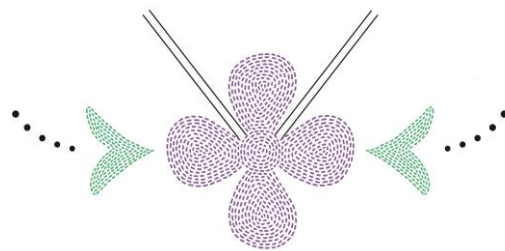


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



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
Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre
Whitehorse, Yukon**



PUBLIC

Tuesday May 30, 2017

Public Volume 1

**Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri & Darla-Jean
Lindstrom, In Relation to Mary Johns;**

**May Bolton, Dennis Shorty & Marilyn Shorty,
In Relation to Elsie Shorty;**

**Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo & Annette Eikland,
In Relation to May Stewart;**

**Catherine Doctor & Cindy Allen,
In Relation to Mary Adele Doctor**

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- Exhibit P4: *Yellowknifer* news article "Ndilo elder dies following attack," by Cara Loverock published Wednesday, February 11, 2009.
- Exhibit P5: *Yellowknifer* news article " Woman accused of beating elder won't face manslaughter charge" by Cara Loverock, Friday May 1, 2009.
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Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

Whitehorse, Yukon
May 30, 2017

1
2
3
4 AGNES: It is the blessing for our people and all
5 things that are alive. Creator, for all the
6 people that are here, Creator, I pray that they
7 will join hands and that they will give the
8 energy that they, the people, need to continue on
9 and to -- to do the very best that they can for
10 the future generation. This is why we are here.

11 I thank you, Creator for this beautiful day.
12 I thank you, grandfather sun, for what you have
13 given us today. I thank you to the galaxies. I
14 thank you, grandfather Moon, grandmother Moon,
15 for what you have given to us. I thank you for
16 our mother earth, for what she has provided to
17 us. And I pray, Creator, that we will follow in
18 the footsteps of our ancestors to look after our
19 land, as -- as we are meant to be here.

20 Creator, hear our prayers. We pray for the
21 answers that are needed. We pray for all the
22 sacred things that is happening here today - the
23 sacred fire, the workers, the people here in the
24 Yukon, and the ones that have travelled so far to
25 be here with us today. I pray for their journeys
26 to be safe.

27 Great Spirit, for the ones that are going
28 through a hard time today, the ancestors, we ask
29 you to come and help them. Our grandmas and
30 grandpas, we call upon you to come and help us.
31 We need the help that is needed. I ask -- ask
32 you to guide us in the right direction so that we
33 are doing the right thing.

34 Great Spirit, look after all the workers,
35 look after all the people that are here today. I
36 pray today will be safe and I pray today that
37 people will have courage. And I pray today that
38 people will hold each other up. And I pray today
39 that we will be grateful for why we are here. I
40 thank you for everything that has been given to
41 us. [Aboriginal language spoken], Great Spirit.
42 [Indigenous language spoken] grandfathers
43 [Indigenous language spoken] grandmothers
44 [Indigenous language spoken].

45 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you. In
46 honour of our Northern sisters, we'll light the
47 *ku'lik*, please.

Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

1 [Silence as *ku'lik* lit by Barbara Sevigny, Elder
2 Louise Haulli and Lillian Lundrigan]

3 BARBARA SEVIGNY: I will share a little bit about our
4 *ku'lik*, the traditional oil lamp
5 [indiscernible/away from microphone].

6 I will share a little bit about we call it
7 the *ku'lik*, our traditional oil lamp. Today we
8 use it as a ceremonial tool, but it was a very
9 important tool for our people. For us it was a
10 survival tool. It helped melt the snow so we can
11 have water to drink, dry the clothes, provide us
12 light when there's 24 hour darkness, provide some
13 heat, dry the clothing, and a lot of good stories
14 around the -- around the *ku'lik* when the hunters
15 came back from their trip and sharing their
16 stories from -- with their children and their
17 wives. And brought a lot of calmness. A lot of
18 children had shared that, you know, they would
19 purposely make their eyes water and it's with
20 their eyes and they'd see rainbows around the
21 flames. So -- and it brought a lot of -- it
22 brought everybody together. This is more of a
23 ceremonial size. They were much bigger and there
24 was multiple *ku'liks* in -- in the -- in the
25 igloos back then. There was three of them used
26 for cooking as well, to cook the food. So, it
27 was very important for us. It was a survival
28 tool. So today we light it in the memory of our
29 ancestors because it was not that long ago where
30 they had stopped using the *ku'lik* as a survival
31 tool. So, we light it in the memory of our
32 ancestors, of what they had to live through in
33 the harsh conditions in -- in the weather. In
34 the North were our people. Yeah, so today I'd
35 like to thank Louise for lighting it on behalf of
36 our -- our ancestors today for everyone.

37 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you.

38 [hearing din]

39 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you.

40 Before we hear from our first family, the
41 commissioners and our lead counsel -- pardon
42 me -- want to give you some opening remarks.

43 First, I want to acknowledge the spirits of
44 the missing and murdered Indigenous women and
45 girls. I want to acknowledge the survivors of
46 violence, including the members of the trans and
47 two-spirited communities. I want to thank the

**Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks**

1 elders, who are here with us today, and the
2 sacred fire keepers for starting us in ceremony
3 and taking care of us every day.

4 I acknowledge our grandmothers, who share
5 their wisdom with us. And I also acknowledge and
6 thank the members of our National Family Advisory
7 Circle, who support us and guide us in our work.
8 I want to also acknowledge and honour the people
9 all across Canada who have worked so hard and so
10 long to make this National Inquiry a reality. I
11 thank you for your work.

12 Today is a turning point in our national
13 history. Now there is a national stage for the
14 stories and the voices of the missing and
15 murdered Indigenous women and girls through their
16 families, and a national stage for the survivors
17 of violence to share their experiences. I expect
18 that in this hearing and in hearings to follow we
19 will hear about mothers, grandmothers, sisters
20 and aunties, nieces, cousins, and dear friends.
21 They are and were real people who loved and were
22 loved, who dreamed and hoped, who laughed and
23 cried. We'll also hear about those people who
24 found courage and strength to carry on. This
25 National Inquiry is about them, their lives.

26 We want families and survivors to trust us
27 with their stories. We know that their trust is
28 sacred, treated with respect and thoughtfulness.

29 All of Canada needs to hear the truth about
30 the violence that Indigenous women and girls have
31 endured for generations and continue to endure.
32 Why? This is a sorrowful but essential part of
33 our national history. We need to recognize and
34 understand colonization and racism. We need to
35 heal and we need to craft solutions. When an
36 Indigenous woman or girl goes missing, is
37 murdered or is harmed, we are all weaker As
38 families, as communities and as a nation. We
39 have lost a life giver, or a life giver has been
40 harmed. We must remember our women and girls are
41 sacred.

42 In the midst of stories of loss there will
43 be stories of courage and resilience. There will
44 be also stories of healing, reconciliation,
45 growth, and innovation. We want to hear those
46 stories too so that we have a better
47 understanding of systemic violence.

Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

1 In closing, I expect that the voices heard
2 and the stories told throughout this National
3 Inquiry will rewrite the national consciousness
4 about systemic violence experienced by Indigenous
5 women and girls, trans, and two-spirited people
6 from coast to coast to coast.

7 Thank you very much.

8 Commissioner Audette.

9 COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: [Speaking Innu-aimun]

10 Vraiment fière d'être auprès de vous.

11 Aujourd'hui, je suis honorée de me tenir devant
12 vous ici à titre de commissaire pour l'Enquête
13 nationale pour les femmes et les jeunes femmes
14 autochtones assassinées ou disparues.

15 C'est dans le regard de chaque femme, de
16 chaque jeune fille ou enfant, que depuis le tout
17 début je réalise l'importance de ces travaux, de
18 cette enquête nationale, et aussi, non seulement
19 aux yeux des ces femmes et jeunes filles mais aux
20 yeux de leurs proches, des gens qui les
21 soutiennent et qui les appuient.

22 C'est aussi mes yeux, mon coeur qui
23 ressentent toute cette vérité, toutes ces
24 histoires, ces récits. Et il est de notre devoir
25 de s'assurer de ne pas oublier, pour qu'elles ne
26 tombent pas dans l'oubli et que ceci reste sans
27 conséquences, surtout les sévices, les lésions,
28 les injustices, les inéquités dont elles ont fait
29 l'objet, pour celles qui sont disparues ou
30 assassinées, que leur histoire soit vaine,
31 qu'elles ne tombent pas dans l'oubli ou qu'elles
32 se répètent.

33 Pour moi et mes collègues, les commissaires
34 avec lesquels je siège, toutes ces vies pour
35 toutes ces peines et pour toutes les larmes, le
36 temps est venu après des mois de préparations,
37 d'acharnement, de détermination, et de recherche
38 aussi, de recevoir vos témoignages. Ceci est
39 très, très, très important.

40 Il ne s'agit pas seulement de poser des
41 questions. Il s'agit de poser les bonnes
42 questions aux bonnes personnes. Ainsi, nous
43 espérons obtenir des réponses. Mais si les
44 réponses ne viennent pas, la force sera
45 nécessaire.

46 En ce moment ici à Whitehorse, nous
47 franchissons une étape importante, un jalon très

Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

1 important au niveau de la démarche de l'enquête.
2 Chaque victime, chaque famille, chaque
3 communauté, chaque citoyen et citoyenne du Canada
4 qui nous écoutent aujourd'hui ont les yeux rivés
5 sur les travaux de cette enquête, une enquête
6 historique.

7 Enfin ces travaux mettront la lumière sur la
8 vérité, votre vérité, puis la reconnaissance sur
9 la violence faite aux femmes et aux jeunes femmes
10 autochtones, parce que cette enquête doit mettre
11 la lumière, oui, sur les faits, et surtout parce
12 que nous croyons en la justice et l'équité, parce
13 que la crédibilité exige la qualité, parce que la
14 qualité exige le temps, parce que le lendemain du
15 dépôt du rapport final est aussi important que le
16 processus d'enquête.

17 Alors, je me tiens devant vous aujourd'hui
18 prête, enfin vraiment prête, à amorcer cette
19 partie charnière des travaux de cette enquête, et
20 du même coup je tiens à souligner, et surtout
21 saluer, la contribution des organisations ici
22 présentes et ceux et celles qui nous écoutent,
23 les familles à travers le Canada, les
24 survivantes, les leaders et les communautés,
25 d'avoir exigé de nous, les commissaires et les
26 employés de l'enquête, de la rigueur et surtout
27 de la qualité envers cette enquête. Et c'est sûr
28 que je partage ce degré d'exigence élevé.

29 Les yeux de ce pays, je dirai même la
30 planète, nous regardent. L'histoire se
31 souviendra de ce moment. L'histoire se
32 souviendra de ces efforts, de ces pages, dont ces
33 pages dans lesquelles la vérité aura émergé, la
34 vérité qui émergera pour toujours.

35 The work of which will shed light of the
36 truth and the knowledge and I am doing this for
37 you. And the violence suffered by women
38 and girls, Indigenous women and girls, has to
39 stop. This inquiry must shine a bright light of
40 facts because we believe in justice and fairness,
41 because credibility requires quality, because
42 quality requires time, because the day after the
43 final report is submitted as -- is important as
44 the investigation process. I stand before you
45 today ready to begin this crucial part of our
46 work. The eyes of the country and the world are
47 watching. History will remember this moment.

**Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks**

1 History will remember these efforts. History
2 will remember these pages - these pages in which
3 the truth has emerged, the truth that will emerge
4 forever, your truth.

5 Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: Good morning, everyone.
7 I'd like to recognize the traditional territory
8 of the Kwanlin Dün, the Ta'an Kwäch'än.

9 It's a pleasure and an honour to be here
10 with you all today as the National Inquiry holds
11 its first community hearings as part of the
12 truth-gathering process.

13 I'd like to say a few words about our
14 hearings that we're having this week. As
15 you -- as you no doubt know, our mandate requires
16 that we inquire into and report on systemic
17 causes of violence against Indigenous women and
18 girls in Canada. And also, institutional
19 policies and practices that have been implemented
20 in response to that violence, including practices
21 that have been effective in reducing violence and
22 increasing safety.

23 We have also been directed to make
24 recommendations on concrete and effective action
25 that can be taken to remove systemic violence and
26 increase safety for Indigenous women and girls,
27 as well as ways to honour and commemorate lost
28 loved ones.

29 In planning for the hearings, the
30 commissioners and our staff have been very aware
31 that the stories about lost loved ones and
32 stories from those who have experienced violence
33 can be very difficult to tell, but those stories
34 need to be told, they need to be heard. It's
35 very important that those stories are heard as
36 part of carrying out the mandate of a National
37 Inquiry.

38 Our mandate also directs us to take into
39 account that the inquiry process is intended to
40 be trauma informed to the extent possible and
41 this has been a very important consideration for
42 us all along. And we have received helpful input
43 from family members and organizations, including
44 grass roots organizations on our processes.

45 We have clearly heard that the inquiry needs
46 to be flexible in terms of the options that are
47 available for people who want to share their

**Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks**

1 stories. And we indicated that this can be done
2 in a number of ways, such as speaking with us in
3 a public hearing, like we are having here today.
4 People can also speak to us in private or in
5 camera, or people can speak to a statement taker,
6 who will record their stories. Stories can also
7 be expressed through art.

8 This week here we will be holding public
9 hearings each day that we have hearings, Tuesday,
10 Wednesday, Thursday. We will also be holding
11 some hearings in camera at the -- at the same
12 time as the public hearings and we will be
13 starting that this afternoon. So, this means
14 that two commissioners will be holding hearings
15 elsewhere after the lunch break today while three
16 commissioners will remain here for the
17 continuation of the public hearings.

18 We have also planned to have a family circle
19 that will be held on Wednesday afternoon in
20 camera, and we have set aside time for two
21 sharing circles, one later today that will be
22 public and one on Thursday that will be in
23 camera. We may have to make adjustments to the
24 schedule as the week progresses in order to meet
25 the needs of everyone here who wants to share
26 their stories with us this week. We also have
27 statement takers available this week on site.

28 So as we begin the challenging, important
29 work of hearing the stories in this community
30 hearing context, we want to ensure that if
31 you -- if you're here and you want to share your
32 stories, that you have appropriate options
33 available to be able to do that and have your
34 experiences heard.

35 We would also be very grateful for your
36 feedback or suggestions on how we can improve the
37 process so that we can make adjustments and
38 continue to strive to be flexible and meet the
39 needs of everyone who wants to share their
40 stories with us as we carry out this very
41 important work. And I look forward to working
42 with you all this week. Thank you. *Miigwech*.

43 COMMISSIONER MARION POITRAS: Good morning, everyone.
44 There's lots of people watching and lots of
45 people listening and I just want to open my heart
46 and say good morning to everyone, everyone that's
47 here, everyone that's watching from somewhere

Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

1 else, the supports that you have at home that are
2 helping you be here today. I just want to say
3 good morning to everyone.

4 I want to begin by honouring the fact that
5 we have been asked to be part of what I think is
6 a very large national ceremony for our country.
7 I think that the work of the National Inquiry has
8 been made a reality by all of you, and all of
9 you, and all of the women across this country and
10 their supporters, their husbands, their children,
11 their partners to say Indigenous voice matters
12 here. The loved ones who have left us or are
13 suffering in my heart are guiding everything that
14 this Commission has the potential to reach. And
15 I want to honour that first and foremost.

16 I am thankful to the fire keepers outside
17 that began this ceremony for us in Whitehorse
18 when we came a few weeks ago and they're back
19 again. I am grateful to the *ku'lik* that you have
20 had a story about, for fire is the ultimate
21 symbol of rebirth and I think that's what we're
22 in the middle of here. It's a sacred element for
23 every Indigenous community in our country.

24 I am grateful for the prayers, the prayers
25 that have guided us, the prayers that we have
26 received today, and the prayers that were sent on
27 a daily basis from people saying we support you,
28 we believe in you. I am so grateful. I want to
29 honour and acknowledge the prayers that have gone
30 out to the people who are brave enough to be the
31 first people to speak to us today. Thank you.

32 I want to -- I want to acknowledge that we
33 don't exist without the symbolism that's made a
34 reality here, the fire that rebirths us, the
35 water that we're all dependent on that is a life
36 giver for us; the land that we're on, that our
37 women are ultimately connected to forever and it
38 symbolizes our relationship in the word. The
39 blankets that you see around the room today,
40 cotton blankets, again a symbol of the land, the
41 cotton, and those are created by women for this
42 purpose - a group of women who came together and
43 offered the blanket so that we would feel
44 comfort. Blankets were used for hauling.
45 Blankets are used to hold babies. Blankets are
46 used to keep us warm. I'd like you to take your
47 time to read the messages that are on these

Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

1 blankets from some residents from the Elizabeth
2 Frye, from the Enaahtig (phoentic) Healing Lodge
3 in Southern Saskatchewan, from family members in
4 Saskatchewan, from ex-police officers that came
5 to hold some space with family members, from
6 MLAs, from the LGBTQ2S community in Saskatoon.
7 And they're throughout. They're throughout the
8 process. They're in all of the spaces that we'll
9 be using. Please take some time to have a look
10 at that.

11 I want you to see that there is a basket in
12 front of us, another symbol of our connection to
13 the land. This basket is red willow. There is a
14 Cree tradition of red willow being the
15 first -- the first plant, the first plan to talk
16 to us for -- for a healing. That red willow and
17 the red basket, the red cloth offers protection
18 and healing and the symbolism is it was gifted to
19 the inquiry as a way for us to collect and gather
20 your stories, and we offer it in that honourable
21 tradition of saying we respect what you're
22 offering us.

23 I want to acknowledge that the earth we call
24 our mother for a reason. We depend on her for
25 life. And this is an inquiry from missing and
26 murdered Indigenous women and girls. And when
27 our women and girls are honoured and looked after
28 and supported by our men and we support our men
29 and we have our boys close to our hearts,
30 everybody wins.

31 Our women are creators and caregivers. How
32 we treat our women in this country tells us how
33 we treat everyone in this country. How our
34 Indigenous women and girls are treated tells the
35 world how we'll treat each other. And I want us
36 to hold that sacred as we move from this. That
37 as people tell our stories, as these women come
38 forward and talk to us, as the men come forward
39 and talk to us, that's what we're honouring, who
40 we are as a nation.

41 I want to acknowledge that we are next to a
42 river. And there is going to be a lot of tears
43 that are going to flow over the course of this
44 and have flowed already and that they're
45 necessary, and that we want to gather those too.

46 I want to -- I want to tell you how grateful
47 I am to be welcomed onto this territory and to

Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

1 start here and to be starting in a good way, and
2 to be sent on across this beautiful landscape
3 that we call our home and to do it in a good way
4 everywhere we go. But my greatest gratitude goes
5 to the women who have been telling their stories
6 forever on this land and nobody has been
7 listening and nobody wants to hear. And we're
8 finding each other and we're telling our stories
9 and they matter. And we have a process now for
10 you to come and share your truth and I am really
11 grateful to be part of that. Thank you so much.

12 COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: [Inuktitut spoken]

13 Good morning. Thank you for welcoming us to
14 your home, to your land. Thank you and for
15 teaching me, like you did just now.

16 I am very honoured to stand beside you in
17 front you have today as the commissioner on the
18 National Inquiry.

19 A woman shared with me recently how she
20 learned about violence at a very young age. She
21 told me about how even as a little girl she knew
22 she had to protect herself. She knew what houses
23 she had to avoid, what people she should not be
24 alone with. She grew up in survival mode. I
25 refuse to believe that we live in a society where
26 we are leaving our women, girls, trans and
27 two-spirited this way. The National Inquiry is
28 dedicated to finding the truth through in-depth
29 examination. A part of this inquiry is about
30 what makes sense. It's about what really
31 happened, what's really happening everyday. It's
32 about receiving this information from you, from
33 families, families of the heart and survivors.
34 It's not about extracting it. It's about
35 receiving it as a gift from you and we are so
36 grateful for that.

37 We will listen to people that for years have
38 not been seen, have not been heard, have not been
39 understood, and haven't even been acknowledged.
40 We want to hear and understand you and
41 acknowledge you in your words, in your language
42 on your land.

43 We're travelling across this country to
44 gather evidence - evidence that will lead us to
45 the truth, evidence that will lead us to
46 knowledge, knowledge that will lead us to
47 solutions - because to move forward it requires

Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

1 this understanding of the past and the present;
2 because we can't improve a situation if we don't
3 acknowledge it; because that woman is you, that
4 woman is me, that woman is all Indigenous women,
5 that woman is all Canadians.

6 I believe one day women, girls, trans and
7 two-spirited will live in a safe environment,
8 they will be able to grow in a healthy and safe
9 environment. I believe in justice and equity. I
10 believe that every little change can lead to
11 great change.

12 After these hearings I hope you will go
13 home, back to your communities, back to your
14 nations knowing that this reality can and will be
15 changed, and that you will have a part in that.
16 I believe very strongly in this work. Canada
17 needs this work to be done. Canada needs this
18 work to be done to be the nation it aspires and
19 purports to be - a nation we want and can believe
20 in. I ask to hold -- I ask that you hold onto
21 this glimmer of hope, hold onto this belief in
22 humanity. This is not about one commission.
23 This is not about one moment in time. This is
24 about who we are, fundamentally who we are as a
25 society, who we shall be, and what change we
26 shall make.

27 I am Qajaq Robinson. [Inuktitut spoken] I
28 am ready to find the truth, honour the truth, and
29 give life to the truth. [Inuktitut spoken]
30 Thank you.

31 SUSAN VELLA: Good morning, everyone. Before we call
32 upon our first family members, we welcome the
33 opportunity to make some brief opening remarks.

34 The key purpose of public inquiries in
35 Canada is to restore public confidence in
36 institutions which have been seriously damaged by
37 reason of revelation or an incident or a series
38 of incidents. The public inquiries aim to do
39 this by shedding light on the circumstances which
40 gave rise to the tragedy and then to propose
41 recommendations to ensure such a tragedy can
42 never happen again.

43 The public inquiry also has an important
44 objective in promoting - no, demanding social
45 accountability from institutions that serve
46 society. I want to acknowledge the pain of the
47 families of lost loved ones and their -- and the

**Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks**

1 survivors of violence who are with us today
2 wherever you are. But I want to honour the
3 strength, the determination, and the resilience
4 of families and of survivors to be with us to
5 share your stories.

6 Today we begin the truth-finding journey
7 with hearing from families who have lost loved
8 ones to violent, wrongful or suspicious death,
9 and from survivors who have and in some cases
10 still continue to experience life-destroying
11 violence. As you will hear over the next three
12 days, Indigenous women and girls are vulnerable
13 to violence, which occurs in many forms and in
14 many environments. Survivors and families will
15 share with you stories of sexual violence,
16 domestic violence, and emotional violence. They
17 will share with you experiences with the law
18 enforcement system, the coroner's inquest system,
19 the child welfare system, the health system, and
20 other institutional systems which they believe
21 contributed to the high level of vulnerability of
22 the violence and violent outcomes faced by
23 Indigenous women and girls. They will share with
24 you about how poverty, domestic violence, sexual
25 violence, and the lack of available resources to
26 help has led many into high-risk lifestyles
27 leading to violence in one form or another.

28 You will also hear about the affects of
29 colonization, which has disrupted and in some
30 cases nearly destroyed Indigenous family, social,
31 cultural, spiritual, economic, and legal
32 traditions. You will hear from families and
33 survivors of diverse Indigenous realities and
34 backgrounds. You will hear from elders, youth,
35 mothers, fathers, grandparents, sisters,
36 brothers, cousins, and members from the LGBTQ
37 two-spirited communities. But you will hear not
38 only of the personal challenges which survivors
39 and lost loved ones have faced but also of their
40 strength, their gifts, and their resiliencies.
41 You will hear not only of the problems they faced
42 but also of the solutions they have to offer.

43 You will hear from families and survivors in
44 different ways which respect both Indigenous and
45 Canadian legal traditions. You will be part of
46 sharing in family circles, observing and listen
47 to stories told through artistic expression. You

**Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks**

1 will listen to individuals who will share with
2 you their experiences, knowledge, and advice.

3 While the -- we are listening to families
4 and survivors, there will also be opportunities
5 for those who wish to provide their statements to
6 statement gatherers as well.

7 This is the beginning of the family and
8 survivor truth-gathering process, a process which
9 will take the Commission to many communities
10 across Canada over the coming months. As
11 Commission counsel we are honoured and privileged
12 to play a role in facilitating that conversation
13 which is about to begin.

14 With that I call on my fellow commission
15 counsel, Karen Snowshoe to call upon the first
16 family members. *Miigwech*.

17
18 **First Hearing**

19 **Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri and Darla-Jean**
20 **Lindstrom (Family of Mary Johns) with Karen Snowshoe**
21 **(Commission Counsel)**

22
23 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Susan.

24 Frances, could you please start with a
25 prayer?

26 FRANCES NEUMANN: Oh, God, guide me, protect me, and
27 make me a shining lamp and a bright star. Thou
28 art mighty and powerful. [Aboriginal language
29 spoken]

30 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.

31 Chief Commissioner, commissioners, it is my
32 honour to be of service to you today as
33 commission counsel. It is more so my honour to
34 present to you Frances Neumann and her daughter,
35 Tracy Camilleri -- Camilleri.

36 I'd also like to present to you the supports
37 who are currently in this tent in support of
38 Frances and Tracy. Behind me is Tracy's spouse,
39 Jordan Camilleri. Seated next to Jordan is
40 Marilyn Jensen, who is the niece of Frances
41 Neumann. Seated next to Marilyn is Megan Jensen,
42 who is another niece of Frances Neumann. I would
43 also like to acknowledge Shirley McLean, who I
44 believe is also in the tent, who is in the back -
45 thank you - who is another support and family
46 member for this family.

