you know? They're drug dealers. They're not even
8 Native. You see other races. Let's address that.

9 Like I said, Misty has been missing for over
10 2.5 years now and it's been hard. I just -- I just wish
11 they would have took it more serious. It wasn't taken
12 serious, and I had to -- what do you say? Play nice with
13 the RCMP. I was doing a lot of -- I don't know how to say
14 it. I'm just going to say it the way I know. Like,
15 kissing ass. They said things that were rude and stuff,
16 and I just had to take it because these people, I'm relying
17 on them to find me answers.

18 And, one thing that I want to point out is
19 that there is a videotape, and we asked them to go see it,
20 and they -- I don't remember the name of the RCMP at that
21 time, but he was the first one that was on Misty's case,
22 and he was not a nice guy. He's, like, "We don't" -- I
23 told him there's a surveillance -- there's a witness that
24 said they saw Misty at the store. Can you go there, check
25 their surveillance tape? Because we tried to go there and

1 do it and they said the RCMP has to come do it -- request
2 that information.

3 So, we phoned him, and we were sitting
4 outside the convenience store, and they just -- so, when we
5 phoned him, we told him and he says, "Oh, we can't just go
6 around doing stuff like that." And then my brother, my
7 brother, Percy Jr., he just flipped out on him, and he was,
8 like, "Well, what the F are you there for? Isn't that your
9 job?" And, I had to calm down my brother, because like I
10 said, I was trying to be -- play the nice -- be nice to him
11 so that he can do this, and I'm, like, "Well, isn't there
12 something that you can do?" And, he's, like, "No, we can't
13 just go around doing stuff like that. Sorry."

14 So, when they decided to go do that, it was
15 probably, like, two weeks, almost a month after, and it was
16 recorded over. So, they could never make that connection.
17 And, the person that said that saw her get into the
18 vehicle, the vehicle matches the description of the people
19 that I think are involved with her missing. And, when I
20 talked to the lead investigator, he says, "Oh, their story
21 checks out. Their story checks out." "What do you mean
22 their story checks out?" "Oh, we can't tell you that.
23 It's under investigation." "Okay. Well, what do you think
24 happened to Misty?" "Well, we just think she ran away."

25 I'm just, like, no, she didn't. She didn't

1 run away. Like, they're not listening, and it seems like
2 when they say she ran away, it's like an easy -- it's an
3 easy scape for them. Like, they don't have to do anything,
4 and they didn't even really do anything in the first place.

5 Like, what my dad said, the McCanns, they're
6 Caucasian. Somebody went to jail for that. They made a
7 connection there. Where's the connection with my sister?
8 Oh, their story checks out? Well, what about Travis?
9 Like, it just -- it's frustrating. So, there's no closure.
10 There's no support from them. People tell us, "Oh, take
11 care of yourself."

12 You know, I've been going to counselling for
13 the past 2 years. I've been seeing two different
14 therapists. I go through my ups and downs. I isolated
15 myself for six months after Misty went missing. I almost
16 -- I almost died. It's tough. And, I can't even imagine,
17 like, this is a world -- this is a country, Canada-wide
18 issue, and there's more people. Like, there's a lot of
19 people in my situation.

20 I know that my dad was speaking about it's
21 not only Indigenous women but, you know, the justice system
22 makes it easy for Indigenous women to go missing. Like,
23 it's easy to go murder an Aboriginal woman, because there
24 will be no -- there will be no consequences. Or, maybe
25 they'll just get a slap on the hand. If you did that to a

1 white woman, you go to jail for maybe life. I don't know.

2 I grew up in the city. I was 14, and I used
3 to get chased lots. Like, I'm really -- I could have been
4 missing. But, I was smart. I had to go to school in
5 Edmonton. And, my sister, she was my role model, what she
6 achieved. I was trying to do the same thing, and I was
7 getting chased in the city.

8 But, yeah, I don't know. I'm just rambling
9 now, but yeah, that's what I have to -- yeah.

10 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Earlier, you were
11 saying, you know, Misty was a mom. And, despite her
12 obstacles or what was happening in her life, that tough
13 time in her life, you were convinced that she would not
14 have disappeared willingly because of her son and because
15 of her good upbringing, and teachings, and she would want
16 to be with family; is that fair? Can you tell me a little
17 bit more about -- because I also understand she was working
18 towards a PhD. Do you want to tell us just a little bit
19 more about some of her strengths and her connection to her
20 son?

21 **MS. EVA POTTS:** So, the reason why I don't
22 think she ran away was because Misty's son, you know, she
23 had a hard time, and her and her husband, they separated.
24 They were having marriage problems, and she had a hard
25 time. Like, it started from when my brother, he passed

1 away in 2011, and my brother was really -- we looked up to
2 him, and it was really hard for our whole family, and
3 that's where it started.

4 So, when he passed away, it was December 8th,
5 2011, and then at the end of December, my sister found out,
6 you know, that's when her marriage problems started
7 happening. So, it was just like in the same month, and
8 they separated. She still tried. She tried her best, and
9 she became a single mother, and she just -- her life just
10 fell apart.

11 She wasn't looking after herself the way she
12 was taught, and she kind of just -- I think she had a
13 nervous breakdown. And, you know, we're not perfect and
14 whatever, but she allowed her husband to take Gabriel
15 because she wasn't doing well. And so -- but Lee, her
16 husband, wasn't supposed to move back to Winnipeg or
17 Manitoba, and he made that move. And then after that move,
18 she kind of -- like, she fell off the rails, basically.

19 But, every week, she would call Gabriel.
20 She would call him. She would take contracts here and
21 there and send him money. We talked about getting him
22 back, and she went to Manitoba because they were going to
23 work it out. The year she went missing, she went back over
24 there, and then she wasn't going to work. There was just
25 too much.

1 So, she talked to me on the phone, and we
2 talked for hours, made a plan. She came home. The
3 leadership was going to send her to a rehab in B.C., and we
4 were going to get a lawyer and we were going to get Gabriel
5 back, and we were going to do it. We're looking up. Good
6 things were going to happen, and when she came back, she
7 just -- she was back for about four days. And then after,
8 she just said she was going to go to the store, and she
9 never came back.

10 We knew where she was. That whole week she
11 was on the reserve, we knew what she was doing. But, yeah,
12 no matter what she did or what she was doing, she would
13 always call Gabriel. She would always check up on him.
14 She loved him. Like, that's her son. And, when the police
15 say that she just -- maybe she just took off and went to go
16 start a new life, I don't -- all the time, Misty went to
17 Winnipeg to go to school, and she always came home. She
18 loved her family, no matter what. Whatever she did, she
19 always had to make that connection back with us. You know,
20 every family fights, and even little fights couldn't stay
21 -- we couldn't stay mad at each other too long. It was
22 that love. There's no way.

23 And, I tell them that. I say, okay, yeah,
24 maybe she did go away, but it's, like, she would call her
25 son. She wouldn't just leave her boy like that, and

1 that's, like -- yeah.

2 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, you know, you've
3 already shared with the Commissioner that the police
4 weren't taking it serious. How do you feel? Do you feel
5 if they had -- now they're circulating photos and stuff,
6 but do you feel if they had done that earlier, it would
7 have made a difference?

8 **MS. EVA POTTS:** Yes. I feel like it
9 definitely would have made a huge difference, because we
10 would have had people out there looking for her. We could
11 have caught something earlier on. What if we got that
12 video surveillance? We could have made a connection there.
13 There's a lot of things that they didn't do.

14 They should have -- and like I said, a year
15 after, that's when they started, and they only did that
16 because I got my face into the media and I started calling
17 around and started getting the issue out there, trying to
18 push them to do that. And then it didn't happen until a
19 year, and I had to do that. Not a lot of families can go
20 out and do that. They don't have that. Some people are --
21 they don't. They don't know what to -- and I even tried to
22 contact Edmonton Sun to ask them to do a story. They said
23 no, an RCMP has to do it. I'm, like, what the hell is
24 that?

25 So, I got Global, who helped me, and APTN,

1 and Vice News. And then when they helped me, all of a
2 sudden, the RCMP started doing things. All of a sudden,
3 they were doing a dive, and they told me about it, and told
4 me how much money it costs. And then they said they did a
5 ground search, which I found out by the farmers when I was
6 out there doing a documentary that they didn't even search
7 his land. They searched the ditches. What the hell is --
8 like, we searched the -- I don't know. When we first did
9 our ground searches, we were walking through muskegs, we
10 were walking in a line. We were walking right through deep
11 bush. Like, where were they walking? I don't know.

12 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Well, you've shared
13 about some of the advocacy work you've had to do, and that
14 you've kind of had to raise some of these issues yourself.
15 Can you tell me about some of the other stuff the family
16 has done? I mean, I see the poster, the banner there, but
17 I understand you also did a round dance to raise some
18 awareness. And, you just said something a minute ago, not
19 everyone can do that. So, maybe you sharing some of the
20 tips of how you were able to do some advocacy might help
21 other families. Can you share some of what you guys have
22 done?

23 **MS. EVA POTTS:** Well, some of the things
24 that I've done, it's not only me. It's been a group
25 effort. I guess one of the tips is, like, communities

1 really need to support their members. Like, for me, my
2 community really supported me. They support everything
3 that me and my family do with Misty. It was one of the
4 ladies that said, "We should do something for Misty." You
5 know, Misty believed in song. She believed in prayer and
6 ceremony, and Misty used to always talk about song being a
7 way of prayer.

8 She said that we should have a round dance,
9 you know, get us all together and sing, and maybe Misty's
10 spirit will hear us, you know, bring her home, get us some
11 answers or something. So, that's how we started the round
12 dance the first year. So, 2016, we started it. But, yeah,
13 we do the round dance for prayers, or strength for us, so
14 that mainly so that she can hear us. You know how we
15 opened up with song? We're a singing family. I truly
16 believe every time I sing, she hears me and, you know, even
17 when we were singing there, I was asking her to come be
18 with me and help me say the right things, and have the
19 right words to help us and to help her case.

20 Yeah, so mainly just a lot of the
21 communities, they really need to support their families,
22 the ones that are going through it. Like, I didn't just do
23 that on my own. Lots of people helped. We had help from
24 all over, but it really does help. I made this dress.
25 Misty used to sew. She used to bead. Misty used to do a

1 lot of things. And, me and her, we used to backup sing
2 together, and I couldn't -- we used to Sundance together,
3 and she -- I couldn't go back to the Sundance. I finally
4 went back two -- not last summer, but the summer before I
5 went back, and it felt really good. I get my strength.

6 The first time I went to a round dance was
7 last fall. I went up to sing behind my dad, and I just
8 started bawling, because all these memories started
9 flooding. When one of us was out of tune, we would joke
10 around and push each other and laugh, and that's -- I lost
11 my sister. It took me a long time to even make these
12 things. I kept crying every time I finished something.

13 She was my partner. It's not easy. It's
14 hard. I try, but it's not the same. But, I'm going to
15 keep trying.

16 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Well, we know that
17 Misty got a Master's in Environmental Studies, and we know
18 she was working on a PhD. But, she also created a
19 documentary film about the land, Awakening Spirit. Can you
20 tell me a little bit about that?

21 **MS. EVA POTTS:** That was the contamination
22 wildlife study that I told you she did. I think my dad
23 could probably answer that better. He was her advisor
24 through that whole process. I was just an assistant.

25 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Before you pass it

1 to your dad, though, I think one of the important things,
2 the connection between the harm that's happening to the
3 land and the harm that's happening to Indigenous women, did
4 you want to say anything about that before your dad talks
5 about Awakening Spirit?

6 **MS. EVA POTTS:** The harm that's happening to
7 the land and women?

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** The connection
9 between the harm that's happening to land and to the
10 environment, and the harm that's happening to Indigenous
11 women?

12 **MS. EVA POTTS:** Well, like, what do I think
13 about it? Well, I don't know. My dad, I've been hunting
14 with my dad since I was about eight, nine. We used to go
15 hunting beavers and stuff, and the land would be -- the
16 land isn't the way it used to be when you go out there.
17 There's lots of oil and gas development, and a lot of the
18 animals migrated. We have to now -- we used to just be
19 able to go not too far to go get a moose.

20 But, now we have to travel, spend, like, two
21 full tanks of gas to even go get a moose. The land is
22 pretty -- it's pretty destroyed. We've lost a lot of
23 medicines that aren't even there anymore, berries. They're
24 both being destroyed, I guess. I don't know if it's going
25 to stop. I don't think it is. You know, oil and gas are

1 the money makers in Alberta. Pretty soon, we're going to
2 look like a desert probably. I don't know.

3 But, my dad has more to talk about. Like,
4 he can answer those questions really good.

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thanks. Percy,
6 could you help us with Awakening Spirit and some of those
7 environmental issues your daughter was so passionate about?

8 **MR. PERCY POTTS:** Okay. When Misty was
9 going to go to Manitoba, she came and seen me. So, I took
10 her to this spring by Whitecourt, and I sat down with her
11 there, and I told her, "Look, no one speaks for this water.
12 All the animals that come to this water rely on this spring
13 to stay the way it is, and if the spring is not protected,
14 then the animals are going to lose that resource. And, if
15 the animals lose that resource, we're going to lose the
16 animals. Nobody talks for the animals. So, when you go to
17 Manitoba, I think that's one of the areas that you should
18 look at."

19 And, Misty was kind of like a comic in a lot
20 of ways. She said, "Okay, Dad. You want me to be Bugs
21 Bunny? This means war." You know, Bugs Bunny does that
22 stuff, eh? She watched that. But, that's where she went.
23 And, she had a lot of background. I wasn't the only one
24 that she worked with. There was a gentleman in our tribe
25 of Stoneys by the name of Mel Paul. And, Mel Paul told us

1 a story that was gotten from the east, and it was related
2 to the environment.

3 When the newcomers first came, he said they
4 brought two little snakes with them. One was gold, the
5 other one was silver, and they were small, so they would
6 feed them. They would eat. They started growing, so they
7 fed them more. Over time, from this little one, it filled
8 this room. From filling this room, they filled more area.
9 They started getting bigger and bigger. One day when they
10 went out hunting to continue feeding them, now it's a full-
11 time job feeding those snakes.

12 When they had gone out hunting, those snakes
13 broke out of the pen and they consumed all of the
14 villagers, everything that they could get, they could eat,
15 and they took off this way, except one little boy escaped
16 and he was watching it. He went to see the hunters and he
17 told them what happened. They all went back there. Just
18 complete devastation. Complete devastation.

19 And, those two snakes came west, and I guess
20 the old man that had initially told them to destroy those,
21 told them that now they're loose. They're going to go
22 west. They're going to contaminate the rivers. They're
23 going to consume the land, resources, everything.

24 To us, it was just a story of two snakes. I
25 thought, wow, what a nice story. And then I started

1 looking at the meaning behind it, like gold and silver,
2 timber being cut down, rivers being polluted, natural
3 resources being extracted. We can't even drink water the
4 way we used to, berry patches being destroyed, animals
5 migrating. It's still out there.

6 But, the story goes, according to Mel, that
7 there was a bull that was given, and there were seven
8 arrows that were to be assigned to seven nations. And,
9 when the time is right, that bull will be fired. Those
10 seven arrows will be fired. That's when we start fighting
11 back.

12 And, that's a story that Mel told -- was
13 telling me, and Misty was sitting beside me when that story
14 was being told. She heard every word that was said, and in
15 her thesis, and also in that DVD, that CD that she made she
16 included that part in that to show how industry is -- what
17 it's doing to the environment.

18 Like, if you go out there on the land, our
19 springs are not protected. There's no buffer zones around
20 there. Where medicines grow in the meadows, there's no
21 buffer zones. They're just cleared off. And, if you clear
22 it off, it's going to all dry out. And so, there's no
23 respect for traditional knowledge to include in government
24 policy, and we're the ones that are uncivilized? And,
25 here, civilization comes and destroys everything that's

1 beautiful.

