National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
Truth-Gathering Process
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Statement - Volume 84

Dr. Maggie Hodgson, O.C.,
In relation to Cherish Oppenheim

Statement gathered by Alana Lee

INTERNATIONAL REPORTING INC.
41-5450 Canotek Road, Ottawa, Ontario, K1J 9G2
E-mail: info@irri.net – Phone: 613-748-6043 – Fax: 613-748-8246
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NOTE

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**Statement gatherer:** Alana Lee

**Documents submitted with testimony:** none.
Statement - Public
Maggie Hodgson
(Cherish Oppenheim)

--- Upon commencing on Wednesday, November 8, 2017, at 4:14 p.m.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay, so it is November 8th, 2017. This Alana Lee, statement gatherer with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I am here with Maggie Hodgson and we're in Edmonton, Alberta. We are an in-camera session.

[Registrar’s note: the witness subsequently elected to make her statement public]. Maggie, you're here today on a voluntary basis --

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: M'hm.

MS. ALANA LEE: -- right? Okay. So I just want that on the record. Maggie, you're originally from ... 

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Nadleh Whut’en.

MS. ALANA LEE: Nadleh?

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Nadleh.

MS. ALANA LEE: Nadleh, and that's in British Columbia, right?

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Up in -- by Prince George.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay, perfect, and you are a resident of Edmonton, and have been for quite some time.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Fifty-six years.
MS. ALANA LEE: Fifty-six years, okay. It is currently 4:14, and we're going to start. So, Maggie, what would you like the Commissioners to know?

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I want to talk about Cherish Oppenheim's murder, my great-niece. I also want to speak about what it means for grandmothers, matriarchs, or -- or family helpers who work in them frontlines --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- and also have family members who die. And I had a French father from (indiscernible) Quebec, lived out on a reserve. And my mom was raised in residential school in Lejac, B.C., and our reserve is the reserve that Lejac is situated on.

MS. ALANA LEE: Oh, okay.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And there are things that I didn't know until later -- when I worked in residential schools I was able to read files. I never knew why my dad never went to church and he was Catholic. But there was some children that died in -- in -- in residential school, running away.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And the priest came to our house -- the other thing is Mom and Dad lived on the grounds on our reserve where the residential school was.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And they lived in my
grandpa's house. So you know, how land is allocated by
council, this belongs to so and so.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: So it belonged to my
grandpa. And the priest came to dad and said, “These kids
died and, and this is what you're going to -- you're going
to” -- there wasn’t an inquiry, but he said, “You know, the
government's going to come and they're going to ask you
questions.” Well, it was this public inquiry. “And this
is what you're going to tell them.” And my dad was a very
colourful language person in his broken English, and he
told the priest in not so kind words -- many unkind words,
with many colourful names, “I'm not going to lie about how
these kids died.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: “They -- they were
beaten and they ran away.” That's what I'm going to tell
the inquiry. So the priest said, “Well, if you tell -- if
you say that you're going to get fired tomorrow and you're
going to be off -- off this land the day after.”

In January when it's 35, 40 below there's no
extra houses, like in those days all the houses are full,
so Mom and Dad moved in with this other family in a little
log cabin in town.
MS. ALANA LEE: Wow.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And Dad was never called. And all of the Aboriginal people from my reserve who worked in that -- in that school, and that was I think in -- either in the late 20s or early 30s, who worked in school, all lied because they seen what happened to Dad.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And they knew my dad was a fighter, so they lied about how these kids died.

So my dad was an orphan -- no, he was -- he -- he was put in an orphanage, but he wasn't an orphan. His mother became -- became a single parent, her husband died, so she put some of her children into orphanage. My dad was five foot two as a fully grown adult man. In the orphanage he would have been prime target to be sexually abused.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so he sexually abused me for years. And we lived in a tiny -- tiny little house and my dad was the go-to man in our town. People -- people -- and -- and we didn't have doctor, so he got a St. John's Ambulance, and people would come to him to get medicine and sew up their cuts and to do things like that.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: When they'd have
miscarriages, he'd help them when they had miscarriages.

And my mom went to residential school, and her mother died when -- three months after Mom was born. So Mom was raised by her uncle on the -- not on the reserve, and his family.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so they're kind of my uncles, you know, they're my cousins, but they're really my uncles.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And that kind of history set the foundation for other things that transpired and how it affected Cherish's family.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Which Cherish married into our family.

And so -- and there were other men that Mom and Dad drank with that sexually abused me, both Native and non-Native. And my dad was killed when I was 11 in an industrial accident, and the night before he was killed I told my family, “I wished my dad would just die,” and he died, boom. I was sure I killed him.

So there was six of us and my oldest brother went to residential school. The oldest brother is Cherish's -- Cherish's grandfather, Cherish's dad's
grandfather.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Cherish's dad's grandfather, and he -- he went to residential school so he had a very -- very -- when he drank he was very sadistic and very -- very -- very abusive. So Cherish's step-dad, who's my nephew, [Nephew 1], he -- he was -- he -- he was as gentle as his dad was violent.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And he did drugs for years, and decide one day, I'm going to quit and he quit. I don't know -- he's been sober probably about maybe 35, 40 years now, a long time.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And the context of Cherish's grandfather and my -- my -- my life experience was difficult and challenging and racist and I learned how to kickbox. Grade one to eight I was the only girl in my class. So grade eight the guy that taught grade -- grade -- his wife taught grade one to four, and so I taught because she was pregnant. I was a grade eight student teaching grade one to four in his wife's place while they got paid.

MS. ALANA LEE: Where?