47 Bryan, if you would please administer the

Hearing - Public**Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)**

1 affirmations.

2 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Yes. Good morning. I suppose we'll
3 start with Frances this morning. Good morning,
4 Frances. Do you solemnly affirm that the
5 evidence you will give today will be the truth,
6 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

7 FRANCES NEUMANN: [indiscernible/away from microphone]

8

9

FRANCES NEUMANN, affirmed.

10

11 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you very much.

12

And, Tracy, you can remain seated, if you'd
13 like, or -- or stand as you wish. Same question
14 for you: Do you solemnly affirm that the
15 evidence you will give today will be the truth,
16 the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

17

TRACY CAMILLERI: I do.

18

19 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

20

TRACY CAMILLERI, affirmed.

21

22 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Commissioners, the family has asked
23 to introduce the first piece of evidence today,
24 which is a six minute APTN video clip.

25

Perhaps while we're waiting for the
26 technical -- the technical aspect of the video,
27 the family -- commissioners, the family would
28 also like to introduce into evidence three
29 different photos. Frances, can you please
30 describe who is in these -- in this particular
31 photo?

32

FRANCES NEUMANN: This is my sister-in-law, Mary, and
33 her son, Charlie Peter. This was taken when
34 Charlie was about six months old. We come from a
35 close-knit family. My son was one month younger
36 than Charlie Peter. We were so close that the
37 two boys, the two babies, shared a hospital room
38 with just a window between them separating them.
39 One was in for tonsillitis and the other one was
40 in for chickenpox, but they spent their time
41 together and how they communicated was pounding
42 on the glass window. And this is a picture of
43 Mary and Charlie.

44

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Frances. The
45 family -- commissioners, the family also has two
46 other photos to submit. And the second photo,
47 which is contained here, is actually provided in

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Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)

1 a larger format here. So Frances, if you don't
2 mind, I'll just hand this. And this will give a
3 better visual of the second photo, which is at
4 the top. Frances, can you please tell us about
5 that photo?

6 FRANCES NEUMANN: This is one weekend that my sisters,
7 who, five girls spent the weekend with their
8 parents and our children, we were all young
9 mothers at the time. My brother, Peter, was a
10 very stri-- strictest person and was always
11 teasing and joking with us girls. All five of us
12 were dressed in sweatshirts and blue jeans,
13 spending the weekend with our parents, except my
14 brother went to pick up our older sister and said
15 to her, "For God's sakes, get dressed. The
16 *Whitehorse Star* is going to be over there taking
17 pictures." So needless to say, she came with her
18 hair curled and all fixed up and makeup and she
19 walks in and we say, "What are you doing all
20 dressed up? We're -- we're just having family
21 pictures." And she said, "Well, Peter told me
22 that the *Whitehorse Star* was going to be here."
23 And everybody had a big laugh about it.

24 This is my sister-in-law, Mary. This is her
25 son, Charlie Peter. This is my brother, Peter.
26 And they were a family.

27 KAREN SNOWSHOE: And, commissioners, the final photo
28 that the family would like to submit is this
29 photo here, which is the same photo as here.
30 Frances, can you please tell the commissioners a
31 little bit about that last photo?

32 FRANCES NEUMANN: This picture was taken at the same
33 time. And my son ... I -- please excuse me. My
34 nephew, Charlie Peter, was a special gift for my
35 brother because he was a father at a later age.
36 And he was a special gift. Thank you.

37 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.

38 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Ms. ... Ms. Snowshoe,
39 we'll mark the first photograph of Mary and
40 Charlie as Exhibit 1; the large family photo will
41 be Exhibit 2, and the third photograph of Charlie
42 will be Exhibit 3, please.

43 KAREN SNOWSHOE: So, registrar, I'll -- I'll now pass
44 these photos to you.

45 Okay. Thank you.

46 Frances, can you please identify again for
47 the commissioners who this woman is?

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(Mary Johns)**

1 FRANCES NEUMANN: That's Mary Johns.

2 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Okay. And was that her birth name?

3 FRANCES NEUMANN: Her birth name was Mary Smith.

4 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Okay. And can you please tell us
5 again who this baby is right here looking up --

6 FRANCES NEUMANN: That --

7 KAREN SNOWSHOE: -- at Mary?

8 FRANCES NEUMANN: So loving looking at his mom was
9 Charlie Peter Johns.

10 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.

11 Frances, can you please tell the
12 commissioners when you first met Mary what were
13 your impressions? Actually, first of all, can
14 you please tell the commissioners what your
15 relationship was to Mary?

16 FRANCES NEUMANN: Mary was my sister-in-law. I first
17 met Mary in 1970. We both found out at the -- at
18 a visit that we were both expecting our first
19 child. My brother and I shared that bonding that
20 we were going to have our children one month
21 apart. My son was one -- one month younger than
22 Charlie Peter. As they grew older, Charlie would
23 always tell my son, Dale, "Remember, respect your
24 elders," And I guess 30 days makes a big
25 difference in age.

26 I was his aunt, but he was more like a son
27 to me. I watched Charlie grow to a young man and
28 he was in and out of our home many times.

29 Mary was a young mother full of life and
30 full of promise. She loved to laugh. And when
31 she'd laugh, her whole body would jiggle and
32 everybody would laugh. She was so full of life
33 and we were always teasing because she was
34 younger than me. And we would spend time at the
35 bingo halls and we had a rule that the youngest
36 one would always go get the refreshments. So
37 once in a while we would give her a break and
38 we'd flip the coin to see who would get the
39 refreshments, but somehow it always ended up Mary
40 getting -- serving us. And she says, "I never
41 get any breaks." But, you know, they had so many
42 promises. Through [indiscernible] seeing that
43 Mary and Peter had a -- lost a child to crib
44 death in 1973 and that was the start of the
45 downfall of their marriage. They never blamed
46 each other but it was the unspoken words that
47 hurt the most.

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(Mary Johns)

1 In 1975 Mary decided she was going to go to
2 Vancouver to look for a better life. And we can
3 watch the video and it'll explain everything.
4 Thank you.

5 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Yes. So now in order to -- the
6 family would like to offer a --

7
8 [Video commences]
9 >>Hey, mom, check this out.
10 [Video stopped]

11
12 KAREN SNOWSHOE: -- a six minute video clip, APTN
13 video clip which will set up context for which
14 they are speaking about.

15 [December 18, 2015 APTN National News Video
16 titled "Preparing for a MMIW inquiry opening
17 old wounds for one family" commences]

18 >>Frances Neumann: ... I believe.

19 >> Narrator Shirley McLean: *The signs of*
20 *time have taken over this old family*
21 *portrait. It shows a very young Frances*
22 *Neumann.*

23 >> Frances Neumann: We all came out to
24 spend the weekend with your grandparents.

25 >> Shirley McLean: *It's also one of the*
26 *last photographs that show Frances'*
27 *sister-in-law, Mary Johns.*

28 >> Frances Neumann: She was young there.
29 And Charlie Peter looking up at his mom so
30 loving. Mary was always so full of life and
31 always laughing and joking around.

32 >>> I have carried this hurt for many years.
33 I have never talked about it.

34 >> Shirley McLean: *Mary Johns was a young*
35 *mother in 1975 when she ran away from the*
36 *Yukon to seek better luck in Vancouver.*
37 *Like so many others, Johns ended up on the*
38 *Downtown Eastside, Canada's most notorious*
39 *neighbourhood, looking for a new life,*
40 *drowning out the old, her story similar to*
41 *that of other Indigenous women who ran from*
42 *their families and homes.*

43 >> Frances Neumann: For many years we had
44 no idea what happened to Mary.

45 >> Shirley McLean: *In July of 1982 Mary's*
46 *body was found lying face down on a foam*
47 *mattress at this location on Kingsway*

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1 Avenue, her blood alcohol level 0.71.
2 Before it was a place of grace, it was the
3 Slocan Barber Shop, owned by Gilbert Paul
4 Jordan, an alcoholic known as "The Boozing
5 Barber". Not only did he have a thirst for
6 booze but a deadly lust for women he would
7 lure with alcohol from the Downtown
8 Eastside.

9 >> Larry Campbell, Liberal Senator, British
10 Columbia [on phone]: I would describe him
11 as a serial killer. We know that a number
12 of women were found dead in his company,
13 both at his barber shop on Slocan as well as
14 hotels. And there is no doubt in my mind
15 that he killed these -- these women with
16 alcohol.

17 >> Shirley McLean: Senator Larry Campbell
18 was the coroner in the 1980s in Vancouver
19 and during that time many women were showing
20 up dead with three times the lethal amount
21 of alcohol in their blood.

22 >> Larry Campbell [on phone]: Then what he
23 would do is he would pay them or we would
24 cajole them into chugalugging alcohol, which
25 would take their blood alcohol way up
26 very -- rapidly, which would then cause the
27 depression of -- of your breathing and
28 ultimately death.

29 >> Shirley McLean: Jordan was linked to at
30 least eight deaths of women over the course
31 of 20 years, all of them First Nation except
32 for one, but somehow the barber avoided a
33 criminal investigation - until he was
34 finally convicted for manslaughter in 1988
35 for the death of Vanessa Lee Buckner. It
36 was the first time in Canada that alcohol
37 was used as a method of killing.

38 >> Larry Campbell [on phone]: I think he
39 wanted to watch people die. I think that's
40 what he wanted. He was evil. That's the
41 only way I can really put it. He was just
42 evil.

43 >> Shirley McLean: Mary is buried in an
44 unmarked grave just minutes away from where
45 she died. Her plot lies in a section of the
46 Mountain View Cemetery nicknamed "Potter's
47 Field" by police for the deceased who died

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(Mary Johns)

1 alone and were unclaimed. In 1987 Frances
2 was living in Vancouver and made it her
3 quest to find Mary to help mend the broken
4 heart of the child she left behind.

5 >> Frances Neumann: I know that he was very
6 troubled not knowing why she left. He
7 always felt that his life wasn't complete.

8 >> Shirley McLean: *Mary laid here unknown*
9 *until Frances read about her death in a*
10 *newspaper article six years later.*

11 >> Frances Neumann: I was just blown away
12 because we looked so hard for Mary. I had
13 to go and tell my nephew that the search was
14 over and give him more pain.

15 >> Shirley McLean: *In a sad twist of fate,*
16 *Mary's son, Charlie Peter Johns, would also*
17 *end up on the streets of Vancouver.*

18 >> Frances Neumann: He was on Skid Row,
19 where his mother was taken from. Charlie
20 died of an overdose. That was the one time
21 that ...

22 >> Shirley McLean: *The past week has been*
23 *emotional for Frances. She has held onto*
24 *the pain of Mary's story for years and now*
25 *feels it's time to share.*

26 >> Frances Neumann: I don't understand how
27 he could go on for so many years and not
28 have to answer to anybody. These women were
29 not protected because they lived on the
30 streets. These women have loved ones that
31 care for them and we let them down.

32 >> Shirley McLean: Frances says she can be
33 at peace now knowing that Mary's story and
34 the legacy it left behind will be part of
35 the National Inquiry Into Murdered and
36 Missing Indigenous Women. She says she can
37 also be at peace knowing that Mary is safe
38 and nobody can hurt her anymore. As for
39 "The Boozing Barber", he died in 2006.

40 Shirley McLean, APTN National News,
41 Whitehorse.

42 [Video concludes]

43 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Frances, what are the -- can you tell
44 the commissioners what -- what is going through
45 your mind right now after seeing that video clip?

46 FRANCES NEUMANN: It's brought a lot of very
47 unresolved feelings. There can't be any justice

Hearing - Public**Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)**

1 for Mary. She's -- she's at peace now, but I, a
2 grandmother, a mother, a great-grandmother, Mary
3 and I should have shared that privilege.
4 That -- we'll never have that because Mary and
5 her whole family is gone.

6 My brother left this world without making
7 amends with Mary. He passed on in 1988 and he
8 asked me to find out what happened to Mary. I
9 had to contact my brother to let him know that
10 Mary was finally found. We spent many hours
11 looking on Vancouver Island, the Eastside. My
12 brother come in from Carcross, Yukon, the
13 population of maybe 250 if you counted the
14 animals. He came to Vancouver looking for Mary
15 also and spent many hours looking on the
16 Eastside. He wasn't city knowledgeable for that.
17 He parked his truck in one parking lot and
18 because the time expired he had to move it, so
19 needless to say he spent the whole day looking
20 for his lost truck. He couldn't remember where
21 he parked it. That night he came home and he
22 could barely walk because he was looking on the
23 streets for Mary. And it's pretty hard walking
24 with Dayton cowboy boots on the pavement. We all
25 had a good laugh about that and then when
26 continued on the next day with our two aunts.

27 My aunt from my father's side and my aunt on
28 my mother's side, we took to Vancouver Island
29 looking different places that we thought maybe
30 Mary was living on Vancouver Island. We did not
31 find Mary, but in 1988 I happened to pick up a
32 newspaper to read and there it was on the second
33 page, it had "Mary Smith". And I thought to
34 myself, "Could that be our Mary?" So, I called
35 Port Moody Police Department and I said, "Maybe
36 this Mary Smith that's in the paper might be my
37 sister-in-law, I'm not sure." So they came out
38 to my home and my husband was with me. And they
39 asked me if I had any family photos of Mary. I
40 brought out these pictures that sits before you.
41 And we identified Mary through our family
42 pictures with the morgue pictures. At least we
43 knew where she ended up.

44 The next thing I did was I called my
45 brother, read him the newspaper, and he asked me
46 if I would send -- send the clippings to him. At
47 that time he was very ill.

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(Mary Johns)**

1 In 1989 my brother passed away. I had to go
2 and meet my nephew, Charlie Peter Johns, who
3 ended up in a juvenile detention in Vancouver. I
4 told Charlie that we found his mom, I knew where
5 she was, and where she was buried.

6 The sad part of this, in 1980, 1981 Mary had
7 a son and his name was Billy. She brought Billy
8 home before she passed on in 1982. So, Billy
9 lives here in Whitehorse as an adult.

10 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Frances.

11 Frances, can you tell me, this photo here
12 with Mary -- with Mary and her baby, Charlie
13 Peter, looking up at her, where was this photo
14 taken?

15 FRANCES NEUMANN: This photo was taken in my parents'
16 living room in 1976.

17 KAREN SNOWSHOE: And in which town?

18 FRANCES NEUMANN: Or '7-- '72, sorry.

19 KAREN SNOWSHOE: 1972. And which town?

20 FRANCES NEUMANN: In Carcross.

21 KAREN SNOWSHOE: In Carcross, okay. And how old was
22 Peter Charlie in that photo?

23 FRANCES NEUMANN: I believe Charlie was probably about
24 five months old.

25 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Okay. And you mentioned in
26 the -- the video that Mary had ended up in the
27 Downtown Eastside. Can you tell us how did she
28 end up -- she had been living in Carcross. How
29 did she end up in the Downtown Eastside of
30 Vancouver?

31 FRANCES NEUMANN: Well, in 1975 she had a baby boy,
32 Howard Clifford. 1973, sorry. Howard Clifford
33 passed away to crib death at six months old.
34 This was a great blow to the family and it was
35 that that broke the marriage up. It was the
36 unspoken blame that Mary couldn't handle, so in
37 October of 1973 -- 1975, sorry, that Mary left
38 for the city. She was only on the streets for
39 seven years before Mary passed.

40 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. And can you tell me a
41 little bit -- sorry, can you tell the
42 commissioners a little bit about Mary's life
43 before she died? What was her life like on the
44 streets? Do you have any idea?

45 FRANCES NEUMANN: I have no idea. I can only imagine
46 what it was like because in my search I went to
47 the Eastside of Vancouver, Granville. I did not

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1 drink, I did not smoke, and I did not take drugs,
2 but it was important for me to look for Mary to
3 try to find and help mend the family. I went to
4 the Cecil Hotel, the Blackstone, the Balmoral,
5 California Hotels, where no one should ever go.
6 But I would meet friends from Carcross, male
7 friends, that would -- I'd say, "I want to go to
8 this hotel," and we would walk through and
9 everybody would watch every move we made, but it
10 was important for me to try to help get my
11 brother, my nephew's family back together. It
12 wasn't easy and I was so scared, but somebody had
13 to do it. Somebody had to look for Mary. I
14 always believed that I would run into her in one
15 of these hotels or maybe on the street.

16 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. Thank you, Frances. You
17 mentioned that -- you also mentioned in the video
18 clip that while you were on the search in the
19 Downtown Eastside, the downtown of Vancouver, for
20 Mary Johns, that you came across a news article
21 about her. Can you tell us what was -- what that
22 news article was about?

23 FRANCES NEUMANN: There was a fellow from Toronto that
24 wrote an article about these missing women that
25 was dying from alcohol. And after they would
26 pass out from so much alcohol that he would
27 encourage them to chugalug, "I'll give you \$20,
28 I'll give you \$50, I'll give you \$75 to drink
29 more." I believe this -- he found a way to get
30 rid of these women. In the court case that I
31 went to, one of the questions they asked him,
32 "Why did you seek these women out?" And his
33 answer was, "Because my own people shunned me."

34 These women were vulnerable, they had no
35 protection, they were lost, but each one of those
36 women had families that loved them. We let them
37 down. We did not protect them because they were
38 weak. And because they were weak, no justice
39 came to their aid. This is what I am looking
40 for - not for my sister-in-law now because nobody
41 can harm her, but that my daughter, my
42 granddaughter, my great-granddaughters can walk
43 the streets in safety, my nieces, that no harm
44 can come to them. We must stand up for justice
45 for these women that have walked before us. This
46 has been coming many years and I thank Canada for
47 supporting our families, our loved ones, to give

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1 voice that was taken away so unjustly. We need
2 your help and we ask you for your help. Please
3 stand with each and every one of women that have
4 gone on. We are the spokesperson that will see
5 this through.

6 I am not a brave woman, but I want justice
7 done. My brother is gone, my nephew is gone, but
8 I promised I would see it through. And every
9 fibre in my body is shaken to my boots. Please -
10 please see this through. We have come up and
11 waited for many years to see the results. Don't
12 sweep it under the carpet. There was no justice
13 for my sister-in-law. He didn't even -- he
14 wasn't even charged. She was the fourth one to
15 die in this man's company. And they were all
16 First Nation women except one, and that's how
17 come he was charged was the last one wasn't from
18 the streets, she wasn't a streetwalker. We
19 prejudge why these women end up where they do.
20 There is many stories like Mary's. She had a
21 loving family. But because of her being raised
22 away from her family in residential schools, she
23 didn't have the tools of the streets.

24 I ask you to help other women, that they can
25 walk safely and not have to worry. [Aboriginal
26 language spoken]

27 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Okay. Now, Tracy, what would you
28 like the commissioners to know about Mary's case?

29 TRACY CAMILLERI: Because I was only a couple of
30 months old when my aunt left, my journey through
31 all of this has been through my Uncle Peter, who
32 is my favourite uncle - he's always on my
33 screensaver on my cell phone - and my brother.
34 Charlie Peter was like a brother to me. I was
35 witness to his pain and his suffering, not having
36 a mother, being raised by my grandmother. And
37 losing her when he was 14, he always felt
38 displaced and was always in search of that
39 meaning in his life.

40 Because of the challenges that were
41 presented to Charlie throughout his young life,
42 he got into trouble. He put his energy into
43 unproductive things. He, around -- not long
44 after my grandma passed, ended up in the Burnaby
45 Willingdon Detention Centre. And, jeez, I was
46 10 years old and my mom filled out these
47 applications for herself, me and my brother,

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1 my -- to visit him. I remember being so scared.
2 It was a seriously scary place to be, just to
3 visit. And as heartbreaking as it was to go
4 there for these visits, he needed us, he needed
5 that connection, that he was always missing in
6 his mom.

7 Charlie continued on his challenging
8 journey, at the age of 18 ended up in the Matsqui
9 Penitentiary, and again my mom filled out these
10 applications. And I was 14 at that time. Going
11 into a federal penitentiary and, man, I thought
12 Willingdon was scary. But my mom ensured that we
13 knew how important family was and connection was
14 for Charlie Peter and we drove the hour out to
15 Matsqui a couple of times a week. They so looked
16 forward to. We had fun in this cafeteria at the
17 federal penitentiary visiting with him and
18 sharing stories and talking about, you know, what
19 life would be like when he's out, back in
20 Carcross, doing those things that we did as
21 children. You know, we all had a lot of plans
22 for when he got out.

23 And I was graduating in 1993. I was turning
24 18 that summer and he was going to be out and he
25 was going to be in the Yukon. And when my
26 parents took us out of the Yukon in '81 when I
27 was 6, my brother always said the second we're
28 done school we're going back. And so when I
29 graduated, I took a month and packed up my things
30 and moved from suburbia Vancouver to Carcross,
31 Yukon. And at that point when I returned,
32 Charlie had breached one of his conditions and
33 had gone back to the Whitehorse Correctional
34 Centre. So again I missed him on the outside.
35 The fall solstice he invited me up and yet again
36 I visited him in jail but it was really
37 comfortable here. We were in our homelands.
38 They had ceremony. He was stronger of mind. He
39 knew what alcohol and drugs were doing to his
40 life and he wanted change, he wanted peace.

41 That Christmas I went home to Port Moody to
42 visit my parents for Christmas and I was going to
43 be there, I think I stayed until February. So, I
44 missed him when he came out. And so we talked
45 and I said, "Hey, I'm -- I'm coming back, I'm
46 just a couple weeks." And then I got a phone
47 call from Charlie Peter from the Whitehorse

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(Mary Johns)**

1 airport. He was, like, "Hey, can you pick me up
2 at the Vancouver airport. I'm getting on a
3 plane." I was like, "What?" We were, like,
4 after all this years finally going to be on the
5 outside together and freedom, had mom's car.

6 And I -- I picked him up. He was bummed out
7 - he was an amazing artist - that his carving
8 tools got confiscated at the airport on that
9 trip. I took him to meet our cousin, Nathan, who
10 was given up for adoption. And after that he
11 said, "I want to go to the -- the Eastside now."
12 And I said, "How about tomorrow or in a couple of
13 days?" Although he knew Aunty Mary was gone, he
14 was searching for answers that he never got. He
15 wouldn't come to Port Moody with me. He assured
16 me, he's like, "Trix," I don't like that
17 nickname, but, "Trix," he's, like, "look at where
18 I have spent my time these past years. I'm going
19 to be okay." And the way he explained it, I'm,
20 like, "Oh, yeah, you're probably going to be
21 okay." Really naive to really what the Vancouver
22 Eastside really was. I knew it was scary, I knew
23 we locked our doors. I knew she -- my mom always
24 drove through, not around, just in case.

25 I went to -- you know, I think of my mom
26 going to these hotels and, man, I was scared.
27 Pre-social media, pre-cell phone days when you
28 had to set a time and approximate Moody to
29 Vancouver, and he said, "You pass the Balmoral in
30 your left lane, turn left, there is a short
31 street there." He's just, like, "You find a
32 parking spot there. You keep the doors locked
33 and you don't get out until I'm there." And he
34 was there on the corner when I got there and
35 honked and I pulled over and he -- he reassured
36 me he was going to be okay. He gave me some
37 rules. I was to stick with him. If I had to go
38 to the bathroom, to let him know; he would find a
39 girlfriend to take me to the washroom. I very
40 oddly felt safe with him. He was a protector.
41 He was a very loving older brother just searching
42 for answers, and he wasn't going to leave until
43 he had those answers.

44 I was getting ready to go back, come back
45 home to the Yukon, so I told him, "I'm --" "I'm
46 going to come visit you one more time." And a
47 male friend from Vancouver came with me that time

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1 and the three of us hung out I think in The
2 Regent. And when we were in the Balmoral, that
3 one was probably the scariest one for me. That
4 was the one I had escorts if I wanted water, if I
5 had to go to the bathroom. But I remember when
6 it was time for me to leave, it was like -- it
7 kind of -- it dragged on for over an hour. "One
8 more pop." And I said, "Charlie, there's so much
9 we have planned. All these years, all these
10 visits, all these things we were going to do,
11 please come home. Please finish your business
12 and follow me home." And he promised he wasn't
13 far behind. That night was the last time I saw
14 him.

15 I was home in Whitehorse in March of '94
16 when we got the news that he had overdosed on the
17 Eastside in The Regent Hotel. This for me, my
18 presence here is for him, for his closure. This
19 day has been a long time coming, 35 years since
20 my Aunt Mary's death.

21 Although being here is of such tremendous
22 importance and I feel that my aunt and my uncle
23 and Charlie Peter can rest with this closure,
24 unfortunately it doesn't end there for our
25 family. My grandparents had nine children, many
26 grandchildren, great-grandchildren,
27 great-great-grandchildren. There's not one
28 person in our lineage that doesn't suffer
29 tremendous trauma. And we have the whole mix in
30 our family, the range of suffering. Even,
31 you know, the -- the really successful cousins,
32 resourceful cousins who got their education, to
33 some -- some of them who are streetwalkers, and
34 everything in between. There needs to be
35 long-term support for this trauma.

36 Just last week when we were meeting with
37 Karen, we met on a Monday and, you know, I think
38 we caught her off-guard. She said we're
39 very -- we present well. Well, when we got home
40 we were a mess. Neither one of us were able to
41 work that week. The very next day I had a
42 meltdown. We don't talk about this every day.
43 This isn't a topic of conversation.