2 So, she seen that, and I think the few times
3 that I talked to Misty, she said, "You know, dad, the
4 problem that we're going to have as Aboriginal people," she
5 used the word, and I've been trying to figure out what that
6 is. She said, "How are you going to quantify traditional
7 knowledge so that the system can understand it?"

8 She said, "Right now, it can't be done.
9 That's why they're not listening to the concerns that we
10 have. The concerns that we have are for their benefit and
11 they're not seeing that. We're not just saying stuff to
12 try and get money off industry. We're seeing something
13 that's going to address the state of the environment of the
14 earth, and we're not being taken serious because they don't
15 see us as influential people. We're not to be listened
16 to."

17 But, the proof is there, she said. I don't
18 know how she knows that, but she said the polar ice cap is
19 melting. There's things happening up there that's
20 affecting what's going on, on Earth. I don't know that.
21 Me, I hunt, I do ceremonies, and I listen to people.

22 But, Misty's legacy is not going to go away.
23 I know that. She was very influential. Sometimes, I think
24 that maybe the Creator allowed her to be with us just for
25 this time, and when I think that, the pain kind of goes

1 away.

2 But, I would still like to see a resolution
3 to what happened to Misty, and if we have, in this country,
4 a judicial system that takes everybody as equal, we will
5 know. But, if race-based decisions, discriminatory
6 decisions, are going to be at the forefront of the judicial
7 system, we're not going to know.

8 I've tried -- I've talked to some people
9 that are supposed to be psychics, Natives and white people.
10 Nothing. They lie. They just take your money, your
11 rifles, your blankets, and they talk to you like they have
12 more information and they don't. I think that's why that
13 thing came last night (speaks in Indigenous language).
14 "Help yourselves. No one is going to help you." I think
15 that's a call for all of us to stand up and not look to
16 somebody else to provide answers for us. If anything, this
17 Inquiry should be directed to do, is to bring the judicial
18 system to the table as quickly as possible, because as we
19 speak, there are still more girls going missing. There are
20 still more women getting killed on both sides, not just
21 Indigenous women.

22 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** We actually have the
23 trailer for Awakening Spirit, and I wanted to ask the
24 family if this is a good time to show it? Yes? Could we
25 please get the trailer for Awakening Spirit, and can you

1 say the name for me? Because I don't speak your language.

2 **MS. EVA POTTS:** Wanorazi Yumnezi. It means
3 Awakening Spirit.

4 --- Whereupon the Trailer for Awakening Spirit was played

5 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, that was just a
6 trailer. The documentary is actually much, much longer,
7 and has more people explaining, sort of, connections of the
8 land, and I know that's an important part of Misty's
9 legacy, but it also kind of talks about what you just
10 talked about, Percy, how important she thought the
11 connections between traditional knowledge and land were.

12 I want to make sure that you guys have an
13 opportunity to share anything else that you wanted with us,
14 or if you had anymore recommendations for the Commissioner?

15 So, actually, we're just going to ask the
16 family members that have joined that are supporting also
17 introduce themselves, and just tell their relationship to
18 Misty.

19 **MS. DAISY POTTS:** My name is Daisy Potts,
20 and I'm Misty's mom, and I love her really lots. I can't
21 talk about her because I just cry.

22 **MS. ROXANNE SUSAN:** Good morning. My name
23 is Roxanne Susan. Misty is actually my husband's relative,
24 but all the years we've been together, I had become close
25 to Misty. We adopted each other culturally as sisters. We

1 bead together, we sew together. She always loved making my
2 daughters stuff, and I will still continue to pray and have
3 hope for our sister to come home.

4 **MS. COURTNEY ALEXIS:** Hi everyone. I'm
5 Courtney Alexis. I'm actually Misty's niece.

6 **MISTY'S COUSIN:** (Speaks Indigenous
7 language). Misty is my first cousin, but -- and she's
8 younger than I am, but the relationship I have with her is
9 there's a -- you look up at the front there, and there's
10 some things, as Eva was talking about earlier on, regarding
11 her and some of the stories that surround her.

12 But, what a lot of the -- one thing that
13 wasn't mentioned here is -- it was mentioned just a little
14 bit, but there is an importance to it. She drove us
15 singers to sing. She was very instrumental in creating the
16 Eagle River Singers. And, as the old man mentioned
17 earlier, she submitted -- she knew what to do with the
18 album that we made, and we ended up winning that Canadian
19 Aboriginal Music Award, and that literally was all her.
20 When we were in the studio, she would tell us what to do.
21 And, although that might seem like it was a commercial
22 thing, she always led everything with ceremony. She always
23 smudged. She always insisted on behaving certain ways.

24 With us, it's a little different. The
25 females in our tribe call the shots. I don't see that

1 anywhere else. I'm not judging anybody, but that's the way
2 it works for us. So, when she would walk in the room, even
3 though she was younger, because she had two things; first
4 off, she's female, and secondly, she carried that pipe.
5 So, there was nothing we could do to trump that, and we
6 didn't feel that we had to, because she would always tell
7 us, "You're going to do it like this, and this is the
8 reason why." Instead of, "Do it like this because I'm
9 telling you." She never took that superior attitude. She
10 took that leadership role in all of us.

11 So, we started singing with her gathering
12 all of us together, and for me, I just wanted that story
13 out that she was very instrumental in the creation of the
14 Eagle River Singers as the founder. Even though there's a
15 lot of us members, you can't say that she's not the
16 founder. Plus, the old man here with all the ceremonial
17 aspects that they would do, one of the requirements wasn't
18 just you show up and go round dance or you show up and go
19 to Pow-Wow.

20 She would always tell the singers, if you're
21 going to sing with us, you better come to the lodges too.
22 You better come to the Sundances. You better come to the
23 sweats. You better come to the (indiscernible). There's
24 lots of songs that make up our people than just the
25 commercial aspect of going to sing at a round dance.

1 And so, that's what Misty's singing was to
2 me, and still is. Sometimes I can't even listen to that
3 record no more because her voice was very -- it's one of
4 the dominant female voices on the album, and if you knew
5 her, you would know what her voice sounds like. And so,
6 when you hear the album, you hear her for the last time,
7 and you get -- I'm sorry.

8 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Thank you for
9 sharing. That was a beautiful story, beautiful words. So,
10 at this point, Percy and Eva, I just want to make sure we
11 haven't missed anything, or if there's anymore
12 recommendations or comments that you want to make before
13 the Commissioner might ask questions or comments?

14 **MR. PERCY POTTS:** I think you should come to
15 Alexis Indian Reservation territory, on the land; not the
16 Sheraton.

17 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** And, that would be a
18 recommendation, that we should be on the land or in
19 community, and not the Sheraton.

20 **MR. PERCY POTTS:** If we're done, we need to
21 sing a song.

22 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** *Merci.*
23 *Merci*, Maître Big Canoe, Daisy, Eva, Percy, and the family.
24 Thank you so much. And, I agree. We should be on the
25 land. And, tonight, we will be given the ashes from the

1 sacred fire. Every time we travel, we bring ashes to the
2 next place we go, and we will be in a First Nation
3 community way up north in Quebec, my First Nation
4 community, eating caribou.

5 But, mostly thinking about you in the sweat
6 Sunday. We will be in a sweat to bring the blankets, to
7 bring the eagle feathers, and the sacred gift that we were
8 given for the families and the work we do. And, I'll think
9 a lot about what you shared to us a lot. And, I hope you
10 are with us, but I would like to go hunting with you also.
11 I don't hunt, but I'm a good person beside the hunter. I
12 eat. This is where I'm good. I have so much to learn. I
13 have to be frank with you.

14 You mentioned about the National Inquiry
15 should bring together or bring the judicial system -- can
16 you explain to me the English? The French, I missed that
17 part, when it was the recommendation part. You talked
18 about we should bring the Inquiry the judicial system?

19 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Bring the judicial
20 system.

21 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Explain to
22 me, please.

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** So, Percy is
24 suggesting that the judicial system should be brought into
25 here or questioned, potentially, as part of an

1 institutional or other hearing, just to come and talk to
2 the Inquiry and address some of the issues. Is that fair?

3 **MR. PERCY POTTS:** The reason why I say that
4 is because that's where we're having the problem. Like, if
5 we had the resources, if we had trained people, we would be
6 working on these cases. But, we don't have trained
7 personnel, and we don't have resources. So, they have the
8 resources, and while we're out here talking, they're still
9 happening, and whatever they have in place is still there.
10 It's not changing. So, the sooner they come here and you
11 ask them questions...

12 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** This Inquiry,
13 where we are right now, it's the community hearings with
14 the families and the survivors and the strong people. The
15 second phase or another phase will be in 2018, in the
16 winter, spring, summer, but we're getting there,
17 institutions. You want to be there? Make sure he's there.
18 Where we're asking the hard questions, where we're
19 expecting the truth.

20 You shared the truth to us, I honour it, I
21 hope they'll do the same, and that is in our prayers, but
22 also in our -- we have something very unique that no -- any
23 Inquiry had the power to say to an institution, "We're
24 subpoena" -- is that what we say in English? "You have to
25 come, and if you don't come, what's the result?"

1 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** A motion to bring
2 them in court.

3 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Voila. So,
4 we'll use that system, but I hope we don't get there. I
5 hope they come. So, *merci*.

6 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Prior to what you
7 would normally do in giving the family gifts, the family
8 would like to close with ceremony.

9 **COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Okay.

10 **MR. PERCY POTTS:** We want to do a song.
11 This song is called Treaty Song, as well as in the old days
12 when a family approaches another family that was camping,
13 they sang this song to let them know that they don't have
14 any negative intentions toward them, that they're coming in
15 peace, so that when they hear that song, they go and greet
16 them and bring them in.

17 So, we want to sing this song for not only
18 Misty, but for all of the ones that are out there, to let
19 them know that we're coming to look for them, and we're
20 doing whatever we can on Earth to try and bring them home
21 to their families.

22 **(MUSICAL PRESENTATION)**

23 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** The Commissioner is
24 actually -- wants to provide the family a gift for sharing
25 their sacred story. The grandmother here will be bringing

1 it for you as well.

2 --- Gifting of eagle feathers

3 **MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** The Commissioner is
4 actually -- and the grandmothers are providing the family
5 with gifts for sharing their sacred stories. The
6 grandmothers in Haida Gwaii had asked that feathers be
7 prepared for all the families that are sharing their
8 stories to respect the sacredness of the story being
9 shared, and she's also handing them seeds, a gift of
10 reciprocity, so that they can grow new life, grow something
11 new. And, it's just a way to say thank you so much.

12 At this point, I'm also going to actually
13 just ask for a 15-minute break. So, there will be another
14 hearing commencing here in about 15 minutes, if we can all
15 keep on time? Thanks.

16 **Exhibits (code: P01P06P0301)**

17 **Exhibit 1:** Trailer of Awakening Spirit, which was played
18 on monitors during public hearing.

19 **Exhibit 2:** Electronic folder of two images shown in
20 public testimony.

21 --- Upon recessing at 11:13

22 --- Upon resuming at 11:35

23 **Hearing # 2**

24 **Witnesses: Carol Wolfe, Josephine Longneck, Brenda O'Neill**
25 **and Dortha Swiftwolfe**

1 **In Relation to Karina Beth Ann Wolfe**
2 **Heard by Chief Commissioner Brian Eyolfson**
3 **Commission Counsel: Wendy van Tongeren**
4 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Good morning,
6 everybody. My name is Wendy van Tongeren. I am one of the
7 Commission counsel, and I am here to help with the talk
8 that comes from the family, the next family on the list.
9 This is a family that -- this situation was actually
10 scheduled for quarter after, and it's taken a little while
11 for us to get ready. But, nevertheless, we're ready now.

12 And, the family is -- the main speaker is
13 Carol Wolfe speaking of her daughter, Karina Wolfe, and we
14 will start with a prayer.

15 --- Opening prayer

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** To start, I shall
17 pass the microphone to my right, to have each member of the
18 family members here and the supports and the interpreters
19 to identify themselves for the record. Please give your
20 first name and your last name. So, for me, it was Wendy
21 van Tongeren, that's my name, and I'm counsel.

22 **MS. JOSEPHINE LONGNECK:** Good morning,
23 everyone. My name is Josephine Longneck. I'm Carol's
24 aunt. I'm from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

25 **MS. BRENDA O'NEILL:** Good morning. My name

1 is Brenda O'Neill, I'm also Carol's aunt, and I'm also from
2 Muskeg Lake.

3 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** Carol Wolfe. My daughter
4 is Karina Wolfe, missing.

5 **MS. DORTHEA SWIFTWOLFE:** Good morning.
6 Dorteia Swiftwolfe. I'm Carol's support from Victim
7 Services with the Saskatoon Police Department.

8 **MR. TYLER BURGESS:** Tyler Burgess and Dean
9 Weeps (phon), language interpreters, Saskatchewan Deaf and
10 Hard of Hearing Services.

11 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Now, there is an
12 agenda, so we have lots to do this morning. And, I
13 anticipate that all of these women will speak, and the
14 chosen ritual before they start to speak is an affirmation
15 using the eagle feather as the symbol of good speech.

16 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Great. Wendy, if you
17 could pass the sacred feather, then, to the first witness.
18 Okay. Good morning, Carol. I believe Carol will start?
19 Okay. Okay. Good. Carol, do you promise to tell your
20 truth in a good way today?

21 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** Yes.

22 **MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG:** Okay. Thank you.
23 Okay. And, I think, Carol, if you can pass the feather to
24 Dorteia. And, good morning, Dorteia. Do you promise to
25 tell your truth in a good way today? Okay. Thank you.

1 And, we'll pass the feather down to the
2 other end. Okay. Brenda, good morning. Do you promise to
3 tell your truth in a good way today? Thank you.

4 And, Josephine, good morning. Do you
5 promise to tell your truth in a good way today? Okay.
6 Thank you.

7 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Carol, would you
8 like to hold the feather when you're speaking?

9 Good morning, Carol. I know that you have
10 worked long and hard for many years for this day and this
11 opportunity to speak to the Commissioner, and you spent
12 tremendous effort, even in the last week, getting ready to
13 do so, with your family and with Dortehea, with your
14 interpreter friends. And so, at this point, I'm just
15 communicating to you that it's time to start. You are the
16 lead. Please start when you're ready.

17 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** My name is Carol Wolfe.
18 My daughter, Karina Beth Ann Wolfe, was missing for five
19 years -- five and a half. She was located deceased. The
20 picture I have brought with me today is all I have left of
21 my daughter, Karina. My daughter Karina was stolen. My
22 daughter Karina was missing and murdered.

23 My daughter Karina was a talented writer and
24 artist. She had dreams and goals. From the moment she was
25 born, she was strong. At three days old, she was holding

1 her head up and looking around. She would look up at me
2 and I just knew that she was looking at me, knowing I was
3 her mother, and she was loved.

4 Karina, from an early age, loved to read and
5 write. She would sit for hours reading and writing in her
6 journal. To read for hours, she would write poems, stories
7 just about her day. When she was not writing or reading,
8 she would create beautiful pieces of art. She would paint
9 or create art with little pieces of paper. Karina was
10 gifted and very creative. She was self-taught.

11 I remember how proud she was to learn how to
12 bead. She was -- she made beautiful earrings, lanyards,
13 bracelets and dream catchers. I remember how much she
14 loved her little brother, Desmond. At first, she was not
15 sure as she was the only -- she only wanted me to hold --
16 to carry her, but the love she had for her brother can't be
17 put into words. I remember one time I went to check on
18 them and I thought Karina would be sleeping on the bed and
19 Desmond would be on the floor, but it was the other way
20 around; Karina was on the floor and Desmond was on the bed.

