National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Truth-Gathering Process

Part 1 Statement Gathering

Edmonton Inn & Conference Centre
Edmonton, Alberta

November 7, 2017

Statement - Volume 79
Doris Gratton

Statement gathered by Frank Hope

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NOTE

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Documents submitted with testimony: none.
--- Upon commencing on Tuesday, November 7th, 2017, at 9:35 a.m.

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** I really like your leather jacket.

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** Thank you. My aunty gave it to me.

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** Yeah. I -- I have one -- I have one similar like that too.

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** Yes. If -- when I get out of my depression and get out of my house, I'll start going to the Friendship Centre, and they can teach me beading, and I'll probably use this as a -- put some beads on it because I wanted something --

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** Yeah, (indiscernible).

Yeah, yeah.

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** Like this.

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** Yeah.

**UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** That's nice.

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** Yeah.

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** Okay. Here we go. My name is Frank Hope, statement gatherer. Today is Tuesday, November 7th, 2017, and we are in Edmonton, Alberta, Edmonton Inn and Conference Centre. Today we're speaking with Doris Gratton, and in the room we have a health
support Kate Langham, and the start time is 9:35 a.m.

So we'll start, Doris, what is it that you want the Commissioners to know?

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** Well, first of all, tán'si, boozhoo, hello. As a survivor, I want to share my stories, and I'm hoping it'll help others like me.

Again, thank you. My name is Doris Marie Gratton, and I am a recently reinstated First Nation Aboriginal Cree woman from the Driftpile First Nations, and I'm a third-generation residential school survivor, which my grandparents Emma and Albert Noux (ph) attended.

Let me begin with my parents. My father is a Métis from North Battleford, Saskatchewan. His mother was disowned from her family because she made children with an Indian. When they divorced, they sold the farm and moved to Edmonton. This is where he met my mother, a Treaty Cree woman from Driftpile First Nations who had been given to a woman from Groussard [sic], Alberta, to be raised because her biological parents had too many mouths to feed, and it was their hope that she would be safe from having to go to residential schools.

So as you can see, my conflicts and burdens began before I even arrived at the Royal Alex on [birthdate] 1972, here in Edmonton, Alberta. Both families agreed that if I was to succeed, we must work together to
show me their ways, but the hatred proved to be overwhelming, and my father became a terrible alcoholic and severely beat my mother on a daily basis. We were constantly moving, and mom kept making more sisters, and we lost one due to crib death.

Many times, my mother tried to take us and run, but he found us. I remember when I was 4 and we were hiding at my auntie’s house, and my grandmother just finished telling us or bedtime stories, and we settled in for the night, when my mother heard a noise, and she said, stay here, and ran upstairs. I was so scared and she was taking too long. I slowly crept upstairs to find my father with a knife and my mother in a chair with her head back, and she screamed, go back downstairs. I screamed, no, Daddy, I love Mommy, please, Daddy, no. He grabbed me, and we ran out, and he threw me in the car and told me he loved me, and then the lights came and they took me back home to my mother.

We moved again to High Prairie, Alberta, to my mother's adopted mother's house. Shortly after, my father found us, and again, Mom refused to go with him, and he stabbed my grandmother for protecting my mother. So back to the city she came, and these people came and took me and my sisters away and put us into foster care.

My father's mother got me out, and my
mother's mother got the baby out, but the two sisters would
still be there until Mom would finish what they needed her
to do. This is where she met my dad, [Step-father]. He
helped Mom get a lawyer, and she got us back home. He
helped us rebuild as a family. Mom said she was a hippy
who had found her military brat. He became our protector
and raised us girls to educate our mind.

I started school here in Edmonton, not like
every other child. I was strapped for stealing money from
my parents to buy crayons because I didn't want the
24-pack; I wanted the 64-pack. So at 5 years old, I was
strapped. Nobody'd ever laid a hand on me before. I had
this man strap me, and then he shamed my mother. My mother
kicked my butt literally all the way back home, and then
when my dad got home, I got spanked again. I can honestly
say I had never broken the law stealing. I never stole in
my life, as I made sure that nobody would ever strap me
again.

My next experience was in Grade 4. My first
day of class at a Catholic school here in Edmonton, the
teacher asked me, if there's one ounce of Indian in your
blood, please stand at the front of the class. There was
about four or five of us. She began to say that we
belonged at the residential school, not in hers to burden
her students and her school, for them to beware because we
would only become drunks and gamblers playing bingo and not home taking care any of children. She said we can't be taught. I will always remember the smile of that day wiped off my face and replaced with tears. That lasted, yes, even until today.

I remember going home and crying to my mother, who walked me back, and we got a half-hearted apology. Mom and Dad tried to reassure me that she was wrong and I could prove her wrong by learning their ways and succeeding. This is when they quit their party and joined AA.

By Grade 7, I failed my first year because an uncle had raped me, and I didn't want anyone to know, so they put me with a counsellor and a resource teacher, who would sexually assault me and my sister [Sister 1]. He was dismissed and nothing was said. I remember him saying to me, don't bother telling anyone, no one's going to believe a dirty squaw.

By Grade 9 with the help of a great drama teacher, she helped me get back on track. By the time I graduated, I was two years into Air Cadets. I won concerts as an outstanding flutist. I'd become a concession supervisor at the racetrack, and I won outstanding player on my volleyball team that I played with for four years. I made records on track and field, and I was an all-star
player for my community league I played for four years.

But it was also this time that my mother got terribly addicted to pills. When she let her brother hire me to clean his apartment one night, I ran late, and I stayed in the spare bedroom, and when he came home, he violently raped me, and he kept coming around, and I couldn't take it. I found my mom's pills, and this is the first time I almost took myself, but my cousin Brenda found me and saved me.

(Indiscernible) tried to join me with a bunch of nuns, but I wouldn't stay, so they sent me to my mom's biological parents. While I was there, my aunty who was a social worker took me for a drive and told me if my grandfather found out, it would kill him, so I agreed to go to RCMP and drop charges. I didn't want to be responsible for killing my grandfather.

This is where I started drinking, just on weekends when Mom and Dad didn't know. I never meant to hurt them. They let me move back home, but I started skipping class, and when my mother got a letter home, they freaked out, and I was sent to live with my biological father on an acreage near Onoway.

After a couple of weeks, he convinced me to have my sister come too. Within a month, he was raping us both. One morning, I ran away and came to Edmonton and
became the ward of the court, and they helped me get my own place, and all I had to do was just get a job, so I did. I worked two shifts at a 7-11 as a cashier, but the boy I was dating became addicted to cocaine and started beating me, and I lost my place because the landlords ran off with rents and damage deposits. I moved in with my aunty and got a job with her and Mom at Crown Star. This is where I met my husband. At 18, I married a Muslim refugee from South Carolina, and because he was working illegally here in Canada, he was deported, and we left for South Carolina.

The good: My son the Creator gave me one day, truly a blessing in the midst of such darkness. The bad: The loss of my daughter due to a beating I received one night. She had heart failure, and we removed her and held a service. The ugly: My front teeth are dentures due to a car accident I was in with my husband. He warned me, don't you say it again or else, and I meant it, so I said it again, and he hit the brakes. He was probably doing about 180, and I hit the dash three times. I was like the elephant woman, spitting out blood and teeth, and I couldn't breathe, all this because his old stomping grounds got him addicted to crack, and he want wanted to kill me to cash in our life insurance policy so he could raise our son himself. He just got out of prison for murder.
I know I wanted to come home a month after our (indiscernible). I got stuck there for five years. After my last beating, I grabbed my son, and I jumped out the bedroom window, and I went to the Burger King and called the police officer, and he -- he knew my husband, and he gave me a card. He took me to the local women's shelter, and we got my tickets, and I was finally coming back to Canada.

