National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Public Hearings
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Public Volume 89
Lisa Big John & Lisa Jacquiline Robinson,
In relation to Mona Wilson

Heard by Commissioner Michèle Audette
Commission Counsel: Fanny Wylde

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Heiltsuk First Nation                   Non-appearance
Northwest Indigenous Council Society    Non-appearance
Our Place – Ray Cam Co-operative Centre Non-appearance

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada         Beth Symes (Legal Counsel)

Vancouver Sex Workers’ Rights Collective Non-appearance

Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak / Women of the Métis Nation Non-appearance
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Metro Vancouver, British Columbia
--- Upon commencing on Thursday, April 5, 2018 at 9:36 a.m.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Good morning, Commissioner Audette. I would like to present to you our first family of the second day of the hearings. With me, there is Lisa Big John, and her daughter, Lisa Jacquiline Robinson. They will be sharing the story of Mona Lee Wilson, who was murdered by serial killer, Robert Pickton, but they will also be sharing about their own story as survivors of many forms of violence. Before they do start and share their story, I will ask Mr. Registrar to please swear in the witnesses, and both of the witnesses would like to provide oath with an eagle feather. Thank you.

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Good morning. I’ll just pass the feather. I’ll begin with Lisa Big John. If you just want to take the feather.

LISA BIG JOHN, Sworn:

MR. BRYAN ZANDBERG: Thank you. And I’ll pass it to Lisa Jacquiline Robinson.

LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON, Sworn:

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Thank you, Mr. Registrar. So we will be starting with Lisa Big John. Lisa, I would like to invite you to introduce yourself to Commissioner Audette and introduce your family.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Good morning. My name
is Lisa Big John. I was -- I’m the oldest sibling of the -- of my family. I’m very honoured to be here, to be a part of this Inquiry. It’s really overwhelming and it’s just kind of a -- I’m trying to keep myself together here without falling apart. And -- first of all, I would like to start off is the journey that I’ve been through. All the years of pain and suffering.

Death really changed a person a lot. All through the years, I’ve gone through to deal with this, and to work with this and live with it, it hasn’t been -- hasn’t been very easy for me. And I still have a lot of issues to deal with in my own way. I’m just trying to start to find a way to -- to start off my -- my journey and to share -- to share -- to share my testimony here about my sister that was brutally murdered by an evil one that -- that took her away from us.

I was part of the Inquiry back in 2012, 2011. I guess I can say that from the -- from that -- from that experience too I’ve -- there was no -- there -- there was no anything good that I -- that I seen out of that (indiscernible). There’s -- speaking for myself, and for my family. But other than that, I’m the -- I’m -- I’m the main leader of my family. I try my best in all of this to stay strong to -- for my family and there are some days I have my days. And some days that -- that -- that I -- that
I go on with life any way I can.

And the -- way I had to -- the way I had to live through this is unmanageable how -- how I had to lose my sister to -- to the society, the system that failed her. Miserably failed her. I came from a broken home also, and -- but the worst of it is that she was the one that had to go through a lot in life and now I’m her voice. And through her I -- I speak for her, and I speak everything that -- that -- and she has -- that -- that she wasn’t recognized by the system.

And I honoured her memory the day when I learned that -- when the day that I learned that she was -- she was toooken [sic] by this -- this -- this evil monster and it’s been a very hard journey to try sometimes to -- not to think of it, but a person’s -- they can’t forget. I know that life goes on, but still.

It’s been 17 years, I had my sobriety and I quit drinking to honour her memory. I guess it took -- it took for her to -- to realize that life was important and it took for me to realize that -- that I had to do something to -- to go to a -- to -- to go to a positive side for my family, and -- and to be there for them any way I can. People say I’m strong. That -- how do I live with this? How do I cope with this? And I guess of all the graces of the Creator that has brought me this far in life,
there was always a lot of reasons for me to still be here
today.

And my life changed forever when -- when I
couldn’t understand what became of her life and what she
had gone through. I was a straight person myself, but it’s
just -- just the -- it’s just unimaginable, the way that
her life was because she was failed by the system and
nobody acknowledged to her what she wanted.

I’m very -- I got no respect for the system.
Still, today, I see a lot of injustice that has been done.
And I’m the grandmother as seven grandchildren. We having
a -- my eighth -- my -- my eighth grandchild will be born
in November. And I do have -- one of my granddaughters, I
do have a -- she -- she -- she lives -- her grandma’s name.
I named her Mona Lee, after my sister, for her name to
continue on and to live on.

My grandkids are the one that keep me going
in life, and my daughters. My family. Everything is about
them. When I look at them. The system also failed me, my
family, all the things that have -- all the -- all the
stuff that the system has miserably failed. Through my
daughter’s lives. They ended up in a foster home here and
there. And I also -- one of the -- I’m -- I’m also a
survivor from a residential school as well.

I just about forgotten who I was that one
time, and the only way for me to do — to deal with this
was to — not to try and think about it, but it’s pretty
hard not to think about stuff like this that -- that has
caused a very huge impact on my family.

I remember back in the days when my -- when
all my daughters were small. I used to always come to
Vancouver looking for my sister and -- and I’ve always felt
that she was hidden from me. The system didn’t want me to
-- to find her or to have anything to do with her. But
Mona left me some memories. I shared a lot of
conversations with her over the phone when she used to call
me from the institution of Burnaby, and she told me a lot.
She shared a lot. She shared a lot with me. Why her life
-- why she had to pick that life, and nobody did
acknowledge her when she was trying to reach out for help.
And it always -- it always -- she got turned away.

At the age of 11 years old, she turned to
the street, looking for a home or friends. There was a lot
of things that wasn’t recognized upon -- upon her -- well,
upon her life. I shared some -- some -- some of my words
last night with -- and said that if only -- if only my
sister had that kind of -- had that kind of well-being in
her life, people did acknowledge her, and over the years --
over the years that -- that I’ve tried to come over this.
I know that life goes on. I tried to make the best through
that my -- with my family to try and do what I have to do
to stay strong. But I would like to see justice done
before I leave this world, so that my grandkids can live in
a safe place, in a safe world for them. To trust the
system and be there for them.

It’s very unmanageable that -- that when I
do think about things, what -- what could have been done,
and what could have -- what could have been -- what could
have came out of this -- but I always say -- I’ve always
see -- I’ve always seen that, of people being failed. And
the only one that was -- the only one that I can turn to
was my family to -- to try to talk to about a lot of
things. And -- and not knowing what lies ahead for the
future, I put all that faith in the Creator’s hand.

I experienced through a lot of health
issues. I went through -- I went through a lot to try to
over -- to try to come over a lot of things, but a lot of
things I still -- that’s still bothered me, that I still
have to live with, and still have to work with. I
experienced a lot of health issues, which took a lot of --
huge impact on my health.

When I got sick, I just about lost myself.
It just about took me under. I just about
didn’t come back to the world. That’s how powerful a death
can change a person, losing a loved one. Death changes
everything. I tried to reach out to people for a compacity, and I try to reach out to my community and time after time I got pushed away from people, from the society when I was trying to reach out for help. And then when I do get out of hand or upset, I get judged. Why? It’s because people don’t understand. Some people don’t understand what that person has to live with, and what they have to go through in life.

I’m 55 years old today, and I still have a lot of issues that I -- that I need to -- that I need to work with. ‘Cause when I leave this world, I don’t want to -- I don’t want to take all of that to my grave. And for -- and for a lot of reasons, as I got older, I -- I realized a lot of things that what -- what I had to do. It continues on fighting for justice.

I’ve always often wonder -- why some people have to live like that and why they choose the dark road. Some people give up and some don’t. And some don’t come out of it. Why? It’s because a system failed them, and the only -- the only way that they’re acknowledged too is -- is when they’re out of -- when they’re out of -- when they get out of hand. That’s the only time the system will acknowledge them, is when they’re -- and when they get out of hand, or when they do something.