21 Karina had a passion for reading and
22 writing. I can picture her sitting on the couch reading.
23 Karina had a smile that would light up a room, would light
24 up the hearts of people with her.

25 Karina grew into a beautiful woman. Just

1 like a butterfly, Karina is and always will be my
2 butterfly. Karina was full of love and always brought a
3 smile to people's faces, just like a beautiful butterfly
4 does when people see one.

5 Being deaf with two hearing children, my son
6 Desmond always said they were lucky as they had a secret
7 language, as they could be across the room from each other
8 and still be able to communicate. I remember the first
9 words that she signed to me and they were, "I love you,
10 mom."

11 As a young woman, Karina struggled with
12 addictions, but sought out help. Karina completed
13 treatment and was getting back on track. Karina always
14 knew that she would bring change through her art, whether
15 that being written word or painting.

16 Karina had goals, she wanted to graduate,
17 she wanted to go to university, fall in love and have
18 children. She would say, "Mom, when I have children, I'm
19 going to teach them to paint and draw."

20 Karina was the type of person who always
21 tried to do what was right, and to lend a helping hand to
22 anyone in need. She was a light, a light of change, a
23 light of hope. Karina was a fighter. She would always
24 stand up for her brother as young children and as a young
25 woman. If she felt anything was wrong, she was ready to

1 fight to make it right. Karina loved her family and was
2 very proud of her family.

3 Karina went missing July 2nd, 2010, that was
4 the last day I saw her. My last words to her were, "Are
5 you coming home tonight" and "I love you." Karina did not
6 come home, and I was a little worried as she never came
7 home or called. After three days, I was so scared as I had
8 no idea where she was.

9 I went out each day and each night searching
10 for her. I just could not rest or sleep as I was so scared
11 and needed to find her. I walked and walked and stopped
12 anyone who would stop and read my note. I had a note and a
13 picture of her that I carried to show to anyone. Some
14 people stopped, not at all, and I wanted -- all I wanted to
15 yell, "Please stop and listen. Look at the picture of my
16 beautiful daughter. She is missing and I need to find her.
17 I need to bring her home."

18 I just walked and continued to walk all
19 over, looking for her. Her brother, Desmond, walked all
20 over, searching, asking friends and anyone who would help.
21 I searched her Facebook, seeing if anything new was posted.
22 Putting messages for her to call me, to come home, just in
23 case she might see them.

24 Karina had a pink cell phone, as pink was
25 her favourite colour. I called it over and over, until the

1 battery died on her phone. I searched and looked for 18
2 days and I just could not find her. No matter where I
3 looked, I could not find her. My birthday is a day that
4 she never missed. She would always be with me to
5 celebrate. My birthday came and passed. That evening, I
6 just sat and waited. I don't know if I fell asleep. I was
7 worried, filled with panic.

8 July 20th, 2010 is the day I went to the
9 police station by myself without an interpreter. I knew I
10 needed help to locate my daughter. When I arrived, I took
11 a picture and a note to give to the police. I handed my
12 note to the officer. He just looked and acted like it was
13 not important. He ignored me. I was so angry as he was
14 not helping me. I banged my hand hard on the counter, that
15 is when he looked at me and handed me a witness statement.

16 I had no idea what I was to do with that
17 paper. No one explained what I needed to write on that
18 green paper. I looked for the officer to help me, but he
19 was busy on his computer, acting like I was not important
20 or what I needed was not important. Once again, I slammed
21 my hand hard on the desk. Finally, a big man in a white
22 shirt came and tried to help me. Once I was done with the
23 paper, I gave it to the big man in the white shirt and I
24 left.

25 I left the police station very angry and

1 upset. The next day, I went back to the police station
2 with an interpreter and filled out and completed my
3 statement. Without an interpreter, communication was
4 difficult. As I went alone, I felt unheard and dismissed
5 simply because they chose not to hear me, help me to locate
6 my daughter.

7 For two weeks, I had no idea what was
8 happening, or if the police were even looking for my
9 daughter, as no one came to see me or call me. All I
10 wanted and needed was to be notified that, yes, they have
11 my report, and yes, they are out there looking for my only
12 daughter.

13 Roughly two weeks later, I think it was
14 August 4th, 2010, three people came to the house, Sergeant
15 Bruce Gordon, Constable Rebecca Parenteau (phon) and
16 Dortehea Swiftwolfe from Victim Services. They wrote out to
17 me that they came to ask me a few questions regarding my
18 daughter's case.

19 I was so afraid of what they were going to
20 tell me, and for some reason, I felt guilty, like I did
21 something wrong, even though I knew I had no reason to feel
22 like that. This meeting was difficult and some things were
23 miscommunicated as they did not bring an interpreter with
24 them. They came to let me know that they were searching
25 for my daughter and wanted to make sure they had the right

1 information.

2 At first, I really did not trust the police
3 or Dortehea from Victim Services. I did not understand
4 everything they were telling me as everything was written
5 down, but they wrote that they would keep searching for my
6 daughter, Karina.

7 I did not know or trust Dortehea, but she
8 just kept showing up, sometimes three times a week, to give
9 me updates and just to see how I was doing. Communication
10 was slow as most of the time there was no interpreter, but
11 -- when we would sit and talk or when I would receive an
12 update from the police. Like I said, I did not trust her,
13 but she just kept showing up. Slowly I began to trust her
14 and realized she was there to help me.

15 My auntie, Josephine Longneck, came to help
16 me look for my daughter and to hand out posters. Every
17 time she would travel, she would carry her poster to hand
18 out. Josephine would talk to the Chief to help me to help
19 him understand that Karina needed help as she was missing.
20 My auntie, Josephine, has done so much for me. I would
21 have been lost without her help.

22 I started to make a binder with every new
23 paper clipping that had a story about my daughter, Karina.
24 The first report was in August. I was a little upset as
25 the news kept reporting that my daughter had an addiction

1 to drugs, to meth. They never wrote that she had just
2 completed treatment before she went missing. They never
3 wrote that she had decided to go into treatment on her own.

4 The next release was done on the 12th of
5 August, 2010, with a picture of my daughter and her
6 description. It explained who I saw her with last and how
7 she was making process -- progress in her addiction.

8 At least once a month, my daughter's story
9 was in the news, asking for help to find her. The police
10 and Crime Stoppers would release her story monthly, and
11 with all that, there was no news. February 17th, 2011, they
12 released a story how one girl was located and then how many
13 others were still missing. When I saw the caption, Missing
14 Girl Located, I was excited that it might be my girl, my
15 daughter, but I knew it was not her as Dortehea told me
16 earlier that day about the news release. Dortehea promised
17 that she would tell me first, before the news, when they
18 found her or had any new information regarding my daughter.

19 With the one-year mark coming, we planned to
20 have a walk to bring attention that we were still looking
21 and we will never stop looking. July 2nd, 2011 was the
22 first candlelight vigil and walk. With the help of my
23 family, Child Find and Women Walking Together, Victim
24 Services and Saskatoon Police Service, we walked holding
25 signs and pictures. Many people don't realize that there

1 is a cost for posters, water for the walkers, candles, so
2 we held bake sales, steak nights, auctions, and asked for
3 donations from the organizations in the City of Saskatoon.

4 Josephine and Dortehea helped me set up
5 interviews with the media, so that I could always have her
6 story in the media. My Aunt Josephine made t-shirts for
7 everyone to wear, as well as a big banner that we would
8 carry while we were walking. My Aunt Josephine would
9 travel out of town to different cities, when she could, to
10 hand out flyers and to search for Karina.

11 One year, I attended a family gathering up
12 in Muskeg that was set up by Angie Bear. I had never went
13 camping before. I thought I was prepared, and I was not.
14 I was so cold the first night there. I texted my auntie on
15 the same day I saw her driving in the campsite with her
16 camper for me to stay in. Josephine introduced me to her
17 network of friends and co-workers to assist with
18 fundraising. That is when I met Lorna Arcand (phon). Lorna
19 and my aunt, Josephine, held fundraising events to help
20 with the cost of the search for my daughter.

21 With the help of a friend, Pam, we even made
22 a Facebook page, "Where is Karina Beth Ann Wolfe?" My
23 friend would keep it updated and add pictures from the
24 walks. And, when the media would do a story, it was added.
25 Pam helped me set up a bank account for all the monies we

1 raised for the searching of my daughter.

2 With friends from the SDHHS and my friends
3 who are hearing impaired community, I was never alone in
4 regards to my walks or fundraising. They were always there
5 with me. My friend Janet was a strong support, for she
6 always tried to make sure I was okay. When I was living in
7 Prince Albert before my daughter went missing, I met two
8 wonderful people, Gordon and Sue Hine (phon). Each time I
9 needed support, they would come. Even after each ceremony
10 I held, they came. When I did the documentary, My Only
11 Daughter, it was Sue who was my voice. Sue is also an
12 interpreter for the Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing
13 Services, and I am so lucky to have my support like the
14 SDHHS, as they have been my voice through this ordeal.

15 October 4th, 2011, I spoke at the Annual
16 Sisters in Spirit Walk. This was the first time I spoke in
17 front of people who understood what it meant to have a
18 missing loved one. Darlene Okemaysim and Myrna LaPlante
19 from Women Walking Together asked if I would speak, as they
20 were a support for my family and I. With the help of Myrna
21 and Darlene, I finally understood what it meant, the
22 concept of what murdered and missing was as, you see, for
23 the first few years, I had no idea what that meant.

24 I was asked in 2013 if the Saskatoon Police
25 could do a YouTube video for Missing Persons Week, which is

1 in May. I said yes. Sergeant Randy Huisman, Dorteia and
2 the RCMP created a seven-minute video of Karina's case.
3 This video was shown at the launch of Missing Persons Week
4 in May of 2013.

5 During the launch, I spoke about my
6 daughter, Karina, and asked if anyone saw her, to let her
7 know I was looking for her and needed her to come home.
8 That same week, we held a birthday week for Karina on May
9 7th at the Indian Métis Friendship, and we invited the media
10 community and all who loved her to come and attend.

11 That first week in May, we had a billboard
12 put up on 20th Street and Idylwyld Drive. This was made
13 possible through fundraising and with the help of Indian
14 and Métis Friendship Community Centre of Saskatchewan.
15 Dorteia Swiftwolfe, Jennifer Strongarm (phon) and Curtis
16 Puche (phon) from Victim Services designed the billboard.

17 When we were working on the billboard, we
18 did not want it to just be another missing persons'
19 billboard. We wanted people to realize it was my daughter
20 and not just another missing person or another statistic.
21 We wanted to make a connection with the general public.
22 Karina's billboard had the caption, "Talented artist and
23 writer," with all the police numbers. Karina's billboard
24 remained for the whole month of May 2013.

25 If Dorteia could not be there to help the

1 other members from Victim Services -- if Dorthea could not
2 be there, the other members of Victim Services would come
3 to help and would also come to visit with Dorthea from time
4 to time. Every walk and vigil, Jennifer Strongarm and
5 Dorthea were there. Throughout the years, their team
6 changed and I met two other wonderful ladies, Loretta
7 Johnston and Ashley Jestan (phon).

8 During this time, I was also going to family
9 meeting to help create a monument for the murdered and
10 missing. Saskatoon Tribal Council held many family
11 meetings with other families, including myself, to come up
12 with an idea of what it should look like. I was not sure
13 what I wanted to see, but I knew that I wanted butterflies.
14 I wanted butterflies as my daughter was a butterfly. On
15 May 5th, 2017, the unveiling of the statue was held in front
16 of the police station.

17 Through the years, when my daughter was
18 missing, her file was handled by many different
19 investigators. I am sure only four, Sergeant Bruce Gordon,
20 Randy Huisman, Sergeant Tony Benouche (phon) and Kevin
21 Montgomery. Each time they would change, they came out to
22 my house to introduce the new investigator that would be
23 working on my daughter's file. Even though they would no
24 longer be working on her file, all the investigators stayed
25 in contact with me, even the Chief of Police, Clive

1 Weighill, always made time for me to have meetings or to
2 bring attention to my daughter's case. He would always
3 make mention of it when he was talking to the media.

4 For five and a half years, almost six years,
5 I searched -- they searched for my daughter, Karina. In
6 November of 2015, a man by the name of Jerry Constant
7 turned himself into the police station and led them to
8 Karina's body. The team of Dortehea; Kevin Montgomery, lead
9 investigator; Tony Benouche, second investigator; Deputy
10 Chief Bernie Pannell; Linda Perrett, Coordinator of Victim
11 Services, came over to let me know that they had found
12 Karina's body and that she was dead. Saskatoon Deaf and
13 Hard of Hearing came shortly after as they wanted to let me
14 know before the news release. Desmond was contacted and
15 arrangements were made for him to be brought home by taxi
16 so that he could be told that Karina was gone.

17 It was extremely emotional. I was overcome
18 with great sadness and anger. It was a good team and they
19 were able to work with Desmond as he was so shocked and
20 upset, he was ready to punch a hole in the wall. The team
21 was so supportive with him, they helped settle him down, to
22 get to a place where he was not angry -- not so angry. At
23 that time, all I really wanted to know is where they found
24 Karina. Within hours, we were driven out to the site, the
25 site is by the airport, she was so close and we never knew.

1 My Aunt Josephine, was called and notified that they found
2 her remains and the rest of the family came in from Muskeg.

3 Most of the team left, except for Dortehea.
4 After we returned to home to wait for the rest of the
5 family, Dortehea stayed with me the rest of the day, into
6 the night. She wanted to console me as I wept throughout
7 the night. Those first few days, people were coming and
8 going to support me, the support from Saskatoon Tribal
9 Council, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations.

10 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** At this juncture,
11 this is as far as Carol got because she found it so
12 upsetting and -- to be writing this out. So, the next plan
13 here is that she has a victim impact statement, because the
14 matter moved on and this fellow was actually charged and
15 pled guilty to murder and was sentenced. And so, in the
16 court process, there is the opportunity for a victim impact
17 statement, and so Carol is going to read hers.

18 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** My name is Carol Wolfe and
19 my only daughter was Karina Beth Ann Wolfe. This is the
20 most difficult thing I have ever been asked to write, to
21 put into words the loss of my daughter, to put into words
22 the heartache that I live with daily, to put into words the
23 pain, heartache and suffering that you caused my family and
24 me with your unspeakable actions, to put into words the
25 emptiness I am left with as Karina was my only daughter.

1 A bond between mother and daughter is a very
2 special bond. The bond is filled with love and happiness,
3 just to be close together, to hug each other and to simply
4 say, I love you. These are things that I can no longer do
5 with my daughter, Karina. From the first time I held her
6 in my arms, I knew Karina was special. I was surprised how
7 strong and alert she was. She was lifting her head already
8 at three days and only to look at me to smile at me, her
9 mother.

10 It was not easy at first, as I cannot speak
11 or hear. I would hold her close to me and sign to her. I
12 had to teach her so we could communicate. The first word
13 she signed to me was mom, mother, quickly followed with, I
14 love you. As Karina grew, she learned to sign and she
15 helped me to teach her brother to sign, how she loved her
16 little brother.

17 Karina had a passion for reading and
18 writing, painting and drawing, and journaling. It was
19 clear as a child, always writing or painting. She could
20 sit for hours reading, and then writing, and then back to
21 reading. Karina was very intelligent as she received
22 awards through her years in school.

23 Karina grew into a beautiful young woman.
24 People would say that her smile would light up the room. I
25 would say she lit up my world, my heart and my spirit.

1 Karina was my butterfly. Karina was full of love and the
2 -- and the way a beautiful butterfly makes people smile,
3 that she was and will always be to me. As Karina grew into
4 a beautiful young lady, she struggled, she had issues, but
5 she was working on them.

6 Karina completed treatment and was planning
7 to finish school as she strongly believed that she could
8 change in the world through her writing and artwork. As a
9 parent, I supported her with her dreams and goals she had
10 set out for herself. She wanted to finish school, go on to
11 university, fall in love and have children. These things
12 will never happen as you decided that she did not deserve
13 to live out her dreams.

