National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 3 Expert & Knowledge-Keeper Panel
“Indigenous Laws & Decolonizing Perspectives”
Canadian Human Rights Museum
Winnipeg, Manitoba

PUBLIC

Part 3 Volume 3

Thursday August 24, 2017

Day 3: Indigenous Laws & Decolonizing Perspectives

Talking Circle
II

APPEARANCES / COMPARUTIONS

Aboriginal Legal Services No Appearance
Amnesty International Canada No Appearance
Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Julie McGregor (Legal counsel)
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) Joëlle Pastora Sala (Legal counsel)
Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police No Appearance
Canadian Association of Police Governance and First Nations Police Governance Council No Appearance
Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action and Partners – Canada without Poverty and Dr. Pamela Palmater No Appearance
First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada No Appearance
Government of Alberta Doreen Mueller (Legal counsel)
Government of British Columbia Jean Walters (Legal counsel)
Government of Canada Anne Turley (Legal counsel) Amber Elliot (Legal counsel)
Government of Manitoba Heather Leonoff (Legal counsel)
Government of New Brunswick Heather Hobart (Legal counsel)
Government of Nova Scotia Sean Foreman (Legal counsel)
Government of Nunavut Alexandre Blondin (Legal counsel)
Government of Ontario Kirsten Manley-Casimir (Legal counsel) Catherine Rhinelander (Legal counsel)
Government of Saskatchewan Colleen Matthews (Legal counsel)
Government of Yukon Chantal Grenier (Legal counsel)
Human Rights Watch No Appearance
Indigenous Circle Chapter of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association No Appearance
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--- Upon commencing at 9:16 a.m.

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: Okay. Thank you, everybody, for coming here today and being with this circle. There has been a change in the agenda and we're inviting family members, if they wish, to come to sit in the first row of seats to share anything that they would like to share to the Commissioners. And if there's any even written documents that need to be presented to them they will be accepted at this time.

And just a reminder again for family members, when you are sharing your story, to remember it's a live stream; okay? So, it'll be across Canada and just to be aware of that.

We're going to have an opening prayer by Katherine Whitecloud, to begin with, and then Grandma Shingoose will do ceremony with a song and there will be a gift presented to the Commissioners. And I think that we are all very aware that there's been a lot of mixed emotions in these three days, especially by family members. And this is the time that I believe -- now that the Commissioners are here, that you can present your suggestions, recommendations.

One of the thing that I want to say, being an Indigenous person who loves to cook and feed people, you got to feed people when they come to your meetings. It's
very important. And but I can only imagine the cost of the food in this place. Yikes. But if it was held somewhere else we could have brought our own food. We could have bought like lots of good things.

So, I will call up Katherine now to say the opening prayers.

**MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD:** Morning.

--- OPENING PRAYER AND SONG/PRIÈRE D’OUVERTURE ET CHANSON:

(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

**ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK:** Hello. Hello. Hello. Okay.

So, what is going to happen now is that Grandma Shingoose here is going to sing a song of her choosing and we will be doing the gift giving as well. The -- I'm not sure Qulliq -- Qulliq -- codelick (ph -- codelick (ph)) will be lit as you're singing; okay?

**MS. GERALDINE SHINGOOSE:** The song -- bonjour. My English name is Geraldine Shingoose. My spirit names are Sky Woman, Northern Lights Woman. I come from the Bear Clan and my warrior spirit is Grandmother Turtle.

The song I'm going to sing is for the children, for the children that are going to come after us, our future, but also it's for the children that are -- that -- for the missing and murdered Indigenous women that are
missing or murdered, that sacred bond that was -- that they 
had, the mothers and the children. So I want to 
acknowledge those children and sing this song for them.

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: Thank you very 
much, Grandma Shingoose. That was beautiful.

And while the Qulliq is being lit, she has 
asked us to have a moment of silence for the murdered and 
missing women, and to remember their beauty, their 
awesomeness, their uniqueness.

So, at this moment we will have -- you can 
stand if you want, but we will have a moment of silence.

(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: Thank you very 
much.

I said this before I think in the first day 
that when we are saying prayers for the ones who are 
missing and have been murdered that we must remember that 
they had in their bodies the beautiful water of life. And 
as we say our prayers, to say our prayers to the spirit of 
the water that was in their bodies, the sacred water that 
gives us life, that produces life. And they will always, 
always be in our hearts. Always.

And as I'm waiting for the Qulliq to finish 
being lit we will have -- I lost my paper. I need it. My 
memory's like a sieve, you know. I got to catch it when I
can.

And we were -- we're now going to have a
gift giving to the Commissioners. The grandmothers have
given them a gift for their bundle so that it can travel
with them. And it is a turtle and turtle represents truth.
And that's what needs to be told in all of this, in
everything that we do, that we must speak the truth,
whatever that is, and we may not be happy to hear the truth
sometime but we need to.

Oh, okay. All right. So, I'm going to let
Velma and, geez, Carol, and I think all the grandmothers
that were in the circle last night to come up and make
their presentation. And I really want to emphasize that it
is the truth that we want at the end of this inquiry,
whatever that may be. And I know it's going to be painful
all the way. And we have to honour the families who go
through this every single day of their lives. There isn't
a day that goes by that they don't feel the sadness and the
grief and we must always remember that.

Okay. You can go ahead then.

**MS. VELMA ORMIS:** Bonjour. (Speaking in
Native Language).

We want to present some gifts, some sacred
medicines and we want to say miigwech to our beautiful Jade
for giving us this most beautiful turtle to travel with
you. And as we were cleaning the sage yesterday, we
cleaned it for you because we know that you'll need it
many, many times. And if you ever need more, just call me.
We'll clean more for you. So, with that, we'll present the
gifts and say miigwech for having us in your circle. It
was so sacred and so heartwarming why we're here.
Miigwech.

**MS. CAROL MOAR:** The turtle is one of our
spirit helpers in the women's teachings. It's the turtle
that guides us. Because the shell has 13 sections to it,
and if you count around it has 28 for the 13 moons and 28
for the cycle in between. And because of the importance of
our sisters that are gone missing or murdered, I think it's
so important that we have a turtle as part of your bundle.
And the sage is the women's medicine. It's a time that us
women can -- we can use it all the time. And so again,
with that, it's for our sisters and for their families. So
I'm going to walk around the circle because I am contrary
but I'm not going to go backwards. Yeah.

**(SHORT PAUSE/COURTE PAUSE)**

**MS. CAROL MOAR:** I want to thank the
grandmothers for their gift to the Commissioners. I also
just want to let people know that the sage in that cedar
there is available to anyone that wants to take some home.
And Jo Seenie, the next one going to be speaking, and Chris
picked those fresh.

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: So the next on
our agenda this morning is -- that's a sign I think. You
don't need paper.

Anyway, we're going to have Joannie (ph) --
see I can't even say that name right. Joannie (ph), like
where did that come from? Anyway, Jo Seenie and Danny (ph)
are going to talk about the original law of the land, which
seems to be forgotten in this country so we're bringing it
back. We're like clan mothers here. All Aboriginal women
are clan mothers. We were the ones that did what needed to
be done when life was happening. And I say -- and I'm
probably going to -- probably going to have whatever, but I
think that -- I believe that the clan mothers need to teach
the men how to be men. That's been missing for many
generations already thanks to the residential school,
thanks to the other things that happened even before that.

And the one thing that I've now -- I'm 69
years old. I've been sober for 42 years. And I'm very
proud of that, very proud of that because I never thought I
would come out of it. Is that our -- the most important
thing in our lives, the most important thing, the only
thing we had to live by other than living under the law of
God was our families. And almost right from contact our
families were discombobulated, like totally. And it didn't
take long.

I mean, you think -- you know, so here you are as a newcomer and so you and I are going to speak. Well, I think that's going to be fun because you have no idea what my language is and I don't know what yours is but we live together and then things start to happen. Then there's intermarriage. I figure the Métis people were here a long time ago, not just the Red River.

And so in -- because we have to remember that our lives were thousands of years -- our ancestors were here. There's no 150 years. I mean, try adding 20,000 to that and more. And we have to remember every day that we honour our ancestors. That's why we're here today.

But because the families have been so discombobulated with all the systems in place, I mean, still our children are being removed from us, and the mothers are suffering too whose children are taken. And you think about, you know, I'm -- what happened when I left? What did my grandfather and grandmother do when I left? I didn't know where I was going. They didn't either. But there I went, you know, for 10 years.

So we have many years of healing to do and it's our responsibility. No one else. We need to do that for ourselves.

I am a carrier of my Innu (ph) language,
which you know is Cree, and our Innu (ph) way of life. And
I don't have to ask anybody's permission from any other
tribe. I am from the Innu (ph) Nation, Mosakahiken (ph)
and Innu (ph).

So with that I'm going to call Jo Seenie to
come and speak on the clan mother's law, the original law
of the land.

MS. JO SEENIE: Bonjour. (Speaking in
Native language).

I just want to acknowledge our ancient
ancestors, also acknowledge the grandmothers and the
grandfathers, acknowledge our families and also to remember
the unborn, and that whatever we do today is for the love
of those yet to come, so that when we make decisions or any
kind of things that are done for the future that we always
remember those.

When I heard about this that was happening
here I heard it through some of the family members and how
they were upset because they didn't have the -- there was
miscommunication or misunderstanding of what this gathering
was about. They felt that they weren't being heard. And a
lot of them are upset as we speak and offended. And but
yesterday when we arrived -- I wasn't going to come. I
wasn't going to come to this meeting and but I know that
I'm here on the will of the Great Spirit and that the words
that I need to share are really deep words and that I'm not here to come offend but to address our proper defence, our protection under tribal law.

In this territory I've always been known to stand up and stand against things that happened to the earth. I get in trouble a lot here because I -- I'm against raping to Mother Earth and against raping to our peoples, so I'm very vocal and very straightforward and offend the system.

I guess I just -- I don't want to talk so much about me and how I been involved in helping with our families because this is about our families and these are about the loved ones that are missing, both male and female.

I have a writing that I wanted to read that we have. The old man that helps us -- right now we are going through something that happened to us when we came back from Standing Rock. We came in as who we are as tribal people. We identified ourselves as our Anishinaabe name, our clan and our territory, and representing us as Indians. And because of that we were targeted and pepper-sprayed, then beaten at the so-called Canadian border, also along with my 10-year-old son who was also pepper-sprayed.

And the reason why I'm bringing this up is because of the violence that's still done towards our
people and that this needs to stop. And I think about our families who are back home who feel that missing and murdered -- MMIW has now become an industry. And I hate to say it like that. People get offended by that. But it -- people who don't have good hearts -- and we know they're there. There are good-hearted people, a lot of good-hearted people but there are hearts that are not good who would thrive off that and that needs to stop.

There are families who make decisions from searching or paying their bills who lose their children, threatened by the system. And you can't blame them for being upset when things -- these kind of meetings are going on because imagine -- and we can't imagine. I mean, a lot of us have loved ones that are -- who have been murdered or missing. So a lot of us are affected in our communities, so-called communities.

I recommend to the Commissioners that when you go to Montreal that you let them know ahead of time what this gathering was because there's -- the families thought this was going to be about them expressing what they need to express. But if you give them that information ahead of time then they wouldn't be so upset. They'll still be hurt but at least they'll understand. Because even when you look at when families have missing ones and they're in the news at the moment, it's almost
like they get all the attention. And I'm not -- I don't
mean that in a bad way, but there's families that are still
searching on their own, having a hard time to search. Some
of them have to do things. They have to be constantly
doing things. They do walks. They do some kind of -- just
so that they know that they're doing something for these
families, for their loved ones.

But I wanted to also acknowledge that there
was actually a quiet protest that was going on yesterday
and that says something. Then when they -- when this was
presented to me I felt sad. If you -- just raise this if
you feel like you're not being heard. Raise it. And then
I was like, well, I guess my hand will be -- the families
will be like this all through the whole time if they don't
have the understanding of what this was about. So I'm
going to keep this.

I'm trying to keep this short so I'd like to
read this from our helper who is a legal advisory in tribal
law. And he wanted me to read this message to the people.
I'm not really a writing and listening -- reading things.
I'm usually just say what I need to say, so this is the
first time I'll be reading and I'm really, really nervous
and that's kind of unusual for me to be really nervous.

"Bonjour. Dante. Greetings to all my
relatives." (As read)
I just want to add that we're not racist but that we are tribals, so don't be offended by what I say.

"Greetings to all my relatives. I am a member of an Indian movement that has addressed issues since the late 60s by using methods that brought about immediate positive results, yet these same methods were condemned by most white people and Native organizations, as well as Native people themselves. They had their Indian minds altered so they would be accepted by the white man. In my travels I was fortunate to meet old Indian women and men who spoke limited English or not at all but were intelligent beyond the word and known exactly what Indian law really was, is and can be continued without the white government's interference. The Indian law I speak of has stopped both federal and provincial court judges from convicting Indians who stand up for the people and the earth. This movement has nothing to do with Idle No More or the American Indian Movement as those..."
organizations [sic] are registered under
the white man's law. As well meaning
as they may be, our struggles are not
for equality because we do not want our
children and grandchildren to be
equally messed up like most white
people are. And even though there are
good white people among us there are
exceptions to the rule that simply
proves the rule..."  (As read)

Oh my goodness. Okay. Sorry.

"...the majority that rule of them are
messed up. Prior to the European
invasion we are still experiencing,
there were treaties between our tribes
that were made with spiritual
foundation that were based upon peace
that we few tribals still live by to
this day. We are seldom noticed
because our objective is not to please
the television audience but to pass on
to our children a living philosophy and
not a program that will destroy them.
I am pleased and elated that when our
younger people come to accept that our
tribal law is the only answer because it works and can resolve any problems that the white government and its followers confront us with. It will bring peace to you all, and not the illusion of peace that governments have presented to the people globally. Should any of you take more than interest in what I'm saying there are a few tribals among you that can direct you to where you begin -- can begin. We do not need another neo-colonial system or natives that want to join the white man political parties that compounds further suppression of all Indian people. In closing, I thank you all and I will leave you with a quote from the late Art Solomon (ph) Anishinaabe Arthur -- author and teacher. "A curriculum that is in harmony with earth will be -- will bring harmony to the people of the earth." Miigwech. Hai Hai. Keep a good mind for us all. (Speaking in Native Language)." (As read)
And I just want to give this to the legal briefing. This is a legal -- this briefing was researched and written by an individual classified as an Indian, not a person or inhabitant of the ceded or a conquered territory claiming no academic or professional standard that are required. Should the briefing be in the area of problems that belong to any legal citizen or inhabitants that owe allegiance to the Government of Canada or the Crown of England, this briefing is outside this allegiance and not restricted by the laws, religion or concept of this allegiance. The legal sense of this briefing is to establish for the first time since the Europeans first believed they were the superior race and attempted to conquer the world by using the concept of discovery, which permitted all other Aboriginal groups to be in direct conflict and outside acceptance of any social order practiced by these codes and ethics of European concept.

The concept of international law are respected in this briefing in which the nation of the world follow because Aboriginal code ethics and law have been disregarded or destroyed, making international law the only law between nations left to be respected. If this law does not exist, there is no law between nations, man or concepts, but the fact that there are international boundary lines between countries of various names which
were brought into existence by conflict of interest and ideologies settled by war.

Between these nations from which a treaty has -- was agreed upon and signed does not give this briefing its legal and just existence for the Indian. The legal -- the legality of the Indian was restricted by those who managed alienation, severalty and guardianship of the sovereignty and territories of the Indian tribes.

The citizens and the inhabitants of Canada cannot teach, instruct or relate to the Indian of his unique legal sense because of the allegiance owed to protect the Government of Canada, therefore, disqualifies any of the science of instructions to history, law, government or religion. The facts present -- presently being printed and advertised are for its white citizen members that are policy of this citizen -- civilized nation. And they are in direct conflict with the actual documentations between Indian tribes and the Government of Canada.

My goodness. This briefing is the disqualifying instrument needed by the Indian when the question of validity to any statement that distinguish the Indian from the non-Indian and the Indian being the Aboriginal found in the various areas of North and South America.
I know that's really deep but it needed to be said. And it comes with a good heard and that there are Indians who are awake and that we are back with our tribal and custom usage and that we need to protect our future.

And remember that I came here with no intendance [sic] to be offensive to anybody but that the law needed to be said. And that in order for us, we need to reclaim the women to be the true title holders of this land. And also, that we have to remember that there are no borders across this land, and to remember our South American relatives who are also being attacked and murdered.

So I come to you with a good heart and to remember our ancient ancestors because the spot that we are in right now, they were under here. And to remember those family members, to connect with them and hear what they have to say, and that their names of their family loved ones are not just names. And I know a lot of you know that. You all have good hearts and are here for that intention, to help.

So peace, miigwech to you all, my relatives.

We all come from tribal ancestry. Miigwech.

**ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK:** Thank you very much, my friend. Truer words have never been spoken. And we are the descendants of the original people of this land.
And I'm very proud to say that. There's not too many Canadians that can say that but I can.

Okay. I am now going to call on -- where did you go? She's going to be explaining the circles and what's going to be happening later.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** I just -- thank you.

We are going to take a short break before we start the first circle. And this will allow us just to set up the space in a good way as well.

The first circle. So, as you've heard the grandmothers speak this morning, yesterday the Commissioners asked the grandmothers that have been in attendance throughout the week if they could provide guidance on ways to ensure the families could participate. And the grandmothers -- bless their -- them because they are already working very hard -- stayed up until 10:30 last night to provide the guidance that was necessary. And the grandmothers had said that the first circle really needs to be the families.

And so we are going to take a break but when we come back I ask that the families have the inner part of the circle. The grandmothers and our presenters will also be welcome in that inner circle. But if there's room needed, because there's more family members than fits in here, we want to make sure a second row is available for
them too.

And, essentially, it's a directed circle. And what that means is the grandmothers will help direct the family members go through some points. And there is a speaking stone that will be passed around. And when the stone is passed no one has to speak. Like a circle you don't have to speak. You can pass the stone, but while you're holding the stone that's that person's turn.

But we did want to be really clear. This is being live webcast. So, you know, some rules are general guidance you have in circles, like, you know, what you're saying in the circle stays in the circle. It's not exactly the same. So we wanted to be very clear that this is still part of the public process and that's it's being live webcast. And we just want everyone to know that, not to discourage anyone from speaking their mind, but so you have that awareness.

And then also, the families will be invited -- families will be invited to have lunch and we will be coordinating that and you'll be able to speak with myself or some of our other staff that we've identified.