44 Thankfully I was able to connect with a
45 support line, got connected with the residential
46 schools survivor, IRS, I managed to push because
47 my counselling maxes out at a thousand dollars

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1 a -- a year and I knew I was getting close. And
2 I was realizing in that moment this is intense,
3 how huge all of this is and the responsibility in
4 it and the importance of telling my family's
5 story. My energy practitioner did a session over
6 the phone, got me out of story, got me grounded,
7 did a four-hour session with me. Two days later
8 the supports here in Whitehorse got approval for
9 15 sessions for my counselling. So, that just
10 wasn't a worry. You know, I -- I'm a pretty
11 resourceful woman. I loaded that smudge bowl for
12 four hours. I cried for four hours straight. My
13 poor husband wasn't quite sure what to do with me
14 other than come in and drop tea, drop a smoothie,
15 drop some vitamins, but ... I get addictions on
16 a whole different level. I thought I got it. I
17 thought I had it. It was in that moment that I
18 have amazing supports, I have the resources in me
19 to find the help. I wasn't going to allow myself
20 to get to a place where the option was driving
21 off a cliff, reaching for a bottle, or drugs.
22 Not everyone has that in them, to reach for those
23 healthy supports. And for the bottle to be
24 there, to always be there and it may not be the
25 healthiest choice, but it's -- it's a momentary
26 relief from that intense pain. I didn't go to
27 residential school, but my abuser went to a
28 residential school. And I don't want that pain,
29 all that anger, all that shame I hold -- I held
30 within me to be passed on to my children and
31 nieces and nephew.

32 I really feel that a big part of what needs
33 to happen is institutionalising education across
34 this country. The Indigenous people of Canada
35 are emotionally exhausted by being the educators.
36 It needs to be at all levels - from early
37 childhood, right up through the ages, through the
38 school systems, government systems. I have fear
39 that our children will face those stereotypes,
40 the racism I faced as a child. As a grown woman,
41 I'm going to be 42 this summer, and I still deal
42 with it within the Yukon government.
43 It's -- it's everywhere. It's not just the
44 blatantly overt racism you can see and touch and
45 pinpoint, it's that uneducated, ignorant, low
46 lying, cunning, sophisticated racism that is
47 there. And there are good people that -- that

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1 want to know, they just don't and they haven't
2 had the opportunity, don't know a First Nation
3 person, they haven't received the education.
4 It's no wonder I have heard comments, "Well, I
5 went out and got my education, paid for that
6 education. I came back here and applied on a job
7 on my own merit," insinuating that my education,
8 that I -- I didn't pay for my own education and
9 my job was handed to me on a silver platter,
10 those types of things. That needs to stop.

11 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Tracy. I just have a
12 couple more questions for you and I'm wondering
13 if you could speak to two things. One, can
14 you -- the first question is can you -- do you
15 have any comments or anything you can tell the
16 commissioners about why Mary was vulnerable to
17 violence? And the second question is do you have
18 any recommendations to provide to the
19 commissioners on how to keep our Indigenous women
20 and girls safe? So the first question is about
21 any particular vulnerabilities of Mary, any
22 systemic issues beneath her being vulnerable to
23 violence?

24 TRACY CAMILLERI: Well, the -- the big one is she
25 is -- she was a residential school survivor. She
26 was young when she lost her second son, Howard
27 Clifford. The lack of tools to cope. The lack
28 of the non-communication that was happening
29 between herself and my uncle. My mom describes
30 them as very happy, very content and whole in
31 that family. And I know my uncle searched for
32 her to apologize, to bring closure.

33 I ... I think her lack of street smarts. I
34 can't imagine growing up in a small community
35 here in the Yukon and landing on the Eastside of
36 Vancouver, how overwhelming and scary and fearful
37 and -- she must have been. My mom describes
38 Aunt Mary as a non-drinker before Vancouver.
39 Being down there with no supports, no family,
40 running from so much pain, she must have found
41 comfort in those people that were all there
42 suffering some of the same things and more. She
43 must have found a family there. I think what has
44 been really unjust and unfair and, you know,
45 where a lot of our anger is is we didn't know she
46 passed. She was being searched for for six years
47 and she was already dead. Our people have

Hearing - Public**Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
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1 ceremony when our loved ones pass on. And for
2 six years she was in an unmarked numbered grave
3 in Vancouver, where she must have been receiving
4 support somewhere, social assistance. Where was
5 the cheque? When the cheque wasn't picked up,
6 was someone called? Do -- like, where was the
7 process to find out why it wasn't picked up?

8 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Tracy or Frances, do either of you or
9 both of have you recommendations for the
10 commissioners on how -- how we can keep our
11 Indigenous women and girls safe, safe from
12 violence?

13 TRACY CAMILLERI: Well, like I said, education is
14 huge. I've had some very open, willing
15 conversations with people who I have provided
16 enough comfort for them to ask their dumb
17 questions, and sometimes I think, wow, some of
18 this should be so basic. The non-Indigenous
19 people of Canada live in a country where they
20 don't understand the true history of the First
21 Peoples of the country they live in. They are
22 taught from their parents, who were taught by
23 their parents, who you have to recall what things
24 were like a few decades ago, when we couldn't
25 vote, when we, you know, had to go through a
26 separate entrance or just seen as less than.

27 In Grade 7 Social Studies I was so excited,
28 we were finally going to talk about, you know,
29 Indigenous people of Canada. And there are the
30 Tlingit, I was going to point out on the map.
31 And we started the class and, oh, open the books
32 and the boy said, "Well, all Indians are dumb and
33 drunk," and it just deflated me and I didn't know
34 what the statement meant, and the teacher never
35 corrected him. Things like that. That
36 7-year-old boy had -- that did not come from him.
37 There is generations of non-Indigenous people
38 that I don't know what it'll take. I think the
39 answers are going to come from many different
40 areas, Truth and Reconciliation, justice, all
41 these things all coming together to make this
42 change, but I believe that telling our stories,
43 telling our true history, being open to sharing
44 who we really are and sharing our culture is a
45 part of, you know, we are humans, we're not less
46 than, we're not heathens. We have a lot to
47 offer. We have a rich history and culture to

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(Mary Johns)**

1 share and we want to share that with Canada.
2 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. Final question. What can
3 this inquiry do to honour the lives of Mary Johns
4 and her son, Charlie Peter?
5 Sorry, what is your name, please?
6 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: My First Nation name is Adax
7 Ayamdagoot. And my English name is Darla-Jean
8 Lindstrom. This is my aunt, Frances Neumann, and
9 my cousins.
10 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.
11 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: So --
12 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you and welcome.
13 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: Thank you.
14 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Before you speak, if it's okay,
15 we'll -- we'll just need to give you an
16 affirmation or oath, if that's okay.
17 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: [indiscernible] white man.
18 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Bryan.
19 BRYAN ZANDBERG: There's actually a few options. I
20 mean, we -- we have an eagle feather you could
21 use for an affirmation. We've got a Bible.
22 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: I'll use the feather.
23 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Great. What's -- what's your --
24 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: So --
25 BRYAN ZANDBERG: -- first name? Could you tell me
26 what your name is?
27 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: My name?
28 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Yes.
29 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: My Indigenous name is Adax
30 Ayamdagoot, and my First -- my non-Native name is
31 Darla-Jean Lindstrom.
32 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Adax Ayamdagoot, do you
33 solemnly affirm that the evidence you will give
34 today will be the --
35 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: I do.
36 BRYAN ZANDBERG: -- truth, the whole truth and nothing
37 but the truth?
38 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: Nothing but.
39 BRYAN ZANDBERG. Thank you.
40
41 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM, affirmed.
42
43 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. And can you please tell
44 the commissioners how -- how can this inquiry
45 honour the -- the lives of Mary John and son,
46 Charlie Peter?
47 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: I believe what you're doing

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(Mary Johns)**

1 right now is accompanying people through their
2 pain. I believe that's a -- a good first step.
3 I think that we need to honour our people, who
4 are dealing with trauma issues. We need to help
5 and support them through our customs, our
6 ceremonies, birth to death ceremonies that, you
7 know Tracy alluded to earlier. This murdered and
8 missing Aboriginal -- Indigenous women and
9 children is a symptom of, you know, racism
10 throughout the whole political arena, through the
11 justice system, through the education system. We
12 as Aboriginal people have almost become
13 colonizers of our own people. The federal
14 government made us wards of the state through the
15 *Indian Act* and we learnt helplessness. We became
16 ashamed of ourself. We became -- we believed
17 what society was telling us.

18 And since the early '70s we have progressed
19 slowly to, like, self-government here in the
20 Yukon and we need more of that. We need more of
21 our language. We need to focus on our -- the
22 wheel of life, birth to death ceremonies, coming
23 of age ceremonies, which my family has practiced,
24 learning our songs and our legends. You know, we
25 know -- we have all worked on our mental
26 capacity, our emotional capacity, our physical
27 capacity, but we need to focus on our spiritual
28 capacity. And we say that's pending the strength
29 of our spiritual condition is how we're able to
30 handle the rest of ourself. And spirituality has
31 a little or a lot to do with religion, depending
32 on your point of view and what you practice. And
33 spirituality could mean being on the land,
34 learning your language. Anything
35 created -- anything creative comes from the
36 Creator, whether it's playing guitar, singing or
37 dancing, which our family tries to hold each
38 other up and support each other in anything we
39 do. I'm very lucky and fortunate to have a
40 supportive family.

41 And I hope and pray that whatever
42 this -- the commissioners are doing, that it does
43 not sit on the shelf getting dusty, like so many
44 other reports and inquiries. Don't leave us on
45 the shelf. Help us, accompanying us. I
46 shouldn't say "help" because it always indicates
47 somebody is lower than the other, so I change my

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1 word to "accompany us" through our pain and our
2 sorrow. And help give us the resources to help
3 us help ourselves because nobody is going to save
4 us but us.

5 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. And, Frances, would you
6 like to close with a prayer?

7 DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: Yes, I will.

8 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Okay.

9 My apologies. I understand the
10 commissioners have some questions.

11 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: First of all, thank you, thank
12 you, thank you. We'll take a deep breath
13 together because you have done something really
14 difficult and I wanted to say thank you.

15 There are some questions that I have just to
16 really understand the time and the people and
17 what you went through. And one of my questions
18 is did you ever call the police about Mary,
19 either here or in Vancouver or in -- in Victoria?

20 FRANCES NEUMANN: I called maybe 1976. At that time
21 my mother was very tired, and I would take my
22 nephew, Charlie Peter, on my days off and
23 weekends to give rest to my elderly mother. I
24 called Vancouver detachment and I got nowhere.

25 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Did you speak to someone? Did
26 you leave a message? Do you remember what you
27 had to do?

28 FRANCES NEUMANN: I -- I spoke to I believe a
29 constable that worked the Eastside.

30 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Thank you. Another question I
31 have is where is Mary's family?

32 FRANCES NEUMANN: Mary has a son that lives here --

33 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yes.

34 FRANCES NEUMANN: -- with the Yukon government. He's
35 a ward of the government.

36 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay. And her parents?

37 FRANCES NEUMANN: Her parents are deceased.

38 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.

39 I'm trying to imagine the times that you're
40 looking and knocking on doors and going in the
41 bars and asking people if they have seen her.
42 What do you wish existed right then that you
43 could have had access to?

44 FRANCES NEUMANN: Because I didn't have the
45 information where she was living - I lived in
46 Port Moody, I moved there in 1985 - and on my
47 spare moments or in the evenings I would go do

Hearing - Public**Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
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1 down to the Eastside and go into these bars. And
2 if anybody knew me, would never believe
3 the -- the places that I went to. But I was
4 never scared because I knew the people that lived
5 there knew I didn't belong there and would watch
6 out for me.

7 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay. I think -- I think those
8 are all my questions. Qajaq.

9 COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Thank -- thank you very much.
10 I just have a bit of a follow-up question. Did
11 you reach out to anyone at any other
12 organizations or people to assist you in -- in
13 locating Mary?

14 FRANCES NEUMANN: For many years we had a -- a group
15 of First Nations women that would put on a
16 Christmas dinner for the urban First Nation
17 people that lived in the outside Vancouver area,
18 and we did that for 10 years, Yukon First
19 Nations. So, by that we would meet in different
20 places on the Eastside. We'd have meetings, and
21 this is where I would go and look, around
22 Hastings, for Mary.

23 TRACY CAMILLERI: The group my mom is talking about
24 is -- a lot of Yukoners end up on the Eastside,
25 unfortunately, and my mom is very family
26 oriented, community oriented, so her and some
27 other Yukon women put together a society where
28 they would go on the Eastside, they would put out
29 flyers and at Christmas -- it started with, like,
30 a Christmas, having a turkey, coming together
31 with your fellow Yukon First Nations that are in
32 and around, a mix of people on the Eastside to,
33 you know, us in Port Moody. And we'd put
34 together goody bags and -- and it was such a -- a
35 mix of people, but our commonality was our
36 homelands. And I'd help her write letters to the
37 14 Yukon First Nations chiefs to contribute to
38 their people who are on the Eastside, so they
39 could have this connection, come together, have
40 turkey dinner, Christmas dinner. And it was in
41 that forum that my mom found -- could -- could
42 talk about, you know, Aunty Mary and put feelers
43 out through other Yukon First Nations that we're
44 missing -- we're missing one of our women.

45 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Thank you. Just so we can
46 keep our paperwork straight here, the video clip
47 will be Exhibit 4, please.

Hearing - Public**Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)**

1 Thank you. Thank you. Very moving. Thank
2 you very much.

3 FRANCES NEUMANN: I would like to thank -- thank my
4 daughter. I could not do this by myself. I'd
5 like to thank my nieces and most of all my
6 son-in-law to represent our male families that
7 could not be here. I thank the Commission for
8 allowing us to tell our stories.

9 And I would like to say a prayer for all the
10 women - their families to carry on, to stand tall
11 and strong. O compassionate God, thanks to be
12 thee for thou has awakened me and made me
13 conscious, that has given me a seeing eye and a
14 favour in me. A hearing ear has led me to thy
15 kingdom and guided me to thy path. Thou has
16 shown me the right way and caused me to enter the
17 ark of deliverance.

18 O God, keep me steadfast. Make me firm and
19 staunch. Protect me from the violent tests and
20 preserve thy shelter me in thy strong fortress of
21 thy covenant and testament. Thou art powerful,
22 thou art seeing, thou art hearing.

23 O thou passionate God, bestow upon me a
24 heart which like unto a glass may illumine with
25 the light of thy love and conquer upon my
26 thoughts which may change this world into a rose
27 garden through the outpouring of thy heavenly
28 grace. Thou art compassionate, the merciful.
29 Thou art a generous benefit God. [Aboriginal
30 language spoken] Thank you.

31 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: On behalf of the
32 Commission, we are going to extend a little
33 packet of seeds to you from Commissioner Audette.
34 It is our -- our hopes to follow the laws of
35 reciprocity so that we're gifting something back
36 to the families when they gift us their stories
37 and their tears, so thank you very much.

38 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Just a quick announcement. We're
39 going to take about a 10 minute break right now
40 and then reconvene here. Ten minute break.

41

42 First Hearing Exhibits**43 Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri and Darla-Jean
44 Lindstrom (Family of Mary Johns) with Christa Big Canoe
45 (Commission Counsel)**

46

Hearing - Public**Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)**

1 Exhibit P1: 4 x 8" Black-and-white photo of women in
2 glasses and white shirt holding young child
3 ("This is my sister-in-law Mary and her son
4 Charlie Peter" - Francis Neumann)

5 Exhibit P2. 4 x 8" Black-and-white photo of family
6 gathering seated on couch in living room.

7 Exhibit P3. 4 x 8" Black-and-white photo of baby in
8 white jumpsuit with cowboy sitting on a man's
9 knee.

10 Exhibit P4. APTN video :

11 [http://aptnnews.ca/2015/12/18/preparing-for-a-
13 mmiw-inquiry-opening-old-wounds-for-one-family/](http://aptnnews.ca/2015/12/18/preparing-for-a-
12 mmiw-inquiry-opening-old-wounds-for-one-family/)

14 (HEARING ADJOURNED AT 11:35 A.M.)

15 (HEARING RECONVENED AT 12:11 P.M.)

16

17 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Well, good afternoon. I
18 think it's afternoon.

19 Ms. Big Canoe, would you please introduce
20 our next family.

21 Good afternoon, everyone. We'll reconvene.

22 Ms. Big Canoe, would you please introduce
23 our next family.

24

25

26

27

Second Hearing

28 **May Bolton, Dennis Shorty, Marilyn Shorty (Family of**
29 **Elsie Shorty) with Christa Big Canoe (Commission**
30 **Counsel)**

31

32 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. Thank you, Chief
33 Commissioner, commissioners. I would like to
34 introduce you to the family members of Elsie
35 Shorty. Sitting right beside me is May Bolton
36 and her husband is beside her, Ivan Bolton. Next
37 we have Dennis Shorty, and then we have Marilyn
38 Shorty. And then we have Yvonne Shorty and
39 Crystal Shorty [sic]. I am going to allow them
40 to introduce themselves once they have been given
41 their oath, but prior to the oath Dennis will be
42 doing a brief Kaska Dene prayer for the family.

43 DENNIS SHORTY: [Dene spoken]

44 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: The -- the family members can now
45 be -- give their oath, Mr. Zandberg. And May

Hearing - Public
May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

1 will be affirming.

2 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Good morning, May.

3 MAY BOLTON: Good morning.

4 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
5 evidence you will give today will be the truth,
6 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

7 MAY BOLTON: Yes.

8

9

MAY BOLTON, affirmed.

10

11 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

12

Ivan?

13

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ivan will be affirming on the
14 feather.

15

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [indiscernible]

16

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay.

17

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [indiscernible]

18

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Sure.

19

Good morning, Ivan.

20

IVAN BOLTON: Good morning.

21

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
22 evidence you will give today will be the truth,
23 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

24

IVAN BOLTON: I do.

25

26

IVAN BOLTON, affirmed.

27

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

28

Good morning, Dennis.

29

DENNIS SHORTY: Good morning.

30

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
31 evidence you will give today will be the truth,
32 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

33

DENNIS SHORTY: Yes.

34

35

DENNIS SHORTY, affirmed.

36

37

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

38

Good morning, Marilyn.

39

MARILYN SHORTY: Good morning.

40

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
41 evidence you will give today will be the truth,
42 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

43

MARILYN SHORTY: Yes.

44

45

MARILYN SHORTY, affirmed.

46

47

Hearing - Public
May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

1 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

2 Good morning, Yvonne.

3 YVONNE SHORTY: Good morning.

4 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
5 evidence you will give today will be the truth,
6 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

7 YVONNE SHORTY: Yes.

8

9

YVONNE SHORTY, affirmed.

10

11 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

12

Hi, Crystal.

13

CRYSTAL BOLTON: Hi.

14

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Good morning. Do you solemnly affirm
15 that the evidence you will give today will be the
16 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
17 truth?

18

CRYSTAL BOLTON: Yes.

19

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

20

21

CRYSTAL BOLTON, affirmed.

22

23 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

24

May, may I ask who you're here to speak

25

about today? Can you give us a little

26

information about your loved one?

27

MAY BOLTON: I am -- I am here because to talk about
28 the death of my mother, Elsie Shorty.

29

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now, I understand you have a
30 couple notes you made. Did you make these notes
31 yourself?

32

MAY BOLTON: Yes, I did. I -- I wrote things down
33 because I have a hard time talking in front of an
34 audience. I have a hard time talking in front of
35 an audience, that's why I have this, things
36 written down. It's my own writing and my own
37 thoughts. It comes from my heart.

38

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you please share those with
39 us? Can you please share some of the strengths
40 and contributions of Elsie with us?

41

MAY BOLTON: The strength of my mother, Elsie, is in
42 all of her children, done something with their
43 lives in spite of the residential school trauma
44 and in spite of her death. And that paragraph
45 alone shows a loving mother, a great mother's
46 guidance.

47

I'm kind of nervous, hurt, and sad.

Hearing - Public**May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty****Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton****(Elsie Shorty)**

1 My mother ... The greatest thing my mother
2 instilled -- instilled in me, in us as a family
3 is to forgive those who done us wrong or to harm
4 us. And she always tell us never go to bed
5 angry. And my grandparents and my parents always
6 tell us [Dene spoken]. In our language it means
7 people that are mean are not good or well. That
8 is what she taught me. In spite of everything
9 that happened, I'm here for myself and for my
10 family. The things that she taught us, she
11 taught me how to raise my -- my children. As a
12 First Nation woman, she helped me raise my two
13 oldest daughters and they're close with their
14 grandpar-- grandmother. She taught us to respect
15 everybody. It doesn't matter who -- who you see,
16 to try to respect them. That's a legacy I have
17 from my mom. She was never an angry person. She
18 was a kind, gentle person, talked to all -- to
19 all that she meets. And the greatest thing that
20 she taught me today, that I'm going to carry
21 through in her legacy is she taught me how
22 to -- she taught me how to do a
23 traditional -- pick and prepare traditional
24 medicine and to help people. And I'm using it
25 today in honour and in memory of her, my mom.

26 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you for sharing those
27 strengths. What I would like to do is I'm going
28 to pass the microphone but I'm going to ask each
29 family member just other than May, who is Elsie's
30 daughter, to introduce themselves briefly to the
31 commissioners. So, please tell the commissioners
32 who you are and how you're related to Elsie.

33 IVAN BOLTON: My name is Ivan Bolton. Elsie was my
34 mother-in-law. I call her "mother", so I'll use
35 that term from hereon.

36 She was a good woman. She was teaching me
37 their language, which I never learned after she
38 died. She could never be replaced on this earth.
39 There has never been another like her. I'm kind
40 of at a loss for words, which is something new
41 for me.

42 Now, what should I take from here? Should I
43 pass the mic on or do you want to hear what
44 actually happened in this?

45 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's okay, Ivan, you can just
46 maybe let the rest of the family introduce
47 themselves --

Hearing - Public**May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
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1 IVAN BOLTON: All right. I'll --

2 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- and I'll come back to that.

3 IVAN BOLTON: I think that's a good plan.

4 DENNIS SHORTY: Hi. My name is Dennis Shorty. I'm
5 the son of Elsie Shorty and Alec. And we're here
6 and I'm here to talk about mom, how did she
7 impact us with skills and tradition and wisdom
8 and spirituality.

9 MARILYN SHORTY: Good morning. My name is Marilyn
10 Shorty. Elsie is my grandmother. And when I was
11 small, she gave me the traditional name
12 [indiscernible traditional name], which stands
13 for "Skinny Fox".

14 I have a -- I grew up with my grandparents
15 in my younger years, so all of my aunts and my
16 uncles are like my sister and my brothers to me.
17 So, I was always with them learning the
18 traditional ways, learning culture, learning how
19 to respect, how to love the land, the people, our
20 family. I was also I guess you would call
21 mischievous, you know, like, being the youngest
22 and wanting to get involved in everything and
23 wanting to touch and see. And -- and so,
24 you know, with my grandmother being gone, it has
25 a lot of impact on all of us. And like my dad
26 said, there will never be another Elsie Shorty.
27 She will always be the one and only. Thank you.

28 YVONNE SHORTY: Good morning. Elsie was my
29 grandmother and my mother. I also was raised
30 with my grandmother. One of the things that she
31 taught me is love. If it wasn't for my
32 grandmother, I wouldn't even know what love is
33 because of the residential school impacts it had
34 on my family. It's because of her that I can
35 love everybody and myself. And -- and the
36 strength of our family, we need to continue to
37 build that because she taught us that as well.
38 No matter what, your -- your family is family and
39 we have to stick together. And respect yourself
40 and everything around you, the land. She -- I
41 was also taught the traditional lifestyle and I
42 live that today. And I'm here in hopes to make a
43 difference in the justice system that's done our
44 Aboriginal people wrong for so many years,
45 including my grandmother. I love her so much.
46 [Dene spoken]

47 CRYSTAL BOLTON: Hi. I'm Crystal Bolton. Elsie was

Hearing - Public**May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
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1 my grandma. (sobbing)
2 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: That's okay. Actually, Marilyn,
3 can you grab the microphone.
4 Commissioners, if I could draw your
5 attention to the screens. There happens to be
6 three pictures that were sort of rotating
7 through. I would like to ask Marilyn to identify
8 the pictures for you because she provided them.
9 So the one that's currently on the screen
10 now -- oh, [indiscernible]. Can we pause one?
11 The picture that's currently on the screen now,
12 can you please identify the people in those
13 pictures?
14 MARILYN SHORTY: That is a picture of my grandmother,
15 Elsie Shorty, and standing right behind her is my
16 mother, May Bolton.
17 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. Can we see another picture,
18 please? Can you please tell us who is in this
19 picture?
20 MARILYN SHORTY: This is another picture of our
21 grandmother/mother, Elsie Shorty.
22 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do you -- do you know her
23 approximate age in this picture or around when
24 the picture was taken?
25 MARILYN SHORTY: Um ...
26 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And if you don't know, that's
27 fine. Okay.
28 MARILYN SHORTY: No, I -- I don't.
29 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Sorry about that. And the next
30 picture, please. Who is in this picture?
31 MARILYN SHORTY: This is a picture of our
32 grandfather/dad, Alec Shorty, and his wife, our
33 grandmother/mother, Elsie Shorty.
34 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner and
35 commissioners, I would like to make these three
36 photos together be exhibited.
37 CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: The photographs
38 collectively will be Exhibit 5, please.
39 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, the family has indicated that
40 they would like to show a short clip, a video,
41 but I'm going to ask if Crystal can just explain
42 what the video is. Can you do that?
43 CRYSTAL BOLTON: This video is of my -- my
44 grandparents and all my aunts and uncles. They
45 were -- my mom and the older kids had just gotten
46 back from residential school and they were moving
47 camp out to Beautiful Lake to do their

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1 traditional hunting and harvesting and stuff
2 before the kids had to go back to -- before they
3 were taken back to residential school.
4 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And if we could just play the
5 video. It's a short two minute clip.
6

7 [Video commences]

8 >> Male narrator: ... Ross River where the
9 road ended and we met this Indian family and
10 all their pack dogs and all the kids.
11 Everyone had a pack on. [Background Western
12 music (instrumental) commences] The dogs
13 were packing about 40 pounds. Even that
14 little boy there, about 4, he's got a stove
15 pipe. Everybody had a big load. They were
16 going to high country to spend their summer,
17 fishing and hunting and dry the meat, stay
18 in the fall and trap, come out before
19 winter. Everybody had a load. Ma, she's
20 packing the three-month-old baby. The
21 oldest girl had the little ole
22 year-and-a-half old baby on her back. Pa,
23 he had quite a load. He had about 12 pounds
24 of tobacco in his pack and that was it.
25 They all look happy. Yeah, they don't have
26 a care in the world. They don't have any
27 payments. They don't have any mortgage.
28 The 12-year-old boy, he had a .22 rifle and
29 dad and looked at it and said, "What?
30 That's an old, beat up gun." I tried to get
31 a little close-up of the little
32 18-months-old baby on her back and her
33 little sister, she started crying. She knew
34 that me and that camera didn't belong here.
35 She didn't like us, I'm afraid. Did you
36 ever see a happier crew? They don't have a
37 worry in the world. They don't have the
38 pressures that we have today and the fast
39 living. And even the dogs, they're happy.
40 The same thing, they're going to high
41 country, spend their summer, live off the
42 land. Ah, what a way to live. [Background
43 music continues]
44

45 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you for showing that.
46

47 [Video concludes]

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1
2 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Dennis, can I ask you a couple of
3 questions about the video. Can you please tell
4 the commissioners just a little bit about who was
5 captured in that video?