Dad picked us up from the airport, and he cried because I still had bruising on my face and swelling, and my teeth were gone, but the shock on how I looked, it overwhelmed him. I hugged him, and I introduced him to his grandson.

It was a struggle when I first got home. At first, I drank, but Mom found me and told me to smarten up for the boy's sake. One day, I walked with my son and thought about jumping off the Beverly Bridge, but after talking about Mom, she referred me to her therapist.

After some healing, I put the boy in day care and I went back to school. I got my marketing and management diploma, and when I finished, I had found an ad in the Edmonton Journal. I got a job, and I was hired as a manager at a local escort company. My city supports legalized prostitution and even human trafficking, and so I was, what, 21? I had gotten a job at a local escort
company. They wanted to relocate me to Las Vegas to run one of their businesses there, but I had gotten a call from the day care that I needed to pick up my child because a child had been killed in the playground. I never sent him back, and I quit that job, and after a while, I got Mom to watch the boy and I went back to school again, and I got my home health care assistant diploma. Shortly after, I was hired by the General Hospital.

On my last shift, I had a patient go into a seizure in the middle of a lift, and when I went to unhook the harness, we lost both our balance. With me under her, we fell onto the foot rest of the wheelchair. The next day, I could barely walk. I lost my career, and I got nothing from WCB, and Boardwalk Landlords took off with the rents, and then at the end of our court dates, they said that I owed them $3,000.

I needed help with damage deposit, and no one would help me. It was hard being a single Native mother on welfare with an infant, so I went and found my friend, and she introduced me to her friends, otherwise known as johns, who would help me with cash. I could raise money for housing or for me and my child, for food. I remember stopping before I started to pray to Creator to keep me safe: I've got to make it home to my son.

Finally, I got the money for damage deposit,
but due to a cracked foundation, it flooded three days of rain, and the slumlord wouldn't give me back my damage deposit, so back to the streets I went. During this time, my son and I ended up in the doctor's suffering from mildew and mold-poisoning. It almost killed us.

When I got the money, I put us up in a hotel that gave us lice because the sheets were dirty. Then one night, I had a john take me to the outskirts near Sherwood Park, and he stabbed and raped me and left me to bleed to death. I spoke with Creator, and I begged, don't leave me, my son and I, and I walked back to the city and found the Crossroads van and reported my bad date.

Then when child tax came in, I took my son and I moved to Prince George, B.C. I am a survivor of a serial killer my city will not acknowledge or bring in front of justice. I live and was told my life don't matter by this government, or that my province does not exist. I'm telling you, I exist, and so does my province.

My street smarts failed me. Prince George social services helped me, but we needed -- okay -- but a worker from -- okay, so I've -- I was in Prince George. I started working there, but a worker found me and explained that I fit a description of many girls that are going missing and/or murdered on the Highway of Tears, so he took me to the local Friendship Centre, and that's where I
Doris Gratton joined a group that was trying to heal 13 Native women. My boyfriend/pimp didn't like this because I didn't want to work the streets anymore, so at knifepoint he kidnapped me and my son and took me to the Greyhound bus station into Fort St. John.

We spent the week in a hotel room with him beating me so when I went to the women's shelter I wouldn't say nothing. My getting a place set off a red flag for police because my mother had filed a missing person report. When the police came to check on me and my son, they didn't find my doctor hiding in the closet. He told me to call my mother and just left. My doctor and I got into another fight, and then he went to the kitchen and grabbed a knife and came and said, If I'm not going to love you, no one will, and he cut my throat. I was in shock, but I managed to grab a chair, and I threw it through the window, and I screamed for help. A neighbour jumped in and chased my attacker out of the house.

The police came and took some pictures and sent me to the hospital. They wanted to stitch me up, but I didn't want the scars, so I grabbed my son and I called my mother from Edmonton from a pay phone, and her and Dad came and got me.

So now I'm back in Edmonton, scared my attacker will find me. I went to the local shelter, and in
a week they got me a place with Capital Regional Housing. At first, I didn't want it because it was so close to the ave, and I was scared that my attacker would find me again. They promised me that if I paid my rent for a year straight, they would let me relocate. I've been there 15 years, and every year I've asked, and every year I've been denied.

I've watched others become home-owners, and I'm still renting, struggling to rent. It's crushing to me because I'm First Nations, and I'm entitled a house, and I can't get a house in my city because Edmonton won't recognize Papaschase Nation and give us back our reserve we had here at one time because my Grandma [Grandmother 1], she told me when I was a little girl that Edmonton should acknowledge and we do have reserve, but what they wouldn't acknowledge those people down at the hill and say that was a reserve. Instead, they broke them up and chased them away, and it hurt people like me that were coming up, and I can't just can't see myself being a home-owner.

I started programs for myself and my son. We became proud members of the White Buffalo Drummer Dance Society at the Friendship Centre here in Edmonton. Also, my son enrolled at the Ben Calf Robe School, and I took parenting classes. I found my culture healed us, and they gave me the strength to say stay off the streets, and I no
longer -- no longer had the fear of being found.

But I had a relationship that ended badly, and I took it pretty hard, and I found myself partying. I got terribly addicted to crack. They sent me to Calgary because I couldn't find anything here in Edmonton to sober me up, and when I got back, I got a job, but I started getting sick. My sister worked at Northeast Hospital, and she red-flagged my name, so when I came in for help, they treated me like an addict and just heavily medicated me and just sent me home.

After a year and a half, it took my liver and my pancreas swelling and almost bursting until they finally booked me in for an emergency surgery and removed my gallbladder. Because of this, I got pancreatitis and was told not to drink alcohol, that it could kill me. It's been six years, and I don't drink, and I haven't touched crack.

Once I healed, I tried to go back to work as a customer service agent for Cingular Wireless, but because of 9/11 and having to write memos on customers' last words, I quit.

I then went back into the nursing, and I got a job with Nurse Next Door, which lead me into being a private home care nurse, but I found myself getting sick again, and I lost my job.
That's when they found cervical cancer. I had tested positive for HPV and realized I had never been vaccinated for it, which I feel I should have been.

So they booked me for surgery to remove everything. Then they put me in a bladder mesh sling, and I've been in severe pain ever since. The doctor, she said she would remove it if there were any problems, but she just won't see me anymore, all this while my mother was dying from Stage 4 colon cancer.

I remembered -- I tried to reach out for help, but I got a printout of a resource list from 211. The Primary Care Network told me to exercise more; this will solve my problems. So I found myself slipping back into a depression.

So now my son takes care of me, and I get $600 from Alberta Works, but I feel it's just not enough. They also cut my health benefits because -- because I became First Nations. I used to have both -- like, my First Nations was my primary coverage, and then the Province was my secondary coverage, but they're refusing to that you have both coverages, you can only have one coverage, so now I'm down to the one, where First Nations coverage will cover certain things where the Province doesn't cover certain things, so I would like to have them both back.
I'm having a hard time finding a family doctor so that I can get help with getting my -- my bladder mesh sling removed. I'm scared of losing my place, and every morning I wake with the fear of an eviction notice on my door. I am refused with other social housing because I am with Capital Region Housing. I am forced to live with mold and mildew and asbestos in the walls and under the flooring. It killed my poor dog Two-Sock. There is no social housing for First Nations people here in Edmonton.