So, I do really quickly want to identify health staff yet again who are in the room. And so obviously the grandmothers are in the circle and we had a number of them providing health support. But, for
instance, if any of the staff who are in a support --
health support capacity -- I see one staff member here for
sure. And we have Jade. A number of people from here know
Jade Harper (ph). She's also a staff person. And can you
please stand up? In the back is Jodie (ph) -- sorry, Jamie
(ph). And is Jodie (ph) in the room? We have four health
staff members and you can, if you want, go see them. They
have things if you would like to talk to them about. And I
just wanted to identify them for that purpose.

And so we'll take a break. We'll make sure
that the inner circle is cleared for families and the
grandmothers and our presenters.

We have three presenters still with us. But
as you can guess, originally on the agenda was Karen Drake.
And Karen Drake is in the circle and she actually met with
the grandmothers last night. She's graciously also
following the guidance of the grandmothers that the circle
that she was planning will happen or we can find a new way
for her to be able to present that material. And that was
based on the wonderful knowledge the grandmothers had to
share with us.

So, in the directed circle, in the inner
circle, the families will each be given the chance to have
a stone. The grandmothers will be inviting a
representative from each family to join the circle.
There's some points but, you know, if you look on the agenda, it's not like you have to say all of them. You can say what you want. So what the key messages you heard were, what you learned over the course today, what ideas and recommendations you have so that the National Inquiry can move forward in a good way.

There will still be the Manitoba hearing will be taking place in October when we will actually be doing the full hearings with families. And I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

I will not be doing any facilitation. It will be the grandmothers who will be directing the circles when we come back from our break. And so we'll take a 15-minute break now so we can get it set up. Thank you.

--- Upon recessing at 10:02 a.m.

La séance est suspendue à 10h02

--- Upon resuming at 10:24 a.m.

La séance est reprise à 10h24

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Hello. We'd like to get the circle started, so if we can call everybody back into the circle. We can call everybody back in to begin. I'll go outside and get some people out there.

**MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD:** We'd like to optimize our time together. This morning is an opportunity, as discussed at the meeting last night, to
provide recommendations for our Commissioners and for the Commission and how -- and their move forward on a path so that -- as a young lady who spoke before had indicated, people have come here with -- that are upset and we don't want this space to be one where people are upset. We want this to be a good way of honouring our sisters and our mothers and grandmothers that have gone on before us or have not -- are missing.

And so we want to provide -- have that opportunity this morning and so we encourage people -- and there is a lot of noise in the hallways so could we have those doors closed, please? Could we have those doors closed, please, because it's really noisy out in the hallway? Thank you very much.

And one of the interesting things -- and we talked about this last night a little bit is about the -- and we started out yesterday talking about our traditional laws and what that means to us and Dawnis gave us a wonderful presentation at the end of the day yesterday.

One of the key -- I won't say laws, but how we live is that we respect each other and we -- I've never, ever known in my lifetime growing up where we had community where our people got together where it's noisy like that. Never ever. It was always quiet, respectful. If people were talking they talk like this. Because the space is sacred
and the space was a time for people, individuals, to raise their voice with what they were going to share. And so I want to encourage that here because we can't talk about it but not do it. So, let's do what we say we're going to do, which is to listen to each other.

I'm going to ask Sheri to explain what the directed circle means. And we're going ahead and we're just taking the bull by the horns because we want the best out of this circle.

--- TALKING CIRCLE/DISCUSSION EN CERCLE:

MS. SHERI COPENACE: Bonjour. (Speaking in Native Language).

My English alias is Sheri Copenace and I just want to thank everybody here and for that beautiful ceremony this morning and for each and every one of you for being here, bringing your kind, good and compassionate hearts and spirits here.

So what we're going to do this morning is we're going to have a -- you see the inner circle here, we invite all family members to come in and to sit in the circle. Everybody here is equal in the circle. Not one is above or below anybody. And you see the huge number of people sitting in this circle and I want to thank the people sitting in the outer circle as well for supporting the work that's happening this morning.
What this directed circle is, is we would like everybody to have space and time to be able to speak, so it's a little -- it is different from a sharing circle. What we're going to ask you to do is share and so that the Commissioners and everybody else here can hear a key message or a key direction about how this can go in a good way because we know more hearings are coming up and we would like to hear what your thoughts are on that, what kind of guidance you can give on that and that's what we're asking for this morning. And everybody in this inner circle will be asked to do that. We're -- the circle is also not to force you to say anything. That's up to you if you choose to say anything or not. But the only thing is to be mindful to allow everybody to speak here because I think we have -- I don't know. I don't have a watch but --

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: 10:30

MS. SHERI COPENACE: -- it's 10:30 and I think we have until 12:00. We're going to have lunch at 12:00 noon today.

And I believe that was the other message that we were going to give that the families are going to be invited to lunch at -- I'm not sure where. Inn at the Forks. So it's the families that are being invited there. So that's another message that we're sending out today.

So, for me, because this is about families,
I would like to pass this rock to whichever family would like to start first. I feel that it's very appropriate for us to begin in that way. So, we'll pass it to a family member, then we'll go sun-wise and then just pass it along when you're finished.

**MS. MAGGIE CYWINK:** Good morning, Elders, medicine, Commissioners and family members, and the audience here today. My name is Maggie Cywink. I'm from Ontario. I am a family member for 23 years. What I would like to say moving forward in a good way is that the Commission needs to think about seriously to dismantle the National Family Advisory Circle and then appoint families to control in provinces and territories their very own advisory circles. I think it's very important for families to have that control inside of the provinces and territories. It will give families an opportunity to give you advice, connect with families, feel like families have that kind of responsibility and role and be connected to you and be connected to each other.

I would like to thank you and pass this forward. Miigwech.

**MS. MARIE BAKER:** (Speaking in Native Language). I hope I'm speaking loud enough because a lot of times I feel people aren't speaking loud enough.

I am grateful for having come here. I am a
family member and it has been a long time since my mother went missing, so at times I don't expect that much, you know, of a recognition of that because it seems that many people -- many families are grieving the loss of one of their relatives from a more recent time. Anyways, for me, it's at least 60 years plus that I lost my mother.

But I really respect the opportunity at this time to even say anything because I usually don't, you know, seem to have that opportunity.

I was given an opportunity yesterday to use this red material or cloth, you know, to, again, indicate maybe that I didn't quite agree with what was being said. I kind of laughed about it after because I was thinking, oops, maybe I went too far. But I had been concerned with, you know, the way people were speaking. They didn't seem to take into account the danger or the threat to people in families where they are speaking out now or -- well, of course, in the past and now, you know, will be doing so at the inquiry. And I did get some people to speak to and I did notice that they changed the tone or the words, I mean, to suggest that there was more of a need for protection of families.

I think -- well, they had mentioned this thing about justice centres. I don't think it was that clear to people that these could be places or what I'm
calling "sanctuary". Actually, I could expand on that a bit more but I hope to include that in, I guess, the statements that we're going to eventually give in October, you know, under the idea of how do we commemorate, you know, our lost loved ones. Well, of course, right away I thought, oh, I want a garden. I want a garden where families could go to and we could gather at times. So, I don't know. I'm going to write these ideas down.

But I kind of would have liked to have heard maybe more about that but I do feel that even a -- when we're having these kind of more formal meetings, I still wish they'd work in a little space more. I realize the minute of silence, or was it two minutes, was -- I welcomed it but I still feel like I'd like to see more expression of grieving. Maybe not just for our families but just really for everyone, you know, to take part in that, you know, acknowledgement that we have lost, you know, our people.

And, of course, me, I was up the, you know, the words to, of course, genocide and holocaust, but we're in a very appropriate place for that. Even though I keep being told this is not a holocaust museum, it's a human rights one, I just feel that they have neglected really recognizing what happened to our people. And I don't mean just locally like Anishinaabe but, anyways, I hope they don't get any more business from us. I hope we can find a
more friendly place to us that honours our -- you know, whatever we're doing.

But I don't really like -- to me this is one of the big weasel words that they got us thinking about is reconciliation. And I won't go into that but then there are other things that people keep saying about -- I don't know. They -- everybody just seems to be wanting to be so desperate to forgive -- to give -- to forgive people when we haven't even, you know, hardly made an approach on getting social justice. I know, like I said, we'll see more of that in October when our families can, you know, speak in front of others, just to be brief about it. But I don't expect too much sport from my own family.

And I was saying certain areas there will be people having to pretty much stand alone, so we have to get peer support because we're not always going to get it from our families. And I don't understand why they wouldn't say things here like that but I guess the two groups that I noticed have not been addressed that much are the Christian people. It's hard for them. They have certain ways that prevent them from looking at, you know, violence and criminal activity. Again, they are being asked to forgive really quickly, like before even sometimes investigations happen.

And as -- and the youth. I'm right now
participating in trying to get more of a youth, senior
dialogue going. We don't see it that much in Winnipeg.
And one person said that it's up to the seniors to go out
there chasing young people to talk to them. And I thought,
hmm, that doesn't seem too practical. So I'm hoping to --
whatever I'm doing there to set up this dialogue will maybe
result or move more towards a senior centre for Indigenous
people. I believe Sioux Caribou has talked about that and
I feel that among the other cities in Canada that have some
centres or some better programs for seniors that I think we
definitely need that here.

But like I said, I am grateful for the ones
that, you know, made some changes to how they were talking
about this idea of legal -- you know, the historical, legal
rights. My own personal view on that it was way too
academic. I'm glad they did give handouts, printed
handouts after. But I don't think the people worked that
hard to adapt their information to this particular audience
and particularly families. I know you can sit through
those things, say, oh, you know, I'm learning all this new
stuff. It sort of goes in one ear and out the other as far
as my experience is. So I think the more concrete examples
when people are presenting information, I think that'll
help bring our people together in a knowledge that, you
know, that we need to know.
I'm, again, very grateful for, you know, there at least being something here. I -- you know, I'm glad that they're putting emphasis now on the families today. I didn't see it when it started out that much so I was thinking, okay, maybe I'll try this, waving this red flag around. But, actually, I did better by just scooting around and -- in my little sneaky way talking to people and that's how I felt I was able to affect change here.

So, next time you have a meeting I think they need to have like a, I don't know, a person, a desk or something designated where -- well, especially family members can go and, you know, talk to them immediately and maybe the information or whatever the -- you know, that person wants to share can then be shared. Oh, yeah, the other step I thought was important and I was so glad that there were ones that listened to me is I've been very concerned that we -- and hopefully by this time, you know, there is a recognition that we do need a blog for the families to communicate.

So there was two women I talked to -- well, one was from NWAC and another one mentioned some resources from another women's group that might have a little, teeny bit of money that might help this happen. So I hope nothing, you know, is put there as an obstacle to that, even if it's a beginning and even if the inquiry itself or

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whoever. I think the group you mentioned that you want to, you know, see stopped, even if they set up something, you know, that there is maybe more of a formal blog or something that will not, you know -- something that will not be so, you know, political and can be defunded quickly. I really hope that for at least two years we have a kind of a blog where we can share experiences.

Again, I've been very grateful I could meet people that I've met over the years and share what's going on in their area.

Again, I violated things by speaking too long but I figured, well, I'll give it a try because I didn't think that red flag thing worked that good, although I did get a bit of attention there.

So, again, miigwech for listening and, again, very grateful that you're here and could listen to some of the ideas that some of our families might have.

**MS. SHERI COPENACE:** Before we move to the next one, I've just been asked if we can talk a little bit louder. I know you were pretty clear but just for the other one.

**MS. MARIE BAKER:** Oh yeah.

**MS. SHERI COPENACE:** Okay. Thank you.

**MS. ELIZABETH ROSS:** Morning. My name is Mikisayclay (ph) from the Deer Clan. I'm from Winnipeg.
My name's Elizabeth Ross. I'm here on behalf of my families who have murdered loved ones and who haven't been able to make it here today for whatever reason.

I -- I'm not sure if I could make recommendations at this time if that's an expectation. I think it goes back to that decision of not wanting the inquiry and just wanting communities to have the support. I didn't take that decision -- I didn't believe that was a legal decision at the time. I just felt it was necessary and I'd -- but how I feel about being here or anywhere without the families I never -- I didn't want to go forward without the families.

But knowing recently that some steps are being made to bring their cases forward, it, I guess, in a way, brings some relief that something is happening. So I haven't totally -- even though there was time this summer to do that I wasn't able to totally explore what I would go forward on or not.

I haven't consulted with the family members, but because of what I've been through, it makes it really hard to go forward with saying any recommendations or what I think -- what I see or envision. I feel that it will push more for that change because I haven't seen it happen and I just feel it's getting worse. And even though a lot of communities have stepped up, in my view, things haven't
gotten better.

So I guess I'd like to just -- by expressing that to see where that will move towards in terms of how people treat one another or each other. I guess I'm speaking about the lateral violence. And this is something I've learned about only within four years and it's an issue I have had to deal with my whole life and that people I don't think know about. If I'm just learning that within four years and wondering what I had to deal with from people growing up and wondering why people were violent towards me. And I still see that happening every day. Yeah.

Thanks. I'm very glad to be here though. I feel like I -- even though the families are not there I feel like I want to put closure towards that because I know their cases and their voices are being heard. I knew they didn't -- for some reason they weren't being heard and I hope to try to carry on that work that I haven't been able to carry out for whatever reason. But I'm just grateful to be here and to acknowledge to two families of murdered women. Miigwech.

**MS. DAWNIS KENNEDY (MINNAWAANAGOGIIZHIGOOK):**

Bonjour. (Speaking in Native Language).

I had opportunity to speak yesterday so I was invited into the circle. My cousins aren't here today.
And I'm remembering my auntie, their mother, Millie (ph), who is much missed.

And I guess what I would say is -- oh, first something I have to say is that I'm keeping my phone on. And I know that's not with protocol but I'm going to do it because I have a niece who is struggling with meth addiction, who has chosen to get help and is hospitalized right now with psychosis and has made one attempt on her life and so she calls me. So I'm going to keep my phone on and I'm going to answer and I'm going to leave if she calls me. And I just want to say if that happens or if I'm checking my phone, it's no disrespect to anybody's story but that's something I'm going to do.

And I would say that I really took heart in seeing the grandmothers speak together. They stayed last night until 10:30. I don't know, when I got home I felt really tired. But those grandmothers, they did their work and they talked and it was really good to see that they could make a decision and the way that it was respected here. I would say like I'm really proud of that. I'm really proud of that and I'm really proud of the way that this happened and that that's respected because that's the way that I was taught is that it's our grandmother's role to correct things, to make sure that they happen in a way that the -- is in accordance with the way that we do
things, you know. So, it's good that we go out and we try
to do the best we can and it's good that we have grandmas
who can correct us when necessary.

So I want to say that and then -- though one
suggestion that I -- well, I guess I have two suggestions.
And I know some of them have already been thought of but
what I was told is when we invite people somewhere we make
sure that they have water and we make sure they're offered
food and we take care of that. That's a requirement and
that's for everybody. So, that's one thing I would offer.

And another thing, I'd really like in
October for there to be -- for us to gather in a place
where we're close to the fire and we can just go out and
sit and we can kind of go back and forth without having --
I don't mind walking but it feels very far away and I would
like it to be -- to feel closer. And I like the idea that
if there's rent paid that it's going to go to some -- to a
place where our people are very welcome and feel welcome
and where they do good work for the people.

Miigwech. (Speaking in Native Language).

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Speaking in Native
Language).

I'm with my Wolf sister here. And she asked
me to come down with her. And I'm thinking about a lot of
people who have been murdered within the system. We never
received no justice because of a law. A law that's very biased and one-sided. And a defence of this law is only for Canada, not for the people of these territories.

Based on the rights of discovery, we are not considered human. We are lesser than that. We're not even in that. So why should we have human rights?

I'm not here to complain about that or anything like that or want rights from a criminal that thinks that we're lesser than them. But what I want to see is that the supreme law of this land, through tribal custom and usage, be adhered to and obeyed. Because when it comes to the rule law of treaty is based on peace and only peace, not on a theft of land, murderer of people, all the murder and rape and everything that's going on today, the poverty that's created to cause all this damn crime out there and to protect the so-called peacekeepers from murder charges, whether it be a lawyer, judge, politician or anything else that are within our territories from the east coast to the west coast, from the north to the south. Whole half side of the world is the Americas. This is our empire. This is our territory here that we live upon.

The peace has to be adhered to. And the use of any law to protect any government official is to cease and desist. You want some recommendations? There's a recommendation. No better way to hide a crime than to use
a law, even if it is genocide.

But I'm speaking to you as a citizen of my own tribe with my own people, which is a different country than Canada. And Canada's not even a country. It has no sovereign land base here. It has no sovereignty. No Canadian has no sovereignty. You're in our home. Just like when we're at the boarding room we got beat up and I had to fricking curl up on that ground on a cold cell floor in pain because I wanted to live by who I am.

I know the violence. I've had family killed by cops and everything else too, in the past, even before 1492. But the only reason why treaty always comes up, keep the peace, is because of troubles in the past that created a foundation to all international law, which are six treaties worldwide that define the territory. Three of those treaties are here. This is under our command, not the queen. Forget that Roman law you're talking about. All those that are guilty, they are guilty. There is no excuse. No more creating laches or laches because it becomes negligence.

You know, don't want to offend nobody, like we were saying earlier, but I know there is no kind way to say it. I have to be harsh. That we have to use our sovereignty to protect people within our territory. I'm not just talking about our people. I never talk about our
people. All people are our people in our territory.

But some of the things I would never hear people say. But when it comes to the tribes that belong here, come back home. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Speaking in Native Language).

Well, there's lots to say about what's going on. My family, too, went missing, you know, return, come back, some hurt themself, all because of politics and other things. But that's a story I would tell because I'm here with Jo and she spoke well, and here with (inaudible) too to speak on behalf of the tribes and I'll pass this on. Miigwech.

MS. JO SEENIE: Bonjour. (Speaking in Native Language).

I just wanted to mention something for the Commissioners real quickly. I spoke earlier. That there are women that are inside as commissioners, some native women but also other women that are in there and they have a voice as well and please take them serious. They have a right to say things that need to be said, vice versa, male. We have sisters in there that we -- our women shouldn't be afraid to say what they need to say and to be respected.

But also, communication at your next place, I said earlier about letting them -- the families know
exactly what this meeting was about and the -- because they
felt that they weren't heard, so more communication. So

MS. JOYCE CARIBOU: Hello. Can you hear me?
Yeah. I'm the mother of a victim and a daughter,
grandchild, sister, my -- and an auntie. They were taken
away from me for -- all of them. And what I think about
these women that are being killed, what my point of view is
as if they're trying to decolonize the woman so there won't
be more of our people here. I hope you understand what I'm
trying to say.

Like, you know, none of our woman will have
children and their children and never -- and lots of my
families were murdered so I'm saying I'm a mother,
daughter, granddaughter, sister, auntie. And I've been
through a lot. It hurts. No justice was served for the --
oh, I'm just getting all nervous and, you know. But as
long as I spoke my mind. Thank you.

