National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Nuu-Chah-Nulth MMIWG Gathering
Tseshahlt First Nation [Ts'ishaa7ath] - Maht Maws
Port Alberni, British Columbia

PUBLIC

Thursday September 14, 2017

Statement - Volume 179
Arnold Frank, In relation to Iris Frank

Statement gathered by Breen Ouellette,
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NOTE

The testimony here represents the public portion of the testimony of several witnesses in relation to the death of Iris Frank, which is the testimony of Arnold Frank. The remainder is subject to an in camera order and a ban of publication.
### Table of Contents

**Statement - Volume 179**  
*September 14, 2017*  
**Witness: Arnold Frank**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testimony Arnold Frank</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporter’s certification</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Documents submitted with testimony: none.
Tseshaha First Nation / Port Alberni, British Columbia

--- Upon commencing on Thursday, September 14, 2017

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: We are recording.

Okay, could you start by telling me your full legal name?

[Registrar’s note: confidential testimony omitted].

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And can you tell me your full legal name?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: Arnold Frank.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: No middle name?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: Arnold Joseph Frank.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And can you tell me your date of birth?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: [Birthdate], '58.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And can you tell me where you presently reside?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: On Opitsaht.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: And can you tell me your occupation?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: I’m disabled. I do a lot of carving.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Carving?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: Yeah, carvingwi.

[Registrar’s note: confidential testimony

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MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Is there anything else that I haven't asked about yet that you recall that may have come to mind as we're talking about this now, any other details, either what happened at the dam or what happened afterwards?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: I'm thinking that after my sister was found there was an article about a found missing young lady and the way the cops put it, it was probable suicide. And you know, she was beautiful and had the world in her hand. She had everything going for her. She would not take her life. And our parents taught us suicide is the biggest sin you could ever commit.

And you are -- and a lot of people, they commit suicide and the priests say they haven't gone to (inaudible). They don't (inaudible) those souls til the Creator who takes them.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M'hm.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: When my sister went missing March 1980 I wasn't travelling with my mom and my dad. We have a younger brother. His name was Herbert Frank and we had a younger sister named Theresa Frank. And I kind of stayed home with them. And my mom and them went on every lead.

And I was at home and I can't recall the
date the phone rang and I answered the phone. They said,
"We found her."

And the joy to happiness went way up and end in anger. And I said, "Holy."

They said, "We found her and she's gone."

I knocked the wall phone right off the wall. Just flopped on the floor and cried.

My mom hung onto it because she loved all of us equally and all of us the same. She wanted justice for her daughter, for her princess. That's what she wanted. That's what we all want.

And I told my mom, "One day, Mom, I'm going to find out who done it and I'm going to kill him." And I promised my mom if the cops find out who done it and put him in jail, I'll go to jail. I'll find him and kill him there.

I've been starting in 1980 and I carry it, the hurt and anger til 2009, 29 years.

My mom always told me, "Don't carry the grief too long. It turns to anger." And I guess I didn’t realize with my mom because I held onto it for 29 years.

And one of my -- my youngest sister, Theresa, she's gone now -- she had a daughter who's very beautiful. She named her Iris.

We have a cousin from my father's older
sister Cortillda (phonetic). She had a daughter named
Leona and her daughter, Leona named one of her daughters
Iris.

And before coming to this conference I
picked up a newspaper and it happens on the page I find the
RCMP are looking for some missing lady and it bubbles a
whole ball of anger. All they had was missing lady’s
location.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Yeah.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: And just like, they all
trigger flashbacks. Why didn’t they do this for my sister?
Why? They’re sitting there. This is (inaudible) and I'm
not going to let it go. I'm not going to lose her. Or I
could take it to her somewhere so make a wish, and if the
wish would come true maybe I'll find out who done this to
our princess.

It's so -- we -- a lot of our -- I'm
listening to them and I kind of agree with some of that,
what's going on in there and I kind of disagree. Their
missing people, they're saying they hope they're found so
that they could have closure.

[Iris] went missing. And she was found.
There’s still no closure because we don’t know what
happened to her. But we all know in our family, we know
she never took her own life. We know that. And when we
Arnold Frank
(Iris Frank)

say she never -- she wouldn't take her life (inaudible) here because we all knew her.

I guess a lot of them -- I don't even know if my siblings remember that my mom and Iris were close, real close. My mom had a blue jacket and it was a winter jacket with fur on it. And my sister Iris started calling my mom Eskimo. So they both called each other Eskimo.