I’ve seen a lot of that back, when I -- when
I was a street person, and I’ve seen a lot of things that was -- that wasn’t right. I’ve tried to report a lot of issues back -- back then when I was a street person, but the law didn’t acknowledge anything, any concerns that I tried to raise. And I’m thankful I came this far in life, still -- still fighting for -- for what I’ve been -- for what I’ve been searching for all these years. Doing what I have to do out there, to try to survive -- to survive my family and many a things. That’s not right for -- for a lot of people that don’t get acknowledged, and that don’t -- anything in life...

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Lisa, can you tell us more about Mona Lee’s childhood? How she was brought up, her history?

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** Well, my mom had a lot of issues through residential school. That’s where everything started from, was residential school. How it tore families apart, and -- and what became of her life. And she didn’t have no hope at all. And she came from a broken home. The stories that I had to -- that she shared with me over the conversations that -- which she had to live through. Foster homes and foster homes. And she started -- she started running away, and doing what she had to do to -- to try to -- to try to take care of herself, but she ended up in the wrong hands. And that life...
MS. FANNY WYLDE: When you mentioned that at 11 years old she turned to the streets, Mona was running away from a foster home?

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Say that again.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: When you mentioned that at 11, she turned to the street life, was she running away from a foster home?

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Yes, she was. She shared with me that she didn’t want to be there. She was only there for -- she know -- she knew why -- why she was there, because it had to with money. And stuff that she was experiencing through there, and -- so she felt like she wasn’t -- she wasn’t a person that was -- that -- that was supposed to be well taken care of or protected. Then she had no choice, but she started running away from the homes that she was in. Then she wanted to escape. She wanted to come look for her family. Her family was hidden from her. The same way the system that hidded [sic] me from her.

But in that period of time when she was -- when she chose that -- when she chose that life, it’s because everything that she wanted to have in life, she wanted to search for and she wanted -- she -- the only thing that she wanted to do was find her family, especially me.

And my mom’s life wasn’t easy. She was a
residential school victim too. She went through a lot in
the residential school, and she had issues with alcohol.
The only way that they had to deal with that from her was
taking my siblings away from -- from her, when they could
have worked with her in a positive way. But the system
continuously does that over and over.

I’ve seen the challenges and fights that --
that families have to go through to try to fight for their
That wasn’t right. They could have chose this and that for
her -- for her positive’s -- for her positive, for her,
what she wanted and what she was asking for.

So they had to do it the easy way -- was to
apprehend my siblings and throw them in any foster home
that like -- like, there was some kind of a little
ornaments or whatever, people, how -- how they looked at --
look at them. I know that my sister chose to live. She
fought to live hard on the street. But what can you do
when the system is not -- is not there?

She was invisible to the society, to the
system that -- that -- that -- that should have been there
for her. And should have worked with her in a positive way
from the beginning when she was trying to raise concerns.
The stuff that she shared with me and not realizing what
became of her life, especially and now as -- as -- as her
voice and her -- her -- her speaker, and now I'm doing that
to fight that system, so that other families don't have to
go through what that -- we had gone through.

It's a very -- very -- a painful journey for
a person to -- to go through. We need to raise a lot of
concerns as society. Still, today the system is trying to
bother the First Nations kids and take things upon their
own hands. I still see that today, and it’s not good. And
people need to start realizing this -- this has caused a
lot of damage. It’s about destroyed me. It’s what took me
under. Because of my -- through my sister, she made me who
I am today. It’s not about anybody. It’s not -- it’s not
-- it’s not about -- it’s not about other system or
anybody.

The system needs to start realizing right in
up that -- that they need to start doing something positive
instead -- instead -- instead of pushing people away. They
need to -- they need to work with them and they need the
heart to deal with them and talk to them. Because jail,
death, is not the answer. And for my own -- speaking for
myself, what I have gone through with my family...

**Ms. Fanny Wylde:** I’m wondering, Lisa, would
you be willing to share information surrounding the, when
did you find out that Mona Lee was missing?

**Ms. Lisa Big John:** Well, back at the time
in -- I believe she was -- she went missing in 2001. And I was living in Kamloops. And I was still, I was -- I was -- I was an alcoholic. And she was already missing. But they did that to try to make themselves look good. She was already missing for four months before -- before that was even addressed to me. Before that was even acknowledged on her behalf. But I still made an effort to come to Vancouver, me and my husband.

We lived on a street, looking day -- every day -- every day we were out there looking for her, searching for her. And through that journey of looking -- searching for her, I met a lot of people that knew her. And the information that people gave me about her, saying that they might have seen her, but the respond that I got from the -- from the cop was that -- that’s -- she decided to move on and go somewhere else. And to try to start and -- but back then I didn’t really -- I didn’t really notice anything about -- about her at the time, because back then I didn’t -- I didn’t know there was a serial killer on the loose that was predating [sic] on these women.

They could have told me that, but they didn’t. Nobody told me nothing about -- about a person that was out there. And there is a lot of information that’s still hidden from the families as today. A lot.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Did you have any support
and help when you were trying to find your sister in
Vancouver?

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** No. I tried to resort
to organizations and at the time when I was in
(indiscernible), I just -- I just felt I -- I -- the only
thing that I seen, and there was no wonder why my sister
went missing. No wonder why she -- she was murdered
because of -- nobody acknowledged her. And the way I tried
to acknowledge her about looking for her, and it was just
more of a who cares? Who cares who -- who cares what --
what anybody -- anything that happens to those women?

Why, it’s because that -- we’re not -- she
was a human being and she was treated like she was
invisible. Even the Vancouver cops weren’t even helpful.
They always used to try to brush me off about giving me
misinformation about where or what -- what became of her.
Or there was a lot of things that still -- that still that
they hide from the families.

And -- and to my knowledge, you know, some
of those cops you know, they need to be accountable for
what happened to these women. And they need -- they need
to -- they need to start talking. And maybe a lot -- and
maybe a lot of -- in their behalf it will do them good to
in great rewards if they come out with a lot of issues.
How they worked with them. And how they treated them.
MS. FANNY WYLDE: So after she went missing and you went looking for her, how did you find out about her death? Was it the authorities that advised you?

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: You just got to bear with me for a few minutes. This is -- it’s very hard opening wounds. Yeah.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Commissioner Audette, the witness is requesting a recess of five minutes. Thank you. We will take a recess of five minutes. Thank you.

(BREAK)

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Thank you, Commissioner, for allowing us to have this recess. Before we did -- took a break, Lisa, I had asked you a question on how did you find out about Mona Lee’s death?

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I believe I was living in Kamloops when an RCMP came and told me that it was -- there was a possible chance that my sister -- that my sister might have been murdered by a serial killer. I just -- I just stood there like -- the reality didn’t kick in. My body went numb and I didn’t even -- I didn’t even have a chance to ask him. And to ask more information about -- about -- about the information that he came and gave me. Not realizing that -- that when I was going to be facing through lifetime challenging evilness and to challenge every way I can to try to come to answers and to why that
happened to her and why she -- why she was even -- that nobody didn’t even care that she -- she -- that my sister was missing.

And it was just like something that I didn’t want to hear and something that I thought I -- that I could never gone through. So what did I do? I just -- I try to put it aside, and I try to -- not to think about it that -- that -- and the reality kicked in when they came and got our -- came and asked for DNA. And -- and sure enough she was one of the victims, last victim of Robert Pickton.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: If you will allow me, Lisa, I would ask Lisa Jacqueline to -- if she’s ready to share what she want to share with the Commissioner.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yes, I am.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: You can (indiscernible).

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Did you want the feather?

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Pardon me?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: Did you want the feather?

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yes, please.

