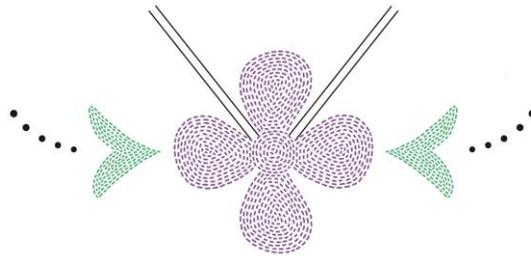


National Inquiry into  
Missing and Murdered  
Indigenous Women and Girls



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  
Edmonton Inn & Conference Centre  
Edmonton, Alberta**



**PUBLIC**

**November 7, 2017**

**Statement - Volume 81**

**Harold Robinson,  
In relation to Julie Cardinal**

**Statement gathered by Alana Lee**

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**INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.**

41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2

E-mail: [info@irri.net](mailto:info@irri.net) – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246

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**List of documents provided by witness:**

1. Article "Alberta: Reconciliation starts. Here's how"  
(3 pages)
2. Photocopy of photograph identifying Julie Cardinal Conklin  
and June Cardinal Conklin, 1947
3. Official Due Book, International Brotherhood of Teamsters,  
Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers

Edmonton, Alberta

1  
2 --- Upon commencing on Tuesday, November 7, 2017 at 12:15  
3 p.m.

4 **MS. ALANA LEE:** So this is Alana Lee,  
5 statement gatherer with the National Inquiry into Missing  
6 and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I am here with  
7 Harold Robinson. Harold is originally from Edmonton.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

9 **MS. ALANA LEE:** And you're Metis?

10 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes. Yes.

11 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah. Born and raised  
12 right?

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes.

14 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay. It's November 7th,  
15 2017. We are currently at the Edmonton Inn in Edmonton.  
16 And you're here on a voluntary basis?

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay. And I understand  
19 you're here to talk about the death of Julie Cardinal?

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes.

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And also about my  
23 uncle who I am named after.

24 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

25 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Can I just start

1 anywhere? Or --

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah. So what would -- what  
3 would you like --

4 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Well, I think,  
5 a couple of things. I -- I'm happy that this Inquiry is --  
6 is taking place. I think it's an important step in  
7 reconciliation and hopefully will be a good opportunity for  
8 healing as we move forward. What I'm hoping the  
9 commissioners will take away from my statement is just a  
10 little bit of insight into the life and death of my uncle  
11 and the life and death of my aunt and how that impacted my  
12 family and me a little bit. So I'm -- I'm named after my  
13 uncle Harold, Harold Emile and he --

14 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Could you spell -- sorry,  
15 don't mean to interrupt but can you spell his last name for  
16 me.

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** That's his middle  
18 name.

19 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Harold Emile,  
21 E-M-I-L-E. And his last name was Pleuz (phonetic).

22 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

23 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** He was a teamster and  
24 he died in the -- in the spring of 1965 and I was born in  
25 June of 1965. And I was named after him and so I actually

1           have a nickname in part because it was a little too  
2           difficult for my granny to call me by her recently dead  
3           son's name. And so I'm known as Buzz, which is also a --  
4           sort of a Metis thing as well though. So -- but this is  
5           somebody who I never got to know and you know, there's --  
6           there's an absence there.

7                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And it was a -- a  
9           story that simply didn't get told in my family. I was told  
10          he died and then found out later how he died which was he  
11          was hit on the head at night and left out in the winter and  
12          froze to death. So, you know, that's -- that's a thing I  
13          think that greatly impacted my family, certainly my granny  
14          and my mom and sisters. So that was just a area of silence  
15          in terms of, you know, who was my uncle and what was he  
16          about. It simply wasn't discussed --

17                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

18                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- which I think is a  
19          shame. And I brought down and I'm hoping that you guys can  
20          see this. It's Harold's official due book. His  
21          International Brotherhood of Teamsters. So he was a  
22          teamster. And this is David (phonetic), March 1965 in Fort  
23          McMurray. So just part of, you know, the opportunity for  
24          me is to commemorate that I had an uncle, his name was  
25          Harold --

1                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- and that he was  
3 loved. The other person I'm hoping to talk about is my  
4 Aunt Julie. And she's here in the -- the middle. I think  
5 this is around 1948, 1950 or so in Conklin, Alberta. And  
6 this is my mom, June (phonetic) who has also passed. But I  
7 remember Julie from -- from my youth growing up. She was  
8 beautiful and high cheek bones and full of life and really  
9 an important part of our family. And I could tell that  
10 just by the way that my mom would interact with her. And  
11 there was just always joking and there was always real  
12 happiness whenever Julie came over.