14 I have been asked how this affected my life,
15 there are a few things I need you to try to understand.
16 For five and a half years, I waited. I waited for her to
17 walk through my door. I waited to see her. I waited to
18 see -- I waited for any news regarding my daughter. For
19 five and a half years, I prayed that she would find her way
20 home. I prayed for five and a half years, I prayed that
21 she was not suffering. I prayed no one was hurting her and
22 I prayed she would find her way home.

23 For five and a half years, I searched all
24 over for my girl. For five and a half years, I walked and
25 walked to look for her. For five and a half years, during

1 rain, snow, heat to search for my daughter, for my only
2 daughter. For five and a half years, I longed for her,
3 longed to see her face, longed to touch her, longed to tell
4 her I love you. For five and a half years, I would call
5 out her name. For five and a half years, I held onto hope,
6 hope for a sign. For five and a half years, I would tell
7 her story, hoping someone would tell where she was. For
8 five and a half years, I carried her picture, showing it to
9 anyone who would look.

10 I fundraised and asked people for donations
11 to help me keep her story in the media. I asked for help
12 from everyone to be able to pay for posters and a
13 billboard. I remember when I was baking cookies for a
14 sale, I wished I was baking for Karina to eat and not for
15 monies to help me find her. Anything I could do or ask to
16 help me find my daughter, I did.

17 Without the help of Saskatoon Police
18 Service, Chief Clive Weighill, Sergeant Kevin Montgomery,
19 Inspector Randy Huisman, retired member Bruce Gordon,
20 Detective Constable Rebecca Parenteau, Victim Services,
21 Dortehea Swiftwolfe, Ashley Jestan, Loretta Johnston, Women
22 Walking Together, Myrna LaPlante, Darlene Okemaysim-
23 Sicotte, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Chief Felix Thomas,
24 Crystal Laplante, Marge Wichillen (phon), Federation of
25 Sovereign Indigenous Nation, Vice-Chief Kimberly Jonathan,

1 Third Chief Dutch Lerat, Saskatoon Deaf and Hard of
2 Hearing, the journey would have been more difficult as they
3 were there to be my voice when I could not speak. They
4 were the voice for my daughter.

5 Jerry, what you did shattered my family,
6 shattered me, my heart, my spirit, my soul. You took my
7 only daughter, and then left her like she was garbage,
8 garbage you threw in the ditch. Karina was not garbage,
9 she was my only daughter. Each day that goes by is still a
10 struggle. I struggle now, anxiety, panic attacks, unknown
11 fears, I am always in a state of worry. Each time my son
12 goes out, the fear and the panic sets in. I am so worried
13 that someone will take him away, hurt him and kill him. I
14 sit at home and cry until he comes home as I fear I will
15 lose him as I did Karina. My life is completely upside
16 down. I burst out into an uncontrollable cry as I cannot
17 make sense of why you did this to my beautiful daughter, my
18 beautiful butterfly.

19 Jerry, I will never be able to understand
20 why you stole my daughter. I will never be able to
21 understand why you murdered my daughter. I will never be
22 able to understand why you thought you had the right to
23 murder my daughter. Jerry, the pain and suffering you
24 caused my family is something I pray that never happens to
25 another family. My family is broken. My heart is broken.

1 We are just broken. Broken by actions.

2 Let's make it clear, maybe Karina did not
3 mean anything to you, but to me and to my family, she was
4 our everything. Karina was my daughter, a sister, an
5 auntie, a cousin, a niece, a grandchild, and she was loved.

6 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Carol is going to
7 read now, a poem that was one that was presented at
8 Karina's memorial.

9 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** My angel up in heaven, I
10 wanted you to know I feel you watching over me everywhere I
11 go. I wish you were with me, but that can never be.
12 Memories of you in my heart that only I can see. My angel
13 up in heaven, I hope you understand that I would give
14 anything if I could hold your hand. I'd hold you oh so
15 tightly and never let you go, and all the love inside me to
16 you I would show. My angel up in heaven, for now we are
17 apart, you'll always live inside me, deep within my heart.

18 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, you have two
19 pictures. They're the same picture, but one is in a frame
20 here? And, the same picture is on a binder. And, the
21 binder that Dortehea is picking up now, is that where you
22 put all the many, many reports and things to be said about
23 Karina for many years?

24 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** Yes.

25 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, we thank you

1 very much, because Dortehea, with your permission, made a
2 copy of that entire binder that you're going to leave with
3 the Commission; is that correct? Thank you very much.

4 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** Yes.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** So, if the camera
6 could just zoom in on the photograph? Do you want to hold
7 this photograph? Carol, is there anything else you'd like
8 to say before we move this onto Dortehea?

9 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** It's been two years since
10 we found -- sometimes I'm very emotional. I don't go out
11 much, I stay home and I have to keep going to meetings, I
12 have to keep being positive and I have to keep being
13 surrounded with support. I miss my daughter so much. It's
14 been a long two years. I'm doing okay, but it's hard for
15 me. That's all.

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you. And, to
17 your right, there is a woman -- to your right, there is a
18 woman, Dortehea, who has helped you through these
19 challenges. So, Dortehea, would you like to tell us some of
20 the challenges that you faced and I provided some questions
21 to you that perhaps you could address, including you
22 brought a couple of binders with your materials that have
23 been developed to assist people who are in this situation
24 that Carol has been in. Go ahead.

25 **MS. DORTHEA SWIFTWOLFE:** A question that I

1 was asked is, what is your job and how did it start? So,
2 what I'm going to do is give you a little history, and then
3 I'll go into how I met Carol. Before my job was created,
4 Sask Justice and the Partnership of Missing Persons held
5 meetings, and out of these meetings were recommendations.
6 And, one of the recommendations was a need for a Missing
7 Persons liaison to support the families. The final report
8 was done in 2007. The partnership held meetings with the
9 families as well in regards to the recommendation.

10 In my current position, I was hired in
11 February of 2012. The first year and a half consisted of
12 research and development with the other two Missing Persons
13 liaisons who are Rhonda Fiddler, who is located in Regina,
14 and Chezanne Turner out of Prince Albert, who is no longer
15 there. Currently, there are only three Missing Persons
16 positions in the Province of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon,
17 Regina and Prince Albert. Once we completed our research,
18 the development of the Family Toolkit and the support guide
19 was created. The support guide is to assist other Victim
20 Services units throughout the Province of Saskatchewan when
21 a Missing Persons report is made.

22 Within the toolkit, there are sections to
23 assist the families with making a police report, what to do
24 within the first 24 hours, 48 and beyond. The toolkit
25 explains how to navigate through a police investigation,

1 the policies and procedures in regards to a Missing Persons
2 report and finally how to work with the police. The
3 Missing Persons liaison is supposed to be and to assist
4 between families and police.

5 Just to highlight a few sections in the
6 toolkit, which can be found in the Sask Justice website.
7 Community organizations that will assist with such things
8 as respite. And, when I'm talking about respite, I am
9 talking about places where families can go just to have a
10 quiet moment. Community organizations that will help with
11 printing posters, telephone access, computer access. A
12 place where the children can go, because sometimes if a
13 family with missing persons has little ones that are left
14 behind. A communications log, a contact list, working with
15 the media and how to set up a page for the internet.

16 Within this support guide that is used by
17 other Victim Services units throughout the province, there
18 are sections that have been developed to assist the worker
19 to meet the needs of the family. Just to highlight a few,
20 the federal grant for murdered and missing children, to
21 presume death act, how to connect with search and safety,
22 how to support hope and how to set up vigils.

23 I first met Carol Wolfe in 2010 as I was
24 asked to come and offer support as the investigators were
25 heading over to her home to do some follow-up questions. I

1 attended the meeting and I can honestly say we struggled as
2 we did not have an interpreter to assist, so there was a
3 lot of writing. When I first met Carol, I was in a
4 different role within Victim Services, and Carol was a
5 little hesitant as she did not know or have any idea why I
6 was there, or how I could help or what I could offer.

7 Together, we forged a relationship and
8 planned on what we needed to do in regards to searching for
9 Karina. Together, we made posters that we could hang up in
10 stores and hand out. Our first vigil was held with the
11 help of community organizations such as Child Find, Women
12 Walking Together and the Saskatoon Police Service.

13 The first few years were very difficult as
14 communication between myself and Carol was a learning
15 process as our meetings and home visits, we did not always
16 have an interpreter. There was a lot of writing. And,
17 Carol would try to teach me sign language during the time
18 we spent together.

19 Throughout the journey of searching for
20 Karina, there were struggles, communications, proper
21 support, monies for posters, using the TTY program and how
22 communication was still and always a hurdle, even
23 counselling was difficult to locate. First of all, for
24 someone who is hearing impaired and dealing with the love
25 of a lost one, and then to locate a therapist who is

1 trained, who can sign and has a level of understanding of
2 what ambiguous loss is. There are two types of ambiguous
3 loss. One is where there's a physical absence and a
4 psychological presence. Type two is where there's a
5 physical loss and a psychological presence.

6 So, I just want you to imagine when a family
7 has a missing loved one, they're dealing with type one.
8 So, you have to imagine every day for families who are left
9 behind are walking around with a large part of their heart
10 missing. But, with the help through Sask Justice and
11 Greystone Bereavement Centre, they saw the need for some of
12 our families and they have on staff a trained ambiguous
13 loss therapist. The counselling service is also free of
14 cost. As many people may not be aware that going missing
15 is not a criminal offence. It turns into a criminal
16 offence when it's suspicious.

17 Throughout the five-and-a-half-year journey,
18 Carol and myself learned how to work with the media. We
19 always kept Karina's story in the public eye by using the
20 media, posters, Facebook and through the vigils. Carol was
21 approached by a film producer, Marcel Petit, who made a
22 very short film that's posted on YouTube. A few years
23 later, she was approached again by a film producer, Grace
24 Smith, and she created, "My Only Daughter", which is a 22-
25 minute documentary that depicts Karina's story and Carol's

1 journey from start to finish.

2 There were struggles throughout the years,
3 one is the cost for interpreters, where the funds will come
4 from. Majority of the time, our meetings and home visits,
5 we did not have one. But, when there were meetings with
6 investigators and media, or when Carol would share her
7 story, we always made sure we had an interpreter.

8 After the arrest of Jerry Constant and
9 Karina was located deceased, it was very difficult to see
10 the pain and heartache that no family should go through. I
11 stayed with Carol for many days and many hours. The Chief
12 of Police was out of town when the family was notified, so
13 that weekend once his plane landed, he came directly from
14 the airport to see Carol and Desmond to offer their
15 condolences and to make sure they were okay.

16 During the court process, it was difficult
17 again to see, and the battle continued who would pay for an
18 interpreter arose, but with the help of the Saskatoon Deaf
19 and Hard of Hearing, this need was met. With the
20 assistance through Saskatoon Deaf and Hard of Hearing of
21 Saskatoon throughout the journey, they are and still an
22 amazing support.

23 The day of sentencing and reading the victim
24 impact statements was very difficult, an emotional day as I
25 read Desmond's into record. Throughout the journey with

1 Carol and Desmond, there are many supporting organizations
2 such as Saskatoon Tribal Council, Saskatoon Tribal Chief
3 Felix Thomas and Crystal Laplante and many staff who made
4 sure our voice was heard during the creation of the -- and
5 the family meetings for the MMIW monument that is currently
6 in front of the Saskatoon Police Headquarters; the
7 Federation of Sovereign Nations, Vice-Chief Kim Jonathan,
8 Heather Bear, Vice-Chief Dutch Lerat, and Kim -- I mean Kay
9 Lerat (phon) who assisted with travels to the roundtable
10 discussions and rallies that were had out of town; Women
11 Walking Together, Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte, Myrna LaPlante
12 who assisted with funds, walks, vigils and many other
13 tasks; Child Find who assisted with putting Karina's story
14 in a Child Find magazine, candles for the vigil, and
15 printing posters; the staff of Exploited Children out of
16 Winnipeg, Manitoba who helped get Karina's story in the
17 newspaper out in Manitoba, and with placements of pictures
18 throughout Manitoba.

19 I'm still involved with Carol and the
20 family, and we've held a few ceremonies these past years.
21 Family and friends' feasts were held this past summer.
22 When Karina's headstone was put in place, Carol, Desmond,
23 Inspector Huisman, Chief Clive Weighill, Gordon and Sue
24 Hine, Josephine and myself unveiled it together followed by
25 our wonderful lunch at Carol's aunt's home.

1 Working so closely with the families of the
2 missing, being consistent is important as the files may
3 change hands of the people who are investigating, but the
4 support should remain the same. The reason being that they
5 have enough trauma in their lives and to continue forge
6 relationships and to start over each time is a struggle. I
7 promised Carol that I would be here, I wouldn't leave her,
8 and I kept my word. Carol, thank you.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, thank you. I
10 understand that you've brought these toolkits and you are
11 prepared that we keep them as part of our exhibits so that
12 we can learn from them ---

13 **MS. DORTHEA SWIFTWOLFE:** Yes.

14 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** --- to move
15 forward? Thank you. Dortehea, and this may be a better
16 question for Carol, but perhaps both of you can consider
17 it, what is the reason why a butterfly is held as the
18 creature as a symbol for what we're talking about today?

19 **MS. DORTHEA SWIFTWOLFE:** When you think of a
20 butterfly and when a butterfly comes and lands on you, it
21 makes you feel blessed and happy because it's so beautiful.
22 The other thing about butterflies is their death, I don't
23 know if many know that. So, each time you think of a
24 butterfly and how it starts from a little worm and it goes
25 into a cocoon and arrives in the world beautiful, that's

1 what we think of when we think of Karina, as a beautiful,
2 free butterfly. She's fluttering free now. She's not
3 suffering, she's not hurting, she's laid to rest in a good
4 way.

5 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you, Carol
6 [*sic*]. Now, on your left, there are two women who have
7 also been of tremendous assistance to you, and it's
8 Brenda's turn. Brenda is going to speak and hopefully
9 Josephine will as well, but -- so thank you.

10 **MS. BRENDA O'NEILL:** Okay. Good afternoon,
11 Elders, families of missing and murdered Indigenous women
12 and Commission. My name is Brenda O'Neill and I'm one of
13 the great aunts of the late Karina.

14 I'm humbled to be speaking on behalf of my
15 family, but it is also with great sadness and regret that I
16 find myself speaking at an event such as this. No family
17 ever thinks that they would lose a loved one in such -- of
18 this sort of heinous act of violence. Karina was
19 struggling with addiction and had her struggles, but it is
20 not what defined her as a person.

21 Karina was a happy-go-lucky young lady with
22 a bright future, like any other 20-year-old. She had
23 hopes, dreams, talents she was only beginning to discover.
24 This was taken from her and from us. We never had the
25 opportunity to realize what Karina would become, whether

1 she would be a wife, a mother or an artist she aspired to
2 be. She loved her family and was loved in return by her
3 family, her mom, her siblings and the extended family.
4 Karina learned from a very young age to communicate with
5 her mom through sign, she helped translate for her mom at
6 functions, at doctor's appointments, social visits and
7 helping family communicate with Carol as well.

8 When we heard from Carol that Karina was
9 missing, it sent a lot of questions running through our
10 minds, was she really missing, was she just visiting a
11 friend or was she taken? Nobody really knew at that time
12 and authorities did not have any answers to our questions.

13 Within the five and a half years of Karina's
14 disappearance, we relentlessly kept the fact that Karina
15 was missing in the media. We hosted vigils, had t-shirts
16 made, hung posters, used all forms of social media and even
17 consulted with a medium to give us some insight as to where
18 she might be. As time went on, we knew the likelihood of
19 Karina returning was starting to diminish, but we never
20 stopped hoping and praying that Karina would come home. It
21 was a very emotional five and a half years of not knowing
22 what happened to Karina to just simply disappear.

