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 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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Exhibit P8: Funeral mass program for Mary Adele Doctor, “In Loving Memory of Mary Adele Doctor, October 1, 1924 – February 8, 2009; one page two-sided with colour images.”
AGNES: It is the blessing for our people and all things that are alive. Creator, for all the people that are here, Creator, I pray that they will join hands and that they will give the energy that they, the people, need to continue on and to -- to do the very best that they can for the future generation. This is why we are here. I thank you, Creator for this beautiful day. I thank you, grandfather sun, for what you have given us today. I thank you to the galaxies. I thank you, grandfather Moon, grandmother Moon, for what you have given to us. I thank you for our mother earth, for what she has provided to us. And I pray, Creator, that we will follow in the footsteps of our ancestors to look after our land, as -- as we are meant to be here.

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

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

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

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you. In honour of our Northern sisters, we'll light the ku'lik, please.
Hearing – Public
Opening Remarks

[Silence as ku’lik lit by Barbara Sevigny, Elder Louise Haulli and Lillian Lundrigan]

BARBARA SEVIGNY: I will share a little bit about our ku’lik, the traditional oil lamp.
[indiscernible/away from microphone].
I will share a little bit about we call it the ku’lik, our traditional oil lamp. Today we use it as a ceremonial tool, but it was a very important tool for our people. For us it was a survival tool. It helped melt the snow so we can have water to drink, dry the clothes, provide us light when there's 24 hour darkness, provide some heat, dry the clothing, and a lot of good stories around the -- around the ku’lik when the hunters came back from their trip and sharing their stories from -- with their children and their wives. And brought a lot of calmness. A lot of children had shared that, you know, they would purposely make their eyes water and it's with their eyes and they'd see rainbows around the flames. So -- and it brought a lot of -- it brought everybody together. This is more of a ceremonial size. They were much bigger and there was multiple ku’liks in -- in the -- in the igloos back then. There was three of them used for cooking as well, to cook the food. So, it was very important for us. It was a survival tool. So today we light it in the memory of our ancestors because it was not that long ago where they had stopped using the ku’lik as a survival tool. So, we light it in the memory of our ancestors, of what they had to live through in the harsh conditions in -- in the weather. In the North were our people. Yeah, so today I'd like to thank Louise for lighting it on behalf of our -- our ancestors today for everyone.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you.

[hearing din]

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Thank you.

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

First, I want to acknowledge the spirits of the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. I want to acknowledge the survivors of violence, including the members of the trans and two-spirited communities. I want to thank the
elders, who are here with us today, and the
sacred fire keepers for starting us in ceremony
and taking care of us every day.

I acknowledge our grandmothers, who share
their wisdom with us. And I also acknowledge and
thank the members of our National Family Advisory
Circle, who support us and guide us in our work.

I want to also acknowledge and honour the people
all across Canada who have worked so hard and so
long to make this National Inquiry a reality. I
thank you for your work.

Today is a turning point in our national
history. Now there is a national stage for the
stories and the voices of the missing and
murdered Indigenous women and girls through their
families, and a national stage for the survivors
of violence to share their experiences. I expect
that in this hearing and in hearings to follow we
will hear about mothers, grandmothers, sisters
and aunts, nieces, cousins, and dear friends.

They are and were real people who loved and were
loved, who dreamed and hoped, who laughed and
cried. We'll also hear about those people who
found courage and strength to carry on. This
National Inquiry is about them, their lives.

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

All of Canada needs to hear the truth about
the violence that Indigenous women and girls have
endured for generations and continue to endure.

Why? This is a sorrowful but essential part of
our national history. We need to recognize and
understand colonization and racism. We need to
heal and we need to craft solutions. When an
Indigenous woman or girl goes missing, is
murdered or is harmed, we are all weaker As
families, as communities and as a nation. We
have lost a life giver, or a life giver has been
harmed. We must remember our women and girls are
sacred.

In the midst of stories of loss there will
be stories of courage and resilience. There will
be also stories of healing, reconciliation,
growth, and innovation. We want to hear those
stories too so that we have a better
understanding of systemic violence.
In closing, I expect that the voices heard and the stories told throughout this National Inquiry will rewrite the national consciousness about systemic violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls, trans, and two-spirited people from coast to coast to coast.

Thank you very much.

Commissioner Audette.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: [Speaking Innu-aimun]

Vraiment fière d'être auprès de vous.
Aujourd'hui, je suis honorée de me tenir devant vous ici à titre de commissaire pour l'Enquête nationale pour les femmes et les jeunes femmes autochtones assassinées ou disparues.

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

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

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

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

En ce moment ici à Whitehorse, nous franchissons une étape importante, un jalon très
important au niveau de la démarche de l'enquête.
Chaque victime, chaque famille, chaque
communauté, chaque citoyen et citoyenne du Canada
qui nous écoutent aujourd'hui ont les yeux rivés
sur les travaux de cette enquête, une enquête
historique.

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

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

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

The work of which will shed light of the
truth and the knowledge and I am doing this for
you. And the violence suffered by women
and girls, Indigenous women and girls, has to
stop. This inquiry must shine a bright light of
facts because we believe in justice and fairness,
because credibility requires quality, because
quality requires time, because the day after the
final report is submitted as -- is important as
the investigation process. I stand before you
today ready to begin this crucial part of our
work. The eyes of the country and the world are
watching. History will remember this moment.
History will remember these efforts. History will remember these pages – these pages in which the truth has emerged, the truth that will emerge forever, your truth.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We have clearly heard that the inquiry needs to be flexible in terms of the options that are available for people who want to share their
stories. And we indicated that this can be done in a number of ways, such as speaking with us in a public hearing, like we are having here today. People can also speak to us in private or in camera, or people can speak to a statement taker, who will record their stories. Stories can also be expressed through art.

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

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

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

We would also be very grateful for your feedback or suggestions on how we can improve the process so that we can make adjustments and continue to strive to be flexible and meet the needs of everyone who wants to share their stories with us as we carry out this very important work. And I look forward to working with you all this week. Thank you. Miigwech.
Hearing - Public
Opening Remarks

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

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

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

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

I want to -- I want to acknowledge that we
don't exist without the symbolism that's made a
reality here, the fire that rebirths us, the
water that we're all dependent on that is a life
giver for us; the land that we're on, that our
women are ultimately connected to forever and it
symbolizes our relationship in the word. The
blankets that you see around the room today,
cotton blankets, again a symbol of the land, the
cotton, and those are created by women for this
purpose - a group of women who came together and
offered the blanket so that we would feel
comfort. Blankets were used for hauling.
Blankets are used to hold babies. Blankets are
used to keep us warm. I'd like you to take your
time to read the messages that are on these
blankets from some residents from the Elizabeth Frye, from the Enahtig (phoenetic) Healing Lodge in Southern Saskatchewan, from family members in Saskatchewan, from ex-police officers that came to hold some space with family members, from MLAs, from the LGBTQ2S community in Saskatoon. And they're throughout. They're throughout the process. They're in all of the spaces that we'll be using. Please take some time to have a look at that.

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

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

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

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

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

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: [Inuktitut spoken]

Good morning. Thank you for welcoming us to
your home, to your land. Thank you and for
teaching me, like you did just now.
I am very honoured to stand beside you in
front you have today as the commissioner on the
National Inquiry.

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

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

We're travelling across this country to
gather evidence – evidence that will lead us to
the truth, evidence that will lead us to
knowledge, knowledge that will lead us to
solutions – because to move forward it requires
this understanding of the past and the present; because we can't improve a situation if we don't acknowledge it; because that woman is you, that woman is me, that woman is all Indigenous women, that woman is all Canadians. I believe one day women, girls, trans and two-spirited will live in a safe environment, they will be able to grow in a healthy and safe environment. I believe in justice and equity. I believe that every little change can lead to great change. After these hearings I hope you will go home, back to your communities, back to your nations knowing that this reality can and will be changed, and that you will have a part in that. I believe very strongly in this work. Canada needs this work to be done. Canada needs this work to be done to be the nation it aspires and purports to be - a nation we want and can believe in. I ask to hold -- I ask that you hold onto this glimmer of hope, hold onto this belief in humanity. This is not about one commission. This is not about one moment in time. This is about who we are, fundamentally who we are as a society, who we shall be, and what change we shall make.

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

SUSAN VELLA: Good morning, everyone. Before we call upon our first family members, we welcome the opportunity to make some brief opening remarks. The key purpose of public inquiries in Canada is to restore public confidence in institutions which have been seriously damaged by reason of revelation or an incident or a series of incidents. The public inquiries aim to do this by shedding light on the circumstances which gave rise to the tragedy and then to propose recommendations to ensure such a tragedy can never happen again.

The public inquiry also has an important objective in promoting - no, demanding social accountability from institutions that serve society. I want to acknowledge the pain of the families of lost loved ones and their -- and the
Hearing – Public
Opening Remarks

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

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

You will also hear about the affects of colonization, which has disrupted and in some cases nearly destroyed Indigenous family, social, cultural, spiritual, economic, and legal traditions. You will hear from families and survivors of diverse Indigenous realities and backgrounds. You will hear from elders, youth, mothers, fathers, grandparents, sisters, brothers, cousins, and members from the LGBTQ two-spirited communities. But you will hear not only of the personal challenges which survivors and lost loved ones have faced but also of their strength, their gifts, and their resiliencies.

You will hear not only of the problems they faced but also of the solutions they have to offer.

You will hear from families and survivors in different ways which respect both Indigenous and Canadian legal traditions. You will be part of sharing in family circles, observing and listen to stories told through artistic expression. You
Hearing – Public
Opening Remarks

will listen to individuals who will share with
you their experiences, knowledge, and advice.
While the -- we are listening to families
and survivors, there will also be opportunities
for those who wish to provide their statements to
statement gatherers as well.
This is the beginning of the family and
survivor truth-gathering process, a process which
will take the Commission to many communities
across Canada over the coming months. As
Commission counsel we are honoured and privileged
to play a role in facilitating that conversation
which is about to begin.
With that I call on my fellow commission
counsel, Karen Snowshoe to call upon the first
family members. Miigwech.

First Hearing
Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri and Darla-Jean
Lindstrom (Family of Mary Johns) with Karen Snowshoe
(Commission Counsel)

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Susan.
Frances, could you please start with a
prayer?
FRANCES NEUMANN: Oh, God, guide me, protect me, and
make me a shining lamp and a bright star. Thou
art mighty and powerful. [Aboriginal language
spoken]
KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.
Chief Commissioner, commissioners, it is my
honour to be of service to you today as
commission counsel. It is more so my honour to
present to you Frances Neumann and her daughter,
Tracy Camilleri -- Camilleri.
I'd also like to present to you the supports
who are currently in this tent in support of
Frances and Tracy. Behind me is Tracy's spouse,
Jordan Camilleri. Seated next to Jordan is
Marilyn Jensen, who is the niece of Frances
Neumann. Seated next to Marilyn is Megan Jensen,
who is another niece of Frances Neumann. I would
also like to acknowledge Shirley McLean, who I
believe is also in the tent, who is in the back –
thank you - who is another support and family
member for this family.