13                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

14                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I know that Julie, in  
15 the '70s, was homeless for a period of time and that was  
16 tough on my mom to see that. And Julie would sort of drop  
17 in and out and be in various states of sobriety and that  
18 was tough on my mother to see that. And it was tough to  
19 see my mother and how that affected her whenever Julie left  
20 because there was this great concern, you know, where are  
21 you going, how are you going to live and survive?

22                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

23                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** But I remember in  
24 1980, I was 15 and the phone rang at about two in the  
25 morning. And we lived in a -- a two bedroom place in

1 Westmount. And there was four of us sharing one room and  
2 my mom was in the other. But we all came out and Mom  
3 answered the phone and I remember her answering the phone  
4 and then sinking to the floor being told that her sister  
5 had died and then being told that not only had she died but  
6 she had, in fact, been beaten to death, you know, by her  
7 partner of -- of the day. And so that loss, seeing the  
8 immediate impact of that on my mother and then later on my  
9 granny and my other aunt Martha (phonetic) was something  
10 that stayed with me. To see how in a phone call that part  
11 of my mother was just stripped away.

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And the silence that  
14 followed her loss. I mean, she -- you know, we were robbed  
15 of her laughter, we were robbed of her, you know, great  
16 zeal for life. And my mom was robbed of a friend and a  
17 sister. And so that stuck with me and the rest of our  
18 family because we were all there and we saw --

19 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- you know, the  
21 impact of -- of the call. And it just -- it literally  
22 pulled the rug out from -- from my mom. I also remember, I  
23 mean, selfishly, I had been working part time while I was  
24 in school and had -- had a big cheque coming to me --

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- for work that I did  
2                   over the winter. And I -- we had no money to pay for her  
3                   funeral. And so, you know, what money I'd made went  
4                   towards paying for a casket for my aunt. And it was years  
5                   -- it was years before we could even afford a grave stone  
6                   for her. And we finally got around to doing that. It was  
7                   15 almost 20 years after the fact. It was nice to be able  
8                   to do that later. But for a long time, you know, she was  
9                   buried without a headstone. And we knew, you know, the  
10                  spot but there was no plaque there to say she was here.  
11                  She was daughter of and sister of and mother of. And so,  
12                  you know, for me the -- the impact of -- of that was  
13                  personal, it was -- it made me feel powerless but it also,  
14                  in a way, you know, as a 15 year old, you're having to grow  
15                  up pretty quick to deal with these sorts of things. And  
16                  so, you know, I'm -- I'm not sure that, as a whole, you  
17                  know, what other impacts, you know -- my mom went to went  
18                  to residential school. She went with -- with Julie.

19                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

20                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** She didn't talk about  
21                  it. And so, you know, these are things that are there but  
22                  unspoken.

23                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so what I'm hoping  
25                  is that the commissioners will catalogue and help provide a

1 narrative around some of the impacts. And I know they have  
2 a job to do --

3 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

4 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- to connect some of  
5 the dots around some of the, you know, the institutional  
6 failings. But if part of what they do includes impacts on  
7 families --

8 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- and ties that into  
10 some reconciliation, creating an understanding amongst  
11 other Canadians --

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- as well of this  
14 circumstance. And I'm, you know, I've -- I've also -- I'm  
15 a lawyer now and I'm, you know, a lawyer in part because I  
16 had the love of my mom, who died too young as well, but of  
17 cancer. And with that I was able to, sort of, move forward  
18 and know that there was always somebody in my corner  
19 backing me and providing me that strength and -- and  
20 support --

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- which was good.  
23 But, you know, Julie's kids didn't have that.

24 **MS. ALANA LEE:** How many children did Julie  
25 have?

1                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Two as far as I -- I  
2                   know. And -- and, you know, they were robbed of that. But  
3                   they had other supports including my -- my granny who  
4                   basically raised them.

5                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

6                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So, I mean, they're  
7                   actually pretty successful now and doing their -- their  
8                   thing. But I, you know, have to think that they would  
9                   trade in, you know, the love of Granny for the love of  
10                  their mother. And -- and to have both, wouldn't trade it  
11                  in but --

12                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

13                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So one of the things  
14                  that I've also done over the last 12 years or so as -- as a  
15                  lawyer I've been adjudicating Indian residential school  
16                  claims. And so have sat where you are sitting and have  
17                  invited people to tell me their story and have learned from  
18                  that experience that residential schools has done an  
19                  incredible number on our families and our -- and on our  
20                  communities.