MS. SUE CARIBOU: Hi. My name is Sue. I'm
going to stand up for my family. I've been here the whole
three days. I'm one of the NFAC, National Family Advisory
Circle. And I stand for my family that's been murdered and
still missing. This is my sister, Joyce. She's been
fighting depression, fighting for her daughters to get
justice. This is my niece, Gail. I'm afraid to lose her.
She attempted suicide quite a lot. I'm proud she's here today, both my sister and my niece.

We have a lot of unjustice [sic] in our family. I'm a strong person. I fight. I continue to fight for my family. I speak for my family. I'm the voice for my family. I'm a voice for a lot of families here in Manitoba. They come to me and they ask me how I can still be standing with all the families I'm -- I have murdered and missing. But I have an auntie and elders that I talk to. They're my support. Best support, the grandmothers. They teach me a lot.

I'm 52. My grandfather was murdered in the 70s. My caregiver is still missing from 1972. Then in the 80s I lost another grandfather, an uncle, a nephew, a sister, a niece, two cousins, and my niece Tanya is still missing and nobody's searching for her. Me and my family continue to search by ourselves with the help of these two beautiful people and the help of my supporter, Belinda. She buys us the equipment out of her own pocket. That's the best support I ever had. If it wasn't for Belinda to give us that money to buy the supplies, me and my family wouldn't have continued to search for my niece. And I'll continue to stand and be the voice for all my family that's still -- no justice, nobody charged to this day.

It's 2017 and my family has been murdered
and gone missing since the 70s. And I'm going to continue supporting families that are going through the same thing I've been going through all my life with my family.

I'm afraid to lose my nieces from suicide. I'm afraid to lose my sister from depression and not come out of that depression. I went and picked them up today, this morning, with the help of Belinda giving me the funds, the cab fare to go pick them up. Nobody else has given my family any funds to help us anywhere else. It's very sad that our family still struggles to this day.

A lot of families have been coming to me for the last two days and asking me why isn't any of the families speaking. I, myself, was confused, but then I asked questions. And our people need to start asking questions to understand things. And I'm very grateful that these two came to the meeting yesterday, and the grandmothers for having a meeting. I'm grateful for the families for coming and not giving up. I'm proud of all the families for having that voice for their loved one. And I'll continue to support all the families.

I got a foundation also called Families First Foundation. I didn't know the policy went through but it went through. I just have to copy applications. If any family member wants that help we're on the Facebook. It's called Families First Foundation. I'll help you in
any way I can with buying a monument, getting a headstone for your loved one. Whatever it is you need from the Families First Foundation I'm there to help you with that. And I'm here as a National Family Advisory Circle to be there for families if they want to talk to me, to support them and to support the Commissioners. I'm in the middle of the Commissioners and the family.

Even though I have a lot in my family that's been murdered and still missing, they keep me going. I'm their voice. I'm their only hope. They don't have a voice. They were murdered and still missing so they can't speak for themselves. So I'm here for all my loved ones that were murdered and still missing. I'm here for my sister, my niece to continue to have their voice out there for my beautiful niece, Tanya Niffenack (ph).

When my parents were murdered in 1979, both my parents were murdered. I was 11. My sister took me and my late brother in. My late brother also died of a heart attack. I call it a broken heart because his eight-year-old daughter got murdered. Five months after that he died. Two days after my late brother her husband died, my brother-in-law. So my family's been going through tragedy after tragedy.

I got a granddaughter in the hospital right now. Grateful that Bernie (ph) gave me some advice before
I left to the -- to go to the hospital. I did what she
told me to do. It helped my granddaughter. Now she's
going to stay one more night to make sure she's okay. I'm
grateful for all the advice that she gave me and for blue.
That's what we're there for is to support each and every
one, support one another. It would make Mother Earth a
better place to live if we were there for one another,
search for our loved ones together, support one another.
And I thank the Creator for another day.

I still have one surviving auntie. That's
who I go to when I feel that I can't do this anymore. I
struggle with depression every day. Thank God for my
daughter. She comes and gets me every lunch time. She's
going to university but she still takes that time to make
sure mom gets up and gets out of the house. I'm grateful.

My kids all got educated, which I didn't
have. I made sure my kids graduated. They all have jobs
to support their children. I didn't have my parents there
for me and my sister and their grandkids. None of my
nieces and nephews got to know their grandparents as they
were taken away. They were murdered.

What do you call good behaviour? When you
shoot five people you get eight years good behaviour.
Shame on our justice system. That guy left us orphans but
he got that good behaviour for leaving so many orphans,
nieces and nephews that didn't get to know their grandparents. Yeah. I still say shame on our justice system to this day because I still have loved ones, unsolved cases, still niece that is not even being searched for. I still say shame on our justice system to this day.

I pray. Every day when I wake up I pray during the day. I pray when I go to bed. I pray for all my family that they keep fighting that depression. I pray they don't take their own lives.

I thank you guys for all being here, for supporting each other. I'm grateful every day when I wake up. I'm grateful at the end of the night that I didn't get a call that one of nieces or nephews committed suicide. I'm grateful my sister is not in bed fighting that depression. I'm always grateful for that every day. And I'm grateful that I have such wonderful support, beautiful people that are loving and caring. They're beautiful inside and out. I love them by my heart. They search. They supply. But, most importantly, from their heart. That's what we all need. Follow your heart.

Thank you and have a good day and God bless you all today. And if any of the families want to speak to me, I am here for all of yous. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Well, I don't know what to say. I'm just going to pass it on because I don't know
what to say. I'm just like -- I'm just depressed right now.

**MS. PAULINE SHIRT:** I just want to say miigwech to our sister here. The fact that she's sitting here with us is a -- you know, is her -- you know -- you know, then we heard her voice. I want to say miigwech to her.

I want to say speaking the language that I was raised with, I am (inaudible) from Sad Lake Treaty 6. And one of my sisters was murdered and a lot of my loved ones. My childhood girlfriend, Pauline Pappin, you know of her that was, you know -- who was murdered in the Pickton farm.

(Speaking in Native Language).

I've -- I'm not going to translate everything, what I said. You can -- each and every one of you understand what I'm saying because each and every one of you the spirit of the language is inside you. You can understand it. All you have to do is open your minds and your hearts and your spirit will tell you what is happening, what I have said.

I want to say miigwech to all the families who've travelled many miles in here, you know, to come and sit with us so we can hear their voices, so we can listen to that -- you know, we can support the spirit of this
whole meeting, of this missing, murdered woman. Because I
got there. You know, I was there. I lost a lot of loved
ones.

In fact, I came here when I was going to be
flying. I was told that I had lost, you know, one of my
best friends. So but I also became a grandma, you know,
that same day. And so I just want to say in my own pitiful
way that I ask the Creator that I will do whatever I can to
help each and every one of you in the best way as I can.

So I just want to say miigwech to each and
every one of you for voicing your opinion and sitting in a
circle, sitting in a circle because that's how our way of
life is. And also, to listen to the Creator's law, to
listen to the Creator's law. That's where we get all our
answers.

So I just want to say miigwech to all the
work that has been done in here and that we will -- you
know, we will support each other in the best way. So I
just want to say miigwech. Hai Hai. Miigwech.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That rock?

MS. PAULINE SHIRT: Give what?

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: The rock.

MS. PAULINE SHIRT: Oh. I left it in my
heart. He wants -- and I said, "What"? "The rock," he
said. And I forgot all about it.
UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Speaking in Native Language).

I just want to use the second language that everybody uses because I know, as an Anishinaabe person, I know not everyone understands our language and we all have different languages because there's many different tribes in this room and we all have our own languages. Like when she was speaking I didn't understand all the way through when she was talking but I was able to pick up here and there what she was talking about.

And also, as I was listening to the stories that I heard from these young people that have lost their loved ones, you see I, myself, too lost a grandniece back in 2008 at home. It happened right at home. But the person that took the life of my grandniece wasn't from there. And I still carry that.

And, you know, when I was listening to these people sharing their stories, I go back to that day, the day it happened, of all the anger that came into me and sadness and grief. And I'm sitting here today holding this rock and also holding this tobacco, which is a very sacred for my own personal point of view because of who I am.

Yesterday she talked about Midewiwin lodges, beautiful stories. I, too, carry a story. And a lady sitting over there right across from me, Sheri (ph),
carries a story too that I know, because she belongs to a lodge that Donna (ph) had talked about yesterday.

After she got done talking yesterday I went up to her to wish her the best. And this is what I told her. "You know," I says, "You made me cry three times while you were talking," I said. But I wasn't joking when I said that. I had tears coming out as I was listening to her story. Happiness. You know, I was happy for her, the story that she had shared with us, especially the Midewiwin stories. I was very happy for a young person to carry so much which she collected from the -- that sacred lodge, Midewiwin lodge.

And I know in this place here where we're at there's a good number of Midewiwin people here. And I know that (speaking in Native language) is listening to us here, watching us as we're gathered with sadness and searching. And we're going to find what we're searching for, but we have to use our tobacco the best that we know how. Like this tobacco that I'm holding, it's going to go home with me and it's going to raise smoke over at the sacred site where I do my ceremonies. It will probably happen this evening because I'm going to leave here shortly.

But I want to thank yous [sic] all for listening to me. Miigwech.

And one of the things that I want to share
with you, which is very -- another important -- that I
earned, sobriety, because many of yous [sic] here do carry
sobriety.

You see, back in 1982 that's when I changed
my way of life. I reached out for help from the
contemporary point. I went for treatment. So I've been
sober 35 years. And I also don't smoke.

I shared a story with that lady, Maggie
(ph), yesterday. I also don't gamble, you know. No
offence to people that are gamblers, you know. That's just
me. I needed to do that because I couldn't handle my
gambling addiction just like I couldn't handle my drinks.
So the only way that I found out is to put it aside. So I
always share that in front of people because I'm proud to
say that I'm a recovering alcoholic. Miigwech.

**MS. ELIZABETH DANIELS:** Good afternoon,
everybody. My name is -- my English name is Isabelle
Daniels and I represent my niece that was taken in 2009.
Sorry, just give me a sec. She was 16 at the time of her
death. And her technical cause of death was hypothermia so
there was nobody brought to justice. She was raped by a
middle-aged man. She had an obscene amount of Xanax and
alcohol in her system. He tossed her out of his truck and
left her for dead behind the Enterprise on Regent Avenue.

And so my -- for my family it's hard to come
to these things because her cause of death wasn't
technically murder but she was raped, she was beaten. She
was left for dead. She was left face down in the back of a
garage, an auto body shop where she was found by one of the
employees in the morning.

So, for me and my family it's hard to come
to these things because we know that there is little
advocacy for families like ours where it wasn't a clear-cut
case in terms of Canadian law and criminal law that she
wasn't murdered. And where is the advocacy going to happen
to have those people, those law -- those cops, those -- the
perpetrator to be held accountable for what he did?

My auntie then ended up killing herself
because of the loss of her child through her addiction.
She has left five children in the care of CFS who my mom
raises. So the ripple effect that happens from one act of
one person goes on for generations. My auntie left behind
five children, not to mention the one that was murdered.
And the youngest one is just six or seven years old. My
mom takes care of all those children. She's a kokum. She
has raised her kids. I am on -- I am the youngest of her
children and I am on the sunny side of 40. And here she is
again reliving that life as a mother and as -- and going
through that -- the teenage years again through her
children.
So we are honoured to be in the process of this inquiry but we're also discouraged because we don't know a lot of the information that is -- that -- why are we reopening these wounds? Why are we sitting here and crying and telling our story if the advocacy at the level of law enforcement is not going to come from the recommendations of this inquiry? When are we going to see action in terms of -- I'm happy that this inquiry is taking place. Don't get me wrong. But where is the change going to come in terms of law enforcement? When are these people going to be held accountable for the lives that they've taken?

Just because a coroner says that somebody died of hypothermia, there's causes that led up to her death. This person was considered to be an upstanding person of Transcona. And here he is discarding the life of a 16-year-old. They said they wouldn't charge him with sex acts with a minor because she was the technical age of 16, which is the legal age to consent for sex in this province. And how was she able to consent for sex when she had five times the legal limit of alcohol and she had a lethal dose of Xanax in her system?

So for us we want to know that from this inquiry, from all this trauma being resurfaced and being rehashed every time we come to these meetings, that there will be actual action that happens from this inquiry. We
want to know that all these people are not being led down this road where the same results will happen in terms of Phoenix Sinclair. That inquiry led to no action in terms of people at this level of CFS. All those social workers are still employed, if not program managers of people who are still street involved. All those people are still employed. And here that girl is no longer on this earth and was not able to become a mother and live her life.

I am also a survivor. My mom is a residential school survivor. I am a survivor of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. I work also with women who are sexually exploited in the only program in this city that helps women at a street level, specific to the population of sexual exploitation through homelessness, sex work and addiction. I don't see any of those people being represented here in the inquiry either when we have more than 50 percent of our clients are either on the MMIW or potential victims of violence because of the state of poverty that we have in our province.

I would like to see programs available in -- on reserve lands in terms of how to stay safe when becoming or moving into the urban area. It's funny that we are Anishinaabe people but we are newcomers in our own land. So when we have to come to urban areas for education, we have to come to urban areas because we have no economy in
our homeland or what is considered to be homeland by the federal government on reserves, there is not going to be any change in terms of violence on -- in our communities. There's not going to be any change in terms of violence that happens to our women when they come into an urban area because we need to change the mindset of law enforcement. We need to change the mindset of CFS. We need to change the mindset on what causes poverty and the people that are more -- most burdened by poverty, and that is our Anishinaabe people.

I think that we have a long way to go but I think that we are on the right track by having the grandmothers lead meetings like this.

I was a little discouraged the first two days. I'm not going to lie. My mom didn't understand the terminologies that were being used when we were doing the Indigenous law. So I -- for my recommendation for people who are not lawyers or people that don't understand legal jargon there should be -- I think when people are speaking that they need to remember that we all don't have law degrees and we all don't speak that language and we don't understand that terminology. So, yeah, a lot of it went in one ear and out the other because we don't know what's being said and we don't understand that language. So, going forward, I think that you need to remember that
you're speaking to people who, again, are not lawyers and
don't have law degrees and are not social workers or work
in that capacity. So vocabulary is very important.

Keeping in mind -- and accommodations for
families to attend these events. My mom was given cab fare
and bus fare by a third party organization that fundraised
on their own in order to have money for people to get here.
I feel like families are highly unrepresented in this
circle. If accommodations and travel can be made for
people who are employed by the inquiry, then you should
make accommodations and travel available to family members
to attend these inquiry meetings. I think it's just that
important. We shouldn't have to be scrounging around and
looking to agencies to attend these meetings. And that's
what happened here this -- over the last three days.

I'm thankful for the people that helped us
out to get here. I'm thankful for my -- for the people
that ensured that my mom had lunch money. My mom, like I
said, is not employed. She's a foster parent, so most of
her money goes to the children that she raises. So she
couldn't afford to be here all day because she didn't have
lunch, she didn't have breakfast and she didn't have dinner
money. And I think that's important when you're
remembering that you're dealing with a large population
that is still very, very much affected by poverty.
You have a lot of these families that are still on reserve and communication to them to come to urban areas and accommodations for them to come to these urban areas and these urban meetings is crucial to making this inquiry go by smoothly.

I thank you all for your time. Thank you to Commissioners. Thank you to grandmothers and family members and everybody that's in attendance today. Miigwech.

MS. SHERI COPENACE: Just -- I know that -- I don't want to like cut anybody short or anything but I'd like to like -- I have great respect for everybody but I'd like to ask the family members to speak first and I -- you know, I apologize to the grandmothers sitting in the circle, but if we could do that because it's almost lunch time. So I really thank you if we could allow that to happen. Miigwech.

MS. CANDACE COPENACE: Bonjours. My name is Candace Copenace. I'm from Kenora.

The most recent loss I remember is Delane (ph) Copenace. We looked for her. We looked for her for weeks. And it's like it's the same thing. Like there was no follow up, no explanation how she went missing or how she died. And I still ask.

But the first loss I remember is 30 years
ago when my -- both of my grandfathers, they went missing in the same month. They both went missing. And that was 30 years ago. And there was no explanation. They couldn't -- the police, the government, they couldn't tell me what happened to them. And I still pray for them every day, their spirits, every night. And that was 30 years ago.

And so I don't know about this. We're -- is anything really going to change? You know, this was a long time ago. And I do appreciate that this is MMIW but I have fathers and grandfathers that went missing, you know. It's all of us. It's our whole people that are going missing.

I'm a survivor. I got beat up by my own people. And I survived.

But I do appreciate all the help that I'm getting because this is the first time I'm really -- I've been crying for three days. It's the first time that I'm actually acknowledging what's going on. I usually just hide it. And then all the medicine, all the grandmothers, all -- everything is helping me acknowledge what I have to acknowledge.

So I don't know. I was brought up by a white lawyer in Kenora. He fought -- he was a criminal and family lawyer in Kenora. He taught me a lot. I'm not a lawyer myself but I used to have to help him when -- like his affidavits and everything like that I had to proofread
them and change his grammar and everything.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

**MS. CANDACE COPENACE:** So I learned a lot but I didn't go to law school myself. But I really appreciate what he did for the people in Kenora. And he's still my dad but he's a white guy.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

**MS. CANDACE COPENACE:** Yeah, he comes to Winnipeg a lot and he still teaches me. And I learned a lot from my grandmothers and my mom about all the medicines and everything.

But I'm really appreciative of this place right now. I'm learning a lot. And I hope things can go forward from here because 30 years ago there was still nothing happening for the missing people. And I hope something happens. I know the justice system and the police in Kenora, they really mistreat our people.

But I can only do what I -- I don't know what I can do. Just help the younger people. That's all I can do, and pass on what knowledge I have. Miigwech.

**UNIDENTIFIED VOICE:** They need to introduce themselves.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Oh, yeah, if you want to say your name. Yeah, just for the families.

**MS. SHERI COPENACE:** We're trying to pass it
to the families first.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Yeah, yeah. Okay.

**UNIDENTIFIED VOICE:** If we have time.

**UNIDENTIFIED VOICE:** Let them introduce themselves.

**MS. GERALDINE SHINGOOSE:** I'm -- hi. I'm just going to introduce myself and pass the rock so the families could speak. I'm one of the grandmothers. My name is Gerry Shingoose. My spirit name is Sky Woman and Northern Lights Woman. And I just want to say chi-miigwech to the families for sharing. And I truly pray that there is follow up after for you guys.

**MS. CAROL MOAR:** Bonjour. My name is Carol Moar. I walk with two spirit names, Blue Sky Woman, Morning Star and I'm from the Deer Clan. And I also believe the families are here and that's more -- they're the ones that need to speak, so I'm going to pass it on, but I did want to introduce myself to the Creator and to all the lovely people here. Miigwech.