I want to go back to school, but Student Finance wouldn't help me. They told me to go to Indian Affairs, and after five years when I finally got reinstated as a Bill C-3, my mother's band -- see, that's changed because my mother's band has accepted me, but they will not accept my son because my son has a Muslim name, so we're having -- we're waiting with membership.

So I feel my band will never be helpful to me or my sisters. I can't get my $5 a year to live off, or I can't get help with housing, and no help with my education. If I try to go back to the streets for money, I could be killed, and the police say I don't matter, and my son will never get his answers.

I believe it's going to take a few different organizations to lead this inquiry. I believe strengthening our First Nations resources with being able
to provide necessary healing and options are very important. We need to strengthen First Nations mental health resources for all with a cultural healing centre that practices cultural ceremonies so that we can work on healing as a nation; it -- that it have proper staffing to help with work with local police who will refuse to leave the files unsolved and who will reassure us our lives matter and give us our answers; that the courts will not revictimize families with personal photos of body parts to the public; resources like The Crossroads van and the Hope Missions truck will receive more funding because their help helps; that RCMP investigate any and all reports of bad dates that girls will fill out voluntarily with the Crossroads and Hope Mission vehicles.

Again, my killer is still out there, and girls are still going murdered and are missing, so I'm here today in hopes that we find a way to help our women and their families.

I would like to see the continuation of involving the victims and their families with the inquiry so we can stop all the assumptions. We can learn what brings them out there and what resources they need to turn their lives around before they go murdered or missing; recording their stories so we may find our answers to solving what has clearly been a disaster for far too long.
Thank you for being an ear to listen. It's my hope that my story can be of help in helping others so they don't end up like I did, in the field stabbed and dying and told my life don't matter.

I ask the Creator to give you all strength along your way because our lives depend on it, that we all can walk away from this inquiry knowing where to start and get it started right away, not years from now.

Mr. Trudeau has recently stated that you can't throw money at the problem, but we all know it's going to take money to fix years and years of trying to destroy a nation. I watched as he's giving money to this and to that, and yet I see nothing happening since the pre-inquiry. It's crushing for me; this, I know.

Again, mercy, and thank you for letting me speak today. 

Hai, hai.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Thank you, Doris. That was a very thorough statement you gave. What a -- a lot of history there.

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yes.

MR. FRANK HOPE: A lot of history, a lot of detail, so I just want to go -- I just want to backtrack, and just -- there's some points that I -- I have some questions that I put down. I just want a little more clarification into some of these time periods.
MS. DORIS GRATTON: Okay.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Because you went through these in -- that's a lot of years and experiences --

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Right from when I was born.

MR. FRANK HOPE: -- so a little more clarification. So let us go back, start with your grandparents. Did your grandparents go to residential school?

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yes. Alberta, at M and U (ph), yes, and some of my older aunties and -- and uncles, they went, but my mother -- because they had 13 to 15 children, and after 13, they started giving the children away. At that time, the -- they always said my mom was given up for adoption, but there's no legal paperwork or nothing. My mother was -- you know, they -- you know, there was another Native lady that lost a child, and she's a great woman, so they're, like, would you take our baby? We have too many babies to feed, and [Foster Parent] was like, yes, and so she took and raised my mom. Yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: So your mom and your dad, also, were in the residential school system?

MS. DORIS GRATTON: No, no. They weren't, know, because they -- my mom went to Catholic schools here in Edmonton because they took her from High Prairie and
brought her to Edmonton to raise her here so she wouldn't have to go to residential schools, so she went to a Catholic school here in Edmonton, and that's why I went to a Catholic school here in Edmonton because my mother had gone to one, so I was able to get in on her paperwork.

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** Okay. So -- and, also, you mentioned that you -- you were put in foster care. Do you remember how old you were, and for how many years were you in the foster care system?

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** Well, my parents got divorced when I was, like, 4 to 5 years old. That's when they were getting divorced, so it would have been around that time. I wasn't there long because once my grandmother found out that the -- us girls were taken away because of the -- all the violence, because she knew that my parents were fighting, and she came to get me right away. I was one of the -- well, I ended up being -- well, I'm the oldest out of my four sisters, so she came to get me right away, and my mother's adopted mother went and got the baby, so it was [Sister 2] and [Sister 1] that would stay in the foster -- and Mom had to do her courses. Once Mom was done the courses, then she would get the other kids back. Like, they had to quit drinking, because that was a big problem was the drinking because it brought on the fighting, you know, and my parents were very violent. Like, you know, at
first when they come home, it'd sound great because, you
know, they were playing their instruments, they were all
singing. It was a good time, and then it -- then time
would go on, and then they -- you'd get loud and you get
ugly. The fighting would start. You know? And then there
would be times -- you know, like, there was times
like -- I'd look outside my door, and I got hit in the head
with a beer bottle flying down the hallway because she was
trying to hit my dad, who was trying to run to the room,
but instead I popped my head out, and I got hit with the
bottle, and that's what started the whole thing was they
had to take me to the hospital, and I had to -- they had to
explain -- because my dad wouldn't lie. You know, my dad,
he's a very honourable man, and he comes from a very
honourable family, and I grew up watching my dad get beat a
lot trying to save us girls from my biological father, and
a part of me wanted my dad, but I knew my dad was bad.
There was times I'd go on my visitation rights, and I knew
that my dad was a bad dad because my step-dad was showing
me what a good dad was, so I knew when I went with my real
dad, he was being bad, but I never wanted to tell my mom
because then I wouldn't get to see my dad, and I loved my
dad, so -- yeah, it wasn't good.

MR. FRANK HOPE: M'hm.

MS. DORIS GRATTON: And I kind of -- I
still -- you know, like, they were always there for me. Like, I always thank the Creator for bringing me my dad because he was always there for us girls.

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** M'hm.

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** Yeah.

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** So just tell me a little more, like, when -- when your grandmother came and got you out of foster care, tell me about that experience, living with your grandmother.

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** It wasn't for very long because my mom had met my dad, and my dad got my mom a lawyer, and my mom was able to work on doing what she needed to do to get us back, so I wasn't with her for very long until my mom took us back, and my dad, you know, got us into school, you know, like, got us into, like, the community league, into programs. I went into the -- my sister ended up drowning in the pool one night when we were being babysat, and it encouraged my parents to put us in with the YMCA, and we learned how to swim, and eventually I ended up becoming a lifeguard, following through with that, and I was actually trying to be in the Olympics because I knew the Olympics were going to be in Vancouver, and I wanted to be in the Olympics as a platform diver because I had a teacher in Grade 6 that -- his sister was an Olympic volleyball player, and that's what got me into volleyball,
it's because I had come through this -- like, teachers were very influential in my life. I was very blessed to have some good teachers that -- that introduced me to there is a better life, you know, with -- there's power in educating. I think that's why I've always educated myself, but I think with the racism and the -- like, the teachers -- like, that teacher I met in Grade 4 there, [Miss M.], she really traumatized me to where, yes, I wanted to prove her wrong, and I would succeed, but I never went to any of my graduation ceremonies because I was giving into -- I didn't want to go and gloat about how I was right and I could prove her wrong, so I never went to any of my ceremonies to -- because for me, it was, like, I done -- I'm done, it's done. You know, I don't need to go to your ceremony and get my piece of paper. You know, I think we get so caught up on pieces of paper that it's left people suffering because I think people -- there's good people who can help us, but because we had our -- our hands tied in getting that education to get that piece of paper, now we don't have people there helping people when we could have had people there helping people, but because we rely on a piece of paper, you know, we don't have the help.