21                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

22                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And in my view, I  
23                  think, the work of this Inquiry will expose even more the  
24                  impact of the residential school experience and what it  
25                  means to a community, what it means to a family to take

1 kids away from parents --

2 MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

3 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: -- and how that  
4 destabilization, you know, leads to other horrible things.

5 MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

6 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: So what I'm hoping  
7 is, you know -- one of the things that I -- I learned  
8 through -- through doing that experience is when people are  
9 given the opportunity to reach out, to connect and to have  
10 somebody listen to them that what I've seen is there's  
11 positive things that come out of it. As hard as it is,  
12 that -- that dialogue can be the underpinning of  
13 progressive healing --

14 MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

15 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: -- as we move forward.  
16 So I've suggested that Alberta take up some  
17 responsibility --

18 MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

19 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: -- and establish a  
20 secretariat to catalogue, provide best practices, to give  
21 Albertans and -- whether it's First Nation, Metis, Inuit  
22 or, you know, non-Aboriginal --

23 MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

24 MR. HAROLD ROBINSON: -- Albertans a place  
25 to call or a door to knock on to ask what is going on out

1           there. How can I get involved? What, you know, what --  
2           what can you tell me that, you know, will help me be a  
3           better neighbour.

4                       **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

5                       **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So I've -- I've put a  
6           proposal out there to the minister, Minister Feehan, to  
7           establish a secretariat. And it doesn't have to be  
8           anything huge, I'm thinking two or three people with a  
9           computer and a phone.

10                      **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11                      **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And they can already  
12          be working in government, whose job it is to, sort of, pull  
13          this stuff together and make it available.

14                      **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

15                      **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so far it's --  
16          it's, you know, he's saying, "Well, I've got a lot of other  
17          things on the go." But I think this little thing could  
18          yield major positive impacts and maybe be something that  
19          compliments the work of the Inquiry as well.

20                      **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

21                      **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And I'll --

22                      **MS. ALANA LEE:** Do you want to say a little  
23          more about that?

24                      **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Well, I've  
25          actually, I've got a proposal that I've written down and

1           that I've forwarded to government and I'll leave it with  
2           you.

3                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

4                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So the -- the basic  
5           gist of my proposal is that residential schools was built  
6           on a breach of human rights.

7                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And Section 16(3) of  
9           the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United  
10          Nations says the state has one positive duty. There's a  
11          lot of things the states shouldn't do. But there's one  
12          thing the state should do, which is to protect the family  
13          unit.

14                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

15                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Because the family  
16          unit is the fundamental building block of society. So you  
17          contrast that with what John A. MacDonald said in  
18          Parliament in the late 1800's which is documented in the  
19          TRC report. He got up and I don't know if he was drunk or  
20          not. But it doesn't matter, he was in Parliament and he  
21          said, "If you teach a savage how to read and write, he's  
22          still a savage. You have to take the child away from his  
23          parents and to assimilate them into the ways of white  
24          society." And that's -- I've read it recently so that's  
25          almost word for word what he said.

1                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And of course the  
3 program was built on that dictate of his in Parliament.  
4 And so we have a program, right, that ran for 100 years or  
5 so that took kids away from parents. And what I learned in  
6 adjudicating the residential school claims is there were  
7 three basic questions that people sitting where I'm sitting  
8 now had at me as the listener. The first one was, "What  
9 gave Canada the right to take me away?"

10                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And of course we know  
12 there was no right. That was a breach of their right not  
13 to be taken away. The second thing they would ask is, "Are  
14 you listening?" And they were talking to me --

15                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

16                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- but they were also  
17 talking to the representative from Canada or the church or  
18 even their health support person. Are you listening?  
19 There's a good word in Cree that I recently learned. It's  
20 nistohtamowin. And nisto is three in -- in Cree. So it's  
21 a part of three part component to listening which is  
22 listening with your whole being, being present. Two is  
23 participating. And three is understanding. So reflecting  
24 back and moving --

25                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- which I think is a  
2                   good word. And maybe, you know, the word for  
3                   reconciliation ought to be nistohtamowin if we're going to  
4                   use, you know, our words. And so maybe this could be the  
5                   secretariat for, you know, for nistohtamowin or --

6                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

7                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So it's those -- so  
8                   the second one was, "Are you listening?" And -- and the  
9                   third is, you know, "Is someone going to say sorry?" I  
10                  think we're still needing to recognize, you know, our --  
11                  our -- our lack of presence. And whether it's government  
12                  or today, you know, hearing about things but not doing that  
13                  thing that we as Canadians usually do well which is to ask  
14                  the question, "Are you okay?"

