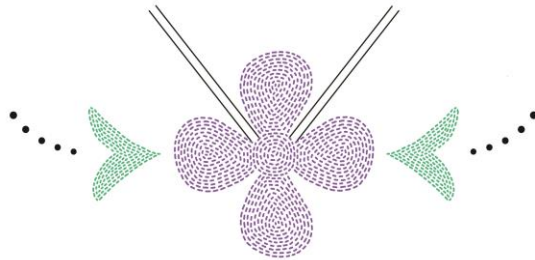


National Inquiry into
Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls



Enquête nationale
sur les femmes et les filles
autochtones disparues et assassinées

**National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered
Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
Part 1 Statement Gathering
Membertou First Nation
Unama'ki (Cape Breton Island), Nova Scotia**



PUBLIC

November 1, 2017

Statement - Volume 73

**Bonnie Polchies & Valentino Polchies,
In relation to Beverly Polchies**

Statement gathered by Daria Boyarchuk

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NOTE

The use of square brackets [] in this transcript indicates that amendments have been made to the certified transcript in order to replace information deemed inaudible or indecipherable by the original transcriptionist. Amendments were completed by listening to the source audio recording of the proceeding and were made by Bryana Bouchir, Public Inquiry Clerk with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQ, July 31st 2018 at Vancouver, BC.

Statement - Public
Bonnie & Valention Polchies
(Beverly Polchies)

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Membertou, Nova Scotia

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---Upon commencing on Wednesday, November 1, 2017 at 11:38
a.m.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Good afternoon. This
is Daria Boyarchuk speaking on behalf of the National
Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and
Girls. It is 11:38 in the morning and we're currently in
Membertou, Nova Scotia. I'm here in the presence of
Valentino Polchies and Bonnie Polchies. They have come
here to speak about their lost loved one. Valentino
Polchies will be giving a statement about his sister,
Beverly Polchies, and this is Bonnie's sister-in-law. And
we are also accompanied by our wonderful health support
worker. Could you just --

MS. JADE HARPER: Jade Harper (ph).

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you. And I
would -- Valentino and Bonnie, could you please note let us
know that you have voluntarily agreed to give this
statement recorded on a video?

MS. BONNIE POLCHIES: Yes, I volunteered.

MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: Yes. Yes.

MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Thank you. So
Valentino, Bonnie, you have come here from New Brunswick as
I understand --

MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: Yes.

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Bonnie & Valention Polchies
(Beverly Polchies)

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1 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- to share your story
2 with us about your lost loved one. What would you like us
3 to know about her?

4 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** (Indiscernible)

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** This is Beverly Marie
6 Polchies. This is my sister-in-law. She was born January
7 27th, 1959. And she was murdered on October 3rd, 1984.
8 And to this day, we do not know the circumstances around
9 her murder. The family has been left in the dark. We've
10 never gotten answers. And so I just want to give you a
11 little bit about what we know that happened that weekend.

12 We both reside on the Woodstock First
13 Nation. And there's a street behind our house, Valentino's
14 mother and father lived and Beverly lived on Woodstock
15 First Nation. On Friday, October 12th, she left the
16 community with three other friends to go down to old -- Old
17 Town, Maine - Bangor, Maine for a weekend of partying. And
18 she was 25 years old. She had left on Friday, and the next
19 thing we know, on Sunday afternoon Val (ph) was out mowing
20 the lawn, and the cops from the reserve came and asked Val
21 some questions and asked us if we knew if his sister had
22 any tattoos. And Val says, "Oh, yes. Yes."

23 And then they proceeded to tell us, the
24 reserve police, that they found a girl in Bangor, Maine
25 that was left at the hospital and she had died, and they

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Bonnie & Valention Polchies
(Beverly Polchies)

3

1 think it might be Beverly. And so Val went in the house
2 and called his brother Terry (ph). Terry lives in Bangor,
3 Maine, so he was going to run down to the hospital and see
4 if -- if he could see if that was Beverly or not. So his
5 brother went down and probably about an hour later he
6 called us back and he said, "Yes, it's Beverly. I went and
7 identified her body."

8 So ~~now when~~ [Val and] I jumped in the car to
9 go to the street behind our house and went to go tell his
10 mother because his father passed away the year before so --

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

12 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- so we went and told
13 his mom, well, it was his step-mother actually. And 'cause
14 if -- Beverly's his half-sister, that Beverly had been
15 killed from what we understood that she was hit by a car.
16 And so that she's laying in morgue in hospital in Bangor.
17 Well, she didn't believe us. She was, you know, she was in
18 shock. So she asked us to take her to Bangor so that she
19 can go and see for herself if it was her daughter or not.

20 Well Val and I jumped in the car, took her
21 down to Bangor, took -- two-hour drive. And I remember
22 going into the morgue and pulled the drape down over her
23 face and it was Beverly. And she was beat very badly. You
24 could see the bruises. We could see pieces of her -- her
25 head missing, dented in and all -- it was bloody. So we

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(Beverly Polchies)

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1 left there, and we went to her -- his brother's house and
2 we decided -- the mother decided they want to bring her
3 home. So he brought her -- we arranged for the funeral
4 home to bring --

5 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

6 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- her back to the
7 Woodstock First Nation, so that we could have her body in
8 the house. Her mother wanted her back home, so we got her
9 body back home. And she laid to rest for three days in the
10 -- in her house, her room, and then we took her to Houlton,
11 Maine to be buried because that's where her little brother
12 was and that's where family was. Because we were only ten
13 minutes from the border, Val has family on both sides.

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

15 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** You know? So -- and
16 he grew up in Houlton, Maine, so that's -- that's family
17 over there. So a lot of the family's buried in Houlton, so
18 we took her to Houlton, Maine. So as of this day, you
19 know, all we were ever told is that she was hit by a car,
20 thrown off a vehicle. Val left it in his brother's hands.
21 Terry lived right in Bangor that he would contact the
22 police and make arrangements and find out what we could and
23 what actually happened to her. And we never got any
24 answers. And -- and his brother never got any answers.
25 The family to this day does not know what happened to her.

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Bonnie & Valention Polchies
(Beverly Polchies)

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1 Now, for years I've been trying to get
2 Beverly's name added to the Murdered and Missing Women.
3 I've been an advocate for all my life for Native women.
4 And because I was told she was killed in Maine, two hours
5 from her home, that she's not allowed to be included on the
6 list. You know, I've contacted (~~indiscernible~~) [NWAC] the
7 Native Women's, I tried it over the years to get her
8 recognized. And that's why we made it a point to come to
9 these hearings so that ~~evidence may be had~~ [Beverly's name
10 be added].