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: (Indiscernible)
creative, hey. And -- and so there were lots of inequity issue things that happened. And -- but because I was the only girl with my brothers, and then I was the only girl grade one to eight, I thought I was a boy, not -- not -- and not -- and I'm not gay or anything, but I thought I was a boy. And at that -- I think that explains why I was a manager at 26, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I just didn't know girls weren't managers. (Indiscernible) and then I was maybe about 14. I was babysitting for this business -- white business man and -- and he raped me very violently, driving me home from babysitting, and I was bleeding and bleeding I wouldn't say anything. I just told mom, “I'm sick.” And my mom finally made me go the hospital because I was bleeding for too long, and we had an amazing doctor, Dr. Gadell (ph), and he -- he was very -- very angry -- very angry about my being raped so violently.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: My being raped so violently and he said, “You have to report this to the police.” Well, there's two things that I was raised, you do not call the police, and worse than calling the police is calling Children Services so -- or Child Welfare, whatever they were called in that day. So but -- he -- he
 -- he was a really good doctor, and mom had a lot of faith in him, so off we go to police.

The RCMP said, “What more -- what's the matter? You pregnant? You know, did you have sex with him and you're pregnant?” And he said, “What more do you expect?” He says, “Your, your mother is an Indian and she's drunk all the time, accept that you're there to be used.” So I ran out of the police station.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'mm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And I was crying. I didn't want to go there anyways. And a young policeman followed me out, a junior cop, very junior, and I believe people on this earth are the hand of God.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'mm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: God acting through people. And he was my hand of God. He was my hand of God. And he says, “That's that guy that drives the Cadillac,” and he says that, “That cream car.” I say, “Yeah.” And he says, “That man's in there is your boss. So nothing legally is going to be done.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M'mm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: “But he -- I'm going to promise you I'm going make that guy pay for what he did to you. I'll catch him and I'm make him pay.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M'mm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: That's what he said. He said, “I believe you.”

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Okay. He said, “This is unjust --”

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: “-- and I'm going to make it just.” Well, you always have to watch for the hand of God in my life. And people who are the hand of God, he was the hand of God in my life.

My mom's drinking got worse. I think about my -- I had a -- the personality from my dad. My dad was real strong, he advocated for a lot of people in our community. And my mom -- my mom taught me strategic planning. My mom and dad would go away for bread and come back a few beers later.

MS. ALANA LEE: Oh.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: She'd get all the women and their older sons together and they'd make ten cords of wood for us and make ten cords of wood, so all the single moms in our families would get our wood from there.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And that's strategic planning. You know, and that's cooperation, that's community development, that's strength, all without ever
using those words.

So I think that -- anyway last thing that I remember living with mom was when we lived in barn she got -- we got -- she got evicted because she couldn't pay the rent, and so her and I lived in a barn, and I thought you know, I'd go days without eating, and I thought, "Things can't get any worse than they are," like -- like, "Where am I going to go, holy shit."

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: So my sister phoned my -- I mean my mom phoned my sister, who's a nun and said I got sent to boarding school, which is on the list for -- they had residential schools that were residential school, and then there was boarding schools, which never got on the list.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: But they were residential schools, but they weren't on the list, so I was sent to a school in Saskatchewan, and I cried myself to sleep from September to February.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Every day, and the reasons that children cry is because they want to be fed, changed, or loved. And the reason they stop crying, is people see change or love them. In my case I didn't have
And then I was naughty. I was raised by an alcoholic mom so I had a bad mouth. So they thought they would settle me down by sending me to Vancouver where my sister was a nun. Well, I mean they could have went to Europe and got me because that didn't work.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I didn't care about her. So I was there for a year. Not -- not quite a year. No, I was there -- I was till Christmastime. And when I went home for Christmas mom was living with his guy and I said, “I want -- I'm going to stay here.” My mom said, “No, you have to go back,” because she was still drinking. So I -- I was -- I bullied her into (indiscernible) the man she's living with supported me to stay home, so I was happy about that.

And so, and then my other brother, who was with in Alberta, his wife, I'd written to her and she said, “Come live with us,” so I went to Red Deer, that's how I come to Alberta. And I married at 17, and had my son at 17, and he died when he was three months old of a disease that's still not treatable now, it's called, polycystic kidneys.

MS. ALANA LEE: What was that?

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Polycystic kidneys.
MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: It's when they're in the kidney, and then they grow all these little cysts on it.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And then the cysts go poof and they all their organs get crushed. So one of the things that I realized after that happened was I can live through anything now.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: If I can live through my son's death I can live through anything. I can live through anything. And so I was married to [Ex-husband 1] for seven-and-a-half years and I had two more children, (indiscernible) and [Son 1]. And when I lived with my one brother at home, only one, Cherish's dad's, step-dad's father, when I lived with them things were really extremely -- extremely -- extremely violent, extremely -- extremely violent.

And so I was, and after my second son was born I had post-partum depression --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- and I attempted suicide. It was too hard. So then my sister came to visit and she fell in love with my husband. She did me a favour. I didn't -- she's a nun. But she did me a favour. That's
-- that's -- that's important you know, because you think
something's really bad in your life, and you -- and it
really turns out good, if that makes sense, you know, it
got me out of a marriage where I was being abused, and he'd
tell me, “You know you and the kids are going to starve.”
I said, “I'm not going starve.”