15                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

16                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And to care about the  
17                  response. And to educate ourselves to know that when we're  
18                  asking the question, "Are you okay?" sometimes what you're  
19                  asking is, "Did you go to residential school?" Sometimes  
20                  what you're asking is, "Did your aunt get killed?"

21                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

22                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** "Did your uncle get  
23                  killed? Did you lose a family member before their time?"  
24                  And so educating ourselves and -- and taking the  
25                  opportunity to -- to step up. Because I think it's

1           actually in our nature. But if we do, again, you know,  
2           seeing the few times when survivors were asked, "Did you go  
3           to residential school?" And it was only recently that they  
4           were asked the question by social workers, parole officers,  
5           doctors, lawyers, teachers, anybody.

6                               **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

7                               **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** The amount of times  
8           that a professional actually asked somebody who was in care  
9           or in custody or in the emergency room for the 15th time  
10          that year, "Did you go to residential school?" I could  
11          count on two hands in the hundreds of appeals that I -- I  
12          dealt with. But the times that they were asked I -- the  
13          next bit of conversation that I usually had was, you know,  
14          the person would say and you look on my employment record  
15          and, you know, after I talked to whoever they talked to  
16          it's about the time I kept the job and got the job and kept  
17          it. It's about the same time when I started going back for  
18          Thanksgiving with my family. It's about the same time that  
19          other good things started happening. So I believe that  
20          this reconciliation opportunity, it's bigger than Canada,  
21          it's bigger than Alberta, it's bigger than any one  
22          institution. It's got to be all of us. And so that's the  
23          opportunity is to get all of us involved, those of us who  
24          want to be involved. And the secretariat, as little as it  
25          might be, could have this profound impact.

1                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so it's a little  
3 thing I'm asking for with, I think, a really great upside  
4 to it. It's not easy but I think it'll be profound. And  
5 one of the things I researched was the AFM did a -- a study  
6 in 2012. And they said, "If you combine healing with  
7 education the economic returns could be upwards of 450  
8 billion over a generation. The reduction in -- in social  
9 services and other health supports could be a reduction of  
10 150 billion over 25 years." And I looked at that report I  
11 thought, "Okay, you know, what if that's only ten percent  
12 right?" Still good --

13                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

14                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** There's still 45  
15 billion to the good and 15 billion to the good. So why  
16 wouldn't, you know, the folks out there who have their --  
17 the ability to say yes to certain things say yes to this.  
18 So I'm hoping that the commissioners might see this, and I  
19 apologize for blathering on, but maybe look at this  
20 proposal that I'll -- I'll give to you.

21                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Absolutely.

22                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And if they think  
23 there's anything to it to, you know, maybe picking up the  
24 phone and calling Minister Feehan or whoever. Because it's  
25 one thing to say no to me. It'll be a little tougher

1 saying no to the Inquiry, I think.

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Absolutely. Thank you.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So that is, for me,  
4 you know, the opportunity was to come here and mention  
5 Harold to -- to mention Julie and, you know, to say they  
6 were an important part of my family.

7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** We lost them too  
9 early. But if we can take that loss and turn it into  
10 something positive then, you know, it won't be a loss for  
11 nothing.

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Absolutely. You  
13 mentioned that Julie and your mother both went to  
14 residential school.

15 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

16 **MS. ALANA LEE:** What residential school did  
17 they attend?

18 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Blue Quills.

19 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Blue Quills. Okay.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. And again, you  
21 know, we didn't hear much about it. I -- I heard that she,  
22 my mom, ran away. She stole a horse even. But -- and at  
23 the time I thought, "Oh wow, what an outlaw", you know,  
24 when I was young and heard the story.

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** But I now know that  
2                   you didn't run away from residential school unless you had  
3                   a goddamn good reason to do that. Because, tell you what,  
4                   when she was brought back it probably wasn't pretty.

5                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

6                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So, again, I mean,  
7                   there's just parts of my mom's childhood that we don't know  
8                   about. And, you know, she passed away in -- in '91. So we  
9                   won't know about it.

10                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And again, that's, you  
12                  know, that's a loss. But I love that picture of the two  
13                  sisters.

14                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** Both very beautiful.

15                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

16                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** Like, stunningly beautiful.  
17                  Yeah.

18                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. And so, you  
19                  know, it was those two together going to take on whatever  
20                  life had in store for them. And I, you know --

21                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** That's absolutely what it  
22                  looks like --

23                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah.