Thank you. Hello, my name is Lisa Robinson, and I was -- I was in -- I’m just going to tell you a little bit about myself. And I -- I don’t know. I’m just really grateful to have my mom. You know, I’m like, really lucky to -- to be her daughter and really lucky that she taught me a lot of things before I went into foster care. ‘Cause I don’t
know if I would have -- it’s like, really emotional. I
don’t know if like, if I would have made -- I can’t talk.
I get nervous. I don’t know if I would have made it out of
foster care because of how I was getting -- getting treated
-- getting treated in there. I can’t do this. I’m really
sorry, it’s just when I think about everything, it’s nobody
does not want to be in the hands of people like that.

When I was getting bought up in foster care,
let’s just say I was like a pet to them. They didn’t care
about my feelings. They didn’t care about what I wore.
They didn’t care about what I ate, and if I talked back
once I would (indiscernible) get thrown inside -- inside a
pool. And I was only seven or eight. And I’m just lucky
that my mom taught me how to swim and everything like that,
because how would they know if I you know, could swim?
They just threw me right in there, and they didn’t care.
They walked away. And it was my older sister that had to
come and help me out of the pool. And it was all swampy,
and it was all cold. And you know, it wasn’t the summer
time, that’s for sure.

And the way I think of it too, that I’m very
lucky too to -- to make it out of there, ‘cause my Auntie
Mona, like, when she got brought up in there, she -- she
just -- she lost herself in there. And that’s what
happened -- that’s what almost happened to me. And at a
very young age, I was always getting shipped to foster home, to foster home because they couldn’t -- they didn’t want to deal with me if I talked back or if I missed my mom, or if I cried. I would literally get thrown inside my room by my hair, or they would just sign me off to another foster -- another foster family.

And I was always told by the foster parents that I would never be -- I -- I would always be living with them my whole life. That my mom is nothing but a drunk, and you know, you’ll never see her again and this and that. And I always prayed every day that I would see my mom, you know? That I would be with her again. And people -- they took me away from my mom when she wasn’t even doing anything wrong. And they put us in the hands of like, monsters.

Like, and every time we tried reaching out, we were always called liars. They -- they didn’t want to listen to us, because our foster parents would come along and be like, “Oh, she’s just lying. She -- she doesn’t know what she’s talking about,” you know? And she’d like, try to hug me and make it look like she was -- she’s a good foster parent.

And me -- me and my mom, I would always be talking to my mom, you know? Telling her what I’m going through. And every time my mom would try to talk about it,
all of a sudden like, the visit would just get cut off
or -- or the contact with her, it would be all just cut
off. And for months and months, and you know, I’d be
sitting in my room by myself ‘cause all -- even all three
of us had to be split up. And I was in foster care by
myself.

Finally, my sisters, they’re older me and
they started running away. I couldn’t do that, because I
was so little. Like, you know, I -- I wouldn’t know what
to do if I ran away, so I had no choice but to stay with
them. And I’m just really grateful that my mom didn’t give
up fighting for us. She -- she didn’t get -- give up at
all, and I got to go back to her when I was 11. So I was
really grateful for that.

And around 2001, I was coming to Vancouver
here, and I was only nine. And I started getting really
sick ‘cause by -- like, me and my Auntie Mona, we had like,
a connection, and I started getting like, very, very sick
and I didn’t know why. I didn’t even know that she was
missing. And as soon as I left Vancouver, I was -- I was
just feeling better. Like, you know, like nothing
happened.

And I always wondered why you know? Like,
why that was, and then all of a sudden, I hear that she’s
missing. And I’m like okay. So I always had faith that
you know, okay, well she would turn up some day. You know, I’ll see her some day. And I always waited to see her and always waited to meet her. And you know, I just wanted to have a life with her too. And all that just got tooken [sic] away in 2003 when we found out that she’s -- you know, she was gone forever.

Like, you know, I -- I think back and I don’t know how the system failed that. Like, I -- I got failed too. Like, everywhere I went in the system, I was just a burden. And you know, nobody care, and that’s why one thing my -- I have kids as my own. And that’s one thing -- that’s one thing I would not let them -- I will not let them go to the system, ‘cause of how I was treated. And I’m just you know, really lucky and happy that I have my -- my mom here, and she’s my mom, you know? And I’m her daughter. I’m -- I’m grateful for every day for her being beside me, because if it wasn’t for her, I don’t -- I don’t know where I would be right now.

You know, people always made it look like you know, my mom was a problem. She was a problem parent, you know? She -- she always got treated like that. The workers always looked at her like that. But really, little did they know, it was the foster parents, the people that I was living with, you know? You know, I even had like, little -- like, big clumps of hair always missing ‘cause my
hair would always be getting dragged around.

And my -- my allowance, I know it doesn’t matter, but my allowance was only $2 a month, and all of the other -- like, her -- her blood kids got you know, whatever they wanted. But I didn’t care. You know, I was just a kid. I thought, I’m like, “Oh, okay. Well, I’m fine with that,” you know? I’ll just go outside and play and you know, do whatever. And -- and yeah, I’m just -- I’m just really, really grateful to -- to just come this far in life with everything that you know, that had happened and went on.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Can I ask you, Lisa, if the foster home you were living with, was it an Aboriginal foster home?

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** No, it was a white family.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** And when you tried to report the abuse and the neglect, was it to your -- your social worker?

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** Yeah. It was the social workers, and every time they tried to go address it with my foster parents, they would always be saying, “Oh, no, she’s just lying.” And you know, they just make themself look like real good parents. They’ll come give me a hug, or you know, they’ll come pat me on my back. And --
and then the social worker is like, “Oh, I don’t see anything wrong with her. Why are you talking about her like that?” And I just like, look at her, ‘cause I’m like, so amazed. I’m like, wow, like, you know, all this -- all this stuff that you’re just hiding. And you know, like, and either she doesn’t want to see it, or she just doesn’t care. Like -- and no matter what the foster parent always, always got the better -- the better side. And our words were always just you know, they didn’t matter.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** Having to face all these challenges, Lisa, what keeps you going in your life on a day to day basis?

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** My kids keep me going. And my family keeps me going. Thank you. So I -- I’m -- you know, when I look at my kids, like, you know, I’m -- I’m grateful for you know, being a part of their life and you know, growing up with them. You know, not -- I can’t give up on them. Not once. Like, it’s just, I can’t -- I just can’t do it. And when I think back the shit that I went to, I wouldn’t even want them to be around that kind of stuff, you know? It’s all just so traumatizing, and I just -- just look after my kids like, give them what like, I never had. And give them the love, and the care and attention that I never got in foster care.

You know, we were ripped out of my mom’s
hands for no reason, you know? Just because you know, she
-- she drank here and there, but what -- what did the
foster parents do, you know? They abused kids. They used
kids for their money. At least my mom gave me attention
and love and care and every -- help me with -- kiss my boo-
boo’s, you know? And always made me feel better when I was
sick. And but like, I got none of that in foster care.
None of it.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: I would like to invite
you, Lisa, if you have recommendations to make to
Commissioner Audette, if you want to address them?

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Pardon me?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: To both of you.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Can you say that again,
please?

MS. FANNY WYLDE: If you have any
recommendations to make to Commissioner Audette?

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Well, this -- this cycle
-- the cycle of abuse and evilness needs to stop, needs to
come to an end. There needs to be more awareness to -- to
other lives that matter.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: There needs
to be more background checks for foster parents, you know?
Like, what’s the point of being a foster parent, if you’re
not going to love and care for the child like your own?
Like, that’s the whole point of getting into foster care, is to help these kids. You know, my -- my mom wasn’t the monster. They were. And they -- they should have seen that.