I didn't know how I would make it. I went
back to school. I took -- when -- when I found them
together I -- I took a office management program, and so
then I went to work for First Corporate Reserves (ph) in
1970. And it was interesting because I -- I wanted to
learn something just to get a job, but I'd never been a
child. I was babysitting children till I left when I was
14 you know, and --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- so I'd never been a
child, so my divorce was -- I was going to school and
having fun. And that's really important in terms of that,
so they Court Worker Services kind of opened up and I was
working at this -- at this car dealership just to get -- I
said, “I got to stay here one year, stay here one year.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so my year
anniversary -- I told -- told my boss -- and I used to work
nine hours -- 9:00 in the morning till 9:00 at night at
this car dealership and I asked for a raise and he, “No fucking way. You're a recovering alcoholic, and no fucking way are you are you getting one.” So I just looked at him I thought, okay. I said to myself, “I'm getting another job,” because I went to work -- I applied frequently, and when I applied for a job at Court Worker Services he didn't have -- he didn't get his grant yet to run the Court Worker Services.

So I'd go back every week, and so I said, Just so you know, I -- I -- I -- I've got kids to feed and I -- I -- I just go some place (indiscernible) anything. I've got to get a job. And welfare wasn't even an option in my -- in my -- my psyche. Welfare was not an option. I don't know why it wasn't an option.

Mom -- Mom never had welfare. She used to wash clothes for loggers and we'd go up the road and get their clothes and water and run it home and then we'd back in from the road up in camp they'd pick up their clothes and so she (indiscernible), and then we'd shoot animals. And I was a good shot. I was a good shot. But grouse -- my big -- was my big catch, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: What was your big catch?
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Grouse.
MS. ALANA LEE: Grouse.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Yeah, shooting grouse
with a .22. You got to be a damn good shot to hit a grouse
with a .22.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** (Indiscernible)

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** Thank you. I was a
good shot. So I think with the -- all of that, I think
helped to develop different skills and -- and in different
ways. Both with Mom's and Dad's personalities, with Mom,
she used to run -- she used to run overnight shelter for
people who (indiscernible) and they'd stop at our place
because they'd be walking on the road and mom said, “Don't
walk on the road -- on the highway -- on the train, because
our people are killed,” so mom ran death prevention.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Wow.

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** So they'd stay at our
place, you know.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** Put a blanket on a floor
by stove. And then all the hobos -- Mom -- we didn't have
food, normal food, and especially when Dad would run away.
And the hobos, they -- they maybe sometimes there would be
20 hobos you know, on our train we used to count hobos, to
see how many hobos there were --

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Wow.

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** -- travelling from --
coming from the east coast. And they -- they had some kind
of hobo smoke signals, or something because when -- when
the train would pull over they'd all run over to our place
and Mom would get them to chop wood you know, and she'd
make them soup, rabbit soup, or whatever. So she -- she
ran -- you know how the Salvation Army runs their feeding
thing --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- well, yeah. But any
time kids needed a safe place they'd come to our place and
she ran an overnight kid shelter too, you know, and -- and
that -- grandpa would give her -- 'atsiyan (ph) would give
us 20 fish, and she'd give 18 fish away to the old people
and to the some parents, but then they did it too, so we
had a -- you know, we had a system where --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- people fed each
other, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Maybe not lots, but we
didn't starve. We didn't starve. So those were my
teachings. And that's what laid my foundation.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I think. That -- that's
what didn't make me survive. Made me thrive.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: You know, with creativity. And so working in court my first time that I had as a woman, 17, 18-year-old woman was charged with something, and she's pregnant, and she had on a man's pair of pants, tied it with a rope, and they had a little blanket over her because a man had raped her, and she was pregnant. And she's standing in court and -- and I was thinking, Oh, my God, that’s my first client. She was from down south. Who is there for her? You know. So I took her to McDougall House, first I took her to STD clinic and got her treatment there and I took her to McDougall’s House.

And working in -- in criminal court, and then moving over to family court, and then we'd -- probably in 1973, three years later, I trained 17 family court workers for Alberta and -- so that was ‘73.

In 1967 my niece, who I babysat from the time I was seven till I was 15, had left home.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: She's now 15 and I'm 22, okay. She comes to me pregnant.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Because my brother was so sadistic when he was drinking her mother was afraid she'd lose the baby, so she came to live with me. So her
and her baby, from grade 9 to 12 she lived with me, and
I -- I have to say I was -- I was like Attila the Hun for a
mother to her because it was going to be -- if it had to be
over my dead body, she was going to get her high school.
Like, you know --

    MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

    MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: She'd -- she'd -- and no
matter, if she was sick, I made her go to school. Anyway,
so I raised her baby for four years, and then she decided
to go home, and because of my belief, when she wanted to
take her baby with her even if that baby was my baby too.

    MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

    MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: She took her baby back
up to our reserve.

    MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

    MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Up to her reserve -- her
mom's reserve, and she got into meth. What they called
speed at the time.

    MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

    MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And she became a
trafficker to pay for her -- pay for her drugs. And so in
Moose Jaw there was -- Legal Aid operated differently, than
Legal Aid does in other province and we had our own staff
lawyers, and then I was like the staff social worker.

    MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: But I also worked in court, you know, and I worked with families, et cetera.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And I helped get the transition house going and one of them had a mentally handicapped woman, she said, "Maggie, this is the best thing that ever happened to me is when I went to that 'transmission' house."

MS. ALANA LEE: Transmission?

(Laughter)

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: She's mentally handicapped, eh -- so cool. I think -- I think that those kind of things -- and so I worked there for and -- and did -- I did petitions for divorce, and I'd get it ready for the lawyer and do all -- the lawyer would maybe spend an hour with them before they went into divorce court because I'd do everything.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And do the support. While I was there I started -- I had a kid that he was charged with 56 charges of theft, I said, "John, you're going to go to jail." That's my counselling. "You're going to go to jail, John." "You can't keep doing this." So I told -- well, I think what he was stealing was car parts and this what -- "Why don't you start a car club?"
"Are you stupid?" he said. "You need a $90,000 car to have -- have -- joined a car club." You know, I told him, "Why don't you join a car club?"