24                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** -- in the picture. Yeah.

25                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. So it's -- it's

1 -- it's a loss for us. But, you know, they also gave  
2 everything they had while they were here. So --

3 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. And you said you were  
4 15 --

5 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

6 **MS. ALANA LEE:** -- when Julie's life was  
7 taken. What -- was there any conviction around that? So  
8 it was her partner at the time?

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know, I -- I don't  
10 know. And it wasn't something that our family was --  
11 was -- was focused on.

12 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know, it really  
14 was the loss. And I think the assumption, and maybe there  
15 was a discussion of that, but it wasn't something that was  
16 discussed with me.

17 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

18 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** The assumption, I  
19 think, is that because they got the call, it was the  
20 police, and we knew that it was her partner [Julie's  
21 partner] who beat her to death that all that was going to  
22 be taken care of. With my uncle I don't know, you know, if  
23 they ever caught the person who hit him on the head and  
24 left him outside.

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I don't know that, you  
2 know, my granny would have insisted on -- on knowing that  
3 or just grieving her -- her son.

4                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Did your uncle attend  
5 residential school as well?

6                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I don't know.

7                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

8                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. That's --  
9 that's a big blank in our -- in my understanding.

10                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Okay. You said  
11 because your uncle has since been laid to rest does he  
12 have, like, a headstone?

13                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I don't think so.

14                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

15                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I honestly don't know.  
16 I mean, if he does we've never visited it. Yeah. What  
17 little I know is he played guitar and was the life of the  
18 party.

19                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Okay. Is there  
20 anything that you would like from -- I mean, we -- we can't  
21 make any -- any promises. But is there any kind of  
22 requests that you'd like around information around your  
23 uncle?

24                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** It -- it never  
25 occurred to me. It just -- it seemed like it was one of

1 those things that happened and --

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I don't think so. I  
4 think at this point I would just as well have it lie un --  
5 sort of, touched any -- any further. I don't -- I don't  
6 see much positive coming out of that. Although I  
7 appreciate that if -- if you had the resources or you have  
8 the resources this could be one of those things that  
9 potentially is looked at. Bu I don't think that from where  
10 my family is at and where we're at now that that will help.

11 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Well it seems, you  
12 know, it seems like -- I mean, this is fanatastic. I mean,  
13 you've come with a proposal so it's, you know, correct me  
14 if I'm wrong but it sounds like, you know, even with --  
15 with all of this loss you've come to terms with it. And  
16 you've put together some really great recommendations for  
17 moving forward so, you know, in -- in helping, you know,  
18 the rest of -- the rest of us and the rest of Alberta,  
19 Canadians, to kind of help deal with these things as well.  
20 So --

21 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I've been fortunate in  
22 the time that I've -- I've finished doing that -- that work  
23 and been working on this proposal is to see how interested  
24 others are.

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so there's letters  
2 of support that I've gotten from church groups and from  
3 social groups from the City of Edmonton, even from Chief  
4 Commissioner Wilton Littlechild on this, which bugs me  
5 then. I'm a little frustrated that even with all that the  
6 minister still, you know, told me to talk to the hand  
7 because the face doesn't care.

8                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

9                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So again, but it's --  
10 it's, you know, you can say, "You know" to Harold but maybe  
11 it'll be a bit more difficult if the Commission thinks, you  
12 know, the opportunity here is to leverage the best, sort  
13 of, the best tendencies and then -- and the best intentions  
14 not just of institutions but of individuals.

15                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

16                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** That I think is the  
17 great opportunity. And if we are able leverage that, and  
18 that's what's this proposal is about, is we don't have to  
19 wait 100 years, you know, to see that turn around.

20                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

21                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I think 25 years and  
22 we're going to see an incredible turn around. But it's  
23 bigger than any one government.

24                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Without leaving this right  
25 now is there, kind of -- is there anything that you would

1           like to -- would like to explain --

2                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

3                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** -- about your proposal.

4           Just -- you know, I mean they're definitely going to get  
5           this paper copy. But maybe just, kind of, you know -- what  
6           -- what are some of the questions that you've gotten asked  
7           in the past about this, you know, after somebody has sat  
8           down and reviewed it. Maybe we can kind of --

9                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

10                          **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

11                          **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Well I was  
12           surprised -- and I've met with the Minister a couple of  
13           times. His first response on this -- his first sort of  
14           question and comment was, "I don't want to turn this into  
15           Alberta's problem."