6 DENNIS SHORTY: That was all our families. Like
7 Crystal said, we just came back from mission
8 school, I was taken away to at 5, and we were
9 just -- we just came back. And we were going up
10 to the high countries so they could teach us the
11 traditional, spiritual values of the Dena people.
12 And it was dad, mom. Mom was packing baby sister
13 Brenda. And Theresa, she was packing our sister
14 Linda. And when they said it was a little boy,
15 it wasn't a boy, it was our sister Emily. She
16 was packing a stove pipe. And Ian was using that
17 tuque, our little brother. And I was packing
18 that packsack with a cap. And my brother, Frank,
19 was -- had a .22. And May, my sister May, was
20 there too. And, you know, as a family we always
21 travelled together like that. And whenever we
22 see mom, she always say, "Mommy love," or, "Baby
23 love." That's what she'd say because she speak
24 limited English, and my dad didn't spoke any
25 English at all. So, mom usually translate
26 whatever she know. So, that's -- that's who we
27 are as a family together, yeah.

28 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I'm just going to ask you to pass
29 the microphone to Marilyn.

30 Marilyn, can you please tell the
31 commissioner -- commissioners some of the things
32 that you believed were the strengths and
33 contributions of living the traditional way or
34 learning the traditional way from your
35 grandmother and grandfather?

36 MARILYN SHORTY: Some of the strengths living the
37 traditional Kaska Dene way with our grandmother
38 is, like I mentioned earlier, our
39 grandmother/mother was never one to not teach
40 anyone about any -- like, the way our -- of
41 living off the land, beading, teaching us
42 cultural ways of arts and crafts and language.
43 She was always with us and teaching us together
44 as a whole group. Myself and my sister, Yvonne,
45 being the younger ones with our aunty and uncles,
46 grandmother and grandmother. They would never
47 never include us. They were always included and

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1 learning off the land. She was a very great
2 teacher. I love her about that. And
3 as -- you know, today I -- I live that way of
4 culture, I live that way of being respectful to
5 everybody and teaching my son that way too. So,
6 I think that's all. There's so many others that
7 she taught us. And as well, you know, like, her
8 teaching, we also -- was taught to us by our
9 mother, May. May taught us a lot of things and
10 reinstilled all of the values and all of that
11 traditional into us children and her
12 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It goes
13 right back to the way of our grandmother, Elsie.
14 Thank you.

15 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

16 Yvonne, can you tell me a little bit
17 about -- Dennis had already said that
18 your -- your grandmother helped translate, but
19 she mostly spoke -- spoke in language. Can you
20 tell us a little bit about the language in your
21 family?

22 YVONNE SHORTY: I remember when we were younger, when
23 our grandmother would tell us stories, our
24 grandfather and grandma would be sitting down and
25 we -- grandfather would be speaking Kaska, and
26 grandmother would translate to us what -- what
27 she's -- he's saying. And it was always that
28 way. And that's what I remember is her
29 translating all the time and no matter what we
30 were doing, out on the land, teaching us. She
31 was always translating. And it's just awesome
32 the way they work, you know.

33 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Dennis, can you tell us a little
34 bit -- can you tell the commissioners more about
35 your parents? Not just language but can you
36 share some stories about how they were and -- and
37 how they -- how they acted in the community and
38 with the family, please?

39 DENNIS SHORTY: You know, our parents, they loved each
40 other. They were great people. There is a lot
41 of people out there don't know that, you know,
42 that this -- there were dads, there were uncles,
43 there were mothers, there were aunties.
44 You know, when they have -- hold a dance, they're
45 always the first one out there, you know, to
46 encourage other people to dance, to go out there
47 and dance. And when, like, tell the stories,

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1 they -- they always finished each other's
2 stories, you know. It's amazing the way they
3 worked.

4 And ... And when they first met, mom was
5 coming down in a moose skin boat from Pelly Lakes
6 with her adopted parents, McKay (phonetic) and
7 Kitty (phonetic). And my dad was standing on the
8 bank, the Pelly Banks. And mom said, "Oh, I
9 looked up and I see this guy looking at me." And
10 dad say, "I see a moose skin boat coming down and
11 I see your mom sitting in there." At that time
12 she was about 13, going to 14. While they're
13 going past and mom said she turned around, "I
14 still -- I still see [Dene spoken], your dad
15 still standing on the bank watching us, eh."
16 That's -- that's who they were. They were great
17 people. And our -- our dad and our mom.

18 And mom was always there for us all the
19 time. You know, even though go through tough
20 times, she's always there. And when we tried to
21 speak bad about other people, [Dene spoken]. Mom
22 would say, "Don't talk bad about people. Things
23 are going to be bad if you talk about people like
24 that." And so that's how we were raised up, we
25 don't -- we don't talk about bad people or
26 anything. And she loved everybody. When we were
27 growing up, she always have kids at our house,
28 sleepovers, and they call her "grandma" or "mom".
29 That's how she was. Other kids, kids came to her
30 and they stayed with us and they call her mom
31 "mom". And there was mom, "Mommy love," and,
32 "Baby love," and she always say that.

33 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I'm going to ask that the -- the
34 second document be put up, please. And if I
35 could get the Chief Commissioner and the
36 commissioners to look at the screen when they do
37 come up. This is just a visual. I'm not going
38 to ask this first one to be marked as an exhibit.
39 I just want to situate.

40 Dennis, is -- what do you see on the -- the
41 screen? Can you -- can you see the screen?

42 DENNIS SHORTY: I can, yeah.

43 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And can you just tell us what you
44 see on the screen?

45 DENNIS SHORTY: It's called Ross River.

46 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So -- sorry. What is it a map of?

47 DENNIS SHORTY: It's a map of the Yukon.

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1 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. Thank you.
2 DENNIS SHORTY: Yeah.
3 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I just want to -- wanted to
4 situate that for the next map. Can we put the
5 next map up, please? And can you zoom in just
6 once, please? Oh. There we go.
7 And can you see that?
8 DENNIS SHORTY: Yes, I can.
9 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I can hand you a paper copy.
10 I -- I am going to give you a paper copy just so
11 you can see. And I may also give you a pen,
12 please, so that you can mark. Maybe ... Here.
13 I can take [indiscernible].
14 Okay. And looking up at the
15 screen -- or -- or identifying, can you please
16 identify Ross River on this? First, do you know
17 what this is a map of?
18 DENNIS SHORTY: It's a -- it's a map of Kaska
19 traditional territory.
20 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you have circled the -- Ross
21 River?
22 DENNIS SHORTY: Yes.
23 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: May I have it for one moment?
24 Thank you. I am just going to show the
25 commissioners because I am going to have him
26 identify something else. [indiscernible]
27 Bryan.
28 Thank you, Qajaq.
29 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: While we're doing that,
30 just to keep our records straight, the video clip
31 will be Exhibit 6.
32 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes.
33 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: The map will be Exhibit 7.
34 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you, Chief Commissioner.
35 Dennis, I'm going to give this back to you.
36 I'm also going to ask you to circle Lower Post.
37 I'm just going to pass this to the
38 commissioners again just to see where it's been
39 circled.
40 [Speaking to staff away from the microphone]
41 Just for the purpose of the public record on
42 this exhibit, Mr. Zandberg, can you please point
43 to the first circle that Dennis made on Ross
44 River? Thank you. And then can you just point
45 to Lower -- Lower Post. Okay. Thank you.
46 That's good.
47 And so, Dennis, can you tell me just a

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1 little bit about the Kaska territory?

2 DENNIS SHORTY: That's Kaska Nation traditional
3 territory. That's where we travel all over,
4 so ... Actually, that's our homeland. And
5 telling stories, my mom, dad, grandparents, they
6 travel all over that area and they lived
7 that -- that lifestyle way back when, even before
8 rifles. They were harvesting with bows and
9 arrows back then. That's the stories my
10 grandfather and grandparents told me, dad and
11 mom, yeah.

12 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Now, what would be the
13 significance of Lower Post? So if you take it
14 out of the context of Kaska territory, why would
15 you probably be circling -- what -- what would be
16 the reason most of your relations would know
17 Lower Post?

18 DENNIS SHORTY: That's where the missionaries,
19 Catholic missionaries, set up boarding schools.
20 And they took me away when I was 5 years old.
21 And I was there over seven -- seven years, and we
22 don't get to go home until midsummer. And, well,
23 I learned really quick how to -- how to survive
24 in there and to speak English quickly. Because
25 when I went there, all I spoke was Dene language.
26 [Dene spoken] Every time I spoke they would
27 punish me. And that's a long ways from home and
28 people don't know that. You know, just I was
29 there by myself sleeping and crying and,
30 you know, many bad things happened to me in
31 there. And my mom and my parents and my
32 grandparents don't -- didn't know that. I never
33 spoke about it. Until recently I started talking
34 about it, yeah.

35 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: May, can I ask you if you also
36 attended at Lower Post residential school, the
37 mission school?

38 MAY BOLTON: Yes, I did, but I attended -- I started
39 there when -- when I was 7 years old because I
40 think I was one of the fortunate ones because my
41 mother -- my parents hid -- hid me away because
42 they were looking for kids at the age of 5/6, but
43 I was hidden. And that's the strength of my
44 parents to protect me. And many things, many bad
45 things happened to me in residential school also.
46 And the trauma that I had, I lost the traditional
47 parenting that my parents taught me. It just

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1 blew right out, right out of the window.
2 Not -- I -- I became a supervisor to my children.
3 And unbeknownst to me, I have created
4 four -- four residential school, that's four of
5 my children. And I thought I was teaching them
6 how to love, but I wasn't. I was teaching them
7 how to hate me. I have no more to say, it's too
8 hard.

9 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yvonne, is there anything that you
10 want to share with the commissioners in relation
11 to your experience as well?

12 YVONNE SHORTY: Residential school has impacted
13 everything in our family and it's because of that
14 that there's a lot of violence, a lot of trauma
15 within our family. I was -- my mother was right,
16 I was taught -- what happened to her in
17 residential she taught me and she taught it well,
18 and I was traumatized over and over. But without
19 knowing or understanding anything about
20 residential school, I often wondered why she
21 treated me like that. I never thought about my
22 siblings or anything. I just, like -- because I
23 was so young. And -- and I did, I did hate my
24 mother.

25 And -- and I did become an alcoholic because
26 of all the trauma that I had to go through, but I
27 quit drinking in November 1992? Or I forget
28 anyway. I quit drinking. Anyway. I had a boy
29 of my own and I hurt him too. And he's got so
30 much anger to me right now because of that
31 trauma. And, you know, I could sit here now
32 today and say, yes, I did hurt my son because I
33 didn't know any better.

34 I went to a lot of counselling. I went to a
35 lot of -- I'm still learning yet. And what
36 stopped me from that childhood abuse, to stop
37 that abuse: My son was 3 years old and I was
38 hitting him the way my mom used to beat me. And
39 he was cowered in the corner and he was looking
40 at me with that scared look on his face. And I
41 just -- I stopped and I looked at him and I fell
42 to the floor and I started crying. I thought,
43 "What am I doing?" I told myself I would never
44 treat my kid this way, the way I was raised. I
45 picked up that phone and I phoned Child Abuse
46 Treatment Services here in Whitehorse. And I
47 begged them not to take my child away from me and

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1 that I needed help. And that's where I started
2 to force myself to understand more about
3 residential school and the -- the way my mom
4 raised us and my aunties and my uncles. And once
5 you start understanding what they went through,
6 you'll learn to love your parents again like I
7 do. I love my mom so much now and my aunties and
8 my uncles because I took that time to understand
9 and I wanted to stop that abuse to my children.
10 I have two boys. And they're just like night and
11 day. My oldest boy is traumatized. My youngest
12 boy is -- is when I learned who I was in here.

13 Thank you.

14 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: May, I'm not going to ask you more
15 questions about your experience, but I was
16 wondering if you could tell the commissioners
17 what you believe the impact was when you and your
18 brother and sister were taken away from Elsie and
19 Alec.

20 MAY BOLTON: Can you say that again?

21 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: How -- can you please explain to
22 the commissioners how you and your brothers and
23 sisters being taken to school impacted your
24 parents?

25 MAY BOLTON: When -- before we left for residential
26 school our parents were loving parents and were
27 always there for us. But when they took us away
28 to school, they had nothing, they had nothing
29 there. So because of that, they started
30 drinking. And they started drinking and abusing
31 alcohol because they have no reason, they have
32 nobody to look after. And they couldn't go out
33 on the land because who would they take because
34 all of their grandch-- all of their children were
35 gone. I am the middle child. There was nine of
36 us. There was -- there was 12 but three deceased
37 and there's nine of us living.

38 Just looking at my mom's face, it just -- it
39 hurts so much. Because the loneliness, and
40 probably because of the loneliness that
41 they -- that they sh-- can't stand. The laughter
42 of their children were gone. Because my
43 fa-- my -- my mother was a lovable mother.
44 She -- she used to tell us stories around
45 campfires. She even played with us. And that
46 was lost. That impact of residential school was
47 so bad that they started abusing alcohol and all

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1 the violence that goes with it. [Dene spoken]
2 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do any of the other members of the
3 family want to speak to how they believe Indian
4 Residential School had impacted the family? No?
5 Good. Okay.

6 The family was originally anticipated for
7 approximately two hours. Rather than go into
8 questions on the details of the death, I would
9 suggest now is a good time to break for -- yes,
10 certainly.

11 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: I want to understand the video.
12 What -- what were you told they were doing? What
13 was the video for? When they came to see you,
14 what were they telling you they were making a
15 video for?

16 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: If I may, I am going to provide
17 Crystal the video so that she can better describe
18 to you where its context or time context is.

19 Thank you for -- commissioner, for asking
20 that. And if I could -- Crystal, where did you
21 get this video?

22 CRYSTAL BOLTON: I first saw this video when I was a
23 kid. My dad had it on a VHS. And I thought it
24 was amazing that I could see my grandparents when
25 they were -- and my mom and all my aunts and
26 uncles when they were tiny. And then I found it
27 an Amazon. So, I ordered it and ... Yeah. But
28 when we watched it as a kid, it was just this guy
29 who wanted to challenge the Northwest
30 Territories. That's what the video is called.
31 And it was just a documentary. And they got to
32 capture a little bit of my family's history on
33 there, so it's neat.

34 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So -- so, Crystal, maybe -- is it
35 fair to say the -- the video -- the video is
36 fairly dated and so --

37 CRYSTAL BOLTON: Oh, yes, definitely.

38 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you -- you don't have the
39 knowledge of when the filmmakers went there
40 to -- to meet with the family? You don't have
41 the context for that other than --

42 CRYSTAL BOLTON: No. I think they were just -- they
43 were travelling down -- like, this video starts
44 at the beginning of the South Canol Road and
45 they're travelling down there and they just came
46 upon -- there's another clip on here that has
47 my -- my grand-- my grandfather's sister and her

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1 family fishing on the Lapie River. That's
2 just -- that's probably where they were heading.
3 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Thank you, Crystal.
4 So, Dennis or May, do you -- do you remember
5 that day? Do you remember the video? Do
6 you -- did they show it to you ever? Did the guy
7 ever see it -- so how old were you when you saw
8 it?
9 DENNIS SHORTY: I was about 8, I think about 8 years
10 old at the time.
11 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: And did the person that was
12 shooting the video know that you were home from
13 residential school?
14 DENNIS SHORTY: No, they didn't know.
15 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Just out camping on the land in
16 your carefree lifestyle --
17 DENNIS SHORTY: This is all camping.
18 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: -- according to him, yeah.
19 DENNIS SHORTY: It's carefree, yeah.
20 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yeah. Okay.
21 DENNIS SHORTY: And I remember they gave dad \$5 for
22 that. I remember that.
23 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: You remember he got --
24 DENNIS SHORTY: Yeah.
25 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: -- \$5 for that. Okay. Okay.
26 And was it just one guy or was it a crew or?
27 DENNIS SHORTY: There was four people there.
28 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: There was four people there.
29 DENNIS SHORTY: Yeah, four, yeah.
30 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay. May, do you remember
31 anything about that day?
32 MAY BOLTON: Yes. As a family we were just happily
33 going up. Yeah, as you can tell, I'm -- I'm the
34 10 year old one and I'm the curious one. I
35 always want to up front and -- and a busybody.
36 And I remember that day very well. As a family
37 we were happy because we just finished coming
38 back from residential school and we were so happy
39 going out on the land. It's just the land where
40 we do our healing. That's our traditional
41 hospital. And all the trauma and all the hurts
42 that we got from residential school, we left it
43 out, we left it there. And it was a happy moment
44 for me that day because I was with my parents and
45 my brothers and sisters. And these guys were
46 coming down the road and they were doing a
47 documentary on "Challenging [of] the Northwest

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1 [Territories]", Gordon Eastman. And he asked my
2 dad permission before he shot the film. And my
3 dad said why not, you know, go ahead. And then
4 that guy offered him 5 -- \$5. And he -- he told
5 dad, "Here, you get \$5. You could -- you could
6 buy more tobacco."

7 [Audience laughter]

8 MAY BOLTON: And dad happily took it and that's all I
9 remember about that film. It was a happy moment
10 for me.

11 COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Thank you very much. I just
12 want to remind you that Commissioner Eyolfson and
13 I have to leave after lunch, but it's in no way
14 to be disrespectful that we're not wanting to
15 hear the rest of your story. We will definitely
16 speak with our colleagues to hear the rest of
17 your story. We just have some in camera meetings
18 that we have to go to. Thank you so much.

19 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, Chief Commissioner and
20 commissioners, if I may suggest we take our lunch
21 recess now and resume following lunch with the
22 Shorty family members. Thank you.

23 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. So we'll be back, reconvening
24 here at 2 o'clock this afternoon. 2 o'clock.

25
26 (HEARING ADJOURNED FOR NOON RECESS)

27 (HEARING RECONVENED AT 1416)

28
29 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Good afternoon. Let's
30 continue. And, Ms. Big Canoe, is the family
31 ready to continue?

32 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes, the family is ready to
33 continue, Chief Commissioner.

34 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Thank you.

35 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, I would just like to mention
36 and explain that the chair beside me has been set
37 with a blanket and drums that belong to the
38 family. And it's sitting here for the purpose to
39 recognize and honour the -- the loss of Elsie
40 Shorty, so that she's here with them in spirit.

41 And I'm going to ask, Ivan, can you please
42 look at the monitors, and I'll ask the
43 commissioners too as well, and tell us what
44 you're seeing on that picture.

45 IVAN BOLTON: In -- in front of the cabin, it doesn't
46 show in the picture, but pointed straight out,
47 straight up in front of the cabin there's a row

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1 of willow about two-and-a-half feet high.
2 This -- I'm saying this now because it's relevant
3 when my story comes out. So that you've got a
4 picture of [indiscernible].

5 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: May, can you tell me what's in
6 this picture and where it's taken?

7 MAY BOLTON: This picture is a cabin of my mother's
8 place out at our home place. It's called
9 Beautiful Lake, where the beautiful people comes
10 from.

11 [Audience laughter]

12 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: You would say that.

13 MAY BOLTON: Yes. It's where -- it's where they lived
14 on their land. And it's a really beautiful
15 cabin.

16 IVAN BOLTON: Beautiful location [indiscernible]

17 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner and
18 commissioners, may I please ask that this picture
19 be made an exhibit.

20 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Yes.

21 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

22 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Number 8, please.

23 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, May, can you please explain to
24 the commissioners why we're looking at this
25 picture of a cabin and -- and why it's
26 significant to the story of Elsie?

27 MAY BOLTON: This is the cabin where I found my
28 mother's body.

29 I will ... I will never, never forget on
30 that day, July 16th, 1992, when my beautiful,
31 lovable, beloved mom was taken from me from
32 persons unknown. That was -- that day changed my
33 life forever because I was the one that
34 phoned -- that phoned our mother, along with my
35 sister-in-law, Margaret, to be -- it was a
36 beautiful sunny day after I finished work. And
37 early on we seen our parents in town. And
38 Margaret, my sister-in-law, was concerned about
39 her horses and she let my parents look after it.
40 There was a coral not -- to your -- to your
41 right, where they kept the horses. And my
42 parents really loved animals and they -- they
43 agreed to look -- care for the horses for my
44 brother, Frank, and my sister-in-law, Margaret.

45 Anyway, Margaret asked me to drive her out
46 to Beautiful Lake because my brother was still
47 working and she was worried about her horse. So

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1 we went out, thinking that my parents were still
2 in town. When we got there, we drove, we were
3 laughing and talking, you know. Laughing and
4 talking and thinking about things that we used to
5 do. And then we drove up to the house, to the
6 cabin. The door was slightly open. I called out
7 to them, letting them know, if they were there,
8 that we were coming, but all was quiet. All was
9 quiet. I went in. I saw that my mother was
10 sleeping on the bed. And I thought -- which I
11 thought she was sleeping, but as I got closer I
12 knew something was wrong. I got a little bit
13 closer, I bent down and I said, "Mom," and I saw
14 blood on her neck. There was a wound to her
15 neck. I seen all the blood.

16 My sister-in-law came in after me. When she
17 saw my mom - and she calls my mom her grandma,
18 her mother-in-law; she just loved her grandma -
19 she went out of control for a few minutes. She
20 was yelling for my mom to wake up, wake up, wake
21 up, and was trying to climb on the bed. And I
22 was -- I was standing there totally in shock. I
23 was just numb to the core, standing there sad,
24 hurt, all the trauma coming back to me, but I had
25 to do something. I just had to do something,
26 something to take control of the situation.
27 That's when -- that's when I put my residential
28 school survival -- survival mode skills in
29 motion, using it in motion, shut everything down.
30 I shut everything down so I could be a support
31 for her, for my sister-in-law, and also support
32 for my older and younger siblings. As I said
33 before, I was the middle child. And that was
34 really, really difficult for me to see. I could
35 still picture her yet in that cabin. I just
36 don't know why something like that could happen
37 to my beautiful mother. I just lost everything
38 when she died. My life is ruined. My teacher,
39 my mother, a grandmother to our children, and the
40 worst part is to this day I just wonder if she
41 could -- if she felt any pain when she was shot.
42 It still bothers me yet to this day.

43 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ivan, can you please tell the
44 commissioners what happened next after May had
45 discovered this in the cabin?

46 IVAN BOLTON: May neglected to tell you one thing.
47 When she got things under control, she went down

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1 to the neighbour's place about five miles away
2 and made a phone call to the RCMP. And the man
3 that owned the -- the property phoned me in Ross
4 River and told me that there had been an
5 accident, a serious one, at Beautiful Lake.
6 Whereupon I jumped in the truck and headed out to
7 Beautiful Lake, passing the RCMP about six miles
8 from the -- where the cabin is. And I led them
9 to the lake because the cop that was driving the
10 vehicle did not know where Beautiful Lake was
11 because it's in off the highway.

12 So, I was there a few minutes ahead of the
13 cops, like, three, four. And then -- and then
14 they -- I could see through the door, which was
15 partly open, I could see mom laying on the bed
16 and there was blood all over the place.
17 Whereupon I told the cop, I said, "I'm going to
18 go back and see if May is all right." So I went
19 down to the neighbour's place and picked up May
20 and we went back to Beautiful Lake. And we
21 talked with the police for a few minutes, and
22 then they said it was all right to go back to
23 town.

24 Then the following morning I went back out
25 to the lake and they had the forensic crew out of
26 Whitehorse there at that time. I don't know, it
27 was probably 9:00, 9:30 before I got out there.
28 And I -- they wouldn't let me into the cabin,
29 naturally, because they were doing their
30 investigation, but I heard one of the police
31 officers say, "Oh, it's just another Native
32 woman." Well, actually, his exact words were,
33 "Aw, it's just another Native woman," and you
34 could see him waving his hand. And then
35 they -- I was asked to tell what I knew of it,
36 which I didn't know very much at that time. So,
37 I'm going to leave it at that point now.

38 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Dennis, where were you at this
39 time?

40 DENNIS SHORTY: At that time I was just coming back
41 from work and I was ready to gas up so I could go
42 out on the land. And I came around the corner.
43 I could see that -- mom and them had another
44 cabin down in Ross. I was looking at it, I was
45 wondering if they're home. And Jack and Millie
46 (phonetic) come around and stopped. They told me
47 what happened, that, "Your mother has been

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1 killed, shot." From thereon everything just shut
2 down. Because at that time I was dealing with
3 the mission school and what happened to me. And
4 to this day my parents don't know what happened
5 to me at that mission school. But now I could
6 talk about it. They didn't know that I was
7 sexually molested at 5 years old. I guess now
8 they know.