11 She was a Native woman. And -- and you --
12 you can't forget her. So -- but as of today, we really
13 don't know what happened to her. And last fall --

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

15 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- I got a call. His
16 brother passed away in October. Come November, because his
17 brother's obituary happened to be in the main
18 (~~indiscernible~~) [Bangor Daily News] in the news, the
19 Attorney General's office had contacted the family. They
20 knew Valentino was the last surviving member that had
21 stayed in Woodstock First Nation. Well, somewhere in the
22 State of Maine they must have contacted the Woodstock First
23 Nations. I happened to be their counsellor at the time and
24 they tracked it down to me and the phone call stating, "We
25 would like to have a picture of Beverly. You know, it's

1 getting close to her anniversary of her date of death and
2 we don't have a picture for the unsolved murder." So then
3 I said, "What do you mean unsolved murders? You -- all we
4 were ever told is you know, like, somebody threw her off a
5 car or she was hit by a car and she was just dropped off."

6 So I sent -- I sent the Attorney General's
7 office a picture. And then I went on to the website and I
8 wanted to read into. This is the only information that we
9 know about. Now it's on -- well, it's a unsolved homicide
10 in the States.

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Bonnie, I'm sorry to
12 interrupt. Could you please state the date of this
13 document and show it to the commissioners where --

14 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Okay.

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- exactly you found
16 it?

17 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** This -- this I printed
18 off on October 25th, 2017. And it is from the Maine State
19 government. It's Maine State Police.

20 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Thank you.

21 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** And I wanted to read,
22 because this is -- this is the only knowledge that we have.
23 It said, "On October 13th, 1984, Beverly Polchies was
24 picked up in Old Town by an Old Town Police department for
25 being intoxicated. They contacted Indian Island Police

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(Beverly Polchies)

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1 Department who picked her up and took her to the
2 reservation. At approximately 8:30 p.m. she was dropped
3 off on route 2 in Milford by Indian Island Police
4 department. At approximately 10 p.m. a small white vehicle
5 pulled into Eastern Maine Medical Centre ER with Beverly
6 Polchies. The driver immediately left the emergency room
7 area. Driver was described as a white male, slender, 5'6"
8 to 5'8", approximately 30 to 35 years of age.
9 Approximately 50 -- 150 to 160 pounds. Medical Examiner
10 office ruled the death a homicide."

11 So when I read that --

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- and Valentino and I
14 had a discussion. We said, "How did it end up being that?"
15 You know we -- we kind of had an idea it was something
16 going on because the people that she was with that weekend,
17 her friends would never speak, would never say what
18 happened that weekend.

19 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

20 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** They were all together
21 at one point. When did they get separated? Valentino
22 received phone calls in the middle of the night shortly
23 after this would have happened and it saying, "Welcome to
24 your sister's death. Welcome to your sister's death." And
25 yet we could never get answers, you know? And then it's

1 just, we've never gotten answers of what happened, so you
2 know, I had asked the Attorney General like, "I'd like to
3 -- to meet -- meet with the detectives. Meet with anybody
4 so Valentino and I would drive to anywheres to Bangor or
5 (indiscernible), wherever so we could get answers to find
6 out what happened."

7 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yes.

8 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** To this day we've
9 never seen an autopsy report. We've never seen nothing.
10 This is the only information that we've ever gotten. And
11 it's just, you know, Valentino's the last surviving member
12 of his family. To this date we don't know what ever
13 happened to her.

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

15 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** You know? And it's
16 something we'd like to -- to find out before you know, he
17 passes away, you know? We tried. I mean, it's like, you
18 know, we're not -- we're not getting any answers, but you
19 know, she's you know, just another dead Indian girl, you
20 know? And that's what happens to our women, right? And
21 it's, and it is -- it is just shitty. The whole -- I said
22 -- like I said, I've been fighting for years to get her
23 recognized on Murdered and Missing Women's list, you know?
24 I did receive a call about a month ago.

25 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

1 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Maybe two months ago,
2 from the -- one of the detectives from the Cold Case Squad
3 in Bangor. And I talked on the phone for probably a good
4 hour.

5 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

6 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** It's the first time
7 that they actually contacted the family.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So this was very
9 recently?

10 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah.

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So it's already been
12 (indiscernible) [registered]?

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Like, two -- two
14 months ago, so you know, it was like, 1st of September.

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

16 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** End of August. Yeah.
17 And it's -- it's like, why are you contacting us now? You
18 -- you -- you guys should have contacted us back then, you
19 know? And we've left messages. We've never got a response
20 from them. I said, "All we want to know is -- just sit
21 down and tell us the -- you know, results of autopsy.
22 Like, what happened to her?" You know? You know, 'cause
23 we have -- we have so many questions, you know?

24 She -- Beverly had a hard life. She -- she
25 got pregnant young and she was in a very abusive

1 relationship. And because of this, her husband got the
2 three children that she had. They were young. She had
3 three children under the age of ten. And you know, he got
4 custody of them. So those -- those kids -- those kids are
5 a mess, you know? Not knowing what ever happened to their
6 mother, you know? Two of them are -- are -- have
7 intellectual difficulties and things, and not being able to
8 comprehend a lot of stuff, but, you know, they ask the
9 questions what ever happened to their mom. And -- and
10 nobody ever knows, you know? And -- and it's a shame, you
11 know?

12 We lost contact with them for many years,
13 and we just found her only daughter probably about six
14 months ago. And we were hoping to meet up with her soon if
15 we had some answers, you know? Because I was going to be
16 asked, and you know, I'd like to give her some -- some
17 information. But right now, we can't. You know, we have
18 nothing to tell her children, you know? And you know,
19 that's something that we're going to have to face in the
20 future here 'cause we promised one of his -- one -- her --
21 her daughter that we would come up and see her.

22 But I know we're going to be asked, you
23 know? We ~~could~~ [can] share the knowledge that we have about
24 what her mother was like, but you know, her mother was
25 going through some stuff to try and get out of that

1 situation, domestic violence and stuff. And it was hard
2 for her, you know? But then he ends up getting custody of
3 them which is --

4 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- so heaven knows
6 what those kids face, you know? So we feel guilty about
7 that too, right? So there's -- there's a lot of guilt.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So you said that you
9 feel guilt.

10 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** M'hm.

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. Could you
12 elaborate on it?

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Well, the biggest
14 guilt I think we feel is that we never found out what
15 happened to her. We didn't fight hard enough. We left it
16 to you know, Val's brother to try and you know, find out
17 the answers. And -- and because of the Old Town Police,
18 that reserve down there, Val's sister-in-law has family
19 there. So there was something going on with his brother's
20 wife. And I don't know if it was her family members were
21 involved, but they should not have picked her up and
22 dropped her off on the highway. Because that's you know,
23 that's where you know, we thought she got hit by a car or
24 whatever had happened.

25 You know, why do we [you] dump our Native

1 women out on the streets? You know, it's -- it just
2 doesn't matter where -- where it is. And it's -- it's a
3 fact a lot of our -- our women are found like this, you
4 know? And I know it's just -- I -- I feel guilty because
5 we didn't fight hard enough and dig. I know we had -- we
6 had family, we had kids. Val was working. You know,
7 there's a lot of things going on in our lives and it's --
8 we just didn't get no answers. Like I feel guilty that we
9 didn't work hard enough to get this solved, you know? Mind
10 it was two hours away from our home. But that's -- that's
11 a big guilt for me.