Bryan, if you would please administer the
Hearing - Public
Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)

affirmations.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Yes. Good morning. I suppose we'll
start with Frances this morning. Good morning,
Frances. Do you solemnly affirm that the
evidence you will give today will be the truth,
the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
FRANCES NEUMANN: [indiscernible/away from microphone]

FRANCES NEUMANN, affirmed.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you very much.
And, Tracy, you can remain seated, if you'd
like, or -- or stand as you wish. Same question
for you: Do you solemnly affirm that the
evidence you will give today will be the truth,
the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
TRACY CAMILLERI: I do.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

TRACY CAMILLERI, affirmed.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Commissioners, the family has asked
to introduce the first piece of evidence today,
which is a six minute APTN video clip.
Perhaps while we're waiting for the
technical -- the technical aspect of the video,
the family -- commissioners, the family would
also like to introduce into evidence three
different photos. Frances, can you please
describe who is in these -- in this particular
photo?
FRANCES NEUMANN: This is my sister-in-law, Mary, and
her son, Charlie Peter. This was taken when
Charlie was about six months old. We come from a
close-knit family. My son was one month younger
than Charlie Peter. We were so close that the
two boys, the two babies, shared a hospital room
with just a window between them separating them.
One was in for tonsillitis and the other one was
in for chickenpox, but they spent their time
together and how they communicated was pounding
on the glass window. And this is a picture of
Mary and Charlie.
KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Frances. The
family -- commissioners, the family also has two
other photos to submit. And the second photo,
which is contained here, is actually provided in
Hearing - Public
Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)

a larger format here. So Frances, if you don't
mind, I'll just hand this. And this will give a
better visual of the second photo, which is at
the top. Frances, can you please tell us about
that photo?
FRANCES NEUMANN: This is one weekend that my sisters,
who, five girls spent the weekend with their
parents and our children, we were all young
mothers at the time. My brother, Peter, was a
very strictest person and was always
teasing and joking with us girls. All five of us
were dressed in sweatshirts and blue jeans,
spending the weekend with our parents, except my
brother went to pick up our older sister and said
to her, "For God's sakes, get dressed. The
Whitehorse Star is going to be over there taking
pictures." So needless to say, she came with her
hair curled and all fixed up and makeup and she
walks in and we say, "What are you doing all
dressed up? We're -- we're just having family
pictures." And she said, "Well, Peter told me
that the Whitehorse Star was going to be here."
And everybody had a big laugh about it.

This is my sister-in-law, Mary. This is her
son, Charlie Peter. This is my brother, Peter.
And they were a family.
KAREN SNOWSHOE: And, commissioners, the final photo
that the family would like to submit is this
photo here, which is the same photo as here.
Frances, can you please tell the commissioners a
little bit about that last photo?
FRANCES NEUMANN: This picture was taken at the same
time. And my son ... I -- please excuse me. My
nephew, Charlie Peter, was a special gift for my
brother because he was a father at a later age.
And he was a special gift. Thank you.
KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Ms. ... Ms. Snowshoe,
we'll mark the first photograph of Mary and
Charlie as Exhibit 1; the large family photo will
be Exhibit 2, and the third photograph of Charlie
will be Exhibit 3, please.
KAREN SNOWSHOE: So, registrar, I'll -- I'll now pass
these photos to you.
Okay. Thank you.
Frances, can you please identify again for
the commissioners who this woman is?
FRANCES NEUMANN: That's Mary Johns.

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

FRANCES NEUMANN: Her birth name was Mary Smith.

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

FRANCES NEUMANN: That --

KAREN SNOWSHOE: -- at Mary?

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

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.

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

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

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

Mary was a young mother full of life and full of promise. She loved to laugh. And when she'd laugh, her whole body would jiggle and everybody would laugh. She was so full of life and we were always teasing because she was younger than me. And we would spend time at the bingo halls and we had a rule that the youngest one would always go get the refreshments. So once in a while we would give her a break and we'd flip the coin to see who would get the refreshments, but somehow it always ended up Mary getting -- serving us. And she says, "I never get any breaks." But, you know, they had so many promises. Through [indiscernible] seeing that Mary and Peter had a -- lost a child to crib death in 1973 and that was the start of the downfall of their marriage. They never blamed each other but it was the unspoken words that hurt the most.
In 1975 Mary decided she was going to go to Vancouver to look for a better life. And we can watch the video and it'll explain everything.

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

[Video commences]

>>Hey, mom, check this out.

[Video stopped]

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

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

>>Frances Neumann: ... I believe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

>> Shirley McLean: In July of 1982 Mary's body was found lying face down on a foam mattress at this location on Kingsway
Hearing - Public
Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)

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

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

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

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

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

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

>> Shirley McLean: Mary is buried in an unmarked grave just minutes away from where she died. Her plot lies in a section of the Mountain View Cemetery nicknamed "Potter's Field" by police for the deceased who died
alone and were unclaimed. In 1987 Frances
was living in Vancouver and made it her
guest to find Mary to help mend the broken
heart of the child she left behind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Video concludes]

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

FRANCES NEUMANN: It's brought a lot of very
unresolved feelings. There can't be any justice
for Mary. She's -- she's at peace now, but I, a
grandmother, a mother, a great-grandmother, Mary
and I should have shared that privilege.
That -- we'll never have that because Mary and
her whole family is gone.

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

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

The next thing I did was I called my
brother, read him the newspaper, and he asked me
if I would send -- send the clippings to him. At
that time he was very ill.
In 1989 my brother passed away. I had to go and meet my nephew, Charlie Peter Johns, who ended up in a juvenile detention in Vancouver. I told Charlie that we found his mom, I knew where she was, and where she was buried.

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

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Frances.

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

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

KAREN SNOWSHOE: And in which town?

FRANCES NEUMANN: Or '72, sorry.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: 1972. And which town?

FRANCES NEUMANN: In Carcross.

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

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

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

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

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

FRANCES NEUMANN: I have no idea. I can only imagine what it was like because in my search I went to the Eastside of Vancouver, Granville. I did not
drink, I did not smoke, and I did not take drugs, but it was important for me to look for Mary to try to find and help mend the family. I went to the Cecil Hotel, the Blackstone, the Balmoral, California Hotels, where no one should ever go. But I would meet friends from Carcross, male friends, that would -- I'd say, "I want to go to this hotel," and we would walk through and everybody would watch every move we made, but it was important for me to try to help get my brother, my nephew's family back together. It wasn't easy and I was so scared, but somebody had to do it. Somebody had to look for Mary. I always believed that I would run into her in one of these hotels or maybe on the street.

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

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

These women were vulnerable, they had no protection, they were lost, but each one of those women had families that loved them. We let them down. We did not protect them because they were weak. And because they were weak, no justice came to their aid. This is what I am looking for - not for my sister-in-law now because nobody can harm her, but that my daughter, my granddaughter, my great-granddaughters can walk the streets in safety, my nieces, that no harm can come to them. We must stand up for justice for these women that have walked before us. This has been coming many years and I thank Canada for supporting our families, our loved ones, to give
voice that was taken away so unjustly. We need
your help and we ask you for your help. Please
stand with each and every one of women that have
gone on. We are the spokesperson that will see
this through.
I am not a brave woman, but I want justice
done. My brother is gone, my nephew is gone, but
I promised I would see it through. And every
fibre in my body is shaken to my boots. Please –
please see this through. We have come up and
waited for many years to see the results. Don't
sweep it under the carpet. There was no justice
for my sister-in-law. He didn't even -- he
wasn't even charged. She was the fourth one to
die in this man's company. And they were all
First Nation women except one, and that's how
come he was charged was the last one wasn't from
the streets, she wasn't a streetwalker. We
prejudge why these women end up where they do.
There is many stories like Mary's. She had a
loving family. But because of her being raised
away from her family in residential schools, she
didn't have the tools of the streets.
I ask you to help other women, that they can
walk safely and not have to worry. [Aboriginal
language spoken]
KAREN SNOWSHOE: Okay. Now, Tracy, what would you
like the commissioners to know about Mary's case?
TRACY CAMILLERI: Because I was only a couple of
months old when my aunt left, my journey through
all of this has been through my Uncle Peter, who
is my favourite uncle - he's always on my
screensaver on my cell phone - and my brother.
Charlie Peter was like a brother to me. I was
witness to his pain and his suffering, not having
a mother, being raised by my grandmother. And
losing her when he was 14, he always felt
displaced and was always in search of that
meaning in his life.
Because of the challenges that were
presented to Charlie throughout his young life,
he got into trouble. He put his energy into
unproductive things. He, around -- not long
after my grandma passed, ended up in the Burnaby
Willingdon Detention Centre. And, jeez, I was
10 years old and my mom filled out these
applications for herself, me and my brother,
my -- to visit him. I remember being so scared. It was a seriously scary place to be, just to visit. And as heartbreaking as it was to go there for these visits, he needed us, he needed that connection, that he was always missing in his mom.

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

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

That Christmas I went home to Port Moody to visit my parents for Christmas and I was going to be there, I think I stayed until February. So, I missed him when he came out. And so we talked and I said, "Hey, I'm -- I'm coming back, I'm just a couple weeks." And then I got a phone call from Charlie Peter from the Whitehorse
airport. He was, like, "Hey, can you pick me up at the Vancouver airport. I'm getting on a plane." I was like, "What?" We were, like, after all this years finally going to be on the outside together and freedom, had mom's car.

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

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

I was getting ready to go back, come back home to the Yukon, so I told him, "I'm --" "I'm going to come visit you one more time." And a male friend from Vancouver came with me that time.
and the three of us hung out I think in The Regent. And when we were in the Balmoral, that one was probably the scariest one for me. That was the one I had escorts if I wanted water, if I had to go to the bathroom. But I remember when it was time for me to leave, it was like -- it kind of -- it dragged on for over an hour. "One more pop." And I said, "Charlie, there's so much we have planned. All these years, all these visits, all these things we were going to do, please come home. Please finish your business and follow me home." And he promised he wasn't far behind. That night was the last time I saw him.

I was home in Whitehorse in March of '94 when we got the news that he had overdosed on the Eastside in The Regent Hotel. This for me, my presence here is for him, for his closure. This day has been a long time coming, 35 years since my Aunty Mary's death. Although being here is of such tremendous importance and I feel that my aunt and my uncle and Charlie Peter can rest with this closure, unfortunately it doesn't end there for our family. My grandparents had nine children, many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren. There's not one person in our lineage that doesn't suffer tremendous trauma. And we have the whole mix in our family, the range of suffering. Even, you know, the -- the really successful cousins, resourceful cousins who got their education, to some -- some of them who are streetwalkers, and everything in between. There needs to be long-term support for this trauma.

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

Thankfully I was able to connect with a support line, got connected with the residential schools survivor, IRS, I managed to push because my counselling maxes out at a thousand dollars
a -- a year and I knew I was getting close. And
I was realizing in that moment this is intense,
how huge all of this is and the responsibility in
it and the importance of telling my family's
story. My energy practitioner did a session over
the phone, got me out of story, got me grounded,
did a four-hour session with me. Two days later
the supports here in Whitehorse got approval for
15 sessions for my counselling. So, that just
wasn't a worry. You know, I -- I'm a pretty
resourceful woman. I loaded that smudge bowl for
four hours. I cried for four hours straight. My
poor husband wasn't quite sure what to do with me
other than come in and drop tea, drop a smoothie,
drop some vitamins, but ... I get addictions on
a whole different level. I thought I got it. I
thought I had it. It was in that moment that I
have amazing supports, I have the resources in me
to find the help. I wasn't going to allow myself
to get to a place where the option was driving
off a cliff, reaching for a bottle, or drugs.
Not everyone has that in them, to reach for those
healthy supports. And for the bottle to be
there, to always be there and it may not be the
healthiest choice, but it's -- it's a momentary
relief from that intense pain. I didn't go to
residential school, but my abuser went to a
residential school. And I don't want that pain,
all that anger, all that shame I hold -- I held
within me to be passed on to my children and
nieces and nephew.
I really feel that a big part of what needs
to happen is institutionalising education across
this country. The Indigenous people of Canada
are emotionally exhausted by being the educators.
It needs to be at all levels - from early
childhood, right up through the ages, through the
school systems, government systems. I have fear
that our children will face those stereotypes,
the racism I faced as a child. As a grown woman,
I'm going to be 42 this summer, and I still deal
with it within the Yukon government.
It's -- it's everywhere. It's not just the
blatantly overt racism you can see and touch and
pinpoint, it's that uneducated, ignorant, low
lying, cunning, sophisticated racism that is
there. And there are good people that -- that
want to know, they just don't and they haven't
had the opportunity, don't know a First Nation
person, they haven't received the education.
It's no wonder I have heard comments, "Well, I
went out and got my education, paid for that
education. I came back here and applied on a job
on my own merit," insinuating that my education,
that I -- I didn't pay for my own education and
my job was handed to me on a silver platter,
those types of things. That needs to stop.