You know, foster care is supposed to be there to help kids to grow and to you know, to make sure that they’re okay, and to make them understand things. Not just to take their money and you know, lock them up in their room. And to think how my Auntie Mona, you know, she went into foster care. She probably went through -- through the same abuse, maybe even worse. Like, and maybe that’s why she -- she went on the way she did, because she felt worthless and nobody didn’t care, and that’s how I start to feel.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** And there needs to be more organizations that do care from the heart that need to work with people and be there for them. Over the years I continually see these women, it’s just a project to some people and some people look at them as projects. It’s -- it’s what who they were and what -- when they were here on this Earth that -- that -- that weren’t acknowledged to -- to society. And especially I was sharing her earlier that there’s so much secrecy with the system that will prevent sharing that information with families and what -- what we want for justice to be done.
And because they don’t realize how much damage that does when there’s a lot of information that’s hidden from us. And it’s gone -- it’s came this far and many years to fighting for justice. And like I said, then the -- Vancouver cops, they’re -- there -- there needs to be accountability for them that -- that they need to start realizing that it’s not only because they’re street people. They need to understand there’s other families out there that love these people the way they live in the society. But to them, they’re just so -- they’re projects to them, and they’ll do anything to -- not to be there for them.

They have pulled so much power over street lives, innocent people. And -- and vulnerable women that -- that -- that -- that have left, that have been brutally murdered. There’s still a lot of answers out there that -- that needs to come forward for families.

And my biggest problem that I have today is that -- is with the law. Sometimes I don’t trust myself seeking out to them for help or protection, because I have to really seriously think if they’re only -- if they’re here to try and address the issues and that -- that -- that they can’t work with, or deal with, or understand. And there -- there needs to be another ways of working through the system. And -- and changing lives for -- to make a better lives for people that still live out there in the
dark world. And -- and for them to -- to matter, for their words to matter.

Just because who they are, it doesn’t mean that -- that they don’t mean nothing.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** Well, us families, we do love our loved ones, but unfortunately it had to come to this tragedy that -- that how we lost our loved ones is so what the families want -- other families don’t have to go through with this. And to challenge this nightmare that -- that’s -- that’s been happening to over the years. Organizations, they need to stop and think. It’s not about them.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** They need to -- they need to realize that -- that when you work for -- when you work for a person, especially -- especially how I lost my sister, she tried to reach out for help. And she told me that when she -- ‘cause she had full blown AIDS. And people didn’t want to -- didn’t want to associate with her, didn’t want to deal with her. Didn’t want to have anything to do with her, because of what she had and life that she had, and how she had to survive.

And there needs to be a lot of accountability done for the boyfriends as well. They need
to stop putting those women out there to working for --
working for them too. They need to stop that. My sister,
she did that for her boyfriend. And still to this day,
when I had to brutally find out that my sister was found in
a garbage pail with only her hands and her skull in it, I
still question myself. Well, where’s -- where’s the rest
of her? What happened to the rest of her? Somebody knows,
but when those people, they hide that kind of information,
they’re the ones that are going to take that to their
grave.

But what can -- what can you do when -- when
 -- when you have a life like that? You’re a nobody to the
society, to the system. A lot of people took a lot of
things for granted over the years into missing murdered
women, specially money. Money is very evil. That’s why my
sister lost her life. If there were -- if there was only a
better way, an easier way for her to live, she should have
been offered that. She should have been given that.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** And I still see that
system today, that -- that -- that -- that I carry with me
for so many years, that -- how I had to deal with my life
sometimes. And how -- how I had to go about talking to
people. Or when I get out of hand, I get judged here and
there. I’m sick and tired of people, how they judge me.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** M’hm.
MS. LISA BIG JOHN: And it did a lot -- it -- it just about -- it just about took me under. It shouldn’t take -- it shouldn’t take people to wake up and realize what has happened to these people. Some -- some truly care, and some don’t. I’ve seen that. I paid attention to people who -- who really cared about these people and not everybody cares. When I was out there looking for my sister, searching for her every day, I either got lied to or I either got -- or stopped to some other people, or got brushed off with the -- so that they don’t have to deal with -- deal with me looking for her. It shouldn’t take for this kind of way, for people to have a rude awakening.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yeah.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Nobody deserves to go through that. Nobody’s got no right to be taking other people’s lives. We live in a very predatorial world. They’re everywhere. And what is -- what is even use -- is the use of us to be here if they’re not going to acknowledge any issues that -- that they -- that -- that they need to pay attention to? I’ve lost other friends too that -- that -- that had a very hard life losing their lives.

I was a street person. I’m a -- I always did truly care about -- about street people, who -- no
matter... I came from a broken home. My kids -- my --
my -- my kids are apprehended from me because I was married
to this guy. And this was supposed to be their dad that --
that -- that used to sexually abuse them. The system took
it out on me. They could have worked with me. No, but
they wanted to see me fall down, 'cause they -- 'cause I
wasn’t a -- I wasn’t -- I wasn’t worthy to them. They’re
always fighting an easy way to brush people off so they
don’t have to pay attention to them, or work with them, or
deal with them, or guide them.

We need to stop the cycle of our people are
always being targeted for -- for a lot of things that
predatorial’s [sic] that are amongst here every day,
they’re looking for victims. In the meantime, how -- how --
how many -- how many cops just on lower mainland there
is, that can prevent a lot of things from happening like
that? There’s enough system out there to look after that,
and take care of that, and -- and work with people.

I’m so sick and tired of -- of the system
always addressing it the wrong way. Is that what they have
to do for us -- for us to listen is to -- is to... As a
street person, I’ve went through a lot of things, and seen
a lot of things in life. What -- how street people get
treated and -- and other people. Even when I was with -- I
was with the Wally Oppal -- I went to that.
MS. FANNY WYLDE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I’ve seen a lot of things there that wasn’t right for some families. We were there just to -- more or less, I was there just for a project. And the reality is that -- that what we want for changes, there needs to be a lot of change that -- made for the future for my grandkids and for them to have a safe world. To live in a safe world. And to trust the law.

I tried to make a -- move to Vancouver here back in mid 2014. And the challenges, the obstacles that I had gone through, finding a home to try to do what I have to do. It was very frustrating, it was very challenging. Going to motels -- to motels with my family, with my grandkids. All those people ever cared about was getting money for us -- for motels. Getting kicked out. And -- and finally, my resort was -- me and my grandkids, and my family, we went and got dropped off right in front of Carnegie (indiscernible) with all of our stuff. Our luggage, with my grandkids.

People are asking me, “What are you doing here with you?” I said, “What do you?” I said, “Only if you would know what -- what I’m doing here.” But yet, it’s so easy for -- for other people to get that help. They don’t have to struggle for it. They don’t have to repeat
themselves getting help. I don’t know what kind of changes
the -- the other system has made or what became of it.
Nobody ever hardly gets in touch with me about the system.

When I want to know something, nobody
doesn’t tell me what goes on behind closed doors with
getting justice and finding answers. Sometimes people,
they disrespect me when I’m looking for answers, and try to
work with the system. Why? It’s because it doesn’t -- it
doesn’t -- it doesn’t seem like -- well, to my knowledge,
it doesn’t seem like it’s going there. ‘Cause stuff’s --
it keeps happening continuously every day. All the damage
that -- that -- that has happened, to try to deal with
this, to try to work with this, and to try to -- to heal
from it.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: The only one that kept
my faith, that kept me going was my family and my
grandkids.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: There -- that -- where I
live, I don’t get that much support from -- from -- from
anybody. I tried to turn to some people. Unfortunately,
they were only there for themselves with money. So I -- I
gave up, and I turned away and I walked away. All the -- I
have to deal with this in any way I can. Walking that
path. And still, today, people are being failed. They’re not being listened to. But I -- it -- it doesn’t matter to the system because they got nothing to lose. They don’t have to live with -- they don’t have to live with what we had to live through.

And it all starts from my -- it all starts from my sister’s -- when she was alive. Every -- every -- the system that failed her and whatever that she had -- that she had to live with and gone through. It’s unimaginable that -- that -- it shouldn’t take -- it shouldn’t take for this kind of life to -- to try to -- to come together and to try to get what -- what we’ve been searching for all these years.

Through her life, to hurt -- to -- to people that had her here, in their foster homes, the foster homes, she was just a little money bag to them. That’s all she was. And what my daughters had gone through, they wanted me to give up, but they wouldn’t care less what happened to me if they -- if they had to live how they had to live.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** (Indiscernible) do you have any final observations to make, Lisa Jacquiline?