**MS. PATRICIA CARIBOU:** Bonjour. (Speaking in Native Language).

My name -- my English name is Patricia Caribou and I'm -- my name is When The Flower First Bloomed Woman from the White Bear Clan. And I just wanted to say also -- acknowledge everyone here, acknowledge the circle.
and the medicine, the pipes, the pipe carrier, and I come
to share my gifts with you and my rock here. This is a
blue lapis and it's -- has the energy for your throat so
you can speak. Chi-miigwech. (Speaking in Native
Language).

**MS. KAREN DRAKE:** Hi, my Karen Drake. I'm a
citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario. And this is the
first time I've ever had an opportunity to hear from family
members and I'm very, very grateful for it. Thank you.

**DR. HADLEY FRIEDLAND:** My name is Hadley. I
had a lot of space to talk in the last two days and I'm
really grateful to be listening today.

**MR. MIKE ROURKE:** Thank you. My name is
Mike Rourke. I'm a little bit sad. I just lost my brother
Monday night and I just wanted to say God bless you though.

We lost a daughter in Vancouver Island just
up by Alert Bay. And I just want to support all of you
people for all your losses. And I just want to hand the
mic to Betty.

**MS. BETTY ROURKE:** My name is Betty Rourke.
I am a wounded mother, a wounded sister. I want to speak
on behalf of my daughters. I know that Kim and Gerry (ph)
would have wanted to be here today but they were not --
well, Kim's not feeling well. But, for Gerry (ph), she was
disappointed that the meeting was being held here. Both
Kim and Gerry (ph) feel like this is not a safe place for them.

We did have a meeting a few weeks ago with Christa and we were expecting to meet at the Thunderbird House. It was changed and we met in a hotel. It was disappointing. The Thunderbird House had everything prepared for us. And one of the ladies that was supporting us was waiting over there and we had to get her and she came to the hotel.

So, as I said, I'm a wounded mom and I defend my children. Of course, you know, like a wounded bear I'm going to defend my surviving cubs. So I ask the Commissioners, because a lot of family members, survivors, we are not comfortable here. I come here.

I'm -- I had a tough mother. My mother made me a tough woman. I'm very resilient I am. I live in a Christian world. I live in the traditional world. My spirit name is She Walks With The Sacred Teachings. And I don't understand that because I'm a Christian, but then they gave me -- when I went to get the -- in the sweat lodge my spirit name is, you know, The Sacred Teachings. And I'm -- I do go to a sweat lodge in -- but I'm not too familiar with everything. And I don't understand when the smudging and stuff like that. I do it because I don't want to offend anyone. But I'm more comfortable in the church.
So like she said her stone was to -- for the -- to speak. Well, I speak -- my God, my Creator will speak through me.

And so as a wounded mother I beg you, Commissioners, please, when you have the hearing in October, please have it at Thunderbird House where we're comfortable, where my daughter Gerry (ph) is comfortable and Kimberly and many other survivors.

That's all I would like to say today. And thank you all. Thank you so much every one of you. I always feel so happy when I leave from all -- everyone that loves me.

Like yesterday I didn't know where I was going to have lunch from but then somebody come and gave me an envelope with money in. Hey. I went to Skinners and had my favourite.

I love you guys so much, all of you. Thank you.

**MS. LINDA NECKAWAY (ph):** My name is Linda Neckaway (ph). I always get emotional when I'm here because it triggers me so much of my sister that's missing, Lily Flett (ph). And I heard Dawnis talking about her yesterday when I was -- had an appointment. I was listening on a webcast. Thank you for talking about her.

She went missing in 2010. We did many
searches on our own. Didn't get any help from others but with friends. I mean, financially.

I've been craving for this for a while since she's gone missing. Don't know where she went. She's just gone.

We were at a conference or a Truth and Reconciliation event here in 2010 in Winnipeg. She was last seen there. And there was a lot of people at the conference when this was going on or the TRC event.

My sister -- my other sister and I -- my sister was -- my other younger sister was supposed to be getting surgery at the hospital and she didn't -- my -- Amelia (ph) didn't show up. We don't know what happened. So we did searches again. We had some police help. And just talking to them I don't know if they did any searches. I feel like they didn't.

It's been -- it's the -- I still struggle with this every day. I miss her a lot. I blame myself because, you know, when you're the oldest in the family you should be taking care of brothers and sisters. And she's gone. She was a younger sister of mine.

She went through some sadness and grieving because of her own relationship that didn't work out previously and started getting really depressed about her situation. She was a well-spoken woman. She attended
lodges and many ceremonies. A lot of people knew her.

So today I -- I've been sitting here in and out for the last, well, three days now. I couldn't stay because I have a family member that's sick. I come in and out. I'm also unemployed and have to pay for parking to come here and so I have to leave.

Anyway, my recommendations were to -- because I live on reserve, to have some support out there in regards to there are mental health workers that do come in but they're always bombarded with some many other community members. I wish there were a central location like in Thompson -- I live in Northern Manitoba -- where we could have people, you know, to go talk to there, mental health workers.

Nothing ever happens up north and I wish it were because we have to travel so far south to, you know, come to events like this. And most times we have -- I've been trying -- I've been coming on my own and that's a struggle.

A lot of us, as I listen, that we don't have any -- we don't even know how to walk on that healing journey. And maybe have some more wellness conferences in regards to how to deal with grief, depression, anger, because it all happens in our families. It's almost like, you know, to practice this way of life is the -- with the
ceremonies here, I didn't know that either. I have to ask
for -- you know, I follow and I watch people do it and I
started learning that way. But some of the things inside,
we need a little bit more help with.

It's been quite a journey for myself in
walking without my sister. It's a different kind of grief
because I feel like she's, you know, she's -- I don't know
if she's gone to the other side. I don't know if she's
still with us. I don't know that. Still a question mark.
I'm still -- I'm grieving for that.

And one thing I would like to say that not --
- I'm hoping that not everything happens in Winnipeg. I
know it's central. But I would also like to get the north,
you know, things happening in the north so that some of the
people will feel what it's like for them to come up north,
you know, that need the funding, that need the food, that
need the hotel. And a lot of people, you know, can't get
there. And there's a lot of people here that can't get
here because of that.

I've been listening to some of the language
that's happening here too. At first I didn't know what was
happening. I just had a question mark, like, what's
happening here? I felt like I didn't belong at first
because there was people here that are smarter than me.
That's how I felt that I didn't belong here. So I was in
and out listening. And I seen Belinda here and I figured, well, if she can be here I can be here too, you know.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

**MS. LINDA NECKAWAY (ph):** So I know that I can fall on her at any time.

But I'm grateful to be here today and I'm grateful for another day. And I always get triggered every time I'm at any conference regarding missing and murdered women because we all go through the same grief. And the triggers that happens will keep continuing. And I get upset and I start, you know, getting teary-eyed but that's okay.

Thank you for listening.

**ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROEK:** Thank you, Linda. I just want to say that Linda and I have been friends since we were little. And her and I were best friends and my sister, Edna, and her sister were best friends. So, we've known each other for a long and she's one of my -- to me, my relative.

And since it's almost lunch I'm going to pass and carry on.

**MS. SHERI COPENACE:** (Speaking in Native Language).

Good greetings, my relatives. I just announce myself and my three spirit names. I belong to the
Elk Clan. And I've gone through twice to that good and kind-hearted lodge that you've heard referenced yesterday and today, that Midewiwin lodge. And, to me, that's -- you know, what you -- what you're being shared with there is like to be a kind and good person. And, for me, I respect all walks of life and I -- and that's what you're taught in there. But I also hold close to my heart our Anishinaabe ways. And I know, like, you're talking about Indigenous law here and to me it's like you're seeing it in action right now, even us sitting in the circle.

So, for me, what I say to the Commissioners is listen to what the families have said. And I'm sure they've said that before. And maybe there's new things that they've said. So do what they ask of you. That's what I would say. Do what they ask of you. And that's what I have to say.

So miigwech to everybody here. I really -- and I thank that our grandmother over there for speaking our language because I know when she spoke that language that she was reciting laws to us. And if the families want to speak in -- when the come before you -- in their own language, have translators there maybe that can translate for you after or during.

So, for me, thank you, chi-miigwech, for all the people here, and most especially the ones that spoke
their original language. Miigwech.

**MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD:** Really quickly.

And I'm not sure if we're going to have the opportunity to share later on today because this is for the families and I do have extended family that are missing. I have a grandson that is missing. And I'll speak about that later because I want to provide the opportunity to families to speak.

And quick recommendation that is if there is an opportunity for you to sit together with the grandmothers, that you take that time to do that because we have much to share with you and it's not possible to do that here because we are cognizant and respectful of the family's time.

And having said that -- can you hold this for me for a minute? I'm going to -- yesterday I spoke with Dawnis last night at the grandmother's meeting, and we spoke about your sister, Millie (ph), who was a good friend of mine. And I spent a great deal of time and I have quite a bit of her artwork that she gave and that I purchased from her. And I told Dawnis that I would find what I have and I would give it back to her so that she can give it to her -- Millie's (ph) children because they don't have anything of hers.

Because we've recently moved I couldn't find
everything but I do have four pieces of her work I want to
give back to you that she made, that her hands crafted, so
that you can give them to her children. And I would -- and
I commit to bringing back all that I have of hers to give
to you and to give to you so that you can have the work
that your auntie made and that you can have the work that
your sister made, and I will return it to you.

So, Dawnis, I want to give you this. I put
it in here with tobacco and this is the work of your auntie
that you can return to her children.

**MS. LOUISE HAU LI:** I just wanted to say from
the videos that we saw yesterday about Inuit law, just to
clarify that what we saw yesterday is -- was family law but
there's more laws that were not in the video. So I'm
hoping some day it will be able to be addressed somehow.
And I feel very honoured to be here and friendly people,
caring people, I'm very happy to be here. Thank you.

**MS. BERNIE WILLIAMS POITRAS:** I just want to
say haw'aa, haw'aa, haw'aa. My name is (speaking in Native
language), which means Golden Spruce Woman. I come from
the house of the (speaking in Native language), which is
the House of the Raven. That's on my grandmother's side.
And I'm also Nuu-chah-nulth, which is Coast Salish. I come
from a remote island off of the west coast of B.C.,
formerly called the Queen Charlotte Islands. And we fought
for the reclamation of our traditional name, which is
called Haida Gwai, some also call it Gwaii Haanas or the
Misty Isles. It's a rainforest so.

My colonial name is Bernie Williams Poitras.
I'm also a family member. I want to say haw'aa to the
traditional people from this territory, Treaty 1. I also
would like to say haw'aa to the clan mothers, to the Elders
and to the grandmothers here, but especially to the family
members.

I want to make this brief because there's
other family members here too. I am a family member. My
mother was murdered in November 5th, 1977. I have three
other sisters that were murdered too in the downtown east
side of Vancouver, one in Merritt, B.C. I never grew up
with my family. I grew up in care, Sixties Scoop
Residential School.

I am a product of a thousand years of love
that I can say. I say haw'aa to my ancestors because I'm
the last survivor of the family on both sides of my family.
I'm the last woman on both sides.

My mother was very young. She was 52. My
sisters never made it to the age of 40. I'm going to be 60
years old in a couple months. I'm a mother of 3 amazing
sons and 10 grandchildren. And I work on the front line in
the downtown east side of Vancouver. I am very nervous. I
have a lot of love for the family across Canada. We walked
with the Walk for Justice five times. We walked 93 days.
Each time we walked I met a lot of these amazing,
incredible families.

I'm on the front lines every day with the
Elders. I only have one Elder left out of eight that --
who started this movement with us back in the 80s and that
they were doing it long before. But first and foremost, I
am a land defender and a protector.

A lot of people don't understand how those
two -- they coincide with one another. And I'm really
grateful for our sister Jo and her brothers for creating
that awareness that everything that has happened to the
land is happened to our women and is still happening.

My recommendation to the Commissioners,
because I am one of the support team from the west coast
for these Commissioners and I think they are really amazing
human beings, and I want to express my frustration on one
thing is that this lateral violence has really got to stop.
You know, at the finger pointing, the blame game, that
really needs to stop. And it's almost like we're pitted
against one another again.

The recommendation that I have is the
health, healing and wellness centres. This is so -- an
imperative. There's so much money that goes into the
downtown east side. We estimate about a million dollars is spent every day down there and no one is getting better. I believe that we are the most -- we are the biggest commodity to these organizations in the downtown east side. And I have no problem saying this. I also have no problem saying that these organizations have really benefitted and that they've built their empires off the backs of our people, the ones that are suffering still yet.

I also believe and hold the justice system accountable. These police officers know on those front lines that I work in. I know every nook and cranny of that downtown east side and we watch them. We keep records of these police officers. We see the beatings. We have filed several suits against them but they will always walk on it because they're so protected. This Indian law that we talk about really needs to be looked at, to be implemented back in.

We watch in those front lines -- we've lost like a whole generation through Fentanyl right now. Our people, our grandmothers, our clan mothers, our matriarchs, the Elders, are the experts when it comes to health, healing and wellness. And we've been asking for those health, healing and wellnesses in Vancouver.

When the residential school -- like the TRC -- and please don't, you know, take this wrong. I looked
at all the money that -- with the walks that happened
nationally, you know, for the TRC and I asked one
individual how much did each one of these venues cost
across Canada when you were doing these major walks for --
at the TRC. We estimated over 300,000. I says, "You know,
this is shameful. Each places that you went to you could
have built a health, healing and wellness for our
communities to bring in our Elders."

I'm new to this medicine out here and this
is -- I was never so proud to be a part of the opening the
other morning. This is so new to me. My -- as my
matriarchs and my house will say, "Skundaal, you have to
use" -- that's my other nickname. It means "little one."
So when they talk to me they talk to me, you know, as
Skundaal. And they say that you have to learn your own to
know who you are. And I'm slowly learning.

But these front lines, a lot of people
forget about them. They forget about them. I sit in the
alleys with them. I'm watching Elders now through the
residential school payments that were paid out that are
smoking crack. I was never ever so angry to find one of
the Elders -- now they're 72 years old -- who has given up
because his own wife died. The monies that were
implemented and, you know, paid out, you know, has helped
to kill more people. Now we've lost like a whole other
generation of our youth through this Fentanyl crisis that we've got well over 1500 right now in B.C. alone. The majority of it is right downtown east side. We have only one Elder that carries that medicine. That is Rita Blind from northern Saskatoon, who has been our Elder, our community Elder, and she's the only one that's left who's carrying that medicine.

A lot of people say they are pipe carriers, who hand you out their cards, this is what I -- this is a good work that I do. And I was always taught to ask questions. Who is your teacher? When they can't tell me that, I walk away. I say, "Haw'aa. Thank you. I got to go."

And the reason why I'm, you know, talking about, you know, that the downtown east side is because women are still going missing. Women are still being -- our women are being murdered at such a high rate now through the Fentanyl.

My recommendation also is about the coroners. To date we've got over 200 bodies in the morgue that are not accounted for. Still to this day over 200 loved ones that have families who don't even know who they are -- where they are, I mean.

My recommendation is to really push at the coroners because a lot of the deaths down in my area in the
downtown east side, they write it off as, you know, as like an overdose. A lot of people don't talk about the hot capping. Hot capping is when they give you the wrong drug. That is intentional. Nobody ever talks about that.

I don't mean any disrespect by my words. I just want to tell you this is my reality, you know, as a family member, that I push every day. You know, I know I can't, you know, bring my mom and them back, but I'm sure the heck going to stand and do everything that I can to make sure that the families, you know, get what they deserve, which is justice, you know, for their loved ones and that.

And I want to say haw'aa again for the medicine and for the Elders and the medicine carriers and the grandmothers for being patient and teaching me. I ask a lot of questions because I want to learn because my three sons are also part Cree, and I try to, you know, learn as much as I can to bring home because they're not ready to go to Fort Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan yet. They're slowly working their way out here.

But I just want to say to, you know, to the families my heart and my love is always with you all the way and but just how effort in allowing me.

And the Commissioners, I think these four individuals here are really great humans. I've had the
opportunity to spend a lot of time with them. And, you know, we're -- we are all learning and we are a work in progress together. And a lot of errors have been made and there's going to be many more, you know, errors that are going to be made. And we just have to be patient.

I've waited over 30, almost 40 years now and I'm learning to be patient and not to get angry. But I ask a lot of questions and, heck, for the rest of the team that is here, I want to say haw'aa to you, you know, because they've been working such long hours. And to Jade and them, they're amazing. They're just amazing. Haw'aa to you guys for making me feel so welcome, you know, in your territory. Haw'aa.

**MS. SANDRA DeLARONDE:** I'm just concerned about people that are diabetic. You know, maybe we could reconvene after lunch?

**MS. SHERI COPENACE:** So I just want to thank everybody again for -- especially the ones in this inner circle but even the ones in the outer circle, thank you for your support and your kindness in giving of your time this morning. And I want to thank the family members for all of their wise words and their recommendations.

So we're going to break. And as I said earlier, I know that the families are being asked for lunch over at Inn Of The Forks and I guess everybody else is on
their own. So we'll see you back here at 1:30. Miigwech.

So, for the families, it's on the second floor at Inn Of The Forks. Miigwech.

--- Upon recessing at 12:29 p.m.

La séance est suspendue à 12h29

--- Upon resuming at 1:51 p.m.

La séance est reprise à 13h51

MRS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD: I'm assuming this is on. Okay. It is. Good afternoon. We are -- I wonder if I could ask someone to close that door again. There's too much noise that comes in from the hallway. I'd appreciate that.

We had the opportunity this morning to provide recommendations. And I want to clarify what the role -- the -- what we were doing this morning. Based on the recommendations from the grandmothers' meeting last night was that we want to provide an opportunity for families to make -- provide recommendations to the Commissioners moving forward on how these -- how hearings should proceed. This, itself, is not a hearing. It's an opportunity for grandmothers and others to provide Indigenous perspective on how we understand law as it affects our family and it affects our missing and murdered women and children.

And so this afternoon we are going to be
moving into that portion of the agenda where Indigenous perspectives are going to be brought forward to the Commissioners led by Ms. Watson -- no, who's leading it this -- Karen? Grandmothers. Okay. The grandmothers?

All right. Okay.

So there was one lady -- you almost became a grandmother. But we were waiting for Sandra to come back because she -- we were going to provide her with the opportunity. She was sitting in the circle and was the last person that was going to speak and I don't see her here.

And we do have -- the schedule indicates that -- and I don't know if it's because of your travel schedules that your -- your flight is when? 3:15? Because we're to finish up here at 3:00 and go to the Oodena circle for 3:30 for closing ceremonies, which means we have an hour.