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

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

I ... I think her lack of street smarts. I
can't imagine growing up in a small community
here in the Yukon and landing on the Eastside of
Vancouver, how overwhelming and scary and fearful
and -- she must have been. My mom describes
Aunty Mary as a non-drinker before Vancouver.
Being down there with no supports, no family,
running from so much pain, she must have found
comfort in those people that were all there
suffering some of the same things and more. She
must have found a family there. I think what has
been really unjust and unfair and, you know,
where a lot of our anger is is we didn't know she
passed. She was being searched for for six years
and she was already dead. Our people have
ceremony when our loved ones pass on. And for
six years she was in an unmarked numbered grave
in Vancouver, where she must have been receiving
support somewhere, social assistance. Where was
the cheque? When the cheque wasn't picked up,
was someone called? Do -- like, where was the
process to find out why it wasn't picked up?

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

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

In Grade 7 Social Studies I was so excited,
we were finally going to talk about, you know,
Indigenous people of Canada. And there are the
Tlingit, I was going to point out on the map.
And we started the class and, oh, open the books
and the boy said, "Well, all Indians are dumb and
drunk," and it just deflated me and I didn't know
what the statement meant, and the teacher never
corrected him. Things like that. That
7-year-old boy had -- that did not come from him.
There is generations of non-Indigenous people
that I don't know what it'll take. I think the
answers are going to come from many different
areas, Truth and Reconciliation, justice, all
these things all coming together to make this
change, but I believe that telling our stories,
telling our true history, being open to sharing
who we really are and sharing our culture is a
part of, you know, we are humans, we're not less
than, we're not heathens. We have a lot to
offer. We have a rich history and culture to
KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. Final question. What can this inquiry do to honour the lives of Mary Johns and her son, Charlie Peter?

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: My First Nation name is Adax Ayamdagoot. And my English name is Darla-Jean Lindstrom. This is my aunt, Frances Neumann, and my cousins.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you.

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: So --

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you and welcome.

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: Thank you.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Before you speak, if it's okay, we'll -- we'll just need to give you an affirmation or oath, if that's okay.

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: [indiscernible] white man.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Bryan.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: There's actually a few options. I mean, we -- we have an eagle feather you could use for an affirmation. We've got a Bible.

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: I'll use the feather.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Great. What's -- what's your --

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: So --

BRYAN ZANDBERG: -- first name? Could you tell me what your name is?

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: My name?

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Yes.

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: My Indigenous name is Adax Ayamdagoot, and my First -- my non-Native name is Darla-Jean Lindstrom.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Adax Ayamdagoot, do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you will give today will be the --

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: I do.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: -- truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: Nothing but.

BRYAN ZANDBERG. Thank you.

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM, affirmed.

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. And can you please tell the commissioners how -- how can this inquiry honour the -- the lives of Mary John and son, Charlie Peter?

DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: I believe what you're doing...
right now is accompanying people through their pain. I believe that's a -- a good first step. I think that we need to honour our people, who are dealing with trauma issues. We need to help and support them through our customs, our ceremonies, birth to death ceremonies that, you know Tracy alluded to earlier. This murdered and missing Aboriginal -- Indigenous women and children is a symptom of, you know, racism throughout the whole political arena, through the justice system, through the education system. We as Aboriginal people have almost become colonizers of our own people. The federal government made us wards of the state through the Indian Act and we learnt helplessness. We became ashamed of ourself. We became -- we believed what society was telling us.

And since the early '70s we have progressed slowly to, like, self-government here in the Yukon and we need more of that. We need more of our language. We need to focus on our -- the wheel of life, birth to death ceremonies, coming of age ceremonies, which my family has practiced, learning our songs and our legends. You know, we know -- we have all worked on our mental capacity, our emotional capacity, our physical capacity, but we need to focus on our spiritual capacity. And we say that's pending the strength of our spiritual condition is how we're able to handle the rest of ourself. And spirituality has a little or a lot to do with religion, depending on your point of view and what you practice. And spirituality could mean being on the land, learning your language. Anything created -- anything creative comes from the Creator, whether it's playing guitar, singing or dancing, which our family tries to hold each other up and support each other in anything we do. I'm very lucky and fortunate to have a supportive family. And I hope and pray that whatever this -- the commissioners are doing, that it does not sit on the shelf getting dusty, like so many other reports and inquiries. Don't leave us on the shelf. Help us, accompanying us. I shouldn't say "help" because it always indicates somebody is lower than the other, so I change my
Hearing - Public
Frances Neumann, Tracy Camilleri, Darla-Jean Lindstrom
(Mary Johns)

word to "accompany us" through our pain and our
sorrow. And help give us the resources to help
us help ourselves because nobody is going to save
us but us.
KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you. And, Frances, would you
like to close with a prayer?
DARLA-JEAN LINDSTROM: Yes, I will.
KAREN SNOWSHOE: Okay.

My apologies. I understand the
commissioners have some questions.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: First of all, thank you, thank
you, thank you. We'll take a deep breath
together because you have done something really
difficult and I wanted to say thank you.
There are some questions that I have just to
really understand the time and the people and
what you went through. And one of my questions
is did you ever call the police about Mary,
either here or in Vancouver or in -- in Victoria?
FRANCES NEUMANN: I called maybe 1976. At that time
my mother was very tired, and I would take my
nephew, Charlie Peter, on my days off and
weekends to give rest to my elderly mother. I
called Vancouver detachment and I got nowhere.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Did you speak to someone? Did
you leave a message? Do you remember what you
had to do?
FRANCES NEUMANN: I -- I spoke to I believe a
constable that worked the Eastside.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Thank you. Another question I
have is where is Mary's family?
FRANCES NEUMANN: Mary has a son that lives here --
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yes.
FRANCES NEUMANN: -- with the Yukon government. He's
a ward of the government.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay. And her parents?
FRANCES NEUMANN: Her parents are deceased.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay.

I'm trying to imagine the times that you're
looking and knocking on doors and going in the
bars and asking people if they have seen her.
What do you wish existed right then that you
could have had access to?
FRANCES NEUMANN: Because I didn't have the
information where she was living - I lived in
Port Moody, I moved there in 1985 - and on my
spare moments or in the evenings I would go do
down to the Eastside and go into these bars. And
if anybody knew me, would never believe
the -- the places that I went to. But I was
never scared because I knew the people that lived
there knew I didn't belong there and would watch
out for me.

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

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Thank -- thank you very much.
I just have a bit of a follow-up question. Did
you reach out to anyone at any other
organizations or people to assist you in -- in
locating Mary?
FRANCES NEUMANN: For many years we had a -- a group
of First Nations women that would put on a
Christmas dinner for the urban First Nation
people that lived in the outside Vancouver area,
and we did that for 10 years, Yukon First
Nations. So, by that we would meet in different
places on the Eastside. We'd have meetings, and
this is where I would go and look, around
Hastings, for Mary.

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

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Thank you. Just so we can
keep our paperwork straight here, the video clip
will be Exhibit 4, please.
Thank you. Thank you. Very moving. Thank you very much.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Exhibit P1: 4 x 8” Black-and-white photo of women in
glasses and white shirt holding young child
("This is my sister-in-law Mary and her son
Charlie Peter" - Francis Neumann)
Exhibit P2. 4 x 8” Black-and-white photo of family
gathering seated on couch in living room.
Exhibit P3. 4 x 8” Black-and-white photo of baby in
white jumpsuit with cowboy sitting on a man's
knee.
Exhibit P4. APTN video:
http://aptnnews.ca/2015/12/18/preparing-for-a-
mmiw-inquiry-opening-old-wounds-for-one-family/

(HEARING ADJOURNED AT 11:35 A.M.)
(HEARING RECONVENED AT 12:11 P.M.)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Well, good afternoon. I
think it's afternoon.
Ms. Big Canoe, would you please introduce
our next family.
Good afternoon, everyone. We'll reconvene.
Ms. Big Canoe, would you please introduce
our next family.

Second Hearing
May Bolton, Dennis Shorty, Marilyn Shorty (Family of
Elsie Shorty) with Christa Big Canoe (Commission
Counsel)

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. Thank you, Chief
Commissioner, commissioners. I would like to
introduce you to the family members of Elsie
Shorty. Sitting right beside me is May Bolton
and her husband is beside her, Ivan Bolton. Next
we have Dennis Shorty, and then we have Marilyn
Shorty. And then we have Yvonne Shorty and
Crystal Shorty [sic]. I am going to allow them
to introduce themselves once they have been given
their oath, but prior to the oath Dennis will be
doing a brief Kaska Dene prayer for the family.
DENNIS SHORTY: [Dene spoken]
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: The -- the family members can now
be -- give their oath, Mr. Zandberg. And May
Hearing - Public
May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

will be affirming.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Good morning, May.
MAY BOLTON: Good morning.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
evidence you will give today will be the truth,
the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
MAY BOLTON: Yes.

MAY BOLTON, affirmed.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ivan will be affirming on the
feather.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [indiscernible]
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay.
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [indiscernible]
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Sure.

Good morning, Ivan.
IVAN BOLTON: Good morning.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
evidence you will give today will be the truth,
the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
IVAN BOLTON: I do.

IVAN BOLTON, affirmed.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.
DENNIS SHORTY: Good morning, Dennis.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
evidence you will give today will be the truth,
the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
DENNIS SHORTY: Yes.

DENNIS SHORTY, affirmed.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.
Marilyn Shorty: Good morning, Marilyn.
BRYAN ZANDBERG: Do you solemnly affirm that the
evidence you will give today will be the truth,
the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?
MARILYN SHORTY: Yes.

MARILYN SHORTY, affirmed.
Hearing - Public
May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.
Good morning, Yvonne.

YVONNE SHORTY: Good morning.

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

YVONNE SHORTY: Yes.

YVONNE SHORTY, affirmed.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.
Hi, Crystal.

CRYSTAL BOLTON: Hi.

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

CRYSTAL BOLTON: Yes.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

CRYSTAL BOLTON, affirmed.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

May, may I ask who you're here to speak about today? Can you give us a little information about your loved one?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's okay, Ivan, you can just maybe let the rest of the family introduce themselves --
Hearing - Public
May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

IVAN BOLTON: All right. I'll --
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- and I'll come back to that.
IVAN BOLTON: I think that's a good plan.
DENNIS SHORTY: Hi. My name is Dennis Shorty. I'm
the son of Elsie Shorty and Alec. And we're here
and I'm here to talk about mom, how did she
impact us with skills and tradition and wisdom
and spirituality.
MARILYN SHORTY: Good morning. My name is Marilyn
Shorty. Elsie is my grandmother. And when I was
small, she gave me the traditional name
[indiscernible traditional name], which stands
for "Skinny Fox".
I have a -- I grew up with my grandparents
in my younger years, so all of my aunts and my
uncles are like my sister and my brothers to me.
So, I was always with them learning the
traditional ways, learning culture, learning how
to respect, how to love the land, the people, our
family. I was also I guess you would call
mischievous, you know, like, being the youngest
and wanting to get involved in everything and
wanting to touch and see. And -- and so,
you know, with my grandmother being gone, it has
a lot of impact on all of us. And like my dad
said, there will never be another Elsie Shorty.
She will always be the one and only. Thank you.
YVONNE SHORTY: Good morning. Elsie was my
grandmother and my mother. I also was raised
with my grandmother. One of the things that she
taught me is love. If it wasn't for my
grandmother, I wouldn't even know what love is
because of the residential school impacts it had
on my family. It's because of her that I can
love everybody and myself. And -- and the
strength of our family, we need to continue to
build that because she taught us that as well.
No matter what, your -- your family is family and
we have to stick together. And respect yourself
and everything around you, the land. She -- I
was also taught the traditional lifestyle and I
live that today. And I'm here in hopes to make a
difference in the justice system that's done our
Aboriginal people wrong for so many years,
including my grandmother. I love her so much.
[Cry spoken]
CRYSTAL BOLTON: Hi. I'm Crystal Bolton. Elsie was
my grandma.  (sobbing)
CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  That's okay. Actually, Marilyn,
can you grab the microphone.
Commissioners, if I could draw your
attention to the screens. There happens to be
three pictures that were sort of rotating
through. I would like to ask Marilyn to identify
the pictures for you because she provided them.
    So the one that's currently on the screen
now -- oh, [indiscernible]. Can we pause one?
The picture that's currently on the screen now,
can you please identify the people in those
pictures?
MARILYN SHORTY:  That is a picture of my grandmother,
Elsie Shorty, and standing right behind her is my
mother, May Bolton.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  Okay. Can we see another picture,
please? Can you please tell us who is in this
picture?
MARILYN SHORTY:  This is another picture of our
grandmother/mother, Elsie Shorty.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  Do you -- do you know her
approximate age in this picture or around when
the picture was taken?
MARILYN SHORTY:  Um ...
CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  And if you don't know, that's
fine. Okay.
MARILYN SHORTY:  No, I -- I don't.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  Sorry about that. And the next
picture, please. Who is in this picture?
MARILYN SHORTY:  This is a picture of our
grandfather/dad, Alec Shorty, and his wife, our
grandmother/mother, Elsie Shorty.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  Chief Commissioner and
commissioners, I would like to make these three
photos together be exhibited.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER:  The photographs
collectively will be Exhibit 5, please.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  So, the family has indicated that
they would like to show a short clip, a video,
but I'm going to ask if Crystal can just explain
what the video is. Can you do that?
CRYSTAL BOLTON:  This video is of my -- my
grandparents and all my aunts and uncles. They
were -- my mom and the older kids had just gotten
back from residential school and they were moving
camp out to Beautiful Lake to do their
traditional hunting and harvesting and stuff
before the kids had to go back to -- before they
were taken back to residential school.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And if we could just play the
video. It's a short two minute clip.