And we had parents but they weren't just parents. They were our friends. They done a lot with us, my parents. When would follow us, watching us play ball. They say (inaudible) being a parent -- I was -- our parents -- my dad was my best friend.

And I think that's how my mom was with all of my sisters. Maybe she didn't tell them but if you could see from here you could know, you could tell that kind of (inaudible).

Yeah. And I'm 59 and it looks like I was 20, 21 when 2009 was when she went missing -- and I came into town, bar hopping, listening, seeing if anybody can talk about it.

And my mom sat me down to talk to me. She talked to me, then told me not to do what I said I was going to do. She said, "It's in the Creator's hands now." And the pressure that I was carrying, the load I was carrying after I was taught that, that was a couple of
And we all hope that we get the answer and like I said, it's been 37 years, so the sooner the better but whether it takes 10 years and we get an answer, that's great. My son and them won't have to wonder. These kids will be (inaudible).

[Registrar’s note: confidential testimony omitted].

Some have taken the wrong path and some have made a good life for themselves.

And just like during this and everything is I remember walking, holding it, my sister's casket, walking with -- my aunts had -- my aunt had to be pried off to let go. It was one of my cousins. She had to come across and had to pull my hand off.

But yeah. And the ones weren't -- were there, I was (inaudible) because one of the questions I asked and I asked. Like, with today, if we say we give you permission to ask for those coroner's reports and the police report and if you do get that and just say can you have it sent to us?

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** What?

**[WITNESS 1]:** If we want the coroner's report and the police report.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** Yeah.

**MR. ARNOLD FRANK:** If we have given you
permission to get them for us.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Nobody's asked that question of me before, so what I can say at this point is that I can look into that and get back to you on that right away after we finish these interviews.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: And I don't know if my [family members] heard, but I know my dad said when they found her about three weeks in water. I don't know if he touched her, but he said she was real soft.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M'hm.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: And that really hurt coming from my dad.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M'hm.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: Yeah. I was telling the people in the conference that this lady, she was a shell. The shell is gone. But she's still in here. All the memories that I have, we look at each other and we smile. That's how I'm telling people she gives me strength because she's here. And I look at her every day like I look at my mom and my dad every day because they're here, little pictures that my mom said the camera can never capture, just ones that you have in your heart.

And there's not a day I still think about my sister or my dad or my mom. I (inaudible) the ones that are gone.
And I didn’t really tell people about that. I was talking to somebody and they were talking about, oh, like, my parents are dead.

I smile at them. "But they never die."

Where do you get this, what's running through our heart? Where do you ever get it? Where do you get the blood that runs through our heart? That's my mom's and my dad's blood, still pumping through us and it will never die.

And I’ve got the memories of her in my heart, that won't die.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M'hm.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: For sure now, (inaudible). And I hope maybe if you can access the truth so it's going to continue for final truth.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So I had some more questions but I can also see that it's noon. So we can take a break so people can eat and regain their strength and then we can continue after lunch, or we can keep going, whichever you'd prefer.

[Registrar’s note: confidential testimony omitted].

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Take a break? Okay. So we will pause it for lunch. And take all the time you need and then just come back and then we'll continue, okay?
Thank you.

--- Upon recessing
--- Upon resuming

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Okay. So we’re back from lunch and we’re going to continue speaking with [Arnold Frank and confidential witnesses].

[Registrar’s note: confidential testimony omitted].

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M’hm.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: To get back to your question, the one you just asked. The situation she got in was like she was open, trusting. And that can be a real vulnerable area and guys can take advantage of that.

So I would say as long the (inaudible) have to trust (inaudible) take advantage. So that’s how my sister was. She just liked chatting with people a lot. She didn’t care who you were, what colour you were. She was always friendly and talked and that. You know, that was the (inaudible). It’s the trust that she had and the openness.

Because it could be a problem because everywhere (inaudible) she trusted too fast.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So do you think that’s
something that we can teach children today? Do you have any ideas of how we protect girls now? For instance, do we need to change the way that we’re raising men as well as the way that we’re raising girls, to protect them?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: Well, that’s what I said in that thing. My mother -- it never came up. I was (inaudible) so my mom always told me. I’ve got to respect women. I had to respect my sister and my mom. And I wouldn’t want anybody doing to my sister what I was doing to the young ladies out there. And that’s what I’ve been teaching my son in the past 24 years, 22 years.