9 And I was shut down for a long time. I -- I
10 was working for Highways and I couldn't work
11 anymore. I came in, I told my boss, "I can't
12 work. I might kill somebody. I might run over
13 somebody." And he sat down with me, he said,
14 "Take two years off with pay." So, I done that.
15 After two years I went back, I still couldn't.
16 During this time I was doing artwork. That's
17 what kept me -- kept me above ground, my artwork,
18 and my music. And that's all I could remember.

19 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Marilyn, can you please tell the
20 commissioners what -- what you -- what you recall
21 from that time period? What your memory was and
22 where you were during the death?

23 MARILYN SHORTY: I was actually -- had just jumped in
24 with Uncle Dennis. We were going to gas up and
25 we were just going to go out on the -- go for a
26 little ride and just -- I don't know what we were
27 going to do, but we were going to go -- go
28 somewhere. And that's when Millie had flagged us
29 down. And -- and I remember Uncle Dennis was
30 saying, "Well, how come Millie is driving,
31 You know, like, so fast behind us," so we pulled
32 over and see what was happening. And she told
33 us. And at that time for myself, I was in
34 complete disbelief. I was, like, you know, being
35 young too and I'm, like, "How could -- how could
36 somebody do that? How could somebody hurt her?
37 Is this real?" I wasn't -- you know, like, I
38 think I went into a different type of shutdown.
39 I went into -- didn't want to believe it. I
40 didn't want to believe anybody could hurt our
41 grandmother. And then ... I don't really
42 remember too much after that because it was such
43 a haze and everybody was hurting and ...
44 You know, one, we just lost our grandmother too,
45 she was murdered. And feeling the pain and the
46 hurt, the grief from everybody. And then myself
47 too, I just shut down. I don't even remember

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1 going to the -- to the service. I don't remember
2 who even had -- did the plans for all of
3 the -- the burial part. Now I know. Now I know
4 it was our mother, May, but back then I didn't
5 know how any of it had come together, let alone
6 even being at the service or even at the grave
7 site. And even, like, to this day, like, I -- I
8 have a hard time remembering the day that she
9 passed away. I think I still have a big part of
10 me that's, like, blocked right off. I don't want
11 to deal with it. I don't want to come to terms
12 somebody could hurt such a beautiful soul.

13 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yvonne, can you please share with
14 the commissioners what you recall or where you
15 were at the time?

16 YVONNE SHORTY: Well, like I said before, I'm an
17 alcoholic and at the time I was drinking, and I
18 did drink with them earlier that day. And
19 because that I was drinking, I wasn't -- I wasn't
20 allowed to be with the family because of my
21 alcoholism, so I had to deal with this on my own.
22 I wasn't even allowed in the house, so I took
23 off. I phoned a friend and I took off and I
24 didn't go back. I wasn't even allowed at the
25 funeral, so I -- I don't remember anything. I
26 don't -- nothing. I did my own shutdown and I
27 did what I did best, drink. But now that we're
28 all dealing with this, it's good to grieve with
29 my family. The first time in 25 years that I
30 could be with them and grieve with them without
31 them telling me, "Get away." That's all I have
32 to say.

33 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Crystal, I know -- yeah, you can
34 [indiscernible]. I know you -- you were quite
35 young, but can you please share with the
36 commissioners what you recall from that time and
37 where you were and any stories that are related
38 to that.

39 CRYSTAL BOLTON: On that day we were -- I was down at
40 my aunt's and I was doing laundry at my
41 Aunt -- my Aunt Linda's house because the
42 following day we were -- our family, no one
43 mentioned it, we were getting to go out to Quiet
44 Lake to camp and get ready to hunt and pick
45 berries and ... And I was doing my laundry,
46 so -- you know, to go -- get ready to go camping,
47 and then my two cousins, my -- my Aunt Margaret's

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1 children - she was with my mom when they found
2 my -- my grandma - and they came to the -- came
3 to my Aunt Linda's house. And I was on the floor
4 and I was folding my laundry. And Aunt Linda
5 came in the room and so did my cousins, Rose and
6 Alex, and they -- they told us. They said,
7 "Grandma -- grandma's been -- grandma's been
8 shot." And my aunt just dropped. She just
9 dropped to the ground and then got up and she ran
10 out, and she ran to her husband and was just
11 screaming. And I wasn't -- I wasn't crying or
12 anything then because I -- I didn't believe it,
13 so.

14 My cousins lived right -- like, we lived
15 right next door to each other, so we walked
16 up -- we walked up to our house. When I got
17 there, there was vehicles all over, people coming
18 to pay their condolences to mom. And when I
19 walked in the house, my mom was just crying. And
20 that's when I finally broke down and I started
21 crying. And after that, it was just a whirlwind.
22 I don't remember. I don't remember anything
23 after that either. We just shut down and went
24 into robot mode. We just had to do what needed
25 to be done.

26 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: May or Dennis, can one of you
27 please tell the commissioners how -- what -- how
28 your father, Alex, reacted and what happened
29 after May -- after Elsie was found dead?

30 DENNIS SHORTY: He just shut down. When that
31 happened, that's when we lost dad too, our dear
32 mom. He keep telling me [Dene spoken], "I never
33 killed mom, my son," you know. [Dene spoken]
34 when he's speaking to my language. [Dene spoken]
35 "Why should I kill mom," in -- in our language.

36 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Why -- why would Alex have to say
37 that? What happened to Alex as the RCMP were
38 investigating the death?

39 DENNIS SHORTY: Well, my -- my dad only spoke Dene.
40 [Dene spoken] He only spoke Dene to us. [Dene
41 spoken] Mom, the little English she knows, she
42 translate for us. And dad always said, "Yes,
43 sir. Yes, sir," and that's his downfall.

44 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's his downfall, so -- it's his
45 downfall and why it be his downfall?
46 What -- what happened when the RCMP came and
47 spoke to your father?

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1 DENNIS SHORTY: Because they asked him, "Alec, did you
2 shot your wife?" "Yes, sir." "Do you know what
3 you're saying?" "Yes, sir." He always says
4 that. And that's what happened.

5 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can one of the other family
6 members share a little more details with the
7 commissioners in relation to the RCMP's
8 investigation and what happened with Alex?

9 MAY BOLTON: There was -- before I started telling you
10 about my dad and when my husband, Ivan, was
11 saying that the officers were saying that, "Oh,
12 it's just another Native woman," she was not just
13 another Native woman. She was my mother. She
14 was a wife. She was also a grandmother and a
15 sister. And she was also an aunt and a friend to
16 many who -- who met her. I just wanted to
17 express that she was my mother, not another
18 Native woman.

19 My dad, like my brother Dennis was saying,
20 he doesn't understand English. Because of that
21 he was blamed because he said, "Yes, sir," and he
22 didn't understand. And quickly the RCMP,
23 they -- they closed the case down because they
24 got a confession. They never did any
25 investigation whatsoever of any -- any
26 fingerprints, any, how can I say that word,
27 forensic tests on the -- on the gun. Nothing.
28 It was just an open and closed case.

29 Through this my dad is gone now. He's up
30 with my mother. He always tell us that he didn't
31 do it. "How could I do that?" Of course they
32 were drinking that day, but my dad remembers he
33 wasn't -- when they usually get in an argument,
34 my -- my brother, Dennis, has a house I don't
35 know how many few feet down the road, that's
36 where my dad goes and sleep and let my mother
37 sleep. And during that time something happened
38 and everything, my dad said, was blamed on him
39 because of lack of English. And when they came
40 up here -- up there to arrest him, there was
41 a -- they got a guard, a police guard there.
42 Even him, he told the RCMP, "Alec needs an
43 interpreter," but they never listened to him. He
44 confessed, he said, "Yes." And they wouldn't
45 listen the guard. He tried over and over to
46 explain, "Alec needs an interpreter. Alec, don't
47 talk. Please don't talk to them," but he doesn't

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1 understand. He figured he could -- he figured
2 that anybody asks him a question he has to -- and
3 say, "Yes," "Yes." That is why my mother is the
4 one that always translates for him.

5 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can a family member tell the
6 commissioners how long did Alec stay in custody
7 or in jail? How long was Alec in jail?

8 MAY BOLTON: He was there I think for two weeks. Like
9 I said before, I shut everything down so I could
10 be support for my family. I shut everything
11 down. I was numb. I went into my -- into my
12 residential school survival mode. And I was the
13 one that met with his lawyer. I went up to the
14 jail to see him. Walk around in the store,
15 trying to find a good outfit for my mother. My
16 sisters promised to be with me, but they never
17 showed up, so I was the one that did everything.
18 They don't know how I -- I -- they don't know how
19 I felt, but I kept everything down. Now they
20 know, I want them to know how I felt. I was just
21 numb. I done that because I love my -- my
22 brothers and sisters and my -- my children, never
23 thinking about myself. And that really took a
24 toll out of my life. I was sick all the time. I
25 developed -- I developed diabetes. I was
26 overweight. I just put myself into my work and
27 trying to think I could fix everybody.

28 He was in jail for two weeks, two or three
29 weeks, I don't -- I don't remember. It was a
30 really hard -- really hard thing to go through
31 because I don't know if they convicted him or
32 not, I don't remember, but he was with me because
33 he had -- they -- because of his confession,
34 nobody never listened to us. The
35 investi-- the -- the investigation was quick.
36 So, my dad lived with me for 10 years. For those
37 10 years he had to check with the RCMP
38 every -- every evening. After work I had to go
39 down. That took a toll out of me. My brothers
40 and sisters never knew that. If I have to take
41 him to Whitehorse with me, I have to go down to
42 the RCMP station to -- to get the permission.
43 And I believe my dad, he said wholeheartedly he
44 did not. "I never killed your mom." He say if
45 I -- if I shot my mom, I could have -- he said I
46 could have heard that gun. I never did. I never
47 heard nothing. I don't know what else to say.

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1 It's too -- it's -- it's too hard.

2 IVAN BOLTON: What May has just said is the absolute
3 truth. She did, we did look after the children
4 and done all the work involved in making sure all
5 went well. And we did look after dad for several
6 years, I can't remember how many, but for the
7 first year he had to go to the police station
8 every day. After that it was twice a week. And
9 that was nine or ten years.

10 But when they were doing the investigation,
11 myself and the lawyer found the location from
12 where the shot had been fired. It was not in the
13 cabin, as the police said. And we showed it to
14 the lawyer and that is why dad did not go to jail
15 because the police -- one police officer believed
16 us. And the lawyer -- because we showed him the
17 evidence too, but the Crown had already made its
18 case and didn't want to change it. And I'm going
19 to stop there.

20 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so is it fair though -- just
21 to clarify, is it fair to say that no one in the
22 family is aware or not whether there was a full
23 trial or conviction?

24 CRYSTAL BOLTON: None of us know anything. We've
25 never even seen her -- the police report. We
26 have never seen anything, of anything. Our whole
27 family, the only thing we know is my grandma was
28 shot and that's -- that's it. We haven't had a
29 chance to grieve or heal because there's no
30 closure in -- because we know nothing. We have
31 no knowledge of anything. That thing regarding
32 the police and the lawyers and -- no one came and
33 talked to us. I was only 11, but I remem-- like,
34 my family would talk to me and -- you know. We
35 don't know what happened.

36 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Crystal, can you tell the
37 commissioners has anyone in the family ever tried
38 to get any more information or ask for more
39 information?

40 CRYSTAL BOLTON: When this first started with -- when
41 you guys came here last -- last year, my sister
42 Marilyn and I asked - what was her name? -
43 Calista MacLeod?

44 MARILYN SHORTY: Yeah.

45 CRYSTAL BOLTON: I think that was her name. We asked
46 her if we could get the police report. And she
47 got back to my sister Marilyn. Maybe I should

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1 let Marilyn talk on this now.

2 MARILYN SHORTY: Yeah, Calista did get back to us and
3 said in regards to the file being so long ago, it
4 was archived and it was -- I guess it's a bigger
5 process to -- to get those files and to see where
6 they're located and how long it will take. And
7 that she said another RCMP will be in contact
8 with us, and we're still waiting. And that's
9 been a year ago, so ... Maybe a little over a
10 year now, but, yeah, it's just -- it's hard to
11 get things going and trying to get answers, let
12 alone trying to get documents that were archived.

13 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Crystal, can you tell me what the
14 impact of having -- living in the community as a
15 child, having everyone believe that your
16 grandfather killed your grandmother, what that
17 was like for you?

18 CRYSTAL BOLTON: I remember the secretary at school, I
19 was walking by and she was talking to someone,
20 and she was, like, "Oh, it's just one of them.
21 They're just a couple of dumb Indians and Alec
22 should be spending the rest of his life in jail.
23 He shouldn't be out free." That was very hard.
24 I was a 12 year old hearing a secretary at school
25 say that about my grandparents was very hard.
26 They had no right to talk about them like that,
27 especially my grandma.

28 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did any of the other family
29 members want to talk about and share with the
30 commissioners the impact of having your father be
31 accused of your mother's or your grandmother's
32 death? Well, how -- what was the impact of
33 people believing that your father killed your
34 mother?

35 DENNIS SHORTY: It was really hard. It's that not
36 knowing what happened. I keep telling myself my
37 dad didn't -- couldn't do that, deep inside, but
38 I keep hearing that, "Your dad killed your mom,"
39 and it's really hard to deal with that. And I
40 can't remember much because I shut down already.
41 And this is the first time I cry for mom.
42 Because I was so shocked that I couldn't cry.
43 And the impact is still with me, with us right
44 now. That's why we're sitting here telling our
45 story, so it won't happen again, ever.

46 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: The family has talked about
47 recommendations and ideas. Are there

Hearing - Public**May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)**

1 recommendations and ideas that you would like to
2 share with the commissioners based on your
3 experiences about what would help families or any
4 recommendations you have whatsoever?

5 Before you get to the recommendations, May
6 would just like to add a couple comments on the
7 last question.

8 MAY BOLTON: But this is -- it's going to be hard for
9 people to hear, but the impact on my father's
10 conviction and my mother's death, I hate -- I
11 hate doing this but it has to come out, there's
12 some racism in those comments that really hurt,
13 that impact me. The First Nation -- Kaska First
14 Nation of Ross River and also some in Watson
15 Lake, they believe my dad didn't do it, but the
16 non-Aboriginal people think my dad should go to
17 jail forever because they're just Indians.
18 That's all I have to say.

19 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. Would any of the
20 family members like to explain to the
21 commissioners ideas and recommendations you have?

22 MAY BOLTON: The first recommendation is, because of
23 my dad's conviction, interpreters. RCMP need to
24 have language interpreters in every case or
25 investigation that they have. They should have
26 knowledge of the First Nations laws and also
27 their protocols. And also [indiscernible] elders
28 as interpretation or any elders should get their
29 paid position, like teachers. Training and
30 cultural protocols for everyone who upholds the
31 law or rules. Culture camps. That's, like I
32 said before, it's our hospital. Little thing
33 goes a long way. And I think we should have for
34 our healing because that's where as First Nation
35 they find their identity, it's on the land.
36 Maybe have after-school programs with pick up and
37 drop offs so no risk of people or young people
38 are gone missing. Community safety officers. I
39 don't know what ... I'm sure we have more, but
40 it's really difficult to say what's a
41 recommendation that's for sure. Maybe you guys
42 pick -- pick some up while we're talking and
43 speaking and maybe that you guys could get -- get
44 information from what we said and from what you
45 heard would be a great recommendation coming out
46 of our words, our testimony.

47 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: I want to reassure you

Hearing - Public**May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty****Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton****(Elsie Shorty)**

1 that at any time you or members of your family
2 can make recommendations to us. Anytime. Thank
3 you.

4 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner and
5 commissioners, did you have any questions that
6 you wanted to ask of the family?

7 COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Thank you. I just wanted to
8 confirm what I heard and what I think might be a
9 recommendation and hear what you thought about
10 it. I think -- what I heard, especially from
11 you, Crystal, was the lack of information has
12 been one of the hardest parts and that more
13 transparency and communication with -- with you,
14 with family from the justice system is something
15 that you haven't received and that perhaps it's
16 something that you want to receive for yourselves
17 but other families as well.

18 CRYSTAL BOLTON: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Is that fair? I just wanted
20 to clarify. Thank you. [Aboriginal language
21 spoken]

22 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Sure.

23 MARILYN BOLTON: I just wanted ... I just wanted to
24 say as well, you know, like, families that go
25 through situations like this, you know, like,
26 having the respect from the RCMP or anybody
27 working in the justice field, you know, have that
28 sensitivity that, yes, families are going through
29 trauma and traumatic events, and, you know, to
30 have that respect for that. You know,
31 like -- like, we all talk about every one of us
32 doesn't -- or don't remember certain situations
33 after the murder. And just to have that respect.
34 To talk to somebody in the family, maybe one or
35 two, you know, with the RCMP and then being able
36 to relay that again and again so that there is
37 that open communication. So that one and -- and
38 another can relay messages on where things are at
39 in the investigation and not just being
40 stonewalled and saying, "No. Your grandfather's
41 guilty," and that's it. You know, just having
42 respect for the families. Open communication.

43 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: [French spoken] Thank you.
44 Thank you. Thank you for the -- for your
45 courage, for your truth, and I heard a lot of
46 recommendations. And we have amazing people,
47 professional people working with us and for us -

Hearing - Public**May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty****Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton****(Elsie Shorty)**

1 for us - that took note prior to this gathering
2 and also today. So, yes, it's still open, you
3 can e-mail us, call us, find us. We're here.
4 And this is the beginning of a relationship.
5 *Merci.*

6 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Thank you all very much
7 for sharing your stories with us today. It's
8 been very moving. We're grateful. And we're
9 sorry for your loss. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: I have one more question.
11 Part of what we have been tasked to do is to look
12 at ways that we can honour lost loved ones. How
13 can we, how can your mom, your mother-in-law,
14 your grandma, your mom, how can -- how can she be
15 honoured? Would you guys be comfortable talking
16 about that with us now?

17 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: If -- if I may, Commissioner, the
18 family actually will be doing something to honour
19 Elsie today, but it's probably -- please free to
20 answer the commissioner's question if there is
21 anything in addition to how you'll be honouring
22 Elsie today.

23 And, commissioners, Ivan would just like to
24 add a couple more words. It's not specifically
25 related to your question.

26 IVAN BOLTON: We ... There is much to say in this
27 area of changing things so that this kind of
28 Situation never ever happens again, but this is
29 not the place or the time to say it because it's
30 too long and too complicated. So, I'm -- but it
31 does have to be brought out. So, sometime
32 somewhere, it doesn't matter where it is in
33 Canada, we have to get the leaders together and
34 talk the situation over so that our laws,
35 both -- both the Territorial and the Federal and
36 the local Native ways can find a way to work
37 together instead of fighting each other. I'm
38 going to leave it there.

39 YVONNE SHORTY: As the family to honour my grandmother
40 and for all the wrong that was done through the
41 justice system to my family, we would like to
42 have a memorial for my grandmother put up
43 someplace for us and probably other families that
44 are going to tell their story as well. And this
45 cannot happen. It can't continue to happen. The
46 justice system fails us every time and it's still
47 happening today. That needs to stop. We are

Hearing - Public**May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty****Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton****(Elsie Shorty)**

1 people as well. We have the same blood running
2 through our bodies.

3 MARILYN SHORTY: It'd be great to see something placed
4 in the -- the school, you know, honouring our
5 grandmother for all the teachings. Something to
6 honour our women.

7 DENNIS SHORTY: And as fathers, uncles, grandfathers,
8 young men, we have to stand up for our women. We
9 have to stop what's happening to our women, our
10 wives, our mothers. We have to do that. Us
11 mens, we have to step forward as warriors of the
12 land, our culture, and take over as leaders and
13 as men. To honour our mom we have to do that.
14 To honour sisters we have to do that. Enough is
15 enough. Let's stand up as men and protect our
16 women.

17 CRYSTAL BOLTON: Maybe like a mentorship too. For,
18 like, myself I was young when my grandma passed
19 away and my family was shut down, grieving,
20 right? So at the age of 12 I turned to alcohol
21 and drugs myself, but, yeah, maybe, like, a
22 mentorship for the younger people while their
23 families are grieving, something, people that
24 could talk with them. I ... Yeah, I started
25 drinking when I was about 12, a year after my
26 grandma died, and I kept drinking until I found
27 out I was pregnant with my first child at the age
28 of 25, but I quit in honour of my grandma because
29 my grandma taught us that family, you take care
30 of your children, you love them, family is
31 everything, so. Yeah, my babies are my little
32 saviors.

33 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: At this time the -- the family
34 would like to do something to honour Elsie and
35 what they would like to do is sing a song and I'm
36 going to ask Dennis to -- to briefly explain it.

37 DENNIS SHORTY: As a musician I write songs in the
38 Dene language, and this song we're going to share
39 with all of you across the nation, a song I wrote
40 about our sisters that's missing. And I'll
41 explain it.

42
43 Where is our sisters? They're out there.
44 They're still out there. Let's sing for
45 them. Let's sing for them.
46 Where is our older sisters? They're out
47 there. They're out there too. Let's drum

Hearing - Public

May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty

Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton

(Elsie Shorty)

1 for them. Let's drum for them.
2 Where is our sisters? Where is our older
3 sisters? Let's drum -- let's sing for them,
4 let's drum for them.
5 They're with the Great Spirit.
6
7 So, we'll do that for you as a family.
8 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: We may need the assistance. Thank

Hearing - Public**May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)**

1 you.

2 DENNIS SHORTY: Ready? Ready?

3 (Strumming guitar) [Dene spoken] We'll
4 sing this song for our sisters, our mothers, our
5 fathers, our brothers, our uncles.

6
7 [Song written by Dennis Shorty sung by the
8 Shorty family in Dene in honour of Elsie
9 Shorty]

10
11 DENNIS SHORTY: [Dene spoken]

12 [Audience applause]

13 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: *Oui. Oui.* Thank -- thank you
14 so much. *Merci.*

15 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: I want to -- we ... To
16 respect the laws of -- of gifting and of
17 reciprocity, we have packets of seeds that we
18 want to give to you as gifts to express our
19 appreciation for -- for sharing with us. Seeds
20 represent growth and new life. And so
21 with -- with that we're going to be giving you
22 some little seed packets.

23 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: We'll stop for about 15
24 minutes. Thank you.

Second Hearing Exhibits**May Bolton, Dennis Shorty, Marilyn Shorty (Family of
Elsie Shorty)**

25
26
27
28
29
30 Exhibit P1: Three-slide PowerPoint entitled "Shorty
31 pictures" depicting a) a woman in shawl and
32 glasses (said to be Elsie Shorty) with a rose
33 motif on margins b) a man and women in Sunday
34 best standing outside with a wooden door in the
35 background c) a woman and a young girls out-of-
36 doors.

37 Exhibit P2: Vintage colour video of the family on the
38 land in the summer, shot by George Eastman.

39 Exhibit P3: Map of Traditional Kaska Dena Territory
40 with two circles made in blue ink, one around
41 Ross River and the other around Lower Post.

42 Exhibit P4: One-slide colour Powerpoint entitled "3
43 Shorty Cabin" depicting a snowbound cabin.

44 Exhibit 6: Video segment of the Shorty family from
45 Gordon Eastman's film *Challenging the Northwest*
46 *Territory*

47 Exhibit 7: Map of Kaska Dena Traditional Territory,

Hearing - Public
May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

1 with Ross River and Lower Post both circled in
2 blue ink
3 Exhibit 8: Photo of a snowbound cabin
4
5

6 (HEARING ADJOURNED)
7 (HEARING RECONVENED)
8

9 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Ms. Big Canoe, is the next
10 family ready?
11

12 **Third Hearing**

13 **Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo and Annette Eikland (Family of**
14 **May Stewart) with Christa Big Canoe (Commission**
15 **Counsel)**
16

17 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes, Chief Commissioner.

18 Hello. Hello. Yeah. Thank you, Chief
19 Commissioner. The next family is ready and I
20 would like to introduce you to the family of May
21 Stewart. So, right beside me is Terri Szabo, the
22 granddaughter of May Stewart. Beside her is her
23 mother, Ann Szabo, the daughter of May Stewart.
24 And beside her is Annette Ekland -- Eikland, the
25 great-granddaughter of May Stewart.

26 Before the family is actually sworn in for
27 testimony, Ann has asked to make a small prayer.

28 ANN SZABO: I'd like to thank everyone that's in
29 listening to our story about my mother and the
30 support that we have to tell our story. Before
31 that I'd like to -- to say a prayer to the great
32 Lord above.

33 Lord God, Jesus, look down upon my daughter,
34 who is about to tell a story how my mother was
35 murdered and how she was found. And plus my
36 granddaughter, Annette. I love her dearly.
37 Bless her and her family. Thank you for her
38 support. And my cousins in the back, May and her
39 daughters. And the support from Vera and her
40 friend. Thank you for them. And bless all the
41 people that are in the audience that have loss in
42 their family, for their father and their mothers,
43 and bless our family at home. Thank you, Lord
44 Jesus. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus'
45 name. Amen.

46 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Good afternoon, Terri. Do you

Hearing - Public

Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

1 swear that the evidence you will give today will
2 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
3 the truth, so help you God?

4 TERRI SZABO: Yes, I do.

5

6

TERRI SZABO, sworn.

7

8 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you. Pass that on.

9

And I believe -- your name card is covered.

10

I believe your -- is your name Ann?

11

ANN SZABO: Yes.

12

BRYAN ZANDBERG: It is? Okay. Good afternoon, Ann.

13

Do you swear that the evidence you will give

14

today will be the truth, the whole truth, and

15

nothing but the truth, so help you God?

16

ANN SZABO: I do.

17

18

ANN SZABO, sworn.

19

20

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

21

Annette, okay. Did you want to swear on the

22

Bible or did you want to make an affirmation?