[Video commences]

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

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you for showing that.

[Video concludes]
CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  Dennis, can I ask you a couple of questions about the video. Can you please tell the commissioners just a little bit about who was captured in that video?

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

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

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

MARILYN SHORTY:  Some of the strengths living the traditional Kaska Dene way with our grandmother is, like I mentioned earlier, our grandmother/mother was never one to not teach anyone about any -- like, the way our -- of living off the land, beading, teaching us cultural ways of arts and crafts and language. She was always with us and teaching us together as a whole group. Myself and my sister, Yvonne, being the younger ones with our aunty and uncles, grandmother and grandfather. They would never never include us. They were always included and
learning off the land. She was a very great 
teacher. I love her about that. And 
as -- you know, today I -- I live that way of 
culture, I live that way of being respectful to 
everybody and teaching my son that way too. So, 
I think that's all. There's so many others that 
she taught us. And as well, you know, like, her 
teaching, we also -- was taught to us by our 
mother, May. May taught us a lot of things and 
reinstilled all of the values and all of that 
traditional into us children and her 
grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It goes 
right back to the way of our grandmother, Elsie. 
Thank you.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.

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

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

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

DENNIS SHORTY: You know, our parents, they loved each 
other. They were great people. There is a lot 
of people out there don't know that, you know, 
that this -- there were dads, there were uncles, 
there were mothers, there were aunties. 
You know, when they have -- hold a dance, they're 
always the first one out there, you know, to 
encourage other people to dance, to go out there 
and dance. And when, like, tell the stories,
they -- they always finished each other's
stories, you know. It's amazing the way they
worked.
And ... And when they first met, mom was
coming down in a moose skin boat from Pelly Lakes
with her adopted parents, McKay (phonetic) and
Kitty (phonetic). And my dad was standing on the
bank, the Pelly Banks. And mom said, "Oh, I
looked up and I see this guy looking at me." And
dad say, "I see a moose skin boat coming down and
I see your mom sitting in there." At that time
she was about 13, going to 14. While they're
going past and mom said she turned around, "I
still -- I still see [Dene spoken], your dad
still standing on the bank watching us, eh."
That's -- that's who they were. They were great
people. And our -- our dad and our mom.
And mom was always there for us all the
time. You know, even though go through tough
times, she's always there. And when we tried to
speak bad about other people, [Dene spoken]. Mom
would say, "Don't talk bad about people. Things
are going to be bad if you talk about people like
that." And so that's how we were raised up, we
don't -- we don't talk about bad people or
anything. And she loved everybody. When we were
growing up, she always have kids at our house,
sleepovers, and they call her "grandma" or "mom".
That's how she was. Other kids, kids came to her
and they stayed with us and they call her mom
"mom". And there was mom, "Mommy love," and,
"Baby love," and she always say that.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I'm going to ask that the -- the
second document be put up, please. And if I
could get the Chief Commissioner and the
commissioners to look at the screen when they do
come up. This is just a visual. I'm not going
to ask this first one to be marked as an exhibit.
I just want to situate.
Dennis, is -- what do you see on the -- the
screen? Can you -- can you see the screen?
DENNIS SHORTY: I can, yeah.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And can you just tell us what you
see on the screen?
DENNIS SHORTY: It's called Ross River.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So -- sorry. What is it a map of?
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CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes. Thank you.

DENNIS SHORTY: Yeah.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And I just want to -- wanted to
situate that for the next map. Can we put the
next map up, please? And can you zoom in just
once, please? Oh. There we go.
And can you see that?

DENNIS SHORTY: Yes, I can.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I can hand you a paper copy.
I -- I am going to give you a paper copy just so
you can see. And I may also give you a pen,
please, so that you can mark. Maybe ... Here.
I can take [indiscernible].
Okay. And looking up at the
screen -- or -- or identifying, can you please
identify Ross River on this? First, do you know
what this is a map of?

DENNIS SHORTY: It's a -- it's a map of Kaska
traditional territory.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And you have circled the -- Ross
River?

DENNIS SHORTY: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: May I have it for one moment?
Thank you. I am just going to show the
commissioners because I am going to have him
identify something else. [indiscernible]
Bryan.
Thank you, Qajaq.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: While we're doing that,
just to keep our records straight, the video clip
will be Exhibit 6.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Yes.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: The map will be Exhibit 7.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you, Chief Commissioner.
Dennis, I'm going to give this back to you.
I'm also going to ask you to circle Lower Post.
I'm just going to pass this to the
commissioners again just to see where it's been
circled.

[Speaking to staff away from the microphone]
Just for the purpose of the public record on
this exhibit, Mr. Zandberg, can you please point
to the first circle that Dennis made on Ross
River? Thank you. And then can you just point
to Lower -- Lower Post. Okay. Thank you.
That's good.

And so, Dennis, can you tell me just a
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little bit about the Kaska territory?

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

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

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

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

MAY BOLTON: Yes, I did, but I attended -- I started
there when -- when I was 7 years old because I
think I was one of the fortunate ones because my
mother -- my parents hid -- hid me away because
they were looking for kids at the age of 5/6, but
I was hidden. And that's the strength of my
parents to protect me. And many things, many bad
things happened to me in residential school also.
And the trauma that I had, I lost the traditional
parenting that my parents taught me. It just
blew right out, right out of the window.
Not -- I -- I became a supervisor to my children.
And unbeknownst to me, I have created
four -- four residential school, that's four of
my children. And I thought I was teaching them
how to love, but I wasn't. I was teaching them
how to hate me. I have no more to say, it's too
hard.

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

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

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

I went to a lot of counselling. I went to a
lot of -- I'm still learning yet. And what
stopped me from that childhood abuse, to stop
that abuse: My son was 3 years old and I was
hitting him the way my mom used to beat me. And
he was cowered in the corner and he was looking
at me with that scared look on his face. And I
just -- I stopped and I looked at him and I fell
to the floor and I started crying. I thought,
"What am I doing?" I told myself I would never
treat my kid this way, the way I was raised. I
picked up that phone and I phoned Child Abuse
Treatment Services here in Whitehorse. And I
begged them not to take my child away from me and
that I needed help. And that's where I started
to force myself to understand more about
residential school and the -- the way my mom
raised us and my aunties and my uncles. And once
you start understanding what they went through,
you'll learn to love your parents again like I
do. I love my mom so much now and my aunties and
my uncles because I took that time to understand
and I wanted to stop that abuse to my children.
I have two boys. And they're just like night and
day. My oldest boy is traumatized. My youngest
boy is -- is when I learned who I was in here.

Thank you.

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

MAY BOLTON: Can you say that again?

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

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

Just looking at my mom's face, it just -- it
hurts so much. Because the loneliness, and
probably because of the loneliness that
they -- that they sh-- can't stand. The laughter
of their children were gone. Because my
fa-- my -- my mother was a lovable mother.
She -- she used to tell us stories around
campfires. She even played with us. And that
was lost. That impact of residential school was
so bad that they started abusing alcohol and all
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Do any of the other members of the family want to speak to how they believe Indian Residential School had impacted the family? No? Good. Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CRYSTAL BOLTON: Oh, yes, definitely.

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

CRYSTAL BOLTON: No. I think they were just -- they were travelling down -- like, this video starts at the beginning of the South Canol Road and they're travelling down there and they just came upon -- there's another clip on here that has my -- my grand-- my grandfather's sister and her
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family fishing on the Lapie River. That's just -- that's probably where they were heading.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Thank you, Crystal.
So, Dennis or May, do you -- do you remember that day? Do you remember the video? Do you -- did they show it to you ever? Did the guy ever see it -- so how old were you when you saw it?
DENNIS SHORTY: I was about 8, I think about 8 years old at the time.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: And did the person that was shooting the video know that you were home from residential school?
DENNIS SHORTY: No, they didn't know.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Just out camping on the land in your carefree lifestyle --
DENNIS SHORTY: This is all camping.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: -- according to him, yeah.
DENNIS SHORTY: It's carefree, yeah.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Yeah. Okay.
DENNIS SHORTY: And I remember they gave dad $5 for that. I remember that.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: You remember he got --
DENNIS SHORTY: Yeah.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: -- $5 for that. Okay. Okay.
And was it just one guy or was it a crew or?
DENNIS SHORTY: There was four people there.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: There was four people there.
DENNIS SHORTY: Yeah, four, yeah.
COMMISSIONER POITRAS: Okay. May, do you remember anything about that day?
MAY BOLTON: Yes. As a family we were just happily going up. Yeah, as you can tell, I'm -- I'm the 10 year old one and I'm the curious one. I always want to up front and -- and a busybody. And I remember that day very well. As a family we were happy because we just finished coming back from residential school and we were so happy going out on the land. It's just the land where we do our healing. That's our traditional hospital. And all the trauma and all the hurts that we got from residential school, we left it out, we left it there. And it was a happy moment for me that day because I was with my parents and my brothers and sisters. And these guys were coming down the road and they were doing a documentary on "Challenging [of] the Northwest
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[Territories]", Gordon Eastman. And he asked my
dad permission before he shot the film. And my
dad said why not, you know, go ahead. And then
that guy offered him 5 -- $5. And he -- he told
dad, "Here, you get $5. You could -- you could
buy more tobacco."

[Audience laughter]

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

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

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

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

(HEARING ADJOURNED FOR NOON RECESS)
(HEARING RECONVENED AT 1416)

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

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

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Thank you.