16                          **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

17                          **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I've heard from others  
18           that, in part, they don't want to make a mistake of, you  
19           know, the old saying is, "The road to hell is paved with  
20           good -- good intentions." So giving the Minister the  
21           benefit of the doubt that what he wants to avoid is the  
22           mistake of hurting instead of helping --

23                          **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24                          **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- by, you know,  
25           charging ahead without having the tools to -- to work with.

1           What I am -- what -- my response to that is well, first of  
2           all, I don't think you can make things much worse. I mean,  
3           you've got, you know, 72 percent of the kids in care are  
4           Aboriginal. Five years ago that was 70 percent. And so  
5           the numbers are -- are still going the wrong way. You  
6           know, I did some work with Homeward Trust. You know, the  
7           number of, in Edmonton, of -- of homeless, of those who are  
8           continually homeless, not just homeless sometime, it's --  
9           it's upwards of 60 percent are Aboriginal.

10                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And we're, what, seven  
12           percent of Edmonton's population. And, you know, in -- in  
13           those who are incarcerated is, what, 30 some percent  
14           Aboriginal. We're four percent of the population. So my  
15           initial response always is, if you're going to make a  
16           mistake, don't make the mistake of doing nothing.

17                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

18                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Don't make the mistake  
19           of thinking the status quo is in any way acceptable or  
20           tolerable. You know, if you're going to make the mistake  
21           make the mistake of trying to help. Make the mistake of  
22           getting involved. Make the mistake of having a discussion  
23           that may be uncomfortable. So my response is, be prepared  
24           to be uncomfortable but be prepared to also be part of --  
25           of -- of a positive change.

1                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And your -- and as --  
3 as a citizen or as a minister able to, by respecting  
4 somebody long enough to listen to them and show you care  
5 and develop a bit of trust, can be a profound agent. So  
6 that's my, sort of, response to the, "Gee, I don't want to  
7 make things worse."

8                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

9                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so, you know,  
10 that's one of the bits of advice if the, you know,  
11 commissioners asked about this proposal --

12                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- that I would give.  
14 I also think it doesn't have to be big. Simply  
15 identifying, recognizing good intentions, good work, good  
16 practices. And maybe in some of the things that have been  
17 tried and have failed miserable --

18                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- to say, "Well, you  
20 know, you know, be careful of the language you use." My  
21 pet peeve is when people talk about our Aboriginal  
22 community. Like I -- fucking own me.

23                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know.

25                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Absolutely.

1                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You can talk about  
2           Aboriginal people in Canada, that's fine. The same way you  
3           talk about Ukrainians in Canada, the Germans in Canada.  
4           So, you know, just language.

5                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Very distinct language  
6           (inaudible).

7                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. Yeah. But it's  
8           -- but again, I'd prefer that the discussion happened.

9                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

10                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And if there's  
11           breaches of protocol then there's usually, like -- a good,  
12           "I'm sorry" goes a long way.

13                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

14                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And, "I want to do  
15           better" goes a long way to mending any rifts.

16                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

17                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so just be genuine  
18           would be, you know, my other bit of advice and trusting and  
19           be optimistic.

20                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

21                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know.

22                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

23                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Albertans in general,  
24           I think, can help, want to help. If we can help them get  
25           there then, you know, we're all going to be better off on

1 the go forward.

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And there's also -- I  
4 mean, there's a lot of stuff that happens -- has to happen  
5 internally in our communities as well, you know, between  
6 brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles. And, you know,  
7 how we have those discussion, I don't know. I don't know  
8 if we ever really do, other than know that there's always  
9 going to be a place at the table.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And maybe that is what  
12 we -- the best we can hope for, just having a place at the  
13 table. And, you know, I think this proposal suggests that  
14 Albertans can have room at their table --

15 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

16 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- but within our  
17 families as well --

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- is that there's  
20 value in that even if there isn't a lot that's said.

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

22 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So that could be one  
23 of the things that's recognized. And again, this doesn't  
24 have to cost a half million dollars. They already have  
25 people who I'm sure would be delighted to take this on.

1                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

2                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** You know, they don't  
3 have to spend anything more.

4                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Structurally, how do you --  
5 how would you envision this, like, the structure. Like,  
6 you even said that just having a few people. You know,  
7 start out with a few employees phone, kind of answering  
8 that (inaudible) organizations that are already doing some  
9 of this work.