And this is one of the things how time goes by really, really quickly without us realizing it. And because you took so long to eat and so long to come back -- no, that's fine. Those are things we have to take time for. So we were waiting for Sandra but she's not here.

So, we're going to move into the grandmother's circle, the stories; right? Okay. So who's going to lead this part of it? The people withstanding are
invited to come into the circle because you're part of this conversation now, whoever that is. Please run, jog. Don't be afraid.

**UNIDENTIFIED VOICE:** Don't stand. Run.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

**MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD:** Please come forward for this afternoon's session. Yeah, you can stay.

**UNIDENTIFIED VOICE:** There's lots of chairs over there.

**MS. CHRISTA BIG CANOE:** Just a housekeeping item. Any of the parties withstanding, you don't have to join the circle if you don't want to. And any time there's any type of circle you're not forced to participate but we are welcoming you to come into the circle or have a representative come into the circle.

**ELDER BLU WATERS:** So I'm going to start this off. I was there last night at the meeting.

(Speaking in Native Language) and Red River.

For me, I want the Commissioners to know and those parties of standing about -- a bit about traditional law from my point. We were displaced from our nations. My family ended up in Toronto. So my res was Hyde Park. And because of the systems that were in place my grandmother worked two jobs. She raised me just to provide for us. And we hunted in Hyde Park as children. We hunted geese,
beaver, ducks, because we didn't have food; right? So we had to hunt. So that's part of our traditional way was to follow those teachings that we had heard from stories from the very beginning of time that I sat on my grandmother's knee about our ways of life, about our laws. But yet, as we were hunting, we were fearful that we were going to be taken away by Children's Aid.

So, one of the things that the Commissioners have to really look at is the Child and Family Services, the removal of our children, the threat that I was always going to be removed just because I was hunting and following traditional laws. That's something that's very fearful for a lot of people. You know, and a lot of us still are displaced from our communities because of colonization, because of laws that are in place by government saying who is and who is not status, who is entitled and where does it stop at.

So where do we belong? Where do we belong in a society that's taken away all our traditional rights, ways, lives? We need to look at that part of traditional law.

And I'm also a family member. My grandmother was murdered in 1977. And at 16 years old I went to court, because I was the witness, to see who was in the house when they found her. And as a young 16-year-old
I had no legal counsel. I had nobody to support me there. I had no one to guide me through that process. And when the process was finished it was weeks. I don't remember those weeks because these are traumas that we all experience when we lose a loved one. So trauma-informed processes have to go into place. Units have to be developed, places that are safe for us to express what we feel and what has happened to us with the loss of our loved one.

And that person who took my grandmother's life was tried under Canadian law. And after, only after, because I wasn't even present, although my body was physically there, I found out through that process that this person received a life sentence for 10 years in Penetanguishene Mental Health because he pleaded that he couldn't read or write, but yet he was a shipper and receiver who read documents every day. So the way our Canadian law is written that those that are the perpetrators are not punished. They're not -- their sentences are not done according to traditional law.

I never had the chance to speak to this person to tell them the impact that they had on not only my life, my brother's life, my auntie's lives, all those that my grandmother had touched, all those families that we had gone to help feed down in Regent Park because that's what
we do. We support each other.

So he pleaded out. So our system allowed him to plead out. And after I found out, not only did he murder my grandmother by manual strangulation, but he sexually assaulted her after she was dead. And that was never even brought up in the trial because he pleaded out. So the crimes were never announced. People never knew what this person really did.

And after 10 years the police came to me -- they found me. They came to my place of work. And I'm assuming through looking through income taxes or whatever they knew where I worked. And they came to tell me this person is getting out of jail. And I was like, "Wow, how did you find me after 10 years?" They said, "Well, we have to inform you they're getting out of jail." And I said, "But what does that mean to me?" Right? They shouldn't be out of jail. They should have been tried under a different system; right? They should have been sat down with the people so the people could tell them the impact of their actions so that they could learn that they had broken traditional laws, that those were not our ways to take a life because all life and all living things have spirit. All living things have value and that includes us as human beings because we're born into the -- our spirit comes into this body when we're born. So we're a gift. We have
value.

So I would like to see the merging of the Canadian law system with traditional law systems so that we can bring back those traditional laws, those ways of dealing with people face to face and having them understand the impact of their actions, and having them work with our healers, with our Elders, so they realize what they did, broke that law and they don't do it again. Because our system right now sends them off to jail, they get back out. They come out worse than they went in. Then they reoffend again and they're back inside again and somebody else's family is going through the same thing and that should never happen. We have to teach those that wrong how to live right and how to get life. And the way to get life is through our ceremonies and going back to our traditional ways with our traditional laws, with our traditional ceremonies, our languages and our ways of being.

Hai hai, miigwech. Thank you for letting -- allowing me to share.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Sandra, you didn't get to share.

MS. SANDRA DELARONDE: Okay. Good afternoon. First of all, my apologies for being late.

I wanted to, first of all, thank the families, survivors and two-spirited people who were brave
enough to come to these sessions without invitation.
Because we know in the way that we've been taught that we
don't go somewhere unless we're invited. So thank you for
your courage to come and lift your voices and your hearts
that your words will be heard by the Commissioners of the
National Inquiry.

And then I also wanted to acknowledge and
honour Dawnis Kennedy for her presentation. It isn't often
when you hear someone speak that all the worlds open up and
allow for the truth to come straight from the heart and
create change. What we experienced yesterday through your
good heart was that we witnessed spirit physically change
this process and to have the hearts and minds of the
Commissioners and the staff open to change this process, so
thank you so much. And thank you to Creator and all the
ancestors for allowing that to happen.

I just want to first of all acknowledge
Helen Betty Osborne. I was 10 years old. My family lived
in The Pas when she was murdered. And what isn't often
said about her story, and a lot of people claim ownership
for creating change for the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, but
more importantly, it was her spirit that -- her restless
spirit that kept people thinking and searching for the
truth. Because she was from northern Manitoba, she didn't
have a home in The Pas or Opaskwayak Cree Nation, no one --
she had no champion in that community. But more importantly, I think that while the community of The Pas has been, to an extent, unfairly painted as being racist, no one on either side of the river took responsibility for justice for Helen Betty Osborne in those early days except for her spirit.

And I know that in many traditions that we don't speak of those that have passed on, and certainly within Helen Betty Osborne's family she wasn't spoken of. Beyond what people see as racism and certainly the truth and the evidence presented by the AJI that had she not been Aboriginal she wouldn't have been murdered, beyond that is the fear that people face when telling the truth. The fear that people face when confronted with criminal activity. So a whole community or whole communities that you would think had nothing to fear by telling the truth feared for their lives because of the engagement of organized crime in that community that is not -- has not been part of the discourse.

So, Commissioners, when you're speaking to families or when families have the courage to come speak, you have to take into account those that live in fear because our truth is oftentimes tempered by our fear. So we have to look for ways that individuals that are gang involved or subjected to issues around human trafficking,
which we know are -- which we assume are led by organized crime, are protected. Not just during the time of their presentation but they will need forever protection. So how do you do that? I mean, that, I think, is a big consideration to how you protect women and girls and two-spirited people that are involved in those situations.

So we need to discuss how fear to create change or be part of change is also how we discuss recommendations for the National Inquiry.

And, you know, we have had conversations. And for those in the room, we have begun a conversation with the Commissioners for the establishment of a regional sub-commission in Manitoba that would hopefully feed into the findings of the National Inquiry. And as a coalition we're really hopeful for that to take place so that we can, you know, work to ensure that issues like bringing families forward is front and centre of the work. And I just acknowledge the Commission for bringing families forward today.

So that would be our continued discourse from the coalition is the need for a regional sub-commission that puts families first. And in the future for expert panels that you will include family members as experts.

Miigwech.
UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you, Sandra.

Keeper of the stone.

MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD: Thank you very much, Sandra, for those recommendations.

We would like to move into discussion of what lessons we can take away from what we heard from the expert presenters of the first two days for those that have been here all three days. But more importantly, what lessons -- what additional lessons do we want to provide to the Commissioners based on the expert presentations, how those are interpreted by our traditional means of interpreting what was presented. So that is part of what we want to talk about this afternoon.

And the other part, the other -- the second part is what teachings or concepts the National Inquiry should further research, which was recommended here by our sister that is somewhere, provide more materials on or ensure is included in future expert hearings. So what do you feel needs to be included in the hearings? In October the hearing is coming here to Winnipeg. And this is when the families will have the opportunity to tell their stories and make their presentations to the Commissioners and to the Commission. That's in -- what are the dates in October? The week of October 16th. Put that in your calendars for those who wish to make presentation to the
Commissioners about your personal stories.

So, what is it that we want the Commissioners to learn here that will help with addressing your concerns, your issues? How can the Commission address you, as families, about what needs to be done with regards to our missing and murdered women and children? So, what lessons can we take away or add to from our expert presenters?

And we all heard Dawnis speak and we had two other ladies that spoke for a day and a half. And what teachings or concepts does the National Inquiry need to further research or provide more materials on or ensure is included in future expert hearings? Because we had -- we heard family members say it would be helpful if the information was available to them before the hearing starts so they know process and so they understand what is happening, and as well so they could input into it. So that is what we're doing now.

So I'm going to ask Sheri, my colleague, to speak right away because she has been at one before.

**MS. SHERI COPENACE:** (Speaking in Native Language).

My English alias is Sheri Copenace and I come from -- on the east side of Lake of the Woods but I live here in Winnipeg now. And I heard our sister say this
morning, which I truly believe, that we don't have a provincial boundaries or any boundaries whatsoever. And I come from the Anishinaabe Nation and I know that's a vast territory, vast.

So, for me, in regards to teachings and Indigenous ways, I know there's many nations in here, and for the Commission to be really -- to research into those different nations because we want to avoid that pan Aboriginal ways too. Like we all -- even though we're all different nations, we do things differently. The concept might be the same that we honour all of creation, we honour all of life, but we might do things a little bit differently.

And for me, even sitting in this circle is practicing and living Indigenous ways. Like, for me, as an Ojibwe, that's what we do. That's what I've been taught that everything we do is in a circle, even everything you look out in creation is circular and there's a reason for that. We welcome everybody into our circle. We, as Anishinaabe people, we lead these ways and other people support it by being a part of it. We don't ever say no to anybody. We welcome them here.

And I already spoke this morning about being respectful of other ways as well. Whatever the -- whatever people follow, that's up to them. But for me, what I know
is that Creation gave me a way of life that's powerful, 
that's connected, that helps me make relationships, both 
with the, you know, the spiritual realm, the human, all of 
life. So, for me, I really cherish that Anishinaabe way of 
life but I also respect all ways of life. 

And the other thing that I mentioned this 
morning is about language and how our laws are embedded in 
there. And if you are a first -- like original language 
speaker you'd know that, how difficult it is to translate 
to another language because you lose a lot of that meaning 
of what you're attempting to convey. So, for me, I would 
say like if families choose to speak in their language, 
make that space for them. Make that safe space for them. 

And the other thing I was talking to these 
women about is I've been taught too that as a family member 
if I want to bring my spiritual teacher, then allow -- make 
that space as well. Bring -- allow that -- bring -- give 
them the resources for that to happen. Because we know 
that when you bring your teacher or your -- yeah, your 
teacher is with you, you know, it opens much more doors 
than we could ever imagine. And it's powerful. It's 
strengthening for those families and for everybody in that 
circle. 

So, for me, I know that our laws are even 
here in this room, even out there in creation. When the
woman rendered that song, it's in there. That's what I've been told.

And, for me, too, like, I wasn't here for the opening ceremony but I know they spoke for that water, so I'm glad they did that because even that's a law in itself. And I've been told that if I wanted to even just talk about -- make an attempt to write about water law, because Anishinaabe ways it's so vast and so deep, that I wouldn't be able to ever write that, that maybe it would fill this whole building or much more. And it would just be a piece of that.

So, that's what I'm saying to you. Like, we have such beautiful strong ways that -- and it's simple. Like, we're -- it's not complicated or complex. Creation gave it to us in that way. So that's what I would say is that for us to respect that, to follow the families and to follow the ways of the people that you're visiting.

So miigwech.

Who's the next grandmother? This way?

**MS. CAROL MOAR:** I guess I'll come over here.

Bonjour, everybody. Again I'm going to introduce myself. It's Blue Sky Woman, Morning Star and I'm from the Deer Clan and an honoured member of Saugeen First Nation.
I thought long and -- I've been thinking long and hard. I apologize. I apologized at the meeting yesterday. Although I was here, I was usually busy smudging our families and our people here. And so I wasn't really keeping, like, my brain on what was being said, although I wanted to. But I was here for the purpose of the families and the purpose to be a helper and that's what I concentrated on.

But as far as my feelings of traditional laws, the ceremonies, we start our ceremonies with our children as soon as they're born. We wrap them up tight and put them on our backs. And the first teaching they get is listening because they can't move their heads around to look, so they learn to listen to the world around them, to Mother Earth around them with their hearing.

So, right as -- and I miss that and I missed raising my children with that but my grandchildren are getting the teachings. And we need to bring those ceremonies back. And it doesn't necessarily have to be our ways because all messages teach respect and love. And we have to get our people, and especially our young ones, to respect each other again and to love one another again and not to hurt each other.

I'm a foster mom of three teen boys. And I made one quit talking to me about violence. He's always
talking about The Bloods. And I made him stop. I said, "Not in front of me. You know, I don't want to hear it," I said. I love those young men but I don't respect them for hurting our own people. And I know they're only trying to survive the only way they know how but I can't respect them for hurting our own people. And so he quit and he is learning respect and he doesn't talk about gangs or anything like that.

And I just think that our -- the one thing that we're forgetting and Dave Crushane (ph) Senior, who was a residential school survivor, there's one abuse that's not talked about and he quoted it. He said, "They taught us self-hate. They taught us that everything about us was wrong. The way we lived was wrong. The way we looked was wrong. Our long hair was wrong. Didn't matter what we did they taught us self-hate."

And our ceremonies teach us how beautiful we are. And the coming of age ceremonies for our young ones, for our youth that are coming of age, the berry ceremony, it teaches our young girls to respect and love themselves. And it teaches them that the community and their immediate families love them. And I'd love to see more ceremonies like that coming back to teach our youth because I'm -- I love the youth and I work with the youth and I work with women. And my pipe is for the women and for the youth and
for the young children. So that's what I have to say.

I think, for me, the traditional laws is
just starting from the basics of getting our first name as
we're being born, our first spirit name, and continuing
from that moment on, from the first breath in Mother Earth
is our ceremonies. (Speaking in Native Language).

MS. VELMA ORMIS: (Speaking in Native Language).

I really say thank you for the invitation
here and I've learned so much. But I want to talk about
what we've been doing for the last six years. My late
teacher, Tabesanequat (ph) Canoe, he was my first teacher,
he -- before he passed he had a vision and he had asked
Edward Mandamen (ph) to find an Elder to carry it out. And
I was the one that was asked and he said that it was good.
I'd know what to do. And he wanted the four directions,
the four colours of people around the outskirts of the
city. So the first year we did that there was a snowstorm
but we went anyway because he'd been told that we were
going to do it that day.

So we hang those four flags and we sing and
we give food for the spirits and tobacco. And the young
people that go with me, they bring their drums and they
sing and we offer that water too. And when we went from
the east to the south we hang that flag near the Brady (ph)
landfill. And it was storming and we prayed for Tanya Niffenack (ph). That's where she is in that garbage dump and it's not right. And many, many mornings, early mornings and late nights when I sit by myself I think of her and pray that some day that she's brought home and has a decent burial because it's not right for one of our beautiful young women to be left there.

And I wanted to share that with you and we are going to keep and continue doing this every December around that first date when we first started. And we'll do it. And I hope some -- some day when I can no longer do it that someone younger, I want to pass that on so that they can do that and pray for all the people, not only inside of the city, the four colours of people, but the ones on the outside too. So I wanted to share that with you.

Miigwech.

**MS. WHEN THE FLOWER FIRST BLOOMED WOMAN:**

Bonjour. (Speaking in Native Language).

I'm very honoured to sit here in this circle.

My name is When the Flower First Bloomed Woman and it's my gift to bring consciousness to the people. I do that in my work. I have a private practice here on the urban reserve and I work in O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi Healing Lodge and also at Saugeen First Nation.
At the healing lodge I work specifically with people that have committed sexual offences and homicides. And it is there that I bring that Indigenous law to mix because that's been my whole work, has been mixing this way, the west -- the academic with the spiritual. There's a lot of people that would disagree with that and that's okay. I've found it to be powerful and beautiful.

And when I'm sitting in that -- sitting with those men that have killed our women, that are -- that have sexually abused our children and I talk to them and they get that grandmother's lesson, very strict, and when I do that I'm speaking and helping -- trying to help for everybody because I think about the mothers, the grandmothers. I think about everybody and I make a person accountable for his own sake and for that of the people to make it right.

What carries me in my work is I was taught a long time ago by one of my teachers, who is Michelle St. Pierre (ph) who's gone on to the spirit world who is a Mohawk. She taught me. She said, "Who are you to say who's good and who's not good? Who are you to say who's the monster?" And I said, "Well, what do you mean?" She said she lived many lifetimes. And she said, "I think that I've been that. I've been that murderer. I've been that
molester." And I had to say to her, "Me too. I guess I've been that too." That's what carries me is that I'm no better. I'm no better than that. But a wrong is a wrong. And when I speak with the men and I tell them, "This is wrong what you've done." And those prayers, every day, 24 hours a day those men are praying. "Who are you praying for?" "I'm praying for my victim and their family." "Okay."

So I was asked to come here today to speak about these things, about my knowledge. And I try to figure out what to share. And I know that that's important. It's important that you know that people that are put on the other -- put in behind bars that they're taken to task for what they've done.

I work from those first four Ojibwe laws. The first 4 of the 44 laws are sharing and caring, kindness, honesty and faith. Those are the first four that I learned, that I carry. And any time that those are present then I know, hey, I'm doing good today if I'm doing these things. I'm living that law.

The other thing too is teaching my children. The most powerful teaching in my family, who is mostly Christian -- you know, they never had traditional teachings or my grandmother died giving birth to my mother. But they say when that happens that there's a powerful thing that
happens, that we're gifted in other ways because we didn't have our grandmother. So, we carry that kindness and that's one thing that people say a lot about my mother. She's so kind. She's so kind. And that's like -- that's a huge thing for me.

Indigenous law is kindness. Indigenous law is sitting in a room where -- with people that have hurt you. And Indigenous law is forgiveness so that you can help yourself and move forward. Indigenous law is standing up for yourself, being who you are. Doesn't matter if you -- you know, like sometime we're trying to judge ourselves, you know, like, well, I didn't grow up like that or I didn't grow up on the res or, you know, all this stuff, you know. Or I did grow up on the res and then, you know, like we're always judging ourselves. And no way, man. You're 100 percent right now who you are.