23 This unfortunate loss has brought awareness
24 of the vulnerable lifestyle and its consequences, and has
25 given us as parents a new determination to educate and talk

1 to our children and grandchildren about the dangers of a
2 vulnerable lifestyle. This can happen to anyone and no one
3 is immune to this sort of thing, unless we fight for our
4 children and grandchildren, it will continue to occur. I
5 have personally heard many times, what do you expect when
6 you lead a lifestyle like that? This does not give the
7 right to anyone to take a life of another human being. We
8 can continue to be angry and blame, or we can choose to be
9 proactive and help the many Indigenous women that may be in
10 danger of this sort of thing happening to them.

11 Creating awareness is key and healing our
12 spirits as Indigenous women is imperative. The underlying
13 causes need to be addressed in order to assist the people
14 suffering from any addiction and self-harm.

15 We were finally able to help Karina on her
16 journey and lay her to rest with the family that has gone
17 before her. We, as a family, now have a small measure of
18 comfort knowing she is with her family. We will never
19 forget Karina, but use this as a reminder to always keep
20 our children close in our hearts.

21 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** And, Josephine, is
22 there anything you'd like to say?

23 **MS. JOSEPHINE LONGNECK:** I just want to
24 thank Carol for showing me the kind of strength that she
25 showed throughout this process. Even though she had

1 barriers, she overcome those and it was because of her
2 strength that kept me beside her every step of the way,
3 thinking of ways to get Karina's name out there, looking
4 for her, asking questions, never losing that hope, never
5 giving up.

6 Karina was a beautiful, young lady, my
7 niece, my great niece. She was taken from us, she was
8 taken from her light at a young age, so senseless and hard
9 to understand how there's people out there that think they
10 can take someone else's life. She had so much to live for.
11 She hadn't even begun her life yet. She had so many people
12 that love her and I know she's here with us today. She's
13 listening to us, giving us that strength.

14 And, I pray every day, every day not just
15 for Karina, but for all these young people out there to
16 take care -- take care of yourself out there. There's
17 people out there, there's predators out there. Jerry
18 Constant took our -- took my niece and one day he will meet
19 his maker, and I leave that in the Creator's hands.

20 We have to continue promoting that awareness
21 at home, at schools, talking to our children, talking to
22 them about keeping themselves safe. I just want to say
23 thank you to everybody that was here today, all the
24 support, everyone that was here for Carol, her family.
25 Thank you.

1 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you,
2 Josephine. And Mr. Commissioner, if it's okay, we were not
3 going to show the whole video, but we'd like to show 5
4 minutes of it at least as the last word from the family.
5 --- Whereupon a clip of "My Only Daughter" was played

6 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you. Thank
7 you very much. So, people are aware that that video is
8 available and we saw about -- what percentage of it? About
9 10 or 15 percent. And, is it available online?

10 **MS. DORTHEA SWIFTWOLFE:** It's available on
11 CTV's website, that -- sorry, just trying to yell. The
12 movie was done by CTV News and that's who released it as
13 well. So, if you go on their website, you Google or search
14 "My Only Daughter", it's there, it's available, it's free.
15 Thank you.

16 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** Thank you very much
17 for bringing it to us so that we could see it, and I
18 understand that that copy is available to us as an exhibit
19 as well. So, Mr. Commissioner, the family has made their
20 submissions, there's so much more to say, but this is what
21 we have for today and are there any questions that you
22 have?

23 **COMMISSIONER BRYAN EYOLFSON:** Just before we
24 wrap up, I know Carol, you spoke about some of the needs
25 that you had, some of the services that were available,

1 maybe where some of the services were lacking. Are there
2 any, perhaps, recommendations you have for the Inquiry in
3 addition to what you've already talked about or are there
4 any needs or services that you -- that may exist that you
5 would like to mention before we close?

6 **MS. DORTHEA SWIFTWOLFE:** I know one of the
7 recommendations Carol had -- we've always talked about is
8 the availability of interpreters, the cost of interpreters,
9 to make sure the funds are there when they're requested. I
10 mean, without the help of Saskatoon Deaf and Hard of
11 Hearing, Carol being able to teach me sign language to the
12 extent that I do know how, we would have never gotten as
13 far as we did.

14 **MS. CAROL WOLFE:** Oh. Yes, I understand the
15 question now. Thank you. Yes, certainly more
16 interpreting, and then the -- you know, interpreter's time
17 is limited and expensive, and sometimes you need an
18 interpreter for two and four hours, and all day, not just
19 -- you know, so certainly more interpretation would be
20 better and less discussion about who is going to pay for
21 it, but just get an interpreter there and -- so that was a
22 huge difficulty for us.

23 **COMMISSIONER BRYAN EYOLFSON:** Thank you very
24 much. Carol, I want to really thank you for coming and
25 sharing with us today and I want to thank the rest of you

1 as well for telling -- sharing your truths with us. And,
2 before we wrap up, I just want to -- I have a small token
3 of appreciation to share with all of you before we close.

4 So, what we have here is, just as a small
5 token of reciprocity, are some seeds that we share with
6 people after they share their truths with us here at the
7 Inquiry, so I'm just going to give each of you a package,
8 and it has a little written explanation with it as well.

9 **MS. WENDY VAN TONGEREN:** I'd just like to
10 say that the session -- the formal session is now over and
11 we will be coming back to the room in about half an hour,
12 at quarter after 2:00; okay? Thank you.

13 **--- Exhibits (code: P01P06P0302)**

14 **Exhibit 1:** Photocopy of memorial photo album for Karina
15 Beth Ann Wolfe, 109 pages.

16 **Exhibit 2:** Victims services two-inch binder "Family
17 Toolkit: Information for Families of Missing
18 Persons," ten tabs.

19 **Exhibit 3:** Victims services two-inch binder "Supporting
20 Families of Missing Persons: A guide for
21 police-based victims services support
22 workers, includes tabs 1-10, appendices A-F.

23 **Exhibit 4:** DVD marked "My Only Daughter", presented in
24 hearing.

25 **Exhibit 5:** Statement of Carol Wolfe, five pages.

1 **Exhibit 6:** Dorteia Swiftwolfe's statement (First line:
2 "What is your job and how did it start"),
3 three pages.

4 --- Upon recessing at 13:43

5 --- Upon resuming at 14:20

6 **Hearing # 3**

7 **Witness: Danielle Ewenin, Lillian Piapot, Mona Woodward and**
8 **Debbie Green**

9 **In Relation to Eleanor "Laney" Theresa Ewenin**

10 **Heard by Chief Commissioner Marion Buller**

11 **Commission Counsel: Jennifer Cox**

12 **Registrar: Bryan Zandberg**

13 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Are you
14 ready to start? Everyone's here? Okay. Okay. There are
15 a few formalities we have to go through first. We need
16 microphones when you're speaking, please, so everyone in
17 the room can hear because everyone wants to hear what you
18 have to say. Also, if we could start with the people who
19 are going to be speaking today about Laney, if you could
20 introduce yourselves, please?

21 **MS. LILLIAN PIAPOT:** (Speaks in Indigenous
22 language).

23 **MS. DANIELLE EWENIN:** My sister was 13
24 months older than I was, and I have -- I can say that my
25 siblings and I, we were born in a time and condition that

1 we couldn't be raised by our parents, and that the policy
2 of residential schools, my father was a World War II
3 veteran, the Sixties Scoop, all impacted our family. When
4 I was about 9 and Laney was 10, they were separating us
5 from our home. Mona was -- Mona, Laney and I were placed
6 together, and they were separating Laney from us, and they
7 were going to take her to another home.

8 In our backyard at that foster home, we had
9 this couch, and we used to use it as a playhouse. And,
10 Eleanor and I were on there, and we promised each other
11 that no matter what, when we grew up, we would find -- we
12 would find each other. And, we did. And, in -- what she
13 was able to share with me about those intervening years,
14 she lost a finger in a foster home, there was one point
15 where she had run away, she said she must have been no more
16 than 13, and it took social services or the authorities
17 three weeks to find out who she was because she wouldn't
18 tell them their -- her name.

19 I don't believe that my sister in her entire
20 life ever felt safe, that the only safety that she had was
21 what she could create when she was able to get out of care.
22 She had two sons, and we had made every effort to try to
23 bring them here today. I have to say that I'm not -- not
24 pleased with how that turned out, Commissioner Buller. We
25 had been -- in our pre-interview that we attended on August

1 4th in Regina, my sister and I, that was one of the things
2 we had asked for, is that the boys be brought -- be able to
3 be brought here to talk about the murder of their mother.
4 We had difficulty locating them, and your staff just flat
5 out just said, "No, we don't have time to do it. We have
6 three lawyers here we have families who are working with,
7 we just -- no, can't do it." My First Nation was good
8 enough to assist and they got a hold of the band lawyer,
9 and the Band lawyer was working very hard on getting them
10 here.

11 But, I think it's important that statement
12 takers go to them, the cultural liaison officer at the
13 institutions want, you know, some notice. They said that
14 family could be with them, plus they would also have an
15 Elder and other supports so that that occur and that they
16 would have a plan in the institution to help them with
17 after care so that they don't become -- you know, they
18 don't have a hard time.

19 We had asked in August for the autopsy
20 report and the police report. We never saw either ever.
21 And, in the whole time in preparing to lead up today, only
22 one spoke to a lawyer in the family here. The lawyer
23 contacted one person, and -- but that's not the lawyer
24 assigned to the family. We never saw that person, and I
25 only heard from that person that was assigned from your

1 legal department to our family at 10:15 this morning. She
2 wanted some time to help us prepare. I said, "If you don't
3 have the autopsy report and the police report, then I don't
4 know."

5 The federal government set up the FILU
6 units, the family liaison units, whatever they, you know,
7 called -- you know, ours wasn't set up until the end of
8 October, didn't have a person there until the end of
9 October, called her, she couldn't help get the autopsy
10 report or the police report. She said we had to contact
11 Alberta, and she would contact the FILU unit in Alberta,
12 and she did. And, the FILU unit said she couldn't get the
13 autopsy report or the police report for us, that it would
14 have to come from one of the Commissioner's lawyers, that
15 they had the power to subpoena those. And, I believe it
16 was two, three weeks ago, they had spoken to my one sister,
17 and I -- the request had went. So, there's none of that
18 here today ready.

19 I want to also talk about the time she was
20 killed. I think it's also important to know that my family
21 was already grief-stricken. We had just buried a sister
22 who had perished in a house fire from smoke inhalation.
23 And, it was two weeks to the day that my sister got the
24 call from the -- the police showed up and -- to inform her
25 of what happened to Laney.

1 I sat with my parents when the police came
2 to give the family the information on what happened. And,
3 my parents were very old school, and I sat with them
4 because I wanted to make sure that they weren't going to be
5 taken advantage of, and that questions were -- would be
6 asked, so I sat with them. And, what we do know, and like
7 I said, we've never seen the police report or, you know,
8 the autopsy report, is that they said she died of exposure,
9 and that she was found in a field, and that they believed
10 that she was in this field because there were lights on a
11 building and she was trying to make it there.

12 And, it was about February 4th, because we
13 buried her February 8th, that -- and it was bitterly,
14 bitterly cold. And, the police informed my parents -- the
15 police officer that attended, because this was occurring in
16 Regina and he was getting the information from Calgary that
17 somebody had taken her outside of the city and left her
18 there. It had snowed, and you could see the tracks in the
19 snow where -- on the grid road where he -- the car came in
20 and the car left. And, you could see the footprints and
21 smudged footprints of where she was taken out of the car.
22 And, he said, "You could see where she would walk. She was
23 trying to go to that building where she fell. She would
24 get up, and she fell again. She would get up, and then she
25 fell again and died." It was one of -- like I said, one of

1 those bitter, bitter cold spells we have. And, he said
2 that they probably would never -- they -- last she had been
3 seen was two nights before that and they didn't know what
4 had happened to her when she had left that one
5 establishment or who she had went with.

6 My sister struggled with all of those
7 issues, as in many of our family, but she would go into
8 recovery and she would try really hard to try to bring
9 herself up and be able to be in a place to raise her sons.
10 Before -- and our family was poor, very poor at the time.
11 She couldn't come to our sister's funeral, nor could my
12 brother, and he said they sat in Calgary together knowing
13 that we were burying one sister and they weren't able to
14 come.

15 When CBC in 2014 were putting together their
16 database on cold cases, they had called, and their -- on
17 their return call, they said they weren't able to find --
18 the Calgary police were not able to find a police file on
19 my sister. So, it was fairly important to me that the
20 Commission, the Inquiry be able to get that information for
21 us.

22 I've -- you know, we live in a time now that
23 we can look back over that -- those periods, you know, the
24 last 150 years, and we have an analysis of what colonialism
25 is, what that legislation -- the direct impact of

1 legislation and policy has on life. Well, my parents
2 didn't have that. My parents died with guilt and shame.
3 My mother blamed herself because she didn't have the
4 benefit of that analysis.

5 And, the way the systems work is that they
6 took her boys and they put them in care in British
7 Columbia. And, again, we know what the statistics are of
8 Aboriginal children placed in care, that they stand a 5
9 times more chance of dying in care than they do in their
10 impoverished communities, and that our children not just
11 suffer isolation and alienation, but they also suffer abuse
12 and neglect. By the time the boys made it home to us, we
13 weren't equipped to deal with the emotional issues that our
14 -- those two young boys had, those two young men, they were
15 in their teenage, and none of the systems really tried to
16 help the families do that.

17 I remember one time when we were dealing
18 something with the boys and my other sisters' kids, and I
19 had my other -- my own kids that they asked -- one agency
20 or women's group asked, "Well, what can we do that would
21 help you?" I said, "I need money. I need money to feed
22 them and I need money to pay the bills. That's what I
23 need." And, of course, they couldn't help me, but that
24 would have helped a lot.

25 And, I want to say that when we decided to

1 come forward here is that -- it's that, you know, we
2 understand what happened to us, that our mother wasn't a
3 bad person, and that in different conditions, in different
4 -- you know, we would have been with her, we would have
5 been raised by her, and maybe Laney wouldn't have ended up
6 in that field. But, we want to tell her story and story of
7 our family because we want it to add to everybody's story
8 that out of this come some fundamental changes and systemic
9 changes that will not only reduce the violence of Indian --
10 First Nations women, but also the resources to lift them
11 up.

12 I know -- just a minute. I just wanted
13 permission to share that in -- last night at 3:00, I get a
14 message from my daughter that the security has shown up to
15 her door demanding to know who is in -- who all is in her
16 room. There was a mix up at their desk about their guest
17 list and there was some confusion, but that was 3:00 a.m.
18 that they did that. I got dressed and I went down, and I
19 demanded an explanation and told them I didn't appreciate
20 security showing up like that. How does that look?
21 Security showing up at an Indian woman's door at 3:00 a.m.
22 and demanding who is in this room?

23 And, it's just indicative of the attitudes
24 of how they see us. They don't see us as, you know, that
25 -- for someone to go and do that while the National Inquiry

1 into murdered and missing women is host -- they're hosting
2 it in their hotel? That just is -- it just shows how
3 engrained those prejudice and that discrimination is, and
4 they were flabbergasted that they -- someone would ask that
5 -- you know, that's not acceptable behaviour, that's wrong.
6 And, they blamed you guys, but I mean I thought it was
7 unfortunate they woke up your staff to try to provide an
8 explanation when it wasn't your staff that sent the
9 security banging on my daughter's door.

10 I have some other recommendations, but I'm
11 going to let my other sisters talk, and then maybe when we
12 get to that part we can...

13 **MS. DEBBIE GREEN:** Hi, my name is Debbie
14 Green. I'm the last born of seven sisters, and I just
15 wanted to acknowledge my niece making these skirts for us.
16 They represent seven sisters of which four of us are still
17 here in this world, and I know that they mean a lot to all
18 of us, so I want to acknowledge her for doing that.