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm. (Indiscernible)
13 [Valentino] would you like to share your, exploring your
14 memories about your sister?

15 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Basically I -- all
16 the information that she didn't mention this -- why I
17 received from this (indiscernible) [whole incident]. You
18 know, all these questions that we -- I -- I mentioned
19 earlier like about -- ~~after this deal from~~ [I've carried
20 this guilt for] the last 33 years. And why wouldn't we --
21 I'm her brother, why wasn't I there to -- to uncover what
22 had happened and when, and all the stuff like that?

23 And I've been (indiscernible) [carrying this
24 guilt around] ever since she had passed, you know? And it
25 -- it's hard. I don't want to go to grave with this guilt

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(Beverly Polchies)

13

1 in my -- and ~~after Terry had known this,~~ [I have to carry]
2 and so it -- money is not a help in reference to me to come
3 this far enough. Then we would go find out what's really
4 happened to her, you know? Or told us in Bangor what --
5 and no autopsy report. No police report, no nothing you
6 know? Why am I just (~~indiscernible~~) [forget about it] and
7 -- and my (~~indiscernible~~) [my impression was] as well?

8 We had talked to him on the phone. Whether
9 she got him on the phone. I thought, what [they gonna do
10 Bonnie, just say hey look] ~~the hell are you~~
11 (~~indiscernible~~), don't go back to (~~indiscernible~~) [Bonnie
12 Polchies]. Just let it slide and put it behind us, to
13 which it won't come up again (~~indiscernible~~). [Just let it
14 go, let it ride]. Just (~~indiscernible~~) [another Indian]
15 the lady's gone. Just forget about her. So just -- just
16 let it go, you know? Tell them don't ~~pressure~~ [push it].
17 Just tell them, sir you know, (~~indiscernible~~) or whatever,
18 (~~indiscernible~~) [let it die] that was my thoughts anyway,
19 that she's (~~indiscernible~~) [an Indian girl]. You know,
20 she's -- she's gone, but just let her (~~indiscernible~~).
21 Don't forget the (~~indiscernible~~). It'll go away. That --
22 that was my ~~father~~ [thought] in the whole thing, you know?

23 And -- and like I say, (~~indiscernible~~)
24 [along with the] guilt that's -- that's -- that's my -- my
25 -- my comment ~~and that was~~ [in reference] to what happened.

1 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

2 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** And I said
3 (indiscernible) together all the hearings that never heard
4 you. That gives me (~~indiscernible~~) ~~besides~~ [more guilt
5 because] they -- they're family going to -- going after
6 whatever they (indiscernible) you know, same thing. And
7 that's (indiscernible) knows what -- what (~~indiscernible~~)
8 [where was I] you know?

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Were you close with
10 your sister?

11 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Pardon?

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Were you close with
13 your sister?

14 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Quite close, yeah.
15 Yeah. I was closer than my -- my ~~younger~~ [older] brother,
16 yeah. It was --

17 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And when was the last
18 time you saw her?

19 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** That week was
20 the -- the party and whatever they went, was the last week
21 I seen her. ~~When I~~ [They] lived in (~~indiscernible~~) [back
22 of us] where our -- where our house was, we had one street
23 up -- and (~~indiscernible~~) [I'd go up every now and then and
24 visit her] with her mother -- ~~rest~~ (~~indiscernible~~) [my
25 stepmother] her mother and her, but we weren't strangers.

1 We -- we -- we met of course --

2 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: M'hm.

3 MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: -- family you know?

4 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: M'hm.

5 MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: I mean, we had

6 dinners together and stuff like that, eh?

7 MS. BONNIE POLCHIES: Even if they don't see
8 each other. How many times you tried to go up there and
9 get in the middle of her and her husband.

10 MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: M'hm.

11 MS. BONNIE POLCHIES: But she would always
12 stick up for her husband.

13 MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: Yeah.

14 MS. BONNIE POLCHIES: You know? But that's
15 -- that's -- that's domestic violence, right?

16 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: So in the time of --
17 of this murder, was she living with her apartment -- with
18 her husband?

19 MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: No, they were
20 apart.

21 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: They were apart?

22 MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: Yeah.

23 MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK: Okay.

24 MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES: She lived in - she
25 lived in (indiscernible) [Maine] there.

1 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay?

2 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** And then
3 (~~indiscernible~~) [they were separated she moved back] ~~she~~
4 ~~goes back~~ towards that reserve, you know? And she kind of
5 was estranged from her husband I guess there.

6 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

7 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** I might -- I'm not
8 saying, like, he should have been part of this, but I -- I
9 erased him out completely because a few times I lived in
10 (~~indiscernible~~) for a short period. Then she'd come up,
11 she would ~~elimb~~ [come] up there [to] [m]y brother's
12 (~~indiscernible~~) [office] she -- she was the head officer
13 for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in -- in -- in Maine. And
14 I said (~~indiscernible~~) him? She (~~indiscernible~~) all
15 bruised and pregnant and black eye and busted lip and that
16 was from him. 'Cause then me and my ~~bud~~ [brother] finally
17 decided we should teach him a lesson, you know?
18 (~~Indiscernible~~) [he wants to be roughing up women, but then
19 -- (~~indiscernible~~) [Beverly got wind of it] ~~when I was~~
20 young (~~indiscernible~~) [leave him alone, leave him alone].
21 It -- it's not his fault, it's ~~not his~~ [my] fault. ~~You~~
22 ~~kind of get the blame, you know that?~~ [She kinda took the
23 blame].

24 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

25 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** For him kicking the

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Bonnie & Valention Polchies
(Beverly Polchies)

17

1 hell out of her (indiscernible). She [So we] just backed
2 off and (indiscernible) [we seen them once] after that and
3 we ~~didn't want~~ [give him a warning, if we hear anything
4 more] (indiscernible) about this. [Forget about it, his
5 name was [M.], forget about it [M.], you're warned.] She
6 ~~didn't want anything with [M.]. "Do you know about [M.]?"~~
7 ~~"No." I says, "You know me."~~ (indiscernible) no -- no --
8 no -- no talking about, just [go] ealled --
9 (indiscernible). And that's the last contact I had with her
10 husband] at the time. But that was my -- my -- my whole
11 thing I referenced to getting (indiscernible) [information
12 on Beverly] 'cause I thought she met him. My brother's
13 wife, she had relatives on the (indiscernible) [Old Town]
14 police force.

15 And I don't know, maybe I -- maybe I
16 (indiscernible) [that hindered] my brother. ~~Go a little~~
17 ~~bit~~ [Don't go any] further, but I don't know, shouldn't be
18 (indiscernible). See my brother [and his wife] ~~knows as~~
19 ~~much as~~ (indiscernible) [don't say a word about it cuz,
20 whatever her name was, or their name was]. ~~That's --~~
21 ~~(indiscernible) was there family was~~ that had come up. So
22 this ~~--- that~~ [let it die] type of thing. So I don't know.
23 I don't know where it went from there, you know? ~~I'm not~~
24 ~~sure~~ (indiscernible) She was a good lady. She used to
25 babysit for me and my (indiscernible). I was married too

1 before Bonnie. She'd come babysit for us all the time. We
2 thought it was (indiscernible) things like that had -- had
3 no time with him.