The women, they give us our life and they should be treated with respect. And I was just surprised when I picked up that Declaration and that’s what they had written on there and my mom had told me that years ago, that women should be respected.

But now that’s what -- our parents, especially mothers, and the dads have got to teach the young fellows that women should be respected at all times as men.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M’hm.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: And no matter the race or reputation. They deserve the same respect that you got for your mom and for your sisters.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Can I ask, what was it
for you that changed? What brought you to the realization
for you? What changed in your life where you -- was it the
fact that your mother kept just reminding you of it or was
it something else?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: It’s -- one day she just
asked me how I would like it if men were treating my
sisters and my nieces and my granddaughters the way I
treated them.

And I'm one of the guys that was in a
relationship for a few years and it was (inaudible).
That’s like other kind of abuses still stuck there.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M’hm.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: Asking what I was doing.
Sometimes (inaudible). That’s why she was always saying,
“Be careful what you say.” (Inaudible) can’t grab it, it’s
gone. Once it’s past, the damage is done.

She talked like that to all my brothers. I
just wish that I had (inaudible) more to listen but I wish
(inaudible) vulnerable. My dad was saying, It’s so easy to
listen. But to hear,” he said, “You listen over here and
you hear right here.”

A lot of stuff I learned from my mom.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Okay. So for the
current young generation, for future generations, what can
we do -- not just what can we do as a family. But what
should society be doing to protect Indigenous peoples, women and girls? What aren’t they doing and what should they be doing?

This is your opportunity to tell our Commissioners what they should be putting in their report, their recommendations.

**MR. ARNOLD FRANK:** Another recommendation is that when the sexual offenders, the sexual abusers are caught, the penalties should be higher, stiffer. Eighteen (18) months is just like a holiday. Two years is a like a holiday. But the damage that’s done to a woman lasts their life. And the sentence they get is just like calendar days.

If the penalties aren’t stiffer -- especially when it comes down to all people. One of our granddaughters used to (inaudible). They got other kids; they get that guy to go to court. They’re on probation for five years. So it’s okay; go out and do it again. That’s what they’re saying.

They get two years. Well, when you get out you can do it again. That’s the (inaudible), sexual priors. They live off that.

**MR. BREEN OUELLETTE:** M’hm.

**MR. ARNOLD FRANK:** It doesn’t go away after they got sentenced. I think (inaudible) because I was
sexually abused when I was eight years old. But we’re not here for that.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Would you want to prevent children from being put in the same position that you were in?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: M’hm.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: Have you any ideas? Anything that your experience brings to the table is welcome.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: Well, I told my son. I said, “Let me know if anybody hurts you or touches you.”

And he said, “Yeah, okay, Dad.” And I said, “Well, can you do that?” And then I went about it the wrong way (inaudible) if something happened to him: “I don’t want my dad to go to jail.”

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M’hm.

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: And then I talked to him again and I told him, “We’ll go through the proper way. We’ll call the cops. We’ll deal with it right.” And that’s the (inaudible) stuff going on.

I asked and he was, “Dad, who can I trust? Who can I talk to?”

And he said, “Well, you can trust all my relatives.” I said, “No. That’s where it starts. It starts in house. Just nobody -- anybody that touches you
wrong or tries to take you somewhere, run.”

And he said, “But I’m a guy.”

I said, “It happens to both.”

And he is 24. And he’s a good healthy young man.

And when you were talking earlier about alcoholism, this is a problem. Our sister never really had a -- she wasn’t really an alcohol abuser. Mind you, we used to go out but when we were (inaudible) she used to make sure none of us were (inaudible).

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M’hm. So she was just a normal 20-year-old?

MR. ARNOLD FRANK: Yeah. She had no depression and she -- like I keep saying, she was fun-loving and open, trusting and honest.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: M’hm.

[WITNESS 2]: She was a -- she was going to be a lady.

MR. BREEN OUELLETTE: So heavier penalties for sexual offenders. Send that message.

But is there anything else that we can do to make communities safer? Is there anything that we need in place that will help people? For example, you know, hitchhiking puts people ---
--- Upon adjourning

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST’S CERTIFICATE

I, Karen Noganosh, 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.

__________________________
Karen Noganosh

October 2, 2017