19 So, being the last born in the family, I
20 didn't know I had siblings until I was about 10-years-old.
21 I lived a different life than my sisters did. I did grow
22 up with my mother. It wasn't peaches and cream though; you
23 know? But, I did have her and my father.

24 When I met my sisters, I remember being very
25 happy that I had, you know, another brother and I had other

1 sisters and this big whole family that I didn't know about.
2 And, since then, you know, we've made every effort to
3 become close and, you know, they're my heroes. They have
4 mom's blood running through them. When we speak of warrior
5 women, I think of my sisters and our mother.

6 And, I didn't get a chance to really know
7 three of those sisters, and Laney being one of them, so I
8 only have one memory of her when she came to visit us when
9 I was a young girl sitting on the steps. And, I just
10 remember seeing her like I see my sisters now, just very
11 strong. Strong, strong girl, and it makes me very sad that
12 I didn't get to know her. But, through the stories that my
13 sisters tell me, I'm, you know, able to know her a little
14 bit.

15 So, we talked about, you know, Indigenous
16 women being at risk in this country. It's so true; you
17 know? I think, you know, every Native woman knows somebody
18 if it's not in their immediate family, it's in their
19 immediate circle of friends or somebody that's been
20 assaulted or murdered or missing or -- you know? And, to
21 compare that to, you know, white society. I don't think,
22 you know, every woman can say that; you know? So, what
23 does that say; you know?

24 I know myself when I was a child, I was
25 almost abducted on a country road and I had to run away. I

1 went through a relationship where, you know, I had to --
2 you know, had a shot gun; right? So, it has to change; you
3 know? And, how could we do that? Like, it took 150 years
4 like my sister said; you know? Of colonization and how
5 long is it going to take to heal; you know? What do we
6 need to do to make sure that that happens; right? So that
7 our daughters and our grandchildren don't face that same
8 world; you know? That we can be equal to the white women
9 in the room; you know? Not have to worry if, you know, our
10 rooms get mixed up that somebody's going to come knock on
11 our door; right? You think they would have went and did
12 that with a white lady? Really? Honestly, do you think
13 so; you know? I think I'm just going to stop there for
14 now.

15 **MS. MONA WOODWARD:** Thank you my sisters for
16 sharing that, sharing your experience and strength and
17 hope. Good afternoon, my name is Mona Woodward, and that's
18 my adopted name. My colonial name -- my Indian name is
19 Sparkling Past, Rising River Woman, and I'm very honoured
20 to be sitting here and it's been a long time coming. We
21 had asked for an Inquiry many years ago, and I never
22 thought it would -- I would be sitting here today being one
23 of the, you know, organizer of the Missing and Murdered
24 Women's Memorial March.

25 And, I just learned at a very early age

1 that, you know, Aboriginal women were disposable, and I
2 learned that at 18 when my sister, Eleanor Theresa Marie
3 Ewenin, was murdered. And, I kept asking my uncle, "Well,
4 how come nobody's looking after -- like why aren't the
5 police doing anything about it? Like, what's going on?"
6 And, I was told that's just the way it is. It was just
7 accepted, a way of life that our sisters and family,
8 especially women, at the hands of violence. I couldn't --
9 it was hard -- hard for me to, you know, accept that.

10 I was adopted at an early age. I know that,
11 you know, anybody in the '60s -- and, you know, we examine
12 that and looking at Eleanor's situation too, and I was
13 talking to my daughter earlier today and, you know, asked
14 her -- you know, because her too, you know, she was in
15 foster care, and one of the things she brought to our
16 generation is the intergenerational trauma because in our
17 DNA, you know, just like healing is, you know, like the
18 songs and the language, you know, we seem to pick up on,
19 it's just there. And, you know, she was talking about just
20 having this really, really deep sadness inside of her and
21 crying, and not knowing why she's crying about it. But,
22 learning more about her culture has given her some
23 strength, and I just wish that Eleanor had it -- had that
24 opportunity.

25 When we talk about some of the reasons why

1 Aboriginal women go missing and murdered at alarming rate,
2 we have to look at the, you know, the institutional biases
3 that happen within those systems they interact with, and
4 that's starting with the child welfare system. The way
5 that they came into our community and demanded our parents,
6 our caregivers to give us up or they go to jail.

7 When we were in foster care, I remember
8 looking at this newspaper and I can see my picture in it.
9 And, the foster father covered the writing, or whatever, so
10 I wouldn't read it but, you know, it was just a catalogue
11 of Aboriginal children; you know? And, I know that now,
12 but I didn't know what I was looking at that day. Like, a
13 catalogue; you know? Cute puppies; you know? It was --
14 today, that's appalling, that's totally appalling.

15 And, I moved away from Saskatchewan because
16 I wanted, you know, a better life for my children and my
17 grandchildren. I thought if I did the geographical change
18 then, you know, it wouldn't happen. I realized I was wrong
19 because it was happening right within the community that I
20 had chose to be my community in the downtown east side.
21 And, I tell you, you know, there was a lot of powerful
22 women that, you know, took me in and mentored me, and it
23 was -- I learned that, you know, I can be empowered by that
24 pain to be able to start, you know, community mobilization
25 and start to bring those issues to attention even if it was

1 -- fell on deaf ears. You know, it was for our own
2 personal healing because, you know, if we can heal as a
3 community, then the healing is really more impactful.

4 And, I can tell you right now that, you
5 know, racism is alive and well in our communities and so
6 is, you know, violence because I'm sitting here with an
7 injury due to the fact that, you know, I was -- had to get
8 out of a car that was -- you know, the person was going to
9 hurt me if I didn't get out, so I jumped out of a car and I
10 was -- you know, it was still moving and I broke my pelvis
11 in three places. This is still happening.

12 I think about my sister, Eleanor. I think
13 about, you know, potential life that was lost like so many
14 other Aboriginal women that we've lost to horrendous
15 violence. All those women had potential, they had gifts,
16 and that was taken away from them. And, I think that, you
17 know, we, as a society, have to make those changes and
18 those changes start within the governmental bodies; you
19 know? So, it has to be starting from the national, and
20 also, like, within those communities.

21 If we don't start changing those bylaws and
22 the laws that allow these people to keep going through a
23 revolving door of the system, you know, because they're
24 white -- and when -- a lot of Aboriginal women don't want
25 to go to the police; you know? And, I know that from my

1 own personal experience; you know? And, I stand here as a
2 survivor too and I know that, you know, I never wanted to
3 go to the police either. It was like, what's the point?
4 Like -- you know? Some of those police that are sworn to
5 protect us, those are the ones that are the perpetrators
6 upon our women. Those are the ones that are, you know,
7 perpetrating horrendous violence on our Aboriginal women
8 today.

9 One of my cousins was thrown from the
10 window, and this was after, you know, the -- Doug LePard
11 had, you know, made a public apology to the -- to Picton
12 families, and I was wondering -- like, the headline
13 splashed on the newspaper, you know, drug addict, you know,
14 all of these things that they portray Aboriginal women.
15 You know, some of the language has to be changed; you know?
16 And, what a shoddy job of policing they did, and just like
17 they did with my sister. You know, like, right now, you
18 know, the case -- even if it was reopened they'll never
19 find, you know, the person that's responsible for that.
20 And, it was the same with my other family member.

21 And, I remember there was some sled dogs
22 that were, you know, being butchered up in Whistler, and
23 they had, like, a trauma team, and they had, like, a
24 special police task force for these dogs. And, I thought,
25 what the hell? They have all of this -- you know,

1 resources for dogs and nothing for this one little Native
2 girl; right? And, that just kept spinning around my head
3 and I just thought, well, we have to do something about
4 this; right? Because nothing's going to change unless we
5 do something.

6 And, you know, I think that, you know,
7 there's a lot of women lawyers out there that have, you
8 know, worked very hard to bring these issues to point and
9 -- I was part of the memorial march, but also for the
10 coalition on the missing and murdered women as well, which
11 was developed because of -- we were shut out of the Opal
12 Inquiry; you know? And, I was happy that we had an
13 Inquiry, but at the same time, you know, there's -- when I
14 look at the Inquiry to date, right now, and the assessment,
15 I know the coalition had -- did a media release and gave
16 them, like, a very, very low mark on expectations; you
17 know? And, I hope, I really pray -- that's the only thing
18 -- reason why I'm here is because I hope that something
19 will become of this Inquiry, that we can make those
20 changes, that, you know, it will be people first and
21 families first. I need some water.

22 One of the things that brings to mind, and
23 that was the recommendation of the national police for --
24 that it should be developed in response to missing and
25 murdered Aboriginal women. And, there's nothing around,

1 you know, a plan or around policing, because those are the
2 people that we go to, to ask for help, those are the people
3 that are responsible for the safety of the community. And,
4 at the same time, you know, if they're found doing crime,
5 then they should be susceptible to the same incarceration
6 and same treatment as a criminal and they're not. All they
7 do is transfer them to another community, and that's
8 horrendous so they can, you know, repeat the same
9 perpetration on our people.

10 One of the other recommendations, when I
11 look at -- I worked in the downtown east side for over 20
12 years and worked as a support worker in different hats that
13 I did, and I know that homelessness is a national crisis in
14 our country. There are so many people homeless out there.
15 And, when we look at any supports of -- that women need,
16 you know, like with housing, also with, you know, health
17 care. Health care is a big issue. I know in B.C., like,
18 there's waiting list after waiting list for -- just to get
19 in there to see a doctor, to get an operation that they
20 really need.

21 And, some of the treatment that they get in
22 their health care is horrible, and I know that for a fact
23 that it's a crisis. I mean, you know, like, I was -- after
24 I was in the hospital, I know that they were so short
25 staffed. You know, like, I sat in my own feces for, like,

1 five hours before any nurse came in to see me, and I never
2 ate for, like, over, like, two days, and they just left me
3 in a room like that. And, I thought, how awful. And, I
4 could see how a woman could lose her will to live, just
5 sitting there thinking that nobody gives a fuck about her.
6 And, the treatment is even worse. When the nurses came in
7 there, you know, they were rude and they were just -- the
8 way that they treated you was less than human.

9 But, luckily, you know, I have a voice today
10 and I never had that many years ago, and I, you know, got a
11 hold of a friend, a family friend, and she came in there
12 and she, you know, asked them, you know, "What is happening
13 with this patient?" You know, "Give her her medicine now,"
14 and very quickly they worked very diligently to make sure I
15 was comfortable and cleaned up. But, I thought about what
16 about all those other women, you know, that are just --
17 don't have a voice?

18 And, there's got to be more, you know,
19 resources and services. There's got to be -- you know,
20 like, I know working in a non-profit society that, you
21 know, even though I work hard every year to, you know, put
22 out those proposals -- you know, out of, you know, 28
23 proposals I put out, maybe four would be successful, and it
24 would be only year to year. When a person gets, you know,
25 dependent on a resource that's helpful, and then, you know,

1 the funding runs out, where does she go? I mean, those
2 organizations that are helping those people, there has to
3 be, you know, more stability in the funding so that those
4 -- those, you know, tools that they learn to help keep them
5 motivated and empower women because that's what helped me
6 when I was down and out, you know, of those resources.

7 I know the child welfare system, and we know
8 this is -- needs to be a complete overhaul, you know,
9 because it's just picked up where the residential schools
10 left off. We need to have more supports for those mothers.

11 When we look at the mayhem and the
12 destruction that has happened to our women and our families
13 at the hands of the government, and I think about my mother
14 and I felt, you know, like, she wasn't really a mother to
15 me. Just -- like, I never felt that connection; you know?
16 And, that -- you know, for me, it was just like some kind
17 of attachment disorder that I had that, like, I couldn't
18 feel close to her, and it's still like that today for me.

19 I know that Eleanor had such a strong
20 spirit. I loved her very much. I think about her, I think
21 about what she would be doing, you know, if she was here
22 today, and she is. She's here in spirit, and I know that,
23 you know, there's one thing I take from her is her strength
24 and courage that she always had. She was always straight
25 up and honest. You were never just second guessing because

1 she always would tell you exactly what she was thinking or
2 feeling. But, because of the circumstances that surrounded
3 her, she never got that chance because somebody took that
4 away from her. And, I hope that you hear the voices of the
5 family members and the survivors and take that to heart,
6 and to look at all those reoccurring themes that come up
7 with all the inquiries and the research has been done on
8 Aboriginal women. You could even research to death and the
9 same things come up.

10 Enough talk, let's put the money into action
11 by providing those resources, making those changes, at
12 least have a plan. There's no secure work plan that's
13 going to tell us that we're going to be safe, that's going
14 to tell us that, you know, things are changing, and I sure
15 as hell hope that from this Inquiry that we can start
16 implementing those recommendations and they're not just a
17 wish list.

18 I know that for me right now, like, I was
19 burnt out from the work, the overwhelming work in the
20 downtown east side; right? And, I'm tired of wiping away
21 the tears and the blood off our people. It just seems so
22 hopeless. I was really jaded. And, you know, I'm on
23 medical leave right now, and I was really apprehensive
24 coming in here because I -- you know, my experience at the
25 other Inquiry, and I'm here because I have that hope and I

1 know that you have to recreate that hope sometimes within
2 our people within myself to keep motivated, to keep moving.
3 And, I know as long as I do that, you know, things will be
4 heard and won't fall on deaf ears.

5 I don't know, Canada needs to wake up. You
6 know, like the whole world is watching. When we look at
7 all of the reports for the United Nations and amnesty and
8 the human rights, why does not Canada see that? Wake up.
9 So, I say with one heart, one nation that we stand together
10 and we make those changes. (Speaks in Indigenous
11 language).

12 **MS. THERESA:** I don't know what to say. I
13 just want to say that I'm really honoured to be here, and I
14 really feel honoured to be named after my auntie Eleanor,
15 Theresa. I remember when I was a kid, well, younger, my
16 mom would tell me about the story of my aunt, but she never
17 really got into detail. She just said that she passed away
18 in the snow, that -- what she was talking about earlier is
19 that intergenerational trauma that does get passed on, and
20 I do feel the pain, but I also do feel the strength. And,
21 I'm just learning to connect with culture and about --
22 like, learning that she's still here in spirit, like she's
23 providing all of us with a load of strength to come
24 together. We came from all over, from the States, from
25 B.C., from Alberta to be here today together as a family.

1 Our family's pretty scattered due to foster care and just
2 everything, so it's just -- to be together today is such a
3 beautiful thing and all my relations.

4 **MS. DANIELLE EWENIN:** I guess there are some
5 specific recommendations. You know, we're still not very
6 good about emotions. I don't know what coping mechanisms I
7 had all of my life but, you know, when Mona talks about
8 some of the things on healing, I guess my healing was my
9 education. And, I always encouraged people if they say, "I
10 want to get a job or go to school," I say, "Go to school,"
11 you know? Because I know what it did for me and how it
12 empowered me.

13 I have to put this on record. I feel that
14 it must be put on record some of these things, is that the
15 Inquiry's definition of family first, it doesn't feel like
16 family first. I can tell you with just the four sisters
17 here, getting just the travel organized just seemed -- I
18 don't believe it was that complicated as it was to get the
19 travel arrangements done.

20 So, as we're all getting anxious about
21 coming here, not having a confirmed date, not having
22 confirmed travel, not having return phone calls, I already
23 spoke earlier about the process with the legal system, your
24 legal department, was not good. A value of ours is that we
25 look after each other and we help each other.

1 On Friday, our Band put something together,
2 and the people from my Band that are -- were coming to the
3 hearings to testify, and it was very nice when I ran into
4 one of -- you know, and I said, "Okay, so when do you
5 testify?" And, the one person said, "I don't know. They
6 never contacted me." And, I know for a fact I helped this
7 individual write their letter in April when the Inquiry
8 said they wouldn't reach out to families, families had to
9 reach out by email or letter. And, as a result, that
10 individual was not public. We got a call Saturday night on
11 some other things and it came out another family had not
12 been contacted. And then just before my arrival here,
13 another family hadn't got contacted.