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: So I told him "You can start a hundred-dollar car club." You know, his car was worth a hundred bucks. So I went ahead, and I did that, and we got all the little -- (indiscernible) the liquids and -- and they made their own roles and I had the judge and cops involved and they started 1320 Car Club.

MS. ALANA LEE: Wow.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Isn't that cool, hey?

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: They called it crime prevention. Anyway, so I think that all of that is important because it's -- so Cherish went back and -- and she gave her daughter to her mother, who was living with my sadistic -- when he was drunk, sober, nicest man in the world -- brother. And so was Cherish's dad --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- who was on the receiving end of Victor's -- of my brother, Victor's, abusiveness when he was drunk. And they had ten kids that were alive and four kids that were miscarried, and that's the context that -- well, his name was [Nephew 1], but we
call him [Nephew 1’s nickname].

   MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

   MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: That's Cherish's step-dad. And so I came back to Alberta when my husband got posted back.

   And -- and then in Moose Jaw I helped get the "transmission" house going, and then the friendship centre going, and then we set up a detox centre, but it was not a -- we call it a detox and assessment because we needed to have a place to hold people to get into treatment because they didn't -- there's no holding place, you know.

   MS. ALANA LEE: Oh, okay.

   MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: So they're calling it detox and assessment centre --

   MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

   MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- that provided a little bit more room to be able to keep people sober until they could get into treatment because we got court you know, and we're appearing in court (indiscernible) and do all that -- go jump around.

   MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

   MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: (Indiscernible) the system. I think that -- and then 1320 Car Club. We moved back to Alberta, and so I went to work as a trainer at -- at the Nechi Institute, and the -- and the director -- he
was a really good visionary, but he wasn't a very good
finance keeper, so I took over a deficit three times the
aid budget and had to clean that up. And we started off
with six a day in training and then when I left there we
had 250 days of training and a summer program and we had
800 contract aides across Canada.

MS. ALANA LEE: Wow.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: So that's about Mom's
determination, her role modeling, and her faith, really
strong faith. And when I -- and then I went to work in --
in -- I left Nechi after 16 years and I went to work in
residential schools in Ottawa.

When I was in Ottawa I'd go to hearings.
I -- I worked as kind of -- I would use the word mediator,
but I never was officially a mediator because I would
actually be able to go in with the people suing Canada.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And be in a private
setting separate from Canada with them you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And I wouldn't divulge
either way. I'd go, and I'd find some middle ground so
they'd come back into the room.

And -- and so through the years I'd see
Cherish off and on, but I was living quite a ways away.
And when I got the call that Cherish was missing and -- so
I started to make plans to fly back home, and then after I
got a call that she was missing then they had found her
body. And so I flew home and my nephew, [Nephew 1], who
was a very -- very -- very traumatized a man, by my
brother.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Cried very little. Mom
-- cried -- cried, but mostly she -- she would just
collapse, and she's -- I think she was vice principal of a
school, or something, at that time, and she just stopped --
bang. Went to bed, collapsed.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: The shock was too much
for her.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so when I got there
the house full and these -- these victim services workers
were there, and so I was polite to them and I was just,
"Here's some tea, you can have some tea." I just kept on
doing -- doing -- being a victim services worker, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And when I got the news
I really -- when I was in Ottawa I really -- really cried.
I -- I -- I was crying for her death, and her -- she was an
honor student. She was a top athlete. She was on the student council. She was a girl who had a bright future. And my nephew had been sober for years before.

She came into her life and -- and so in this blended family thing. And we all experience at one time or another, and she wanted to go, I think to her local temple is where -- seven blocks away -- store -- you know, close, and my nephew said, “No.” And so Mom said, “Well” -- because she's the biological mother and he's the step-father, she said, “You control her too much.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And, “No, she -- she can go. She's fine. She can take care of herself. She's a good girl.” He said, “I'm not scared of what she's going to do. I'm scared of what they're going to do.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And -- and so there -- there was ceremonials from around that would come in and do ceremonies. And -- and so then [Nephew 1] insisted on going to identify the body in Kamloops.

MS. ALANA LEE: What year was this?

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Honestly, I can't remember.

MS. ALANA LEE: Oh, okay.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Can't remember. I'd say
about 10 years -- I had 11 mini-strokes my years are not straight, so, if I say something it would just be a guess.

MS. ALANA LEE: Okay.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I think about ten years.

MS. ALANA LEE: About ten years, okay.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Maybe a little bit more.

I don't know.

Anyways, so I went with him to identify the body, and we -- they had not done any reparative because nobody was supposed be identifying the body. He didn't need -- the cops identified; you know what I mean? Like -- but he said, “I have to see her to believe she's dead.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And -- and she was so bludgeoned. And [Nephew 1], who had extreme trauma from his dad, had maybe two or three tears come down.

Me -- what I wanted to do, I wanted to scream and puke and scream and puke and scream and puke. That's what I wanted to do.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I wanted --

MS. ALANA LEE: Because you went with him, correct?

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I went with him to support him.
MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: So I couldn't scream and I couldn't puke.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: You know. I couldn't scream and I couldn't puke. And on our way back he talked about every -- giving Shelley support you know, everything, because it's Shelley's lost a child. That little girl's been my child since she was three or four, you know --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- that was his daughter.