4 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So then -- then when
5 this happened, she -- she was living as a -- she was a
6 single mom living with her children, correct?

7 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** No, she didn't have
8 her children with her. No.

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

10 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** No. Something
11 happened in -- in (indiscernible) where her and her husband
12 -- I don't know what happened there.

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** He wouldn't -- she
14 wanted to leave, and she wasn't allowed to take the
15 children.

16 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

17 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** So --

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So when they separated
19 she --

20 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** They --

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** -- she already did not
22 have custody of -- of her children?

23 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** No. No.

24 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** All right.

25 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** No, it wasn't --

1 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Custody
2 (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) [to] her husband's
3 mother, ~~I just~~ (indiscernible) [I guess relatives yeah].

4 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah. Yeah. 'Cause
5 when she first left, she was -- she left and she wasn't
6 allowed to take the kids, so she came to her mother and
7 father's house. And --

8 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Yeah.

9 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- and then she was
10 trying to fight for custody.

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

12 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** But for some reason
13 she didn't get it.

14 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** (Indiscernible) [on
15 two occasions] the -- the father, I guess the -- his mother
16 had custody of the children. His mother had the custody --

17 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

18 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- and she's [call
19 and say] (indiscernible). ~~Well, she -- you know, the~~ [if
20 you want to see] kids, you know? ~~You need to --~~
21 (indiscernible) [we'll meet you at McDonald's, we'll meet
22 you at somewhere] ~~some friend that~~ give her the chance to
23 (indiscernible) [meet with them and talk with them and] so
24 on and so forth. (Indiscernible) ~~too crazy to that if~~ [on
25 two occasions that] I recall, and then after that ~~they~~ [we]

1 don't know where they went there.

2 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** That one -- it was
3 back then too, she -- when she first left, she had the kids
4 with her.

5 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** No, she didn't.

6 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** And then she took them
7 over to visit their father.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

9 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** And back then, people
10 didn't have custody of their kids, right? Mothers and
11 fathers automatically --

12 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** (Indiscernible)

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- assumed 'cause
14 you're on the birth certificate that you're both -- and it
15 just got to the point where he wouldn't let her take the
16 kids, leave. He says, "No. You leave." Right? And it's
17 like, and ~~there's people out there~~, [if you go to the]
18 police, 'cause we know with her -- with her daughter we had
19 the same thing. You have to go to court and get custody of
20 your own kids.

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm. M'hm.

22 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** You know? And back
23 then this was in the 80s when all this started --

24 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** M'hm.

25 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- ~~started in~~. [with

1 her]. So she needed to get herself well. She would get
2 over the domestic violence part before she could --

3 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

4 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- apply to get her
5 kids. And she was willing to work --

6 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

7 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- on that.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So when she was living
9 alone, Bonnie, do you know, have you spoken to her, did she
10 ever talk about what she was doing? What like, do you know
11 anything about the -- if like, she was working at that time
12 or?

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** She wasn't working at
14 the time when she moved back to Woodstock First Nation.

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

16 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** It was -- it was
17 cleaning up her -- cleaning up her act.

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

19 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Like, she -- as she
20 would call it. She did, she found another man that she was
21 dating.

22 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

23 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** She tried to move on
24 with her life, and in fact he was one of the ones that they
25 went away on that weekend. The -- it was -- it was her

1 boyfriend, and another couple from the community.

2 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

3 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Another man and
4 another woman were going to go down 'cause they had
5 relatives out Indian Island, go down there and party for
6 the weekend. But she moved on with her life. And she
7 [did] ~~didn't~~ have another -- she had a boyfriend.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

9 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** And he was -- he was
10 going that weekend.

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. So do you know
12 if she was -- if it was his -- her boyfriend, sorry, and
13 that couple on the night when it happened?

14 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** You can't really
15 say they were together. They went down together, [to
16 Bangor, Maine, went to do their partying but] ~~but then when~~
17 ~~we went to --~~

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

19 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- (indiscernible).

20 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

21 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** You can't actually
22 say that so and so here and so and so --

23 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

24 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- we don't -- we
25 don't have that information from the police or nothing.

1 There's no report.

2 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** But they all left
3 together.

4 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** All four of them
6 left --

7 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** But all four.

8 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- from the Woodstock
9 First Nation.

10 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** (Indiscernible) to
11 dump her, just (indiscernible).

12 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** They never --

13 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

14 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- they never talked
15 about what happened that night.

16 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. And --

17 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** ~~That's because they~~
18 ~~were~~ (indiscernible). [They could never face us].

19 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

20 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** So whether they knew
21 something or how [not] they all died ~~around the~~ [early]
22 age. There's none of them left. So --

23 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm. And Bonnie, I
24 think you mentioned earlier that after -- after the
25 incident that someone was calling you and telling you, "Go,

1 go find out what happened. Go find out what happened."

2 Who was it?

3 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Val would receive
4 phone calls --

5 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Yeah.

6 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- in the middle of
7 the night.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

9 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Yeah.

10 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. And who -- who
11 would this phone calls come from?

12 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** The -- they would
13 be saying -- that time (indiscernible) [they didn't have]
14 call --

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Ideas. [ID, yes].

16 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- (indiscernible)
17 Val yeah. "I know what happened to your sister, so I'd
18 check it out if I was you."

19 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

20 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** And she was
21 inebriated, ~~that girl~~ [quite drunk], whatever. But there
22 was a female. When I check it all out it doesn't say
23 nothing. Who is it for? Well, (indiscernible) and she
24 just hung up.

25 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Oh, okay.

1 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** This happened on
2 two maybe three occasions that we get a call like that.
3 And I get a call like that.

4 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** It was always 2 or 3
6 o'clock in the morning.

7 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Yeah.

8 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah.

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. So it could be
10 her friends, it could be, you can't tell?

11 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Hmmm, yeah. We don't
12 know.

13 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Yeah, the -- the --
14 in my mind she was with two -- two guys and this other
15 lady, right?

16 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

17 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** The men must have
18 been her -- with her, and I can't really say for certain
19 but, but I assumed at the time.

20 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** And these phone calls,
21 did they continue for a -- or a long time? Did they stop
22 (indiscernible)?

23 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** No, she
24 (indiscernible). Tonight?

25 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

1 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Maybe a week later.

2 No -- no, we got no (indiscernible).

3 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

4 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Now we do. And the
5 same thing (indiscernible) I -- I always thought -- and I
6 always thought that (indiscernible) ~~with helping~~ [keep
7 checking it out what's happened to] your sister. But not,
8 I -- I need to know more (indiscernible) [What do you mean]
9 you know? ~~Not prove that it happened.~~ [They hung up you
10 know].

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay.