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

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

IVAN BOLTON: In -- in front of the cabin, it doesn't
show in the picture, but pointed straight out,
straight up in front of the cabin there's a row
of willow about two-and-a-half feet high.
This -- I'm saying this now because it's relevant
when my story comes out. So that you've got a
picture of [indiscernible].
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: May, can you tell me what's in
this picture and where it's taken?
MAY BOLTON: This picture is a cabin of my mother's
place out at our home place. It's called
Beautiful Lake, where the beautiful people comes
from.
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: You would say that.
MAY BOLTON: Yes. It's where -- it's where they lived
on their land. And it's a really beautiful
cabin.
IVAN BOLTON: Beautiful location [indiscernible]
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner and
commissioners, may I please ask that this picture
be made an exhibit.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Yes.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Number 8, please.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, May, can you please explain to
the commissioners why we're looking at this
picture of a cabin and -- and why it's
significant to the story of Elsie?
MAY BOLTON: This is the cabin where I found my
mother's body.
I will ... I will never, never forget on
that day, July 16th, 1992, when my beautiful,
lovable, beloved mom was taken from me from
persons unknown. That was -- that day changed my
life forever because I was the one that
phoned -- that phoned our mother, along with my
sister-in-law, Margaret, to be -- it was a
beautiful sunny day after I finished work. And
early on we seen our parents in town. And
Margaret, my sister-in-law, was concerned about
her horses and she let my parents look after it.
There was a coral not -- to your -- to your
right, where they kept the horses. And my
parents really loved animals and they -- they
agreed to look -- care for the horses for my
brother, Frank, and my sister-in-law, Margaret.
Anyway, Margaret asked me to drive her out
to Beautiful Lake because my brother was still
working and she was worried about her horse. So
we went out, thinking that my parents were still
in town. When we got there, we drove, we were
laughing and talking, you know. Laughing and
talking and thinking about things that we used to
do. And then we drove up to the house, to the
cabin. The door was slightly open. I called out
to them, letting them know, if they were there,
that we were coming, but all was quiet. All was
quiet. I went in. I saw that my mother was
sleeping on the bed. And I thought -- which I
thought she was sleeping, but as I got closer I
knew something was wrong. I got a little bit
closer, I bent down and I said, "Mom," and I saw
blood on her neck. There was a wound to her
neck. I seen all the blood.

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

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

IVAN BOLTON: May neglected to tell you one thing.
When she got things under control, she went down
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to the neighbour's place about five miles away
and made a phone call to the RCMP. And the man
that owned the -- the property phoned me in Ross
River and told me that there had been an
accident, a serious one, at Beautiful Lake.
Whereupon I jumped in the truck and headed out to
Beautiful Lake, passing the RCMP about six miles
from the -- where the cabin is. And I led them
to the lake because the cop that was driving the
vehicle did not know where Beautiful Lake was
because it's in off the highway.

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

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

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

DENNIS SHORTY: At that time I was just coming back
from work and I was ready to gas up so I could go
out on the land. And I came around the corner.
I could see that -- mom and them had another
cabin down in Ross. I was looking at it, I was
wondering if they're home. And Jack and Millie
(phonetic) come around and stopped. They told me
what happened, that, "Your mother has been
killed, shot." From thereon everything just shut down. Because at that time I was dealing with the mission school and what happened to me. And to this day my parents don't know what happened to me at that mission school. But now I could talk about it. They didn't know that I was sexually molested at 5 years old. I guess now they know.

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

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

MARILYN SHORTY: I was actually -- had just jumped in with Uncle Dennis. We were going to gas up and we were just going to go out on the -- go for a little ride and just -- I don't know what we were going to do, but we were going to go -- go somewhere. And that's when Millie had flagged us down. And -- and I remember Uncle Dennis was saying, "Well, how come Millie is driving, You know, like, so fast behind us," so we pulled over and see what was happening. And she told us. And at that time for myself, I was in complete disbelief. I was, like, you know, being young too and I'm, like, "How could -- how could somebody do that? How could somebody hurt her? Is this real?" I wasn't -- you know, like, I think I went into a different type of shutdown. I went into -- didn't want to believe it. I didn't want to believe anybody could hurt our grandmother. And then ... I don't really remember too much after that because it was such a haze and everybody was hurting and ... You know, one, we just lost our grandmother too, she was murdered. And feeling the pain and the hurt, the grief from everybody. And then myself too, I just shut down. I don't even remember
going to the -- to the service. I don't remember who even had -- did the plans for all of the -- the burial part. Now I know. Now I know it was our mother, May, but back then I didn't know how any of it had come together, let alone even being at the service or even at the grave site. And even, like, to this day, like, I -- I have a hard time remembering the day that she passed away. I think I still have a big part of me that's, like, blocked right off. I don't want to deal with it. I don't want to come to terms somebody could hurt such a beautiful soul.

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

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

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

CRYSTAL BOLTON: On that day we were -- I was down at my aunt's and I was doing laundry at my Aunt -- my Aunt Linda's house because the following day we were -- our family, no one mentioned it, we were getting to go out to Quiet Lake to camp and get ready to hunt and pick berries and ... And I was doing my laundry, so -- you know, to go -- get ready to go camping, and then my two cousins, my -- my Aunt Margaret's
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children - she was with my mom when they found
my -- my grandma - and they came to the -- came
to my Aunt Linda's house. And I was on the floor
and I was folding my laundry. And Aunt Linda
came in the room and so did my cousins, Rose and
Alex, and they -- they told us. They said,
"Grandma -- grandma's been -- grandma's been
shot." And my aunt just dropped. She just
dropped to the ground and then got up and she ran
out, and she ran to her husband and was just
screaming. And I wasn't -- I wasn't crying or
anything then because I -- I didn't believe it,
so.

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

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

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

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

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

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: It's his downfall, so -- it's his
downfall and why it be his downfall?
What -- what happened when the RCMP came and
spoke to your father?
DENNIS SHORTY: Because they asked him, "Alec, did you
shot your wife?" "Yes, sir." "Do you know what
you're saying?" "Yes, sir." He always says
that. And that's what happened.

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

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

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

It was just an open and closed case.

Through this my dad is gone now. He's up
with my mother. He always tell us that he didn't
do it. "How could I do that?" Of course they
were drinking that day, but my dad remembers he
wasn't -- when they usually get in an argument,
my -- my brother, Dennis, has a house I don't
know how many few feet down the road, that's
where my dad goes and sleep and let my mother
sleep. And during that time something happened
and everything, my dad said, was blamed on him
because of lack of English. And when they came
up here -- up there to arrest him, there was
a -- they got a guard, a police guard there.

Even him, he told the RCMP, "Alec needs an
interpreter," but they never listened to him. He
confessed, he said, "Yes." And they wouldn't
listen the guard. He tried over and over to
explain, "Alec needs an interpreter. Alec, don't
talk. Please don't talk to them," but he doesn't
understand. He figured he could -- he figured
that anybody asks him a question he has to -- and
say, "Yes," "Yes." That is why my mother is the
one that always translates for him.

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

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

He was in jail for two weeks, two or three
weeks, I don't -- I don't remember. It was a
really hard -- really hard thing to go through
because I don't know if they convicted him or
not, I don't remember, but he was with me because
he had -- they -- because of his confession,
obody never listened to us. The
investigation was quick.
So, my dad lived with me for 10 years. For those
10 years he had to check with the RCMP
every -- every evening. After work I had to go
down. That took a toll out of me. My brothers
and sisters never knew that. If I have to take
him to Whitehorse with me, I have to go down to
the RCMP station to -- to get the permission.
And I believe my dad, he said wholeheartedly he
did not. "I never killed your mom." He say if
I -- if I shot my mom, I could have -- he said I
could have heard that gun. I never did. I never
heard nothing. I don't know what else to say.
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Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marilyn Shorty: Yeah.

CRYSTAL BOLTON: I think that was her name. We asked her if we could get the police report. And she got back to my sister Marilyn. Maybe I should
let Marilyn talk on this now.

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

Christa Big Canoe: Crystal, can you tell me what the impact of having -- living in the community as a child, having everyone believe that your grandfather killed your grandmother, what that was like for you?

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

Christa Big Canoe: Did any of the other family members want to talk about and share with the commissioners the impact of having your father be accused of your mother's or your grandmother's death? Well, how -- what was the impact of people believing that your father killed your mother?

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

Christa Big Canoe: The family has talked about recommendations and ideas. Are there
recommendations and ideas that you would like to
share with the commissioners based on your
experiences about what would help families or any
recommendations you have whatsoever?

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

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

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

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

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: I want to reassure you
Hearing - Public
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Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

that at any time you or members of your family
can make recommendations to us. Anytime. Thank
you.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Chief Commissioner and
commissioners, did you have any questions that
you wanted to ask of the family?
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Thank you. I just wanted to
confirm what I heard and what I think might be a
recommendation and hear what you thought about
it. I think -- what I heard, especially from
you, Crystal, was the lack of information has
been one of the hardest parts and that more
transparency and communication with -- with you,
with family from the justice system is something
that you haven't received and that perhaps it's
something that you want to receive for yourselves
but other families as well.
CRYSTAL BOLTON: Yes.
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Is that fair? I just wanted
to clarify. Thank you. [Aboriginal language
spoken]
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Sure.
Marilyn Bolton: I just wanted ... I just wanted to
say as well, you know, like, families that go
through situations like this, you know, like,
having the respect from the RCMP or anybody
working in the justice field, you know, have that
sensitivity that, yes, families are going through
trauma and traumatic events, and, you know, to
have that respect for that. You know,
like -- like, we all talk about every one of us
doesn't -- or don't remember certain situations
after the murder. And just to have that respect.
To talk to somebody in the family, maybe one or
two, you know, with the RCMP and then being able
to relay that again and again so that there is
that open communication. So that one and -- and
another can relay messages on where things are at
in the investigation and not just being
stonewalled and saying, "No. Your grandfather's
guilty," and that's it. You know, just having
respect for the families. Open communication.
COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: [French spoken] Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you for the -- for your
courage, for your truth, and I heard a lot of
recommendations. And we have amazing people,
for us - that took note prior to this gathering and also today. So, yes, it's still open, you can e-mail us, call us, find us. We're here. And this is the beginning of a relationship. Merci.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Where is our sisters? They're out there.
They're still out there. Let's sing for
them. Let's sing for them.
Where is our older sisters? They're out
there. They're out there too. Let's drum
for them. Let's drum for them. Where is our sisters? Where is our older sisters? Let's drum -- let's sing for them, let's drum for them. They're with the Great Spirit.

So, we'll do that for you as a family.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: We may need the assistance. Thank
Hearing - Public
May Bolton, Ivan Bolton, Dennis Shorty
Marilyn Shorty, Crystal Bolton
(Elsie Shorty)

DENNIS SHORTY: Ready? Ready?

(Strumming guitar) [Dene spoken] We'll

sing this song for our sisters, our mothers, our
fathers, our brothers, our uncles.

[Song written by Dennis Shorty sung by the
Shorty family in Dene in honour of Elsie
Shorty]

DENNIS SHORTY: [Dene spoken]

[Audience applause]

COMMISSIONER AUDETTE: Oui. Oui. Thank -- thank you

so much. Merci.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: I want to -- we ... To

respect the laws of -- of gifting and of
reciprocity, we have packets of seeds that we
want to give to you as gifts to express our
appreciation for -- for sharing with us. Seeds
represent growth and new life. And so
with -- with that we're going to be giving you

some little seed packets.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: We'll stop for about 15

minutes. Thank you.

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

Exhibit P1: Three-slide PowerPoint entitled “Shorty
pictures” depicting a) a woman in shawl and
glasses (said to be Elsie Shorty) with a rose
motif on margins b) a man and women in Sunday
best standing outside with a wooden door in the
background c) a woman and a young girls out-of-
doors.

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

Exhibit P3: Map of Traditional Kaska Dena Territory

with two circles made in blue ink, one around
Ross River and the other around Lower Post.

Exhibit P4: One-slide colour Powerpoint entitled “3
Shorty Cabin” depicting a snowbound cabin.

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

Exhibit 7: Map of Kaska Dena Traditional Territory,
with Ross River and Lower Post both circled in
blue ink
Exhibit 8: Photo of a snowbound cabin

(HEARING ADJOURNED)
(HEARING RECONVENCED)

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

Third Hearing
Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo and Annette Eikland (Family of May Stewart) with Christa Big Canoe (Commission Counsel)

CHRISTA BIG CANOE:  Yes, Chief Commissioner.
   Hello.  Hello.  Yeah.  Thank you, Chief Commissioner.  The next family is ready and I would like to introduce you to the family of May Stewart.  So, right beside me is Terri Szabo, the granddaughter of May Stewart.  Beside her is her mother, Ann Szabo, the daughter of May Stewart.  And beside her is Annette Eikland -- Eikland, the great-granddaughter of May Stewart.
   Before the family is actually sworn in for testimony, Ann has asked to make a small prayer.