23

It's fine? Okay. So, Annette, do you swear that

24

the evidence you will give today will be the

25

truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the

26

truth, so help you God?

27

ANNETTE EIKLAND: [indiscernible]

28

29

ANNETTE EIKLAND, sworn.

30

31

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

32

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ann, I just have a couple

33

questions about your mother. So, first of all,

34

can you tell the commissioners who we're here to

35

talk about today?

36

ANN SZABO: We're -- we're here about my mother, May

37

Stewart, who was taken away from us in '72 in the

38

most harshful way. Thank you.

39

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ann, can you tell me about your

40

family members? So, who are your sisters and

41

brothers? Who -- who were May's children?

42

ANN SZABO: I have quite a bit of members of the

43

family that I can think of right now. I just

44

lost a sister about three weeks ago. She

45

suffered an illness before we lost her. Her name

46

was Mary. And then I had -- we have Lucy

47

Stewart. She is not with us. And we have

Hearing - Public**Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)**

1 Rachel, who is not with us. And right now we
2 have -- we have Cecelia. She's with us. And
3 Roy. My brother Robert, he's the oldest in the
4 family. And Roger and he's with us. Donovan is
5 deceased. So, there was quite a bit of us, and
6 there was me. Thank you.

7 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Is there anything else you wanted
8 to add about your mom to start?

9 ANN SZABO: We lived in Frances Lake and I -- it's
10 about a hundred miles out of Watson Lake. And we
11 had to move into Liard, to Watson Lake area,
12 because of the residential school. I went there
13 when I was 7 years old.

14 They just picked us up wherever we were
15 playing. We had no jacket on. Some of us had no
16 moccasins on because we were playing in the mud
17 puddle. I remember so well. And we trying
18 to -- I -- I trying to hide away behind my
19 mother. And they trying to usher -- usher me
20 into the tent. And tell the priest and the
21 brother not to take us, but we hid, but
22 they -- they threatened our parents and said
23 they're going to go to jail if -- if they don't
24 let us come. So they -- they picked me up and
25 they put me in the back of a -- a big army truck
26 with big cans in the back, and there was already
27 other little children in there before me. They
28 were all crying. And -- and they told us we're
29 just going to go for a short ride, and that short
30 ride never -- never came to an end. We were on
31 our way to Lower Post. We didn't know where we
32 were. And to this day I always see the beginning
33 of the poplar trees going down there. And
34 whenever I see it, it just breaks my heart to go
35 see and see them, and the cruelty I suffered.

36 And because of the residential school, when
37 I came out, I was old enough to have my own
38 children - I had my own children, I had four of
39 them - and I wasn't such a good mother. To this
40 day people would think, "Oh, she's such a nice
41 lady." But I taught my kids like the way I was
42 taught. I was just one angry person. And to
43 this day when I look at my kids -- I had four and
44 I lost one. He was just going to be 21. We lost
45 him in an accident. He was my baby. When I look
46 at my kids today, I think how could I be so
47 cruel, how could I be so mean? But that's how I

Hearing - Public**Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland****(May Stewart)**

1 was treated in school. We were punished if we
2 don't eat our food. Our -- our faces are pushed
3 into our plates for unfinished food. We have to
4 eat it. Even if we threw them up, our face are
5 pushed in there and -- or the food is dumped on
6 our heads. I don't know how the government could
7 do something like that to kids.

8 We were raised up in the wilderness. We
9 live off the land, like my cousin Dennis was
10 saying. The Shortys are my cousins, my first
11 cousins. Their mothers were sisters. They look
12 identical. They're a loving people. But when it
13 came to residential school, I wasn't such a good
14 mother. And to this day when I look at my
15 great-grandkids, my granddaughter, I always
16 thought I had beautiful kids and I had beautiful
17 grandchildren. And I thank God for them, that
18 they're loving to their own children. My
19 granddaughter has got two lovely kids, which is
20 my daughter's grandkids. And she treats her kids
21 beautifully and treats them with -- with love. I
22 got older and I know what love is. Sometimes my
23 anger boils up, comes up once in a while, but I
24 also changed my faith and I know about myself
25 more better, that I'm a good person. You have to
26 listen to all the people that went to residential
27 school, what kind of people we really were. And
28 when we first went there we were good kids and
29 then they turned us into people that we weren't
30 supposed to be. I feel sad for that. My heart
31 breaks sometimes. We were angry people, all
32 because of how we were treated. It's a
33 heartbreaking story but I have to say it. That's
34 all I have to say. Thank you for listening.

35 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Terri, can you please tell the
36 commissioners about what you remember of May or
37 of the events and times around May.

38 TERRI SZABO: I just want to say something before I
39 start. I see some people here on their phones,
40 especially when my mom is crying and talking
41 about things that have, you know, really
42 traumatized us and it's systemic. I find that
43 really disrespectful. And if you can't sit here
44 and listen and learn so that society changes with
45 the way we treat each other, you should leave the
46 tent. So, thank you.

47 [Audience applause]

Hearing - Public**Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)**

1 TERRI SZABO: I was only 8 years old when my
2 grandmother, May Stewart, died, and she was
3 actually found on an embankment near the
4 graveyard in Upper Liard. I am not sure if
5 everyone is familiar with Upper Liard. So when
6 you're facing the graveyard, to the far left down
7 an embankment there my -- my -- I heard this from
8 my dad. And the First Nation people in the
9 community used to make a fire down there and they
10 would drink around the fire, and I am assuming
11 that's where my grandmother was. And anyway, my
12 Aunty Cecilia Stewart, she was about 14, I think
13 she was in the care of Social Services, but,
14 anyway, they were looking for her and they chased
15 her. And she ran towards where my grandma was
16 and she found my grandmother deceased basically,
17 with no clothes on from the waist down. And like
18 I say, I was only 8. I remember my mom crying.
19 I remember my Aunty Rachel being there. We're
20 the same age. And I remember the ambulance being
21 there. And I remember I wanted to see what was
22 going on because I wasn't sure, so I stood on a
23 stump and tried to peer into the ambulance, but I
24 didn't see anything. And my mom and dad -- I
25 know my mom says she wasn't a good mom, but
26 I -- I think she was because I have listened to
27 some other stories and I have had a pretty good
28 life. But I'm just -- I've got all these things
29 in my head that I'm trying to think about at the
30 same time so, my brain is kind of overwhelmed
31 with information that I want to speak about.

32 But mom and dad never - there was four of
33 us - told us their problems. You know, they
34 didn't tell us -- at least I don't remember my
35 mom saying that my grandma was raped and
36 murdered. I don't remember that. I just
37 remember something was wrong because my mom was
38 crying and my dad was trying to support her, and
39 I remember going to the funeral.

40 And, yeah, years later my mom would always
41 talk about my grandmother and so I thought, well,
42 you know, I'm -- I'm going to find out what
43 happened here. So, I went to the police station
44 in Watson Lake and I explained to them about
45 my -- what had happened to my grandmother based
46 on what my mom had told me and my dad, that she,
47 you know, had been raped and basically murdered.

Hearing - Public

Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

1 And so they investigated. They came to the house
2 and asked me where my grandma's grave was and
3 they went and they took a picture. And then
4 Major Crimes from Whitehorse called me and,
5 you know, they asked me to tell them what
6 I -- what I knew. And I can't remember if they
7 talked to my mom or not, but they told me to
8 phone the coroner for -- to see if there was an
9 autopsy, and -- and there was. And I -- I shared
10 that with -- with Christa, who has been really
11 great. And in the coroner's report it says that
12 my grandmother was found without clothes on from
13 the waist down and her shoes, her clothes,
14 whatever she had from the waist down was strewn
15 everywhere. And, you know, what I know of
16 elderly First Nation women is -- and from my mom,
17 they're very old-fashioned, so they don't take
18 their clothes off. And I was only 8 years old
19 when my mother -- my grandmother was murdered and
20 I can remember it was very warm. And they said
21 she died of exposure and I don't believe that,
22 but that's what they ruled. So, I'll just keep
23 talking.

24 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I will let you keep talking,
25 but I would like to provide the commissioners a
26 copy of the -- the letter that Terri is speaking
27 about. If Bryan can do that, kindly. And I am
28 just going to ask a couple quick questions so
29 that I can make this a formal document. So, you
30 have told us that you called and asked for this
31 and you received this from the Coroner's Office?

32 TERRI SZABO: Yes, that's correct.

33 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And are all of the documents in
34 there what you received?

35 TERRI SZABO: Yes. Yes.

36 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner, may I have
37 this made an exhibit?

38 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Yes, please.

39 TERRI SZABO: And there was no pictures. I asked for
40 pictures. There was no pictures. I requested
41 pictures.

42 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I'm just going to give this
43 back to you.

44 TERRI SZABO: Okay.

45 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you please carry on telling
46 your story about what you learned from
47 [indiscernible].

Hearing - Public

Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

1 TERRI SZABO: Okay. So if you read -- did you want me
2 to read what you told me to read?

3 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So just -- maybe if you can just
4 first explain to the commissioners, once you read
5 it, you've already told us what you thought, but
6 what else did you think about it?

7 TERRI SZABO: Okay. So once I read the coroner's
8 inquest, I mean, back in '72 they didn't have a
9 lot of forensic science, so I thought the police
10 did, I guess, a half-assed job, I'm not sure what
11 else to say, but they -- just -- just a second.

12 Okay, so this is what the inquest ruled. It
13 says, "Mrs. May Stewart came to her death, due
14 upon their oath say, that she said May Stewart
15 did on or about June 1st to June 7th, A.D. 1972
16 came to her death by natural causes from
17 exposure, contributed to [my excessive -- or
18 sorry] her excessive alcohol in her blood and
19 being left in a seminude condition by a person or
20 persons unknown." [as read] I just don't buy
21 that because like what I said before, I was only
22 8 years old when this happened and I remember it
23 being really warm. And what I know of my mom's
24 culture, my grandma would never take off her
25 clothes, never. So I really believe that she was
26 raped. And, you know, that was a grandmother
27 that I never knew because someone decided or
28 maybe more than one person took it upon
29 themselves that -- you know, that -- that it was
30 okay to rape and kill this person, which,
31 you know, was my grandmother and meant a lot to
32 my mom. I remember my mom crying a lot for my
33 grandmother, for days and days. And, you know,
34 she's -- I'm in my 50s, my mom is in her 70s, she
35 still talks about my grandmother. And I really
36 believe there's a murderer or murderers walking
37 around maybe even in our community of Upper
38 Liard, who knows. I'd just like to see some
39 justice because it's not okay.

40 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I just wanted to ask a couple more
41 questions for clarification on -- on this
42 particular document. So if we just go -- I'm
43 going to give it -- if we just go to the first
44 page, that's the letter that the -- the Yukon
45 government sent you after you requested the
46 report.

47 TERRI SZABO: Mm-hmm. Yes.

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1 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And in the next -- at the next
2 page we actually see the autopsy report. We
3 actually see an autopsy report.
4 TERRI SZABO: Yes.
5 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you please say -- tell me when
6 it's dated?
7 TERRI SZABO: It is dated June 9th, 1972.
8 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And do you know who actually wrote
9 the autopsy or?
10 TERRI SZABO: Dr. Albertini.
11 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. And -- so what was
12 Dr. Albertini's -- so the first thing you read
13 in, that was the inquest or inquisition, is that
14 correct?
15 TERRI SZABO: Yes.
16 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. And that was different than
17 the autopsy. If you -- is that your
18 understanding?
19 TERRI SZABO: Yes.
20 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so what did Dr. Albertini,
21 what was his opinion?
22 TERRI SZABO: His impression was, "None of the
23 findings at autopsy could possibly be classified
24 as a cause of death unless the laboratory could
25 supplement one. Possible causes of death are as
26 follows: extreme intoxication and exposure,
27 pneumonia process, GI bleeding, a combination of
28 the three." [as read]
29 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now, you have read this
30 because -- because you actually sought this
31 document. Did you --
32 TERRI SZABO: Yes.
33 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did you find anything striking
34 about when they were doing the autopsy some of
35 the tests they may or may not have done?
36 TERRI SZABO: Well, when someone gets raped, they can
37 check the DNA, the -- the sperm for, I
38 guess -- for -- from the man, but they didn't
39 have the technology back then.
40 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.
41 TERRI SZABO: Or the expertise, I guess.
42 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And when you say the expertise, I
43 just want to draw your attention to the third
44 paragraph from the bottom. And the
45 doctor -- where the -- where the doctor is
46 describing, you don't have to read the whole
47 thing in, but can you touch on the expertise

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1 issue?

2 TERRI SZABO: Do you want me to read it? Okay.

3 "Genital organs were examined with the
4 possibility of sexual assault in mind. There
5 were absolutely no external signs of injury that
6 could be detected. The vagina contained a normal
7 amount of whitish mucous, a sample of which was
8 taken and put on a slide to be examined under the
9 microscope. [Micro--] Microscopic examination of
10 the slide did not reveal any evidence of
11 spermatozoa, but I have no training or prior
12 experience to know what old spermatozoa
13 [looked --] looks like." [as read] There's some
14 grammatical errors in there.

15 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So does that also lead you to
16 believe though that they just didn't have the
17 expertise --

18 TERRI SZABO: Yes, that's correct.

19 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- to make that determination?

20 TERRI SZABO: Yes.

21 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. But having that said, you
22 are not a coroner yourself, right?

23 TERRI SZABO: No, but common sense tells me there's
24 something wrong here.

25 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. Yes. Is there anything else
26 you wanted to share with the commissioners in
27 relation to, you know, looking for this
28 information or having to find this information?

29 TERRI SZABO: Regarding the autopsy?

30 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Just in general. Like, the fact
31 that you had to seek this information.

32 TERRI SZABO: I'll have to think about that question a
33 little bit. I have too much on my mind right
34 now.

35 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Are there any other details that
36 you recall from the death or from your -- your
37 life experience with your family that -- that you
38 want to share with the commissioners?

39 TERRI SZABO: My personal life?

40 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Not -- not just your personal life
41 but how the -- how May's death or your family's
42 tragedy has been impacted.

43 TERRI SZABO: Well, before I came I wrote about six
44 pages, which didn't do me any good because my
45 brain is just overloaded with stuff. So, my
46 grandma - I'll probably speak for my mom because
47 she's too upset and nervous - she was only 48

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1 when she died in 1972 and that was 45 years ago.
2 She would have been 93. And what I remember of
3 my grandmother, she was very traditional. I
4 remember walking with her. I know they lived in
5 a tent up in a place called Cowboy Hill.
6 Everybody would go woodcutting there. And I
7 remember my grandma cooking fish over the fire in
8 tinfoil, and I don't think I saw anyone doing
9 that before. And she used to tell us stories,
10 really scary stories. At night we'd sit around
11 her and she'd tell us all these stories. And I
12 remember she did not have a toilet, so we -- I
13 had to go on a 5 gallon bucket. And she had a
14 piece of plyboard over it. And I never forgot
15 that because I remember I had to use it in the
16 middle of the night and I fell asleep on it.

17 [Audience laughter]

18 TERRI SZABO: So, that's something I remember. And my
19 grandma also had this old -- it was like a ringer
20 that you sit on a -- I don't know, I can't
21 explain it, but you attach it to a -- yeah, like
22 a -- like a stand and then you -- you manually
23 turn it. Anyway, my Auntie Rachel and I were
24 somehow fascinated with this thing and we used to
25 collect all of the clothes from my grandma's
26 house and we'd get this great, big wash tub. And
27 behind my grandma's house there's a creek that
28 flows by, Albert Creek, and we'd pack water up
29 there and we'd put all the clothes in there. And
30 I don't think we even washed them. We just put
31 it -- made it wet and put it through the ringer
32 and hung it on her line. So, to this day I
33 still -- I don't know what grandma did with those
34 wet clothes. So, that's just something that I
35 remember there.

36 Things that I've heard from my mom, I guess
37 my grandparents never drank alcohol. They were
38 nomadic. They lived around Frances Lake,
39 Simpson Lake. And my -- my grandma had two
40 husbands, my grandpa Norman Stewart and then she
41 left him because I guess he was quite mean, and
42 married his brother, my grandpa Timmy Stewart.
43 But my mom said that they were taken away to
44 residential school and because of that my -- they
45 had to move to Upper Liard. And at the same time
46 other families came from Ross River and lived in
47 tents beside the Liard River because they wanted

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1 to be closer to their -- to their kids. And my
2 dad's Caucasian and I just -- I guess I'm going
3 to talk a little bit about humanity, just what I
4 see being mixed.

5 You know, when we were kids, my youngest
6 brother, Mickey (phonetic), died many years ago.
7 We were very close. And, you know, my mom and
8 dad were two different coloured people and they
9 never talked about colour. We never looked at
10 our parents with colour. Never. They were
11 our -- that was our mom and that was our dad.
12 Never. And I heard about being different from
13 society. And you get it from both sides.
14 And -- and it doesn't matter if people don't
15 agree with what I say, it's just my personal
16 experience and what I see and -- and what I felt.
17 But, you know, as a child you'd go into the First
18 Nation community and even with that word, I'm not
19 sure what word to use to identify First Nation
20 people because in -- I've heard that it comes
21 from academia but I'm not sure. First I heard
22 Indian, then I heard Native, then I heard -- what
23 else did I hear? First Nation, Indigenous.
24 There's one more word I'm missing. But we've had
25 so many different names. And I always knew
26 myself as a half-breed when I was a child. And
27 it didn't bother me. And, anyway, the First
28 Nation people would call me white lady, and then
29 I'd go to the Caucasian community and I'd be
30 called an Indian. So, where do you fit in?
31 Nowhere, you know, but ... And sometimes even my
32 own mother has difficult -- difficulties with me
33 because I'm not like her. I'm my own self. And,
34 you know, she tries to force her culture on me a
35 lot, but I am who I am and that's how it is, but,
36 you know, I respect people's differences. And I
37 think that's what's wrong with humanity, people
38 don't accept people's differences. We're all the
39 same no matter what colour we are. You know, no
40 one's better than the next person.

41 My mom has told me stories too where -- and
42 I can't get over this and thank God I wasn't
43 alive back then, but, you know, my dad would go
44 in the bar and this is what my mom would have to
45 do because Indians weren't allowed in the bar
46 back then - could you imagine that? Just because
47 you're an Indian you're not allowed to go in the

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1 bar. That's bullshit. Anyway, my mom would look
2 through the window like this at my dad. Just
3 because she was Indian. And also when my
4 dad -- when my mom and dad got married, my mom
5 was no longer Indian, according to the Canadian
6 government. She was a white lady. What's up
7 with that? You know, I just -- I was never
8 oppressed but my mom was and I can see it. I
9 mean, sometimes when I take the microphone or I
10 start talking, my mom will literally run away
11 because, you know, I will speak my truth whether
12 people like it or not, and what I say, it's my
13 truth. I don't say anything to hurt anybody, but
14 I speak my truth and what I see as a person.
15 And, you know, I -- when I was a kid, I played
16 with everyone. I had Caucasian friends, Native
17 friends, and I'm still not sure what the proper
18 word is for my mom's people, I don't know, and
19 even where I fit in, but, you know what, I don't
20 care.

21 But, anyway, I think for my -- going back to
22 my grandmother, I really think she would be alive
23 today if the government or the Queen of England
24 did not colonize Canada. The colonizers caused a
25 lot of problems. A lot of problems. You know,
26 they came here with the word "ethnocentrism" in
27 their mind. And if people don't know what it
28 means, look it up in the dictionary, or, better
29 yet, Google it. It means that the colonizers
30 thought that -- in their mind that they were
31 better than. Wow, look at all these savages
32 running around here. You know, we're going to
33 fix them, we're going to teach them English,
34 we're going to teach them how to whatever they
35 wanted us to do. But, you know, there was never
36 anything wrong with my mom. You know, I have
37 known my mom for 50-some years now. She's a
38 First Nation woman. She's been a really good mom
39 and I'm -- I'm sure she's learnt a lot from her
40 mother. And, you know, she's been oppressed so
41 much, told that she's heathen and all these bad
42 things in residential school. And my mom is not
43 like that. My mom is a person. Her skin is a
44 different colour, but she's -- she's a human
45 being. And, you know, in society if we don't
46 accept our differences, it's -- we're never going
47 to go anywhere. You know, everybody is the same

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1 and no one is better than the next person. And I
2 think with the colonizers doing that and along
3 with residential school, and this really bothered
4 me when I learnt this, and I'll just say now this
5 is one of the reasons I brought my daughter,
6 Annette, because the things that I'm talking
7 about she doesn't know about because I never told
8 her. And the same thing with my mom, she never
9 told me all these things when I was a kid. I
10 just learnt by -- by sitting and listening and,
11 you know, practicing what you learn when you
12 leave here with other people, including your
13 children. You know, racism and indifferences,
14 it's learnt in the home around the dinner table.
15 Parents telling their children, "Oh, I saw this
16 dirty Indian downtown drunk." You know, if you
17 are telling your children this, you are a part of
18 the problem in society with hatred and
19 indifference. And I want people to really think
20 about this because no one is better than the next
21 person because my dad is Caucasian, my mom is
22 First Nation, I love my parents, both of them.
23 They're good people. They could have been green,
24 orange, yellow, blue, it don't matter. Love is
25 love. We as people, one person at a time have to
26 make changes for the better, by accepting other
27 people for their differences. And all these
28 drunk Indians you see staggering around, they
29 have a story to tell and I learnt that. I never
30 went to residential school, but the kids that
31 were taken away, I remember that day, I think I
32 was about 6, because I cried. The kids that I
33 played with were going to Lower Post. I thought
34 they were going to a big city. And I -- they
35 were getting something that I wasn't getting.
36 But little did I know where they were going and
37 what would happen to them. And I played with
38 these kids that were sexually abused, beaten and
39 I don't know what happened to them, and
40 that -- that bothers me. So, there's an
41 intergenerational affect here with my mom going
42 and the kids that I played with and that's not
43 okay. That's not acceptable. Why do we treat
44 other people like that? Just because they're
45 different? So what.

46 I just could go on and on, but those are
47 some of the mitigating -- I mean, contributing

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1 factors to some of the issues that, you know,
2 caused my grandmother's death and all these other
3 issues that we have in society today.

4 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ann, can I ask you a couple more
5 questions about your mother, in particular some
6 of the things she taught you as a child. What
7 were some of her strengths?

8 ANN SZABO: [indiscernible] When we trap out in the
9 bush, my dad and my mom would be left in a tent
10 with us. And she'd get me to keep the fire
11 going, to put wood in the stove. And then she'd
12 say, "You come over here to sit beside me. You
13 guys, you -- you're growing up. I'm going to
14 teach you how to sew your own -- your own
15 dresses." Back then my dad gets big materials
16 and stuff for -- from the Hudson's Bay in Frances
17 Lake. And big -- big rolls of -- bundles
18 of -- yards of material. So my mom would cut out
19 our dresses for us without no measurement or
20 anything. She just look at us and she knows what
21 size we use. And then she said, "Now," she said,
22 "I'm going to teach you how to sew. And there's
23 your needle and there's yours." And my sister
24 Mary and I would sit down and the rest of the
25 little kids would be in bed. And Mary would be
26 so busy sewing. She got to the -- to the front
27 and we're supposed to sew our buttons on the side
28 or the side and put -- put holes in there for the
29 buttons and stitch it up. And she had her
30 buttons inside. And then I had my skirt. I made
31 the top. My other arm was -- my sleeve was
32 inside-out and sticking out this way. And the
33 seam was up here and it was supposed to be done
34 here. And then this side was right. And then my
35 skirt was the right -- was the right way but
36 my -- my top was inside-out. And my buttons was
37 on the right way but the wrong side. But we both
38 cried over our dresses and she told us, "This is
39 not the right way. This is -- this is the way it
40 is. You guys supposed -- you're going to take it
41 apart." So, we sat there. She felt sorry for
42 us, so she gave us a little lunch and then we
43 went to bed. We had to put away our dress until
44 the next morning. So, that's the kind of mom I
45 had.

46 She taught us how to sew our moccasins when
47 we grew older. Mary was much later. I had a

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1 problem with my moccasin. It was always lopsided
2 this way. And I got so that I learn how to sew
3 my moccasin and put it together the right way.

4 And then I also know how to do beadwork.
5 And I did beautiful beadwork for my girl. She
6 was the only girl I had. So, I made her -- she
7 wanted a pair of mukluks, so I made her mukluks.

8 And I got older and I used to -- I used to
9 be sick a lot. And I guess all that residential
10 school trauma, I used to be sick a lot and later
11 on in life I had -- I had seizures. That
12 gradually went away and it didn't bother to come
13 back, thank God. And then quite recently I
14 suffered lymphoma. And then I thank God also for
15 that, that I came back and I got out of it and I
16 got better. And she was my escort. My girl was
17 my escort. And ...

18 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: [indiscernible]

19 ANN SZABO: I forgot my doctor's name.

20 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Savage.

21 ANN SZABO: My doctor's name was -- she was telling
22 me, she said, "You know what, mom," she said,
23 "You know what your doctor's name was?
24 Dr. Savage." I said, "Well, that's good."

25 [Audience laughter]

26 ANN SZABO: Well, that's good to hear. I said -- I
27 was so sick I didn't remember because they had to
28 drill a hole in my hip for to get some marrow
29 bone, marrow out of my hip. She was with me.
30 She was brave through that.

31 And I went through a lot of illness, but I'm
32 here today and I'm proud to be here. And
33 I'm -- to talk about my mom. My mom was a
34 wonderful lady and she loves her kids and see
35 loves her grandkids, which she didn't get to
36 know -- to know well. I love my mom.

37 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Annette --

38 ANNETTE EIKLAND: Yes.

39 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- I -- I know you, just based on
40 the year of death, you weren't alive during the
41 same time that your grandmother passed,
42 great-grandmother passed. Is that true? You
43 weren't alive when [indiscernible]

44 ANNETTE EIKLAND: No, I was not, no.

45 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. But can you share with the
46 commissioners what you want to share about the
47 impact it's had on the generations from -- from

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1 your perspective, for you?