12 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** And we pretty
13 much --

14 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** (Indiscernible)

15 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- yeah, then it
16 was pretty much the same phone call would come - come a
17 month later. Two, three months later. Just out of the
18 blue. Just sitting there and watching T.V. and the phone
19 rings. Yeah, I would say, and then shut T.V. off and
20 (indiscernible) things on silent, you know?

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

22 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Next day
23 (indiscernible) I didn't, as this went on, someone from the
24 community called and, "Oh, I've seen your sister last
25 night." "Oh, you seen my sister?" "Yeah. She's on

1 that -- the -- the who is on the T.V.?" I says, "Oh,
2 ~~that's all~~ [unsolved] mystery. ~~That's all~~ [unsolved]--"

3 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Oh.

4 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** "-- ~~that's all~~
5 [unsolved] murders or something like that." He goes,
6 "(Indiscernible) with." I say, "Yeah. It was last night
7 early, about 10 o'clock," (indiscernible) and all that
8 stuff. If I was (indiscernible) find out, eh? And I don't
9 know if that's where she (indiscernible). This message we
10 received ~~taking that~~ (indiscernible) [came from that
11 broadcast] and certainly (indiscernible).

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

13 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** You know? There
14 was -- was on there, (indiscernible) the show goes on.

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Did you ever try to
16 contact authorities? Tried to find out what happened to
17 her? I know that Bonnie was saying that you were an
18 advocate, you are an advocate for women. What kind of plan
19 -- efforts have you done to make sure to -- to find
20 something, what happened to her?

21 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** It -- just calls to
22 Maine State Police and things like that, but they never,
23 ever retuned your call. Never. And like I said, I know
24 several times we ~~felt~~ [called] we never got -- oh, we'll
25 get somebody to call you back.

1 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Yeah.

2 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Nobody ever calls you
3 back. And it's just you know, on going you know?

4 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Give us the phone
5 (indiscernible).

6 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah. It's just -- in
7 the end we -- we -- we had four kids ourselves. We -- we
8 just couldn't just jump in the car and go down and -- and
9 see, it's just nobody ever returned your calls. You know,
10 it's just -- like I said, I always felt like [you know,
11 just another dead Indian woman] ~~they're not just about~~
12 ~~identity~~ (indiscernible) failed.

13 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** M'hm.

14 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** They don't care. They
15 don't. You know, one last person I have to worry about.

16 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** With
17 (indiscernible) [The way] I thought too at that time as --
18 the -- they'll (indiscernible), just leave it all. Some --
19 (indiscernible) detectives, let it go. Just don't respond,
20 just let it go, and it will go away. We won't have to
21 worry about it no more. She's gone, she's dead, she's ~~been~~
22 ~~dead~~ [an Indian] so forget about it. That was my thoughts
23 and this day, still my thoughts --

24 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

25 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- as of today.

1 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah. Because I mean,
2 the last phone call we got was two months ago, and a
3 detective, it's the first time he's ever talked to a
4 family. He said, (indiscernible) and I said, "You know,
5 we'll come down there," and ~~nobody really knows~~ [all we
6 really want to know is] the autopsy, how did it go from her
7 being hit by a car or flying off a car to unsolved murder?
8 I said, "We want to meet with you. With Attorney General,
9 meet with anybody down there ~~who gets an answer~~ [to get
10 some answers]." You know, and, "Yeah. I'll get back to
11 you. Give me a week or two." Well it's been two months.
12 And still nothing.

13 So it's like -- but I've reached out to the
14 Family Information (indiscernible) [Liaison] Unit and they
15 signed the papers, ~~keep sending papers about~~
16 (indiscernible) ~~to get (indiscernible) free access.~~
17 [consent papers Val and I signed with Stephanie Francis]
18 And I'm hoping maybe some pressure from that department,
19 you know, can get us a meeting. The -- the big things out
20 there.

21 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** If you ~~think that I~~
22 ~~get my dear~~ [can get our government here in] Canada to --

23 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah.

24 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- try and ~~postpone~~
25 [correspond back and forth] (indiscernible) to that -- that

1 (indiscernible) [government over there, whether it's a]
2 municipality [or whatever it is] (indiscernible) you know?
3 [What's going on there with] This case is 33 years old,
4 ~~going nowhere. There's nothing.~~ [Where are you going with
5 it, what happened?]

6 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** M'hm.

7 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** We've
8 (indiscernible) families are concerned. Nothing. I don't
9 know (indiscernible) [she's working on that now] ~~right now.~~

10 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah.

11 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** So okay, you --
12 you're (indiscernible).

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** They can help us with
14 the --

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** What do you think the
16 commission -- and how do you hope the commission to help
17 you? What would you like to see the commission do?

18 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** I'd like to see the
19 commission come up with recommendations and trying to fix
20 the justice system, because it's severely broken.

21 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Not just -- and
22 work with other nations. Like, you know, the United States
23 (indiscernible) where our people are, you know?

24 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Hmmm.

25 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** And if they have a

1 killed First Nation women in Indonesia that we don't know
2 about what -- you know, let's all start working together to
3 get this thing solved. Like, (~~indiscernible~~) [get to the
4 root of it] and so ~~hope that they'll~~ [hopefully it won't]
5 continue or --

6 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Right. 'Cause I
7 consider -- we have to follow legislation in place. We
8 have (~~indiscernible~~) [to live under the] Indian Act. I've
9 lived my whole life under the Indian Act. We are wards of
10 the government. Well, when one of our girls goes missing,
11 why aren't they doing something to find out what's going
12 on? Right? That's what this legislation is, we're to be
13 protected. From the time we are born and the time we die,
14 they control all aspect of our life.

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

16 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Right? But why is it
17 when our -- our women are missing that we have to go
18 through -- jump through hoops, go through all the stuff?
19 Our girls are being murdered, and nobody seems to care. I
20 just hope that they can make some recommendations and --
21 and get -- get things changed. Like, our -- our -- our
22 people you know, are suffered so much, you know?

23 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

24 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** And it's -- I just --
25 I have faith. I have -- like I said, I've been wanting to

1 advocate for this National Inquiry for ~~three~~ [many] years,
2 right? I'm just hoping that they have recommendations and
3 it's acted on. Right? I mean, it's -- it's these barriers
4 that are up, you know? And -- and the justice, and -- and
5 the way police handle things, and you know what I mean?
6 And cultural sensitivity is a huge issue. Like, cultural
7 competency should be a must for all police forces and you
8 know, there's so much that can be done, you know?

9 That is just you know, this mentality, you
10 know, the -- that some people still continue, "Oh, it's
11 just another dead of Indian girl." Like, you know? You
12 know, that's somebody's -- somebody's daughter, that's
13 somebody's sister that ~~who have you got~~ [sombody's Auntie],
14 you know? It's -- it's all -- it's all the relatives. But
15 we need to start treating people with respect. And -- and
16 the way we're having to be -- have to handle the court
17 systems and -- and you know, the -- and you know, I like
18 what happens here in Nova Scotia, where they do have the
19 court support workers. Every province should have that.