10                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm. Yeah. I -- I  
11 mean, there's different ways of -- of getting this done, I  
12 think. I mean, I -- just off the top I thought well, why  
13 doesn't the Government of Alberta step forward. Premier  
14 Notley apologized in the spring of 2016, after they formed  
15 a government, for Alberta's silence --

16                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

17                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- while kids were  
18 being taken away. And quite frankly, there's another issue  
19 with day schools and with the administration of old  
20 residential schools being taken over by the Government of  
21 Alberta. And now years of operation jurisdictional  
22 questions that were raised because it was no longer Canada  
23 calling all the shots. And what happened is in some  
24 schools like Ermineskin, for example, in 1969 they changed  
25 the so-called administration but they didn't change the

1 people who worked there, they didn't change the culture of  
2 the people who worked there, they didn't change their  
3 mandate, for crying out loud. So there's kids who were  
4 abused in the spring of 1969 -- show up and are abused in  
5 the fall of 1969 by the same people and sometimes in the  
6 same location --

7 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- but we're told  
9 because Canada made this argument towards the end of the --  
10 of the assessment process that their abuse doesn't count  
11 because there was a different administrative setup within  
12 those institutions. Only the people on the ground who are  
13 doing the abusing apparently didn't get the memo. And so  
14 we've got a whole group of people now who are on the  
15 outside looking in who won't, and to me this is the real  
16 problem, have the ability or be given the opportunity to  
17 tell their stories.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And so, you know, if  
20 the Inquiry is one of the calls for action from the TRC, I  
21 think the Inquiry might also use its -- its mandate and its  
22 authority to say, "There's still work to be done. There's  
23 still stories that need to be told." Because those  
24 experiences --

25 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

1                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- that happened two  
2                   months after led to other consequences in that individual's  
3                   life --

4                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

5                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- that led to other  
6                   consequences where somebody goes through their, you know,  
7                   rest of their childhood and adulthood and even into their  
8                   senior citizenship carrying around mistrust, carrying anger  
9                   with them and not having, you know, the tools that they  
10                  would have received at home had they been able to stay at  
11                  home to deal with what happened. So it's work that's left  
12                  undone that is still yet to be resolved that, you know, in  
13                  addition to the million other things that you guys have to  
14                  do might be beneficial to closing the loop on this and  
15                  could also provide the information to provincial  
16                  governments that if you stood up in your legislature and  
17                  said, "Sorry." If you stood up and you said, "We accept  
18                  the calls to action" then the work isn't done yet. And  
19                  part of that might be provincially setting up or stepping  
20                  up and instituting a process so that those who aren't  
21                  allowed to tell their story under the existing settlement  
22                  agreement --

23                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- can tell their  
25                  story and get some peace on the go forward. So, I mean,

1           that's one of the spin offs, I think, of this. But getting  
2           back to your -- your question, I mean, it's just -- it's me  
3           -- it's a couple people, was what I was thinking, and they  
4           could already be employees of the Government of Alberta.  
5           And if I was the minister what I would do is I would ask my  
6           DM to put the call out, "Who here wants to be my  
7           secretariat?"

8                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

9                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** "Show of hands. Who  
10           thinks this is important. Who sees the opportunity? You  
11           know, who was moved by the TRC? Who's moved by the Inquiry  
12           on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women? And who thinks  
13           that we can, you know, leverage something special here in  
14           Alberta? Put up you hand. Okay. You and you, you're my  
15           team. And whatever you're doing there somebody else is  
16           going to take over. And for the next five years we're  
17           going to have this thing, it's called a secretariat. And  
18           they're doing it in B.C., they're doing it in Ontario,  
19           we're going to do it here in Alberta. And, you know, with  
20           you two we're going to leverage a whole new dialogue and  
21           we're going to get the rest of our citizens involved, or at  
22           least every citizen who wants to be involved."

23                           **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

24                           **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And that'll be, you  
25           know, the best money we've spent.

1                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Thank you for this.

2                   Thank you for this.

3                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Well, thank you  
4                   for listening and for this opportunity.

5                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Is there anything else you'd  
6                   like to add?

7                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** No. I'm probably  
8                   missing a bunch of stuff. I'm trying to think of, you  
9                   know, what my mom would have me talk about. You know, she  
10                  would talk about how lucky she was to have her granny. She  
11                  would talk about how lucky she was to have kids. I mean,  
12                  she raised four of us on her own.

13                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. So she was -- you  
14                  said granny meaning your granny or was your mother raised  
15                  by her grandmother?

16                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes, to -- to both.  
17                  So my granny, who was mom's mom --

18                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- and an important  
20                  part of our family. I mean, it's -- I think a lot of  
21                  Aboriginal families, you know, your granny comes and she  
22                  lives with you.

23                  **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah. Absolutely.