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: He's really -- and he was so proud of her -- so proud of her.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: What kind of girl she was. So he talked about how this is her community. This is her reserve. And people are here to support her and as if he didn't lose a child too.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And that's something that people forget, when people are step-parents they think, oh, it's her child, or that's his child, that's -- so -- and there's ...
And the man that murdered Cherish, the -- the circumstances around her murder was that this man had been stopped by an Aboriginal police officer -- RCMP officer.

MS. ALANA LEE: He had been stopped by an Aboriginal --

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Yeah.

MS. ALANA LEE: -- police officer ...

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Before he murdered Cherish.

MS. ALANA LEE: Oh.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: When he was stopped he had electrical tape open -- open, with the tape there on his wall -- on the side of his van. He had a sheath -- a knife with a sheath right, taped to his chair.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: He had a tire iron down there, and rope. And the RCMP officer -- in my opinion, a lot of factors with my -- just -- my judgment. He gave him a 24 hour suspension, and he took his keys.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: So this man ran home, got the keys, and picked up Cherish. He had a rape kit. That cop went back to his -- his -- his car and checked in the CPIC and found out that he was out on bail for kidnapping, and attempted rape, and murder.
MS. ALANA LEE: Oh.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: All he had to do is check CPIC. But to make up for that, which (indiscernible) I have three family members that are RCMP officers, so there are good officers, bad officers, whatever, you know, good social workers, bad social workers.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: They brought in [Inspector], who is a forensic RCMP officer and a lawyer --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- to interview the accused. They were going to make no mistakes that was going to ever end up with an acquittal.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: That's the only case in my community in my 46 years of working in criminal court -- not saying it doesn't happen in other places, but they did that. They did that.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And after listening to all of the experiences here, we were -- we were lucky, I guess.

[Two lines redacted - personal information].

And the town of Merritt had a candlelight ceremony, and they had a candlelight walk for Cherish, a
prayer, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: When we had her funeral, I -- I worked with Justice -- Federal Justice people on hundred cases across Canada, and residential school, and Mitch Taylor drove up through blizzard, not knowing Cherish, just knowing me, to be a support to me.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And me and the other women, they're like the hand of God, you know, because I was being a support to other people and they came to be my support.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Most unlikely place -- Justice Canada, hey.

MS. ALANA LEE: Absolutely.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: One guy and a thousand others that don't match him, but, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- it's okay. I -- I -- I -- I got the hand of God with Mitch Taylor, and they were there to support me.

And, so I had nightmares, and I went to see a therapist. Therapist couldn't help me with my damn nightmares. I got -- I had -- and I had been to therapy
three, four years, and then I'd stop, it made me -- as soon
as I hit another bump I'd go for another year and hit
another bump and I'd go there for two years. So I had a
lot -- a lot to work on. And I was going to ceremonies.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** Really -- really going
to ceremonies. And I was working in residential school at
the time, which was difficult, but I went to ceremonies and
that helped me by working in residential schools, so
there's lots of healing and singing -- singing -- singing
is one of our medicines.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** And crying is one of our
medicines, you know, and laughing is one of our medicines,
and dancing, and [D.] and I used to go dancing all the time
to try to help me with my trauma.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** Which is great stuff,
you know.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** I think, and also this
here. And I -- I don't think that attention is paid -- I
think some trauma programs, from residential school like
Tsow-Tun Le Lum program. Have you heard of it?

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Sorry, what was it?
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Tsow-Tun Le Lum, T-S-W-O, Tun, T-U-N, L-A, L-U-M (sic), it's in Nanaimo, B.C.

MS. ALANA LEE: I don't believe so.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Anyways they're funded by the Aboriginal Foundation, and they set up a trauma program for frontline workers.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: So I went to that and -- plus my therapy, plus my ceremony. And they also have a grieving -- grieving workshop, and they have ceremonies.

And I had 15 family deaths when my niece died in -- in three years.

MS. ALANA LEE: Fifteen?

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Fifteen. So my -- my last -- so my last -- my last -- the two -- last two guys were my Elders, you know, they died. I said to God, I said, "You said you wouldn't give me more than you could -- I could handle. You just crossed the line, Buddy." I called him out. So since I bottomed out I picked up the phone, phoned my friend, who ran that trauma program and that grieving program.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And I said that, "You know, I'm -- I'm over the top here. I need help." She says, "We have a grief workshop starting on Monday." This
is Friday, the last funeral for one on my Elders, my last Elder. Got on the plane on Sunday and flew out to -- to Nanaimo.

You know, the hand of God, you know, I did --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- call Him out. He heard me.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so I think that --

[five lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Like supporting.

Finally, I thought, “Okay. God, I've tried everything I can, you know, [three lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [Two lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: [Two lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Huh?

MS. ALANA LEE: [Two lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: No, I said --

MS. ALANA LEE: [One line redacted – personal
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: No. [One line redacted - personal information].

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [One line redacted - personal information].

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [Two lines redacted - personal information].

MS. ALANA LEE: Oh.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: But he ran his own business, so he'd have to be running back and forth, you know, to --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- tend to things [two lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [Two lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [Four lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [Ten lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].
MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [Three lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [Two lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [One line redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [One line redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Now.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so the whole issue -- I think that our people through residential school that outlawed our ceremony -- a lot of people say residential school did it. I think outlawing of our ceremonies did it because ceremonies give people a sense of belonging, give them sense of -- a sense of ritual, of meaning, of -- of responsibility.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Reciprocity, and everybody’s got to work to make that launch go -- go sun dance every -- everybody has to contribute.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: You don't get no money from government to do those things. It's a personal responsibility as well.