14 And, I think it's important to say that when
15 we're talking about Indigenous women, they are in the --
16 you know, for the most part, in the lowest social economic
17 group in the country. The way you handle your travel and
18 reimbursement to families, it has put some families in
19 Saskatoon at this gathering to feel shame that they had to
20 ask, and they -- for their travel.

21 Before we were coming out here, it had come
22 -- we were told that we were going to get our travel
23 reimbursed by cheque, and there were families, because we
24 have chats on social media, were saying, "Well, I can't
25 come. I can't come if that's the case." And, I think your

1 -- the Inquiry's definition of families first is not that
2 kind of perspective. It has to come from our perspective.
3 To me, putting families first, it would mean that when they
4 walk in here, someone greets them and makes sure they're
5 going to get their hotel, they're getting registered, "Here
6 is what you're entitled to," and "Is there anything else
7 you need?"

8 After the -- you know, and I don't know what
9 the point of the community hearings were because everything
10 we told there, none of it -- you know, your -- the legal,
11 the -- any of -- you know, the mental health, none of that
12 was followed up on. I never got a call from one mental
13 health person after the community visits. I never got one
14 before either, but you had a case manager call me twice,
15 but I've never heard from her ever again since June. And,
16 in June, you said there was going -- they had said there
17 was going to be a lawyer contacting myself, and it wasn't
18 even the lawyer this morning at 10:15 that called me. It
19 was one of the assistants.

20 So, I don't -- you know, and really,
21 frankly, Commissioner Buller, a letter was written, a
22 meeting was held, letters were sent to people in authority,
23 the Prime Minister, the Ministers about these issues saying
24 families first -- how families first is how it acts out on
25 the ground. We had families here that were crying -- I

1 know you saw lots of mental health staff, but I know some
2 of the families I talked to said, "Well, they don't know
3 how to approach a stranger and say, 'I'm in crisis. Can I
4 talk to you?'" That's not -- you know, if you were born
5 and raised on the reserve, that's not something you're
6 comfortable doing.

7 You know, and, again, back to the community
8 meetings, you know, like, I don't know -- after they were
9 done, I mean, I understand the Inquiry -- you know, and
10 then just so I understood it, you know, I thought -- I went
11 through it again, I went through the mandate, I went
12 through the order and council, read it again, and -- to
13 understand the role that families had in this process, of
14 informing the process, of informing the future changes.

15 And so, I understand you focus on each of us
16 as individuals, you know, and then you call us a family,
17 but -- and while we're here, you try to put in, you know,
18 the supports and those things, but you're not involving the
19 community. And, what happened to my sister and how it
20 affected our family, it also affects our community, and
21 that I found our community very help -- wanting to help,
22 the desire to help, you know, the -- to help us through
23 this. They were there.

24 They helped provide -- to make sure we had,
25 you know, transportation to get here, you know, they helped

1 front some gas money for that, they -- in my case, they
2 directed the Band lawyer to work on trying to get my
3 nephews here from the institutions, the community of
4 Saskatoon. And, it really renews your faith in humanity
5 when people give up their time so easily and they want to
6 create a safe space and give because this affects
7 everybody.

8 When we went to a national conference a few
9 years ago in Winnipeg, we were -- you know, the families
10 were there, were able to go to the Aboriginal Achievement
11 Awards, and it was held in a big arena where the Jets play.
12 And, that place was packed. But, at one point, they wanted
13 to acknowledge the families that were there, and they had
14 them stand up and a song was sung. And, you could see and
15 I could feel it from everybody there that, you know, it
16 was, like, there but the grace of God Gawai (phon) that
17 they weren't standing with us.

18 So, I really believe the Inquiry needs to
19 involve the community, and I mean -- and having a committee
20 of people is not a community. That's not community
21 liaison, that's not community outreach. I wanted to say
22 that in Saskatchewan, it -- you know, it's unfortunate, but
23 it's also become a very political issue and that it's also
24 where the resources go for that. And, a provincial working
25 group established by the provincial government was set up,

1 and there is no family representation on there. You can
2 look at it, it's this tribal council, it's this Métis
3 local, it's this woman's organization, it's this treaty
4 organization, it's FSIN, and families asked specifically
5 more than once that they wanted representation on that
6 working group. And, because it's such a political board,
7 it was denied.

8 Families in this province have asked for
9 over four years for a family gathering, and that being
10 together in an environment provides us solace, it provides
11 a level of healing. And, if you can say it, you can
12 understand it. If you can feel it, you can heal it. That
13 has never been acted upon.

14 When the resources were given out pre-
15 Inquiry and during the Inquiry, we had families trying to
16 make it to information meetings, but they were not given
17 any access to -- and, again, you're dealing with a porous
18 group. And, there is one -- there were a couple of women
19 that were -- said they were going to take in their cans and
20 bottles to get gas money because this affects their life,
21 this is their story, but that money and those resources
22 went to all of those groups. There are -- I'm just trying
23 to gather my thoughts.

24 So, I think if you're -- if in any of the
25 kinds of changes that might be looked up that it not -- now

1 I'm just having difficulty with -- that the families have a
2 say of where those resources go, where it helps them,
3 because what some of them feel is that people are getting
4 jobs based on -- you know, and they're not getting the
5 services that they need. There was -- I know there was
6 counselling centre in Saskatchewan who got a grant to help
7 families, and I can tell you I tried three times to set up
8 an appointment and meet with them. And, it never came
9 through, so I was -- I don't know what -- you know? It was
10 supposed to be at no cost to me, and I never got those
11 services.

12 And, I want to reiterate what my sister had
13 said here. You know, my sister is an expert in this field.
14 I mean, when this -- before this issue gained international
15 recognition and the pressure was put on the Canadian
16 government for us to be doing this here, it started with
17 three or four women holding signs on the corner of Hastings
18 and Main saying, "What happened to these women?" She was
19 one of them. She was one of those organizers. She's
20 helped write policy that -- for law enforcement that is
21 able -- what should happen, A, B, C and D. So, she's
22 helped -- you know, she is an expert in that.

23 What I wanted to talk about too is that
24 there's a saying that I took when I went to university --
25 or not a saying, it was in a class, and it said, "Do laws

1 influence values or do values influence laws?" And, that
2 the legislation and the policy, while we have the Canadian
3 Bill of Rights and Freedoms, it doesn't necessarily
4 translate that into our lives. That -- there has to be
5 some equity mechanisms in there to ensure that the people
6 that don't have access, that don't have the means to be
7 able to -- because we know if we live in this society, if
8 you are a certain income, you're going to have
9 opportunities. If you don't come from that level of
10 income, you don't have to have -- you don't have those
11 opportunities.

12 The other thing that I want to say is that
13 in some of my work experience, and I worked in -- I lived
14 in the States for quite a number of years, and I was able
15 to -- in one position, I worked with the Department of
16 Justice on -- in lands, and they had appointed a new
17 Assistant Deputy Director of Justice, and her attitude to
18 work was different, and land claims there moved glacially
19 slow, like glacially slow. We think we're slow here? It's
20 way worse there. And, people from -- sometimes 15 years
21 pass from the time a person puts -- you know, a Band try --
22 puts in an application before it even begins and it's a
23 complicated process.

24 So, what this Assistant Deputy Director did
25 is that she said she would give a file to a staff, and if

1 it hadn't moved in three days, she'd take it away and give
2 it to someone else so that the work would get done. And, I
3 say that because people in position of authority, positions
4 in power, positions -- they have a choice. They have a
5 choice of what they're going to do and how they can make
6 that work.

7 And, you know, I don't want to sound like
8 I'm beating you over the head with this but, I mean, with
9 families first, you've been told. You know, the Commission
10 has been told, and -- but you're the one with the authority
11 and the power to make sure that that happens in a way
12 that's conducive with our traditions and our values and
13 that makes us feel cared for and respected, and that our
14 dignity isn't compromised when we're asking -- when people
15 are asking for their travel, and that when people have
16 followed your process, that you would honour your word and
17 follow-up on them.

18 And, I have to put this also in record is
19 that on my First Nation, where I come from, Kawacatoose
20 First Nation, is that they have, historically, as far as
21 they've been able to do on their research, is 15 murdered
22 and missing. In April, they applied for a hearing, they
23 also applied for standing. All they ever got was an
24 acknowledgment -- email acknowledgment of their application
25 for standing. Phone calls to the 1-800 number have gone

1 unanswerd, emails to the executive director have gone
2 unanswerd.

3 Initially, there was some discussion that
4 Kawacatoose would have an afternoon here to be able to
5 provide all of that. Within a week before the hearings, we
6 realized that there was no way anyone was going to be ready
7 for that, but even with on that side, Kawacatoose side
8 realizing they probably don't have enough time to prepare
9 properly, there's still no word with the initial.

10 And, I know people say that's Band
11 government, that's *Indian Act*, but those are our people and
12 those are our leaders, and those are -- to me, those are
13 our heads of state and they should be afforded that kind of
14 respect as you would give any Members of Parliament and the
15 Prime Minister, and that has not happened with -- and I
16 know this is not -- this is the third time I'm telling one
17 of the Commissioners that Kawacatoose has requested. So,
18 before I'm taking up too much time, I wonder if -- do you
19 want to...

20 **MS. LILLIAN EWENIN:** My name's Lillian
21 Ewenin. These four ladies in front here, they're my
22 sisters. If you know the way our traditions work, our
23 fathers are brothers, they're my sisters. I'm proud of
24 them today to be able to stand -- to sit here and tell
25 their story. Danielle had asked me to come and support

1 them, and I said yes, and I've been here for the last three
2 days helping with support other families.

3 But, I want to say this about my sister,
4 Eleanor, is that when Danielle had asked me initially to
5 come and support her, I didn't have any memory of her. And
6 then on my drive between Saskatoon and my home, that time I
7 was alone, and I was getting these vivid memories of being
8 small and playing with them when I was small and we were in
9 diapers, and how we were happy, and that how when they were
10 taken from their parents, we lost that connection. And
11 then as we got older -- as we got older, we began to
12 reconnect, to get to know each other, to get to know each
13 other's kids.

14 I remember in 1982 when they came to tell my
15 dad about his niece, Eleanor, and how they had found her,
16 and how him and my mom sat there crying silently for a
17 little while, and then they got going because there were
18 things they had to do. But, those years from when we were
19 small in diapers running around at my *kokum's* house and we
20 were happy until we were -- until when we were adults and I
21 found out about Eleanor.

22 Those were -- those years were taken from
23 us, all of us by the institutions that the government has
24 put in place. I, myself didn't have -- don't -- didn't
25 have much faith in the Inquiry. I mean, I honestly believe

1 in one. I would have liked to have seen a family member
2 sitting on the Commission because then the families know
3 what we're -- what it's like to sit up here and to talk
4 here, and all these years that have gone from when their
5 loved one has passed or gone missing, what they go through.

6 But, I have -- I'm like Mona, I have hope.
7 I have hope that something good will come out of this, that
8 as an Indigenous woman, I don't have to walk on the street
9 and be afraid because, today, when I go somewhere, I'm
10 afraid, and it's a fear that we all carry every day and you
11 get so used to it that it's like it's a part of you, and it
12 shouldn't have to be because not everybody in society today
13 has to walk around and be afraid the way Indigenous women
14 are and girls. I have seven daughters and lots of
15 granddaughters that I worry about constantly all day. I
16 don't want them to become a statistic.

17 Right from the start, the Inquiry was
18 adversary. I looked at it as adversarial to myself because
19 it pitted us Indigenous women against our Indigenous men,
20 and we should be here together because we have missing and
21 murdered Indigenous men also, but they split us and they
22 pit us against each other, who's more important?

23 I've always had my voice, I've always been
24 able to stand up and talk and speak against inequalities or
25 injustices that happen that I see. I got that from my dad.

1 My dad raised me, constantly telling me that -- not to be a
2 second-class citizen because I'm a woman. I really hope
3 that there's fundamental changes to our social systems in
4 our communities, that there's fundamental changes to the
5 social system in society at large, that along with these
6 changes comes an increase and sustainable source of
7 revenues.

8 I just want to mention here that Eleanor's
9 sons, where they are, the life they've led are direct
10 correlation to the fact that she was killed, the way she
11 was killed, how she was found, that that's impacted --
12 negatively impacted their lives and that their stories are
13 important and need to be heard. I know all of us sitting
14 here know that something needs to change so that our -- the
15 violence that happens to our women will stop, that there
16 needs to be fundamental changes in the justice structure,
17 in the social system, child welfare, health care. And, I
18 just want to end with -- again, with saying that I'm proud
19 of my four sisters in front here. Thank you.

20 **MS. DANIELLE EWENIN:** Marie, did you want to
21 say something?

22 **MS. LILLIAN PIAPOT:** (Speaks in Indigenous
23 language).

24 **MS. DANIELLE EWENIN:** I'd like to explain
25 that painting. Can we hold it up?

1 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** This painting was
2 done by my husband, Rowe Inbul (phon), and the reason he
3 created it is because I had made these skirts for my mom
4 and my aunts, and I talk a lot about, you know, the pain,
5 you know, that is in our family and it's just really hard.
6 And, sometimes, like, it just feels like you have to do
7 something, and in that moment, my way of expressing, you
8 know, my love and passion for my family and my people was
9 to create a skirt, and to tell the story, you know, to --
10 and I know that my husband wanted to do the same, so he did
11 with the painting, and he also feels that men -- that our
12 men also need to, you know, guide and protect our women.

13 And so, in the front, it shows two
14 silhouettes of warriors that he made and, you know, they're
15 protecting our women, that -- those are the men that are
16 still here and they're protecting our women. The woman in
17 the red ribbon dress obviously represents all our missing
18 and murdered Indigenous women and girls and the silhouettes
19 on the top are our ancestors, you know, watching over us
20 and, you know, welcoming them home. And, I'm just really
21 grateful that my husband was able to create that. You
22 know, I know it was really meaningful to a lot of people
23 and, yes, that's it.

24 **MS. DANIELLE EWENIN:** She needs a break.

25 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** We'll take, what, a 5-

1 minute break? What would you like?

2 **MS. DANIELLE EWENIN:** Yes.

3 **MS. JENNIFER COX:** Okay, sure.

4 **(SHORT PAUSE)**

5 **MS. DANIELLE EWENIN:** I think there are only
6 a couple more statements. I know that the process is
7 usually just four witnesses, but again it's not just us,
8 it's -- you can see we have a lot of family here today, and
9 they're here, you know, because they love us and they -- we
10 love each other. I think it's important that the
11 information about my nephews, Laney's boys, there would be
12 more, and I have -- yes, and I have another cousin that
13 wants to talk just a bit about the impact on the whole
14 family. And then we'll close with a presentation from Mona
15 and Kyla (phon); right? Yes, women warrior song. So,
16 Chris.

17 **MR. CHRISTOPHER WOODWARD:** Hello, I'm
18 Christopher Woodward. I'm a nephew. I just wanted to say
19 as I can go back in memory to whenever the boys would come
20 over, I would -- it was always -- you would always be
21 reminded that -- not to talk about their mother because
22 she's gone and not to make it any harder on them. But,
23 from what we understood was, well, we have a lot of moms
24 here, so we can share our moms and we're children.

25 But, as we got older, you can tell the

1 institutions that the boys had went through, we lost touch
2 for a long period of time and I had not -- no one -- nobody
3 has known them being in institutions that they were growing
4 up in. And then I hit an age where I wasn't the greatest
5 young man myself and I ended up in these institutions as
6 well, and only being in those institutions do I know my two
7 brothers, and I know them best out of all my family here
8 being that I've lived with them for periods of time. And,
9 they are the most respectful men that I know compared to
10 many. They have the biggest hearts. They are not these
11 monsters that I see were made. They are great young men,
12 but they didn't know nothing else other than behind those
13 walls.