ANN SZABO:  I'd like to thank everyone that's in listening to our story about my mother and the support that we have to tell our story. Before that I'd like to -- to say a prayer to the great Lord above.
   Lord God, Jesus, look down upon my daughter, who is about to tell a story how my mother was murdered and how she was found. And plus my granddaughter, Annette. I love her dearly. Bless her and her family. Thank you for her support. And my cousins in the back, May and her daughters. And the support from Vera and her friend. Thank you for them. And bless all the people that are in the audience that have loss in their family, for their father and their mothers, and bless our family at home. Thank you, Lord Jesus. I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus' name. Amen.

BRYAN ZANDBERG:  Okay. Good afternoon, Terri. Do you
Hearing - Public
Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

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

TERRI SZABO: Yes, I do.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you. Pass that on. And I believe -- your name card is covered. I believe your -- is your name Ann?

ANN SZABO: Yes.

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

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

ANN SZABO: I do.

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

Annette, okay. Did you want to swear on the Bible or did you want to make an affirmation? It's fine? Okay. So, Annette, do you swear that the evidence you will give today will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

ANNETTE EIKLAND: [indiscernible]

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Okay. Thank you.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ann, I just have a couple questions about your mother. So, first of all, can you tell the commissioners who we're here to talk about today?

ANN SZABO: We're -- we're here about my mother, May Stewart, who was taken away from us in '72 in the most harshful way. Thank you.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Ann, can you tell me about your family members? So, who are your sisters and brothers? Who -- who were May's children?

ANN SZABO: I have quite a bit of members of the family that I can think of right now. I just lost a sister about three weeks ago. She suffered an illness before we lost her. Her name was Mary. And then I had -- we have Lucy Stewart. She is not with us. And we have
Rachel, who is not with us. And right now we
have -- we have Cecelia. She's with us. And
Roy. My brother Robert, he's the oldest in the
family. And Roger and he's with us. Donovan is
deceased. So, there was quite a bit of us, and
there was me. Thank you.

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

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

They just picked us up wherever we were
playing. We had no jacket on. Some of us had no
moccasins on because we were playing in the mud
puddle. I remember so well. And we trying
to -- I -- I trying to hide away behind my
mother. And they trying to usher -- usher me
into the tent. And tell the priest and the
brother not to take us, but we hid, but
they -- they threatened our parents and said
they're going to go to jail if -- if they don't
let us come. So they -- they picked me up and
they put me in the back of a -- a big army truck
with big cans in the back, and there was already
other little children in there before me. They
were all crying. And -- and they told us we're
just going to go for a short ride, and that short
ride never -- never came to an end. We were on
our way to Lower Post. We didn't know where we
were. And to this day I always see the beginning
of the poplar trees going down there. And
whenever I see it, it just breaks my heart to go
see and see them, and the cruelness I suffered.
And because of the residential school, when
I came out, I was old enough to have my own
children - I had my own children, I had four of
them -- and I wasn't such a good mother. To this
day people would think, "Oh, she's such a nice
lady." But I taught my kids like the way I was
taught. I was just one angry person. And to
this day when I look at my kids -- I had four and
I lost one. He was just going to be 21. We lost
him in an accident. He was my baby. When I look
at my kids today, I think how could I be so
cruel, how could I be so mean? But that's how I
Hearing - Public
Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

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

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

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

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

[Audience applause]
Hearing - Public
Terri Szabo, Ann Szabo, Annette Eikland
(May Stewart)

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

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

And, yeah, years later my mom would always
talk about my grandmother and so I thought, well,
you know, I'm -- I'm going to find out what
happened here. So, I went to the police station
in Watson Lake and I explained to them about
my -- what had happened to my grandmother based
on what my mom had told me and my dad, that she,
you know, had been raped and basically murdered.
And so they investigated. They came to the house and asked me where my grandma's grave was and they went and they took a picture. And then Major Crimes from Whitehorse called me and, you know, they asked me to tell them what I -- what I knew. And I can't remember if they talked to my mom or not, but they told me to phone the coroner for -- to see if there was an autopsy, and -- and there was. And I -- I shared that with -- with Christa, who has been really great. And in the coroner's report it says that my grandmother was found without clothes on from the waist down and her shoes, her clothes, whatever she had from the waist down was strewn everywhere. And, you know, what I know of elderly First Nation women is -- and from my mom, they're very old-fashioned, so they don't take their clothes off. And I was only 8 years old when my mother -- my grandmother was murdered and I can remember it was very warm. And they said she died of exposure and I don't believe that, but that's what they ruled. So, I'll just keep talking.

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

TERRI SZABO: Yes, that's correct.

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

TERRI SZABO: Yes. Yes.

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

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Yes, please.

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

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

TERRI SZABO: Okay.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you please carry on telling your story about what you learned from [indiscernible].
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TERRI SZABO: Okay. So if you read -- did you want me
to read what you told me to read?
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So just -- maybe if you can just
first explain to the commissioners, once you read
it, you've already told us what you thought, but
what else did you think about it?
TERRI SZABO: Okay. So once I read the coroner's
inquest, I mean, back in '72 they didn't have a
lot of forensic science, so I thought the police
did, I guess, a half-assed job, I'm not sure what
else to say, but they -- just -- just a second.
Okay, so this is what the inquest ruled. It
says, "Mrs. May Stewart came to her death, due
upon their oath say, that she said May Stewart
did on or about June 1st to June 7th, A.D. 1972
came to her death by natural causes from
exposure, contributed to [my excessive -- or
sorry] her excessive alcohol in her blood and
being left in a seminude condition by a person or
persons unknown." [as read] I just don't buy
that because like what I said before, I was only
8 years old when this happened and I remember it
being really warm. And what I know of my mom's
culture, my grandma would never take off her
clothes, never. So I really believe that she was
raped. And, you know, that was a grandmother
that I never knew because someone decided or
maybe more than one person took it upon
themselves that -- you know, that -- that it was
okay to rape and kill this person, which,
you know, was my grandmother and meant a lot to
my mom. I remember my mom crying a lot for my
grandmother, for days and days. And, you know,
she's -- I'm in my 50s, my mom is in her 70s, she
still talks about my grandmother. And I really
believe there's a murderer or murderers walking
around maybe even in our community of Upper
Liard, who knows. I'd just like to see some
justice because it's not okay.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: I just wanted to ask a couple more
questions for clarification on -- on this
particular document. So if we just go -- I'm
going to give it -- if we just go to the first
page, that's the letter that the -- the Yukon
government sent you after you requested the
report.
TERRI SZABO: Mm-hmm. Yes.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And in the next -- at the next page we actually see the autopsy report. We actually see an autopsy report.

TERRI SZABO: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Can you please say -- tell me when it's dated?

TERRI SZABO: It is dated June 9th, 1972.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And do you know who actually wrote the autopsy or?

TERRI SZABO: Dr. Albertini.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. And -- so what was Dr. Albertini's -- so the first thing you read in, that was the inquest or inquisition, is that correct?

TERRI SZABO: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. And that was different than the autopsy. If you -- is that your understanding?

TERRI SZABO: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And so what did Dr. Albertini, what was his opinion?

TERRI SZABO: His impression was, "None of the findings at autopsy could possibly be classified as a cause of death unless the laboratory could supplement one. Possible causes of death are as follows: extreme intoxication and exposure, pneumonia process, GI bleeding, a combination of the three." [as read]

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Now, you have read this because -- because you actually sought this document. Did you --

TERRI SZABO: Yes.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Did you find anything striking about when they were doing the autopsy some of the tests they may or may not have done?

TERRI SZABO: Well, when someone gets raped, they can check the DNA, the -- the sperm for, I guess -- for -- from the man, but they didn't have the technology back then.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay.

TERRI SZABO: Or the expertise, I guess.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: And when you say the expertise, I just want to draw your attention to the third paragraph from the bottom. And the doctor -- where the -- where the doctor is describing, you don't have to read the whole thing in, but can you touch on the expertise
issue?

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

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

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

TERRI SZABO: Yes, that's correct.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- to make that determination?

TERRI SZABO: Yes.

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

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

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

TERRI SZABO: Regarding the autopsy?

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

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

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

TERRI SZABO: My personal life?

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

TERRI SZABO: Well, before I came I wrote about six pages, which didn't do me any good because my brain is just overloaded with stuff. So, my grandma - I'll probably speak for my mom because she's too upset and nervous - she was only 48
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when she died in 1972 and that was 45 years ago. She would have been 93. And what I remember of my grandmother, she was very traditional. I remember walking with her. I know they lived in a tent up in a place called Cowboy Hill. Everybody would go woodcutting there. And I remember my grandma cooking fish over the fire in tinfoil, and I don't think I saw anyone doing that before. And she used to tell us stories, really scary stories. At night we'd sit around her and she'd tell us all these stories. And I remember she did not have a toilet, so we -- I had to go on a 5 gallon bucket. And she had a piece of plywood over it. And I never forgot that because I remember I had to use it in the middle of the night and I fell asleep on it.

[Audience laughter]

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

Things that I've heard from my mom, I guess my grandparents never drank alcohol. They were nomadic. They lived around Frances Lake, Simpson Lake. And my -- my grandma had two husbands, my grandpa Norman Stewart and then she left him because I guess he was quite mean, and married his brother, my grandpa Timmy Stewart. But my mom said that they were taken away to residential school and because of that my -- they had to move to Upper Liard. And at the same time other families came from Ross River and lived in tents beside the Liard River because they wanted
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to be closer to their -- to their kids. And my
dad's Caucasian and I just -- I guess I'm going
to talk a little bit about humanity, just what I
see being mixed.

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

My mom has told me stories too where -- and
I can't get over this and thank God I wasn't
alive back then, but, you know, my dad would go
in the bar and this is what my mom would have to
do because Indians weren't allowed in the bar
back then - could you imagine that? Just because
you're an Indian you're not allowed to go in the
bar. That's bullshit. Anyway, my mom would look through the window like this at my dad. Just because she was Indian. And also when my dad -- when my mom and dad got married, my mom was no longer Indian, according to the Canadian government. She was a white lady. What's up with that? You know, I just -- I was never oppressed but my mom was and I can see it. I mean, sometimes when I take the microphone or I start talking, my mom will literally run away because, you know, I will speak my truth whether people like it or not, and what I say, it's my truth. I don't say anything to hurt anybody, but I speak my truth and what I see as a person. And, you know, I -- when I was a kid, I played with everyone. I had Caucasian friends, Native friends, and I'm still not sure what the proper word is for my mom's people, I don't know, and even where I fit in, but, you know what, I don't care.

But, anyway, I think for my -- going back to my grandmother, I really think she would be alive today if the government or the Queen of England did not colonize Canada. The colonizers caused a lot of problems. A lot of problems. You know, they came here with the word "ethnocentrism" in their mind. And if people don't know what it means, look it up in the dictionary, or, better yet, Google it. It means that the colonizers thought that -- in their mind that they were better than. Wow, look at all these savages running around here. You know, we're going to fix them, we're going to teach them English, we're going to teach them how to whatever they wanted us to do. But, you know, there was never anything wrong with my mom. You know, I have known my mom for 50-some years now. She's a First Nation woman. She's been a really good mom and I'm -- I'm sure she's learnt a lot from her mother. And, you know, she's been oppressed so much, told that she's heathen and all these bad things in residential school. And my mom is not like that. My mom is a person. Her skin is a different colour, but she's -- she's a human being. And, you know, in society if we don't accept our differences, it's -- we're never going to go anywhere. You know, everybody is the same
and no one is better than the next person. And I think with the colonizers doing that and along with residential school, and this really bothered me when I learnt this, and I'll just say now this is one of the reasons I brought my daughter, Annette, because the things that I'm talking about she doesn't know about because I never told her. And the same thing with my mom, she never told me all these things when I was a kid. I just learnt by -- by sitting and listening and, you know, practicing what you learn when you leave here with other people, including your children. You know, racism and indifferences, it's learnt in the home around the dinner table. Parents telling their children, "Oh, I saw this dirty Indian downtown drunk." You know, if you are telling your children this, you are a part of the problem in society with hatred and indifference. And I want people to really think about this because no one is better than the next person because my dad is Caucasian, my mom is First Nation, I love my parents, both of them. They're good people. They could have been green, orange, yellow, blue, it don't matter. Love is love. We as people, one person at a time have to make changes for the better, by accepting other people for their differences. And all these drunk Indians you see staggering around, they have a story to tell and I learnt that. I never went to residential school, but the kids that were taken away, I remember that day, I think I was about 6, because I cried. The kids that I played with were going to Lower Post. I thought they were going to a big city. And I -- they were getting something that I wasn't getting. But little did I know where they were going and what would happen to them. And I played with these kids that were sexually abused, beaten and I don't know what happened to them, and that -- that bothers me. So, there's an intergenerational affect here with my mom going and the kids that I played with and that's not okay. That's not acceptable. Why do we treat other people like that? Just because they're different? So what.