20 You know, there shouldn't be a Native person
21 going into that court room without having a support person.
22 And that I'd love to see in every province and territory.
23 Our people should not be going into these court rooms, into
24 these justice's that aren't even ours, but we have to face,
25 right? In this. And I'd just like to see some changes in

1 there, you know? There -- there's a lot that needs to be
2 done. I ~~have this~~ [just] hope that the recommendations
3 that come down here are enacted on, you know? I -- I have
4 a little bit of faith in the Liberal government, you know?

5 Justin Trudeau put down -- I was at the AFN
6 meetings when he made the statement of there will be a
7 National Inquiry.

8 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

9 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** I cried. You know? I
10 cried. 'Cause our women and girls deserve that. ~~We are~~
11 [and our] two-spirited people. ~~We only have this and we're~~
12 [we have missing men] out there, and boys can't be left out
13 either, you know? I just hope that you know, the -- and --
14 and people are treated with respect with like I said, with
15 these processes. And sure, you don't have to tell families
16 all what's going on on the file, but keep them up to date.
17 Keep them aware, you know? That they want -- our people
18 that are been murdered or missing, validate it, right?
19 Because they're not -- we're not -- we're not treated as
20 equal.

21 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

22 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** You know, and I just
23 hope that through all the ~~years~~ [hearings], and everything
24 going through, the recommendations that come down are --
25 are enacted. That they listen to families, and try to fix

1 the wrongs that we face for years.

2 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** What about you on a
3 personal level would you like the commission to help you
4 with?

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** I personally -- I've
6 had my struggles too. You know? I've -- my father went to
7 residential school. (~~Indiscernible~~) ~~they~~ [and we] all know
8 what the horrors of that was like, but when my father left
9 residential school, he went straight into the Canadian
10 Forces. And he met my mom and they ended up having six
11 kids. Well, he got out of the Armed Forces ~~anyway to~~
12 (~~indiscernible~~) [and went to the States] as most Native
13 people on the Atlantic coast. We all go together to either
14 Boston or somewhere for work.

15 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

16 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** You know? So we -- we
17 had gone down to -- to Connecticut for a while, and my
18 father was very abusive, you know? And he'd -- my mother
19 got to the point she said and like, -- she was tired of it;
20 that she left. She went out for ~~a walk~~ [milk] one night
21 and never came back. So here's my father sitting with six
22 kids. He says, "I've got to go back home to New Brunswick
23 to my reserve where I have support." So he took us six
24 kids to Woodstock First Nation. Once that's -- I was nine
25 years old when I first even knew I was Native. You know, I

1 didn't even know that I was Native, because he didn't, you
2 know, he didn't know -- he didn't want us to learn our
3 culture. Didn't want us to learn our language.

4 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** You know? He was not
6 proud of who he was. But he never spoke of the residential
7 school. Never. Yeah. He brought us down to Shubi (ph)
8 one year, and he took us there to the school and said,
9 "This is where they take ~~the really~~ [you when you are]
10 bad." So you keep ~~back~~ [acting], and I was the one that
11 was always the trouble maker of the kids. I was the one,
12 because I just -- I was a fighter. I always was.

13 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

14 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** He said, "This is
15 where you're going to end up." Looks at me, "Okay. No big
16 deal." I didn't even know about it.

17 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

18 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Well, ~~I was~~
19 (indiscernible) ~~then~~ [I didn't know what it was or
20 anything], right? Like I said, I was nine years old. And
21 my mother ended up sneaking up from Connecticut when my
22 father was in the hospital and she took two of the babies.
23 So she said, "I couldn't take ~~en~~ [all] six of you. I could
24 only take two of you," so the four oldest ones ~~I said~~
25 (indiscernible) [my siblings, there was]. Seven, eight,

1 nine and ten years old ~~in the hospital~~ (indiscernible) [us
2 four stayed with] my father. The next thing you know --
3 "You know how abusive he is and stuff, and you'd leave your
4 kids behind though?"

5 I was angry at her for a long time, you
6 know? But I took a brunt, a lot of brunt of -- of the
7 abuse from him because I was the one that was ~~the fighter~~
8 [defiant]. I was the one that you know, he always said
9 that I was a milkman's daughter. I know why though 'cause
10 I looked a little bit different than my other
11 (indiscernible) maybe it's true, I don't know, but I was
12 the one that was always acting up, you know? He said, "You
13 can't fight city hall." I heard it all my life, "You can't
14 fight city hall." Yeah. 'Cause I said, "How -- you know,
15 how can being on reserve life be like this?" You know, so
16 much abuse going on. I was molested on that reserve, you
17 know?

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

19 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** I -- I ~~would damn near~~
20 ~~break sometimes~~ [was damn near raped one time]. I told my
21 father, I said, "You know your best friend tried to rape
22 me? I was 14 years old." "My friend wouldn't do that."
23 You know, he didn't believe me. So I just continued and
24 oh, I tried -- tried to sneak into the language class and I
25 would be beat. I would try to make baskets,

1 (indiscernible) baskets. Bring them home, I'm so proud.
2 ~~We were~~ [he would burn them] you know, he said, "You
3 don't need to -- you don't need to know your culture."
4 That's ~~where we began~~ [only going to bring you down].

5 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** So do you think this
6 sort of behavior, this sort of treatment and denial of
7 Indian culture was an effect of residential school
8 (indiscernible)?

9 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Oh, I know it was. I
10 know it was. Because when I was 15, my older sister had
11 gotten married.

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** And my grandmother
14 said, "Come on, we have to pack up her stuff." I says,
15 "Why?" I said, "Yeah. She getting married, but I didn't
16 think she's moving out." She says, "No. She's no longer
17 Native." I said, "What do you mean she's no longer
18 Native?" "She married a non-Native guy so she
19 doesn't --"

20 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

21 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** "-- have no more
22 Native in her." I said, "What?" And that's when I first
23 found out [about the Indian Act] I said, "That's not
24 right." And I -- ~~I know how~~ (indiscernible) [I hollered
25 at] my father I said, "What is this Indian Act and why --"

1 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** And then I met this
2 guy. And him and I started dating. I was 18 and he's been
3 my rock. He's gotten me through a lot. And without him, I
4 probably would be dead. I know I would have. So -- so
5 that's when I learned the lesson about what the Indian Act
6 is and all this legislation that we as Native people have
7 to follow.

8 I know the struggles of -- of some of the
9 women that have gone through, and in a moment, you know,
10 we've all faced our demons. But with this rock beside me I
11 can come over, go through a lot. He's been there. And he
12 is the most supportive Native man I've ever -- my father
13 didn't want me marrying a Native man. He would push me,
14 "You can't marry a Native. ~~The whole turning down~~ [They'll
15 only bring you down] Native ~~is a~~ [isn't] good..." But I
16 didn't know this story until he had passed away and my aunt
17 had told me.