But I understand the need for the piece of paper. You know, I've spent a lifetime earning pieces of paper. I've got a booklet at home full of pieces of paper
because they always figured it would be helping me, putting me into programs, because they didn't know what to do with me. You know, I couldn't get the counseling -- you know, I didn't -- I didn't learn until now that the reason why my grandparents were so aloof was because they had gone to a residential school. I -- I'd never -- I hadn't heard -- I only heard residential school once in Grade 4. I never heard about it afterwards until I became older, and then all of a sudden it was a shock to me to find out my grandparents had gone there, and meanwhile I'm having to explain to my son what kind of effect that's had for us in our family. I still try and understand all that myself.

You know, this is the first time I've actually been able to say who I am because for -- since I was born, the government denied that I was even First Nations, and I went to them and begged them at 18 years old saying, I'm First Nations, I want my card -- my treaty card, and they said to me, no, you're not, and I said, no, I am, and they said, no, you're not, and so I had to go find family members in -- in -- who are in politics and say to them, why am I being denied who I am? And they're, like, well, then you need to come with us and join this Bill C-3, and we'll get your name on the list, and we'll work on getting you your rights back.

And it took a really long time, but we
finally got that back, so I got reinstated, and -- and I've
gotten the rest of my family to be reinstated, you know,
and -- but there's still struggles within -- there's just
so much to try to understand when it comes to all of that,
and I can just put it as simple as, you know, like, there's
no resources here in Edmonton for urban First Nations.
Like, you know, I can't go to a First Nations office and
say to them, well, I'd like housing. You know, where's my
housing? Why do I have to go drive four hours away to
Driftpile to get $5 a year to live off of? I don't
understand why my grandparents or my parents, why did
they -- somebody not say to somebody that $5 is not enough
to live off of a year? $5 is a slap in the face to me as a
third -- third-generation, that's three generations of
slapping me in the face and giving me $5 and saying, here,
go live the year. I can't do that off of $5. I can barely
survive the $600 a month I get off of social services. You
know, everybody likes to think social services gives you
all kinds of money to live off of, that you're some kind of
millionaire when you get on social services. I'm telling
you, no, you're not. I get paid three times less than when
I work. I would much rather be working and getting more
money than to sit there and have to beg for scraps. It's
humiliating. It's degrading. It's like I'm taking money
out of people's personal pockets, and then I have the nerve
to watch online about how everybody tells everybody -- you
know, like, they just don't understand.

Like, I tried to say that the reason why I
was out on that corner is because -- and it was true. I
needed money for rent. I needed money for food. I -- I
got into a -- a style of living where I -- if I needed
this, I went and got the money to get that, you know? You
know, not all my dates were bad, but I went through a lot
of bad dates to get that, you know? But it was providing
me a life that -- it was the only resource I was out there
to provide the life I needed just to be able to get by, you
know, to -- to have groceries for the month or my son to
have those diapers or -- you know, I wasn't -- I wasn't
working it to get the -- like, I can understand how some
girls use the drugs to medicate themselves because,
absolutely, you do need the medication. You need the
medication to be -- you think you're tough. You know, I
was tough, and you think you can survive the things that
are done to you and that it's easy. No, it's not.
It's -- it's ugly out there. I can't tell you how
ugly -- how terribly ugly it is out there and what we got
to do in order to get a buck to just try to survive, but I
can honestly tell you, if those resources were properly out
there, if I had the mental resources to help convince me
that I didn't have to go stand on that corner, and I didn't
have to let those people do what they needed to do just so I could be able to survive, if those resources were there, a lot of those women's faces that you see out there probably would be alive today because they wouldn't have the need to go out there and be on the corner. You know?

And that's why I've always been an advocate for shutting down these -- these parlors that the city allows. I worked there. I know my struggles with that. I know -- I know for a fact that that's legalized prostitution, and that's why I'll always advocate to shut those things down because I myself was put in there. I know of buildings here on 118th Ave. where upstairs, they'd have room fulls of girls on mattresses on the floor, selling them -- selling them. A lot -- there was one house that I went there, there was girls coming from that -- that China place, they were bringing them over, and they were selling them out of there, and meanwhile -- and I used to go online, and I used to tell them, shut that place down, and they used to tell me, no, no, it's a business, it's a legal business, and it's, like, no, that's an illegal business masking, you know, as a legal business, and this city allows that, and I don't feel that's right, and I feel that should stop. One day, I hope we get there.

MR. FRANK HOPE: You mentioned your sister drowned. How -- how old was she, and -- how old was she,
and how did -- when she drowned, you were -- you were in
care with your stepfather by then?

MS. DORIS GRATTON: No, no, no. We were
still with Mom -- there's high-rises downtown, and in
between two high-rises, there's a pool, and -- like, the
grown-ups had gone to bingo and left us to be babysat with
the older cousins, and my older cousins had taken us
downstairs to swim earlier in the day, and -- but we had to
go upstairs and have something to eat and everything, so we
had left the pool and went upstairs, and in the process of
making something to eat in the kitchen, my youngest sister
slipped out of the -- out of the apartment, and she made
her way downstairs to the pool, and, of course, when I
couldn't find her in the apartment building, I knew we had
just come from the pool downstairs, so I had gone down
there, and, like, the way this -- this place is, it's all
glass windows, so when -- I couldn't get in the door
because the door was locked. I went to look in the side
where the glass was, and I could see my sister in the pool,
and there was a man who was getting off the elevator, and I
yelled to him saying that my sister's in the pool and she's
in the deep end, she's drowning, and the man used his key
to open the door, and he jumped in there and grabbed my
sister out of the pool and -- and -- and brought her out
and gave her CPR, and she survived, and -- but that would
lead to us going into swimming lessons and learning how to swim because that wasn't going to happen again. Yeah.

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** And later on, you said you started to get into addictions. When did you start? When did you start...

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:** I was a young teenager, so probably -- well, right after my uncle raped me, I started -- I started drinking. I'd say -- I'd go stay at my friend's place, and there's a few times there I actually came home drunk, and so then my parents became aware of that I started to struggle with drinking, and -- and at the same time there, I had a lot of pressure from school, and I ended up dropping out of -- I ended up doing a lot of skipping school because I was hanging out in the pool halls, making money on the pool tables, and so they sent a letter home telling my mom I was skipping class, and, of course, my mom freaked out, and -- like, she'd always threaten me -- when I was bad, she'd always say to me, oh, I should send you to go live with your father, and because I never knew my father, I said to her, well, maybe you should, maybe it's time I get to know my father.

And so she called him, and that's when he came to get us, and -- well, he came to get me first, and it was probably, like, a week after that he convinced me to go get my other sister [Sister 1]. Yeah. And the one
thing about [Sister 1] and my dad, they ended up having a child. I was at -- I went to Sturgeon High School, and I had a friend at high school there who had got rushed to the hospital because she had -- her appendix burst, so when my sister [Sister 1] got rushed from the hospital, the lady -- the secretary told me, oh, by the way, your sister's been rushed to the hospital, and I said, oh, and she goes, oh, it's like the other lady. I said, oh, well, she must have appendicitis. So I called the hospital to find out about my sister, and they told me that it wasn't appendicitis, that my sister had given birth to a child.