24                  **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Right. And she keeps  
25                  her hides under your bed. And, you know, her beads

1 scattered all over the place. And -- and you're lucky for  
2 that. It's -- and then she moves in with your aunty for  
3 any number of years. And you're lucky for that. And you  
4 see each other, you know, every weekend because you're at  
5 each other's houses.

6 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

7 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** That's -- that -- that  
8 was my experience. So I was lucky to have, you know,  
9 granny and aunties and my mom there.

10 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** And their  
12 encouragement. So, you know, I think what my mom would  
13 have me say is, you know, don't forget to tell them how  
14 important family is, how lucky you are as a father to be  
15 able to kiss your kids goodnight --

16 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- each night.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** And so Julie's children, you  
19 said they're doing well today.

20 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

21 **MS. ALANA LEE:** That they were raised by  
22 granny?

23 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes. Yeah. Yeah and  
24 they -- they, I mean, they're -- like I said, they're --  
25 they're -- they even may have already been involved, I'm

1 not sure.

2 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

3 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I'll have to ask them  
4 next time I see them. But it's -- it's for them to come  
5 out and tell -- tell their story, I think.

6 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Were they living with Julie  
7 at the time?

8 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** No. Well, Julie was  
9 already out and homeless by that period of time. So her  
10 kids were out doing their thing.

11 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

12 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So -- yeah and it was,  
13 you know, one of those things that, again, was unfortunate  
14 in that -- that, you know, that -- that rupture that --  
15 that occurred. One of the -- one of the best things that  
16 happened though was when we able to get a headstone and we  
17 all gathered again.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** They could see how  
20 much it meant. You know, I called them my aunt and my  
21 uncle but they're actually my cousins. To be able to look  
22 down and, you know, see their mother's name there and that  
23 they were remembered in -- in -- in what we (inaudible).

24 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

25 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I know it's about

1           having a place to -- to go sometimes. And to, you know,  
2           grieve but to also say thank you.

3                       **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

4                       **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So having that -- that  
5           place, that home is, for me, you know, what -- what has  
6           been taken away but could still be restored --

7                       **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

8                       **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- I think. And maybe  
9           the secretariat is a place to go --

10                      **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

11                      **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** -- as well.

12                      **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

13                      **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Those are good  
14           questions. Is there anything else? Or --

15                      **MS. ALANA LEE:** Was there anything else you  
16           would like to add. I mean, there's -- there's some  
17           questions but you've covered most of it. And I think that,  
18           you know, this is -- this is -- would be a really good  
19           opportunity for the commissioners, maybe even after we're  
20           done this interview I want to -- I want to look at this a  
21           little more in -- in depth and read it. Because, you know,  
22           I'm asking questions about it but I haven't really had the  
23           opportunity, it's just kind of what you're --

24                      **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** M'hm.

25                      **MS. ALANA LEE:** -- you know, what you're

1 speaking of, to look at this. And, you know, I think,  
2 like, fantastic and, like, thank you. You've really put  
3 this -- put a lot into this. And so, I mean, this is, you  
4 know -- I mean, one of my questions could be, like, what do  
5 you think would make it better for future generations.  
6 Well, you've already handed that over here, well structured  
7 proposal, it's ready to go, you know, you're doing your  
8 part to make this happen. And so, you know --

9 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** I need others though,  
10 you know, to carry it forward.

11 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.

12 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** So whatever -- if you  
13 think there's anything to it. If you have any questions my  
14 contact information is on there. Feel free to --

15 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Right. And it's right at  
16 the bottom right?

17 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah.

18 **MS. ALANA LEE:** Just for the record. Yeah.

19 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yeah. Then if there  
20 is other better ideas than that, then I'd be happy to -- to  
21 know the other better ideas.

22 **MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm. Thank you, I mean, is  
23 -- is there anything you'd like to add?

24 **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** No. No. But thank  
25 you for doing this.

1                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Do you feel like you've been  
2           heard today?

3                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Absolutely.

4                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Okay.

5                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Yes. No, thank you so  
6           much.

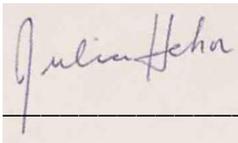
7                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** Perfect. Thank you.

8                   **MR. HAROLD ROBINSON:** Okay. Good luck.

9                   **MS. ALANA LEE:** It is -- oh, I apologize  
10           commissioners. We began the interview at 12:15 and I  
11           forgot to state that. And we're concluding at 1:04.  
12           --- Upon adjourning at 1:04 p.m

LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Julia Hehn, 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.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Hehn".

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Julia Hehn

March 5, 2018