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** Not at this moment.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** Well, I hope this is where I leave all -- all my -- the issues that I have come
and raised here. I hope this is where -- I hope this is
the new beginning, a new journey for me. And --

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** And --

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** -- if not --

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** Oh, sorry.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** -- life goes on. And if
I never see justice, I guess I’ll leave it up to the
Creator’s faith.

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** That’s
another reason why I named my baby girl after my Auntie
Mona. Just so I could carry on her -- her name, and she --
she’ll always be with us in our hearts and everything. And
it’s -- it’s kind of freaky, because my baby girl is
starting to look like my Auntie Mona, and you know, I think
that’s -- she gave her a really special gift. And --

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** -- I’m like,
you know, I’m really happy and glad that I -- I named her
that. ‘Cause I can already see it now.

**MS. FANNY WYLDE:** M’hm. Commissioner
Audette, do you have any questions or comments for the
family?

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** Merci
beaucoup Me Wylde. First, I have to say thank you. Merci
beaucoup for your courage, and I would say in my own words
your powerful message and testimony. And I hope, and it’s always the same hope since we started this journey that Canada is listening, listening your message. I hope the Province of British Columbia is listening. And the citizen, the people who lives here. And I hope also, our Indigenous leadership is listening with an open mind and an open heart, because you’re right, the system failed your Auntie, your sister. And too many of us, the women across Canada are still today affected by how the system respond or don’t respond.

So I commend you. Thank you for being here, and reminding us, reminding this country that things needs to change. And Vancouver is very special for me. Very special. But also very hurtful, because when we walk there, and saw the pain you know, in downtown east side? And I was 16 years old the first time I saw that. And I was speechless, and I’m from up north in Quebec, and I couldn’t believe that. I didn’t know those words that time, that the system was failing the women, and most of us -- us Indigenous women. But today, 46 years old, I’m still affected when I walk there, but I’m impressed by women who stand to make sure that it doesn’t happen, or there’s an end.

I listen carefully your recommendation, and we -- we’re taking good note of what you’re proposing or
recommending. But my question to you, the two of you; you mention about the background check for foster parents. Do you believe that they do also -- or do you think that they do also a criminal record check for parents?

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** No, I don’t think so. They don’t.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** They don’t?

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** ‘Cause if they did, then why would we get put with monsters and people that like to do that to kids?

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** If you know, if -- if they get -- got a proper check, you know, we would be getting put into the hands there that are just like my mom. Like a parent. Loving, caring parent, but unfortunately that’s -- this just wasn’t the case.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M’hm. Merci, and I thought your message there was so powerful when you said, “She was there to kiss me when I was hurt. She was there when I was sad,” and so, and so. For me, as a mom, I totally understand that. So our children shouldn’t be with monster, but with parent or like you said, you should get help instead. So I believe that also.

The other thing also, I heard you saying that project, we’re project. Women are project. Or can
you explain to me what you meant by that?

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** Well, there - there is -- there is people that -- and I do pay attention to and observe. I pay attention. Why? It’s because how I lost my sister. The system that was never there for her. And from -- and from there, people took a lot of things for granted with evil money.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELÉ AUDETTE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** Using these women for a project. These are not project. This is my sister that was a human being that -- but other people, they don’t look at it as that way, how we feel. But the society looks at them as project. And it’s really sad, you know, that there is a lot of people that pay attention how people go on about -- about working with the families and that.

I met -- I met people that are very caring. That speak from the heart, that care from the heart. And -- and when I see that kind of stuff, it only -- it only sends a message that -- that for other people, not to really come forward with how -- how their life is and how they feel, and how they affect, how they’re affected by -- by a lot of things that became -- became, to try to come together with awareness against what -- against Indigenous women.

And -- and you know, I -- I didn’t come here
for that. I came here looking for answers. I came here looking for justice, and -- and I hope this is where -- that I can -- to walk a better path, a healing road. Whatever life that I have left, I want to enjoy the rest of my life. Whatever life that I have left.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Because --

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: You just want to be at peace.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: -- the damage that -- the damage that I’ve been through, have gone through, only that person knows. The stuff that people want to talk about, their loved ones, and it’s always other people speaking. I pay attention to that, but what about -- what about how -- how -- how some families feel? How it made them feel? What did they want from this? What should be done?

I want -- I want to see changes, you know? Especially for my future. My grandkids are going to be in this road too in the next future and I want them to have a positive life. I want them to live in a safe world. And they don’t deserve to live in fear. ‘Cause I -- I lived through that life and it’s not a good life. It’s not a good feeling to live like that.

And people, they need to understand, you know? These -- these women are not project.
MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: They were once here on this Earth. They were loved, and there -- and they’re -- and -- and -- and they’re still -- and they still are loved. That’s why I continuously do what I have to do for my family to try to -- to try to keep my family in line.

One of my daughters, she chose a dark path there for a wild [sic]. Domestic violence is one of the biggest problems. And that needs to be looked into too; domestic violence in families, in relationships. And --

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: -- whatever that needs to be looked into. Right away, the system wants to threaten. Either they want to come in there and scoop -- scoop the kids out and -- you know, that needs to stop too. There’s -- there’s a lot of families out here that -- that are alive, that are capable of -- of looking after their -- of their families. That happened to me because you know, I wasn’t given a chance. I did not deserve a chance. That’s how they looked at me and -- and they didn’t care. Regardless, they didn’t care what my life was out there.

We live in a very dangerous world with predatorial’s [sic] and foster homes. The law.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Family homes. And I
came from -- and I -- like I said, I come from a broken home, where -- where I was repeatedly sexually abused. I was raped when I was about six years old. And if that wasn’t enough, I get thrown in the residential school. How much can a person go through -- through in life before they give up? And you know, like I said, the Creator is very powerful, and He had something for me in life in stored. And now I -- and now I see that. And now I see His messages, why I’m still here; because of my grandkids. They need me.

People have given up a lot. They don’t work with them. They don’t want to work with them. They don’t want to work with them. They choose not to work with them. They choose -- they choose to work with other people that -- that are not -- don’t even have an idea how to be a family to those -- to those loves ones.

Like I said, my sister picked the street when she was only 11 years old. She ended up on the street. When I was old enough I want -- I -- I wanted to be there for her continuously. I went looking for her. I went soul searching for her, and they hidded [sic] her from me.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: And I even told -- and I even told the system, “Well, you guys should be happy now.”
She’s gone. She’s not here.” Every life that gets taken away from -- from families, it does a lot of damage to that family. Some come out of it, and some don’t. And some -- it -- it causes a lot of family break ups and whatever issues that families have to deal with. ‘Cause some -- a lot of us, we don’t know how to deal with that sometimes. Sometimes people don’t know how to talk to us.

I don’t -- and I’m sick and tired of talking to people that have never been there, that never walked in my shoe, that -- that don’t understand and realize what it does to a person. If they want people to be looked after and to be help, don’t send somebody there that doesn’t know what they’re doing. Send somebody there that understands what they’re doing, and how to talk to them and how to deal with them, and how to have that compacity [sic]. You know, it just -- I never thought in many years I’ve -- I -- I still see a lot of that going on.

People are not trying to -- even my community, they’re not -- some of them, they don’t do good for the youth, for the future. And there’s a lot of Elders that have fallen in the wrong path too. Everything in life, from the moment that we came into this Earth, we shouldn’t -- we shouldn’t had gone to that kind of life, especially for her.

You know, we deserve to live in a peaceful
life, and -- and I have to -- to move on. To try to -- whatever life that I got, because this has literally, literally really drained me out. And it just about took my life. I have very -- health issues, and you know, I just about -- I just about passed away last year. It’s a very hard cycle to go through. And it’s -- it shouldn’t be like that.