2 ANNETTE EIKLAND: Well, I think -- my heart's just
3 with my mom because I have such a great
4 relationship with my grandmother and that was
5 taken away from her and that just breaks my
6 heart. You know, the things that my
7 grandma -- grandma has taught me and the time
8 that I spend with her, it's -- I wouldn't trade
9 it for anything and my mom's never going to have
10 that or didn't have that, so. Yeah.

11 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Is there anything else that you
12 wanted to share?

13 ANNETTE EIKLAND: No.

14 TERRI SZABO: I just want to add when -- like, it's
15 really important to listen to what people say.
16 This is how you learn. Because I didn't go to
17 residential school, I didn't suffer a lot of the,
18 I guess, contributing factors from residential
19 school. I mean, I did and I didn't. I've heard
20 worst stories, so I consider myself lucky and,
21 you know, really honour people that have
22 suffered. That, you know, you're stronger than
23 you think. People have gone through a lot and
24 you're still here.

25 Anyway, I learnt about this just by
26 listening, going to events like this. I learnt a
27 lot from going to university. And when I went to
28 university, I did my genealogy. And on my dad's
29 side, my dad's a -- a Hungarian Jew actually,
30 would you believe colonization and the holocaust,
31 can't find anything better than that, but,
32 anyway, on my dad side they're European settlers,
33 immigrants, farmers, nothing out of the ordinary,
34 and on my mom's side is all devastation, death,
35 murder, alcohol. And, you know, when my grandma
36 died, she left a lot of children. And my
37 youngest Aunt Rachel was the same age as I and we
38 were like sisters, we played together and,
39 you know, I didn't talk about her. I brought her
40 up a little bit the last time when you guys were
41 here, that she was also murdered by her common
42 law, you know. And my younger's brother,
43 Donovan, froze to death. My Aunty Lucy drank
44 herself to death. And my Aunty Mary recently
45 died and she just lived a life of alcohol. And,
46 you know, I contribute all those problems to
47 colonization and residential school. You know,

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1 the colonizers, the Queen there of England
2 thought she knew right, but she didn't. No.
3 They got it wrong big time. And, you know, I'd
4 like to see changes, some of the changes that I
5 spoke about because I'm tired of going to
6 funerals. In the past month in Watson Lake I
7 probably went to maybe four or five. Lots of
8 suicides. You know, I -- I watch the news a lot
9 just to stay tuned with what's happening in the
10 world and I watched Justin Trudeau last night, I
11 just about puked. He asked the Pope for
12 forgiveness for, you know, what happened to the
13 Aboriginal people. And, you know, I was thinking
14 why the hell is he asking the Pope for
15 forgiveness when we didn't do anything.
16 They -- they're the ones that did something
17 wrong. We don't need to ask for anything. We
18 knew what we were doing. But the other people
19 thought otherwise, so ... Unless we start
20 getting along and treating each other equally, I
21 don't think we're going to go anywhere.
22 You know, I -- my mom and dad have been married
23 over 50 years, two different cultures, two
24 different colours, and it's been -- there's been
25 a couple wars there, but they're still going, so
26 you know it's possible for people to get along.
27 And I say that with humour and you have to really
28 know my mom and dad, our relationship to -- to
29 understand, so it's -- being mixed has been a
30 blessing and a curse in some ways, but I wouldn't
31 trade it for anything, so. Yeah, I have -- I
32 have good parents. It's been quite colourful,
33 so. But -- but unfortunately my grandma missed
34 all this stuff. Just some of the family members
35 in the background here want to talk.

36 [indiscernible]

37 LEDA JULES: My name is Leda Jules. I am married to
38 Ann's oldest brother. And May, they're talking
39 about, is my mother-in-law. You know, and I just
40 listened to the reports they were talking about.
41 It doesn't sound right for me, you know. Because
42 I knew the night that she disappeared she was
43 sober. And the reason why I know that is she
44 came over to the house in 1972, there was a flood
45 down in Liard, the highway flood and washed away.
46 And -- and that one time they thought the bridge
47 was going to go, so she came over to the house

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1 and she tell us, "Let's go down to the river and
2 have a look," you know, and she tell me that I
3 had to be prepared. And she tell me I had to
4 pack up things for the kids, so, you know, we'd
5 be ready if anything should happen. And she was
6 sober. She wasn't drinking. So, it's kind of a
7 surprise to -- for me to hear that she was drunk.
8 It really bothered me because I knew my
9 mother-in-law. She was a kind-hearted woman.
10 She loved kids. She loved all my kids, you know,
11 and she babysat for us and whenever we're in
12 town. So, you know, just listening today,
13 you know, his aunt's death was pretty hard on
14 him, but she died later, that's May's mom.
15 That's my husband's aunt. Now I'm talking about
16 my mother-in-law too. That's May's sister. And
17 May's sister Elsie, they're both gone and they
18 both died violently. And it's been pretty hard
19 on the kids. Because my -- my -- my children
20 really loved their grandmother, you know. Never
21 once did she say anything mean or bad to the
22 kids. She loved them. She cooked for them. She
23 did everything for the kids. You never would
24 hear her swear at the kids or anything
25 because -- I hear that in some other homes, but
26 never her home. And my kids were always safe
27 with her.

28 You know, at that -- at that time they found
29 her body, my -- my husband was out working, he
30 didn't know his mother was gone because we didn't
31 know. We didn't know. Nobody told us that she
32 had died. People were looking for her. They
33 said she was in Ross River visiting her sister,
34 Elsie. And we thought it was true because we
35 knew she always talked about Elsie all the time.
36 And then later on we hear she was found in
37 Carmacks, I don't know for what reason, because
38 she really didn't know very much people at
39 Carmacks. So it was stories after stories and
40 she's been -- she was missing for about two,
41 three weeks before we found out what happened to
42 her. We didn't find out, but my youngest -- my
43 younger sister-in-law, Cecelia, she -- she must
44 have been about -- I don't know how old, 9, 10,
45 I'm not really sure how old she was at that time,
46 but she ran away from that probation officer
47 because she is supposed to be in school and there

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1 were -- we had a probation officer that was
2 always checking around on kids. So, she was one
3 of the kids that missed school a lot since -- and
4 her mother wasn't around. So, she ran away from
5 the probation officer and running down that hill
6 by that graveyard. That's when she found her
7 mom. And, like, when Terri was talking,
8 you know, and First Nations women, ever since
9 we're small kids we're taught to be respectful
10 for our bodies and our -- everything has got to
11 be covered up. And students, how long dresses we
12 used to wear, believe it or not, since
13 the -- it's just recently women started wearing
14 jeans was in 1950s. Before then all women,
15 children, young girls, they always had dresses.
16 I remember that when we were growing up. Even
17 wintertime we had dresses. They made dresses for
18 us because that was part of our culture. So when
19 they found my mother-in-law in that -- in
20 that -- behind that -- down the hill from her
21 place, she was -- from what I hear, she -- she
22 had been raped and she had no clothes from her
23 waist down. And my husband just got off work
24 from the mill down there, sawmills. He worked
25 for Desrochers (phonetic). And he ran home and
26 I -- I tell him, "Don't go down there," but he
27 had to see, he had to check. And he loved his
28 mother. So to find her in that condition,
29 you know, it's been really hard on him. And the
30 only reason too is that, you know, I knew she was
31 sober is because she came to our house very late
32 and we walked down to the bridge and, you know,
33 just to see the high water. There was three of
34 us, me and my husband Robert, and his mom. And,
35 you know, if anybody should tell us that she was
36 drunk, she wasn't drunk at all. And, you know,
37 and something -- something has to come out of
38 this, you know. We -- we need answers. We
39 really need closure to this. We never had that.
40 You know, and just listening to grandma Elsie's
41 family just before this, you know, it's really
42 troubling because it's just Native women being
43 raped and murdered, you know. We -- we
44 need -- we need something. I'll be speaking on
45 behalf of my sister later on this week, on
46 Thursday. So, you know, the kids really need to
47 know that their grandmother loved them. We -- I

Hearing - Public

Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

1 was -- I was one of the children that went to
2 Lower Post. I had a lot of regrets on how I
3 raised up my children. Just listening to May
4 talking about her being the supervisor to her
5 kids and not their mother, we all went through
6 that. I was like that too. I never -- I never
7 told my kids that I loved them. And it was hard,
8 you know. I forced my kids to go to church every
9 Sunday. I'm -- still today I'm a Catholic yet,
10 but it's not the religion, it's not the church,
11 it's -- it's the people that run, you know. So,
12 you have to know there is a difference too. And
13 I loved my mother-in-law. And a lot of people
14 don't love their mother-in-law. You hear horror
15 stories about their mother-in-laws.

16 [Audience laughter]

17 LEDA JULES: And yet -- like *Monster-in-law*, that's
18 what I hear too, but, you know, she was more than
19 a mother, mother-in-law to me, you know. So, I
20 just wanted to share that with the -- with my
21 sister. I'm really close with her, with Ann.
22 She's been married to Andy for 58 years. And I
23 have been married to her brother for 56 years, so
24 we are more than family.

25 TERRI SZABO: I just want to quickly say something so
26 that the general public understands this. The
27 family that went before us, the Shorty family,
28 they're our cousins. And their -- their mom,
29 Elsie Shorty, was my mom's sister. So, my
30 great-aunt, Elsie Shorty, someone killed her, and
31 someone killed my grandma's mom, my grandma May.
32 And the Queen did a good job with -- with alcohol
33 and suicide and all the other problems, so ...
34 Haven't killed me yet though, so watch out.

35 [Audience laughter]

36 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do the commissioners have any
37 questions for the family?

38 COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: I -- I have a couple of
39 questions and I'll ... That's okay. I -- thank
40 you for bringing these documents and sharing them
41 with us. I was hoping you could tell us a little
42 bit more about what brought you to -- to seek
43 this information, what steps that you have taken
44 to try and get more information. And this is all
45 you have received?

46 TERRI SZABO: So, the first question was what made me
47 seek that information?

Hearing - Public

**Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)**

1 COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Like, more so how, like, the
2 steps that you have taken and what you have
3 received. I -- I understand why.

4 [indiscernible]

5 COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Yeah, yeah, of course.

6 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, why did you want to look for
7 the -- the documents in the first place?

8 And -- and then what steps have you taken to get
9 information?

10 TERRI SZABO: Okay.

11 [indiscernible]

12 TERRI SZABO: Okay. Well, the reason I looked for the
13 documents and started this process was my mom
14 would always speak about her mother being raped
15 and murdered. And I'd hear it, you know, maybe
16 every other year, every couple months, so I
17 thought, well, you know, my mom is getting older,
18 so I told, mom, well, you know, I am going to do
19 something about this and we're going to find the
20 rapist, murderer or murderers that did this to
21 your mom, my grandmother, maybe before you die
22 hopefully. So I just went to the police station
23 and I told them what my mom had told me and it
24 just kind of started from there.

25 So like I said earlier, the police came to
26 my house and, you know, they asked where my
27 grandmother was buried in the cemetery in Upper
28 Liard, so they went there. And then Major Crimes
29 phoned me from Whitehorse and just asked me to
30 talk about what I had known about my grandmother,
31 so I just explained what I knew. And I'm not
32 sure if they spoke to my mom, I didn't ask her.
33 And I phoned the coroner to see if they had
34 anything and that's how I got the documents. I
35 asked for pictures, but there was no pictures.
36 And Major Crimes did do some legwork. They spoke
37 to the investigating officers, who are still
38 alive, and they, I guess, gave a statement and
39 just said basically the same thing that is in the
40 document.

41 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: The -- the only other question
42 that I have and any of the three of you can
43 answer this is we've heard about some of May's
44 strengths, but what would -- is there anything
45 that you would want to -- to help honour her, her
46 legacy, her memory, anything, type of
47 recommendation you think would be important to do

Hearing - Public

Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

1 that?

2 TERRI SZABO: Well, I guess priority for me would be
3 to find out who did that, that it's not okay to
4 rape a woman and kill her. You know, that she
5 was important to -- to us. That was my
6 grandmother and I was denied a grandmother. My
7 mom was denied a mother. And, you know, no
8 knowledge of how to be a parent, so it was
9 basically just I guess what she knew best. It's
10 a violent crime, I mean, and, you know, I believe
11 that that person or persons could still be
12 walking around out there and maybe they did it
13 again. Protect society. And I know in
14 residential school a lot of children were raped
15 and they came back to the community and,
16 you know, they kept raping other kids, and it
17 just went on and on, and it's still going on
18 today. And there's a lot of talk about rape also
19 in the news, that it -- it's not being reported.
20 And I know laws is doing a lot of work and -- and
21 Ann can come up here and talk about what they're
22 doing if she wants because I don't know as much
23 as she does, but I know a lot of women are
24 getting raped and not reporting it, and we're
25 talking about really young girls, girls that are
26 passed out, and that's not okay, that's not
27 acceptable, and that has to stop. And also a
28 judge, I saw on the news, that he told one
29 complainant that she should keep her legs closed.
30 And I think he was fired, I'm not sure, but
31 that's not okay. And like I say, it always goes
32 back to the dinner table. You know, raise your
33 children right. Tell them that, you know, it's
34 not okay.

35 And another thing is we have all these
36 problems and there's no mental health services
37 for people. It's huge. And that's not only for
38 the First Nation community, that's, you know,
39 general public in -- in Canada we need mental
40 health services. It's okay to have a problem in
41 your mind. You're not crazy. It's -- you know
42 that taboo, it has to go. We have to talk about
43 it because people do have problems. Just like a
44 broken leg, you get a cast, well, maybe you need
45 medication, maybe you need to talk to a
46 counsellor. Just ... It's -- it's just
47 something that's -- you can't put a Band-Aid on.

Hearing - Public**Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland****(May Stewart)**

1 It's -- it's a process that is going to go on for
2 a while. It took 500 years to cause all these
3 problems, so maybe take another 500 to undo it, I
4 don't know, but mental health is huge. It's
5 huge. And, you know, respect for women. It's
6 not okay to -- to touch someone, rape someone,
7 make rude comments. You know, educate the
8 judicial system, the judges. I was surprised
9 actually when I went into the wrong door here,
10 they're having a Justice Conference. Well, they
11 could have came here and learnt probably more
12 because, you know, all these colonial ideologies
13 that they have in the judicial system, social
14 services, it's not working, and they just keep
15 using the same system. They put people in jail,
16 I mean, they're not monkeys, and they come out
17 with the same problem. Social Services, they
18 take the child. They need to repair the family
19 as a whole. Oh, just -- okay, thank you.

20 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Is there anything else anyone
21 wanted to say, the final -- anything final to
22 the -- the commissioners?

23 TERRI SZABO: I could go on forever, but since I
24 always watch the news, I have been hearing bad
25 press about the commissioners. And I think my
26 only issue is -- is it's -- it feels like you're
27 on trial here. For me anyway personally
28 it's -- and because First Nations people have
29 been oppressed, I mean, my mom wouldn't do this
30 if it wasn't for me. And I just think we have to
31 find a different way other than these colonial
32 ideologies to -- to repair the harm that's been
33 done. It's -- it's -- I know you guys have a
34 tough job and it -- it would be draining to
35 listen to all these problems across Canada and
36 you've been getting bad press and -- that's my
37 only issue this -- this -- it feels like you're
38 on trial. And it's probably intimidating for a
39 lot of people, but I -- I talk a lot and,
40 you know, I will speak my mind and my mom always
41 gives me that look, but that's okay, that's been
42 going on for years. But I just really would like
43 to tell all the First Nation people in Canada
44 to -- you know, we all have our issues, our
45 complaints, but do it in a respectful way and get
46 behind this process of murdered and missing women
47 and girls, and we have to find solutions to these

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1 problems. It has to stop. And just try and work
2 together instead of conquer and divide.
3 You know, just try to respect one -- one another,
4 support each other. Just help each other in some
5 way so that we can stop this -- I guess all these
6 problems, so thank you.

7 ANN SZABO: Can I say something?

8 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Mm-hmm.

9 ANN SZABO: I'd just like to say something that I -- I
10 wouldn't want to walk out of -- out the door
11 without saying it. The Shorty family is my first
12 cousins. And their mother, Elsie Shorty, who was
13 murdered, her and my mother and they also had a
14 brother. Their brother's name was Tom. And when
15 my Uncle Tom, their -- my mother and Aunty Elsie
16 Shorty's were small and I don't think not too big
17 and they were living out in the -- in the
18 wilderness, in the bush, and my mother -- my
19 grandmother -- my grandfather's wife was carrying
20 my Uncle Tom and she went into labour and there
21 was only these two little girls. This is what I
22 hear from my mother when she was telling me the
23 story. It's just like it was yesterday that
24 she'd tell a story. We used to sit around. But
25 when she was telling us that story about how they
26 got separated, at that time my Aunty Elsie
27 was -- we found out she was living in Ross River.
28 We hadn't been to Ross River and we were
29 teenagers by then. And then we found out that
30 she had a brother named Tom. And there was three
31 of them. And after my grandfather lost his wife
32 to childbirth, the little guy was born and
33 health, but my grandfather was left without his
34 wife because his wife passed away. And he
35 bundled up all his little -- little -- little
36 ki-- little children and he loaded them on a
37 toboggan and he went to the nearest place where
38 he know there was people that he knew. He went
39 to Ross. And he handed out his kids to whoever
40 he thought would look after them well. That's
41 how come I have an Uncle Tom Smith. The Smith
42 family took my -- my Uncle Tom. He passed away
43 quite a while back ago. And then I've got the
44 Shortys. They're -- I love May. She's named
45 after my mom. She's my first cousin. She's an
46 aunt in my walkie-talkie.

47 [Audience laughter]

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Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

1 ANN SZABO: Yeah. And -- and ... So and then
2 my -- my mom was the oldest, eh. Was the oldest.
3 And my grandpa walked away. Well, she -- he gave
4 her away too. So, she always said she had this
5 mandolin, you know, an instrument that you play.
6 My grandfather used to play that. And she said,
7 "I don't know why," she said, "my dad left me
8 this mandolin." He said, "It's so heavy," and
9 plus she had a -- a pet beaver that was really
10 heavy. She had to take it out of the packsack,
11 she said, and she had to take little willows out
12 and -- so the beaver would eat them. And then
13 she had to find a cup of water or a bowl of a pot
14 of water to soak its tail because that's how she
15 was told by her parents. And then she said that
16 beaver was so heavy and she said she didn't like
17 the people that her dad left her with, so she
18 snuck out when those two adults wasn't looking,
19 she followed my grandfather. She grew up with my
20 grandfather over here in Watson Lake, in Liard
21 area. So that's how come she came -- she became
22 my mother and the grandmother of my children, and
23 my aunt and my cousins grew up in Ross. My uncle
24 was in Ross. So, I got to know them when I was
25 older. That's my story about my -- my
26 grandparents. Thank you.

27 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I believe that will conclude with
28 what the family has to share, but I understand
29 Commissioner Audette has something to say.

30 COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: *Oui*. Yes, I want to say
31 something because an important comment or message
32 also of - my English - I think it's important
33 what you just said about how we should do things.
34 And one of the mandates that we have or we're
35 provoking is that we don't want to wait until the
36 end to propose new ways. And today a young woman
37 who works with us, very young, said debriefing is
38 important with staff but what about with the
39 families. So I hope you'll be there this week,
40 where commissioners and the staff will debrief
41 with the family about the setup, about how things
42 happen, how can we improve for the next one. So,
43 you're giving us a gift. *Merci*.

44 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Because you have given us
45 so much this afternoon, we have a small gift for
46 you as a recognition of our -- our gratitude.
47 They're seeds that we hope that you'll plant and

Hearing - Public**Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)**

1 tell us that they grow. Thank you.

2 CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. The family has just
3 requested to close with a prayer. Is it Ann that
4 will be saying the prayer again?

5 ANN SZABO: Dear God Jesus, bless this whole area
6 where they're having this most important event
7 for Murdered Indigenous women and girls. Lord
8 Jesus, bless the people that are working with us,
9 all their hard work. And bless the people that
10 came to attend. Bless their family and keep them
11 safe. And Lord God Jesus, I pray that you give
12 them knowledge, the people that are working
13 with -- with the people that are attending here.
14 Give them knowledge to make the change for
15 everyone that is here, and bless their family
16 that they left behind at their home, their
17 children, their grandchildren, whoever they love.
18 And bless our homes and -- and our children,
19 our -- our husbands. And Lord God, I pray have
20 mercy on -- on each and every one of us here and
21 give us courage to speak up. Give courage and
22 strength for the people that -- that have to come
23 up here to tell their story. Give them strength
24 and courage, dear Lord God. I pray in the name
25 of Our Lord Jesus' name. Amen.

26 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: We'll take about a ten
27 minute break, please.
28

Third Hearing Exhibit**Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo and Annette Eikland (Family of
May Stewart)**

32
33 Exhibit P1: Three-page double-sided copy of
34 correspondence and report of Yukon Coroners
35 Service
36

37 (HEARING ADJOURNED)

38 (HEARING RECONVENED)
39

40 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Ms. Snowshoe, are we ready
41 to start?

42 [indiscernible]
43

Fourth Hearing**Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen (Family of Mary Adele
Doctor) with Karen Snowshoe (Commission Counsel)**
46

Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)

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KAREN SNOWSHOE: Catherine, I understand that you wanted to start with The Lord's Prayer.

CATHERINE DOCTOR: Yes.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Would you please lead us in that prayer.

CATHERINE DOCTOR: [indiscernible] stand up.

In the name of the Father and the son and the holy spirit, amen. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory is yours now and forever and ever. Amen. In the name of the Father, the son, and the holy spirit.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Chief Commissioner, commissioners, it is my complete honour to introduce to you today in the matter of Marie Adele Doctor I present to you Mary Adele Doctor's daughter, Catherine Doctor; the granddaughter of Mary Adele Doctor, Cindy Allen, and the great-granddaughter of Marie Adele Doctor, Sunfire Jack (phonetic).

Bryan, would you please provide an oath to Ms. Catherine Doctor. She'll be swearing on the Bible today. Thank you.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Good afternoon, Cathy. Hi. Do you swear that the evidence you will give this afternoon will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CATHERINE DOCTOR: I will

CATHERINE DOCTOR, sworn.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.

And, Bryan, Cindy Allen would like to affirm today.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Cindy, do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you will give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

CINDY ALLEN: The words that I speak today are the truth as I know it, yes.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay.

**Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 CINDY ALLEN: [Aboriginal language spoken]

2 BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

3

4

CINDY ALLEN, affirmed.

5

6 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Catherine, I understand that you have
7 a written statement prepared today that you would
8 like to read to the commissioners. Please
9 proceed when you're ready.

10 CATHERINE DOCTOR: My name is Catherine Doctor and I
11 am from Yellowknife, Ndilo, in the Northwest
12 Territories. I am here to speak to you about my
13 mother, Mary Adele Doctor.

14 Mary Adele Doctor was born in Behchoko, Fort
15 Rae, on October 1st, 1924. She was the
16 granddaughter of Chief Monfwi, the signator of
17 Treaty 11 of the Tlicho Nation in 1921.

18 Monfwi's lands from Fort Providence along
19 the Mackenzie River to Great Bear Lake and across
20 Behchoko (phonetic) Lake and to the present day
21 Lutseke (phonetic) and along the northern shores
22 of Great Slave Lake to Fort Providence were used
23 as the base of the Tlicho Land Claims Agreement.

24 My mother was a powerful woman that raised
25 11 children, three daughters and eight sons, in
26 the bush. Mary survived residential school in
27 Fort Providence and had to relearn the Tlicho
28 language on her return to Behchoko. She was a
29 strong, tough Dene woman. She and my father,
30 Gabriel Doctor, spent much of their time out on
31 the land and the camp site [indiscernible], at
32 the family cabin at Mile 16 on Highway 2 and in
33 the Bear Lands.

34 My parents were known for their culture
35 teachings and led a culture camp in Ndilo and in
36 Yellowknife in the 1990s, where they taught
37 others how to tan caribou, moose hides, prepare
38 muskrats, make sinew, build drums. Mary Adele
39 Doctor was a very respected elder from Ndilo that
40 knew a lot about Dene traditional laws, spiritual
41 cultural practice and bush skills.

42 On January 15, 2009 my mother, Mary Adele
43 Doctor, who was 81, was violently assaulted in
44 her own home in Ndilo by a woman. This woman was
45 not invited to my mom's -- mother's home. She
46 did not know my mother. She broke into my
47 mother's home, and when she was asked to leave

Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)

1 she became violent and seriously injured my mom.
2 That tragic result was that my -- my mom died
3 three weeks later from the violent assault.

4 The woman who was charged by the police for
5 the assault got only 14 months. But because of
6 time served, she was out three months after,
7 which to me was like a slap on the wrist. The
8 woman that assaulted my mom still lives the
9 negative life. She is a street woman. I feel
10 justice was not served.

11 My mother was well-respected, a beloved
12 mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She
13 lived a traditional way of life. Because she
14 died a violent death, I feel the courts should
15 have given the woman a much stiffer sentence.

16 It was in the newspaper. The headline was
17 "The police usually get their man but in this
18 case it was a woman". To me it was like an
19 insult, an insult to the memory of who my mom
20 was, a strong Dene woman with many traditional
21 skills and knowledge.

22 In Yellowknife there are issues regarding
23 alcohol and drugs which affects everybody. I
24 live in Ndilo and I do not feel safe in my own
25 home because of the alcohol and drug abuse. I
26 live in the same community that my mom lived in
27 until she died from the violent -- at the hands
28 of someone who was not from Ndilo but from
29 another small community in NWT.