I try to teach my children that this -- that they belong here. This is yours.

And one thing I'm going to leave you with is whenever I start a group, when I work with a group of men, for the past 20 years -- and of course, you know, like sometimes I have a big group and there are all kinds of roughnecks in there. So I got to try get them to -- okay, I got to try to get -- she's laughing because she works in the jail too. But I have to try and get them -- okay, I
got to get them just right or else they're going to walk all over me or be scared to death of me.

And then I say to them, all Indigenous men, I say, "You ever walk down the street and then people they don't want to look at you? And they look up all over or they look down all over?" And they're all going, "Yeah," kind of grudgingly. "You know why?" "Why?" They're all expecting me to -- wonder what's she going to say? Say, "Because you're the landlord and the rent is due and they don't got the money."

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

**MS. WHEN THE FLOWER FIRST BLOOMED WOMAN:**

Because I want to teach them how powerful and beautiful they are. Yes, those people that have hurt people so much. And I want to teach them to love themselves, to know how strong they are. Because when they go home I want them to love their women and love their children and honour their grandmothers.

I was trying to explain one time well, what is it -- what do you do anyways, you know? Because there's not a lot of people that blend the clinical and the traditional for their work. I was thinking, thinking, what do I do? What do I do? Okay. I know what I am. I'm a professional lover.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)
MS. WHEN THE FLOWER FIRST BLOOMED WOMAN:

(Speaking in Native Language).

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: Thank you. I
have to stand up because my darned knee is sore from these
chairs. They're ugly.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: (Speaking in
Native Language).

I am so grateful today and every day that
I've been alive that I can speak my language, that I can
think from my language, that I can live from my language,
and that it gives me the guidance to live the way I'm
supposed to live.

I was wondering what I was going to talk
about because there's so many things that -- so much to
learn even, you know, to teach. And first of all, too, I
do again want to honour the 500 tribes that lived here, and
that means 500 languages. That just truly -- I'm just
amazed at that. And we were supposed to be killed off but
here we are. And we really like the word "resilient". I
don't know why. It means nothing in my head. You know, I
just know that I know who I am and that I know where I come
from and that I know my relations -- not all of them,
thanks to residential school. I'm still trying to catch up
to that.
The one thing -- I just want to -- a little story about I did a workshop called decolonizing the body, mind and spirit. And, you know, there was people that were upset at me for charging what I did but it was a three-day workshop, which I thought was pretty cheap myself. It seems to me it's okay if you pay the white man to do a workshop but not us guys, not us women.

And the one thing that I have learned in my 69 years of living is that I am not afraid of anybody. I don't care who they are. I am not. And certainly I'm not afraid of the justice system. And I don't ever have to whisper the clan mother's law. Ever. This is my land. This is my territory. And we had a clan system before anybody came here. So I will always honour that in my life.

So I went to a residential school for 10 years. I don't remember the day I left. I don't remember the train ride. I remember getting to the train station, lots of yellow buses. Don't remember getting on that bus. Don't remember the ride to the residential school. I was nine years old.

When I got to the residential school -- we were driving up to the school. Big school. Huge. Stairs. People in white outfits, men and women. And the minute I saw that I thought I was going back to TB Sanitorium, which
I'd been for a year-and-a-half of my life at five years old, at which I was tied up in a straightjacket for a lot of the time because I wanted to go and check out the hospital. Excuse me. I mean, I'm five years old. You think I want to stay in bed? I don't think so.

Anyway, so I don't like being tied up. Anyway, so I thought that's where I was going back. Oh my god, I guess they said that I fought. I kicked and I hit anything that was in my way that was trying to get me off that bus. Anyway, I don't remember getting off that bus. I don't remember my walk up the stairs or going into that building.

There began my journey of life that was to change me forever. Little did I know that when I was playing down the hill at Begedi (ph) Reserve Mile 5 of which -- where I was born, at the bottom of that there was a burnt out place. I didn't know that was the old Mackay School. I didn't know that's where my mom and dad went. Nobody told us those things. So, little did I know that I was now going to be entering the new school of the old Mackay School that was burnt down on my reserve.

I grew up with my grandparents. I -- my whole family was very religious. And we went to church every Sunday and my grandmother knew all the hymns in Cree and she used to sing them and I just loved them. I still -
- you know, I really get goosebumps when I hear them. When I go back home -- and sadly enough, the only time I go home is when I'm going to a funeral and that's when I hear them because I don't go to church.

    Anyway, so coming back, you know, to -- it's almost like the land before time. I don't know what else to call it. Land before time. And, you know, we have to know, as the Indigenous people to this country, we had a way of life. It's still here but over there, back then, we don't seem to remember that we had a way of life before anybody got here. And I'm including our own people in this. My grandmother didn't know the history of Canada. She just lived her life. She was happy living her life on a reserve, which we didn't want, and living on welfare because they were old.

    So, you know, you have to remember that we did not want reserves and we did not want welfare. We wanted to be able to look after ourselves, hunt for ourselves, then this Act comes in, Fisheries Act, all that stuff. It's just so controlling. It just drives me crazy.

    Anyway, so I went to a residential school for 10 years. Sexual abuse happened in my life when I was about 12 by a student who was a bully, just petrified all of us. The year she didn't come back we were very grateful. So that set a thinking in my head that would
play into my life.

And after she -- like, coming in into that residential school I didn't know that things were going to change my life forever. Saturday nights we used to watch cowboys and Indians movies. And, you know, sometimes when I try to explain what colonization is I say when we first got there, three or four years, we cheered for the Indians, cowboys and Indians movies. Four or five years later we're cheering for the white guys. So what happened? A switch up here.

And then you begin the journey of hating yourself, hating anything that's Indian about yourself. You begin to think you're better than your grandparents and your parents and everybody else that's on the reserve because you're smart now.

While I was in school I -- after the -- that student didn't come back from -- to residential school, my life there was okay. I mean, it's not like that every single day of my life I was fighting the fact I was there. You just live your life. You got no choice. You have to live it.

So coming into junior high and senior high my life was okay. I made a lot of good friends. Ukrainian -- I call them my Ukrainian white friends and they don't mind at all. And I used to go home with them on weekends.
And I -- already back then I was already someone that spoke up against injustice. Got me into trouble a lot. And but I just knew that my life had to be about sticking up for people. That's what I knew at that time. I didn't call it, you know, justice. Who knows words like that when you're little?

But anyway, so when I -- by the time I lived my life in residential school living -- and I ran for school party. I was modelling in high school and all those things. I got involved. I was track and field and I love track and field. And so by the time I left when I was 19, I didn't feel good about myself but I didn't know why. I didn't know why. I didn't know all the underlying messages throughout my years there, from the teachers, from students and, you know, all the name calling and all of that. And especially, especially the movies, you guys. That was -- if ever you can go into an old channel of cowboys and Indian -- watch it. It's abhorring. It's like how could they even make movies like that?

Anyway, but the messages are there every day, every weekend, every year. So they get down and down and down. And then when you have to try to pick them up and be who you are it's hard. Because there's so many things that play against you for being who you are. You're not a good person if you're Indian in this country. That
was the message most of my life. And when I woke up as to
who I am that ended then because I will never accept that
from anybody again.

But what happened was every time that I
thought -- and I would think about -- we had our way of
life before anybody get -- how come nobody talks about
that? How come I can't go to somebody and said, you know,
I want the teachings of whatever?

So the only thing we had was religion. You
know, if -- you were an okay Indian if you went to church.
You're pretty good. You're just the same as we are.
That's the white people saying that.

And then, you know, it took me 10 years of
my life to undo that up here. Ten years. And I'm an
educated woman. I'm not stupid. But that's how long it
took me and my heart and my spirit to know that and to
believe that we are good, kind, loving people and this is
our country. Like why do we have to fight that anyway?
This is 2017. I thought we were all smarter than that in
Canada. I don't know about the United States. I don't
want to talk about Trump, by the way.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: I don't know
where he came from but anyway. He could go back there if
he doesn't like it here. But I'd like to have a talk with
that guy. I really would.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: I think we'd have fun. But anyway, so it -- because every time I would come to, okay, we had a way of life before anybody else came here, then this one would say, "Oh, no, but you guys are -- you go to church and everything and that's your life and blah, blah, blah." And then I'm here again, you know, a year or two and then three. And I'm no, no, no, no. I got to talk to people that know what they're talking about. Then I come over here. I'm back home. Oh but you have to -- oh my god. And if you don't go to church you're -- and if you follow this way you're working the devil. Oh my god. Like that is our life here. Do you know people are still at that stage right now? Not knowing who they are. And you would think that we should know, that every one of us should know who we are but we don't.

One day I got a phone call from the matron of the school. Loved her. And I used to always phone her at least once a month. And I'd say, "Hi, Mrs. Grace. It's Belinda." "Hi, Belinda." And it was Palm Sunday too, by the way. And by then I already was not going to church at all. That was years later.

So anyways, she says, "Oh, did you go to church this morning?" And I'm like, okay. Ooh. How do I
deal with this? Okay. I got to tell her the truth. I said, "No, Mrs. Grace. I don't go to church anymore." I said, "I follow the ways of my grandfathers and grandmothers and I honour them." "Oh, that's nice." So that was one hurdle.

Next hurdle was my mother. My mother died at 93, 2014. And she called me evil right until then because she knew that I followed the ways of our grandfathers and grandmothers.

The day that I knew was 1989, that I knew at that moment. I'm in my house on 608 River Grove up that way. And I just -- I don't know what happened that day. I guess I woke up and I'm, you know, going about my business. All of a sudden I just knew that it was like if something was moving into my body it was coming in pretty good and strong. And I said, "I know who I am and I know where I come from. And I don't ever have to ask anybody's permission to be who I am. And no one will ever sway me from that. Not the queen. Not the pope." I'd like to talk to those two too someday.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

ELDER BELINDA VANDENBROECK: And just have a good chat with them. And I knew from that day no one would ever sway me from who I am, no matter who it is. And that day was a good day.
So my life, my goal in life is to keep teaching the kind and gentle way. And I want to say to all the men, our Indigenous men in Canada, today I am asking you to look after your children, protect your women and grandmothers. From this moment on you have to think about that, otherwise, we're here another 100 years talking about the same thing and we can't afford to do that.

Do not hurt your children. Do not hurt your wives. I'm not talking to the white guys in this country because they'll keep doing whatever they're doing, believing whatever they want to believe. But if they want to have a chat with me I'm ready for them too, because if we talk about prevention it starts at the home. It's a fathers, the mothers, the brothers and the sisters. You have to look after each other. That's what I know for sure.

And to all the families of the murdered and missing women, I love you and I'll be there for you any time.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD: Thank you very much, Grandmother Belinda.

Grandma Shingoose.


My name is Gerry Shingoose. My spirit names are Sky Woman
and Northern Lights Woman. I come from the Bear Clan and
my warrior spirit is Grandmother Turtle. I'm a mother of
three. I'm a grandmother to eight grandchildren. And I'm
also a great-grandma to two great-grandchildren who are
very dear and precious to me.

I'm a residential school survivor too. I went to Muskowekwan Residential School for nine years. I didn't get a chance or opportunity to go home during the holidays. I stayed there for the 10 months with my siblings and other children that couldn't travel home.

Today I'm a happy grandma. I'm a grandmother and that's my role. And I carry it well. And why I carry it well is I carry it for the people because that's what my late father taught me.

My family comes from Tootinaowaziibeeng, Valley River. Very traditional community. They were one of the communities that had sundances and kept the ceremonies going and my dad was one of them.

After residential school that's when he taught me. He told me, he says, "Gerry (speaking in Native language)." He says, "I knew when you were four years old when we were living in the bush," he says, "that, my girl, you were going to be gifted. You're -- and the grandmothers and the grandfathers, our ancestors told me that you were going to carry a responsibility." And then I
told him, "Well, who's the grandfathers and the
grandmothers?" I didn't know because I spent all those
years in residential school. So he says, "Well, the wolf
came to me," he says. "He come and told me," he says,
"when you were just a little girl," he says, "and he gave
me that message that I was supposed to teach you." And the
wolf is the one that carries that message from the spirit
world to the physical world here on Mother Earth. Whenever
you need guidance from that spirit world that's who you
ask. You ask that wolf.

He taught me lots before he passed on in
those short years. And those teachings still come to me
what he taught me. But he also gifted me a pipe and then
he says, "My girl." He says, "I'm giving you a pipe," he
says. I was 29 years old. I didn't know what a pipe was.
He says, "And I also want you to do the sweat lodge," he
says. And I said, "Well, that's a big" -- I'm thinking
that's a big responsibility. And then I ask him again,
"Who told you?" And he says, "The grandfathers and the
grandmothers." So I took it and he showed me the way. He
showed me how to do it.

My father was very, very dear to me. I
spent years with him learning from him after that when he
told me. In 2001 he passed away. It was very, very hard
on me. I still choke up when I think about it because he
showed me the way of life. He showed me ceremony.

After he passed I grieved. I put my bundle away. I put my teachings away and I just lived physically. I didn't want to go to ceremony anymore because if I went to ceremony I would think of my father and I would break down. That hurt and that pain, that grief, that grieving. Anything that reminds you of your loved one you try to avoid and that's what I did. I did for 10 years.

When I moved here to Winnipeg in 2010 I was isolated. I didn't know anybody. 2012 is when I came out. That's only five years ago. And you know what woke me up was the youth. I seen the youth. They were so inspiring. They were so gifted and so much energy and I wanted to help them. So I brought out my pipe. I started going out there into the community, took my drum wherever I went. I carried bags, many bags. The grandmothers know all the bags we carry.

And I went out there and that's when I connected with spirit, with myself, who I was, where I came from, why I'm here. I found my purpose. So I'm here today. The last three days were very, very emotional for me. But not for me because I was trying to take what I heard. I usually do that.

I have so much love and compassion for the families. I hear their stories. When we went to -- like
people go on walks. People set up sacred fires. People set up camps here in Winnipeg. And I go and I listen to them. And it's so inspiring what I hear from our community members. But especially the youth, what I hear from them. They have a different vision. It's so authentic and original and they are -- they have so much pride. And they do it through art. They do it through media and they do it through that magazine we see, Red Rising. Like, you know, it's so -- you just see so much activity, so much beautiful activity out there that it's so inspiring. And those are the ones that are carrying the families like I want to carry the families.

When I came here the first day I sat with the grandmothers and they were so beautiful to sit with. Like, it just -- I learned so much from each one of you. I want to say thank you. And what we brought to you was that spirit, the one that I lost for that 10 years. We brought those medicines. We brought those pipes. We brought the tobacco. We harvest sage in front of you. We sang songs. We have a sacred fire over there. All this ceremony is so beautiful. And that's where the answer is.

Last night I had a sweat lodge. We had a sweat for the women. It's heart medicine. There are women that are -- been sexually exploited, who are sexually assaulted. It's a 12-week program and we had a closure.
And we closed it with a sweat. And the women from the previous groups -- we've had like four or five groups already -- they keep coming back. They came into the sweat and they sang songs. And it was so beautiful to hear them because when they first came to the groups they didn't know their identity. They didn't know where they came from. And that was -- so that's the beauty as we see as grandmothers is we see that growth. We see that change. And that's what's going to help this inquiry is that that spirit.

And you're going to see families share. You're going to see families hurt. You're going to see their tears, that sacred water that they share with you. They're going to be the voice for those little ones, the ones that can't speak for themselves. But it would be so beautiful if we could say to those little ones come in and share because you never know what they have to say. They can do it through art, drawings. They could say it with words because then they're so pure they could speak from the heart. And they know what to say. So I hope that those voices are heard as well.

So I just wanted to share that and welcome everybody later on. We're going to go smoke the pipes at the sacred fire later. So I just want to say chi-miigwech to each one of you for listening to me.
MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD: Thank you very much.

Recommendations from listening for the three days that I've been here to you, the Commissioners, and I will speak directly to you.

You heard all of our grandmothers speak and others that are not here now who have gone home, in the sense of physically they've had to fly out, speak about — and speak in their language, and the grandmother Pauline who sat over here and spoke extensively in her language to all of us. And although we may not have understood the language we understood the spirit of the language and what she was talking about.

You must accommodate all these languages that are spoken during your Commission hearings because it is through language that we have learned what traditional Indigenous law is because it's built into our language, all of the understandings, that we are raised with as children, that we actually learn while we are in our mother's womb, that we learn in the way we are carried, in the way we are spoken to and the way we are taught at our grandmother's and great-grandmother's, grandfather's knees. And we learn through experience.

And there must be room for people to be able to share that with you because what we see today, the
product of our women being murdered, abused, assaulted, our
children being abused and assaulted, is a product of being
disassociated from their true self from whether it be from
residential school, whether it be through the Sixties
Scoop, whether it be through forced assimilation and
particularly from the reservation life, which is as far
from natural as it possibly can be.

Our traditional way of life, our laws are
from the land. We only need to look at the plant life and
the animal life to understand the laws that were intended
for us because we are only one component of nature and we
are part of that. You need only look to British Columbia
and the wild forest fires that nobody can control, that
started because of lightning strike. There is a lesson in
that.

You need only look at what happened to Fort
McMurray last year. There is a lesson in that. That is
natural law. We all need to be fearful of what is going to
come next because Mother Nature will determine. And she
will take care of herself. She will cleanse herself. And
she may cleanse herself of all of us for all the harm we've
done to her. That is natural law. That is Indigenous
perspective. That is written into our languages and
through our songs and in our ceremonies.

When we talk about sovereignty -- read the
report called "Sole of Sovereignty." And it outlines very specifically that to be sovereign means you first of all have to have your language. It means you have a land base, and we know where our land is. We walk on it every day and we are tasked with the responsibility of caring for her. And we need to, as Indigenous people, smarten up and be more vocal about it because that is our responsibility to care for our Mother, the earth. That's a responsibility that's been given to us as Indigenous peoples. That is where our sovereignty lies.

Our people have been removed from their lands. We have -- are not allowed to travel freely. We're not allowed to hunt, gather and all those things that are natural to us that are a part of natural law for how to take care of ourselves, to keep our bodies well. The reason why our people are sick physically, spiritually and emotionally and in our minds is because we are not eating the natural foods and we are not living a natural life. We are living a processed life that is so far removed from who we are supposed to be as a people.