I have a grandson that’s ten years old. I tell him a lot of things. I only wish I could have been told that kind of -- that kind of skills in life about things. I tell him the truth. How to stand up for himself, ‘cause he gets bullied in school. That’s a lot -- that’s -- that’s another issue too, that people are always getting bullied. I see a lot of that everywhere.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Elders, they get bullied. Even from the cops, teachers, whatever. My grandson went through that. I’ve seen how much -- I seen how much hurt it caused him. ‘Cause he’s -- he’s chunky, eh? And he gets called down because of his weight. Why does he need to be -- feel like -- why does he need to feel, to live like that in a school, where there’s supposed to be people there educating him? When he tried to speak out about -- about issues, no he gets judged. Oh yeah, ‘cause he has First Nations family. That’s right. That’s
what I had to tell the -- tell this principal.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: A -- a few times, I had to go to the school, because there would be a little incident, and my son would come, he’d be really upset because there’d be like, three or four kids bullying him. And it’s just him. And I go the school, and even the principal is trying to stand there and tell me, “Oh, no, your -- your son started this. Your son did that.” And I’m like, “Well, how come -- how can you let all this carry on to this situation?

Like, how come I wasn’t called first or you know, like, how come -- how come nobody didn’t come and get me?” Or you know, it’s my son that -- he comes crying to me. And I always have to calm him down, and I always talk to him. You know, I always -- I always let him know like, you know, that he’s very loved and the people that bully him, he doesn’t have to listen to any of that, you know?

Like, he -- he’s the way he is, because he’s loved and cared for. And I even tell him like, you know, “I’m -- I’m chubby. Like, I -- I don’t care. Like, I’m fine with it.” And he even sees that too. Like, you know, and I’m loved and cared for. I have three beautiful kids and I’m going to be having another one pretty soon. And that’s why I -- I just always talk to him and I always remind him when like, when I was in foster care, I had
nobody talking to me. I had no -- no one telling me what
was right and wrong. And you know, the only person I had
was my mom, but I -- I couldn’t even see her or contact
her.

And I always tell my son how lucky he is
that you know, that I’m sitting there, talking to him, and
you know, talking to him about life and making him realize
what wrong and right is. And -- and I just don’t
understand like -- like, ‘cause there is a few -- I had to
move him from school to school a few times, because even
the teachers there, it just felt like they’re against us.
And I try to go there and give them all my respect, and try
to cope with them. And you know, I even try to get my son
to talk to them, but like, I -- I just don’t understand how
-- how people can be like that.

And -- and even they’re supposed to be
teachers, and you know, they -- they -- they got a job as a
teacher, so they should be acting like, instead of trying
to act like a kid, you know, like, and act like a bully or
something. It’s just -- I just don’t get it sometimes, and
-- and I don’t like to see my son go through that kind of
you know, stressful, torture situation. Like, he has to go
to school. He’s going there to learn, not to get bullied.
Like --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: It’s not in
1 the First Nation community?

2 MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: No.

3 COMMISSIONER MICHELÉ AUDETTE: Okay.

4 MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: No.

5 MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I guess my final -- my

6 final thoughts to that talking about bullying is that it

7 only makes a person grow up to be bitter and not choosing

8 the right -- the right path. And trying to relate to that

9 (indiscernible) to what my sister had gone through, and if

10 she was -- if -- if she only would have completed her

11 education and not -- not been taught the way that her life

12 should have never happened, 'cause a lot of kids, they grow

13 up, they pick up you know, a lot of things. And when they

14 -- and when they grow up, they -- it changes their lives

15 like the way my sister’s life was changed.

16 She was young, you know? She -- she could

17 have been prevented from -- from a lot of things. They

18 could have you know, she could have finished her school,

19 and she could have been anything that she wanted to be.

20 MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

21 MS. LISA BIG JOHN: No, but she was --

22 she -- she -- she -- the system made her feel that she was

23 a nobody.

24 MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

25 MS. LISA BIG JOHN: And she -- she picked
that life because when she tried to reach out to the system, and the system didn’t want to be there for her, and to -- to acknowledge any of the concerns that she tried to -- to talk about. And I was very -- I was very surprised when she told me that she chose the street life when she was only 11 years old. And -- and she started coming forward with all this information that she was -- why -- why she did that and all of this stuff.

And it’s no wonder why that -- that -- why she picked her life like that. To have a life like that and to live like that. The system needs to stop using First Nations kids for money.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: They need to stop taking that for granted just because some kids, they get thrown in -- in the white society with Native kids. That needs to stop too. And there needs to be a lot of resources available. People that can trust the system. Who they can talk to. And where they need to do -- and where they need to go for help.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Jacqueline, to get that help, I -- I’m not sure where you live?


COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.
MS. LISA BIG JOHN: And there’s a lot of
people there too that are very racist.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I live in a very racist
town. I don’t really go anywhere because of how people
look at me sometimes, and --

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: -- even there’s a couple
organizations there that -- they’re just there for
themselves. And they’re not there to reach out for -- to
give people the proper -- the proper help that -- that
they’re looking for. And there’s a lot of street people
too that get used for money and whatever that people need
to benefit off of that. People need -- some organizations,
you need to stop doing that ‘cause I -- I -- I see -- I see
a lot of that too, that people you know, they use it for
their own selves, and yet, those services are supposed to
be provided there for -- for people to go there and reach
out for help.

But when -- but when you try to work with
that, it doesn’t give -- it doesn’t give me any hope. I
walk away and I figured well, whatever you know? I can
just see that you’re there for yourself and -- and I say --
like I say, I stay home a lot.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.
MS. LISA BIG JOHN: ‘Cause I -- when I do come out in the world here, I -- I face challenges with people. Whatever people that -- how they live -- how they live out here. And -- and bullying is one of the -- becoming one of the biggest problems too. And -- and I guess when I try to go places, I -- it’s unbelievable to try to -- to try to raise that concern to -- to -- to these people. They just -- it’s just like, it’s never ending.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: And people are -- yes, some people do get protected because they -- ‘cause they have this, but I from from a -- I -- I -- I come from a background where I never had nothing. And in order for a person to know that kind of life, you know, they’ll understand what it means not to have anything.

There’s a lot of things that it -- it’s not right. Even through my sobriety of years, I still -- I still -- I still have a -- I still go through a lot in life with -- with a lot of issues and challenging racist bullying. Being judged. And families become homeless so often because of the damage that was left -- the damage that was left for them to live with and to deal with. And what is a person supposed to do when, you know, when -- when they got nowhere to turn?

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.
MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I’ve tried to turn to people for help and even my people have literally
failed me. Failed my family. And it’s not good what they do. Like, you know, being one of being a survivor is is one the challenges that I never thought I’d ever live through and see. I’ve gotten this far in life, and for a lot of reasons because like I said, when the Creator is done with my life and being here, what I have to do, and to move forward forward with life. To to to have that safety rule for the future.

But you know, it’s -- like I said, I’m not really -- I’m not really into that person to try to seek any more help and I did try to seek for help, and even to my community, they -- they can do a lot, but they choose not to. You know, I’ve been fighting for a home over 20 years now to have a home in my community, and I’m still fighting to have a home.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I want to get -- I want to have a home for my grandkids, for my family where they’re going to have a home for permanent when I leave this world.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I’ve been living places to places, to places. Renting off people that don’t even
belong from this -- this Nation, and it’s just unbelievable how the Native rights got buried third -- third ground. That’s where my rights are. But I’m not racist of anything, but I see a lot of things that are not right what the government does and what the system does. I see -- I still see people being homeless. I still see people looking for a home, and whatever that -- that they’re fighting for. And then we’re supposed to the first people in this land and --

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** -- it’s from my experience, I’m -- you know, I’m just -- it’s unbelievable how -- how my life is. Through the grace of the Creator that led me this far in life. Maybe I wouldn’t have got -- come this far, but I knew it was my sister that lived through me, that made me who I am today. Not to ever give up.