18 They were at the Shubenacadie residential
19 school together. And she told me his struggles and what he
20 went through. So I don't blame him. I blame the system,
21 right? And it's -- it took me a long time, because I hated
22 my father 'cause he was so abusive. I hated my mother for
23 leaving us in that situation. But it took me a long time
24 to get over that. And like I said, ~~the fact~~ [with Val]
25 he's been ~~hearing me~~ [there and] like I said, I said "Val I

1 -- I've got to go protest. That this woman is fighting for
2 a house. She's got nowhere to live." Val will be right
3 there to support me.

4 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** The 35 years we've
6 been married and I -- I went to a lot of protests. He --
7 he went with me sometimes. But I mean, he's been there,
8 and he knows that I'm not doing this for me, you know? I'm
9 doing this to help other women. To me that's how I help
10 myself. So that's something that I've had that -- feel
11 what I need to do. And that can ~~put~~ (indiscernible)
12 [continue doing], you know? And it's like, when we left
13 the community for a little while in 1999 our -- our
14 youngest child was suicidal. And I said, "The system is
15 not going to take our child. We need to find a school ~~or~~
16 ~~he's going toward~~ [where he's going to learn]..." 'cause I
17 know what the school systems were like. I had a hard time
18 in school too. And I said, "They're not going to take our
19 child."

20 So we ended up coming to Halifax for 13
21 years to get him educated, you know? And it was ~~that~~
22 ~~school -- that school of you know~~ [the best move, best move
23 for him, now we have a] (indiscernible) ~~had~~ a son that
24 we're so proud of. He's our big teddy bear.

25 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** M'hm.

1 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

2 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** M'hm.

3 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** But he's a strong
4 Native man with the biggest heart like his dad. He has --
5 he's -- when we decided -- Val retired in 2012 I said,
6 "It's time to go back home." Our son's graduated, and I
7 said, "You know, it's time to go back home. We need to go
8 back home." And I said, "That's where our people..." well,
9 when we got back home it was like we were outsiders, you
10 know? 'Cause we went and got educated. We went and got
11 you know, the community felt like, I mean it's -- it's so
12 much mixed community. You know, I mean the language is
13 gone. You know, there's a few (~~indiscernible~~) [handful of]
14 speakers left. There's no -- there's no culture. There's
15 nothing. No, and so you know, I was upset. And I told
16 Val, "Like, I'm really upset." You know, we had a house
17 there. But it -- it got contaminated with sewage. Chief
18 and counsel wouldn't fix it.

19 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

20 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** You know? So we --
21 because I've been a strong native woman, the women in my
22 community -- Chief of Counsel had something against us most
23 of my life because I would only stand up and challenge him.
24 "We can't treat women like that," you know? And we've
25 always been on the outs with the politicians in our

1 community, you know? And when I got back, and I said, "You
2 know, I'm really upset that our kids don't have the
3 language and culture, especially if the only middle school
4 we have in our community is the head start. The daycare,
5 the pre-school."

6 So I told Val, I said, "You know what? That
7 building wasn't set aside, designated a specific building.
8 We need a house." So we went and occupied the -- the head
9 start, the daycare.

10 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

11 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Not only because we
12 wanted a house, but because ~~it was the~~ [there was no]
13 language and culture there. So I said, "I'm not leaving
14 that -- I want them to learn their language and culture and
15 that in preschool," you know? We got two to five-year
16 olds, they should be proud of who they are, you know?
17 Like, not whitewashed. I said, "~~Why don't you worry he's~~
18 [my whole community's] whitewashed?" You know, and I --
19 and Val really didn't want to do it, but he stood behind me
20 and ~~they~~ [we] went in. It took a court injunction five
21 days later they kick us out, but we proved the point.

22 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

23 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** We ~~had mentioned it,~~
24 [eventually] we got our house. And there's now language
25 and culture in there. And you know, ~~I'm head~~ [I ran] for

1 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- to me myself, my
2 own personal thought is, it all ~~blows~~ [boils] down to
3 racism. That's the bottom line for me then you know?

4 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** M'hm.

5 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** 'Cause ~~we're~~
6 ~~finally getting new stuff right now~~ [up where we live] the
7 town, it's a big Bible belt from one county to --

8 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** M'hm.

9 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- the three ~~other~~
10 [hundred] kilometres. It's different from all that earlier
11 in this world.

12 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** M'hm.

13 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** And it's very
14 racist. And we're all prejudice. And there's no
15 community, yeah. I think that's -- that's ~~the whole~~
16 [Episcopal] church, Catholic church -- all these different
17 churches and it's a Bible belt. And oh yeah, ~~I've~~
18 (~~indiscernible~~) [Love your neighbours, love yourself]. But
19 ~~I see it straight up like I said,~~ [I used to go to church
20 I'll -- I'll (~~indiscernible~~) ~~the~~ [was raised a] Catholic,
21 but I never practised my mom and dad because the Native
22 church, no you should not give him - God bless him and all
23 that. (~~Indiscernible~~) listens to religious organization.

24 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** M'hm.

25 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Yeah. Kind of

1 [backed away] (indiscernible), and how do we -- I -- I
2 don't even know how to do that, but a lot of culture, that
3 was (indiscernible). I still -- and if I didn't know about
4 (indiscernible) and that (indiscernible). I never --
5 (indiscernible). It's not like I ever did though. And
6 that's my -- my bottom line for --

7 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

8 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- if you wanted to
9 leave the men as (indiscernible). (Indiscernible) men
10 (indiscernible) that's growing up with this murdered
11 people, whatever. ~~I'd like to hear what they did,~~ [I was
12 at a hearing the other day] the guy I mentioned there.
13 Those people ~~with her,~~ [that are] killing off our women.

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

15 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** What the hell? I'm
16 not (indiscernible). I'm -- I'm (indiscernible) chopped
17 somebody's neck (~~indiscernible~~) [she only weighs 100
18 pounds]. And this television, I - I have to agree with
19 what (indiscernible) said the other day, it's
20 (~~indiscernible~~) [cowardly] very (~~indiscernible~~) [cowardly].
21 But -- and myself, that's ~~happened~~ (~~indiscernible~~) [kinda
22 shrug things off, kinda non-chalantly]. But -- but ~~out~~ [I
23 was] in the military too, but I -- ~~I would~~ (~~indiscernible~~)
24 [worked with German people, I worked with]. African
25 Canadians, Americans whatever you call them. And every

1 nationality, but I never once was prejudice to them
2 (indiscernible) that --

3 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

4 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- blah, blah,
5 blah, blah. Not (indiscernible) there, but I'm never,
6 never. I said, and -- and Indians, it had a lot of
7 Indians. I know a lot of Italians I don't like, but you
8 know, all the -- they're all the same. No, I don't pay
9 (indiscernible) everybody is (indiscernible) as I. A happy
10 world. (~~Indiscernible~~) [Let's all get along together,
11 let's all sit at a table and] ~~and it's all (indiscernible)~~
12 ~~w~~ed break bread together. So we went -- you're from
13 Germany, you're from France, you're from -- and that's all
14 fine and dandy. That's (indiscernible) [chit chat, you
15 know]. That's the kind of person I am though.