How many of yous [sic] went to a fast food outlet today? Uh-huh. You're all going to get sick.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD: We live in a drive-thru world where we want everything instantly. We
want to go through a drive-thru, get our Tim Horton's coffee or we can't function. Go through a drive-thru for our food because we didn't take the time to pack our own lunch this morning, prepare our own natural meal. We want to be able to answer our phone right now like the shoe phone that Maxwell Smart used to have and we never thought it would arrive and it did.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

**MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD:** And it's not helping any of us. Our children don't know how to communicate anymore. Our young people don't know how to have a conversation or sit in a room and spend time with their grandparents so they can learn because they're so busy with that thing in front of their faces. We allow that and that is removing our children from the natural ways of learning, which is to sit and listen to us, to sit and watch, to watch nature, to be out in nature, to listen to grandma, grandpa, auntie, uncle. That is built into part of the reason why we are where we are now and why you're having to hear -- have these Commission hearings.

What about process? You all are Indigenous, you, as Commissioners. You have the where with all to change the way this is being conducted. That is why you were chosen, I'm assuming. Change it so we're not sitting in a courtroom system. Change it where we don't have to
give witness.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD: Because our way is when you speak, every word you speak is sacred.

My grandmother taught me be careful what comes out of your mouth because you can never take it back. Every word we say is sacred. We don't have to put our hand on a Bible and say I promise.

Oh there. I was speaking the truth. Because that is what we were taught that you don't speak -- and all you speak is the truth. As children we were taught that you don't speak when Elders are in the room unless you ask for permission. You respect your mothers, your grandmothers, your aunties, uncles. You respect your older brothers and sisters. We are not to call our older brothers and sisters by name ever. We refer to them by the term in my language. Tu-doda (ph) is older brother. Wee-non a (ph) is my older sister. Don't ever refer to them by name. That's respect. And today we have children who care -- call their parents by first name and we allow it.

Those are such simple things. But that is the beginning of the lesson and teachings in what it means to be an (speaking in Native language), that person that the Creator made you, all those teachings that he gave you specifically for how to walk your life, how to conduct
yourself in life. And if you have that, then you wouldn't be sitting here. Then you wouldn't have to be crying.

Language is so important. Change the process. Don't have us come and sit in rows. Don't have us swear that our words are going to be the truth because they are naturally going to be the truth.

You asked about further research. I encourage you to read the research that has already been done by our traditional people. You will find too, also, that you're not going to see a lot of our traditional Indigenous knowledge written anywhere because we are an oral people. We learn from our grandparents. We listen and we hold it in here so we can pass it on because anything that is written on paper can be twisted. It can be torn up. It can be burnt. But our laws that are taught to us by our grandparents and our great-grandparents remain in here and, therefore, in here so I can share it here with my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren.

So I encourage you to sit with Elders. I encourage you to have a circle of grandmothers and grandfathers everywhere you go before you even start your hearings because they will teach you this is the law in our community. These are the laws amongst our people. These are the laws that keep this in mind when you come to listen to our people come and tell their stories. This is the
reason why we have you here.

When we talk about what is it that bother --
that our children are suffering from -- I mean, our people,
I call it a deficit of spirit because we have not
connected. We live a physical life but we don't live our
spiritual life. And first and foremost we were put here as
spiritual people and we must reconnect with that. And how
do we do that? Whether it be God, the church or whether it
be through ceremony, we need a spiritual life and -- in
order for us to know that we have a place in this earth and
what our place is and our purpose is. And, especially for
those that have gone on before us, we have ceremonies --
and I know you all do too.

And I talked about this with somebody just
in the last couple days because I knew this hearing was
coming here. We have a specific ceremony when someone
finishes their life on earth with us. And we help them go
on their journey to the other side. And we support them
for four days during and four days after. And then a year
later we have a memorial to release them so that we can
walk with a happy life and they can also where they are.
And that has not been done, not only for our missing and
murdered women, but it hasn't been done also for all of the
children that died in residential schools.

And so we have families and mothers and
grandmothers and aunties and fathers and everybody else,
grandfathers, still grieving and crying for those children
who died years and years and years ago in residential
school and nothing's ever been done for them. And that
also leads to this constant grieving that we're in, that we
still haven't addressed, that is a part of this issue too.
And that has to be done. And, again, sit with your
grandmothers and grandfathers in your communities of where
you're going for your hearings and they will tell you what
needs to be done from that -- from a ceremonial
perspective.

And I listen to the grandmothers say, "Men
take care of your women. Honour your children. Honour
your women. Uphold them and uplift them and protect them."
That starts from those little boys listening as small
children to their mothers and their grandmothers and
learning what love really is. Understanding what love
really is and what it means. Not only does it mean it's a
gift, but it's a tremendous responsibility and it's a
tremendous gift that they have to offer also. And nowadays
our young people don't understand that because it's about
use and abuse because that's what they see in the homes or
if they -- and with 80 percent of a lot -- of the children
in care being our children, they're growing up without
that. They're growing up with use and abuse.
And so men, young people, grandmothers -- we issued a statement here in Manitoba a couple months ago that we take full responsibility for our families and our children. Remember what we say is sacred and we have to follow that up with action and I -- we have to do it individually, in our own homes and in our extended families and then throughout the communities. I encourage all of you. That's why I keep saying you have to listen to the grandmothers. You have to.

We begin with song. We begin with honouring water. We uplift our pipes and our tobacco and we light our sage and our cedar and our sacred medicines and we will close with that. And that is why I quote a dear friend of mind, Dr. Larry Emerson (ph), who just completed our life with us this past week, which I just found out about through social media. And he had a profound saying that when young people used to suffer -- and he was a professor in the university -- and I'm going to refer to that also in a little bit. He used to always pull out his drum and he would start singing. And automatically that singing would soothe students and would uplift them and it would give them strength. It would calm their minds and their hearts. And they could then study and they could reconnect and refocus why they're there. They're there for their people, not just for themselves. They're there for their family.
Somebody told a story the other day. Who was it? You. About -- yeah, about the little guy who became a lawyer and no one even called him or thanked him or honoured him and he went home and his mother's house was full of flowers because they were honouring the mother for raising a child to be that strong that they're able to complete university and to get their degree. That is how our society is. We do not honour the individual unless we -- as family members we honour them. The community honours the family. And we need to bring that back instead of the crab in the bucket. We're in the crab in the bucket syndrome. We need to get out of that. And you all are part of that. I call you "you all" because you are Indigenous also and you understand that concept.

Regarding -- I was going to talk about something and now I forgot because I just was on a roll. Our song. Our song is still singing but there's something else I wanted to say as a recommendation for you.

This young lady spoke the other day about an education system that is not working for our people. The education system was used to tear our children away from a way of life and to tear our children away from who they really are as individuals and Belinda just spoke about that. If something is going to be changed, if something is going to be done to right this ship the way it should be,
then utilize the education system and start when our
children are little and support the parents in ensuring
that they have that -- our children have a right to be
loved and to be honoured. And so that our parents have
that opportunity to teach your children their languages, to
teach our children in their way of life, much like other
models. If you want to use other models that work, look to
Finland. It works. Look to our people. It works but
nobody believes that it works. I believe our system works.
I want my grandchildren to be taught in our
language until eighth grade because, you know what, they
will surpass everybody else in any test you give them once
they get done high school. Because as the Sole of
Sovereignty says, that report -- and I only cite that
because everybody needs five letters or six letters
attached to the name before anybody will listen to them.
Where it states that the language is what provides children
with that knowledge. And if they are raised within their
own language and taught within their language, they get to
high school they will excel in every subject and they will
excel in university just like this young lady did because
she grew up with language and ceremony.

So if you're going to change system and make
-- and it's been made 100 times but make it again. Teach
our children in our languages. Allow us to teach our
children with ceremony and song and dance instead of
punishing us if we don't send our children to school,
instead of punishing our children because they went hunting
instead of sitting in a classroom. Instead of punishing
our children because they wanted to help grandma and they
stayed home and helped grandma and you punish them because
they weren't in the classroom. In the meantime, they
learnt in one day with grandma what you couldn't teach them
in a year in grade school.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

MS. KATHERINE WHITECLOUD: Thank you. So
those are my recommendations to you and I hope you make
them also when you're done. And we encourage you to
continue to sit with grandmothers and grandfathers wherever
you go because you will get your education. And the
experts that were here, I honour you and I respect you for
all that you shared. And I'm just adding to it and I'm
building to it because I know you had your lessons from
your teachers and your elders that you shared that
knowledge.

My sister works in a law school too. And
sometimes she's too white in her way of thinking and it's
difficult to get her back to the Dakota way of thinking
because you get removed from it because you're in that
circle all the time. Remove yourself from the circle. Go
home to ceremony as often as you can, even the whole
summer, and it will reground you and refocus you. It's
like a grandmother said, a grandfather. When you live in a
city, especially those who only live in the city, you lose
connection from the land. Take your shoes off. Go walk on
the grass. Be pretty woman. And you will reconnect.

Thank you very much. (Speaking in Native
language).

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

MS. SHERI COPENACE: I just want to thank
everybody. I know I see three more people that are asking
to speak. So I will -- we will, of course, support that
but I know the Commissioners and the Grandmother Annie here
wants to speak as well, so I don't -- who wanted to -- I
would kindly ask you just to like keep it like really --
she asked first -- and then we can do it as quickly as
possible.

MS. ELIZABETH ZARPA: Okay. Thank you. I'm
running kind of -- I'll go quite fast because I also have
to go. But thank you to the grandmothers and to everybody
who shares a piece of their story. And it's like
Toowayoung (ph) said, you're going to come out of this and
you're going to see differently. And these past three days
have been really insightful.

But speaking from an Inuk woman's
perspective and a woman's perspective, I recognize that
being here, traditional Cree, Oji Cree, Anishinaabe
territory, Treaty 1, it's beautiful. And speaking on a
National Inquiry representing Indigenous women, I think
it's key also to keep in mind that -- I think a
recommendation that I would see as something that's really
important is more Inuit drum dancing, throat singing.
Thank you. Thanks.

And I really, really valued the teaching
about the emotiq (ph) and the Qulliq. I think that was
really beautiful. And I just know there's Inuit in
Winnipeg and I'm like where are they? You know, there's
very few of us. And it would be nice to see more Inuit in
the audience.

And also -- which leads me to my next idea
of recommendations would be to have more Inuit experts. We
had one from Pond Inlet in Nunavut, which was really,
really, really insightful. But Inuit, we live in the north
in Inuit Nunangat so, like, all throughout the north in
Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, Greenland and
we're also in the south too, urban settings, going to
school. So, I think it's really important to have other
Inuit experts and also more time. Trying to fit Inuit law
into an hour and a half is just really, really almost
impossible. You need a whole day or something.
And translation. I think the consecutive translation you -- we didn't get the chance to really delve into asking questions that we kind of wanted to or I wanted to because it was just such a short timeframe and the translation made that -- it was longer, so we need longer time for translation.

We also have to recognize that the dialects are different in Inuit Nunangat. I'm not fluent in Inuktitut. I know a little bit. But I know that the dialect sometimes can be a little bit confusing, so making sure that you have more translation from different dialects and keep -- being mindful of that for the expert hearing in Montreal.

The other area that I thought was really, really important is just I was questioning throughout the entirety of the expert hearing why and the audience didn't get the chance to question the experts. Because I think that's -- that would have been really -- and might have had more time but -- it might have added more time but I think that it would have been a really insightful experience to have the option to allow the audience to ask questions as well.

So I think also -- I think that's predominantly everything right now. So thank you so much.

(APLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)
MS. SHERI COPENACE: So I'll give this to Thelma and then to this young lady, then the Commissioners would want to say a few words -- or however. Yeah.

MS. THELMA MORRISSEAU: Miigwech, Sheri.

Bonjour. (Speaking in Native Language).

I just wanted to -- actually, I had a lot to say but I know I'm limited, so what I wanted to share at this time is that I'm not here on my working capacity but I work at a place called The Office of The Children's Advocate. And I'm sure you're aware that we have them right across Canada. So I'm what they call an advocacy officer there. And what our office does is that we look at child welfare matters that come across our desk. We recently got an expanded mandate, which is going to cover five more areas including justice education, mental health, some other ones I can't remember right now.

But I think what I wanted the Commissioners to know -- and I'm sure you do but I just -- I feel compelled to have to tell you. I've been there 17 years and I think I can honestly say that 99.9 percent of the files that come across my desk are Indigenous children.

So we know that Manitoba has the highest number of children in care across Canada. We also know that close to 85, 90 percent of those children are Indigenous, whether they're First Nations or Métis or
Inuit, they're Indigenous children. And the sad thing about this as I see it has a repetition of residential school. Because we know residential school took the children away from the homes, took the children away from the parents and the grandparents whose job it was to raise them. And so the communities became silent because there were no more children, there was no more laughter. And it's the same thing that's being repeated in child welfare.

What I also have seen is that our young girls, Indigenous girls, how I believe child welfare is a stepping stone to exploitation, sexual exploitation, human trafficking. That is a really serious issue in our country. It's a serious issue right here in Manitoba. People don't realize that it's right here in our back door. It's happening. So I really think that issue has to be looked at. We have to stop taking our kids from our homes. We have to.

If our people are going to heal, we have to give back a purpose to the mothers and the fathers, the grandparents, the aunties and the uncles to look after their children. If you have no children in your community, you have no one to look after and what purpose do you then have?

So I'm asking in a really good way that that be looked at. Our kids are being placed in homes that are
not Indigenous homes. And I recognize as well that many of
our people are still hurting, are still wounded, are in a
journey of still healing and perhaps they can't do that
work. But I also know there are so many that can and there
are grandmas, mushums and kokums that are willing to look
after their children. And for whatever reason, child
welfare is not hearing their voice. That has to change.

If our children are going to learn a
language it has to be their language, not someone else's.
Another language should come second or third. But their
own language should be taught first. But when they are
placed outside of their community, outside of their family,
they're not being exposed to any of that. That's not fair.
That's not right. Ethically, morally, that's not right.
We can't continue to do that.

I had -- my husband and I had supper the
other night with a really beautiful family who lost a
daughter a year ago. And I have her permission to talk
about it. Her daughter was Christine Wood (ph). And I
want to talk about it because I really believe this issue
is not just an issue for Indigenous people. I think it's
an issue right across Canada and we all have to do
something about it.

That little girl, that little 17 or 19-year-
old girl who was in the city and went missing shortly after
she left her mother and dad at the hotel died within hours of leaving the hotel. And she was found. I wanted to tell you this because that family -- I've never met a family so beautiful as Christine's parents, Melinda and George Wood. They are such beautiful, spiritual people. And despite the pain that they live with every day, they can still have hope and strength. They are real teachers for all of us.

Throughout the time that their daughter was missing -- their daughter actually died -- went missing August the 20th, 2016. So they just celebrated one year of her missing just the other day. So when we had supper with them the other night that's all they wanted to talk about. And we let them. That's the least we could do. They talked about her in such a beautiful way.

Their little girl was found outside of Winnipeg just past the Town of Dugald where her body had been buried in a ditch on a farmer's field. And I don't have enough time to tell you everything but there's some really important things that happened there. But significant to it there was all kinds of spiritual signs that the family received. And one of the primary teachers, if you will, was that fox.

In our culture the fox is taught to be a messenger. And so many times that fox came to that family throughout those months they were waiting, they were
looking for her, waiting for her to appear. But when they finally found her body it was on this farmer's field.

And what had happened, this farmer had got up one day and he had a fox sitting on his woodpile. This is a shagenash (ph), a white man. He had this fox. I mean, you know, and usually in our culture we take great significance when animals come to see us, and normally not for their culture. But he paid attention to that fox who came and sat on his woodpile. And without realizing, without knowing why but it's almost -- I believe it was spirit-driven, myself. But he jumped in his truck and he drove around his land. And he said, "I have no idea why I went where I went." But he drove down that road off of Highway 15 and it wasn't very far down that road he saw something in the ditch and half exposed was Christine's body.

And that man -- we believe that an animal came and removed part of that earth so this little girl could be found so that the parents would be able to have some closures. We really believe that's what happened. And this man has been so kind to the family. He planted a tree for Christine. And you can go there and you can go and offer your prayers there. They've set up like a little area for her. You can go there. Traditional people can go there and smudge. Christian people can go there and say a
prayer. There's a cross there. It's really beautiful how this man has taken it upon himself to take care of that site where her body was found.

And, you know, that gives me hope for mankind because it tells me that people overall inherently are kind, and that we all hurt the same. We all bleed when we're cut. So more than differences we have more similarities. And I want us to honour that.

I am so grateful to Christine's parents for what they have given to my husband and I. (Speaking in Native Language). I have -- she talked about her daughter loving butterflies and how she put a little -- some kind of little structure there with a butterfly. And just before that in March I was getting ready to go to my Midewiwin ceremonies. And this is no word of a lie. This is the truth I am speaking. When I went to ceremonies I had this young woman in my head. That's all I could think of. She is who I thought about. She is who I prayed about and for her family.

And we have two lodges for the Midewiwin. There is the Midewiwin teaching lodge and then there was -- there is the Midewiwin initiation lodge. And it was that morning as I stood in front of the Midewiwin initiation lodge, as I was entering to my right were butterflies. So I know that Christine was there. Her spirit was there.
And, you know, some people may not believe that but I know what I felt inside and I know what my spirit told me. And so I share that with you and in thinking about how really extremely important it is for families to have closure because Melinda said, "I know she's gone but I also know she's in a better place. I thank God for allowing her to come home to me so that we can put her in a good place and have some closure."

And so it's critically important to help our families across Canada to find closure, to find where are their loved ones, where are their daughters, their mothers, their sisters, their granddaughters? Where are they? Their sons, their grandsons. In order for our people to heal they must be able to have some closure.

So I share that much with you. I say chi-miigwech allowing me these few words at this time. Miigwech.

**MS. SABE TUWIA:** Tansi. My traditional name is Sabe Turiwa, and -- sorry. So I would ask for implementations of changes of policy to -- within the RCMP and police forces to end discrimination against the peoples of the land. Also, I'd like to see policy also changed in terms of reference to women. So currently in Vancouver there have been changes to -- that have been implemented; however, I don't feel that they're adequate enough but it's
definitely a good start. And so that's feminist policies and they watch it via video and it's mandatory.

I'd like to see cultural competency training implemented into the police forces for those policies to be changed. I'd also like to see funding implemented for families to be able to access cultural services, whether cultural services, so if it's gas monies or bus monies. And also for Elders to receive compensation as equal as psychiatrists and psychologists, I'd like to see our people be recognized and receive the same amount of pay as well.

Also, I'd like to see more changes in the education system as well, for more of our people to -- well, I'd like to see changes in the educational system. So currently there's, you know, history that's being shared and spoken about that I believe is outdated and inaccurate. And I'd like to see those changes -- I'd like to see that eradicated from there and for truth to be spoken and for there to be a system overhaul. I'd like to see changes in the Constitution as well, more than a recommendation, and for a day where we can be free from discrimination and violence. I'd like to be able to walk down the street and not be a target.