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** M’hm.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** Even to this day, my son is -- he’s -- as we speak, he’s going to school with other kids that are in foster care. And every day they always tell my son how lucky he is to be living with his mom and his dad. And those kids that are living in foster care, like, they just -- they just tell my son that
you don’t want to be there. And you know --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yeah.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: -- ‘cause he
-- he can be bad, you know? All kids can have their
moments here and there. And -- that’s -- that’s what they
always -- those kids remind him of that. Like, you -- that
foster parent -- foster care is not a place to be. Like --
like, you’re just -- you’re just very lucky to be with your
family, and you know, you’re not where -- where we are.
And I always wanted to find out like, more information
about those kids. And like, you know, how they’re well-
being is, and ‘til to this day it’s -- it just seems like
foster care is still continuing on with this you know, with
this abuse. And they’re Aboriginal kids too, so --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: -- it’s just,
I don’t know. It’s just unspeakable. Like, how the -- the
system can just allow people like that to keep carrying on
with a very important job, you know? Like, they’re
supposed to be working for kids, and the government, but it
just seems like they’re just doing that all for themselves.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Over
generation and generation.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: And that’s
what I also hope. I just hope like my mom said, just to
get answers and you know? Just to stop trying to run
around with our heads cut off. To try and find them.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I guess my final
thoughts on changing -- changing for a better way of -- to
have a better safety world, is -- I was talking about here
a few minutes ago. People need to understand to when
the -- to understand how people are.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: How -- how to work with
them and how to deal with them. And especially them
getting out of hand, then the -- how to guide them -- how
to guide them in their bettering themselves, instead of
that -- instead of that person standing there addressing it
the wrong way. You know, like, taking matters into their
own hand. And that’s -- that -- that’s a lot. I see that
too, is that the system has took a lot of things into their
own -- in the -- in their own hands, in the wrong way. Not
property addressing it the right way that they should be.

And -- and maybe you know, a person will
just start understanding how to work with that person. And
that person would have a lot of hope and to make them feel
better by giving them hope. And who they are, and -- and
not by addressing the -- in the wrong hands of the law, and
maybe they need to start having other organizations to --
to start having more -- more homes for homeless people. And to give them hope, and whatever --

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** A chance.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** -- so that they can have chance in life. And so that they have something there that they can feel hope. Feel good about, and for them to give them hope. You know, the system really fail -- really failed the First Nations a lot. Did a lot of damage and a lot of -- a lot of people -- a lot of my people has -- has chosen a dark road for their -- for their choices. I’ve seen a lot of family break-ups. Domestic violence, suicide.

**COMMISSIONER MICHELÉ AUDETTE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** Why? It’s because they -- nobody is there to make -- make them feel that they are important, but they choose that kind of life. They go there because a lot of people has -- they -- those people knew -- know that they -- they got failed. A life that I went through, I -- you know, I was very suicidal, and when I was very overwhelmed with a lot of pain and over the years, you know?

**COMMISSIONER MICHELÉ AUDETTE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** I don’t want to say nothing to my family or my -- or anybody. Those thoughts had come there a few times when -- when I didn’t know how
to deal with it, or -- or to -- to work with it. When a
person asks me, “Do you feel suicidal sometimes?” And I
sit there, and I’m not going to tell a person everything,
how I feel when that person doesn’t even care. I had to
learn that too when I talk to people. A lot -- not
everybody cares. You know, they’re just there for -- for
whatever that they need to be there for. And people, they
need to start understanding, realizing that -- that their
life, it matters too.

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: You know, just because a
lot of people are poor, you know they get treated bad. And
they get left out. Like my community, you know, I’m
outcasted from my community because I’m poor. And that --
that’s how they look at me, but me, I look it as -- I was
truly blessed with a lot of things that over the years that
I have challenge in life. My sisters, I said my sister
that left a lot of power to be a survivor and --

COMMISSIONER MICHELE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: -- and to who -- who she
was. But now, a lot of people don’t understand, you know,
how a lot of families, they came -- the became very
resilient and strong, even though that nobody’s not --
there’s not enough people or organizations there for them
to guide them with their, with their painful journey.
MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I had to work that on my own from here. I’ve had to ask myself many times that -- that -- that my life needs to move on because this needs to put to a stop. And I have to try to make the best of my life, whatever life that I got. To cherish my life with my grandkids and my family, and -- and to start having a positive life for my future.

You know, my grandkids, they always ask me that, they ask me -- kids, they ask, kids, they like to ask a lot of questions, and they’re very, they’re very curious. My grandson, he’s always -- always asking about, questions about her. Why -- why that -- why that, he had to kill her like that. And I told him the truth. You know, the system out there is not going to care. That’s why -- that’s why -- that’s why her life was tooken [sic] and stolen because I’m trying to make him aware of these things. And if I never see that change, he has to know that.

In life, for his future. He -- I prepare him for the -- for what lies ahead in life for him. I’m not going to sit there and lie to him that you know, that -- that there is some people that do care, and some don’t. And he -- he’s -- my grandson, he’s seen a lot of things already that -- that he shouldn’t -- he shouldn’t be experiencing. I’ve tried to reach out to the community
about the bullying that’s happening in school. They just
brushed -- they just brushed it off like, oh, it’s not
happening to us. We don’t have to acknowledge to that.

But they seem to forget how it makes that --
how -- how it makes him feel and how he has to deal with
it, and stand up for his rights. And yet, and let alone an
adult standing there to try to challenge him, work against
him in telling him that well, this and that. I want --
well, how do I know that?

I have to listen to my grandson, because
he’s the one that’s standing there being bullied and
experiencing it, and then I -- you know, principal and
teachers talking over about him. But -- and he’s trying to
tell me different, and he’s -- other people are trying to
tell me different. It’s still violence. You know, he’s --
he’s already -- at the age that he is, he’s already going
through that. He gets ganged up. A month ago here, he
came home -- he came home with a bloody nose, and saying
that -- that he got jumped.

And he -- you know, that -- that scares me,
that terrifies me. And to try to talk to the system about
that, and right away they -- right away they want to dig
into my history. Why -- why my grandson’s acting out like
that, or why it’s going on. And right away they want to
look at -- at us. Like, is there anything? No, I’m trying
to prevent this from happening. Trying to prevent --

trying to stop it from happening, because it’s violence.

And he’s -- he’s even aware of that. And he’s not -- like

I said, he’s -- he’s a very smart little boy.

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA BIG JOHN:** I don’t take -- I don’t
take the system’s side, because I wasn’t there when things
goes on with them. I talked to him and I listened to him

when he’s telling me something like that. A bully too,

with the First Nations kids, and in school too. That --

that needs to be -- I raise a concern right there.

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** About the

bullying, do -- does school have like a policy against

bullying? And --

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** Yeah. They
do, but it just doesn’t seem like -- like they follow

through with you know, what they say. And even like --

like as I said, the teachers would be trying to like, tell

me, “Oh, no, he started it. You know, it’s all his fault.”

And --

**COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE:** M’hm.

**MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON:** -- and then

there’s these other kids here. I’m a little how come, why

just blaming one kid? Like, you know, I don’t think that’s

fair at all. I think you should have one on one and with
all of them. And you know, see -- like, get all of their sides and see what happened. And it’s -- it just puzzles me of -- you know?

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And what about racism? Do they have something that we do not tolerate racism at the school?

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yeah. Yeah, but -- but I think that’s just all a bunch of baloney. Like, it’s -- it’s written on the wall, but do they actually follow it?

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Did you put in an official complaint about that or?

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Hmmm, yeah. I went to -- I went to speak with the school board about that. And every time I say that I’m going to go address it to them, they start trying to talk to me like, “Oh, no, we’ll make this change, we’ll make that change. No, this will change.” And but nothing ever really happens and that’s why sometimes I just say, “Forget this school, I’ll just put you in another school.” And --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Okay.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: -- you know, it’s like, we -- I just try to like, make the situation better for Layton (ph) and instead of him going though all that stress, but then it just happens again. And --
COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: M’hm.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: I just don’t know when that’s ever going to stop. Like, probably never.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: One thing I know, it’s we have so many warriors in our world, the Indigenous women and men. And I hope it does stop.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: That’s what I pray for every day.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Yeah. And even at your school, your son’s school and every school?