So my father and my sister had made a baby, and when I went back there, and -- my sister tried to raise her baby, and of course, I was threatening to run away at the time. Of course, I was drinking heavily at the time, and -- and I was dating a guy named Darren (ph), and he used to bring me to the city all the time. I could always escape on the weekend and come run to the city, and -- and later on that would help me when I -- when I finally ran away one day. I couldn't take my sister [Sister 1] with me because I didn't even know where I was going to live, so I had to leave [Sister 1] at that house with him, but [Sister 1] ended up giving that child up for adoption, and I think they sold that child for, like, $10,000 to a family, and that's the only thing I knew because I hadn't -- I ran away
after that, and I ended up -- I walked from Sturgeon High
School, and I hitchhiked back to Edmonton where I stayed
with a friend, Sabrina (ph), and then I went to -- I think
it was called Job Corps at the time for youth here in the
city, and that's when they introduced me to a social
worker, and then the social worker introduced me to a
judge, and that's when the judge made me a ward of court,
and they helped me take care of myself. I was able to get
an apartment, get a job. You know, I just wanted to do
what I needed to do just to be able to keep that shelter
and not have to -- because when I was younger, I didn't
want to get into prostitution. I hustled the pool tables.
I took in bottles. You know, I'd search the garbage can
for bottles. You know, I did things where I wouldn't have
to go be a prostitute, so -- but later on in life, by the
time I was 20-something, I finally had to give in to it and
say, you know, it's the fastest way. Like, you know, I
under -- yes, I understand going to work from 9 to 5, but
what people make that month, I can make that in, like, one
day. You know, you make a thousand dollars a day? I can
make that in a day. That money was faster. You know, when
it's not ugly, the money was good, you know, and,
like -- it was giving me something, something that I didn't
have. Like, you know -- I don't know if it's so much,
like, why you need your dad for -- I didn't know a
dor -- well, I knew my real dad -- my step-dad, right? I knew the good, but there was something else I was missing in that because Dad -- because my step-dad, his father, too, comes from a reserve in Manitoba -- from Manitoba, so Dad never told us what his experiences were with his dad coming from the reserve or residential school, so, you know, even my -- my step-dad had a lot of -- where he was closed off. He wasn't very -- you know, I didn't just run and give my dad a hug, you know? I'd tell my dad I'd want to hug him, but I never actually went and hugged my dad. You know, I can't remember the last time my dad and I have actually hugged, but yet we know in our minds we love one another, but we don't just tell each other that or hug each other. We just should know that, right? So it's different.

MR. FRANK HOPE: M'hm.

MS. DORIS GRATTON: You know? And I was searching for something, and being out on that corner gave that to me, but that -- that's because I wasn't mentally healthy. If I was mentally healthy, then I probably wouldn't have been stuck with that.

MR. FRANK HOPE: The sexual -- the issues you experienced, has -- were anyone charged during those...

MS. DORIS GRATTON: My uncle, no. We kept that within my family, because -- it made it hard because
we're family, so it's, like -- you know, first, I would have dinner, and then they would say, okay, well, why don't you go to your [Aunt 1] and go get the -- go get buns from [Aunt 1], and when I would be sent to another family member's house, they would slide him in so he could have his quick dinner and that, and then he could go out, and I could come back. Like, he was never charged -- him and I finally had to talk to each other, and I told him, I said, you know, I can't live like this, you know? I need to know that you know that what you did was wrong, and he said, no -- he goes, I know what I did was wrong. You know -- somehow -- somehow him coming from -- you know, having an abusive father and then him passing that down and -- and me feeling the repercussion of that, you know, we had to somehow make it okay because I was struggling with it. You know, I -- suicide, I was trying to kill myself where I'd never thought of that before. I don't know what came over me, and then that -- that wouldn't be the first time. Like, there's been many times I tried suicide. [Six sentences redacted pursuant to Rule 55]. You know, nobody's -- nobody's come to me and asked me. They all just kind of -- I always say I'm the lone wolf. I'm the lone wolf with the huge family, and that's heartbreaking, and it's so heartbreaking that, you know, when my family couldn't be there, I wish -- I wish my
people could be there. You know, I wish I had someplace
that I could go to, and you know, I could sit there and
say, okay, this is my struggle today. Like -- you know?

Like, I reached out to the Primary Care
Network, and I do their programs and everything, and -- and
I still sit in there locked inside my house. I still don't
have my medication because I've spent five years looking
for a doctor, and all I did was get my uterus and my womb
removed, and I still don't have my medication. I
just -- I'm also -- I'm also -- I'm also frustrated because
we're here again to do this again. Two years ago, I sat in
a room and I told my story in front of all my people, and
now I can't even show my face around the roundhouses or
nothing like that because at one time people respected me
because they didn't know that I was actually a prostitute
on the corner, and then when I went to the pre-inquiry and
I stood in front of a room full of Enoch Cree women and
told them that I was a survivor and I told them my story, I
no longer felt comfortable amongst my people. No, I
just -- I'm just glad to be able to tell my story today,
and I hope that the -- I hope the help comes soon because
we need it yesterday.

MR. FRANK HOPE: It's an important one.

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yes.

MR. FRANK HOPE: (Indiscernible).
MS. DORIS GRATTON: All over the place.

Yeah, I still see people -- like, you know, there was this little girl that I watched from a baby grow up, her friend was murdered about a month ago. They broke in -- they were attacking two doors ahead, but they -- instead they attacked her and they killed her, and it broke my heart because, you know, here I am, two years, fighting to get help for us, and I'm still watching as girls in my neighbourhood are being killed, and I -- and I can't help but think, you know, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry that this isn't -- this isn't stopping, that the help is not here like it should be.

I watched a drunken mother cry over her child's memorial, and I just keep thinking about how that could have been my mother and how I never want that to be me, and that's why I got to share my story because I don't want people to think that, you know, it doesn't happen here because it happens here also. I think this is something that's happening everywhere because I got this side and my Native side that I see this in, but I also see this on the Muslim side that I married into. You know, I see the girls being abused there. My husband was actually supposed to be in an arranged marriage, and as far as I'm concerned, that's an abuse too. That's abusing their women. You shouldn't be forced to have to marry somebody. Like, I
watched my sister-in-law -- I had to go rescue her from her husband trying to beat her to death because, you know, she couldn't be controlled because they're strong people. They're not meant to be controlled like that, so -- and that's why my husband married me because he wasn't going to be forced to do an arranged marriage. He wanted to marry for love, and that's what we -- we started off was, was marrying for love, but -- because his parents struggled with being in camps, like in Germany and London and being in the camps trying to flee Idi Amin, you know, he was raised in kind of -- you know, not a residential school, but he was in camps, which is also a type of -- a genocide or a type of extinguishing nation -- a nation or a culture.

You know, and then -- you know, and then, no -- no healing, no acknowledgment and no healing to begin, so it leaves people, like -- like, my son's never seen his father since he was, what, a year old, and he's trying to go see his father, but because Trump's got in there, now all of a sudden he's changing the immigration thing to where my son can't even go even if he wanted to go, he'd not be allowed to go. So he's not going to see his father, and I don't know when that'll ever happen or -- but...

MR. FRANK HOPE: M'hm. You mentioned -- when you were on the streets, there's two
events that you mentioned. You were stabbed, you were left
to die; another time, you were -- had your throat cut.
There's a lot of violence within that lifestyle you were
living. Can you tell me about the police involvement in
those cases?

    MS. DORIS GRATTON: Well --

    MR. FRANK HOPE: Were those resolved? Was
there a case? Can you tell me about the police
involvement?

    MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yeah. They came
in -- sure. Like, the -- the one where I got my throat cut
in B.C. there, they did come and take pictures and
everything, but I never heard anything about that since,
and I actually --

    MR. FRANK HOPE: How long ago was that?

    MS. DORIS GRATTON: Oh, that happened
back -- because I was in Prince George at the time that we
thought the world was going to end, so that was 1999 to
2000. I was in Prince George at that time, so it would
have been maybe even 2001. I still have my lease that I
was forced to sign while I was under duress, as I was a
kidnap victim. I signed a lease, and it was funny because
as a kidnap victim, when I came back home to Edmonton, and
I was a struggling mother, my first cheque that I ever got
from help from this Province, they actually took half of my
cheque to pay back me leaving Prince George as a kidnap victim. They still charged me one month's rent, they. Still charge -- took my damage deposit to pay for the furniture that was left in the house after I was kidnapped --

**MR. FRANK HOPE:** Who -- who kidnapped you?

**MS. DORIS GRATTON:**

My -- the -- the -- well, my boyfriend/pimp that I was living with. He was my pimp. After the while, it became more he was the pimp than more -- at first he started off the boyfriend, but then he ended up being the pimp because it was violent and abusive and -- you know, and -- yeah, so yeah, I ended up getting -- like, they charged me all kinds of stuff -- okay, and then when I called my parents and I came back to Edmonton, that could be another reason why nothing was ever done because I came to Edmonton, and I never did -- the only reason why I started inquiring lately is because the inquiry. That's the only reason why I called to check on -- check -- check to see what's happening with it, and I know nothing was done.

I actually ran into him up at Northgate Mall about a couple of months ago. My son had gone in, and -- he got hurt on the job, and WCB was not going to pay him nothing and was just writing him off, so my son had, like, four bulging discs, and they found a curved spine, so
they really hurt him bad at work, and we went to social
services to get help, and as we were up there, that
attacker walked into the -- walked into social services,
and of course we spinned on our heels right away because
it's like I didn't want him to recognize me, and we ended
up leaving there, and -- but I told the woman, there's
somebody who called me with regard to this -- this inquiry,
and I told her that information, and she said that she was
going to call and see what was happening with the file in
B.C., so that's the one with -- that cut my throat. My
uncle, nothing ever happened to my uncle.

MR. FRANK HOPE: And -- and the stabbing in
Sherwood --

MS. DORIS GRATTON: The stabbing, okay.
Yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Yeah. Tell me about that
one.

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yeah. I was on the
corner here. I was probably on 118th Ave. and probably
about -- there used to be an old Safeway there, and
there's, like, a drugstore there and a bus stop. Well, I
used to sit at that bus stop every day, and when I -- when
I -- sometimes if it's too dangerous to sit still, I'd
walk, so I would back down to Beverly, walk back up
118th Ave, go down 95th Street to downtown, and then I'd
walk back, and that would be my route whenever I worked, and if I got tired, I sat at that bus stop.

So he picked me up at that bus stop, and we were going to look for a place to do it, and -- and, of course, I go to north side, I'm on the north side, so I go to the north side spots, and one of the north side spots is -- like, you go down Victoria Trail, and you can either go -- at the very end of Victoria Trail, you can go off this side road that takes you to a little opening where there's a park there, and -- and this guy, you know, he didn't look dangerous, you know, but he wasn't really -- like, I was trying to make small talk, that gives me kind of an idea of what kind of character you have, you know, but he wasn't talking. He was just staying focussed. He had no expressions at all to what I was saying, and I was kind of getting nervous about it, and -- but I -- you know, I really wanted the money, so there -- we -- there was somebody at this spot, so we didn't go there.

I ended up taking him to the outskirts, and there was, like, zig-zagging through roads, and I know, like, you go over the railroad tracks, and, like, you go to the right, and there's, like -- I know there's a farmhouse here. It's, like, side roads off in Sherwood Park, eh? And so we get there, and he stops the car, and I'm still trying to make small talk, and he's not
really talking, and he goes and he -- his arms come out, and he starts stabbing me, and I start begging, don't kill me, don't kill me, you know, I have a son, and -- and because the whole -- when I was talk -- I think it was my small talk on the way there because I was telling him, you know, how I was a nurse and how I was struggling, and I -- and -- and I think it was my small talk that maybe even saved me because he didn't -- like, he hurt me, but he didn't kill me, you know? And he raped me, and then he told me get out of the car, so I got out of the car, and he just backed up and drove off and left me there, and -- and I stood there in shock, but it was -- it was winter time, so I didn't have time to really stand around. It was cold, and I knew I was far from the city, so I just got back on those roads and just started walking back, and -- I was staying at the -- the Beverly Motel, and before I went to my hotel room, there was a Crossroads van, and -- and I know the Crossroads van. They tell you that -- like, because you can get, like, socks or gloves or a hot drink. Like, I used to get my condoms there, you know, because I always used protection, so I get my condoms from the Crossroads van -- and Candora actually told me about that. There's a place up at Abbottsfield Mall, Candora Society, that they would give out free condoms, or if I needed to see a doctor because of a bad date or something went wrong,
they would let me see one of the doctors there, and -- so
I -- and Crossroads van, when you talk to them, they have
this thing where you can report a bad date. If you go with
somebody and you have information, I think it was RCMP
actually had this form that you could -- if you had a bad
date, you would go to Crossroads van, they'd fill that out,
and I did that, and I never heard anything else after that
because I -- I ended up getting child tax, which was on the
20th of that month, and I took what I had, and I got us on
a Greyhound, and I got out of the city because I couldn't
work the streets no more, and -- and, you know, I was
already in a hotel room, and the whole reason why I was in
a hotel room is because the slumlord took my -- my -- they
wouldn't give me back my damage deposit, and I needed that
damage deposit to get a place, and yet I couldn't get
damage deposit anywhere.

I had asked family to help me. Family
wouldn't help me. I went to my grandparents to ask them,
but my dad got mad because it was shameful to him to have
one of his daughters, especially the oldest one, be less
than; you know, like, I shouldn't be so dire straits,
especially a baby, you know? But -- and I think they were,
you know, disappointed that I was divorced and, you know, a
single mom, and, like, I failed at everything that I was
supposed to do, and -- and I'd like to say I was sabotaged,
but -- and I worked hard. I worked hard to really try to make it.

You know, I just -- you know, I'm 45 now. I'm just happy to be alive. I've learned how to find pleasure in the little things. I got a great cup of tea with my dog who really, truly loves me. That makes me happy. You know? I -- I find the sales so I can get a big bag of potatoes for ten bucks so I can have potatoes for the month. Like, I -- I work smarter where when I was younger -- you know, it's just that I don't make that a solution anymore. Yeah.

But I really would -- I really don't want the other girls to keep making it one for them. You know, I wish that there was ways that we can convince them not to even be out there, and then this can all stop, you know? I really -- and I do believe, too, if we stop those johns from being out there, you know, we'll stop the girls from being out there because that's what kept me out there was those johns, as long as they're purchasing me.

MR. FRANK HOPE: So that case -- there was never a case, that man that stabbed you?

MS. DORIS GRATTON: The serial killer. No, I just filled out a paperwork with the Crossroads van --

MR. FRANK HOPE: (Indiscernible).

MS. DORIS GRATTON: -- and that was it.
Yeah. No, because I left -- I left the city, I got out of the city, and when I came back, I was scared.

MR. FRANK HOPE: So how -- how would you describe the police involvement and the police support or lack of support --

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: -- over the years? How would you describe that?