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And all of that meaning and sense -- and a sense of identity -- sense of identity, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And outlawing of ceremonies, and the opening in -- opening of -- opening of -- I know it’s not for this, but that's okay, I'm going to tell you anyways, because you need to know this.

In mid-1800s there was a ceremony, and in that ceremony the Elders were told, "We're in our midnight and we'll come into daylight when Eagle lands on the moon. When Eagle lands on the moon we'll become motivators."

Now, you know if I was sitting on the ground in the mid-1800s, I don't know whether I'd be telling my children, and grandchildren, and grandchildren, and grandchildren.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: In 1969 the first Native alcoholic Aboriginal-focused program opened up in North America from a traditional perspective.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And at the same week that the astronauts landed on the moon and the message that was sent back to earth was “The Eagle has landed.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And our Aboriginal alcoholic and drug treatment program opened up with ceremony as being the center -- center post. With people getting -- developing a sense of identity, sense of belonging, sense of ritual, and sense of value --

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- for each other. [Two lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55].

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: [Two lines redacted pursuant to Rule 55]. I said, “Thank you, God. Thank you, God. Thank you, God.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: “Thank you, God.” I have -- before that and since then I have a very -- very strong belief in ceremonies, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: But people -- you get
out of what it you put into it.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And you get out of it what you put into it, and so -- and I started National Addictions Awareness Week in 1988, because I listened to myself talking at conferences, and saying there's this many kids in care, this many people in jail, and I thought -- I came back one time and actually listened to what I said.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And I said, I'm selling failure.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I'll selling failure. So Northwest Territories had an additions awareness week, and the -- the -- the slogan they had was *Keep the Circle Strong*. So I asked them if we could start it.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Start one, but across Canada. So I talked to Epps, Jake Epp, he's a minister (indiscernible), he said -- and his staff, his -- his political staff, and his policy people. He says, “If Jake Epp declared national addictions week he'd have to declare national shoe week.” I says, “If people were dying of God damn shoes, they should have a national shoe week, but our people are dying of addictions. So, Buddy, with -- without
Epp, it's happening. It is happening. We're going to make it happen.”

He says, “You -- you have no authority.” I told him, “I have all the authority in the world. I declare it. We have 25 communities involved. I don't care whether Jake Epp gets on the engine or the caboose because this train has left the station.”

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** We had 25 communities and then we had moved it up over three years 80 committees, 400, 800, 1200.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Wow.

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** Just under a thousand people involved across Canada. And including white people. And so it's celebrating success. Coming from a place of celebrating success. If people are sober for a day, celebrate it, you know.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** If people have a child that's not FASD, then celebrate it. Celebrate whatever. And in the meantime we -- we did -- the truth -- we did addictions training, but the truth of the matter we secretly did trauma -- a lot of trauma work.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** But we didn't we call it
trauma. We called addictions. We didn't -- you know, we had to teach about addictions, but that's not -- government didn't believe that that was their job --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- to do that, so we did it. And we snuck it in, we got -- got away with it.

In 1992 I started Healing Our Spirit Worldwide in Australia, New Zealand, United States, and Canada, and the first world conference, we had -- and see we have an alcoholic, like we have residential school survivor, we got an AIDS person, they all got separate conferences. We got our conferences together and said “Let's look at our traditional healing.” From a lot of perspective.

So we have every four years, and the next one will be in New Zealand, I mean in Australia next year. We generally have 20 sections, 200 speakers, and each country pays for their own event, you know, they're going to -- they're going to raise the money and at a national level.

MS. ALANA LEE: Wow.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And -- and so the whole thing is about hope, and I think about building bridges in our communities, and I think that, and then 2002 I started a National Day of Healing and Reconciliation because I was doing litigation.
MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And litigation meant --

it's like walking through a slough with gum boots on. Muskeg.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Like you know, you can

only walk that long in litigation for so long.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I needed to have hope. I needed my community to refocus. Yes, we're in

litigation, but we got to look about healing amongst

ourselves. And then I was on the founding -- one of the --
one of the board members with the Action Healing Foundation

and they set up all the trauma programs across Canada. And

that's about getting the boots out of muskeg, you know.

And having --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- a traditional focus. And so I think that one of the things I was thinking about, and I really struggled whether I wanted to talk about with

Cherish, because [Nephew 1]'s -- my nephew, [Nephew 1], and

my brother, Victor, has as much to do with Cherish, you

know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I'm not a novelty in my
community, you know. Many of us frontline workers have had to do a lot of work on ourselves you know, really lots of work.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** Hard work. When our families become missing and murdered we're the go-to people, and people say, “What kind of support do you have for yourself?” Well, that -- that doesn’t quite do it. And we have -- now we have the missing and murdered women, and then we're going to have the day school, and then we have the foster care, and these funds are going to be set up, I don't know, a hundred million for -- for (indiscernible) -- well, for foster kids and 50 million for that other thing, 750 million, whatever. Not much money. But anyways, I think that -- while we did a reasonably good job of -- in getting people sober because we had a training center in Nechi (ph).