14 I've managed to make it out of there and
15 have children, and I'm trying hard to stop this from any
16 further, and I figured this is helping by speaking. I just
17 wanted to share that with -- that my brothers never had a
18 chance due to this.

19 **MS. LANA KLENYIK:** Hello, everyone. My name
20 is Lana Klenyik (phon), and I'd like to share something
21 with you about my life. Today, I'm finally meeting more of
22 my biological family which is awesome. I've looked forward
23 to this day for a long time. I'm extremely excited and
24 happy. To start off with, I hear that I'm a part of the
25 Sixties Scoop. I didn't really understand what that meant.

1 As far as I know is that I was adopted at 3 weeks old into
2 the Klenyik family. Growing up, I was denied my roots, who
3 I was and how I got there.

4 I specifically remember as a child I found a
5 black and white picture, and it said Lana Ewenin. And, I
6 looked in the phonebook and I found the last name, and I
7 had phone up this number and said, "Are you my mommy?"
8 And, she would say no; right? And, they wouldn't tell me
9 -- I'd ask and they kept it a secret like it was a bad
10 thing, you know, don't tell me about my real family or
11 where you're from, you know, what's your heritage and
12 everything.

13 And, today, I found that -- like I'm just
14 really pissed about it because how can another human do
15 that to a child? You know, to not tell them about who the
16 child is, their culture, their roots; you know? Like, and
17 then you find out 48 years later and you're meeting your
18 real family, and you're like, wow, you know, I was just --
19 how could they do that; you know? But, I was naïve, I
20 didn't know that the system did that or were they allowed,
21 or they just did it anyways.

22 So, anyways, as I was growing up in this
23 white family, the abuse started at a young age, and the
24 stepfather did sexual things, being raped, run out of towns
25 because I'm Native, losing my kids because I'm Native and,

1 you know, start to -- you react on this like a rebound,
2 like, you know, because of my family life and growing up,
3 now I'm -- now losing my kids. I vented out in a way, I
4 found drugs, and I thought that was the answer. So, I
5 ended up going down, but to me, it was numbing the pain and
6 I was okay with it.

7 As years went by, I realized that, you know,
8 I needed help and that -- then I finally met Mona for the
9 first time out in B.C. She's my real aunt and I was, you
10 know, thrilled. I was like, holy shit, this is my real
11 aunt. I met Tracey, my half-sister, her daughter, Winona.
12 I think that was it. And, you know, just those three or
13 four people, I was like, holy shit; you know? This is my
14 biological family. You know, wow, this is real family.
15 And, as the years went by, I've met today -- I was looking
16 really forward to meeting more of my family. You know,
17 this is family to me because the connection is there, we
18 love each other, she's my inspiration, we have a strength;
19 right? All of us combined. We learn from each other, like
20 Mona said, a community where we become really strong,
21 that's what I do believe.

22 Today, I've also met -- what's her name
23 again? Debbie. Debbie, twice now, Danielle and the lady
24 in the back there. I forgot your name. Pardon? Tracey.
25 So, yes, that's like two people more that I've met for the

1 first time and, you know, I'm just so excited about it. I
2 -- you know, I love them all even though I haven't met them
3 because growing up, like I said, in an abusive, adopted
4 home and having your real heritage hidden for all those
5 years, and all the abuse and bullshit you went through, and
6 then you reunite with your real family, and -- you can't
7 imagine what that feels like. It just -- you know, you
8 melt because here's somebody that's going to love you,
9 these people, because, you know, that's me. They're --
10 we're connected, we're family.

11 So, yes, today, I'm extremely happy. I just
12 wanted to say a little bit about my life, about my name,
13 stepdad and all the shit that goes along with it. I've
14 been clean for three years now since Hastings, and I got
15 out of there. I am a survivor also. Mona always told me,
16 "You're a survivor," and I do believe that because a lot of
17 people don't get out of that street. They never do. They
18 die, and I was lucky enough to get through the bullshit,
19 the bad days, the knives, the shootings, all that and, you
20 know, I'm here and I'm okay, I'm alive. And, what better
21 yet, I'm with my real family that loves me.

22 And, the way I see it, is that the Klenyiks,
23 the white family that's adopted me, okay, they raised me,
24 but as far as I see it, they weren't a family, but this is
25 my family today and there's nothing like family. And, I

1 told them all I loved them, and from here on in, I want to
2 stay connected, see them more, you know, just do the --
3 what families do because as far as I know, today, I don't
4 have anybody.

5 I live here, and at Christmas, everybody
6 goes with their family. I don't have anybody. So -- but
7 this year it's going to be different, I hope, and even
8 calling them and sending stuff; you know? That means a lot
9 to me because they love you and you know that; you know?
10 And, to have that is phenomenal for me because I went
11 almost 20 years without having connected with these -- my
12 family, real family. The adopted family has disowned me.

13 So, yes, I was pretty lost after that, after
14 my adopted mom died, the five brothers and sisters, I
15 haven't talked to them over 20 years. So, you know, it's
16 been -- that really hurts a person because, you know, this
17 family, the real family that loves me, they're in B.C. but,
18 you know, you can't see them -- or you can phone them, and
19 I thought, well, there's not connection there, so you feel
20 kind of alone like nobody gives a shit about you. But, now
21 I know that, you know, they do and I love them so much. I
22 just want to express how happy I am to be here and to speak
23 my -- share my story with you and, yes, that's about it.
24 Thank you very much.

25 **MS. CAROL:** My name is Carol. I am sister

1 to Lillian and Danielle and Mona. Those are all my
2 sisters. I just wanted to say that when we were young, we
3 all knew each other. We knew -- our grandmother used to
4 bring us all together and we'd have Sunday supper, and we
5 -- everybody in the family knew each other. But, with
6 residential schools, the Scoop, we lost track of each
7 other, and some of them I still haven't met yet, and I'm
8 starting to meet them now.

9 And, another point I wanted to make was, I
10 don't think it's fair that, as an Indian woman, that we
11 should have to live in fear every time we go out and worry
12 about our granddaughters, our grandchildren. And, like
13 everyone else, there has to be some real change happening.
14 Thank you.

15 **MS. WINONA:** (Speaks in Indigenous
16 language), my name is Winona. I am the daughter, the
17 oldest daughter of Mona. And, I just wanted to say to my
18 mom and my aunties, like, for the first time today, I kind
19 of understood what intergenerational survival meant because
20 we hear about trauma all the time, but we don't hear about
21 the qualities that allow us to survive. And, despite the
22 stories of separation and stuff, like, your bond is strong,
23 you know, as siblings, and your connection is deep in its
24 roots and it had to be. It had to be in order for you guys
25 to continue to live in this world and be in this world.

1 And, it's like that with me and my siblings
2 too, growing up in foster care; you know? And, I know my
3 family -- I'm a survivor too, and I come from a very strong
4 -- from very strong educated women who are deep in their
5 roots, and I am so proud of them. And, you know, there's
6 been many different topics and discussions about this
7 Inquiry and whether or not we believe in it or staying
8 hopeful. You know, I'm sitting here because this Inquiry
9 happened because we continue to tell our stories and that
10 is powerful.

11 But, today, I also know that I don't have to
12 rely on an Inquiry, but I also know that defamation laws
13 protect individuals that continue to perpetuate violence;
14 you know? And, I know the laws in a different way than --
15 but then other people do now because you continue to tell
16 your stories. And, I just -- what I was wishing for
17 through the Inquiry was healing and connection, and being
18 able to honour each other's stories, and I don't see that
19 happen -- happening here at all. I'm not able to connect
20 with another family because I'm having a hard time and time
21 limited to connect with my own family.

22 And, to tell my story, I don't even know if
23 I want to rely on the Inquiry; you know? I -- the -- I
24 have a Small Claims that's got potential to go to Supreme
25 and, you know what? Once I serve them, and then I have a

1 media person from CBC that's been following me, and this is
2 going to be completely different because I know you could
3 be found not guilty in criminal court, but have to pay up
4 in claims. That's how fucked up the laws are -- the system
5 is.

6 All those inconclusive investigations, there
7 are other ways of dealing with it. You just have to know
8 how to deal with it and have the education to go before a
9 courtroom and plead your case. But, Inquiries are meant to
10 tell a part of history that was stolen from a bunch of
11 people and it was meant to heal each other through each
12 other's stories and, you know, I'm happy I'm sitting here
13 with my family and I'm happy to get to know my family
14 through how the history has impacted them and the strength
15 they had to share.

16 But, I'm only limited to -- and like Auntie
17 Danielle said, you know, I really wished that there was
18 more community involvement. You know, I wish it was really
19 more community-based; you know? And, I don't see any of
20 the local communities here welcoming us. I didn't even --
21 I wasn't even welcomed here. I just rushed off to bed and
22 got up, and rushed up and got ready. Like, there's no
23 ceremony in this.

24 When Eggy (phon) told the story behind the
25 creation of the dress, it was so beautiful, and I didn't

1 even know that, you know, it was snowing or anything like
2 that. And, I had finally decided to speak out publicly
3 about, you know, what had happened to me, and it was at the
4 Vancouver Art Gallery at a Me Too event. And, when I
5 started talking, it started to snow.

6 My mom thinks that, you know, what happens
7 to me happens more often than we think to a lot of
8 Indigenous women in this country, and that my story is
9 really important because -- you know, because of her
10 sister. You know, that happened in 1984. What I
11 experienced happened in 2015 and 2016, and somebody needs
12 to stop the RCMP from closing our files, not investigating
13 our files or hiding our files because they are guilty.
14 And, I don't know if anybody can change that or who can
15 change that, but the amount of power that they have to not
16 do nothing is scary.

17 And, I've been through so much even
18 discrediting -- like been told about a head case, head
19 (indiscernible), like everything. I have to remind myself
20 that I was -- I'm a mother of five children, two whom I've
21 adopted and I'm a third-year university student; you know?

22 One of my friends who is in psychology told
23 me about gas lighting, and it's a technique that a lot of
24 people use. And, when I educate myself, I heal myself, and
25 I start to see the things that people are doing to me to

1 try to hurt me and play a game on my emotions. And, when I
2 learned that, I learned how to better, like, hide my
3 emotions and become stronger to talk and be -- talk in a
4 way that people understand me. And, when people do try to
5 discredit my feelings or emotions, I can put them in their
6 place.

7 My daughter loves *kokum*. My daughter's name
8 is Justice, and she was given -- her spirit name was given,
9 Red Sweet Grass Girl. And, she used to be at the front of
10 the marches with mom, she used to wear her cousin's shirt,
11 she used to be butterflies in spirits. But, now she's in
12 foster care, and she wants to go back into this dance
13 group, and she wants to do the marches again and, you know,
14 she sees me becoming healthier.

15 I said, "Justice, like, how come you like
16 this so much? How come you're such an advocate for it?"
17 And, she goes, "Because I asked *kokum* why she does it and
18 she said she doesn't want it to ever happen to one of her
19 kids." And, I said, "Oh, like, mommy?" And, she goes,
20 "Yes." And, Justice goes, "And, I didn't want that
21 happening to you either and I still don't want that
22 happening to you either." And, I was just like, oh, my
23 God, that was the first time I said, you know, that could
24 happen to my daughter.

25 And, I said, "Justice, do you think this is

1 ever going to happen to you?" And, she goes, "Nope." I
2 said, "Why?" And, she goes, "Because you're still here."
3 But, she's in foster care. I lost them, and that's
4 institutional violence that's perpetuated through these
5 racist policies that I don't know who has the power to
6 change or stop. You know, these policies are not going to
7 change themselves overnight, you know, these laws that
8 divide us.

9 I'm just sad that, you know, I took an aunt
10 that I have never even met to be sitting here today with
11 all of my family and that some of us don't even get this
12 opportunity, and this is an opportunity for some of our
13 family members to finally meet each other, and we're being
14 rushed through it. We don't get the time to connect. And,
15 I really feel that this Inquiry needs to be looking at that
16 deeply and thoroughly, and how healing should be a big part
17 of this and family reunification and connection should be a
18 big part of this because tragedies and traumas separate us
19 just like it did to me and my kids.

20 So, tomorrow, we've got to be at the airport
21 early in the morning, and after this, I'm probably just
22 going to head to bed. I don't think I'm going to be
23 meeting anybody else or seeing anybody else or hearing
24 anybody else's story because I don't have that time to
25 recover or that -- given that space to, and that's not how

1 we honour each other's stories in our traditions. If it
2 was up to the communities to do Inquiries, it would be
3 different.

4 I mean, I remember in Vancouver at the Haida
5 House, when they were making the statement for the dates,
6 the Haida House has spirits that are displaced. There's no
7 smoke hole. The spirits are trapped just like the totem
8 poles at Stanley Park, and that -- this represents that.
9 (Speaks in Indigenous language).

10 **MS. MONA WOODWARD:** I just wanted to kind of
11 summarize some of the things that I learned today and some
12 of the things that have been said today, and that's to do
13 with the Inquiry. You know, like, are we really doing good
14 or are we doing harm? Are we creating more harm? Are we
15 victimizing the victims? That's something to think about
16 because, you know, when we talk about these things, we
17 bring back to light that pain and that hurt that's been
18 covered up for many years and sometimes hasn't even been
19 talked about. And, I just wonder -- you know, I worry
20 about the ones that are going to go away here with a heavy
21 heart and have no way or -- to grieve and to be able to
22 have that chance to recover. And then we wonder why, you
23 know, where the -- when our people, you know, turn to drugs
24 and alcohol to mask the pain.

25 And, I just wanted to put it out there that,

1 you know, we are all good people, and the Creator is here
2 with us, as well as our ancestors that have gone before us
3 and the people that have fought so hard and have given
4 their life and blood so that we can have a better life.
5 And, I know that -- you know, an Elder shared this teaching
6 with me, you know, when I was really struggling, really
7 struggling, and I was just like, you know, why do so many
8 people have to die? Why does it have to be death before
9 the government or anybody takes action? Why do tragedies
10 have to happen before we realize that, you know, something
11 needs to change, that these laws have to change?

12 And, I said, you know, I just feel like, you
13 know, giving up, but I don't know why. And, they said,
14 "Well, you know, there's always that spark that lives
15 within everyone of us. When we feel like we can't go on,
16 then that spark gets ignited and it comes -- and it creates
17 a flame that comes through our total being where that
18 strength can carry us through those times that we need the
19 extra help."

20 And, I hope that everybody has a safe
21 journey home wherever they're going and to remember the
22 good things that we had today or after, the friendship and
23 the unconditional love that we have for each other because
24 that will carry us through. And, as long as keep talking
25 about it and, you know, this issue's not going to go away,

1 as long as we keep bring it up to light and never let it --
2 anyone forget what happened and that -- so that it never
3 happens again. All my relations.

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Is it on? Okay.

5 (Speaks in Indigenous language) for having us here. This
6 song is about -- it's a west coast warrior's woman song and
7 it's dedicated to all the missing and murdered Indigenous
8 women, and it was written by a woman from Mount Curry;
9 right? Okay. So, this -- we'll just do it for you. And,
10 if you know the song, please join in.

11 **(MUSICAL PRESENTATION)**

12 **CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:** Thank you
13 all very much. It's been -- thank you all very much.
14 Thank you all very much for being here today. It's a
15 pleasure to meet all of you. What you've said to day is
16 very important, very important to our work, very important
17 to other families and people who have been witnessing what
18 you have said today. So, we're very grateful that you all
19 came, we're very grateful for what you did say. You've
20 made a big difference in what you've said today and by
21 being here, so I'm very grateful. Thank you.

22 --- Upon adjourning at 17:24

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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

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

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

Shirley Chang

February 16, 2018