30 There is a lot of homelessness in
31 Yellowknife. And the court system does not send
32 people home when they should, and these people
33 continue to stay in Yellowknife and end up in
34 Yellowknife. There are a lot ... A lot of small
35 communities have prohibition, so they go instead
36 of Yellowknife for alcohol and drugs. The
37 violence in Yellowknife has gone from bad to
38 worse as a result of homelessness, alcohol and
39 drug abuse. Down in Ndilo where I live, I feel
40 that the Yellowknife's Dene First Nation Band
41 Council should have more resource and do more
42 itself as an Aboriginal government to help deal
43 with these issues happening in Ndilo and in
44 Yellowknife.

45 In the community of Ndilo everybody knows
46 that there are drug dealers and bootleggers.
47 There have been a lot of deaths -- deaths and

**Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 increased violence as a result of these issues
2 and in Ndilo and in Detta. It is not safe to
3 live in Yellowknife or in Ndilo. I do not feel
4 safe walking around Yellowknife or Ndilo. I do
5 not feel safe in my own home in Ndilo. I do it
6 not spend that much time there because I feel
7 unsafe there and it should not be like that.

8 There is no treatment centre in NWT. Why is
9 that? I think the government of NWT should have
10 a treatment centre where people should go get
11 help with their alcohol and drug addictions.
12 This has been going on for many years. I do not
13 understand why the government of NWT doesn't fund
14 a treatment centre in the North that provides
15 Dene teaching and culture programs to
16 Northerners. People seeking treatment for
17 addiction must go south to get help. A treatment
18 centre would not solve all the different issues.
19 The government allows the liquor store to sell
20 alcohol and make profits. Where is all the money
21 from alcohol sales going? Some of the money
22 received by the NWT government from alcohol sales
23 should go towards funding a treatment centre.
24 The NWT should have a treatment centre that
25 Northerners can go for help, to help them to
26 overcome their addictions. The government of NWT
27 permits the sale of booze which results in these
28 issues. The government of NWT should help the
29 people deal with their issues. It is not only
30 the government of NWT but also our chief and
31 councillors and community leaders that need to
32 help our people. My mother, Mary Adele Doctor,
33 should not have died a painful death from
34 violence at the hands of another woman in her own
35 home in Ndilo. Our chiefs and councillors need
36 to do more to ensure the safety and protections
37 of our Indigenous women and girls in our
38 communities.

39 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. Thank you, Catherine. I
40 just have one question for you. You speak of
41 alcohol and drug issues in Yellowknife that
42 affect Ndilo, the community where you mentioned
43 your mother lived and where you also live, and
44 you have made some recommendations in terms of
45 addictions treatment. Was your mother's death
46 alcohol related at all?

47 CATHERINE DOCTOR: Yes, it was.

**Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 KAREN SNOWSHOE: And can you tell me about -- can you
2 tell the commissioners about how alcohol was
3 related?

4 CATHERINE DOCTOR: My mom is a traditional woman. She
5 never drank, smoke, or use alcohol in her life.
6 And for her to have died a violent death from a
7 woman that have used alcohol and result of that
8 my mom died. So for me it's very important that
9 our people and not just our people, the whole NWT
10 should get -- have a treatment centre to help
11 deal with all the different issues as a result of
12 people using alcohol.

13 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Catherine.

14 Commissioners, the family has provided to
15 our registrar a number of items in support of
16 Catherine Doctor's statement today. These items
17 include four newspaper articles regarding the
18 death of Marie Adele Doctor. This is in addition
19 to the statement provided by Catherine Doctor
20 today. And she has also provided the Commission
21 with a memorial -- how would you call it, a
22 memorial pamphlet? The pamphlet that was
23 provided at the memorial of Mary Adele's death.
24 Thank you.

25 If it's possible now to -- to view the
26 PowerPoint presentation. There are -- how many
27 photos?

28 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Six.

29 KAREN SNOWSHOE: The family would like to offer in
30 support of their presentation a series of six
31 photographs. And when the photographs begin, I
32 will ask Cindy Allen to just give a brief
33 description of each photo. Thank you.

34 CINDY ALLEN: [Aboriginal language spoken] Thank you.
35 So the pictures that we have here are about my
36 grandmother, Mary Adele Doctor. As my Aunt
37 Cathy, Catherine, has said, my grandmother lived
38 a traditional lifestyle. She's seen the changes
39 from -- she lived out in the bush and she lived
40 through the changes and moving into the
41 community, but she still lived a very traditional
42 lifestyle. So this first picture that you see is
43 of Mary Adele Doctor at the original Hudson Bay
44 Post in Yellowknife from the -- the picture is
45 from the 1950s. And you see granny packing
46 Catherine. And then you see my mother standing
47 there with her little striped top. And then

Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)

1 Uncle Jimmy Doctor there as well.

2 Next one. This one is -- the next one is
3 granny with Catherine taken as well at the Hudson
4 Bay Post from the 1950s.

5 Next one. So here you can see granny,
6 Mary Adel Doctor, doing the things that she loves
7 doing, tanning hides, scraping hides. So this is
8 from the 1980s at our family camp on the highway
9 to Mile 16 just outside of Yellowknife.

10 Next one. So here you see her in another
11 picture, her scraping the hide, and right next to
12 it is a finished a tanned hide that she did. So,
13 this was the things that she loved doing.

14 Next one. So here she is as well with -- at
15 the family camp and there is a finished product
16 of her tanned, smoked moose hide glove with
17 beaded -- beading and beaver fur.

18 Next one. So this is the last picture that
19 I have right now, but this is inside our
20 granny's -- in -- in the cabin on -- on the
21 highway. And you can see her with her -- her
22 beading and her crafts. So, this is the thing
23 that she liked to do to keep herself busy, but
24 she also shared these skills and gifts with
25 others, with the family. And like Catherine
26 said, her and grandpa had their own culture camp
27 and they provided these teachings not only to the
28 family but to others in the community and to
29 Yellowknife, people living in Yellowknife. So
30 they were very sharing and giving, not only to
31 the family but to others.

32 So, those are the pictures that I have to
33 present here to you and now you can put them on
34 the loop. [Aboriginal language spoken]

35 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Cindy ... Cindy, I understand that
36 you have also prepared a written statement today,
37 which has been provided, 10 copies. And I
38 now -- whenever you're ready, I now invite you to
39 present your statement to the Commission.

40 CINDY ALLEN: [Aboriginal language spoken]

41 My name is Cindy Allen. I am Weledeh,
42 Yellowknife's Dene Tlicho person originally from
43 Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. I am here to
44 speak to you about my grandmother, Mary Adele
45 Doctor. My daughter, [indiscernible name] Jack,
46 Sunfire Jack, is also here to support the family
47 as the great-granddaughter of Mary Adele Doctor.

**Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 I am very honoured that she had the courage to be
2 here today.

3 My grandmother's traditional [indiscernible]
4 name was Madah (phonetic). Madah. So, I invite
5 her to be here to witness and listen.

6 My submission to the Murdered and Missing
7 Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry is my way of
8 honouring my grandmother. Madah was a beautiful
9 strong Dene woman and I want to share that with
10 you.

11 Myself, I grew up in Winnipeg, in Winnipeg,
12 Manitoba, with my father, Richard Allen, my
13 brother, Richard, and my two uncles, Doug and
14 David. My mother, Christine Doctor, also lived
15 in the city but not with us. I saw her
16 unfrequently -- infrequently when I was growing
17 up.

18 In 1994 I came home. I -- I travelled North
19 for the first time to reconnect with my Dene
20 family in Ndilo and to be closer to my mother,
21 Christine Allen, who by that time was living in
22 the North again.

23 My mother was a very gifted seamstress and a
24 designer that attended Red River College in
25 Winnipeg and LaSalle College in Montreal for
26 fashion design. My mother passed away on
27 June 19th, 2004 from complications from what was
28 supposed to be a routine day surgery in Edmonton.
29 With her passing I was left with a great feeling
30 of loss, but at least I had some comfort in
31 knowing that I still had my grandmother, Mary
32 Adele Doctor, to learn more about my Dene
33 heritage.

34 Mary Adele Doctor was a very respected elder
35 from Ndilo that knew a lot about traditional
36 laws, spirituality, cultural practices, and bush
37 skills. She raised 11 children, three daughters
38 and eight sons, in the bush. She and my
39 grandfather, Gabriel Doctor, spent much of their
40 time out on the land at their camps at
41 [indiscernible place name], at the family cabin
42 at Mile 16 on Highway 2, and in the Barron
43 (phonetic) grounds. They were known for their
44 cultural teachings and led a culture camp in
45 Ndilo and Yellowknife in the 1990s, where they
46 taught others how to tan caribou and moose hides,
47 prepare muskrats, make sinews, and build drums.

Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)

1 When my grandmother passed in 2009, I was
2 devastated, since it -- it made it so much harder
3 for myself and my two kids, [indiscernible name]
4 and my son, [indiscernible name of son], it made
5 it so much harder for them to learn about being
6 Weledeh, Yellowknife's Dene Tlicho, and learning
7 those traditional skills and knowledge.

8 Her death resulting from a violent assault
9 from another woman in her home in Ndilo is hard
10 to speak about, but I'm here to honour her story.
11 I am still grieving for her. I am still grieving
12 her death and from her being taken away
13 from -- from the family in such a violent way,
14 such a tragic way. My grief is not only for her
15 but for the loss of the traditional knowledge and
16 stories and skills that I will not hear from her
17 at the kitchen table over a cup of tea with some
18 caribou meat or fish soup. I will not hear those
19 stories from her. She is no longer here to teach
20 me how to tan moose hide, make sinew, or sew
21 beaded moccasins. (sobbing)

22 I remember going to my
23 grandpa -- grandparents' cultural camp in Ndilo
24 and at Folk On The Rocks Music Festival in the
25 1990s and seeing them teach others traditional
26 Dene skills. I was so proud of them and to be
27 their grand-- granddaughter. I was so proud.
28 They welcomed me into their lives and made me
29 feel at home, even though I did not grow up North
30 and they did not -- they did not really know who
31 I was, knew who I -- but they still welcomed me.
32 Even though they did not have much, they had big
33 hearts. Whenever I went to their home or visited
34 my grandmother in Ndilo, there was always tea on
35 and some food to eat.

36 My favourite memory of my grandfather [sic]
37 was actually the last time I saw her at her home
38 in Ndilo in January 2007. I came North to attend
39 the funeral service of my Uncle Albert Doctor,
40 who died tragically in a plane crash flying to
41 Blachford Lake Lodge. I came -- I came to spend
42 some time with my grandmother. And I remember
43 her smile and the warm and loving hug that I got
44 from her when I said goodbye. I did not know at
45 that time that it would be the last time that I
46 would ever see her alive (sobbing) or the last
47 smile or hug I would ever receive from her.

**Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 It is my hope and request that my submission
2 to the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and
3 Girls Inquiry about my grandmother, Mary Adele
4 Doctor, results in positive changes for
5 Indigenous women and girls living in Ndilo and
6 Detta and in the North. The normalization of
7 violence in Northern communities and in Ndilo and
8 Detta is not normal. It is not normal and should
9 not be tolerated. Indigenous women and girls
10 should not live in fear in their own homes and
11 communities. The social issues resulting from
12 alcohol and drugs need to be addressed, not only
13 by the federal and territorial governments but
14 also by Dene chiefs and leaders in the
15 communities. Dene women and girls need to be
16 protected and feel safe in their homes and these
17 issues needed -- need to be acted on now. We
18 should not be waiting any longer.

19 I would like to see photos of my grandmother
20 and grandfather put up in the Yellowknife's Dene
21 First Nation offices and the community hall. My
22 people and others should know of and be reminded
23 of -- of how amazing my grandmother and
24 grandparents were. They should be reminded of
25 our amazing elders. I would love it if there was
26 a cultural award or scholarship in honour of my
27 grandmother and grandparents, Mary Adele and
28 Gabriel Doctor. I think that would be a
29 wonderful legacy.

30 I would also like to see the traditional
31 Dene laws of respect, sharing, love, and caring
32 be more widely taught to Dene and others. The
33 Dene law of respect is one that teaches respect
34 to everything around you, the land, the water,
35 the animals, the bird, and nature. The law of
36 respect starts with respecting yourself and
37 respecting others and respecting your elders and
38 your community. If you live a respectful life,
39 you will live a life that honours and respects
40 everything around you. Through respect for self
41 and others and everything around you there is no
42 place for violence and negativity. If the woman
43 who killed my grandmother had lived a respectful
44 life for herself and if she had treated others
45 with respect, my grandmother, Mary Adele Doctor,
46 may not have died the sad and tragic death that
47 she did.

Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)

1 Other recommendations that I suggest to the
2 inquiry for them to consider when they are making
3 their final report come from the Truth and
4 Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action report.
5 My recommendations relate to child welfare,
6 health, and justice, and they are: I'm not sure
7 if I want to read all of them, but ... I can?
8 So, under "CHILD WELFARE", recommendation
9 number 5:

10
11 We call upon the federal, provincial,
12 territorial, and Aboriginal governments
13 to develop culturally appropriate
14 parenting programs for Aboriginal
15 families.

16
17 Under "HEALTH" I -- I recommend 18, 19, 21 and
18 22. Under 18 :

19
20 We call upon the federal, provincial,
21 territorial, and Aboriginal governments
22 to acknowledge that the current state
23 of Aboriginal health in Canada is a
24 direct result of previous Canadian
25 government policies, including
26 residential schools, and to recognize
27 and implement the health-care rights of
28 Aboriginal people as identified in
29 international law, constitutional law,
30 and under the Treaties.

31
32 And I would add Dene law.
33 Number 19:

34
35 We call upon the federal government, in
36 consultation with Aboriginal peoples,
37 to establish measurable goals to
38 identify and close the gaps in health
39 outcomes between Aboriginal and
40 non-Aboriginal communities, and to
41 publish annual progress reports and
42 assess long-term trends. Such efforts
43 would focus on indicators such as:
44 infant mortality, maternal health,
45 suicide, mental health, addictions,
46 life expectancy, birth rates, infant
47 and child health issues, chronic

**Hearing - Public
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(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 diseases, illness and injury incidence,
2 and the availability of appropriate
3 health services.
4

5 Number 21:
6

7 We call upon the federal government to
8 provide sustainable funding for
9 existing and new Aboriginal healing
10 centres to address the physical,
11 mental, emotional, and spiritual harms
12 caused by residential schools, and to
13 [address] that the funding of healing
14 centres in Nunavut and the Northwest
15 Territories is a priority.
16

17 Number 22:
18

19 We call upon those who can effect
20 change within the Canadian health-care
21 system to recognize the value of
22 Aboriginal healing practices and use
23 them in the treatment of Aboriginal
24 patients in collaboration with
25 Aboriginal healers and Elders where
26 requested by Aboriginal patients.
27

28 Under "JUSTICE":
29

30 We call upon the federal government to
31 eliminate barriers to the creation of
32 additional Aboriginal healing lodges
33 within the federal correctional system.
34

35 Number 36:
36

37 We call upon the federal, provincial,
38 and territorial governments to work
39 with Aboriginal communities to provide
40 culturally relevant services to inmates
41 on issues such as substance abuse,
42 family and domestic violence, and
43 overcoming the experience of having
44 been sexually abused.
45

46 Number 37:
47

Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)

1 We call upon the federal government to
2 provide more supports for Aboriginal
3 programming in halfway houses and
4 parole services.
5

6 38. We call upon the federal,
7 provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal
8 governments to commit to eliminating
9 the overrepresentation of Aboriginal
10 youth in custody over the next decade.
11

12 And number 39:
13

14 We call upon the federal government to
15 develop a national plan to collect and
16 publish data on the criminal
17 victimization of Aboriginal people,
18 including data related to homicide and
19 family violence victimization.
20

21 I would actually like this information to be
22 provided as well to the Aboriginal governments so
23 they can actually see the statistics that are in
24 their communities and maybe that will help affect
25 some change as well. Not talking about this and
26 normalization of violence is not acceptable
27 anymore. This needs to change. I want to know
28 that in the future, the near future, that my
29 daughter, Mary Adele Doctor's
30 great-granddaughter, will be safe in her own
31 community in the North. I want -- I want to -- I
32 want that -- to know that in my heart. I would
33 like to see those changes happen.

34 And I feel very honoured to speak here today
35 about my grandmother, Mary Adel, Doctor, Madah,
36 and for you to hear my family's story.
37 [Aboriginal language spoken] Thank you.
38 *Miigwech.*

39 KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Cindy. Before I invite
40 questions from the commissioners, is there
41 anything else that's maybe come to mind that,
42 either Cindy or Catherine or Sunfire, that you'd
43 like to let the commissioners know? No? Okay.
44 Commissioners, if you don't mind, Catherine
45 Doctor has requested that any questions be please
46 directed to Cindy and she'll respond on behalf of
47 the family, thank you.

Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)

1 COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Testing. There We go. Sorry.
2 Thank -- thank you for coming and sharing
3 with us and -- and for your thoughtful words. I
4 was hoping we could talk a little bit about the
5 newspaper articles that we received. I'll read
6 them. I didn't want to read them while you were
7 talking, but is there something that you want us
8 to take from it or understand from those
9 articles? Or do they speak for themselves? I
10 just wanted to make sure we gave you that
11 opportunity to -- to share your thoughts on those
12 and express your views on their significance
13 before we were done. So, that's really my only
14 question.

15 CINDY ALLEN: The -- the newspaper articles ... Maybe
16 I'll just say a little bit more about what
17 happened to granny. So, a woman high on alcohol
18 and drugs broke into granny's house. And when
19 granny asked her to leave, she got violent,
20 pushed granny around, assaulted her, and granny
21 fell and hurt herself very seriously, broke her
22 hip and there was some other injuries. But
23 granny, she never spoke English that much, and so
24 the family found her injured in the home. And no
25 one knew what happened, but then they kind of
26 pieced it together, but this person had left.
27 There was a -- I don't want to upset you any, but
28 there was a manhunt across the Northwest
29 Territories to find this person because we did
30 not know who it was, and it was a woman. So
31 shocking.

32 So, we had hoped that this person would have
33 a stiffer sentence. We had hoped that she would
34 be charged with -- well, in my mind I was
35 thinking murder, but she wasn't charged with
36 murder. She was charged with manslaughter and
37 then it was downgraded to aggravated assault.
38 And then the coroner's report, well, after they
39 did -- they did an autopsy because granny died a
40 few weeks after the assault. So from what I
41 understand, the coroner's report said there
42 wasn't enough evidence to have a higher charge, a
43 murder charge. That's very upsetting to the
44 family, especially when they downgraded it and
45 then this lady is only -- she's out after four
46 months. She's out of jail after granny dies.
47 She was only in jail for four months. That's

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(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 wrong. Sorry. And I -- I wish that woman a
2 healing journey, she obviously needs some help,
3 that other lady, but that's -- I hope some
4 changes happen. So the ... I have yet to see
5 the coroner's report and I have the -- I have
6 made that request. I -- I am -- I hope that
7 there wasn't any systemic racism that arise from
8 the downgrading of the charges against this
9 woman. I know that's an issue in many
10 communities and there is a recent court case here
11 in the Yukon about that happening. So, I
12 requested a copy of the coroner's report.
13 It -- I wasn't strong enough until now to -- to
14 face this because it's such a tragic loss. I
15 have lost my grandmother and I have lost the
16 traditional teachings with her death.

17 So the -- these stories here tell about
18 that, about this journey of what happened to
19 grandmother over the months, months, and it was
20 more than a year, I think, and a half before all
21 this stuff was settled out. And so I hope that
22 answers your question. [Aboriginal language
23 spoken]

24 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: When you receive the
25 coroner's report, would you be willing to share
26 it with us?

27 CINDY ALLEN: Yes, I'd be happy to share the coroner's
28 report with you.

29 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Thank you. Karen would be
30 the person to send it to. Thank you very much.

31 KAREN SNOWSHOE: I will now -- actually before I -- I
32 call upon Catherine, I understand you wanted to
33 say a few last words, a thank you to the
34 commissioners. Before you do that, I would like
35 to apologize to your family. I -- I made an
36 error and I forgot to introduce to the
37 commissioners some very important people who are
38 seated behind you and those are your -- people
39 who have come here in support of you today. So,
40 commissioners, I'd like to introduce you to Hazel
41 Buffalo Robe, who has been a very important and
42 integral support for this family. And we have
43 staff members, Alana Boileau and Barbara Sevigny.
44 Sevigny, yes. Thank you.

45 CATHERINE DOCTOR: Okay. Thank you very much for
46 hearing my story. It's been eight years that
47 myself, my family, and we have extended family

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(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 all over NWT that are affected from this violent
2 death. And I hope there will be changes, so that
3 needless death of our mother. For me, myself, I
4 feel very unsafe living in Yellowknife in Ndilo.
5 I want changes so I can live a safe life. I am a
6 mother, a grandmother, and I do not want my
7 grandchildren to have -- to live in fear. I live
8 in fear everyday in Yellowknife and that
9 shouldn't be happening because in our culture the
10 traditional way of life, I never experienced
11 that. So, I'm hoping and praying that there will
12 be changes done very soon. And I'd like to say
13 some words in my language. [Aboriginal language
14 spoken]

15 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Because we want to thank
16 you for coming today and sharing your stories, we
17 have some packages of seeds to give you. We hope
18 you plant them and tell us what grows.

19 [Silence]

20 BRYAN ZANDBERG: So, commissioners, the -- Catherine
21 Doctor has just made a request to -- to say a
22 closing prayer.

23 CATHERINE DOCTOR: Can we stand, please. I'm going to
24 say The Lord's Prayer. In the name of the
25 Father, the son, and the holy spirit. Amen. Our
26 Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.
27 Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as
28 it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
29 bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we
30 forgive those who trespass against us. And lead
31 us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
32 Amen. For thine is the kingdom, the power and
33 the glory is yours now and forever and ever.
34 Amen. Father, son, and holy spirit. Amen.

35 CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: We're finished our work
36 for the day with our wonderful families. So,
37 could I ask our elder to come and close us for
38 the day.

39 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE ELDER: Great spirit,
40 grandfathers, grandmothers from the four sacred
41 directions, hear our prayers, as we are small and
42 humble, Creator.

43 There has been many things said today. We
44 are feeling your hurt. That's why we are here
45 today. We will open our eyes to see what is
46 happening today. The truth will come out. It
47 will never be hidden anymore.

**Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 Guide us, Creator, as we move forward. Help
2 our families, our loved ones, our children, and
3 all the babies that are yet to come. Creator,
4 our baby girls, they are the gift of life and the
5 givers of life of our people.

6 I pray that we will stand for the woman in
7 our communities across this country, across North
8 America and South America and around the world,
9 that we will help our women, that we will be
10 there for the aunties and the grandmas and the
11 great-grandmas.

12 Creator, I pray that you will keep these
13 families safe tonight. And if they need any
14 help, I pray, Creator, they will come back to the
15 sacred fire. Pray with your tobacco. And you
16 put your tobacco in that fire. Don't carry it on
17 you anymore, let it go. We have to move on for
18 our children to make this place a better place
19 for the children. With your guidance, with our
20 elders' knowledge we will do this.

21 We thank you for what you have given to us
22 today. We thank you for what you have provided
23 to us. We pray for the people that are here, all
24 the workers, all the supporters, the fire
25 keepers. And we pray for all the community that
26 has been affected. Great spirit, guide them in
27 the right direction. I pray that our people will
28 take ownership of what's going on and we are here
29 to do something to help our people with. And we
30 will stand beside our families and our loved
31 ones.

32 We will take the time to rest tonight, get a
33 good sleep, enjoy a good meal. Sit with your
34 family, express how much you love each other.
35 This is what will carry us through. Creator, we
36 give thanks for this day. [Aboriginal language
37 spoken]

38 [Silence]

39
40 **Fourth Hearing Exhibits**
41 **Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen (Family of Mary Adele**
42 **Doctor)**

43
44 Exhibit P1: Print-out of slideshow presentation shown
45 May 30, 2017; first image in slideshow bears
46 caption "Marie-Adele Doctor with beadwork at
47 family cabin in 1990s; six slides in total,

**Hearing - Public
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen
(Mary Adele Doctor)**

1 including images of Marie-Adele Doctor scraping
2 and tanning hides.

3 Exhibit P2: "Submission by Cindy Allen about Marie-
4 Adele Doctor to the MMIWG Inquiry in Whitehorse,
5 Yukon," signed by Cindy Allen and prepared on May
6 30, 2017; four pages, stapled top left corner.

7 Exhibit P3: "Submission by Catherine Doctor about
8 Marie-Adele Doctor to the MMIWG Inquiry in
9 Whitehorse, Yukon," signed by Catherine Doctor
10 and prepared on May 30, 2017; one page double-
11 sided.

12 Exhibit P4: Yellowknifer news article "Ndilo elder
13 dies following attack," by Cara Loverock
14 published Wednesday, February 11, 2009.

15 Exhibit P5: Yellowknifer news article " Woman accused
16 of beating elder won't face manslaughter charge"
17 by Cara Loverock, Friday May 1, 2009.

18 Exhibit P6: Yellowknifer news article "Accused in
19 elder beating to stand trial" by Lauren McKeon
20 published Wednesday, August 12, 2009.

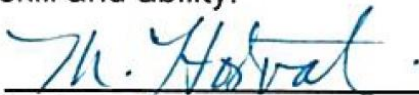
21 Exhibit P7: Yellowknifer news article "Fourteen month
22 sentence for assaulting elder" by Lauren McKeon,
23 published Wednesday September 30, 2009.

24 Exhibit P8: Funeral mass program for Mary Adele
25 Doctor, "In Loving Memory of Mary Adele Doctor,
26 October 1, 1924 - February 8, 2009; one page two-
27 sided with colour images

28
29 (HEARING ADJOURNED TO MAY 31, 2017)
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LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and accurate transcript of the evidence recorded on a sound recording apparatus, transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.



M. Horyat, Transcriber