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Why?

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Nobody, like, especially kids, they don’t deserve to go through that. Like, it can really mess up a -- you know, someone’s mind. Even a child’s mind. They’ll grow up thinking this and that. And then who knows if they think it’s okay to bully or to hurt people. And well, I -- I was never cared for when I got bullied. So why not? That’s just another reason to -- I talked to my son about lots. I make him understand a lot of things and he’s very smart and intelligent, you know? And he’s always there. He’s really caring. You know, and he sees me like, upset or if I need help with something, he’ll instantly be right there. “Oh, you, mom, you need -- you need this to be done?” And he’s
very gentle and kind with his manners. And --

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: You mentioned also your sister was invisible when you started your testimony with us. And it is clear for many, many of us, she is not invisible.

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: You are not invisible. We are not invisible, and we will stand until justice is happening. And some places it does happen because our women stood and still standing very strong today. So I have so much respect for that and respect for you also, to see three generation. I know the third one is here.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: And to see that you have so much support, because when we’re sitting here, it’s always scary or we’re human being. Even if we’re sitting on this side of the circle. That’s sometime family comes along because they travel far or because that’s their choice. But to see that you have Gladys (ph), C. J. --

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: -- Bonnie (ph) and Cynthia (ph), and I think your boyfriend?

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yeah. My
husband.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Oh, excuse, husband. That’s okay. Yeah. I’m at this stage of husband to be now. Not there yet. Yeah. Basically. I would like to ask you if you would accept from us and from the families who support this journey, this Inquiry, a gift -- a gift and if you do, Bernie (ph) will explain the beauty and the meeting of this gift.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Yeah. This is like, one thing like, I never shared any of what I said to anybody, so that’s why I was just -- it’s very hard to talk. So the only people I really talked about it with was with you know, my mom or my husband.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: How do you feel?

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: I just feel overwhelmed and but I’m glad that people had to hear my story. Like, it -- it needed to be heard because the -- what’s going on with the system today is -- is just you know, we -- what’s going on with -- I was a kid, it’s still going on now, and I’m 26 years old.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Well, I’m blessed to be here with you and receiving your truth. Very, very honoured. And I hope you will continue. You’re so beautiful and people need to hear that you’re breaking
that cycle. You are a good example that we are capable to
break it.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: Exactly.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci. Merci beaucoup.

MS. FANNY WYLDE: So Commissioner Audette, if I can ask to adjourn this session please? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Oui, Bernie va présenter le cadeau.

MS. BERNIE POITRAS WILLIAMS: So Lisa and Jacqueline, I want to say hello to you. I know your mom’s been fighting for so long and I’m so glad that she’s here. And that she’s never given up. Because many of us -- this was almost felt like our last you know, kick at the can basically. Our last chance here. And I’m so grateful that you’re here, Lisa. And thank you for your honesty, and your resilience. And I’m so proud of your journey here with us. I’m so glad you’re here. On behalf of the Commissioners and their -- and the grandmothers, the staff, we’d like to offer you the eagle feathers.

I want to explain that these eagle feathers, they started their journey from Haida Gwaii. The matriarchs picked along at the beach over 400 eagle feathers, and then the call went out nationally. So these eagle feathers have come from Thompson, Manitoba. Have
made their way before the -- this Inquiry, this hearing. The other ones came in from Sechelt. So (Indiscernible) people nationally. The Elders, grandmothers, family members have donated these eagle feathers all across Canada for the families that are giving their statement and the hearings. So we’d like to offer this to you, and to you too. And your husband here.

MS. LISA JACQUILINE ROBINSON: M’hm.

COMMISSIONER MICHELLE AUDETTE: Merci, Bernie. Oui, excusez-moi, j’accepte, nous terminons la session.

(PAUSE)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We just got a song for the families, so if you have drums or you want to come and sing, that’d be great.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And there’s also two drums here if anybody would like to join us.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There’s two drums here. Somebody wants to pick those up and help us drum.

(PAUSE)

MS. LISA BIG JOHN: I’m very honoured to been a part of this Inquiry. It means a lot to me, and I’m very blessed today. I felt a lot of my sister’s present [sic] here, guiding me with my words and my knowledge. And I’m very blessed to come far in this life. Especially
seeing other sisters that are here, that are very you know, very special part of my life. And I hold them close to my heart, and I see that we never lose touch. Even though those moments, I -- I carry with me and treasure, cherish. The strong sisters are some of them are here today with me, guiding me with my strength and -- and to be strong.

And once again I want to thank the Commissioners for -- for being a part of this Inquiry, and I hope that in life, what lies ahead I hope there’s going to be changes made for the future. Like I said, I seen a lot of my friends here that I don’t see very often, but I keep them close to my heart. My friend Gladys, C.J, Cynthia and Bonnie, and because of their strength too, giving me power and courage to speak about everything that I have to. I’m very blessed. Thank you. Creator blessing.

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup. So the next hearing will start as soon the lawyer and the family to the other room will finish, so we have to respect as you know, our beautiful rules it’s to respect the time that they need to share their truth with us. So we never know when it’s finishing. So what I would like to propose is that we have lunch -- a quick lunch. As soon the lawyer Wendy, comes here and she’s ready with the other family to start we could start.
But I would like to say also that this morning we had an opportunity to have a few words from a wonderful woman, so I have to say thank you. When we start this journey in your territory and you’re here today, but also I met a man this morning. He’s the uncle of the mother of my granddaughter. And -- tears, come here. Small world. So he’s a Chief too. So you’re accountable. Come tell us that you will do something for the women, please, or say what you -- you want to say.

MR. ROBERT PHILLIPS: (Indiscernible). My name is Robert Phillips. I’m with the First Nations Summit, and the First Nations Leadership Council. And I too want to give acknowledgements to Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish and just to the south of Tsawwassen. And give acknowledgements as well to everybody. I can certainly understand the bravery that you have for coming here to speak on the issues that are so -- hits everybody’s heart. And to actually -- to have experienced it, I cannot even speak of it, because I have never had such a loss in that way.

And your bravery to come here, to share your thoughts, and to also give ideas to help I think, are very important. And we as a First Nations organization are here to bear witness and to observe and to listen. And then try to help, so with the commissioners and the chief
commissioner and the missing indigenous women and girls, I think it’s something that I know it’s not perfect, but we’ve called for for many, many years. And I know families such as yours have called for it. And we have it.

And you’re so brave enough. And I keep coming back to the word brave. Because we talk about warriors, and we talk about people that stand up, but you’ve been through it, and you survived and you’re here now. And we as political leaders sometimes go out and speak on issues, but we also need to listen. And we tried it to the best of our abilities to listen.

And there’s a lot of families that are in grief, that have been through so much. And when we get up and speak on it, I think you in a way give us that strength. ‘Cause I know as I was listening, I felt a tremendous amount of emotion, but then also kind of looking ahead and saying we can do something about it to do our little part.

‘Cause I do believe it starts with the self, in your heart. And what you’ve shared, and then to your family as you’ve expressed through your children and grandchildren. Then through your community, and then our nation. I think with that, we will try to the best of our ability to make it not only a better world for us, but a better world around us. And I think this is just the
beginning. And I think we need to continue and with you being there, I think means a lot. And like I said, we’ll try our best as well. So I know people are hungry and I -- I’m ready to eat too. Thank you. (Indiscernible)

COMMISSIONER MICHÈLE AUDETTE: Merci beaucoup. Merci. Thank you so much.

--- Upon adjourning at 12:37 p.m.
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Anja Curuvija, 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.

Anja Curuvija
April 12, 2018