16 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

17 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** And all my friend
18 (indiscernible) ahead, that's racism. That doesn't -- this
19 doesn't -- the system had nothing to do with racism, but
20 this -- my bottom line is racism. And like this year, last
21 year, after it's -- Native status, her -- her sister's
22 (indiscernible). ~~It's not -- and that's a (indiscernible).~~
23 (~~indiscernible~~) [Once you marry this white guy, you're no
24 longer an] Indian. ~~It's one Indian, oh,~~ [She was born
25 Indian, Hello] I mean how are you going to -- just

1 (indiscernible) [you're not Indian any more, I'm sorry].
2 There's not many of them (indiscernible) so you
3 know, (indiscernible). Like I said, they don't belong with
4 us no more. It's all racism. And even some of the
5 celebrities from T.V. it seems like -- I (indiscernible)
6 [want a] tax cards. (Indiscernible) I want that card, you
7 know? That (indiscernible) you know I said, it kind of
8 (indiscernible). Laughingstock they put national
9 television at least come up with this, you know? And
10 that's the national media though. (indiscernible) ~~all~~
11 ~~Mexico~~ (indiscernible) [Live in our shoes there buddy and
12 we'll see how Indian you] want to be.

13 That's the thing about this whole thing,
14 racism, eh? By the time I was ten, my father had
15 (indiscernible) T.V. I was 16, 17 years old when he got a
16 T.V. And I used to watch old cowboy and Indian shows. Now
17 ~~you knew which one was~~ [I always root for the] cowboys
18 'cause they always won, you know? Now it's (indiscernible)
19 cowboy. Come on, get that (indiscernible) [Indian].

20 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** The --

21 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** (Indiscernible) you
22 know? But I ended up (indiscernible) the rest of it there.

23 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** [Bonnie], Valentino I
24 kind of wanted to ask you -- I know that the -- the murder
25 of your sister ~~in this situation~~ [and your sister-in-law]

1 hasn't ~~getting~~ [been] solved. Is it something you hope
2 that this Inquiry, the commission will look into so that
3 you -- you will get an answer to what happened to her that
4 night?

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** I don't think
6 ~~that's~~ [you guys] -- have the mandate to do that. ~~They~~
7 ~~know where to look into~~ [how are you going to look into
8 individual cases?] -- into these cold cases.

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** The -- m'hm. Yeah.

10 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Right? I understand
11 right? Looking at all the systemic and (indiscernible) --

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

13 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- (indiscernible).

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** You have to come
15 and --

16 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** No, I'm not -- we
17 didn't come to the Inquiry for you guys to solve it.

18 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Yeah. No.

19 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

20 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** We came so that they
21 recognize ~~that girl~~ [Beverly].

22 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

23 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Because we have been
24 trying to get her recognized for a long time.

25 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

1 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** But because she
2 crossed that border --

3 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Right.

4 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** (Indiscernible)

5 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- you know, that's
6 what I was told, you know? She left her community and she
7 was killed in the United States? Well, that's -- that's
8 not our borders, right?

9 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

10 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** So we don't recognize
11 borders you know.

12 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

13 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** That's also when I
14 took my ~~when~~ ~~when~~ (indiscernible) standards [away the
15 ladies status because she married a non-native], ~~I should~~
16 ~~(indiscernible)~~ --

17 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

18 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- ~~and they sent me~~
19 ~~to~~ [and the same for] that border, you want to get across a
20 border? ~~You're not leaving anymore~~ [you're not Indian no
21 more]. You look up over here.

22 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah.

23 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** You think there's
24 a --

25 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** No, we all keep

1 pushing and hoping at least, you know here with the autopsy
2 reports, you know? Because the -- the three people that
3 were with her that weekend, they've all died. Like I said,
4 they've all -- like I said, if they were involved with her
5 death, karma ~~will come~~ [got them].

6 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** M'hm.

7 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** That's how we look at
8 it, because not one of them would speak to the family. So
9 they -- if -- if they know what happened to her, they
10 did - they took it to their graves with them.

11 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

12 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** But maybe we'd just
13 like to know the truth --

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

15 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** -- of what actually
16 happened.

17 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Having the autopsy
18 report and --

19 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yes, even that, right?

20 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

21 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Because like I said,
22 maybe -- we put it and we have that ~~energy~~ [image] in our
23 face all the time ~~to her~~ [in our head of . . .].

24 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

25 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** ~~And~~ identify her body

1 in morgue. You know, we -- we see that.

2 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Every now and then
3 in the community somebody would come up and say, "Did you
4 ever find out what happened to your sister?" "No." "~~See,~~
5 ~~you should talk to~~ (indiscernible). [You should talk to so-
6 and-so, so-and-so, they might know something about it.]
7 ~~That guy might know something about her.~~" And [then we go
8 to so-and-so] indiscernible) don't have any -- any memory
9 of that because --

10 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah.

11 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- (indiscernible).
12 And trying (indiscernible) you know, I see. Yeah. You
13 know, we know -- we know about that. We heard that --

14 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** M'hm.

15 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- she was hit on
16 the head with something. Then another -- (indiscernible)
17 somebody (indiscernible) [she fell off the] back of a
18 pickup truck. Found her in the ditch and somebody helped
19 her up, took her to the hospital and they took off. I
20 don't know if the guy that took her to the hospital ~~is the~~
21 ~~one that~~ (indiscernible) dies [one of the guys] or I don't
22 know.

23 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah.

24 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** They ~~pulled~~ [took]
25 her ~~at~~ [to the] hospital. When she died from

1 (indiscernible). No shit. If you found her in the ditch
2 and (indiscernible) put her in a wheelchair. And the
3 (~~indiscernible~~) [the guy in the] truck took off. And you
4 know, it was in the newspaper, ~~and they said respond~~
5 ~~(indiscernible)~~-[this is what this guy looks like, a
6 composite from the police]

7 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah.

8 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- (indiscernible)
9 the cop, and I've never --

10 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** (Indiscernible)

11 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** -- ~~not~~
12 (indiscernible) [nothing ever come of it].

13 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Yeah. Is there
14 anything else you would like to share?

15 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** I don't have
16 (indiscernible).

17 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** No.

18 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Okay. Okay. Thank you
19 for your courage today. If your voice -- I think you --
20 your voice has been heard. Your story has been told. You
21 -- yeah?

22 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Thank you. That's --

23 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Thank you
24 (indiscernible).

25 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Bonnie

1 (indiscernible) tell me her rock, but I don't perceive
2 [consider] myself as a rock, but she had been right there
3 beside me for 35 years. And you know? And sometimes I
4 have to put her in line, but that's (~~indiscernible~~) ~~work if~~
5 ~~you can get it~~ [we keep it off the record] (laughter).

6 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Yeah, right. Yeah.

7 **MS. DARIA BOYARCHUK:** Thank you very much.

8 **MR. VALENTINO POLCHIES:** Thank you.

9 **MS. BONNIE POLCHIES:** Thank you.

10 ---Upon adjourning at 12:36 p.m.

11

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

March 8, 2018