I'd like to see services be changed for our young people so that they have access to treatment, alcohol and drug treatment, for there to be services enacted for
family violence. Sorry, I'm really shaking.

I'd like to see our language -- languages recognized equally as French, Jamaican, Mexican, Italian, to be recognized. We're supposed to have human rights and I'd like -- also like to see this Inquiry based around the human rights of Indigenous peoples, but that framework. And one day I'd like to see changes in the Constitution as well. But, you know, a framework definitely free from discrimination as well and racism.

Also, I think that services, whether they be cultural or western-wise, that those services be available to all people, to all people that are people of the land.

I stand here today. I was one of those kids that was -- that grew up without knowing any culture and I found culture later on in life, which I'm very thankful for. I grew up not knowing -- well, when I was a little girl I grew up with my grandparents and they taught me language, culture way of life. You know, we hunted. And my kokumm she fished and she trapped. She was a trapper. And so I don't know those ways and I had to learn, you know, some of those ways through exploring that for myself. But I think that it's essential that Elders also be present in the education system, you know, in the community, everywhere because there's a generation that's growing up without language, without culture.
And, you know, when I was a little girl I --
and I heard this story from this woman and she shared about
being groomed at a very young age from, you know, her
environment. You know, and for me that was my stepfather
and then it continued, you know, when I grew up in care.
And, you know, being one of those kids that -- I really
didn't fully understand back then but, you know, I, too,
was -- grew up to be groomed to be sexually exploited, you
know.

I stand here today and I think that, you
know, I'm one of the lucky ones because I was one of the
ones that got away; right? And a lot of my sisters they
didn't have a chance to get away. And a lot of our
sisters, you know, every day that this Inquiry goes on,
that there's a lot of young girls and boys that don't get
to come back either.

And when we look at that history, you know,
of that relationship between westernized culture, society
and our people, you know, we're all by-products, you know,
of colonialism and what that means. And I would really
like for, you know, the Commission, for each of you to
really understand, to dissect that, to look at that, the
relationships between the Crown. I know it's a big task
but I'm hoping that some of these changes will come, you
know, for the people.
So I just want to say thank you.

COMMISSIONER BRIAN EYOLFSON: I'd just like to thank everybody so much. I'd like to thank everybody that was here with us this week. And just from the beginning everybody that contributed to such a great opening we had Tuesday morning at the sunrise ceremony and the sacred fire and the panellists that we had this week. They gave us a lot to think about.

And I'd also like to thank the families and survivors who shared some stories with us today and gave us some recommendations. And that's really helpful for us. I mean, it's the stories that help us do our work to look at the hard questions we have to look at. And the recommendations that help us move forward and make improvements to how we're going this work and make adjustments so we can keep trying to do this better. So I appreciate that so much.

And I really want to thank all the grandmothers that were here with us this week and helped so much and for all your hard work last night in helping us make today what it was. It was a really great day. So a big chi-miigwech to everybody. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I was on a little bit of a holiday last week with my son. We went on some adventures. So the weekend before coming here I read
my material and I prepared. And I wasn't feeling prepared enough but I read the materials and I had some questions so I was prepared. And I -- you know, we prepare for things and we don't realize what we were actually preparing for. I think my preparation was last week with my son, not the things that I read.

I've learned so much about the importance of relationships, how we nurture life. Dawnis, you couldn't have said it more perfectly. The water, the food, our bodies, each other and the earth.

This is personally and professionally the toughest work that I'll ever do, second to being a mom, which I do at the same time as this work. And I want to thank the grandmothers. I want to thank the ceremony and for bringing us through that and guiding us through that and opening that door. I don't know how else to sort of articulate that or explain it. It opened something on Tuesday morning that allowed for something.

And I want to thank the grandmothers. Last night we gave it to you to guide us and I'm sorry we took as long as we did to take that step. A lesson learned there, that's for sure.

This is an incredible -- we've been told and we feel it and acknowledge it, an incredible task the four of us carry. We can't carry it by ourselves. We can't do
it by ourselves. And we're not. And you reminded me of
that again this week, so thank you.

I want to thank the families and I want to -
- I'm sick of apologizing because words aren't enough.
Thank you for teaching me. We'll be back in October and
we've learned a lot that next time -- there's no right way.
People keep saying, "We -- you have to do this the right
way." And then I listen to the grandmothers and they say,
"There's no right way. You have to find the way and find
it together and go."

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: So I'm going
to assume that that is a teaching in and of itself that I
hear one thing and then another thing so we have to go and
we have to do and we have to try.

And I look forward to being back here and I
look forward to hearing from the families. And I look
forward to our team building with you, this community, the
right space for that to happen in the way it's supposed to
happen. So I say that to you as I say it to my colleagues
and I say it to our team. And I know they feel it and I
guess I'm saying it to the country. There we go.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: I forget that
moment sometimes.
But I think that's important because we need
to bring this country, this entire country on this journey,
all the nations in this country, Indigenous and non-
Indigenous. And this is a turning point and there are big
choices to be made individually and collectively. It has
to be an informed choice here and here and in every way
that we make our decisions. We have to make those
decisions for our babies and our grandbabies and for those
that came before us.

So I'll keep making my step-by-step
decisions hoping for them to be good decisions and the
right decisions. (Speaking in Native Language).

I also want to say how proud I was that
yesterday as we learned about Inuit laws it was all in
Inuktitut. Lillian Aq'luqa (ph), our lawyer, she speaks
English. I speak English. Sandra Omik (ph) speaks
English. That was not the language to speak about that.
And it all happened in Inuktitut and that was very
powerful.

And I want to thank Elizabeth Zarpa. You're
right. We need more, more of those moments, for them not
to be one-offs, for it to be what we do. But I want to
acknowledge it because I am very proud of that that as the
parties, as the witnesses, as the person who is to listen
and learn, it was all spoken and understood without devices
between us, and that was really cool. I'm proud of that. I hope my son will be one day too. He's six right now. It's just Star Wars and Lego.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And hockey. And he has Jordon so, yeah, there we go. (Speaking in Native Language).

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci Qajaq. Merci beaucoup. I love when Qajaq speak with the heart or from the heart, sorry.

I want to acknowledge the people of this land before I say something and I want to acknowledge all the beauty who are surrounding us and the beauty, spirit, plant and all of that; mostly, the people who share their truth also. Not only yesterday, today or the day before, but I was away last week. I was away with my kids. I have two beautiful twins, Sheshka (ph) and Awesiya (ph). They're 10 years old. They're stronger than me, louder than me, so I'm proud of them. And my son Yoquesi (ph) and husband-to-be when he sees me. So, we were away.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: We were away. And I promised that I was going to look my emails. I lied. I looked every morning. But I'm a Facebook person. I'm a Twitter person because we connect with families through
that social media since 2009. So now you know. And one woman asked me what's going on. Why this place? And it was your daughter. So when she wrote to me I said, "I have to honour this." So I ask. I was wondering why we're here. We got some answered but we're not coming back; okay?

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: So some people like the place. That's their right. But some people doesn't want to come, so I have to acknowledge that and my colleagues too did when we found out so.

What is important also is that every time that we receive, or I, through social media, a call, a text or an email from people that I don't really know or really know, it's always important. Always. Always. Doesn't matter the way they say it. Ouch sometimes and sometimes wow. But they're telling us something. They're teaching us something. And that's my world. This is where I grow up with organization, with women, with children, with people who wants justice. And I'm surrounded by people who wants to do the same but differently because they were coming from another world, but they're respecting me, my colleagues. And I'm impressed by that. I was afraid that they would say, "Oh my god. Who is she?" But they still respecting me, so merci beaucoup.
And it is clear for me that you, the women and the men, did something historical yesterday. Yesterday. Because last fall I asked our lawyers, because I never did an inquiry, I never did a Commission -- sorry, my dress is falling.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: It's my man side.

So but I wasn't afraid to ask question. How is the setup for the room? How is the setup? Some of us it's wigwam. Some of us it's igloo. Some of us it's tepee, metashan (ph) and so on or buildings. And I saw the uncomfortable. I saw it. I acknowledge that. But I said, "How can we make it a place where it's safe?" Culturally is that what we say appropriate and respectful? How?

We did a hearing where the roof was falling so we have to find a place so we ended in a tent. It wasn't a circus. It's just because we respect the commitment so we went in white horse in that tent. But still, it wasn't enough for me.

I was praying. And yesterday a woman -- another woman, another woman, family members, an Elder said, "This is not our way." And look what you did. Can you imagine the parties, most of them are Canadian, the lawyers. They see Commissioner and -- having coffee with
families or with government or with other parties having fun, hugging. They never saw that. Usually Commissioner don't speak to media, don't speak to families, don't speak to any party. We need to be pure, apparently. Well, we changed that rule. We changed it. But it wasn't clear enough for anybody or for everybody. That's -- I take that responsibility. But you made us change the way we have to conduct the hearings with the families or the institutions or people that we need to ask question or listen. So merci beaucoup (speaking in Native language). You did something amazing.

So for that, for me, the recommendation that I listen, like taking care of families when they come, believe me, I'll fight from inside -- they know me -- to make sure that the next one, Montreal, Rankin Inlet, doesn't matter where we go where the land is welcoming us. The spirit is welcoming us. We will make sure and I will fight that families are respected. Believe me.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And it's not something we did on purpose, not at all. We're human. "Perfectly non-perfect," we say in French. I don't know in English.

Another thing that is very, very important for me is I had another prayer. I was wondering, how come
they say it's too legalistic when I fought for this inquiry
so Canada, Ontario, Quebec, any province, can be
accountable? They have their laws so how can we say to
their laws this is what went wrong but let us do our way
also with our laws? So, yes, I need that legal aspect and
I'm not a lawyer.

    Boom. You arrive. Your oath. So I'm
asking the -- I'm asking you humbly if we can use your oath
for the next hearings. And I'll give you the backhoe for
that.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci.

    I will conclude to say it is clear for me
Inuit is very, very dear for me. I see them in Montreal.
I see them when I travel and I didn't know there were a lot
also in Winnipeg, Edmonton and they deserve their space.
So, we should have more time and more people to teach us.

    Often I heard -- and it's true. It's our
responsibility. We don't tell you the good stuff also.
We're too quiet. I'm learning English so I'm loud in
English now, not only in French.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: To say that
policing, justice system, criminal system, trafficking,
child welfare and all the impact of colonization -- woof, I
tried -- it is a top priority for the four Commissioner that you have in front of you. I'm telling you it is and we will not give up. You have some strong warriors inside the Inquiry. Strong women coming from your communities, your territories, well-educated or educated like me with university of life but we're there fighting for us and for you. When I say "us", I'm a family also.

So this is my commitment as a mother, a stubborn mother, a grandmother, and also a human being. I will fight with you and for you.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Pardon me. Oh, thank you. I finally get to see the stone -- the rock because it's beautiful. I've never seen one like this before.

I want to start by thanking the families and survivors for being here and sharing. And I have -- I don't have to -- I want to thank the grandmothers for setting us straight again because that's what grandmothers do.

I'm a grandmother, not -- well, I have grandchildren but I'm not a grandmother yet. It's something to -- that I aspire to.

I'm going to part with a story about my grandmother. I don't have the last word. My grandmother
always did. She was a beautiful Métis woman. Tough, tough as nails but soft and full of love for everyone regardless.

I had the great gift of my grandmother when I was growing up and I learned a lot from her. I think the most important thing I learned was from my grandmother, other than how to make bannock, was to -- not to be afraid to fall down because I knew she'd be there to pick me up and she always was. And so I'm not afraid to fall down because of my grandma. She picks me up. Even today my grandma picked me up.

So my last word is my grandma. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

--- CLOSING CEREMONY/CÉRÉMONIE DE CLÔTURE:

COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: As we wrap up, Elder Annie wants to close the fire, the Qulliq. (Speaking in Native Language).

Annie would like (speaking in Native language). Annie would like her fellow Inuit with her and she's invited some other people to join her as she extinguishes the flame of the Qulliq to signify the end of our work this week. And I believe she's going to ask the Commissioners -- and I'll give you a heads up -- that she'll want you to help put out the flame.

Marion, she would like you to sit with her.

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: And you too.
COMMISSIONER QAJAQ ROBINSON: And me too.

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: Both of you. Both of you. Okay.

There's so much honour that I want to thank you to all of you. This is a beautiful honour that we Inuit have been accepted to this group and the family and friends here and from other countries. And this is learning experience for me to get out for the first time in my life to be among you. I'm so honoured. I'm so speechless. I get scared so easily. I get scared to talk but inside of me I talk to myself because in residential school we were not allowed to say anything. We were slapped with belts in our mouth if we say anything. But today I'm so grateful. Little bit by bit, I'm able to say at least few words.

Right now at this moment I ask Qajaq and -- your name --

CHIEF COMMISSIONER MARION BULLER: Marion.

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: -- Marion to come to be with us and to say thank you for letting us Inuit to be involved, to be with you and these other Inuit people too here. And I feel so blessed as Inuit people even though I don't have much of my own Inuit culture and I have a long way to learn about our Inuit way of life because of the lost I had in my past. This is so wonderful.
I want to ask one question if we can have this kind of ceremony in Nunavut because my people are really hurting as well like anybody. Something can stop too. They're -- mainly my people were moved from their community by the federal government because their children were taken away to go to school, day school, and being sent away to other places to go to school. And they're hurting. We don't have this kind of ceremony, gatherings, like this. I fear for my own people.

And we're the only younger generations we have. Our so many Elders have passed away and where are we going to go to heal, to get help, us Inuit people? There got to be something to start up there sometime. It doesn't have to be right away but somewhere to start, to start helping our people.

As for me, who I was lost in my life, there's so much violence around me, inside of me because the way I was treated where I went to school. That's all I grew up with. That's all I knew. And it's so hard for me to stop the violence that I'm affected inside.

The death -- near death, sexual abuse, raped, until a few years later I was able to stop it myself. The strapping. My body's full of scars. Being strapped in residential school.

I have to say this. That's been living
inside of me for so long. I grew with Cree people, Indian people like you are, in Moose Factory, Moosonee. I never even seen Inuit people going to school there. And why me? Why was I put there?

One night we used to pretend sleeping. I think it was one night. If it was a dream, let it be a dream. If it wasn't, let it be truth. One night, I don't know, something woke me up. I saw these nuns coming to the room or they didn't -- were there. This nun thing all the time but mainly on Sundays they did. I saw them coming in. I didn't know these girls, who they were. I only knew one friend, Elizabeth. She was Cree. If it was a dream, I saw them coming to pick this Indian girl. I think she was dead. They carry her inside this sheet, in a sheet. I think she was dead.

I've seen your people get so beaten up. I used to see them taking these girls to a room. I don't know what they were doing in the rooms. And one day we were off to bed. We were supposed to go to bed 8:00 every night. I could hear the drum outside. The drum. And all these girls ran to the window. And I was the last one because I couldn't understand. And I finally went to them to look through the window and I asked Elizabeth, "What's that drum? How come everybody ran to the window?" And she said, "My parents are calling us to go home." And I said
to her, "How come I can't go home? Will I go home too?"

It was a big, soundiful [sic] drum. That's always in me.

Every time you people play drum I get right through it. It's beautiful but it's scary because of what those girls did running to the window. But there was nobody out there. They were in the bush. The sod houses, 10 hiding in the bushes, following their children taken away.

There are a lot of me to tell a story but this is only the beginning of my violency [sic] that's living around me every single day. But I'm Inuk. I'm Eskimo. People can call me "Eskimo." That doesn't hurt me. But I have a hard time who really I am. Who am I? Where did I came [sic] from? The only place I can say is that I grew up where the Inuit never gone there to Moose Factory and Moosonee to go to school, residential school.

And I'm so grateful for all of you, all of you, who can listen to me. Please listen to my people too, my Inuit, Inuktitut, Inuit in Nunavut sometime in the newer future. Please.

I'm so -- thank you. My throat is so dry.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: I didn't even know water in my whole life. I was taught how to drink water.

And I believe right now at this time the
Qulliq is my -- directing me to share this with you. I had no idea. I don't know nobody. I don't get to know anybody. I'm always alone at home with my family, my husband. And I thank you to my husband who have been supporting me over the years, looking at -- raising my kids while I travel, while I -- right now too. So thank you for this story I just told you. Thank you.

Now I'm moving on to the Qulliq. Excuse me.

Thank you.

I ask Marion for accepting us Inuit to be part of this right now and for the past three days or -- yeah. So if I can get you to unlit one flame and she will help you?

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: This Qulliq is the sign -- no, you have to get oil on it and take the -- yeah. Yeah. You got it.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: And here's the little -- hold this. Okay. Yeah. Oil it. Oil it. And one more little one in that corner. Yeah. Good. And your -- yeah. Your turn. (Speaking in Native Language). Yeah, this is -- yeah. (Speaking in Native Language) Excuse me. One of my kids wrote something on my (speaking in Native language).
So I would love to start off where Commissioner -- where's the Commission? Okay. You want to come? You can. And maybe you can help him. Now (speaking in Native language). Oh, okay. Yeah. One, one corner like this. Yeah, right there. Good. You did good. Yeah, you're professional.

(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: Here's a wet cloth too. Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: She wants pictures.

(LAUGHTER/RIRES)

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: That one over here.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That one?


(APPLAUSE/APPLAUDISSEMENT)

ELDER ANNIE BOUQUETTE: Now, maybe start off with Jade. Yeah, come forward and do the same thing as you did. This is the honorarium of for you accepting the Inuit people to be in part of you. Yeah, good. Thank you. Here's a little -- yeah, yeah. And (speaking in Native language). Okay. Thank you. (Speaking in Native language). My friend. Yeah. (Speaking in Native language).

Yeah, Barbara's been helping me a lot and

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when I was so scared to come down to look after the Qulliq she came. I ask her, "Can you come down and be with me? I'm so scared in front of the people." But I was -- I managed to do it on my own. Thank you.

I'll do the last to remember the Qulliq that kept us warm in the cold, cold igloo travelling, our parents. Can we be silent for a few seconds just to say thank you?

Thank you. Thank you to all of you.

**MS. JADE HARPER:** I can make the announcement. Hi, everyone. I don't know whose phone this is but -- I just wanted -- I realize -- that was really special and special miigwech to Annie.

We do have one more fire. It happens to not be here. It's at the Oodena circle. So that's where we're travelling to right now. We're all walking over to do our closing ceremonies -- to finish our closing ceremonies off at the sacred fire at the Oodena circle. We do have some food and coffee and tea there for anyone who'd like to join us. And we will be doing a pipe ceremony.

--- Upon adjourning at 4:37 p.m.

La séance est adjournée à 16h37
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

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

Janice Gingras

September 6, 2017