I just could go on and on, but those are some of the mitigating -- I mean, contributing
factors to some of the issues that, you know, caused my grandmother's death and all these other issues that we have in society today.

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

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

She taught us how to sew our moccasins when we grew older. Mary was much later. I had a
problem with my moccasin. It was always lopsided this way. And I got so that I learn how to sew my moccasin and put it together the right way. And then I also know how to do beadwork. And I did beautiful beadwork for my girl. She was the only girl I had. So, I made her -- she wanted a pair of mukluks, so I made her mukluks. And I got older and I used to -- I used to be sick a lot. And I guess all that residential school trauma, I used to be sick a lot and later on in life I had -- I had seizures. That gradually went away and it didn't bother to come back, thank God. And then quite recently I suffered lymphoma. And then I thank God also for that, that I came back and I got out of it and I got better. And she was my escort. My girl was my escort. And ...

ANN SZABO: I forgot my doctor's name.
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Savage.
ANN SZABO: My doctor's name was -- she was telling me, she said, "You know what, mom," she said, "You know what your doctor's name was? Dr. Savage." I said, "Well, that's good."

[Audience laughter]
ANN SZABO: Well, that's good to hear. I said -- I was so sick I didn't remember because they had to drill a hole in my hip for to get some marrow bone, marrow out of my hip. She was with me. She was brave through that. And I went through a lot of illness, but I'm here today and I'm proud to be here. And I'm -- to talk about my mom. My mom was a wonderful lady and she loves her kids and see loves her grandkids, which she didn't get to know -- to know well. I love my mom.

CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Annette --
ANNETTE EIKLAND: Yes.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: -- I -- I know you, just based on the year of death, you weren't alive during the same time that your grandmother passed, great-grandmother passed. Is that true? You weren't alive when [indiscernible]
ANNETTE EIKLAND: No, I was not, no.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Okay. But can you share with the commissioners what you want to share about the impact it's had on the generations from -- from
your perspective, for you?

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

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

ANNETTE EIKLAND: No.

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

Anyway, I learnt about this just by
listening, going to events like this. I learnt a
lot from going to university. And when I went to
university, I did my genealogy. And on my dad's
side, my dad's a -- a Hungarian Jew actually,
can't find anything better than that, but,
anyway, on my dad side they're European settlers,
immigrants, farmers, nothing out of the ordinary,
and on my mom's side is all devastation, death,
murder, alcohol. And, you know, when my grandma
died, she left a lot of children. And my
youngest Aunt Rachel was the same age as I and we
were like sisters, we played together and,
you know, I didn't talk about her. I brought her
up a little bit the last time when you guys were
here, that she was also murdered by her common
law, you know. And my younger's brother,
Donovan, froze to death. My Aunty Lucy drank
herself to death. And my Aunty Mary recently
died and she just lived a life of alcohol. And,
you know, I contribute all those problems to
colonization and residential school. You know,
the colonizers, the Queen there of England
thought she knew right, but she didn't. No.
They got it wrong big time. And, you know, I'd
like to see changes, some of the changes that I
spoke about because I'm tired of going to
funerals. In the past month in Watson Lake I
probably went to maybe four or five. Lots of
suicides. You know, I -- I watch the news a lot
just to stay tuned with what's happening in the
world and I watched Justin Trudeau last night, I
just about puked. He asked the Pope for
forgiveness for, you know, what happened to the
Aboriginal people. And, you know, I was thinking
why the hell is he asking the Pope for
forgiveness when we didn't do anything.
They -- they're the ones that did something
wrong. We don't need to ask for anything. We
knew what we were doing. But the other people
thought otherwise, so ... Unless we start
going and treating each other equally, I
don't think we're going to go anywhere.
You know, I -- my mom and dad have been married
over 50 years, two different cultures, two
different colours, and it's been -- there's been
a couple wars there, but they're still going, so
you know it's possible for people to get along.
And I say that with humour and you have to really
know my mom and dad, our relationship to -- to
understand, so it's -- being mixed has been a
blessing and a curse in some ways, but I wouldn't
trade it for anything, so. Yeah, I have -- I
have good parents. It's been quite colourful,
so. But -- but unfortunately my grandma missed
all this stuff. Just some of the family members
in the background here want to talk.

[ indiscernible ]
LEDA JULES: My name is Leda Jules. I am married to
Ann's oldest brother. And May, they're talking
about, is my mother-in-law. You know, and I just
listened to the reports they were talking about.
It doesn't sound right for me, you know. Because
I knew the night that she disappeared she was
sober. And the reason why I know that is she
came over to the house in 1972, there was a flood
down in Liard, the highway flood and washed away.
And -- and that one time they thought the bridge
was going to go, so she came over to the house
and she tell us, "Let's go down to the river and have a look," you know, and she tell me that I had to be prepared. And she tell me I had to pack up things for the kids, so, you know, we'd be ready if anything should happen. And she was sober. She wasn't drinking. So, it's kind of a surprise to -- for me to hear that she was drunk. It really bothered me because I knew my mother-in-law. She was a kind-hearted woman. She loved kids. She loved all my kids, you know, and she babysat for us and whenever we're in town. So, you know, just listening today, you know, his aunt's death was pretty hard on him, but she died later, that's May's mom. That's my husband's aunt. Now I'm talking about my mother-in-law too. That's May's sister. And May's sister Elsie, they're both gone and they both died violently. And it's been pretty hard on the kids. Because my -- my -- my children really loved their grandmother, you know. Never once did she say anything mean or bad to the kids. She loved them. She cooked for them. She did everything for the kids. You never would hear her swear at the kids or anything because -- I hear that in some other homes, but never her home. And my kids were always safe with her.

You know, at that -- at that time they found her body, my -- my husband was out working, he didn't know his mother was gone because we didn't know. We didn't know. Nobody told us that she had died. People were looking for her. They said she was in Ross River visiting her sister, Elsie. And we thought it was true because we knew she always talked about Elsie all the time. And then later on we hear she was found in Carmacks, I don't know for what reason, because she really didn't know very much people at Carmacks. So it was stories after stories and she's been -- she was missing for about two, three weeks before we found out what happened to her. We didn't find out, but my youngest -- my younger sister-in-law, Cecelia, she -- she must have been about -- I don't know how old, 9, 10, I'm not really sure how old she was at that time, but she ran away from that probation officer because she is supposed to be in school and there
were -- we had a probation officer that was always checking around on kids. So, she was one of the kids that missed school a lot since -- and her mother wasn't around. So, she ran away from the probation officer and running down that hill by that graveyard. That's when she found her mom. And, like, when Terri was talking, you know, and First Nations women, ever since we're small kids we're taught to be respectful for our bodies and our -- everything has got to be covered up. And students, how long dresses we used to wear, believe it or not, since the -- it's just recently women started wearing jeans was in 1950s. Before then all women, children, young girls, they always had dresses. I remember that when we were growing up. Even wintertime we had dresses. They made dresses for us because that was part of our culture. So when they found my mother-in-law in that -- in that -- behind that -- down the hill from her place, she was -- from what I hear, she -- she had been raped and she had no clothes from her waist down. And my husband just got off work from the mill down there, sawmills. He worked for Desrochers (phonetic). And he ran home and I -- I tell him, "Don't go down there," but he had to see, he had to check. And he loved his mother. So to find her in that condition, you know, it's been really hard on him. And the only reason too is that, you know, I knew she was sober is because she came to our house very late and we walked down to the bridge and, you know, just to see the high water. There was three of us, me and my husband Robert, and his mom. And, you know, if anybody should tell us that she was drunk, she wasn't drunk at all. And, you know, and something -- something has to come out of this, you know. We -- we need answers. We really need closure to this. We never had that. You know, and just listening to grandma Elsie's family just before this, you know, it's really troubling because it's just Native women being raped and murdered, you know. We -- we need -- we need something. I'll be speaking on behalf of my sister later on this week, on Thursday. So, you know, the kids really need to know that their grandmother loved them. We -- I
was -- I was one of the children that went to Lower Post. I had a lot of regrets on how I raised up my children. Just listening to May talking about her being the supervisor to her kids and not their mother, we all went through that. I was like that too. I never -- I never told my kids that I loved them. And it was hard, you know. I forced my kids to go to church every Sunday. I'm -- still today I'm a Catholic yet, but it's not the religion, it's not the church, it's -- it's the people that run, you know. So, you have to know there is a difference too. And I loved my mother-in-law. And a lot of people don't love their mother-in-law. You hear horror stories about their mother-in-laws.

[Audience laughter]

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

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

[Audience laughter]

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

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

TERRI SZABO: So, the first question was what made me seek that information?
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Like, more so how, like, the
steps that you have taken and what you have
received. I -- I understand why.
[indiscernible]
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Yeah, yeah, of course.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: So, why did you want to look for
the -- the documents in the first place?
And -- and then what steps have you taken to get
information?
TERRI SZABO: Okay.
[indiscernible]
TERRI SZABO: Okay. Well, the reason I looked for the
documents and started this process was my mom
would always speak about her mother being raped
and murdered. And I'd hear it, you know, maybe
every other year, every couple months, so I
thought, well, you know, my mom is getting older,
so I told, mom, well, you know, I am going to do
something about this and we're going to find the
rapist, murderer or murderers that did this to
your mom, my grandmother, maybe before you die
hopefully. So I just went to the police station
and I told them what my mom had told me and it
just kind of started from there.

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

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

that?

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

And another thing is we have all these
problems and there's no mental health services
for people. It's huge. And that's not only for
the First Nation community, that's, you know,
general public in -- in Canada we need mental
health services. It's okay to have a problem in
your mind. You're not crazy. It's -- you know
that taboo, it has to go. We have to talk about
it because people do have problems. Just like a
broken leg, you get a cast, well, maybe you need
medication, maybe you need to talk to a
counsellor. Just ... It's -- it's just
something that's -- you can't put a Band-Aid on.
It's -- it's a process that is going to go on for a while. It took 500 years to cause all these problems, so maybe take another 500 to undo it, I don't know, but mental health is huge. It's huge. And, you know, respect for women. It's not okay to -- to touch someone, rape someone, make rude comments. You know, educate the judicial system, the judges. I was surprised actually when I went into the wrong door here, they're having a Justice Conference. Well, they could have came here and learnt probably more because, you know, all these colonial ideologies that they have in the judicial system, social services, it's not working, and they just keep using the same system. They put people in jail, I mean, they're not monkeys, and they come out with the same problem. Social Services, they take the child. They need to repair the family as a whole. Oh, just -- okay, thank you.