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** And from 1980 to 1992 when NNADAC started with a budget, they had -- they -- that were there before, but they started to use their budget, our post-secondary people increased by 1800 percent in 12 years because people were sobering up and they were going back to school.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: What -- often -- you know, you really needed more trauma work, you know, in our communities, and we have a very -- very -- extremely pandemic level of child sexual abuse in our communities. And girls don't hit the street on their own. There are things that -- one old man says, “What are you running from and what are you running to?” You know, and they're running from --

So there needs to be some mechanism for families to get help and looking at the Justice, and working with families to be able to keep the kids safe, and get families treatment for incest and sexual abuse that is happening within the family and the community.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And that's pre -- I don't know if it's preventative because we already got a tertiary situation when you got incest going on.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: But it might be preventive for suicide, and might be preventive for girls and boys going working on the street.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And the healthier the parents and grandparents can be, I think that the more chances there is of families getting health. So there
needs to be resources. Like when we set up the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, we wanted to put it -- the interest rate was 19 and 20 percent.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: When that was set up.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And we're only allowed to invest in that two or three percent of the government triple A funding, that's all we were allowed to -- the government's criteria.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Which meant that the fund would stop at seven years.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: We'd run out of money.

So --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so that fund could have lasted forever, being invested in 19 or 20 percent --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- of the day, it's not what it is now. So we really need to have trauma programs in an aid budget, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Side -- side by side
alcohol and drug treatment centres, or in the same building, whatever. I don't care how it's done. Staffed by Aboriginal people, and -- and managed by Aboriginal people.

And -- and -- and that's -- that's a really important issue, and we need to do more than short-term planning, and I'll just use -- government works four years at a time. Okay. They don't plan.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** So the short-term planning and long-term planning there's a big difference. And what that man that started the pre-law program he had a -- it's been 40 years now since he did that. We have --

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** -- thousands of Aboriginal lawyers. We need to have Aboriginal specialists that have a degree in child and family trauma psychology from an Aboriginal spiritual perspective.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** And money needs to be set aside for summer programs because we have thousands of social workers who could work on their master's in summer program because they all work, they got grandchildren they got to support, et cetera, you know.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** M'hm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: We need to have that.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: We need to have that. And -- and so that mean -- and you know if -- if you -- if you look at the cost of -- and the savings.

I guess one of the women that's testified here, she was attempt people attempting murder (indiscernible) a number of times.

MS. ALANA LEE: (Indiscernible).

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: You know how much she earned --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- after she sobered up?

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Eighteen or 20 years now, three million dollars, working in work -- work that she does. What a contribution -- plus she's healthy.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: She's well.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: You know. So looking at it from a life saving perspective; that's one perspective.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: But the other one is was looking at the money it puts back into the economy. I
think that we have to have those facilities, staffed with an adequate amount of money, not adequate, equal money to other trauma programs. Like, I'll just use some of the -- there's some really big shot white facilities, and they -- they got money to burn, you know. They -- they -- they, and the government funds them.

**MS. ALANA LEE:** Yeah.

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** And -- and so we need to have parallel facilities that have traditional healers and -- and -- and also psychologists.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** Aboriginal psychologists and psychiatrists, and that requires a 20-year education investment specifically in the area of mental health. Aside -- we got -- so we could encourage some of our social workers to move into child and family psychology and give them summer programs and set aside money, that's a recommendation, you know, set aside money --

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** -- for -- for -- for those people to be able to be those summer programs. To be able to get their master's and their doctorate.

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

**MS. MAGGIE HODGSON:** I sat on the committee for Children Services and we -- I asked the province to set
up a fund for people that were single parents to go to social work, and it was funded, and then one of our graduates wanted to go to Manitoba, and they said, “Oh, no, we can't pay for your master's degree.” And I says, “You want all of our social workers to be receptionists? No. That's not going to happen. We're going to fund them right to our doctorate, you know. And if we get less people at the bottom end it's too bad.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Let those guys get their doctorate and then we have our own professors.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: You know, that's important.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so the same thing with this issue that's a very -- the other thing is -- and you right think this is not related to missing murdered women, but darling, it is.

One of the biggest businesses in Canada is foster care. And the Foster Parents’ Association of each province -- they -- they pull the strings with the government because the government -- that's their -- that's the only people they have to give those kids to.

Well, we have our kinship care. We have our
kinship care both that are in -- connected to Children Services, but you probably have an equal number kinship care people who will not touch -- stick your money up your you know where.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Where the sun don't shine.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I'm going to keep my grandchildren myself.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Because I don't want you to touch them. If we had funding for kinship care associations that would include Métis, Treaty, and Inuit in our communities.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Who could teach from a traditional parenting perspective, and help some of those grandparents who -- who just think the stick is the answer. You know. Just because they're grandparents and just because they're -- you know, they've been to residential school, I don't care. You know, they can still learn a new way of parenting, a new way of being grandparent.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Through a kinship care
association. Because they won't go near the Foster
Parents' Association. And they're a big political body.

    MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

    MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: If we had a kinship care
association in every province in Canada that had all of the
resources that the Foster Parents' Association has.

    MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

    MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Would that solve the
problem? It would be another beginning. I mean we have
new beginnings every day, you know. And if we have that
20-year investment in postsecondary for master’s level in
child and family psychology from an intergenerational
trauma perspective from the government.

    MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

    MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Then -- and the last
thing is around the RCMP, I really want your researchers
for the -- I've been listening, and I thought -- I think --
I'm a trainer, you know, I think that there's -- there's
little -- there's little cuts and splices of what they're
saying.

    MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

    MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: If -- if they took the
splice and when they talk to the RCMP officer and say to
the RCMP officer said, "Well, call us back after Christmas
you know, and we'll -- we'll investigate or --"
MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- or “She's probably out partying.” Just that one little tip. If they took that, it wouldn't even be half a minute, if they put a whole half hour of just tips from -- from these women's -- people's testimonies and use it as a training device for RCMP officers so they can see what other officers have done.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: You know, and -- and -- and what -- and what that RCMP officer did to me, you know, and I think we could make more progress. And I also think that the family junior court, as Marion's (ph) done in Vancouver, having -- having an Elder in family court. And -- and -- and if possible in terms of changing how family court is done, and who does family court, and what kind of infrastructure is around family court.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: You know, and -- and getting more Aboriginal family court judges. And there's enough, you know, young -- young lawyers --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- you know, that could -- could do that --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- and I think that those infrastructures make a difference because when Children Services go -- women living high risk lifestyle they just pick the kid and you know, they -- they actually say, “You know, you don't -- and there's nothing you can do about it, you know. I'm taking your child and nothing you can do about it, you know. And it you might as well sign this paper, you know.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And that's what they told my niece. When -- when my niece was -- one the one that was using -- when she had her baby Children Services took the baby right out of -- right out of the hospital.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: I was a mother. I wasn't drinking. I had other children. Yes, I was only 23.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: But they said, you know, “She -- it's not a proper home.” I just told the judge, “What's not a proper home?” And I wasn't then who I was -- I am now, where I'm very -- very confident now. I was quite mousy, when it comes fighting to my family it was a different situation.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so the social worker said, “They only have three bedrooms and they have two children already and they're going to four children, they need another bedroom.” I told the judge, “You know, there's 600 other trailers, house trailers in our parking lot, you better go apprehend all those white families, you know, because --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- they only three bedrooms, you know.”

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And -- and so would the judge listen to me? But [Ex-husband] actually built another -- he was earning $300 a month at the time and the bedroom cost us $1,500 you know, in '67 a lot of money.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: It took us three months to get to the second hearing for court, and when we went to pick up our baby, [Niece 1]’s child, there were six babies in that foster home -- room. In -- lined up in cribs, bottle -- walking, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And that's allowed, hey?

MS. ALANA LEE: Yeah.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so and -- and when I
fought with Children Services in Regina there was 25 kids in a foster home where the foster father raped a girl, and three weeks later she ended up on the street. And so I called Children Services and I called -- so Children Service called the foster parents and told them, so they beat her. When they got -- when she went home, for telling.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so I fought them. I had to actually resign from my job to fight them. To get the foster home shut down, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And so I think that -- and we need more trauma -- short-term trauma programs for frontline workers. There are a lot of our Aboriginal social workers who had a lot of -- never mind what they're dealing with.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: It's their own trauma in their own lives, and having a shorter-term trauma programs that they can go to. That's -- that's they don't have to pay for, that's paid for by the government.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: That's -- I think that that's really imperative.
MS. ALANA LEE: Those are really -- those are really strong recommendations. And they do make a lot of sense. And especially in terms of you know, of around the kinship care.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Yeah.

MS. ALANA LEE: They -- there maybe be concerns sometimes and they end up talking too much (indiscernible) parents know there will be concerns with -- with some family members, but those family members still love and those kids are still growing up with an identity.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: M'hm.

MS. ALANA LEE: You know, if they're safe, that's a lot different than foster parents (indiscernible) they just want...

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: And in terms of Children Services I -- I think that -- I think that the Commission here means well, and God, and I talk to your Chief Commissioner, I says, “You know, you're going to be meeting with all of the -- all of the -- the different departments, you know, they're going to have a -- between Commission and all the department, well, good for you.” I says, “But you know what? The people who should be sitting in these seats here are the frontline managers, the in-take worker, you know, the social worker, they need to hear the effects, not from a politician, they can change their mind by listening
to the -- the deathly effects of some of the things --
decisions that they make.”

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Maybe you might only
convince five percent, one percent, I don't care if it's
one percent, one percent is better than meeting with a
bunch bureaucrats who's going to be -- I mean a bunch of
government people who are going to be voted out in four
years, you know.

And two levels need to be dealt with. People
who come from a colonist mind think if they talk to other
colonists they're going to fix things, well you know
what --

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: -- sometimes people -- I
started a national day here, and reconciliation because I
want to develop shared understanding.

MS. ALANA LEE: M’hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: That's how we develop
shared understanding if you talk to -- not only those guys
up there, but people down here. Developing shared
understanding takes time, from both of our perspectives,
you know.

So, and there's one other recommendation, I
was trying to think about. What I -- I think that -- I
think that -- I think that after this Inquiry is over and they have all these -- I don't know what, I don't -- I was -- I learned to be -- learned how to be a kick boxer with my mouth, you know. So I have to tone it down to make it so it's palatable. Like, if they have that trauma fund for the foster -- kids in foster care, they have the trauma fund for the day students you know, and then they're going to set up a trauma fund, like, one plus one makes three, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Fifty million is going do nothing, you think, bang -- bang -- bang, nothing. A hundred million might do something. A hundred and fifty million, I think that -- I think that more and longer -- 20-year consideration, like getting enough of our people who have masters and their doctorate in child and family psychology, I think, for me, is a priority from a spiritual perspective and from a ceremonial perspective, that's really important.

And -- and it maybe it's too -- too -- too long term thinking but you know the guy that started pre-law, you know, we have thousands of lawyers, and we got a model that's been shown with how viable it is, and we're getting our few judges now.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.
MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: Yeah, it took us 40 years to get there, but I don't care, I'll be dead, you know.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: But if we can have 40 years from now year we're still not burying our kids and not burying our women, I think we need to go for it.

MS. ALANA LEE: M'hm.

MS. MAGGIE HODGSON: That's it.

MS. ALANA LEE: Thank you, Maggie. Thank you.

--- Upon adjourning at 5:51 p.m.
LEGAL DICTA-TYPIST'S CERTIFICATE

I, Shannon Munro, 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.

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Shannon Munro

March 7, 2018