MS. DORIS Gratton: Oh, definitely lack of support. I had my -- recently, I had my best friend's boyfriend rape me, and because I waited two days to go and I couldn't do -- they didn't even tell me to go -- like, northeast police station has a hospital right on the other side of the parking lot. They never told me to go there and do the rape kit because it had been two days. He told me he was going to go and arrest that man for raping me in my house, and yet because that man called me a crack-whore, he never got charged. He never got charged. When I called and said, where's my file, what are you doing with my file, they said that they're closing my file, so that man got away with raping me, and now he's telling everybody in Barrhead and everything that, oh, D's a crack-head, you know, she's a crack-head prostitute, you know? Like, what -- you know, it doesn't matter. You know?

Like, you know, it's hard because I -- you
know, his girlfriend is my best friend, and my best friend, I used to have respect from her because she didn't know nothing, but because she met the guy that cut my throat, his sister's on her -- her Facebook, and when she talked to the guy that cut my throat, he convinced her I was just some dirty prostitute, and that's why now my friend doesn't even treat me like she used to because she talked to my attacker and listens to my attacker but doesn't listen to me.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Is this, like, recent?

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yeah.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Yeah?

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yes. Yeah, it's hard. It's hard to live with that, you know, when the only friend you got is one that will side with your attacker and won't side with you, and that's supposed to be your best friend? But that's all I got to talk to. There's nobody else. I called my Friendship Centre. They -- you know what they want to -- do arts and crafts? They want to teach me a language that -- you know -- you know, this whole teach me a language, I -- when I was -- first started school, I spoke fluid French, and I spoke fluid Cree. I didn't even speak English. They sent me to the Glenrose Rehabilitation to speak with a tutor because I stuttered, I stuttered when I tried to learn about the language, so I couldn't really
speak English well, but in that, I lost how to speak. I -- yes, I learned English, but then I lost the French, and I lost the Cree, and now I'm 45 years old, and now they want me to speak Cree? And it's like, who am I going to speak to now? All those -- all those that spoke Cree are gone, you know? I understand, yes, it's important, because if we don't -- if we don't, we'll totally lose it forever. That's why I understand, yes, it's important to learn the language, but -- that's why I say again, you know, like -- I don't know, like -- like, with the healing, you know, like -- I went to a sweat because when my son wanted to know my culture, I went to a sweat, and a sweat actually -- because at the time, I was struggling with the -- the crack, and I wanted to get off the crack because I found out my mom was dying, and I -- I thought, you know what, I've had it. I'm not going to be strong no more. I'm going to find out why my marriage ended. I'm going to find out why these guys are suddenly smoking this crack, and all of a sudden I'm nobody, I'm nothing, because I went and tried it. It was supposed to be a weekend thing, but I tell you, it turned into a year. I lost everything. I was pawning everything in my house. I listened to my son cry in pain because he was so scared that I would die because I was so high that I didn't know -- I didn't think or feel, and -- and I stayed out night after night, got myself into
some pretty bad situations, but...

But it was -- was -- you know, there was
this show, it's called "Intervention." I was watching
"Intervention." I had come home from one of my binges, and
I was sitting there watching "Intervention," and I had a
bunch of the young guys in the neighbourhood. They came in
and they wanted to do what they heard about was an
intervention, and they said they -- they loved [Son] and
they loved [Son]'s mom, and they knew that they didn't want
to see me doing this no more, that they wanted me to be a
good woman, to get clean and get off the drugs and be there
for [Son] and be there for myself, so I think it's not just
the show, but I think those children saved me, and I know
the internet saved me because, as funny as that sounds, if
it wasn't for these internet and these games keeping my
mind occupied, like, my mind would really try hard to
convince me, too, that -- that, you know, you lived a hard
life, things are so bad, you know, don't give a shit, just
go get high; you know, it won't get better.

And, you know, the strength in me because of
my strong people I come from told me no, you know, stay
clean, and every day I fight to stay clean. I still do
every day. You know, I intended to go out there and be
stupid, but I don't want that life anymore.

You know, I survived too many times. Like,
I've had the hospitals treat me like an addict. A year and a half, every day, I was in a hospital, in an ambulance, and -- right after I ate supper, I was calling an ambulance, and I went to Royal Alex hospital every day for a year and a half. It took me dying in an ambulance for them to book an emergency surgery because I was First Nations and they treated me like I was just a drug addict, and yet it wasn't about the drugs. I wasn't there for the drugs. You know, I get better drugs out on the street, you know? I'm not the type of person that go to the hospital for my drugs. I get better drugs out on the streets. I was there because something was seriously medically wrong with me, and because of their ignorance and their racism, you know, I got -- I got a Sinclair that actually, you know, died in Manitoba because of the way the hospitals treats First Nations. Not only did I see that -- family's in Manitoba, but I seen myself in B.C. how First Nations are treated when they arrive at the hospitals, and it's prejudiced, and it's being racist, and, you know -- and yes, I may have been an addict, but I wasn't there for the drugs. I was there for a legitimate reason, and if they would have taken care of that when I first showed up there, it wouldn't have taken a year and a half for me to get that fixed.

But yeah, no, I -- I really haven't had
justice when it comes to any of my attacks. You know? And that's why -- you know, that's why people like me, we need those resources so there is counseling, so there's meetings -- like, I've always liked the -- the support groups. I liked the idea of AA, how you could gather with like people, you know? But I want that with my people, with my culture. I want to be able to gather and share our stories and get strength from one another so we can become strong again. There's too much separating going on and not enough of us coming together, and I think we need to come together to get strong once again. We can help heal one another because that's what it's going to take. It's going to take us working together to heal one another.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay, I don't have any more questions, so I guess we can just start wrapping up, but before I wrap up, I just want to give you just one more opportunity, if there's anything that you may have missed, or you're okay to end right there.

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yeah, I'm okay. I think I've said it all. I've told you everything about myself, you know, and I'm -- and I'm telling you this because, like, you know, I get a lot of people that yell at me all the time because they'll see my name, and they'll see my name as Gratton, G-R-A-T-T-O-N, and -- but -- like, my family name is Noux (ph) or -- Giroux (ph). If I would
sign it Giroux or Chalifoux (ph), then, of course, right away, they'd be, like, oh, she's First Nation, but because my name is signed Gratton, right away, they're like, oh, she's a white lady, then -- and then, what would she know as a survivor? She's a white lady. Because of my name? No. You know, there's so much more to me than this face that you see on the display picture on the internet. There's so much more to my story. You know? And that's why, you know, I feel it's very important because we need to speak to those people that are out there who have survived because that's where we're going to find our answers. We'll find out who's doing this, you know? Like, that's the one thing that really upsets me, you know, after all this time because I was 21 when I started out there. I'm 45 years old now, and not once ever has the City ever admitted that there is a problem with people being murdered or going missing, when I'm going up in that, and I -- I've watched older cousins grow up and die in that, you know, be downtown, you know, and -- and go through all of that, so, you know, we're getting to -- I don't want my son or his children to -- you know because, like, with my son -- like, we had to -- his best friend's -- who I consider like a son because I raised him because his -- his parents ended up having to go to jail, so I pretty much took him in and raised him, too, but
he had found a girl, and him and this girl with the help
from the Province had gotten a place, but the child that
they had, because the -- the house smelled like marijuana,
they took the baby from the boy and his woman, and
they -- about a week later, they got visitation rights, and
the child was sick, and [D.] told her, my son's sick, you
should get him medical help, and a week later, I was
still -- I had to go meet this baby that was just born. I
still -- I was so busy with everything that I finally got a
call. [D.] called the house to tell us that his son had
died while in care, so I was heartbroken because I didn't
get to meet him, and I felt like a grandmother, even though
I wasn't a grandmother, but -- you know, I raised that boy,
and, of course, when you raise children, you often wonder
what those children's children would look like, so I ended
up going to his funeral. I had to smudge that baby because
these kids didn't know much about the culture because us
grown-ups are too busy being stupid and -- and not teaching
the children right, and -- and so they came to me, and I
had to smudge the baby. It's, like, we can't send this
baby out off without smudging him, and from there, because
my son's not making children, you know.