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

TERRI SZABO: I could go on forever, but since I always watch the news, I have been hearing bad press about the commissioners. And I think my only issue is -- is it's -- it feels like you're on trial here. For me anyway personally it's -- and because First Nations people have been oppressed, I mean, my mom wouldn't do this if it wasn't for me. And I just think we have to find a different way other than these colonial ideologies to -- to repair the harm that's been done. It's -- it's -- I know you guys have a tough job and it -- it would be draining to listen to all these problems across Canada and you've been getting bad press and -- that's my only issue this -- this -- it feels like you're on trial. And it's probably intimidating for a lot of people, but I -- I talk a lot and, you know, I will speak my mind and my mom always gives me that look, but that's okay, that's been going on for years. But I just really would like to tell all the First Nation people in Canada to -- you know, we all have our issues, our complaints, but do it in a respectful way and get behind this process of murdered and missing women and girls, and we have to find solutions to these
problems. It has to stop. And just try and work
together instead of conquer and divide.
You know, just try to respect one -- one another,
support each other. Just help each other in some
way so that we can stop this -- I guess all these
problems, so thank you.

ANN SZABO: Can I say something?
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Mm-hmm.

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

[Audience laughter]
ANN SZABO: Yeah. And -- and ... So and then
my -- my mom was the oldest, eh. Was the oldest.
And my grandpa walked away. Well, she -- he gave
her away too. So, she always said she had this
mandolin, you know, an instrument that you play.
My grandfather used to play that. And she said,
"I don't know why," she said, "my dad left me
this mandolin." He said, "It's so heavy," and
plus she had a -- a pet beaver that was really
heavy. She had to take it out of the pack sack,
she said, and she had to take little willows out
and -- so the beaver would eat them. And then
she had to find a cup of water or a bowl of a pot
of water to soak its tail because that's how she
was told by her parents. And then she said that
beaver was so heavy and she said she didn't like
the people that her dad left her with, so she
snuck out when those two adults wasn't looking,
she followed my grandfather. She grew up with my
grandfather over here in Watson Lake, in Liard
area. So that's how come she came -- she became
my mother and the grandmother of my children, and
my aunt and my cousins grew up in Ross. My uncle
was in Ross. So, I got to know them when I was
older. That's my story about my -- my
grandparents. Thank you.

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

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

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Because you have given us
so much this afternoon, we have a small gift for
you as a recognition of our -- our gratitude.
They're seeds that we hope that you'll plant and
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tell us that they grow. Thank you.
CHRISTA BIG CANOE: Thank you. The family has just
requested to close with a prayer. Is it Ann that
will be saying the prayer again?
ANN SZABO: Dear God Jesus, bless this whole area
where they're having this most important event
for Murdered Indigenous women and girls. Lord
Jesus, bless the people that are working with us,
all their hard work. And bless the people that
came to attend. Bless their family and keep them
safe. And Lord God Jesus, I pray that you give
them knowledge, the people that are working
with -- with the people that are attending here.
Give them knowledge to make the change for
everyone that is here, and bless their family
that they left behind at their home, their
children, their grandchildren, whoever they love.
And bless our homes and -- and our children,
our -- our husbands. And Lord God, I pray have
mercy on -- on each and every one of us here and
give us courage to speak up. Give courage and
strength for the people that -- that have to come
up here to tell their story. Give them strength
and courage, dear Lord God. I pray in the name
of Our Lord Jesus' name. Amen.
CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: We'll take about a ten
minute break, please.

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

Exhibit P1: Three-page double-sided copy of
correspondence and report of Yukon Coroners
Service

(HEARING ADJOURNED)
(HEARING RECONVENED)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER BULLER: Ms. Snowshoe, are we ready
to start?
[indiscernible]

Fourth Hearing
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen (Family of Mary Adele
Doctor) with Karen Snowshoe (Commission Counsel)
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.
CINDY ALLEN: [Aboriginal language spoken]

BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you.

CINDY ALLEN, affirmed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

she became violent and seriously injured my mom. That tragic result was that my -- my mom died three weeks later from the violent assault.
The woman who was charged by the police for the assault got only 14 months. But because of time served, she was out three months after, which to me was like a slap on the wrist. The woman that assaulted my mom still lives the negative life. She is a street woman. I feel justice was not served.

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

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

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

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

In the community of Ndilo everybody knows that there are drug dealers and bootleggers. There have been a lot of deaths -- deaths and
increased violence as a result of these issues and in Ndilo and in Detta. It is not safe to live in Yellowknife or in Ndilo. I do not feel safe walking around Yellowknife or Ndilo. I do not feel safe in my own home in Ndilo. I do not spend that much time there because I feel unsafe there and it should not be like that.

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

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

CATHERINE DOCTOR: Yes, it was.
KAREN SNOWSHOE: And can you tell me about -- can you
tell the commissioners about how alcohol was
related?

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

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Catherine.

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

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

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Six.

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

CINDY ALLEN: [Aboriginal language spoken] Thank you.
So the pictures that we have here are about my
grandmother, Mary Adele Doctor. As my Aunty
Cathy, Catherine, has said, my grandmother lived
a traditional lifestyle. She's seen the changes
from -- she lived out in the bush and she lived
through the changes and moving into the
community, but she still lived a very traditional
lifestyle. So this first picture that you see is
of Mary Adele Doctor at the original Hudson Bay
Post in Yellowknife from the -- the picture is
from the 1950s. And you see granny packing
Catherine. And then you see my mother standing
there with her little striped top. And then
Uncle Jimmy Doctor there as well.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CINDY ALLEN: [Aboriginal language spoken]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mary Adele Doctor was a very respected elder from Ndilo that knew a lot about traditional laws, spirituality, cultural practices, and bush skills. She raised 11 children, three daughters and eight sons, in the bush. She and my grandfather, Gabriel Doctor, spent much of their time out on the land at their camps at [indiscernible place name], at the family cabin at Mile 16 on Highway 2, and in the Barron (phonetic) grounds. They were known for their cultural teachings and led a culture camp in Ndilo and Yellowknife in the 1990s, where they taught others how to tan caribou and moose hides, prepare muskrats, make sinews, and build drums.
When my grandmother passed in 2009, I was devastated, since it -- it made it so much harder for myself and my two kids, [indiscernible name] and my son, [indiscernible name of son], it made it so much harder for them to learn about being Weledeh, Yellowknife's Dene Tlicho, and learning those traditional skills and knowledge.

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

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

My favourite memory of my grandfather [sic] was actually the last time I saw her at her home in Ndilo in January 2007. I came North to attend the funeral service of my Uncle Albert Doctor, who died tragically in a plane crash flying to Blachford Lake Lodge. I came -- I came to spend some time with my grandmother. And I remember her smile and the warm and loving hug that I got from her when I said goodbye. I did not know at that time that it would be the last time that I would ever see her alive (sobbing) or the last smile or hug I would ever receive from her.
It is my hope and request that my submission to the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry about my grandmother, Mary Adele Doctor, results in positive changes for Indigenous women and girls living in Ndilo and Detta and in the North. The normalization of violence in Northern communities and in Ndilo and Detta is not normal. It is not normal and should not be tolerated. Indigenous women and girls should not live in fear in their own homes and communities. The social issues resulting from alcohol and drugs need to be addressed, not only by the federal and territorial governments but also by Dene chiefs and leaders in the communities. Dene women and girls need to be protected and feel safe in their homes and these issues needed -- need to be acted on now. We should not be waiting any longer.

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

I would also like to see the traditional Dene laws of respect, sharing, love, and caring be more widely taught to Dene and others. The Dene law of respect is one that teaches respect to everything around you, the land, the water, the animals, the bird, and nature. The law of respect starts with respecting yourself and respecting others and respecting your elders and your community. If you live a respectful life, you will live a life that honours and respects everything around you. Through respect for self and others and everything around you there is no place for violence and negativity. If the woman who killed my grandmother had lived a respectful life for herself and if she had treated others with respect, my grandmother, Mary Adele Doctor, may not have died the sad and tragic death that she did.
Other recommendations that I suggest to the inquiry for them to consider when they are making their final report come from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action report. My recommendations relate to child welfare, health, and justice, and they are: I'm not sure if I want to read all of them, but ... I can? So, under "CHILD WELFARE", recommendation number 5:

We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

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

We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

And I would add Dene law. Number 19:

We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic
diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

Number 21:

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

Number 22:

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

Under "JUSTICE":

We call upon the federal government to eliminate barriers to the creation of additional Aboriginal healing lodges within the federal correctional system.

Number 36:

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

Number 37:
We call upon the federal government to provide more supports for Aboriginal programming in halfway houses and parole services.

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

And number 39:

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

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

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

KAREN SNOWSHOE: Thank you, Cindy. Before I invite questions from the commissioners, is there anything else that's maybe come to mind that, either Cindy or Catherine or Sunfire, that you'd like to let the commissioners know? No? Okay. Commissioners, if you don't mind, Catherine Doctor has requested that any questions be please directed to Cindy and she'll respond on behalf of the family, thank you.
COMMISSIONER ROBINSON: Testing. There We go. Sorry.

Thank -- thank you for coming and sharing
with us and -- and for your thoughtful words. I
was hoping we could talk a little bit about the
newspaper articles that we received. I'll read
them. I didn't want to read them while you were
talking, but is there something that you want us
to take from it or understand from those
articles? Or do they speak for themselves? I
just wanted to make sure we gave you that
opportunity to -- to share your thoughts on those
and express your views on their significance
before we were done. So, that's really my only
question.

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

So, we had hoped that this person would have
a stiffer sentence. We had hoped that she would
be charged with -- well, in my mind I was
thinking murder, but she wasn't charged with
murder. She was charged with manslaughter and
then it was downgraded to aggravated assault.
And then the coroner's report, well, after they
did -- they did an autopsy because granny died a
few weeks after the assault. So from what I
understand, the coroner's report said there
wasn't enough evidence to have a higher charge, a
murder charge. That's very upsetting to the
family, especially when they downgraded it and
then this lady is only -- she's out after four
months. She's out of jail after granny dies.
She was only in jail for four months. That's
wrong. Sorry. And I -- I wish that woman a healing journey, she obviously needs some help, that other lady, but that's -- I hope some changes happen. So the ... I have yet to see the coroner's report and I have the -- I have made that request. I -- I am -- I hope that there wasn't any systemic racism that arise from the downgrading of the charges against this woman. I know that's an issue in many communities and there is a recent court case here in the Yukon about that happening. So, I requested a copy of the coroner's report. It -- I wasn't strong enough until now to -- to face this because it's such a tragic loss. I have lost my grandmother and I have lost the traditional teachings with her death.

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

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

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

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

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

CATHERINE DOCTOR: Okay. Thank you very much for hearing my story. It's been eight years that myself, my family, and we have extended family
all over NWT that are affected from this violent death. And I hope there will be changes, so that needless death of our mother. For me, myself, I feel very unsafe living in Yellowknife in Ndilo. I want changes so I can live a safe life. I am a mother, a grandmother, and I do not want my grandchildren to have -- to live in fear. I live in fear everyday in Yellowknife and that shouldn't be happening because in our culture the traditional way of life, I never experienced that. So, I'm hoping and praying that there will be changes done very soon. And I'd like to say some words in my language. [Aboriginal language spoken]

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

[Silence]

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

CATHERINE DOCTOR: Can we stand, please. I'm going to say The Lord's Prayer. In the name of the Father, 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. Father, son, and holy spirit. Amen.

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

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

There has been many things said today. We are feeling your hurt. That's why we are here today. We will open our eyes to see what is happening today. The truth will come out. It will never be hidden anymore.
Guide us, Creator, as we move forward. Help our families, our loved ones, our children, and all the babies that are yet to come. Creator, our baby girls, they are the gift of life and the givers of life of our people.

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

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

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

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

[Silence]

Fourth Hearing Exhibits
Catherine Doctor and Cindy Allen (Family of Mary Adele Doctor)

Exhibit P1: Print-out of slideshow presentation shown May 30, 2017; first image in slideshow bears caption “Marie-Adele Doctor with beadwork at family cabin in 1990s; six slides in total,
including images of Marie-Adele Doctor scraping and tanning hides.

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

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


Exhibit P5: Yellowknifer news article “Woman accused of beating elder won’t face manslaughter charge” by Cara Loverock, Friday May 1, 2009.

Exhibit P6: Yellowknifer news article “Accused in elder beating to stand trial” by Lauren McKeon published Wednesday, August 12, 2009.


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

(HEARING ADJOURNED TO MAY 31, 2017)
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