And then I had another friend [S.], his son
was killed in care. His son had -- they were getting him
out of the bathtub, and he fell and banged his head,
and -- and his child was killed.

   So I had children all around me, and, like,
the guy that I was dating who I just currently broke up,
he -- he was put in foster care because his children -- his
parents were doing a lot of drinking and stuff, and his dad
was very abusive, and I was worried about [K.] being
abusive, but [K.] not abusive in that way. He's more an
emotional and mental abusive than a physical abuser, and he
doesn't seek treatment, so he doesn't understand that even
what he's doing is abuse. You know, I -- I love going for
treatment. It does help, and it works for me, and, you
know, I always want to encourage others to do that, too,
you know? But I couldn't get him to do it.

   So I'm still an advocate for children in
care; one, because my sister, I almost was there, you know,
but because I'm still dealing with people who are dealing
with foster care who have lost children. It affects me,
you know? So I have to be an advocate for them because I
went online there on social media, and I tried to tell
people about that child that was killed in care, and they
actually came after me, and they -- they wanted to know the
name of the baby, who the parents were, they needed to
verify my story, and when they verified my story and found
out everything that I was saying was true, I never heard
from that politician again. Because the children were
young teenagers, they just kind of hush-hushed it, and -- and nothing was ever heard from again, but I will always be an activist for that child because I had to smudge that child, and the day I have to bury a baby is the day I'm never going to shut my mouth because that child should not have been killed in care. As far as I'm concerned, that child should not have even been taken. It was taken over the smell of marijuana. There was no actual marijuana at the house. There was no child at the house that they were there. It was just somebody, you know, was new to the job and, you know, this is what the rules are, and they just took the child, you know?

But the thing that that I'm upset about is that lady, she's still caring for other children. Those -- what children were there weren't taken out of the home. They continue to put children in her care, and she's never had any kind of repercussion for killing that child, and that -- that still what upsets me today about that, about how that foster care system is -- is a tragedy. Like, it really needs to be looked at and see where the problems are and what solutions we can come to to help that, you know, whether it's getting the resources together to -- so for mental health or whatever the families need, but I really feel that we should try to keep the children in the home if we can, you know, or put them with First
Nations people, so -- I know children in care need to stop
dying, yeah, and I would love to be able to see that happen
in my time because my grandmother's gone now, my mother's
gone now, so my -- my grandmother didn't even get to see
the -- the story. You know? I got to live to see that
story, but what -- what does that story mean if I'm still
having to live off of $5 a day? What does that mean? You
know? It doesn't mean nothing to me, you know?
"Sorry" -- "sorry" doesn't put a roof over my head. I
still have no housing. I won't have housing, you know? I
sat there and watched how band members and council members
have made other people entitled to rights that I have to
fight years to get, and still, I have nothing, and yet they
have a house, and yeah, I was entitled to that. That's my
right. You know? I don't think it's right.

I think -- I think in school, I should have
been taught Canadian laws, but you know what? I should
have also been taught Aboriginal laws. I should have been
taught my culture in school. I should have had that
option, not only French, but -- and drama and art. I
should have had Cree. I should have had my culture on
there to learn. You know?

And to tell you the truth, you know, I don't
like this word "Indigenous." I'm sorry. I don't. I think
when you say the word "Indigenous," all of a sudden it
becomes the world, and it becomes all sorts of people that you forget about little people, you know, people right here that we need to worry about. Before we can start taking care of everybody else around the world, we need to focus on what's going on here because would knowing it, the ugly's only getting uglier, you know? Nobody likes to talk about it. A lot of it is hush-hush. The only reason why I even talk now, it's because this -- this inquiry, because this -- because people are coming out wanting to know.

Somebody told me that here in Edmonton, that we don't have a problem here in Edmonton, and that motivated me to come out and say, oh, we got a problem here in Edmonton. I've been trying to survive Edmonton for 45 years, so, you know -- and, like, you know, my people, it's hard enough my people make us feel bad because my ancestors, they -- they said -- when their government said, you have to go live on a reserve, my ancestors said, no, no, no, I don't have to live on a reserve. I'll go across the highway, I'll put my trailer up there, and we'll call this town Foss (ph), and we'll start -- we'll start our settlement, we'll start to grow as people, and that's what my grandfather did, so that's where I come from.

So to have people come to me now and try to make me feel bad about -- to label me colonized; okay, I don't know why, but there's something in that word that
really hurts me because, you know, I had to lay my head in
defeat as a child and say -- and say, you know what, I'll
give up my people and my ways to join your school, your
Catholic school, and -- and learn your ways, be what you
want me to be, but don't come to me 20 years later and tell
me that I'm the bad guy because I ran. I ran away from
having to live on reserves, and then I went to conform to
learn, to earn your many papers that you wanted me to learn
because they promised me, if I learned -- if I earned those
pieces of paper, my life would be better, yet my life never
got better, and yet I did what I needed to do, but yet they
weren't doing what they needed to do.

You know, just -- you know just like now, my
social worker, I don't understand why -- like, they have me
right now in a room where, you know, 13 people could
potentially be my social worker. There's not one person
who focuses on me, focuses what my needs are or what I need
to have a better life or live comfortable or safe in this
life. I don't have a social worker to do that to me, and I
want to know why. Is that not what their job is? Like,
what do they do? Because, I -- you know, they don't help
me with housing. I called up there to say, why did you cut
off my medical? They had the nerve to say to me, are you
an Indian? I said, yes. And they said, well, you don't
get medical if you're an Indian. Well, that's surprising
because I only had it for how long before you suddenly
decided -- oh, Ms. Notley says no, so it's no? They just
take things from you. They don't ask you anymore. They
don't ask you if they can cut this off, cut that off. They
just do it. And can you -- can you be against it and say,
oh, reinstate it? No. No. A little man like me, a little
person like me, this is the only time I'm going to have the
erpower to have any kind of change happen, because now it'll
be my -- the people who -- who -- like, my Chiefs, you
know, those are the ones they'll listen to before they get
to somebody like me, and yet they need to. Sometimes we
need to humble ourselves, humble ourselves and go to the
middleman and see what's going on. If you want to know why
those girls are out on that corner, go to that corner and
ask that girl on the corner, why are you out here? You
know? Instead of going to an organization, a head of an
organization who never deals with those people on that
corner, and you're going to listen to them tell you what we
need? No. You go to that girl on that corner and ask that
girl on that corner what she needs because it'll get lost
because there's an assumption being made on what that woman
actually needs. So...

MR. FRANK HOPE: Thank you.

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Thank you.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Thank you. Thank you. So
it's a good place to end right there?

MS. DORIS GRATTON: Yes.

MR. FRANK HOPE: Okay. So just for the record, I want to note that you have made some recommendations in your statement, and that brings the time to 10:55 a.m. Just one second.

--- Upon adjourning at 10:55 a.m.

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Jenessa Leriger, 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.

Jenessa Leriger

March 13, 2018